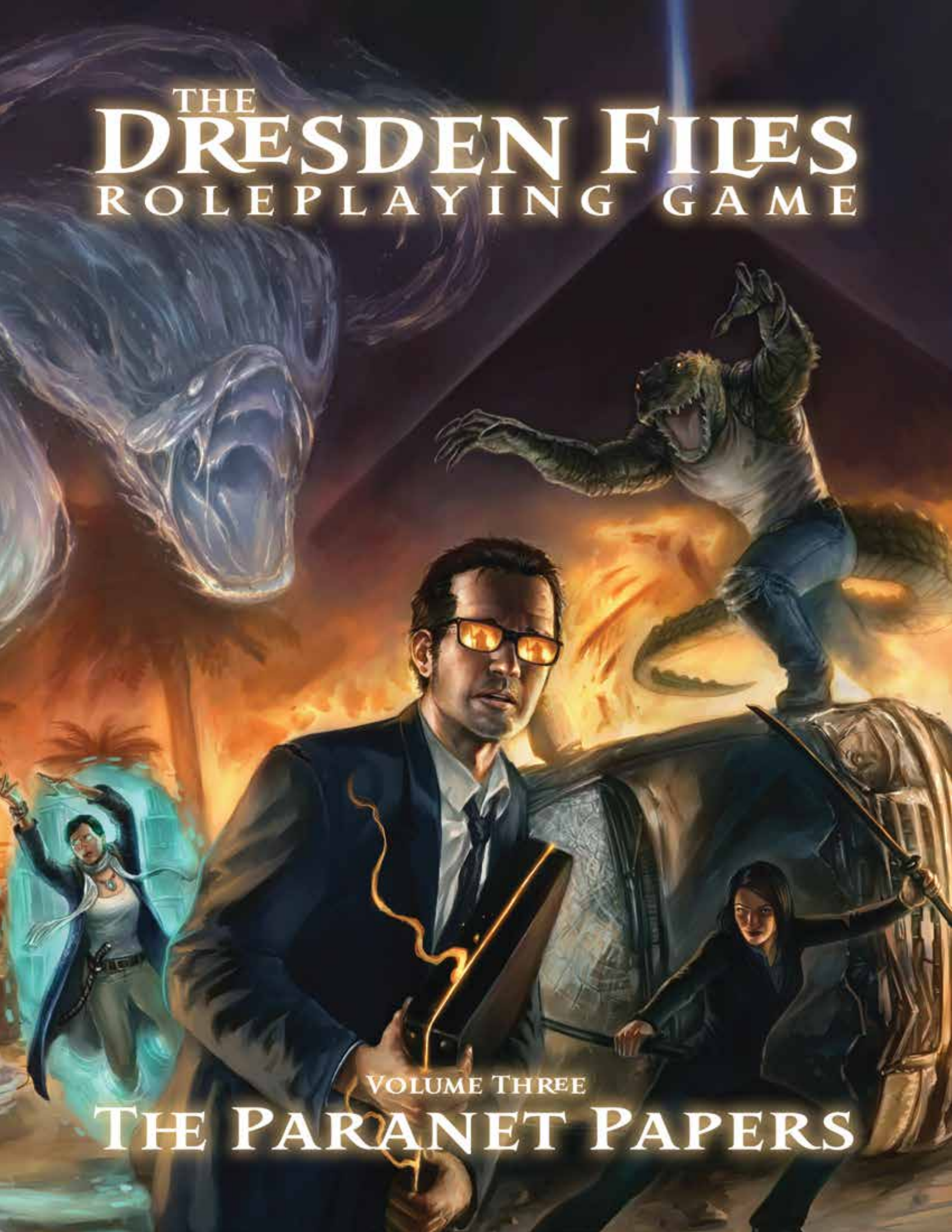
THE DRESDEN FILES ROLEPLAYING GAME



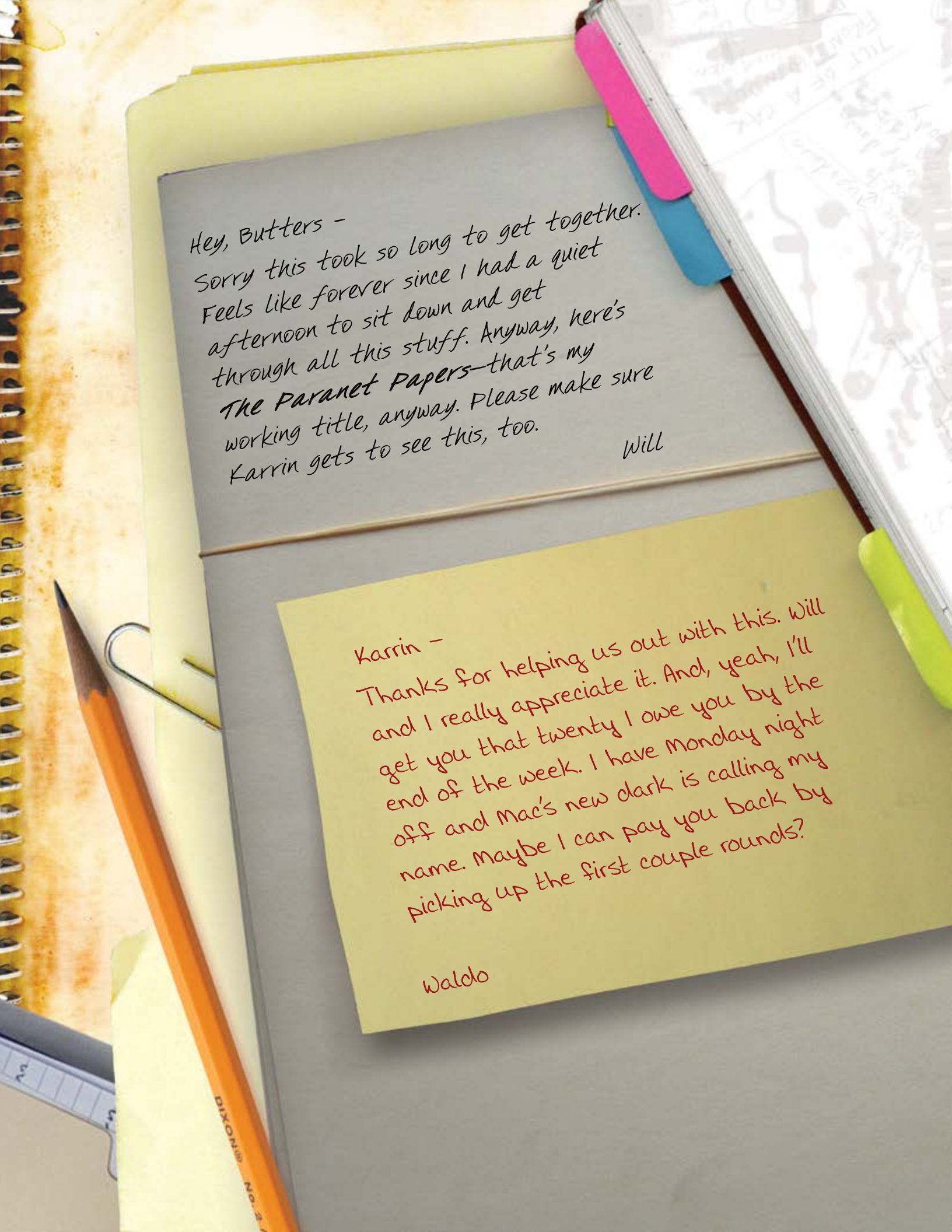
VOLUME THREE

THE PARANET PAPERS


MISSING
MISSING
MISSING
MISSING
MISSING
Last seen leaving for morning jog
Family receiving phone calls on disconnected phone
No fingerprints at the scene
Claw marks in drywall
Room ransacked, candles removed
Definitely NOT Fomor activity
Who's behind this one?
The Fomor
Ancient folk
Water dwellers
Seashell bomb
WEAKNESS
IRON
Manhunt
Boy abducted on way
Chicago Shocked by Brutal Killings
Ransom Demands
- South Shore Beach
- Randolf St
- South Pond
- Andersonville
- Shedd Aquarium
- The Field Museum
- Northerly Island
- Edgebrook Library
- Skinner Park
Sea urchin-like projectile
Nov. 20
Avalon Park
MISSING
Have you seen me?
Neighbors not talking
one neighbor says she saw 8-foot-tall "man" reaching into window
scrap of Harry's tee?
The Ragged
calling card


Purple Eyes
5 to 6 ft
Kidnapped teen Still Missing
Lincoln Park
Belmont Harbor
?
Turtlenecks
No Trace of Abductee
People remain Missing
murder in Mexico
Warns of
rial Kidnapper
The Red Court's destruction
(OCT)
Power vacuum
The Fomor
Team meeting
Father Forthill
Friday 8:00
delivery
after
artment fi
DEAD
MISSING
MISSING PE
PLEASE HELP!!
R.I.P. Kirby
until he gets back




Hey, Butters –
Sorry this took so long to get together. Feels like forever since I had a quiet afternoon to sit down and get through all this stuff. Anyway, here's **The Paranet Papers**—that's my working title, anyway. Please make sure Karrin gets to see this, too.
Will
Karrin –
Thanks for helping us out with this. Will and I really appreciate it. And, yeah, I'll get you that twenty I owe you by the end of the week. I have Monday night off and Mac's new dark is calling my name. Maybe I can pay you back by picking up the first couple rounds?
Waldo
DIXON

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Scoobies

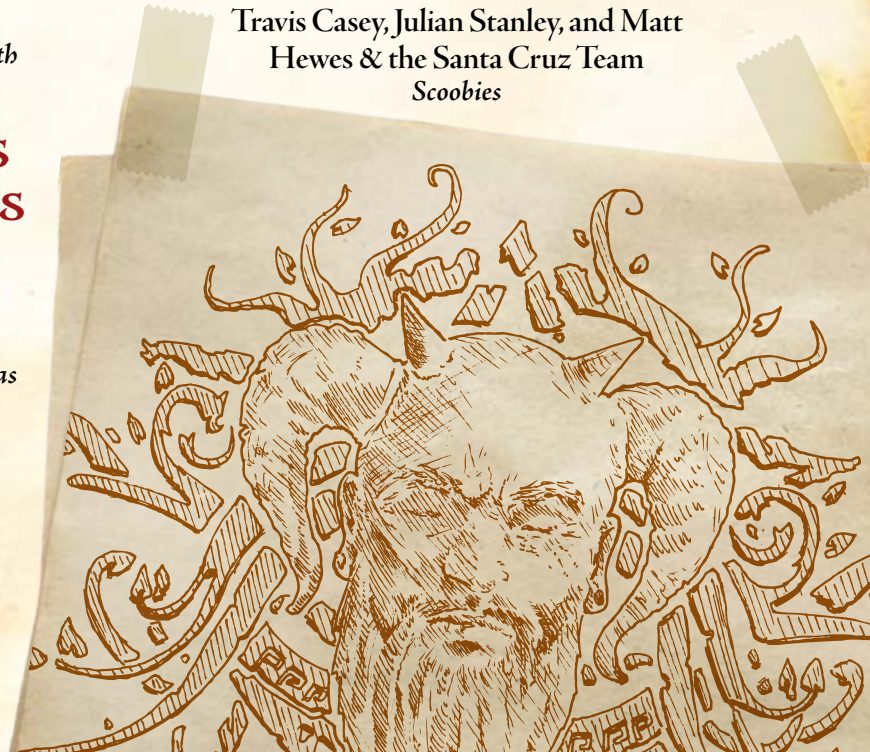


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Seriously? The Dresden Files?

Also known as the Dresdenverse.

Because Harry needs a bigger head and all.

Still not sure how I feel about this dichotomy.

What do you mean?

Real people and their problems being used as fodder for play pretend... just seems a little exploitative.

It's important to get the information out there, and we had to conceal it somehow. This seemed as good a choice as any.

If only real life were so easy.

Tell me about it. Though I'm getting a little tired of things changing, right about now.

Uh, Mortimer Lindquist is not a part of the Paranet, last I checked.

Maybe not. But he did, in fact, tell me something about ghosts last time I saw him at Mac's. It's in Goes Bump: Addendum, page "Ghosts (update)" on page 284.

Also...werehamsters?

Bob said they were real. Don't ask me.



Welcome to the Paranet

This is The Paranet Papers, our collection of additional information based on our best intel and current events in the world of The Dresden Files. It's intended as a companion to our prior efforts, Your Story and Our World.

Remember—while the information presented here is based on the reports we're receiving from the Paranet, your campaign world may look totally different. If something doesn't work for you, change it, leave it out, whatever it takes to make your game the best it can be.

The Paranet in Your Game

As with any organization you might include in your game, you should express your ties to the Paranet in one or more of your aspects. These ties can be as distant or as personal as you like, from a high concept like Local Paranet Den Mother or a trouble of Hounded by Paranetters to an aspect that goes the extra mile to distance yourself from them, such as Paranetters Get What's Coming to Them. Of course, the more complicated and dramatic your relationship to the Paranet, the better your chances of that aspect getting you fate points when that connection comes up during the game.

Once you've established this tie, you can use the Paranet to justify the use of any of your skills. You'll probably use Contacts most often, but you could also use the Paranet to justify Lore ("Old Mort Lindquist told me something about ghosts last time I saw him at Mac's.") or Resources ("Evil Stevie said I could borrow his motorcycle to hunt that werehamster, as long as I bring it back with a full tank.").

Finally, your group may decide during city creation that the Paranet has a significant presence among the supernaturally inclined groups in your city. In that case, the Paranet might even have its own location—say, a local headquarters—with a theme or a threat, depending on what kind of impact you want them to have. Remember to give the Paranet a face to personalize how your PCs interact with the organization.

Using the Paranet Papers

This book is a supplement, which means you really need to pair it with Your Story and Our World. Page references to those books begin with YS and OW, so YS83 is page 83 in Your Story and OW114 refers to page 114 in Our World.

The first half of the book is a "world tour" of sorts, settings which we explore in detail like we did Baltimore in Your Story. They're fully playable as-is, or you can hack and steal from them as you please.

Three of them are important flashpoints we've gotten good reports on—Las Vegas, South America, and the Florida Everglades. Each of these places has been impacted by the events in Harry's last major case, which we're calling Changes, giving us the chance to show you just how far-reaching those events were.

One of them is Novgorod in Russia, during the Russian Revolution. We wanted to provide an example of a historical game and give you some good information about how the supernatural and mortal worlds can intertwine, how they've shaped our history and been shaped by our history.

Finally, we have a chapter that isn't necessarily a setting in and of itself, but is about all the ways *between* other settings, about traveling and the kinds of things you can run into on the road. That's also where we reveal some choice info about the Nevernever—the ultimate "way between," as it were.

The second half of the book is an addendum to Our World. It contains updates and new characters from Harry's more recent casefiles (and some older ones we just hadn't gotten to until now), as well as some new rules to accompany what we've learned, especially as it applies to magic. Also, our own time playing the game guided us to a few things we thought it'd be helpful to mention. Before you ask—no, we didn't play as ourselves.

That is true, but I've heard rumors that some of the early copies of the manuscript found their way to Mac's, where a group of minor talents regularly act out the adventures of Harry Dresden and company.

See, this is an example of what I was talking about earlier. That weird dichotomy.

In fact, Karrin, you're one of the most popular characters.

What? What do they... Never mind. I actually don't want to know.

In other words, a list of places to Not Ever Go.

I maintain that Vegas is fun.

"Changes"? Talk about an understatement.

Yeah, well, I just felt lucky to even find his notes on that casefile. I didn't bother with the whole naming convention thing.



Careful here, Will. This may be a slippery slope, not to mention potentially misleading. Our intel is pretty scarce.

I did have some help...

Lots of people out there are curious about the Nevernever. I think it's only fair that we try to share what we know.

Harry always tells me that you can't possibly fathom what the Nevernever is.

Harry wasn't around to tell me that. So I did the best I could.

Keeping Up With The Dresden Files

The addendums in this book cover the following casefiles:

- "Day Off"
- "The Warrior"
- "Last Call"
- "Even Hand"
- "Love Hurts"
- Turn Coat
- Changes
- "Aftermath"

Thanks for letting me include this info in the book, Karrin. I tried to keep the more personal observations from your account out of it.

[redacted]

I appreciate that.

LAS VEGAS
SINS AND SECOND CHANCES

Finally finished transcribing this. Someone mailed it anonymously to a Paranet member in Los Angeles. The writer, this Herbert guy, wrote on a bunch of random sheets of paper—some notebook paper, some napkins, some post-its. All crazy scrawls and chicken scratch, lots of weird stuff in the margins. I cleaned it up as best I could. Crazy stuff in here—I think we need to seriously consider sending a team out to investigate this guy and his claims.

WHO ARE WE SUPPOSED TO SPARE FOR THAT? WE'RE HAVING ENOUGH PROBLEMS WITH CHICAGO.

If it's any consolation, I can take your notes to the annual medical examiners' conference and see what sticks. The last one I went to was at the Bellagio, and it was a blast.

If you follow up on any of this stuff, you probably won't have a lot of fun. Rather the opposite.

Las Vegas, Nevada

I cannot tell you about my city without telling you about myself. My story is the city's story. My blood flows through me like silver and gold flow through Las Vegas—pooling in chips at a table, meandering in the veins and arteries of commerce, fueling the machinery of dreams.

My name is Herbert C. Plainfield. I was once an accounts receivable clerk at ShuffleMaestro, Inc., a company that manufactures those automatic shuffling machines that prevent your card counting from working at any major casino. Now...I don't know what I am.

My wife of seven "lucky" years left me a few weeks ago, proof that there is more magic in what we believe about a number than in the number itself. Except for phi.

Fortunately, anticipating this occurrence won me a rather large sum of money in the office pool. Yes, we had been betting on whether or not I'd get divorced. I could call it a matter of odds, but the truth is that I cheated—our mailman, George, had carelessly left his hat on the coat rack.

The money gave me little consolation from the solitude. In Vegas, however, you don't take an empty victory lying down when you can leverage it into a larger, emptier victory. Thus, I found myself living an ancient Vegas cliché—bleeding chips at a hold 'em game in the Golden Nugget, and after those were gone, bleeding credit and anything else I could put up of value, pushing against the inevitable weight of that empty house awaiting me.

When there was no more blood left, the Dragon came.

He approached with speed but was not rushed, his immaculate pinstripe suit seeming to raise the class of the place just by being there.

I thought he was a hallucination until he sat, pushed a pile of chips my way, and matched with a stack of his own. I asked him what I owed him.

"I am also pushing against inevitabilities," he said. "Give me time, and I shall consider us more than equal."

"I might lose," I told him.

"You might not," he replied.

He was right. Sloppy, jack-high straight flush on the river kind of right, but right nonetheless. He stared at me for a long while, then reached over to reclaim the mountain of chips.

I caught his arm. Our eyes met. I reflected on how fitting it would be to die gambling, the way I had lived.

Then he gave me a wan smile and held up a briefcase in his other hand. An exchange. I let him go, snatching the briefcase and scrambling to my feet.

"In four hours, open it," he said. "You may find something with which to fill your house. And, for what it is worth, I am sorry." Then he left.

I don't know why, but I did as he asked. Timed it and everything.

Inside the briefcase, I saw nothing but a pinpoint of light. It grew, engulfed me. And then I *saw*. And then I *knew*.

The Dragon was already dead, and I have been cursed.

Unlike him, though, I will not keep the secret. I'm going to show you what he has left behind, before the rest of us die, too.

Karrin, did you skiptrace this guy?

TRIED TO. I VERIFIED HE REALLY WAS EMPLOYED AT SHUFFLEMAESTRO, INC., BUT THE REST OF THE PAPER TRAIL IS GONE. NO CREDIT HISTORY, NO DRIVER'S LICENSE, ETC. DON'T KNOW WHAT TO TELL YOU.

Damn. Think someone "erased him" for finding out too much?

Or he chose to disappear. Or it's a big prank. It is Vegas, after all.

THAT'S PRETTY CRYPTIC. ANY IDEA WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED?

Not really, no. Taken at face value, it looks like he got some kind of real-time, supernaturally prescient info-dump straight into his mind.

Maybe a variation of intellectus?

Your guess is as good as mine. Some of this stuff is oddly specific. Some of it seems like bullshit. I can't tell one from the other.



The Stereotype, For Better and Worse

You pick up a cocktail in a bar in a plastic souvenir glass and walk with it, wandering without consequence into the night. You amble through a parody of Earth—an Egyptian pyramid shooting light into space, a faux-medieval fairy tale castle, the Statue of Liberty, the Arc de Triomphe, Roman colonnades, palm trees, volcanoes, and enormous golden lions floating in a sea of pulsing phosphorescence.

Everywhere you look, something beckons, calling you to the Big Win—step up and try your luck, free knick-knack with every purchase, don't miss this special offer. People on the street push cards at you with a distracting slap, the naked women on them staring into the middle distance.

Club beats meld with the clinking of glass. Breasts jiggle with the passing of dollars. Alcohol pours in every color of the rainbow.

Sometimes, you might look into the spaces between the lights, but not for long, because the gazes that stare back at you are hungry and desperate. You imagine the crime and danger you've seen in cinema and television, and then return to the lights, where the truly dangerous criminals steal your money with your consent. Or you might brave those shadows, seeking something more genuinely forbidden than what the billboards encourage.

Very rarely, you achieve what the advertisements promise you and win big. More often, you leave with less than you came with and dream about the next time. If your luck is truly awful, you become a part of the city, stuck in those dark spaces, noticed only in fleeting glimpses by people who were once just like you.

Worst of all, you convince yourself that the city is responsible for the things you do. Plausible deniability. That is how we draw you back, time and again.



Man, this guy is a buzzkill.

Is he wrong?

Maybe? I go to Vegas because I genuinely like being there. I can choose not to go, and not to partake when I'm there.

Partake in what?

Bad stuff. You know.

No, I really don't.

Never mind.





The Bird's Eye View

Living here puts a different, and often dull, spin on the stories you usually hear. This information may seem tedious now, but it's actually a gift, a touch of normalcy before the plunge.

Money

Tourism has been the largest sector of the Las Vegas economy since the government legalized gambling in 1931. The city relies on being a place that you want to go, providing casinos, resort hotels, and a variety of stage entertainments that range across the entire spectrum of family-friendliness—you'll find Cirque du Soleil and you'll find strip clubs and you'll find everything between. It also does a brisk business in conventions and trade shows, with each hotel having facilities to host large corporate events.

On this backbone rest the hospitality and retail industries, filling the spaces between the larger distractions. Nearly every Strip casino has a shopping mall or a handful of good restaurants, and the city enjoys among its dubious nicknames the title of "Buffet Capital of the World."

What manufacturing and construction we do have largely exists to support these two industries, creating little else of interest—with the overhyped exception of military aerospace research and development.

The lack of diverse infrastructure has recently contributed to a sharp economic downturn, presaged by the crash of the real estate market in 2007. Tourism declined as the level of disposable income plummeted across the United States; the backlash hit Vegas like a comet, leaving some of the highest foreclosure and unemployment rates in the nation.

Climate

Las Vegas has two seasons: dry and hot. During autumn and winter, days are mild and nights are cold and brisk, very rarely bringing the miracle of rain. During spring and summer, days heat up drastically, resulting in routine highs over a hundred degrees. What other weather we have, we borrow in limited doses from California when theirs gets extreme.

Geography

The Las Vegas metropolitan area nestles in a mountain valley in Clark County; it consists of a loose collection of census-designated places (or CDPs) on unincorporated land—in other words, population centers that have proper names, but they're all under the jurisdiction of the Clark County Commission rather than having separate municipal governments.

Among these, Paradise is probably the most significant, just south of Las Vegas proper. It contains McCarran International Airport, UNLV's main campus, and most of the Las Vegas Strip. This is what you see in those establishing shots of Vegas in CSI—the Vegas in your mind's eye.

They have a deal now where you get access to, like, seven different buffets for one set price—it's pretty awesome.

How exactly is anyone supposed to eat that much?

It's the journey, Karrin, not the destination.

Guess he's not a conspiracy theorist.

There are several kinds of crazy in this world. He can't be all of them, right?



CHRIST, I HATE SAYING THIS, BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE CHICAGO BEFORE MARCONE MUSCLED HIS WAY TO THE TOP OF THE CRIMINAL FOOD CHAIN.

Or the U of C before the Alphas started patrolling. That's a better comparison, isn't it?

SURE, WILL. I LOVE HEARING HOW FOUR-FOOTED VIGILANTES WERE DOING THE CPD'S JOB.

The actual city of Las Vegas serves as the governmental seat for the region and contains older casinos that most people remember affectionately from mobster movies, with the Fremont Street Experience (page 49) standing as a gaudy testament to a bygone era. You mainly know it as the place where all the wedding chapels and divorce lawyers live. It also has one of the highest suicide rates of anywhere in the nation.

In the north, the city of North Las Vegas putters along quietly, composed of industrial parks and housing developments that now stand empty, its fate connected to that of Nellis Air Force Base.

To the west, the planned communities of Summerlin, Spring Valley, and Enterprise house most of the city's upper and middle class populations. To the east, the townships of Sunrise Manor, Winchester, and Whitney contrast them in both age and demographics.

Finally, the city of Henderson stretches out to the southeast, attempting since the 1950s to be everything that the rest of Vegas is not—a place built on good civic values that boasts a much more diverse economy and support for local arts and culture. It's succeeding in baby steps, as much as any facade can.

Crime

You might be surprised to learn that the rates of violent crime and property crime in Las Vegas rarely spike far above the national average. However, we do excel in a few other arenas.

The drug trade is alive and well, going hand in hand with tourism. Of course, we're famous for the sex trade, with the legal adult entertainments sometimes serving as gateways to illegal prostitution.

Perhaps the most grisly thing we have here is human trafficking, which remains a serious problem despite the efforts of law enforcement to combat it, for reasons that I'll get into later.

Financial crime abounds, a perennial favorite of organized crime groups, politicians, and corporations alike. Laundering, extortion, bribery, fraud, and other fun things that bad people do with money have been popular here for a long time, and they aren't going away anytime soon.

At Street Level

Conceptually, Las Vegas is really two cities.

Much of what you hear about it is true. The previous mayor was, in fact, a defense attorney for the Mob. People do snort lines of coke off of hookers' bare asses—in fact, my friend DeMonde calls that activity "Tuesday." People do come here and make millions, changing their lives in a heartbeat.

However, we want you to believe it could happen to anyone, to *you*. Our livelihood depends on you being convinced that you're going to come here and have a magical adventure, reveling in all the excesses you're not permitted in your normal life. Your fantasies are our business. And so these truths get stretched, spun into legends that we send out to you through media. Like all repeated lies, they become true often enough to sustain belief.

Everything that perpetuates this image is one Las Vegas.

The other Las Vegas, the one without the economic power to participate in the fantasy, lies behind the giant shadow cast by that image, more evident the further you get away from the Strip.

Beyond the neon lights sprawls a desert town like any other you might see in the American Southwest, struggling for its own identity. It battles fruitlessly for a share of the resources spent by corporations to charm you all, a chance to have a culture it can call its own. It has bits and pieces of cuisine, art, music, establishments, and traditions, but it has yet to make any of them dominant or lasting.



The Mortals

The population of Las Vegas is a transient one. Of course, we have tourists—a melting pot of people from all over the world who routinely pass through the city for business, pleasure, or a mélange of both. Part of the city's charm relies on the fact that it's possible to run into nearly anyone here, under circumstances that seem to make you equal.

Even among locals, it's rare that you find someone who was born here, let alone a second or third generation native. Vegas isn't a place where people have roots—most who come here followed its peculiar call and never broke free, or found a place in the tourism or entertainment machine, or migrated here to live out the embers of a dying celebrity career like Papa Elvis did.

This doesn't sit right with me. I've met a few Vegas locals, and this isn't the feeling I get from them at all. This guy sounds like he's proud of hating where he lives.

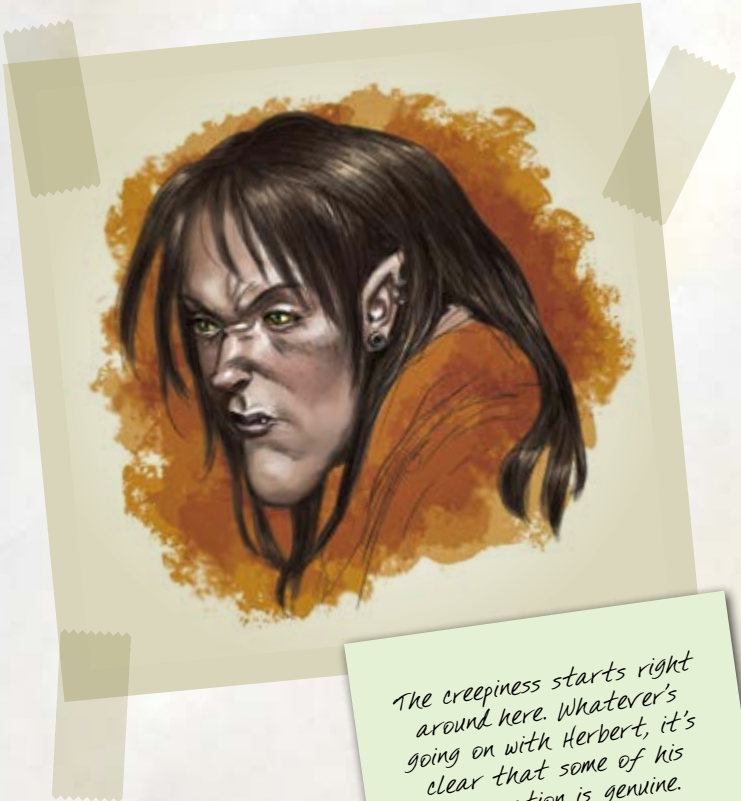
One man's opinion, Butters.

Skiptrace?

NAME AND ADDRESS CHECKS OUT.

Should we call her? Uh, warn her...or something?

DO YOU WANT TO EXPLAIN HOW WE GOT HER INFO? BECAUSE I DON'T.



The creepiness starts right around here. Whatever's going on with Herbert, it's clear that some of his information is genuine.

MIGHT BE A COVER IDENTITY— SOMEONE USING THIS STORY TO GET THE INFO OUT THERE AND AVOID PERSECUTION FOR IT.

The nature of the city has taught most of us to be suspicious of strangers, expecting that everyone you meet wants a piece of you somehow, and to avoid long-term investment in others, knowing that most aren't going to stay very long. We build communities, but they are isolated and fractured, little more than elaborate cliques. It's more likely that we speak with pride about where we came from or where we're going than where we are. We live here, but it's not home. We are perpetually passing through.

Except for Martha Alexandra Bertrand, 6767 Eagle Way. She loves it here and has never thought of leaving, not even on business.

Then we have the literal homeless, a large population—numbering in the tens of thousands—of people who live either in tent cities in the northeast part of town or in a maze of tunnels underneath the Strip (page 53). Many of these "tunnel people" create a secondary ecosystem from the Strip, feeding off its crumbs.

Scions and Supernaturals

The not-so-mortal share in the hodgepodge quality that defines our mortal denizens. Though there are plenty of supernatural beings in Vegas, they don't present a united front of interests for the most part, even among their own kind.

Most notably, because the White Council only keeps us as part of Warden Carlos Ramirez's larger jurisdiction (and if you're reading this, Charlie, I wrote you a letter in my notes on the White Council), Vegas has a large, diverse population of independent magical practitioners. Many of these people are far beyond your garden-variety minor talent—I'm likely going to cause a few ripples by naming some of the most powerful among them below.

For everyone else, the situation has grown extremely complicated. Most of our current supernatural population came to the city because they saw an opportunity for self-aggrandizement, but they've gotten caught up in a fractious ecosystem of competing interests.

Up until last week, this ecosystem was in a kind of delicate balance, harmonized by the desperate necessity of the Dragon.

Now he is dead.

Tomorrow, a Shitstorm

In his wake, the city teeters on a knife point, waiting to see who will be skewered first by the fall. The Dragon's demise has brought the weight of history crashing down upon us.

Here's an overview.



A Brief History of Sin

Let's get the big one out of the way first: there's a reason we call this place Sin City. It's not just a marketing ploy. The city literally feeds on the energy of corruption, a psychic vampire miles and miles across. Every bad thing everyone does—from the smallest of white lies to the most heinous and dehumanizing of crimes—works in some small part to sate its hunger.

As bad as that sounds, it's actually the lesser of evils. Without that corruptive energy, Vegas would no longer be able to serve its actual purpose, sealing away something even worse underneath Nevada, stirring in the depths.

I don't know exactly what that is. It could be an entity, or simply a point of contact with some horrible Beyond. I do know that the last time it broke through, it scarred Death Valley into the very crust of the Earth. The gate, for lack of a better term, was sealed between its world and ours sometime in pre-history, perhaps by powerful shamans in the Anasazi or their ancestors.

I only know that, whoever it was, they also summoned something to deal with the problem and keep the seal intact, a demon in every sense of the word. It demanded a high price for its service—the continual direction of corruptive power right into its black heart for eternity. There has always been one person, the demon's contact with the mortal world, responsible for making sure this happens.

On March 17, 1905, the demon passed this mantle to a noble of the Red Court, who afterward answered only to "the Dragon." The Dragon proved equal to the challenge, using the Court's finances and guiding the right people to build Las Vegas up. It started with Block 16 and the "dude ranches," and eventually became the sprawling thing you now know, with the Red Court or their proxies propping up much of the financial might necessary to make it function.

It hasn't all been smooth sailing. Once the Dragon realized what he had gotten himself into, he tried to break free from the demon's grip, leading to all-out war. It's no coincidence that the United States government chose the Las Vegas Aerial Gunnery School as a nuclear test site. Those craters in the ground are the scars of their battle.

In the end, the Dragon lost. The heady cost of his struggle forced him to diversify; soon, other supernatural beings came to answer the call of Vegas, seeing prime opportunities to be had. Vegas was new, an untapped source of energy, food, slaves, favors, debts, and bargains—the grease on the wheels of the empowered world.

The Dragon shaped them until they unwittingly fed the city, allowing each faction to pursue their interests to a point, but curbing anyone who threatened to curtail the city's growth—no people, no more sin. He had balanced the equation. The demon was satisfied.

Then someone killed the Dragon, along with the rest of his kind. I see a name—Harry Dresden, awash in sin and blood.

Mr. Dresden, if you're out there, you have very likely doomed this place.

Didn't one of the casefiles say something about Morgan dropping a nuke on a skinwalker? I wonder why he fled to Nevada in the first place?

Guess now we'll never know.

Butters, does Bob know anything about this?

Nope. If all this is true, no one's ever heard of it before now.

If someone sent this just to mess with us, I'm going to be pissed.

Me, too. But I don't know how Herbert could know any of this stuff. Why do you think I want to send a team out there?

The Dragon's Mantle

The saying goes that nature abhors a vacuum. Supernature, it seems, is the same way. Every player of significance in the city, as well as a handful of nobodies who are in the know, compete over the vast labyrinth of resources and influence the Dragon left behind. He had every kind of wealth this existence has to offer—staggering piles of cash, the best information network in the city, political influence among mortals and immortals alike, and terrible supernatural power far in excess of his would-be peers.

The problem is, I'm the only one besides you who knows that the Dragon's mantle comes with a whole lot more than anyone bargained for. Some have guessed that he had to deal with a demon or spirit for his magical might, given that the Faustian path is not unusual in those circles. But they think he's more like the immortals' version of Bugsy Siegel. The reality is much worse than anyone suspects.

The demon has not yet approached any new candidates. After the Dragon's death, it's keeping a low profile, letting the fate of the seal remain uncertain. I'm not sure why. Maybe it's still evaluating the field, trying to ensure the next candidate will be worthy to hold the Dragon's legacy. Maybe it's expending all its power just holding the seal together. Maybe, after all these millennia, it's just tired and wants out.

That's weird. I was, in fact, thinking that.

I know what you're thinking. STOP THAT. I'm not interested. I have enough problems already. These things I know... I hurt now, inside. I can't remember my mother's name. I'm not strong enough. I would fail the city.

Honestly, I fear that no one here is worthy.

Meet the Players

Here are some of the factions and organizations you'll find in Vegas.

The Chip Leaders

These are the people at the top of the proverbial food chain.

The White Court: They would probably be the most powerful faction in the city, if not for their terrible infighting. The problem is, most of the White Court vamps we ended up with are here because they couldn't get ahead in their respective Houses. I see names—mostly Skavis, but there are handfuls of Malvoras, Raiths, Lagios (Lagioii?), and so on. They band together against external threats, but keep trying to undermine each other.

Mostly, their role in the Dragon's grand scheme was to act as street-level operators for the drug trade, as well as the casino and ultralounge industry. They're the middle management to the Red Court's CEOs—the people running the places you want to go, making sure authorities look the other way, and pocketing their share of the Red Court's investments in both money and people.

It took some bloodshed to form the symbiotic relationship—the first twenty years were touch and go, until an enterprising White Court vampire ended it by selling out all the power players in his own clan to cement the Red Court's dominance. Those who were betrayed then drove him from the city with extreme prejudice, and I cannot see what became of him.



Two vampire courts, working in collusion. I don't know if I can believe that. Wait, no... Really, it's that I don't **WANT** to believe it.

This may be a longshot, but I wonder if that guy has any connection to "The Colonel" in the Everglades dossier you have, Will. White Court vampire, knows how to run a casino, timeline fits... Just a thought.



They normally eat well, too, by the way. They make sure that, more often than not, the dream of Vegas fails you. The more you hope, the sweeter you taste when you lose yourself among your fantasies, when you fall either to the vagaries of fortune or your own self-destructive tendencies. When that doesn't work, they use the constant stream of smuggled people to satisfy their appetites.

Right now they're in trouble. With the Red Court suddenly gone, a lot of their financial infrastructure has been thrown into chaos. Money isn't going where it's supposed to, business has dried up, and feeding isn't as reliable. Some of them have lost interest in maintaining a civil veneer and are actively hunting in the streets—their trouble is now our trouble.

The individual getting things right most often is a powerful Skavis named Corin, or "Big Corey" (page 26) to his business associates. An advertising and promotions executive in charge of a powerful marketing company front, he's quickly building an infrastructure around himself. I sense he'll make a major play soon.

The White Court's problem is impulse control. Maybe they have a worthy candidate among them, yes, but can they exercise the necessary restraint to push things along once they're in power? Would they share food with the demon when the source of their sustenance is so similar, so overlapping? I have my doubts.

The Followers of Ishtar: Yes, that Ishtar. She's taken a personal interest in Vegas, because things happen here that she cannot abide. Lack of regulation makes the sex trade here incredibly dangerous for women and men. Human trafficking brings more and more innocent victims to the city beyond the reach of mortal law. The average age for those forced into prostitution is thirteen, and some—especially if they're shipped here from a foreign country—get sold into honest-to-G-d sex slavery... sorry, that's honest to G-d. G-d. G-d. G-D G-D G-D—uh. Weird.

Anyway, the Followers of Ishtar have been here a while, trying to curtail all that. They battle in every arena open to them—political, financial, physical, and magical. They actually do get their hands dirty, sending covert packs around the city to wreak Batman-style havoc on their often hapless enemies. They've clashed with the White Court on several occasions.

Ishtar maintains no temple, but the closest thing to it is a Strip nightclub called the Hanging Garden (page 48). It caters to a number of private donors attracted to their cause by unknown, probably dubious, means.

Their leader's name is Arlene Ghorbani (page 28). She came to the United States from Iran and has sent several would-be assassins home in Ziploc bags. Literally. In the mail.

The catch? Vegas depends on the Followers of Ishtar as a balancing factor, not as a leading power. The Dragon fed them selective intelligence, giving them some victories but keeping them in the dark about the full scope of things. Having lost that information, they seethe, and like the White Court, they have been getting more desperate and overt in pursuit of their goals.

If they win, everything destabilizes. Human trafficking stops or gets severely curtailed, which means the vampires and the demon both starve, and all the clientele who come to the city to trade in people get really angry. A legitimized sex trade also puts the demon out, because once such a large source of transgression disappears, the city weakens.

Then the seal fails. Then, Death Valley 2: Death Continent.

So, yeah—on the original, the middle letter in "God" was burned off the page. I also found some blood nearby.

Blood? Like, smeared?

No, more like drops, like maybe he had a nosebleed while writing.

Damn.

Woman after your own heart, Ms. Murphy?

Killing in self-defense is one thing. The rest of it is a bit too... demonstrative.

So, people need to be sold into sex slavery to keep the city alive? Fuck that



Without that seal, I bet it'd be super easy to use the Strip to get to different places on earth through the Nevernever. There's a faux Egypt, a faux New York, and so on...

The Wyldfae: Las Vegas has been hard on the two Faerie Courts, leaving the Wyldfae more powerful here than almost any other city in the world. The demon's seal hardens the barriers between here and Faerie, which makes regular travel difficult.

As the original oasis that put Vegas on the map got used up, Summer's influence over the area waned. Only a small contingent remains, guarding the one portal into a distant corner of their lands at the Springs Preserve (page 52). Summer sees this place like the mortal military sees Antarctica—if you're sent here, you messed up big or pissed off the wrong higher-up.

Despite the desert's entropy, Winter hasn't been able to gain a foothold either. The demon's bargain with the Dragon has somehow prevented the Unseelie Accords from being binding in this valley. Also, against everyone's expectations, Vegas has seen a steady population growth since its inception.

Um... yikes.

There's just enough decay to keep Summer out and just enough fecundity to keep Winter out, as the demon prefers. Thus, the Wyldfae have always found it a fine place to live, from the busybodying Wee Folk to powerful, rogue spirits of nature.

Their crowning achievement is Wanderland (page 54), the territory of a powerful independent goblin who goes by the name of Fortunato (page 30). This place is the chief reason why the dream of Vegas still comes true, the Yang to the White Court's Yin. Wanderland is not a place, so much as it is a...thinness between here and Faerie, an embodiment of the city's promise. It shifts between every casino in Vegas, and it moves like quicksilver, impossible to pin down. You can also get to Faerie and back this way, but to do so, you have to be lucky enough to find it.

Of all the factions, the Wyldfae would probably spiral Vegas into the ground the quickest, if they had the dragon's mantle. They answer to nothing beyond their intrinsic natures. They wouldn't have the flexibility to maintain the necessary balance of hope against despair, of lust against fulfillment, that the seal needs. Compromise is simply not a part of what they are.

So every potential solution sucks, basically. Why do people live there again?

Because it's fun?

Must be the letter Herbert mentioned earlier. Did this actually happen?

I checked with Ramirez. Yeah, it did. He also told me that, in general, the White Council stays out of the city because of its pervasive sense of wrongness.

If Ramirez could accidentally cause that much damage, it implies that the supernatural control over Vegas is kind of fragile. If a single White Council wizard can topple dominoes, maybe two or three Paranetters can do the same.

Listen to you, Waldo. Always the optimist.

The Wild Cards

Some of the people in the city have not yet made their role in the great game known, but they're poised to make a significant impact.

The White Council: Warden Ramirez, the denizens of Las Vegas humbly request that you please never set foot in the city again. That entropomancer ring you busted worked for a major casino holdings company. Its demise led to the closing and demolition of the Stardust and the loss of thousands of jobs. You don't understand how things work here. Stay away. Thank you.

Other Magical Practitioners: Somewhere among the mass of these people, someone powerful waits for his or her moment in the sun. As a major void in the White Council's otherwise highly prejudiced system of enforcement, the city collects minor talents and sorcerers like I once collected action figures—randomly and without restraint. Though some have gathered into minor covens, none of them has yet made a significant impact on the city. Most, in fact, seem content to avoid persecution or detection.

However, given that most of them retain the flexibility of thought and choice so valued in the mortal mind, spellcasters are uniquely capable among supernatural beings of making sudden, individual leaps in power and stature. The Dragon monitored several of the most powerful wizard-types and compiled a list of suspects likely to be at the center of shit hitting the fan.

In no particular order, they are:

- Orpheus, illusionist and somniomancer (page 34)
- Silk, psychomancer and proprietor of Club Xanadu (page 33)
- Alexander Harrowmont, bibliomancer and Chief Archivist at UNLV (page 35)
- Moira and the members of Cirque du Bizarre, who perform among the entertainers on the Fremont Street Experience (page 36)



Red Court flunkies: Those who worked for the Red Court aren't notably organized, but something occurs to me that you should consider. The Red Court kept people in line by addicting their servitors to their narcotic saliva. In some instances, they took this to religious extremes, building up dark street cults and gangs around the sensations only they could provide, using the junkies as disposable muscle.

Now that they're gone, there's no way for these people to get their fix. So there's a scattered population—insinuated into every stratum of society as the Red Court's business required—who battle the worst kind of physical and psychological withdrawal imaginable.

I can't name them all for you. But I can feel them. The city shudders with their need. Soon, they will act on it, and the consequences will be dire for anyone caught in the way.

The Mafia: Though the Italian Mafia's influence has waned significantly since the Siegel days, some of the older Vegas families still retain extensive financial networks and participate in local crime, mostly of the white-collar variety.

More importantly, certain members of the Mob are in the know about supernaturals. They maintain and fund a very secretive (until right now, that is) contract hit squad, the Uccisori della Ombra, AKA the Shadow Killers. Their leader, Thomas Anthony "Little Tommy" Fieracelli (page 44), believes that the soul of the city has anointed him as its protector, and it's true that he has some kind of mysterious, supernatural force granting him power.

IF THIS IS FOR REAL, I BET SOMEONE REALLY WANTS THIS GUY DEAD FOR OUTING ALL THEIR SECRETS.

Maybe the Dragon's last gift gave him other mojo we don't know about. He doesn't seem too concerned with the danger he's courting.

Maybe he's so far gone, he doesn't care.

Though they only work for hire at the moment, they might decide to start choosing targets of opportunity if the situation in the city becomes extreme.

LVPD Special Vices Squad, AKA The Hard Way Squad: A small group in the police force have created an "off the books" department as a response to rampant corruption in the city's political infrastructure. It's a common occurrence for some investigations to ground out in a series of procedural errors and for evidence to go missing, all the better to protect the interests of politically connected criminals. The Hard Way Squad might be the city's only enforcers of true justice. They receive no formal support from the department, and they live in constant danger of being undone by the same legal system they've sworn to uphold.

Their initial goal was to curtail the spread of human trafficking operations in the city, making it likely the Ishtarians had something to do with their founding and initial successes. The Red Court used to be very good at minimizing their impact. Recently, they had their first encounter with the supernatural. It did not break their resolve.

I think things will not end well for them.



Oh, that's apropos for Vegas.

Is it? I don't gamble, so I have no idea.

The hard way bet means you're gambling on the possibility of someone rolling a particular number as doubles—two threes, two fours, etc.—before they roll that number any other way or roll a seven. It's a bet in craps. The chance you'll land that bet is miniscule, but it's one of the most profitable bets at the craps table.

HIGH RISK, FOR HIGH POTENTIAL REWARD. I CAN SEE WHY THE NAME FITS.

The Battleground

All these competing interests coalesce around a few key conflicts.

The Fate of the Demon

At some point, the demon will have to play its hand. Even if it stays quiet, it cannot remain hidden for long. Everyone wants to know what was behind the Dragon's control; as people gradually discover where he kept his safehouses and sanctums, there will be territorial battles to control them and learn their secrets.

Maybe this is just as the demon wants it, quietly tempting potential candidates to prove themselves through "natural" selection. Maybe the sudden upsurge in points of tension is part of its design, or perhaps it's a side effect of the careful arrangement it's been sitting on for so long being thrown into sudden disarray.

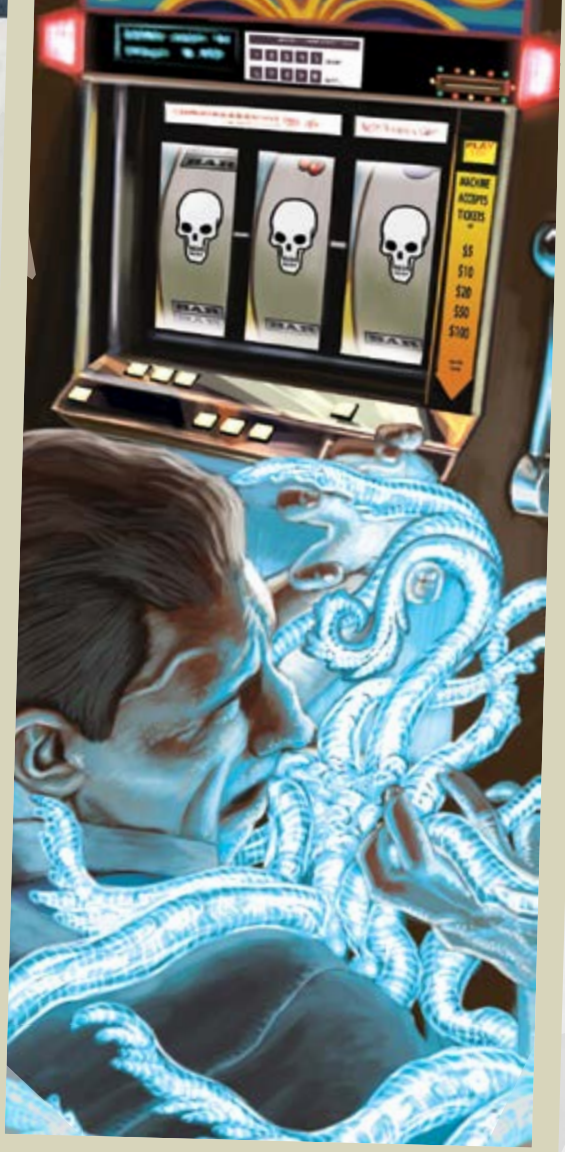
The worst part is, there's no guarantee anyone will take the deal once they find out what's involved. Making a straight-up enemy of the demon would be the worst possible thing that could happen to Vegas—it could only end in mutually assured destruction.

The Trade of Flesh

There's a part of me that wishes for the power to wave my hand and wipe away any notion that the trade of human beings helped to build this city. It's a perversion of everything I have ever valued, a cancerous notion, rotting all it touches. I will never again see the neon without that shadow behind it, hear a slot machine chime without the sound of wailing underneath.

But it's also the chief thing holding the supernatural side of our economy afloat. It brings a morose stability that I cannot deny. The Red Court loved its blood slaves, and trafficking helped provide a ready supply. It was their chief industry in the city, allowing them to join the rest of our inhabitants in a common bond of complicity.

Almost everyone is a client, mortal and immortal alike. Vampires feed on mortal blood or mortal passions. Necromancers and other dark wizards make magic from the reaping of bodies and souls. Pimps need to fill out the rank and file. The wealthy indulge sick fantasies, heady with the power of the almighty dollar. People from all over the world come here to do the same twisted business, ensuring the city retains its place of prominence.



The machine was so well organized, in fact, that in the wake of the Red Court's demise, it just...keeps going, operating on momentum. Middlemen continue their deliveries, shipments pile in by truck or by plane, and clients continue to come with money and favors.

But the cracks are starting to show. Here and there, a shipment turns up missing. The wrong people get delivered to the wrong place. Payments don't match up to agreements. Marching orders show up incomplete—maybe the middleman gets the cash, but then doesn't know where to take it.

Soon, everyone will figure out that the head's been cut off, and then there's no telling what will happen. The Ishtarians will no doubt see it as their day in the sun and gear up for battle. Several others will scramble to assert control over the remnants and stabilize the market, clashing as they run into one another. Angry clients will turn guns and spells toward whoever might appear to be responsible.

And the victims will be right in the middle, more vulnerable than they've ever been.

Someone really needs to get down there and do something about this. It's sick. You see what I mean? Not *us*, Will. Just...someone.



Wanderland Under Siege

As stated before, the Wyldfae have long made sure that the dream of Vegas remains alive. Their pocket dimension, Wanderland (page 54), has been a thorn in the side of the vampires for a long time, fighting an ideological battle. For every person taken by the vampire-controlled casinos and forced into utter despair, another gets pulled back from the brink by meandering into Wanderland and finding a ray of hope.

This is yet another set of checks and balances that has kept the demon's seal strong over the years—the enchantment promised by Wanderland brings people back to the city time and again, a quiet magic that...

I see now, it's enforced by the collective weight of mortal belief. Strange—for all the powerful entities here, the strongest magic in the valley is ours. Without us and Wanderland, the vampires' predations would eventually create scarcity, as their excesses surpassed the reach of their marketing. Huh.

With the Dragon gone, Wanderland is in danger. Big Corey (page 26) knows that taking control of Wanderland could supernaturally amplify his efforts, allowing him to perfect the deceit of the Strip. The Winter Fae see Wanderland as their best chance to gain a significant foothold in the city; they've sent a Sidhe Lord that locals only refer to as "the Ice Queen" (page 32) to operate on their behalf.

Both of them are too short-sighted to understand that losing Wanderland means losing the dream. Fortunato (page 30), the proprietor, does everything he can to keep things stable, but he's fighting a cold war on two fronts. He has little time left.

Tip even one domino, the whole thing falls. Everyone needs everyone. The Dragon was kind of a genius.

EXCEPT FOR THE WHOLE PART ABOUT NEGLECTING TO MAKE SOMETHING THAT COULD SURVIVE AFTER HIS DEATH.

University Blues

The University of Nevada Las Vegas (page 50), known better as UNLV, has long been a source for dynamic, active local culture. Though the Strip just down the street blunts UNLV's impact on the city as a whole, the blocks immediately surrounding the campus thrum to the pulse of student life. Small, privately owned business tends to succeed around campus, and local art and music thrive at the various dive bars and coffeehouses students tend to frequent.

In essence, it's the human soul of Vegas, and for a long time it's avoided the predations of supernatural attention, going unnoticed under the easy gravity of the Strip and Fremont Street. In sales terms, UNLV is a cold market—why bother with the effort when there are plenty of people willing to give up their souls just down the street?

That's all about to change. The economic confusion the city's been under has hurt tourism and cut down on the easy prey. The Dragon's passing creates a momentum for change, and attention turns to this fresh, untouched population of mortals. Potential recruits for the Ishtarian cause, a new feeding channel for the White Court, a way for Summer to tap into a real source of growth—the souls at UNLV represent prime pickings.

Mentioned this to Georgia. We both think UNLV needs a pack of Alphas.

DOWN, BOY.

Dog jokes? Really?

Addictions and Feeding Frenzies

The streets of Vegas are starting to become even more dangerous than usual—miserable White Court vampires have been ejected from the food chain by their more powerful brethren, and addicts hopelessly dependent on the Red Court's saliva will do anything for another fix. The Lucky Penny Casino (page 48) has always been a haven for the former, but the addition of the latter means that battles for territory are inevitable.

This also puts one population of the city in particular danger—the tunnel people. The tunnels under the Strip (page 53) have been



So, unlike Darian (see **NEVERMORE/BALTIMORE** in **YOUR STORY**), Herbert obviously didn't know we were going to use his document as part of a game supplement. I feel obligated to make some of this stuff playable, if only to give myself some emotional distance from the content. Here goes.

Good call, Will—thanks for this. I've wanted to talk game stuff for a while now and was trying to find an appropriate spot for that.

Might as well, from here on out. It's better than depressing the hell out of ourselves.

Look on the bright side: it might all be a hoax after all.

YOU TWO ARE ABOUT TO LOSE ME IN NERD-LAND AGAIN, AREN'T YOU?

a home for the homeless since their original construction, as well as a known haven for drug addicts too far gone to claim a place in society. A number of minor talents and magical practitioners also number among the tunnel people, seeking refuge in the deep when their powers alienate them from the mortal world.

Desperation is bound to send some of these vampiric cast-offs their way. Blood will follow.

Hello Summer, Hello Winter

Last but not least, the eternal conflict between the Fae Courts has the potential to blossom like never before. Winter moves to gain power in the city by taking control of Wanderland or finding some other way to bind Vegas under the Accords. Summer sees potential in UNLV and holds on to the few patches of nature in the valley with a vengeance. When one of them makes significant gains, the other will make a gain that mirrors it, as fits their cosmic balance. A shift of power to the Fae Courts would create a powerful new interest group that would shake up everyone else in the city.

Themes and Threats

Theme: City of Sin

Aspect: Nobody Escapes Temptation

The otherworldly feeling you get in Las Vegas isn't just excitement or anticipation. There's an underlying, supernatural reality to it. The City of Sin promises the fulfillment of your every desire, but always at a price. This isn't some blatant contract to trade your soul for the Hope Diamond or true love. In fact, you're not even likely to notice you're being made an offer—a slot machine here, a flier for a strip club there, or any other easy win. You're bombarded with fifty offers at a time, blinded to the potential fine print. And there's always a next offer.

The demon Herbert keeps talking about is an obvious source of this coercion. If we take his word for it, the demon was there long before Las Vegas existed and specifically feeds off the sin inside the city. It works through intermediaries like the Dragon to maximize corruption, but it also seems to permeate the city with



its presence, tailoring its temptations; a huge win at the craps tables for the high-roller, another hit for the addict living in the tunnels.

But then again, can we take Herbert at his word? If the demon has guarded the gate for a millennium or more, why is it just in the last hundred and fifty or so years that Las Vegas came to be? There's no evidence of a prior "Sin City," so how was the demon feeding *before* Las Vegas? Maybe the demon is just taking advantage of a good thing, feeding off all the sin that free-willed humans bring to the city. Maybe the Dragon's arrival was the real catalyst here—in his hubris, he may have believed that if he could control the demon inside him, he could control the demon of Death Valley.

Regardless of its source, the City of Sin is full of temptations tailored to your every desire—sex, money, fame, even doing good. You can't walk down the street without rolling the dice.

You know, this is a really good question. Wouldn't the demon have needed some kind of nexus of corruption to feed on way before Vegas, if it was stuck there?

Well, strictly speaking, there's no evidence that it's stuck there. History and mythology are pretty full of "sin cities"—look at Sodom and Gomorrah, ancient Babylon, Rome, etc., etc. Could be that this demon gets around, and Vegas is just the preferred playpen right now.

That seems pretty convenient to me, blaming it all on one entity. Although, if I were a demon, I'd probably want you to believe I was that powerful.



One man's intractable problem is another man's PC group being just the right people to take care of things.

Amen.

Theme: Big Risks, Big Rewards

Aspect: All In, or Not at All

On the other hand, there's real opportunity in Las Vegas—it's also called the Land of Second Chances. There's the sin, sure, but there's also the hope for a better life. Las Vegas is the kind of place where your fortunes can change in a flash, where a nobody like Herbert Plainfield can bump into a figure like the Dragon and speak to him on seemingly even ground.

The excitement of that opportunity manifests all over the city. The Red Court figured out they could traffic human lives in the city without getting caught and they created a huge business out of it. While that's horrible, the Followers of Ishtar also realized they could rise up and fight against a seemingly invincible enemy. Wanderland exists as a supernatural anchor for the dream of better things.

To win those rewards, though, it seems you have to take big risks. You can't hedge your bets in Las Vegas—you have to "go all in." Do any less and the city won't notice you. Betting millions doesn't count when you've got millions to lose. The bets the city cares about are the last few bucks in your pocket that separate you from homelessness, or the raid on a vampire den that your entire cadre goes on, knowing it could be a trap that gets you all killed.

The potential for that second chance gives hope to the people of Vegas. Sure, today you're a nobody, but tomorrow you may be on top of the world. The city has circus performers, actors, student activists, and aspiring wizards who all believe that if they put everything on the line, they just might be the one to make it big.

Threat: Chaos in the Dragon's Wake

Aspect: Unavoidable Collateral Damage

The situation that the Dragon's death left behind seems to have created an intractable problem for the city. The demon has Vegas held hostage, making outside intervention pretty much impossible—if anyone came in with force, it could drop the seal and everything would literally go straight to Hell. It's powerful enough to have kept the city free from the influence of Mab and the Unseelie Accords, and has apparently held the gate despite years of nuclear bombardment in the 50s.

However, the real danger in Las Vegas now isn't the demon, or even the gate—it's what the residents choose to do now that the Dragon's gone. There are no good solutions to this vacuum of sin, but the locals have figured out plenty of bad ones.

The Dragon used to keep things under a perverse kind of control. Accepting that a certain amount of in-fighting was necessary, he did a good job of providing an adequate supply of sin to the demon without letting the fight break out into the streets. Now that the head has been cut off the beast, there's no telling how ugly it's going to get; the worst part is that the victims of these fights are the everyday people being swindled, sold, and sometimes slaughtered as part of the factions' disputes.

The Followers of Ishtar, for example, may see the Red Court's end as their day in the sun, but all the hapless addicts who now can't find a fix for their cravings will tell a different story, and the Ishtarians don't seem inclined to do anything for them. The White Court, who once had feeding limits under their Dragon-appointed Red Court bosses, now take to the streets with impunity.

It's also worth noting that the locals don't want any more competition for who's going to control the city. Vegas has operated under its own system, its own rules, for so long that any outsider will only multiply the potential chaos. Look at the references to Ramirez. He comes in and does what amounts to a standard police action for the Wardens, and part of the economy crumbles. And if the outside threat is big enough to cause some of the native factions to ally with one another, the size of the conflagration could be hideous.

Right now, the saying "what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas" is literally true—Sin City is on its own.

And the scariest part of all this is that no one really knows what's going on with the demon and the gate. How much of this conflict actually feeds the demon? Can it hold the seal without a conduit like the one provided by the Dragon? Will anything keep this story from ending with an apocalypse?

How about awesome PCs being awesome?

THAT'S ASSUMING THIS WHOLE THING IS JUST A STORY.

WHEN THEY CAN LEAN ON EACH OTHER FOR SUPPORT, PEOPLE WHO FEEL VICTIMIZED HAVE A WAY OF SUDDENLY TURNING AGAINST THEIR OPPRESSORS.

To an extent I think that's already happening here. Check out the Special Vices Squad and Uccisori della Ombra below.

Aren't inclined, or aren't able? I mean, does anyone really know what to do about Red Court venom addiction?

I THINK WHAT WILL'S TRYING TO GET AT IS THAT, BECAUSE IT'S NOT ON THEIR AGENDA, THEY AREN'T EVEN TRYING. WITH THE SUBTLE IMPLICATION THAT MAYBE THEY SHOULD BE.

WHY IS EVERYONE SO INTERESTED IN PRESERVING THAT SYSTEM IN THE FIRST PLACE, ANYWAY? IF SOMETHING IS CORRUPT, YOU ROOT IT OUT AND TEAR IT DOWN.

Like Marcone?

HIS TIME WILL COME.





Corin "Big Corey" Skavis

High Concept
White Court Marketing Maven

Trouble
Wanderland Defies Me

Other Aspects
CEO of Full House Studios
Double Dealing

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Contacts:	Superb	(+5)
Conviction:	Good	(+3)
Deceit:	Superb	(+5)
Discipline:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Fair	(+2)
Fists:	Fair	(+2)
Intimidation:	Average	(+1)
Presence:	Great	(+4)
Resources:	Great	(+4)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
Emotional Vampire [-1]
Incite Emotion (Despair; Lasting, At Range) [-3]
Human Guise [-0]
Feeding Dependency [+1] affecting the following powers:
Inhuman Strength [-2]
Inhuman Speed [-2]
Inhuman Recovery [-2]
The Catch [+0] is True Hope

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOOO
Hunger	OOO

Notes
Epic initiative, Great defenses, Corey isn't much of a fighter. If cornered he will mostly rely on his speed to escape.

Total Refresh Cost: – 9

I could see this guy being a very common result of a successful Contacts roll. Seems like he'd have a very Marcone-like role in many games—able to get you access to lots of stuff, but always for a price.

Yeah, this city has a lot of that. He could also end up a powerful adversary, if you try to topple his growing empire or stand in its way. I bet a lot of dirt eventually finds its way back to him somehow.

People to Meet...Or to Avoid

The White Court

Corin Skavis, AKA Big Corey

Charming White Court Vampire

Motivation: I will control Wanderland at any cost.

Face of: The Strip (page 47)

Meeting Corin Skavis is like meeting a best friend you didn't realize you had—he's affable, charismatic, always willing to listen, enthusiastic about whatever you care about, and always willing to offer you good advice. You tend not to notice—until it's too late—that, while the advice might have been good for you in the short-term, it's better for him in the long run.

Corey spends most of his time out at any one of the several nightclubs and ultralounges on the Strip, though his company books and promotes performances and special events all across the city. He's now the President and CEO of Full House Studios, one of the biggest marketing firms in Vegas, which he took over from its previous Red Court masters. Full House does the work that keeps Las Vegas full of bright, tempting distractions and presents itself as a one-stop shop—branding and development, media advertising, video and audio production, events management, and talent representation.

This gives Corey unprecedented access to business and political contacts as well as providing him an easy means to acquire prey, whether it's among the nameless masses at any one of a hundred "ladies nights" he sponsors or among the bright and naive musicians, dancers, and models that clamor for a Full House contract. This also makes him a prime mover and shaker among other White Court vampires, and he's quickly building a stable of loyal "employees" out of the recent chaos.

But it's not enough. At the end of the day, the Strip is still an illusion, and some people will always see through it. Thus, his attention turns to Wanderland, to the prospect of using its strange magic and wielding the hope of Vegas like a double-edged sword.

Nelson Brinks, the Mutt

Vampire Fed by Despair

Motivation: To find a way out of this life, one way or another.

Face of: The Lucky Penny (page 48)

Nelson Brinks is the official—and only—bouncer working at The Lucky Penny. You might not even notice him sitting by the door until he's on the move, going from a statue to a blur to break up some altercation or simply dump somebody into the street after they've crossed one of the few lines that place has. He doesn't bother to be subtle about his supernature—if you're at the Penny in the first place, he figures you're too far gone for it to matter.

He has also turned people away at the door without warning, recommending one of the other casinos nearby with a gentle voice and haunting, unblinking eyes. If this should happen to you, it's actually kind of a compliment—it means you're simply not broken enough on the inside to be there.

In fact, the last thing you want is for him to take an interest in you, though it's likely that by the time he does, you don't care. His Hunger is worse than others of his kind—he only feeds on people so beat up by life that they want to kill themselves or disappear into inarticulate, drug-addled sensation. No clan in the city claims him as part of their lineage, thus the nickname.

His is a curious cycle, providing a public service to some and then dooming others. It's no wonder that, on some nights, he wants to die just as much as the people he sends to death.

Nelson "The Mutt" Brinks

High Concept
White Court Vampire Bouncer

Trouble
Only the Deepest Despair Slakes My Hunger

Other Aspects
Death Wish
Empty Inside

Skills

Alertness:	Average	(+1)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Average	(+1)
Discipline:	Fair	(+2)
Empathy:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Great	(+4)
Fists:	Superb	(+5)
Guns:	Fair	(+2)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Might:	Great	(+4)
Presence:	Average	(+1)

Most other skills default to Mediocre.

Powers
Emotional Vampire [-1]
Incite Emotion (Despair) [-1]
Human Guise [-0]
Feeding Dependency [+1] affecting the following powers:
Supernatural Strength [-4]
Inhuman Speed [-2]
Inhuman Recovery [-2]
The Catch [+0] is True Hope

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOO
Hunger	OOO

Notes
Superb initiative, Attack with Superb Fists at **Weapon:4**, Superb defenses against most attacks, Nelson relies on his fists in a fight, but he rarely needs to bother when he feeds. His victims are past caring by the time Nelson gets to them.

Total Refresh Cost: – 9

Isn't your Trouble supposed to be troubling? Can't this guy just create despair, and then feed?

As a GM, I'd compel this aspect to say the despair created with Incite Emotion isn't sufficient to sate his Hunger.

Sounds like there's at least the possibility of redemption there. He shows some kind of remorse.



Arlene Ghorbani

High Concept
The Hand of Ishtar

Trouble
Cleanse This Valley of Corruption

Other Aspects
Cult Leader
Small Unit Combat Training
Independently Wealthy
As Ishtar Commands

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Contacts:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Superb	(+5)
Deceit:	Fair	(+2)
Discipline:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Guns:	Good	(+3)
Intimidation:	Great	(+4)
Investigation:	Great	(+4)
Lore:	Fair	(+2)
Might:	Fair	(+2)
Resources:	Superb	(+5)
Weapons:	Good	(+3)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Person of Conviction (Conviction): Arlene uses her Conviction instead of Presence for determining her social stress capacity.

Powers
Freeing Hand [-1] Arlene may attempt to use her Conviction to free others from mental and emotional magics and supernatural influences by laying on hands. Arlene can remove magically maneuvered mental and emotional aspects on others by rolling her Conviction.
Guide My Hand [-1]
Holy Touch [-1]
Incite Emotion [-1] (Passion)
Inhuman Speed [-2]
Inhuman Strength [-2]
Marked By Power [-1]
Righteousness [-2]

Stress
Mental OOOO
+1 mild consequence
Physical OOOO
Social OOOO
+1 mild consequence

Notes
Epic initiative, Great attacks and defenses (**Weapon:2** or **Weapon:3** against creatures with a holy Catch). Arlene may incite passion at Great.

Total Refresh Cost: – 12

The Cult of Ishtar

Arlene Ghorbani

The Hand of Ishtar

Motivation: I will cleanse this valley of its stink, as Ishtar commands.

Face of: The Hanging Garden (page 48)

Ask any five people who have heard her name, and you'll get five different stories of how Arlene Ghorbani came to earn her title as the Hand of Ishtar. Well, that's not entirely true—certain details remain consistent, even though the names, numbers, and locations shift around.

Everyone agrees that she was once a fairly regular person, and that at some point she fell victim to the sex slave trade in Iran. She'd seen women she knew get dragged away by slavers even before she was in her teens—first strangers, then schoolmates, then friends she used to play with. Later, it was her family—cousin Melia, aunt Nisam, her sister just before she turned twenty. Handfuls of people just whisked away with no one to protest their passing, no one to address the matter except with a downcast stare and helpless silence, no authorities to fight on their behalf.

Eventually, they came for her. She called out, as thugs dragged her away, to whatever power would hear her.

Ishtar answered. Made Arlene an offer, a way to strike back against the years of injustice that she had been powerless to prevent. A life of service for a life of power.

She accepted. Felt the warmth of Ishtar's strength growing inside her. Smiled and stopped struggling against the men, got in their van.

Within a week, several ringleaders of the trade received packages in the mail, containing small pieces of Arlene's former captors. Within another week, the police busted them all, following a trail of anonymously delivered evidence. Arlene then fled the country, understandably disinclined to wait for the investigation into where that evidence had come from.

Her fondness for cutting people up and using them as messages hasn't changed much since, though she only indulges when someone's foolish enough to send an assassin to her door. It hasn't happened recently.

Everything else known about her comes from observation across the twenty-six years, four months, six days, seventeen hours, and forty-eight seconds that she's made Las Vegas her home. She has received some kind of military or small unit training and maintains a pack of street-level enforcers among the Ishtarians.

Arlene is independently wealthy—she financed the Hanging Garden and her cult's operations in the city almost single-handed—and seems to have a knack for law and business. Her contacts in the city keep her in the pulse of county and state politics.

She doesn't bother to hide her contemptuous attitude toward White Court vampires, believing that Ishtar considers them the most impure of creatures, as they encourage and foment a perverse form of love.

As much as I admire this lady's goals, I'm uncomfortable with her choices and methods. Vigilante justice doesn't solve anything.

Yeah, I see her as kind of a wild card character, like an open flame—useful as hell, but with a lot of potential to burn you.

Definitely sounds like Herbert has a variation of intellectus. I love when my guesses are right.

Step into the ring with me, Wally, see how long that smug grin lasts.

...Uh. Shutting up.

Kenneth Mayeda

Partaker in Sacred Pleasure

Motivation: Ishtar's rise, by any means necessary.
Face of: Industrial Road (page 53)

Kenneth Mayeda's father, a salaryman ruled by his thirst for whiskey, told him something at a very young age that stuck with him forever: "Misconception makes for exceptional advertising."

Ken is the living embodiment of that statement, an unapologetic rake who preaches a very different image of Ishtar or Inanna—he uses both names interchangeably, despite the fact that one is Akkadian and one is Sumerian—than you'll get if you talk to Arlene. He seeks out those hungry for pleasure and passion, promising to open up "the delights of the goddess" for their, er, consumption.

His usual stomping grounds are far from the Hanging Garden, on Industrial, where the preponderance of strip clubs and sex shops gives him a warmer market. He haunts Xanadu (page 51) on a fairly regular basis, reaching out to its supernaturally inclined patrons. It's an open secret that, if he could, Ken would take the club from Silk and run it himself, using it to expand his peculiar "business."

People gossip and debate over what he takes in exchange; his clients never tell, and I can't see anything about it—the Dragon never partook. Some have likened the practice to sacred prostitution—he shows you, in a wild night (or afternoon, or morning, or all of the above), why you want Ishtar in your, er, tent. And I know that some of the Followers' most significant donors were originally some of Ken's "friends."

Despite this, he lacks popularity at home—Arlene ends conversations when he comes up, and talking about sacred prostitution in her presence may result in broken limbs. However, she makes no active efforts to stop him, leaving any clues as to the true nature of their relationship a mystery.

As for Ken, he waves away any mention of it with an easy, dismissive sweep of the hand. Then he offers to *show* you his relationship to the goddess, rather than talk about it. And then he smiles.

Kenneth Mayeda

High Concept
Ishtar's Ad Man

Trouble
The Pariah of The Hanging Garden

Other Aspects
Misconception Makes Excellent Advertising
The Other Side of Ishtar

Skills

Contacts:	Fair	(+2)
Conviction:	Good	(+3)
Deceit:	Superb	(+5)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Rapport:	Fair	(+2)
Resources:	Fair	(+2)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
Marked by Power [-1]
Incite Emotion (Lust, At Range, Lasting Emotion, Potent Emotion)[-4]

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OO
Social	OOOO

Notes
Mediocre initiative, attacks, and defenses. As a last resort, Mayeda can use his Incite Emotion ability if cornered in a fight, but he would prefer to be long gone before the situation gets to that point.

Total Refresh Cost: – 5

I'm starting to see chains of relationships spilling out here—Mayeda and Silk are direct enemies, and I'm guessing Big Corey and Arlene aren't too hot about one another, either.

And beyond that, it's possible that Big Corey and Silk have some deals worked out between them. Mayeda might have stuff going on with Corey as well, despite being with the Followers—he could be a traitor in the Ishtarians' midst, conspiring behind their back for his own piece of the pie.

Kind of an interesting notion for a campaign—you get into business with one guy and you inherit his "friends" too. Hm.





So, in the relationship map, we can presume that Big Corey actively has it in for this guy. So noted.

Fortunato

High Concept
Goblin Guardian of Wanderland

Other Aspects
Free from the Erlking
The Luck of the Draw
Scales Should Be Balanced
I Provide Leverage

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Bows (Guns):	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Superb	(+5)
Deceit:	Great	(+4)
Discipline:	Epic	(+7)
Empathy:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Fantastic	(+6)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Fantastic	(+6)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Resources:	Good	(+3)
Stealth:	Superb	(+5)
Survival:	Superb	(+5)
Weapons:	Great	(+4)

Most other skills default to Average or Fair.

Stunts
Hunter (Survival): Fortunato uses Survival instead of Investigation when tracking prey.

Disciplined Play (Discipline): Fortunato may use his Discipline as a gambling skill during a game of chance.

Powers
Demesne [-1] (Wanderland)
Echoes of the Beast [-1] (Hunting Hound)
Greater Glamours [-4]
Supernatural Sense [-1] (Sense Imbalance & Unfairness)
Supernatural Speed [-4]
Supernatural Strength [-4]
Supernatural Toughness [-4]
Supernatural Recovery [-4]
The Catch [+3] is cold iron and the like.

Stress
Mental OOOO
+1 mild consequence
Physical OOOO(OOOO)
+1 mild consequence **Armor:2**
Social OOOO

Notes
Always goes first for initiative, defends at Fantastic, attacks at Great with **Weapon:4**, and can cast Greater Glamours such as veils and seemings at Legendary ability. Fortunato is nearly on the level of a plot device, especially within his own demesne of Wanderland, where he can attack and maneuver at Epic.

Total Refresh Cost: – 22

What skill do you use for Gambling rolls anyway?

For the most part, I'd handle the bits of gambling that matter as reading the opponent, not the cards. So gambling should use the standard social skills like Empathy, Deceit, etc.

The Wyldfae

Fortunato

Evener of Odds

Motivation: To keep Wanderland fair and honest, no matter the cost.

Face of: Wanderland (page 54)

Fortunato cannot remember anything before his freedom from the Erlking's servitude. All he knows is that once he was a goblin much like any other, and then one day the Erlking released him to find his own fate. He'll tell you that, whatever happened, it was the luckiest of things, and he celebrates that with his current name. For a long while, he wandered the Nevernever doing much the same thing he does now—finding beings caught up in unfair circumstances and evening the odds—until he came into possession of his own demesne by beating an elder gruff at chess.

Seriously.

It was never his goal to bring hope to Vegas. In fact, he cares about fairness, about the absolutism of probability, more than any other being in the valley—and hope isn't about fair. It's just that he's the only one not stacking the deck, which makes your chances with him far better than they would be anywhere else. It should tell you something when being the closest thing a place has to a good guy is just giving people a fair shake.

He runs Wanderland with this same attention to probability and detail, allowing people to cross in and out of it as their fortunes rise and fall, always pushing things toward the middle. He prefers not to use the power at his command and arranges almost all disputes as friendly wagers or games, at which he displays considerable acumen.

If he catches you cheating, it's likely he'll turn you into paste.

The Seelie

Brianna

Summer Guardian

Motivation: To show the Seelie Court just how effective I can be, despite them.

Face of: The Springs Preserve (page 52)

Brianna was a changeling who made her Choice in 1536 to become fully Fae, leaving her mortal life as a leatherworker's daughter behind for a future as a huntress for the Summer Court.

Despite technically being a Sidhe, she's now in charge of the worst duty post the Court has to offer, guarding the Preserve's small, small gate into a very remote corner of Summer. She's been overlooked in the halls of Summer for over four hundred years now. Why she never got the chance to shine, I'm not sure—all I know is that whenever the opportunity came for her or a rival to get ahead, the rival invariably got the chance. Perhaps a curse placed on her early on, unbeknownst to her? It's hard to say.

Also, I know what you're thinking—distance in the Nevernever doesn't work like distance here, so how can you have any place that's remote? You just have to trust me. Where this gate goes, it's far from anywhere else in Faerie, no matter where you're trying to go. It might be the least-used Way in all of existence.

This grates on her constantly. Tension ripples in her too-collected walk, the movements of her hands, the set of her jaw. She treats her small cadre of elves with officious, imperious weight, calling thunder onto them for the slightest mistake and demanding levels of discipline that would make any drill instructor weep from the stark beauty of it.

If you stray onto her territory, you should take care where you step, where you look, where you breathe, lest you draw her ire. She guards the Preserve against all potential threats, real or imagined, and tends to strike first and ask questions later. The fates created her, it seems, to overcompensate.

Two more things: First, while there are also Summer Fae in nearby Mount Charleston, they won't welcome Brianna among their number, and I don't know why. Second, behind that harsh exterior lies a being very, very eager to prove her worth to the Summer Court as something other than a glorified security guard.

Her desperation has led her to take some matters into her own hands. She knows there are Winter agents in town, though not precisely where they are or what they're doing; however, this hasn't stopped her from shaking down anyone she suspects, whether she has any hard evidence or not.

Brianna

High Concept

Elven Ranger (For Real)

Cute, but this isn't exactly how Herbert described her.

Trouble

Constantly Overlooked by Summer

Other Aspects

Impulsive

Officious to a Fault

The Spring Preserve's Guardian

Skills

Alertness:	Great	(+4)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Superb	(+5)
Deceit:	Fair	(+2)
Discipline:	Superb	(+5)
Endurance:	Fair	(+2)
Guns:	Fantastic	(+6)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Good	(+3)
Presence:	Average	(+1)
Stealth:	Great	(+4)
Survival:	Good	(+3)
Weapons:	Great	(+4)

Most other skills default Fair or Average.

Stunts

Point Blank Shot (Guns): Brianna adds +1 to any Guns attacks made with a bow against targets in the same zone she is in.

Two-Weapon Fighting (Weapons): Brianna is highly skilled with her two scimitars. She adds half the second weapon's bonus (round up) to her damage.

OK, seriously, Will.

C'mon, you know you picture her like this!

Powers

Seelie Magic [-4]

Greator Glamours [-4]

Swift Transition [-2]

Supernatural Speed [-4]

Supernatural Toughness [-4]

The Catch [+3] is cold iron and the like, as well as trappings of Winter.

Rote Spells

Entangle (Seelie block, five shifts): This spell causes grass, weeds, and other plants to wrap around creatures in the zone and prevents them from moving. (4 shift block lasts two exchanges).

Charm Animal (Seelie maneuver, five shifts): This spell makes an animal regard her as its trusted friend and ally. Give the animal a Brianna's Friend aspect if appropriate. Lasts two exchanges.

Pass Without Trace (Seelie maneuver, five shifts): She leaves no footprints or scent trail while moving. (Gives the aspect Passing Without Trace for three exchanges).

Arcanos druid spells? Really?

Stress

Mental OOOO
+1 mild consequence

Physical OOO(OOOO)

Social OOO

Notes

Supernatural initiative, defends with Athletics at Superb, Attacks with Weapons at Great using two scimitars (**Weapon:3** with her stunt), her exceptional (**Weapon:4**) bow at Fantastic, or magic. She also has a suit of studded leather armor inlaid with metals from the Nevernever (**Armor:2**), but because of her Toughness, doesn't actually need it.

Total Refresh Cost: – 17

Great, just what this town needs. More vigilantes.

Wonder why she hasn't gotten onto the Ice Queen's trail yet. Is the demon messing with her, somehow throwing her off? Anyway, a character like this could be a powerful ally if she got solid information.

Or easily manipulated into being a weapon for someone using her to harass a rival.

The Unseelie

The Ice Queen

Dealer in Favors

Motivation: To put Winter in position for a big move.

Face of: City threat Chaos in the Dragon's Wake

One of the newest players on the scene, the Ice Queen is also one of the most obscure. She earned the nickname, which she has appropriated, because of how she usually appears in public—navy or black pinstripe power suit, black hair tight in a bun, and an often unblinking stare the color of those ice packs you buy in the grocery store to put in a cooler.

She only seems to show up when a manifestation of Wanderland (page 54) is imminent—if you see her, either you're already in it or you're about to be. She's a high-roller, which in some cases means money, but usually means memories, souls, favors, or any of the other more...unique options available to wager at Wanderland's tables. Gambling is one of her obsessions—her table chatter often consists of detailed probability breakdowns, commentary on odds, and teasing hints of what she'll do with her winnings. Chatter between her and Fortunato might make your ears bleed.

The Dragon suspected her as part of Mab's plan to undermine the power structure in the city and increase the standing of Winter. I can't see deeper than these suspicions—I know that she's already racked up an impressive list of boons and debts among the populace, but as of right now there seems to be no rhyme or reason to them.

Only time will tell, I guess.

What do you want to bet that she and Big Corey are running a game against Fortunato together?

I don't know. Seems like they'd be rivals for the possession of Wanderland, right?

Sure. So they get rid of Fortunato, then immediately betray each other and see who comes out on top.

The Ice Queen

High Concept
Servant of Winter

Other Aspects
High Roller
Debt Collector
Let Me Tell You the Odds
Cold as Ice

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Contacts:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Superb	(+5)
Deceit:	Fantastic	(+6)
Discipline:	Superb	(+5)
Empathy:	Great	(+4)
Fists:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Good	(+3)
Rapport:	Great	(+4)
Weapons:	Great	(+4)

Most other skills default to Average or Fair.

Stunts

Riposte (Weapons): The Ice Queen can sacrifice her next action to turn a successful defense into an automatically successful attack.

Wall of Death (Weapons): The Ice Queen is capable of using her Weapons skill to make spray attacks in her zone.

Powers

Unseelie Magic [-4]
Greater Glamours [-4]
Supernatural Strength [-4]
Supernatural Recovery [-4]
Swift Transition [-2]
The Catch [+3] is cold iron and the like, as well as the trappings of Summer.

Stress

Mental OOOO
+1 mild consequence
Physical OOO
Social OOO

Notes

Good initiative, attacks and defends with Weapons at Great using a Fae-forged longsword (**Weapon:7** all told). She can also casually control 6 shifts of Evocation using Unseelie Magic.

Total Refresh Cost: – 17

I can totally imagine a Highlander-style sword battle between her and Brianna as a highlight of a hypothetical campaign.



Wizards and Would-Be Wizards

Silk

Psychomancer with Good Intentions

Motivation: To find another way to stem her powers before it's too late.

Face of: Club Xanadu (page 51)

She broke her first john when she was fourteen.

It was the first time she'd enjoyed one of her clients since she started hooking, something about his touch that was different from the rest. When they had finished, he stared at her, took her hand, and squeezed it with genuine warmth.

"You want love, not this," she told him. "You deserve something perfect. Don't settle until you find it."

The police scraped his brains off the back of his kitchen window six months later. Next to the gun, his note had just three words on it: IT'S NEVER PERFECT.

This didn't stop her latent psychomancy from developing, nor did it shock her into controlling it. In fact, it became an addiction. She found that she couldn't help but try to fix people—just a suggestion here, an adjustment there, and a forest of shattered minds to show for it, most of them people she really loved. She's worked as a fully independent escort for many years now, after the pimp community got tired of having its members wind up in alleyways, bleeding from their eyes.

She came to Xanadu intending to take it over and make it her own. A Red Court vampire of considerable power named Adolfo Marcel ran it at the time. He proved resistant to her magic and gave her something she wasn't expecting—a way to stem her desire to warp minds.

Unfortunately, that way involved drinking Marcel's spit. The supernatural narcotic satisfied all her urges; it allowed her to take lovers without destroying them, to work without endangering people, and to avoid the scrutiny of Warden Ramirez whenever he came to town. They entered a partnership, growing Xanadu into something far greater than either had intended.

Then, like the Dragon, he died. Now Xanadu belongs to her, the newest in a long line of wishes that came true for her in the worst possible way. Her urges are returning.



Silk

High Concept
Psychomancer with a Heart of Gold

Trouble
Two Terrible Addictions

Other Aspects
It's for Their Own Good
Kill Them with Kindness

Skills

Conviction:	Superb	(+5)
Deceit:	Good	(+3)
Discipline:	Great	(+4)
Empathy:	Great	(+4)
Endurance:	Fair	(+2)
Lore:	Good	(+3)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)
Rapport:	Good	(+3)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
Soulgaze [-1]
Channeling (Spirit) [-2]
Lawbreaker (First) [-2]
Lawbreaker (Fourth) [-2]
Refinement [-2]

Focus Items
Silver Locket (+1 Spirit Offense Control and power, evocation)

Enchanted Items
8 slots kept open for potions and other "consumable" items.

Stress
Mental OOOO
+1 mild consequence
Physical OOO
Social OOO

Notes
Mediocre initiative, attacks, and defenses, unless using magic. With Lawbreaker powers and her Focus, Silk can cast 6-8 shifts of spirit attacks easily. Silk's potions take the form of gifts she gives to people she's trying to help.

Total Refresh Cost: –9

And this, ladies and gentlemen, is why—even with good intentions—breaking the Fourth Law of Magic is bad.

I could see Silk wanting to forge some new alliances in order to keep Xanadu together, or even pass on its ownership. A PC group who takes over Xanadu might be an interesting game premise, sort of **Cheers** meets...I don't know, some extremely messed up fetish ball stuff.

I wonder if Silk might have a temporary alliance going with Arlene, and that's part of what's protecting her from Mayeda.

Seems to me like she's a time bomb waiting to explode. If there's no more Red Court venom, and she needs it, I imagine people will eventually need protecting from **HER**.

Orpheus

High Concept
Underground Alchemist and Somniomancer

Other Aspects
Tunnel Dweller
Bitter Regrets
Overactive Imagination
The Stuff that Dreams Are Made of

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Fair	(+2)
Contacts:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Great	(+4)
Deceit:	Fair	(+2)
Discipline:	Superb	(+5)
Empathy:	Great	(+4)
Endurance:	Fair	(+2)
Investigation:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Good	(+3)

Most mental skills are Average, the rest default to Mediocre.

Powers
Greater Glamours [-4]
Psychometry [-1]
The Sight [-1]
Soulgaze [-0]
Thaumaturgy [-3]
Refinement [-3]
Lawbreaker (First) [-1] enough for +2
Lawbreaker (Third) [-1] enough for +2
Lawbreaker (Fourth) [-1] enough for +2

Specializations
Thaumaturgy: Control (Psychomancy +1)
Complexity (Psychomancy +1)
Frequency (Crafting +1)
Strength (Crafting +1)

Enchanted Items
Orpheus has 8 open slots that he uses for potions; he can use multiple slots to add to their number or strength. He usually has two types readily available.

Bottled Nightmare: Maneuver at Great opposed by target's Discipline. If the resistance fails, target is afflicted with the temporary aspect Nightmarish Hallucinations.

Dream in a Bottle: Maneuver at Great opposed by target's Discipline. If the resistance fails he is afflicted with the temporary aspect Pleasant Dreams.

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOO

Notes
Fair initiative, Fair defense, and Average attacks. Orpheus can create veils, seemings, and true seemings at Epic ability. He also has all manner of dreams and nightmare potions to throw at people.

Total Refresh Cost: – 15

Will, this guy isn't Fae—much less a Fae Lord. Why does he have Greater Glamours?

He has some truly scary illusion powers that are so real they can kill, and they seem to happen apparently at his whim, so giving him Greater Glamours just seemed to make sense despite him not being Fae.

You know, I just had a scary thought. If you could bottle up the experience of Red Court venom, could someone get addicted to it through experiencing those memories?

I DON'T WANT TO THINK ABOUT THAT. BUT I BET HIS CLIENT LIST IS PRETTY LONG, AND MIGHT INCLUDE ANYONE ELSE IN THIS DOCUMENT, FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER.

You know, Butters, that's a really efficient solution for the RC spit addiction problem. If Orpheus could pull that off, he'd be sitting on a cult-like army right now, ready to do whatever he asks.

Orpheus
Bottler of Dreams
Motivation: To own the dreams of everyone in Vegas.
Face of: The Tunnels (page 53)

Orpheus lives deep in the tunnels beneath the Strip, sequestered away in the darkness of an enormous drainage basin. You wouldn't know that, however, if you actually go there. Sometimes it looks like a medieval castle, complete with moat, drawbridge, and angry peasants. Sometimes it looks like a seedy alleyway in the middle of a nameless city, reeking of sex and danger. Sometimes it looks like a drawing room parlor, tape tracing out where the murder victim fell.

It all depends on what Orpheus is reading that week.

His powers of illusion first manifested when he was a teenager, sitting with his parents at dinner, turning his living room into an exact replica of what they were watching on television.

Unfortunately, they were watching A Nightmare on Elm Street. His parents literally believed themselves to death.

He spent a lot of time homeless after that, causing serious havoc whenever he happened to find a book or magazine, or passed an electronics store and saw a movie on the TV in the window. Worse yet, he found that he could see into the dreams of others, giving the deepest recesses of the subconscious a physical, often terrible reality. Eventually, he found his way into the tunnels, where he didn't have to worry about hurting anyone.

Orpheus has never learned to fully control his abilities, but he has found a way to turn them to his advantage. I don't know who taught him alchemy, but he's since developed the ability to take dreams—his own or other people's—and bottle them for later use by himself or anyone else. Imagine being able to experience the dreams of others, enjoy their fantasies, learn their deepest, most primal triggers...

Makes heroin seem like cough syrup by comparison, yes?

Alexander Harrowmont

Potential player character
Bibliomancer Archivist
Motivation: To establish myself as a wizard the arcane world will notice.
Face of: University of Nevada, Las Vegas (page 50)

Harrowmont has always wanted to be a real, old world wizard. He cultivated a London accent even when his immigrant parents had long lost theirs, secretly thanked the universe for the near-sightedness that allowed him to justify horn-rimmed glasses, obsessively bought stoles and robes, and constantly studied the kinds of books that get you insulted or kicked around by bullies.

He cast his first common ritual in high school, having had the luck to stumble upon a room-tidying spell with actual power from a book he'd acquired from deep in the back of the stacks of a occult used bookstore. The tiny, tiny commission of will left him exhausted enough to skip school the next day and worry his mother. It also changed his life forever.

As a young adult, mired in the mystical community of New England, he expanded his studies and power enough to get him noticed by a member of the White Council. His day had come. He would finally achieve his dream.

He scored lower on the wizarding exam than any candidate had in the past century. The proctors practically laughed him out of the examination chambers, without even the customary warning that they'd watch him for potential signs of Lawbreaking.

Here's why: his particular brand of magic is only useful around books. He's a bibliomancer, unable to do any magic that isn't precisely recorded or easily derived from written material. Without an arcane library, he can do no more magic than I can.

Decades of study haven't made him any more powerful. The only avenues of study that seemed to help also brought a Warden to his door within the day, waving around a silver sword. He began traveling, seeking a place to avoid their scrutiny.

He found UNLV and a cozy home as one of their Chief Archivists. He's extremely popular on campus and often helps students with all manner of research—he seems to have memorized their library system and he brings the flexible touch that a computer search can't. When he's not on campus, one usually finds him poring over an old tome while sipping a sample from Synecdoche's (page 50) fine collection of single malts.

He continues to study constantly, waiting for a second chance.

Alexander Harrowmont

High Concept
Chronicler of Lost Lore, Cataloger of the Arcane, Servant of the Secret Fire, and Lord of the Stacks

Trouble
Wizard Wannabe

Other Aspects
Tweed, Spectacles, and Pipe

Skills

Contacts:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Fair	(+2)
Discipline:	Great	(+4)
Investigation:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Great	(+4)
Performance:	Fair	(+2)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Resources:	Good	(+3)
Scholarship:	Superb	(+5)
Weapons:	Fair	(+2)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
High Quality Workspace (Resources): The value of Alexander's Personal Arcane Library is equal to his Resources skill.

Does the Evocation equivalent of this type of magic resemble Arcanos spell memorization?
It does now.

Powers
Bibliomancy [-2]: Bibliomancy is a unique form of Ritual. It can do any kind of thaumaturgy, but with a nasty limitation: you must have access to an arcane library for any spellcasting, and you cannot do any spells of a complexity higher than that library's rating. You also don't get any auto-prep from having a high Lore, though you can still roll the skill in order to make prep declarations as per the normal rules. You can have "spellbooks" as enchanted items containing a single spell which are not subject to the library restrictions, but they require a minimum of one scene to use—no flipping through at combat speeds.

Enchanted Items
4 slots kept open for "spell books," standard strength at Great

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OO
Social	OOOO

Notes
Mediocre initiative. Alexander took up fencing as a hobby partly to cultivate his erudite professor persona and partly to prepare "to do battle with the forces of darkness." He can attack and defend at Fair with weapons.

Total Refresh Cost: – 3





Campaign Idea: Harrowmont and the Enhanced Collegiates

It's possible that Harrowmont, whether as a PC or as an NPC mentor figure, might be at the center of a close-knit group of college students with powers, especially since he has high Lore and knows how to spot them. Given the current shift in supernatural attention coming to UNLV, this group might have banded together for mutual protection and information swapping, and could even get directly into the business of righting wrongs and protecting the student body.

This obligation sits on top of their academics and the other distractions that college provides, so you have the opportunity to contrast their kicking of monster ass with interpersonal dramas and the stress of school. How do you explain to Professor Donegal that you missed the midterm because of a faerie glamour gone rampant at the Kappa Delta mixer? What happens when your ex-boyfriend throws himself at a White Court succubus because he's trying to get over you? How do you keep that rogue alchemist from using Synecdoche's famous chili as a ritual conduit without drawing suspicion?

These questions and more could be yours to answer.

Moira

Potential player character

Acrobatic Kinetomancer

Motivation: To keep the members of the Cirque protected, hidden, and unaligned.

Face of: The Fremont Street Experience (page 49)

Prudence Turner was raised in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. A native of Salt Lake City, she was the classic and all-too-common "Sunday Christian." It was easier to go through the motions than fight with her family and community. Forget real questions of faith—she just wanted to escape notice and study gymnastics.

This worked about as well as you'd expect. By seventeen she had a nightly routine—get in fights, drink a lot, and do things with her hips that would make a Brother forget himself. One day her mother nearly shot one of her boyfriends, thinking he was an intruder. During the ensuing argument, Prudence admitted that she didn't believe and had never believed.

Her loved ones staged an intervention. Dinner was at Elder Stevens' house and it progressed as such things do. No matter what she said, no one would *listen*. But deep down, she knew they really cared about her—which brought a crushing guilt. She felt caught between living a lie or alienating everyone in her life forever.



Driving home, she broke. Brother Issac accompanied her, and he would not. Stop. Talking. There was no way out of this. For the first time in her life, she had no other option—she prayed. Fervently. She begged for everything to stop.

A wall of telekinetic force brought the car from 60 to 0. The airbag saved her. Brother Issac became one with the passenger side dashboard.

Her family, attributing Issac's death to the stressful situation they'd put Prudence through, blamed themselves and softened their pressure on her. Things went well for the next year, enough to make Prudence wonder if, in fact, her prayer had been answered.

Then the man came, wearing a grey cloak and wielding a silver sword. He boomed declarations about the Laws of Magic, sorcery, and other things that scared her to death. And he simply would not listen—the fact that she had no idea what he was talking about only made it seem more likely that he would take her head off.

So she prayed again. "Save me." The scary man flew as if rammed by a piston, and she ran.

Prudence knew that, whatever happened, this wasn't the last she'd see of those people. She was terrified of her parents falling to the sword, and she took the first Greyhound out. She'd acquired good street smarts during her troubled youth, and it helped her disappear—new name, new look, new everything.

Now, she calls herself Moira, and she heads a small group of mystically inclined performers called the Cirque du Bizarre. Her Mormon upbringing gave her the skills to form a community. She has a knack for finding people like her, gifted with abilities that seem destined to create trouble. The members of the Cirque hide in plain sight among the riff-raff on Fremont Street, using their supernatural talents to enhance their performances.

Moira still has to pray to use her gifts, which forces her to seriously consider the questions of faith she ignored as a child. Those who watch her telekinetically enhanced acrobatics often call her abilities miraculous. She wonders if they're actually a curse.

Moira

High Concept
Kinetomancer Circus Aerialist

Trouble
Crisis of Faith

Other Aspects
Latter-day Sinner
Gymnastics Prodigy
Power of Prayer
Cirque du Bizarre Ringmaster

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Burglary:	Fair	(+2)
Conviction:	Good	(+3)
Deceit:	Good	(+3)
Discipline:	Great	(+4)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Fair	(+2)
Rapport:	Great	(+4)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Acrobat (Athletics): Moira gets +1 to Athletics rolls to survive falls and dodge ranged attacks.

Powers
Channeling (Spirit/Force) [-2]
Inhuman Speed [-2]
Lawbreaker [-1]: enough for a +1

Focus Items
Silk Scarf (+1 Offensive and +1 Defensive Control for Kinetic Energy)

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OOO

Notes
Fantastic initiative, Superb defense (Fantastic ranged defense), Fair attacks. Moira has the Discipline to control 4-5 shifts of evocation with kinetic energy. However, she hasn't really worked out any rotes and usually casts her spells by praying to the Heavenly Father for help. Moira's Inhuman Speed is her unconsciously channeling her Kinetomancy into her body's movements.

Total Refresh Cost: – 6

Potential Player Characters
Herbert talks about a few people who could potentially be playable characters. They are:

- Alexander Harrowmont (**page 35**)
- Moira (**page 36**)
- Daniel Smith (**page 38**)
- Patricia Ruiz-Borges (**page 40**)
- Sergeant Stella Andrews (**page 43**)
- Thomas Anthony Fieracelli (**page 44**)

You might want to think twice before playing Ryan Rutland on **page 42**, but he could easily be at the center of a group of player characters.

"Potential" player character? How's this different from the "suggested" PCs in other chapters, Will?

I'm not sure I'd ***suggest*** anyone play any of these broken people. More than that, though, the potential PCs in this chapter probably wouldn't work very well together in one campaign—you'll want to choose one and create a group of other characters who move in the same circle.

Mortals and Miscellany

Daniel Smith

Potential player character
Counselor to Ghosts
Motivation: I must free my wife from the shades that darken her.
Face of: City theme Big Risks, Big Rewards

Daniel Smith is the seventh son of a seventh son. If you're from a family that large in the American Southwest, it usually means one of two things: either you're a Mormon or you're a sorcerer.

Daniel is both.

He came to Las Vegas under duress and disappointment. He had thought he'd make his future out of silicon and circuits, working at a high-tech firm in Irvine. One economic crash and some lay-offs later, he managed to find work, but far from the site of his dreams—he works now as a junior IT tech at McCarran.

The job loss didn't hurt him as much as losing the community he'd established in Irvine—leaving his coaching position on his eldest son's basketball team, enduring the quiet, awkward stares of the other dads. He felt terrible that day, and he brought that despair across state lines, wearing it like a shroud.

There's a cliché about misery and company, and how they feel about one another. Perhaps the presence of both in Daniel's soul changed him. I don't know. I only know that he started seeing ghosts.

He was at his neighbor's house the first time it happened. A particularly vicious poltergeist tried to push Brother Bill's hand into the blade of a table saw, make it look like an accident. Daniel saw the figure and pulled Bill away with timing that both men could only describe as miraculous. If it had stopped there, both men might simply have considered themselves blessed.

But more spirits came, bringing their anguish, their restlessness, and their problems right to Daniel's door. He discovered he could speak to them and, in some cases, send them away merely by speaking to them of faith, of the things he'd been taught. It brought him some small comfort to do what he came to understand as divine work.

It also brought a heavy price. His home life crumbled as he continued to focus on worlds none of his family could see. He left a vacant chair on board game nights. The Six Smiths, a garage band that he'd formed with his five sons, quietly renamed themselves the Five Smiths and practiced infrequently. He missed the varsity soccer championship. He missed the Green Valley High annual talent show. He missed prom.

He missed his wife, more than any of these things, when her lawyer showed up in her stead to serve him divorce papers.

Since then, he's only seen her once, in litigation. She's being followed by something. A dark shade, whispering in her ear, turning her heart cold. It stared at him from across the room, eyes blazing with hatred—nothing like the human ghosts he's helped thus far.

When he told her she had a demon at her shoulder, she fled the room in tears. The shade followed after, fixing him with a smile.

Most would have fallen to despair. But Daniel remembers the words of Paul—

"I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound."

"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

In the original, the entry ends abruptly. The quotes just looked like little wavy squiggles. On a hunch, I got a magnifying glass and found them there. The lettering almost looks like typeface, it's so perfect.

A magnifying glass? I thought I was the only one who still had one of those.

They're both Biblical quotes, FYI, from Philippians 4:12 and 1 Corinthians 15:26 respectively.

Daniel Smith

High Concept
Faithful Medium

Trouble
A Demon Haunts My Wife

Other Aspects
Seventh Son of a Seventh Son
Once Devoted Family Man

Skills

Athletics:	Fair	(+2)
Conviction:	Superb	(+5)
Craftsmanship:	Good	(+3)
Empathy:	Great	(+4)
Endurance:	Average	(+1)
Lore:	Average	(+1)
Scholarship:	Good	(+3)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Ghostly Concord (Empathy): Daniel adds +1 when using Read People on Ghosts. This bonus increases to +2 if he's attempting to ascertain what will put the ghost to rest.

Powers
The Sight [-1]
Ghost Speaker [-1]
Guide My Hand [-1]

Stress
Mental OOOO
+1 mild consequence
Physical OOO
Social OO

Notes
Mediocre initiative, Mediocre attacks, Fair defense against most attacks.

Total Refresh Cost: – 4

Campaign Idea: Daniel With Lots of Options
Daniel represents the kind of PC who might be involved with a wide variety of groups—he has a strong motivation driving him forward, and he's likely to work together with anyone he thinks could help him in his cause.

If his sons start to suspect that he's right about their mother, they may be more inclined to forgive him and help him.

Katrina Morrison

Red Spit Addict

Motivation: I must find the next fix.

Face of: Summerlin Country Club (page 52)

Katrina is a board member of Sunset Holdings, Ltd., one of the major front companies the Red Court used to further their various business interests. Unlike many of her co-workers, she was aware of her benefactors' supernatural nature. In fact, she was the thrall of a minor noble before getting installed in Sunset's upper echelons—a perfect daytime operative to represent the company's interests.

I could tell you about the future she gave up as a free mortal to become a mouthpiece—and armpiece, and handpiece, and other parts-piece—for the Red Court, about the sunsets she watched, the dogs she cared for, the music she used to write, the passions she had, wrung out of her one by one and replaced by the Red Spit.

Instead, I'll tell you this: she was so far gone, when the Red Court wanted to punish their own, they'd bind them and feed them to *her*.

Feed them... like, literally?
No idea. Don't want to know.

She often conducts her business at the Summerlin Country Club, hiding the most profane dealings among the lushness of the greens, working complex deals across the span of the eighteen holes. Financially speaking, she's weathered the demise of the Red Court extremely well, and retains almost total control over Sunset Holdings despite the chaos. So far, she's collected payments and made shipments—and yes, I'm talking about people—on time, and she's started a little business on the side.

However, her dependency on the Red Spit runs deep and terrible. And while she did take precautions, the bottom line is, she's out and she can't get anymore. It's started to take a physical toll on her, and she's tried nearly everything to take the shakes away—heroin and other normal drugs can't even compare. She's visited Orpheus a few times. She's even bound a few White Court using the methods her masters taught her to see if the emotional bliss they provide from their feeding could substitute.

Nothing works. And she's getting more desperate.

Katrina Morrison

High Concept
Red Court-Enthralled Executive

Trouble
Jonesing Bad for Red Spit

Other Aspects
Senior Board Member of Sunset Holdings
Human Trafficker
Ruthless Sociopath

Skills

Contacts:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Fair	(+2)
Deceit:	Great	(+4)
Discipline:	Fair	(+2)
Empathy:	Fair	(+2)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Fair	(+2)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Rapport:	Average	(+1)
Resources:	Great	(+4)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts

Filthy Lucre (Resources): Katrina gains +2 to Resources when using it for illicit purposes.

Lush Lifestyle (Resources): Katrina can declare that she previously attained any reasonable item equal to or less than her Resources.

Read the Surface (Empathy): Katrina needs less than a minute of interaction on her first attempt to read someone.

Fakin' It (Deceit): Katrina uses Deceit instead of Rapport when making first impressions.

Subtle Menace (Intimidation): Katrina doesn't need to be in a position of power to Threaten someone, and her victims never get an advantage bonus.

Powers

Ritual (Summoning and Binding) [-2]

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOOO

Notes

Average initiative, attacks, and defense. Katrina is totally ruthless and has considerable resources to draw on in the pursuit of her addiction.

Total Refresh Cost: – 7

You know, this theme of Red Court addicts keeps coming up. I wonder if there's a whole subculture of these addicts—like if they have a support group somewhere, or if there are crack house equivalents full of them, flailing for an alternative.

Scary thought. Especially with this lady, who has the money to get away with some pretty extreme shit in the pursuit of something to satisfy the craving.

Yeah... I wonder if she's been bargaining with those people she transports, and if so, with whom? And for what?

Great choice for a potential PC, Will. She's an easy link to Harrowmont and any of the tunnel crowd, and her crusade is general enough to accommodate her presence in a wide variety of groups. She also works really well as an NPC instigator, challenging more complacent PCs to get more involved in the affairs of their city.

Yeah, you'd have to be a real jerk not to help her out.



Patricia Ruiz-Borges

High Concept
Crusading Do-gooder

Trouble
Cares Too Much

Other Aspects
Hands-on Approach

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Contacts:	Fair	(+2)
Conviction:	Great	(+4)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Rapport:	Great	(+4)
Scholarship:	Fair	(+2)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Paranoid? Probably. (Alertness): Patricia gains +2 to Alertness when rolling against surprise.

Person of Conviction (Conviction): Patricia uses her Conviction to determine her social stress capacity.

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OOOO

Notes
Mediocre at initiative, attack & defense.

Total Refresh Cost: +0
(Pure Mortal)

Patricia Ruiz-Borges
Potential player character
Activist on the Front

Motivation: To help the oppressed and equalize opportunities for all.

Face of: Synecdoche (page 50)

Patricia Ruiz-Borges is interested in change. And I don't mean she collects rare coins. Though, she does that also.

I mean serious social change, making the world better for all people living in it, tearing apart the systemic patterns in society everyone ignores and bringing them to the light.

She wants economic reform across the city, a loosening of the casino industry's stranglehold on our financial landscape, real jobs and a chance for local business to thrive, the growth of a real tax base, and more opportunities for the American Dream to manifest.

Like many of her fellow UNLV grad students (in her case, Masters in Sociology), she spends a lot of time at Synecdoche talking about this change, usually with a Samuel Smith's Organic Cider in hand. She's happy to include you in the conversation, whoever you are, and happy to direct you to meetings of the Students for Democratic Justice, or the Student Liberty Collective, or the Equality Warriors Forum, or any number of other student groups who sit around and talk about social change while drinking a variety of expensive alcohol.

Attend those meetings, and you'll probably amass a very impressive collection of incendiary tweets and Facebook posts, but you won't find her there.

Why?

Because she's too busy picketing, protesting, and watching for cops at a rally on the Strip, or slogging in the mud and sand to wrap a blanket around a bum in a tent city on Nellis Boulevard, or bringing care packages to the tunnel people, or driving total strangers to the voting booth when they don't have a ride. She does this every single night, wandering out into the city alone to see what she can do.

The night has not yet shown her its deepest shadows. I fear for her. If you see her, wandering in the darkness, please help her. She probably needs it.

Julio Trevizo, McCarran Airport Foreman

Just a Security Guard

Motivation: To keep myself alive.

Face of: McCarran International Airport (page 49)

He should have just walked past Container A-206 that night. Should have just ignored the banging, like he always did. This time, though, the latch didn't have the padlock on it like usual, and something was pulling on the door, yanking on it. It was going to slide open eventually.

Stupid, stupid, stupid. He'd never been the kind to ask questions before. And he'd seen all kinds of things come through the airport—as a foreman, he learned pretty quick when to look the other way, collected the nice green envelopes containing the "spontaneous bonuses" when some large company had a shipment that needed to come through with a minimal number of questions asked. Those envelopes kept his wife and children happy, clinging to their piece of the American Dream.

But he couldn't help it. As he got closer, he thought he could hear...whimpering...

He shined his flashlight in, then dropped it in shock. The container had people in it. *People.* At least six, maybe more, stacked in—no, shoved in—an air freight container not more than 13'x5'x5'. They writhed in the light, a monster made of limbs.

Then one of them grabbed his ankle and pulled. He went down hard, hit his head on the pavement. Felt the hands and feet grope and push, crawling across him toward freedom. Smelled the sweat on them. The piss and shit. Stopped fighting back because he had to throw up.

By the time he recovered a portion of his senses, they were gone. All but the two laying still in the container, reeking of death. He threw up some more.

He wanted to call it in, but what would he say? He'd heard stories of the shipments before, people traded as chattel to satisfy the perversions of the wealthy, but it couldn't, it *couldn't* be true.

The next day, the men came. A group of five or six, crawling around the container, shouting angrily in a language he didn't know. One of them was so pissed, he kicked the sliding door in. The steel sliding door. All the way in. It bent nearly in half and came off the frame.

Julio asked for a transfer to one of the security checkpoints on the runway. He's gotten a shotgun and a pistol, and cut a hole into his booth for spare slugs and clips.

He spends every night fearing for his life.



Julio Trevizo

High Concept
McCarran Airport Security Guard

Trouble
Human Traffickers Hunt Me

Other Aspects:
Man of Conscience

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Guns:	Average	(+1)
Investigation:	Average	(+1)

Most other skills default to Mediocre.

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OO
Social	OO

Notes
Fair initiative, Average attacks with guns. Julio is just an ordinary guy. His conscience will probably get him killed.

Total Refresh Cost: +2 (Pure Mortal)

Hm. Looks like the human trade is not universally supported, after all.

You know, this guy is probably representative of a lot of people. For every shipping employee that's being paid off to play along, there are probably a lot more who are simply frightened into silence.

Yeah. I wonder what'd happen if someone could convince all the Julio Trevizos throughout Las Vegas to come out and talk. Also, I wonder if this one knows Daniel.

Ryan Rutland

Well-connected Bathroom Attendant

Motivation: To keep himself useful, to everyone, all the time.

Face of: City theme Big Risks, Big Rewards

Everyone uses the bathroom. This truism has made Ryan Rutland one of the most well-connected individuals in Las Vegas.

He came upon a unique industry out of desperation, when his fledgling career as an adult movie star didn't take off the way he expected. (Seriously, you thought his mom gave him that alliterative, Stan Lee name? So, so wrong.)

At first he worked for tips only, and the only place he could find work was a dive bar trying to improve its image; but dedication soon got him bigger, better contracts. Those contracts forced him to hire help, and further growth forced him to start a company. Since then, Ryan and his employees have been all across the valley plying their trade—in strip clubs, gourmet restaurants, high-end nightclubs, the works.

And that trade? Bathroom attendant. Handing you soap and towels, offering you cologne or perfume, and taking tips once you're finished using the facilities. It hasn't made him terribly rich.

However, it allows him and his employees to talk to an extremely wide variety of people in this city—the rich, the poor, the sly, the dull, and everyone in between. He trains his employees in the intricacies and etiquette of talking to people in bathrooms—sometimes you push the mark, sometimes you let the mark go. Sometimes you tell the mark the truth, and sometimes you hint and let the mark fill in the blanks. Knowing even a small bit of what's going on in the city makes for bigger tips—and it makes people who *think* you're in the know talk to you like you *are* in the know.

Also, the things people try to hide in bathrooms—consider it a receptacle for the most private of crimes. Ryan's seen his share of those and sensed opportunity knocking. Club soda can't completely get blood out of a white shirt, but it does make it look like you spilled wine instead. Ryan knows these things, as well as a hundred other tricks to make evidence of an evening's activities just disappear.

The Ice Queen recently fucked him blind during a shift at Tao in the Venetian. I mean that almost literally—strolled into the men's room, dragged him to a stall, left him shuddering. Not actually blind, but, you know...blindsided. Also left her business card.

He'll soon be living in interesting times.

Ryan Rutland

High Concept
Bathroom Attendant Mogul

Trouble
Everyone's Useful Pawn

Other Aspects:
How Can I Help You?
This Might Do the Trick
I've Made a Lot of Friends
Everybody Poops

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Contacts:	Great	(+4)
Empathy:	Fair	(+2)
Investigation:	Good	(+3)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Rapport:	Great	(+4)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts

Ear to the Ground (Contacts): Ryan has plenty of friends and employees who can give him the heads up on information; the difficulty of any Getting the Tip-Off roll is reduced by two.

I'll Get One of My Guys (Contacts): Ryan receives a +2 to Knowing People rolls at any high end establishment to have one of his employees working in the restroom.

Restroom Confidant (Rapport): Ryan receives a +2 to Chit-Chat rolls when in a bathroom.

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOO

Notes
Fair initiative, Average attacks and defense.

Total Refresh Cost: – 1 (Pure Mortal)

Campaign Idea: Ryan and the Bathroom Attendants

If you're interested in a neat Pure Mortals game (or mostly mortals, anyway), you could have all the PCs work for Ryan's company. These people have the ability to insinuate themselves nearly anywhere in the city where the elite are, and they make the ultimate set of spies and information brokers. Ryan can't be everywhere in the city at once, and without female attendants, he's missing out on a rich potential source of gossip—the women's restroom.

And as Herbert mentions, their lives have the potential to be extremely interesting even at random—people try to hide lots of things in stalls, from bodies to drugs to weapons. Every movie you've ever seen with a bathroom scene in it is a potential idea for what Ryan and his co-workers could discover any night of the week.

They would also probably be a formidable status quo changer if they decided to turn their efforts to help out a particular faction or pursue a goal. Supernaturals usually underestimate the value and capability of determined mortals, and a group like this could find themselves with enough leverage on the major NPCs in town to stake their own claim in the Big Game.

Look, Murphy! Las Vegas has its very own you!
LAUGH IT UP, FUZZBALL. Did Murphy make a nerd joke? I think I just snorted an entire cappuccino up my nose.



LVPD Special Vices Squad, AKA "The Hard Way"

Sergeant Stella Andrews

Potential player character
Kickass LVPD Sergeant
Motivation: To show the powerful and corrupt that no one is above the law.
Face of: Theme City of Sin

Imagine Jada Pinkett Smith, Phylicia Rashad, and Samuel L. Jackson somehow had a daughter.

Then imagine she hits like Sugar Shane Mosely.

Then imagine her kicking you in the head.

You have just met the leader of LVPD Special Vices on a normal day.

To say that Sergeant Andrews doesn't take any shit from anybody is basically just to say her name. Superlatives fail to do her justice—for many years, she's operated a clandestine police organization that often puts her at odds with her own corrupt superiors with no real support from any other part of the police force or the Clark County government. She's manipulated said government into convicting its own corrupt allies and putting them in jail, while keeping herself and her own people away from trumped up "legal" retaliation.

Most significant, she's one of the few people in the city who, without any supernatural assistance, has actually made headway against human trafficking, sex crimes, racketeering, money laundering, drugs, and other fun hobbies of the elite.

She's on the verge of pursuing bigger game—her squad recently mixed it up with two extremely starved White Court vampires prowling near Fremont. She lost two of her squadmates, but still managed to put the vamps down through sheer volume of firepower—always a good way to go when in doubt.

The medical examiner was unfortunately rather thorough and came to the head-scratching—though obvious—conclusion that the biology of the two perps they put down was inherently Wrong. Andrews isn't sure what to think and she can't put full department resources on it, either. So she's investigating, trying to get more information from the streets.

I don't know what she'll do when she finds out the truth, but I sense it's likely she'll get herself killed doing it.

Danger, Will Robinson.
WILL ROBINSON? YOU KNOW THE M.E. OUT THERE?
Never mind.

Sergeant Stella Andrews

High Concept
Head of LVPD Special Vice Squad

Trouble
Operating Without Sanction

Other Aspects:
Incorruptible
Multi-disciplined Martial Artist
I Make a Difference

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Contacts:	Fair	(+2)
Conviction:	Fair	(+2)
Discipline:	Average	(+1)
Driving:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Superb	(+5)
Guns:	Fair	(+2)
Investigation:	Great	(+4)
Lore:	Mediocre	(+0)
Presence:	Great	(+4)
Stealth:	Fair	(+2)

Other skills default to Average or Mediocre.

Stunts

Footwork (Fists): Stella may use Fists to dodge attacks instead of Athletics.

Weight of Reputation (Presence): Stella may use her Presence instead of Intimidation to scare someone, provided the target is aware of her reputation.

Friends in Useful Places (Contacts): Despite, or maybe because of, her no-nonsense attitude, Stella has friends all over the city. She adds +2 to any Contacts rolls made to cut through bureaucracy.

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OOOO

Notes
Good initiative, Superb attacks with Fists, Superb defenses.

Total Refresh Cost: – 1 (Pure Mortal)

Campaign Idea: The Special Vices Squad, AKA "The Hard Way Squad"

The Special Vices cops are great for a "mortals on the cusp of discovery" game. They have a lot of independent jurisdiction to investigate what they please, when they please. They're a bit more "off the books" than Chicago PD's Special Investigations—besides being low on the totem pole, some of their staunchest adversaries come from the very government they serve.

A campaign like this can explore the challenges and dangers of trying to understand the supernatural world—figuring out where the hangouts and good contacts are, brokering information and getting into the favors game, potentially making tragic mistakes because you don't know any better, and eventually coming into your own as a significant faction in the city.

Interpersonal drama can expand on the whole notion of jurisdiction—if a White Court pimp can just seduce his way out of any court or jail, what can the cops do about it? Will they have to become signatories of the Unseelie Accords? Will they turn to supernatural sponsors for help? How long will they all stay Pure Mortals?

Tommy Fieracelli

High Concept
Boss of the Uccisori della Ombra

This is just something I made up for the game—there's no way to know what might actually bypass his super-defenses.

Trouble
Family Problems

Other Aspects:
I Hear the Song of Vegas
O.G.
Well Mannered Badass
Honor Among Thieves
Cultured

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Contacts:	Average	(+1)
Conviction:	Average	(+1)
Driving:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Superb	(+5)
Guns:	Fair	(+2)
Intimidation:	Great	(+4)
Investigation:	Average	(+1)
Lore:	Fair	(+2)
Might:	Average	(+1)
Performance:	Fair	(+2)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Resources:	Fair	(+2)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

I'm not really sure what Tommy is. He may be some sort of Changeling, or perhaps he's whatever Kincaid is.

Powers
Inhuman Speed [-2]
Inhuman Strength [-2]
Inhuman Toughness [-2]
The Catch [+0] is someone executing a hit ordered by a higher up in Tommy's crime family.
Guide My Hand [-1]
Worldwalker [-1] Tommy's version of Worldwalker is limited to quick travel to places he is taken by Guide My Hand. This limitation reduces the power's cost by +1 Refresh.

Stress
Mental OOO
Physical OOOO(OO) Armor:1
Social OOOO

Notes
Epic initiative, Superb Attacks with **Weapon:2** Fists, Most Defenses are Superb. Tommy is an all around badass in a stand up fight. He relies on the raw power of his fists, although he does keep an assortment of "(brass, cold iron, inherited silver, etc.) knuckles" to allow his fists to satisfy a supernatural creature's Catch.

Tommy's Guide My Hand and Worldwalker powers represent his uncanny ability to show up wherever supernatural badness is going down. In his case, Guide My Hand doesn't come from a deep personal faith.

Total Refresh Cost: – 8

The Uccisori della Ombra

Thomas Anthony Fieracelli, aka Little Tommy

Potential player character
Mafia-trained Freelance Hitman
Motivation: Keep mortals in charge of Vegas.
Face of: Theme Chaos in the Dragon's Wake

Little Tommy Fieracelli seems like he walked out of an old movie about Las Vegas and into your life. He's suave and charming in his impeccably pressed suit and fedora. He has a firm handshake and a wicked, mischievous smile. He knows wine and cigars, ballroom dances extremely well, and conveys a mysterious and dangerous air.

Spirited away to endure a traditional upbringing in Missouri, Little Tommy didn't know he was born into the Fieracelli crime family. His mother died of lung cancer and left him bereft and alone, until his father (named Big Tommy, I swear, you cannot make this stuff up) called for him and invited him to Las Vegas. Though he'd heard about how wicked his father was, the young man was intrigued by the idea of being a Mob boss' son.

He soon discovered that his upbringing conflicted with the realities of life as a Mafia gangster; he tried to reform his father's organization to conform to the classic movie image of the Mob—honor among thieves and rigorous codes and all that. It didn't endear him to the rest of his family, so he disappeared into the city for a while, keeping a low profile.

He reemerged when a strike team of Red Court infectees and their "patron" tried to take out his father for getting too close to one of their shipping assets. He took on the Red Court vampire himself, duking it out with matching speed and strength.

Campaign Idea: Tommy and the Uccisori

If you want high-octane action and the tone of a superhero comic, the Uccisori della Ombra is for you. Since it's a group assembled to fight supernatural oppression, you can justify a hodgepodge of different character types—even if they all have their own goals and motivations, there's always an excuse for them to work together.

Several of the more powerful suggested PCs might be members of the group already, like Moira or Daniel. This might lead to some internal strife as goals clash, but it also makes for interesting drama.

Lots of interesting questions come up. What kinds of contracts will the team accept? What do they ask in return? How charitable are they? What if someone can't afford to pay? How long will they remain available for hire? Is there certain work they don't do? Any of these questions can lead to a dynamic situation in play.

A PC-driven Uccisori will quickly make a lot of ripples in the existing power structure of the city, perhaps even forcing some of the NPCs to ally and present a united front against them. If you have the Justice League, the Legion of Doom has to appear at some point, right?

After the initial shock, Big Tommy realized the value in his son's abilities. Little Tommy worked strictly for the family for a while, but he now operates freelance, head of a squad of trained anti-supernatural hitmen. He's never spoken of where he got his own powers from; he merely says that "the city needs me" and that "I'm never far from where I need to be."

Charon, The Gondolier

Mythic Ferryman

Motivation: No idea, honestly.

Face of: The Venetian Canals (page 48)

The Dragon found Charon the first night the canals at the Venetian opened for business, just standing on a gondola, waiting expectantly under a black hooded robe. He hadn't felt the being's arrival, despite the power that radiated from it.

When he approached, Charon held out its hand. Familiar with the myth, and intrigued by the unfamiliar pleasure of surprise, the Dragon handed over two quarters. Charon pointed at a talisman around the Dragon's neck, one of the last remnants of his mortal family.

Guided by instinct, he handed it over. Charon admitted him onto the gondola. They talked, and Charon told him—

> Guys, all I found on the rest of this page was a bloodstain, running across like it'd come from a massive nosebleed. It had some chunky bits in it. I decided not to look for text underneath.
>
> Jesus.

The Dragon destroyed his enemies' plans the next day.

And so it has been with Charon for over ten years now. The canals at the Venetian are a favorite place for contesting parties to negotiate, and Charon has a vested interest in protecting the sanctity of that, as well as the will to do so. Direct conversations with the Gondolier are rare, but they all have the same thing in common—it wants something of value to you, and it will tell you something of value, which is rarely the answer to the question you ask it. It seems to have no biases or allegiances.

It may be the actual Charon. The Dragon never asked.



Charon

High Concept

Enforcer of the Venetian Canals

Other Aspects:

Pay the Ferryman

Skills, Power, Etc.

Charon is a plot device and is impossible to quantify mechanically. Assume all social skills are at least Legendary. Other skills are even higher.

Notes

I don't know if this is "The" Charon from Greek mythology, or some other extremely powerful entity posing as it. Regardless, the Venetian's canals are Neutral Ground and it makes sure they stay that way.

> Will, he's a very powerful, creepy supernatural entity with a fondness for charging people to ride on its boat. The simplest explanation is that it's the Charon of mythology.
>
> Do you realize you just used Occam's Razor to say someone was, in fact, a Greek god?



The Cowboy

High Concept
Spirit of Carnage

Other Aspects
Spectral Gunfighter
I Deal in Weakness
I Thrive on Conflict

Skills, Powers, etc.
The Cowboy is a plot device. Assume that most skills are in the Fantastic to Epic range. It has a Legendary or higher resistance to any attempt to bind, banish, or ward against it while on the Kiel Ranch grounds.

Hm. That's an interesting theory.

I don't know. Herbert describes the Cowboy as thriving on destructive conflict—unchecked, that can only lead to mutually assured destruction. Charon and the Cowboy seem like spiritual counterparts to one another, almost. You go to one when your intentions are destructive, and you go to the other when you want to compromise.

Well... Charon did give the Dragon information to act against his enemies.

Against their plans, Will. Important difference, not just semantics.

The Cowboy

Dealer of Weaknesses

Motivation: To keep everyone fighting.
Face of: Kiel Ranch (page 51)

Kiel Ranch is a closed-off historic site in North Las Vegas, famous for a bloody history. A spirit walks the Ranch grounds—the locals call it the Cowboy, complete with the requisite hushed whispers and campfire-style legends. To the empowered, the Cowboy is something else—perhaps one of the most powerful information merchants in the city.

The Cowboy manifests as a frontiersman of the American Southwest—hat, gun, chaps, boots, and everything in between. Some say it's the shade of Archibald Stewart, one of the owners of the land that eventually became Las Vegas, who was slain in a duel on the grounds in 1884.

The Cowboy sometimes appears to people who go out to Kiel Ranch to use its dark energies for various magical purposes. It also answers direct summons, though no one has ever succeeded at binding it, probably because of its tie to the land.

Like Charon (page 45), the Cowboy deals with information, but of a more specialized and brutal kind—it sells and buys a person's greatest weaknesses. This includes supernatural vulnerability, making it the equivalent of a mystical arms dealer. You never quite know what you'll get with the Cowboy—sometimes it literally hands you a weapon, sometimes it merely offers a cryptic bit of trivia that proves to be your enemy's downfall when revealed at the correct time.

The price for such knowledge is high, for the Cowboy only barters in knowledge—to learn your enemy's weakness, you must reveal your own. Many have been desperate enough to seek its counsel, only to find themselves later undone by the similar desperation of their foes.

Thus, the Cowboy both represents a quick route to power over your enemies and works as an equalizing factor for supernatural conflict in the city—if the Cowboy knows how to get to you, then someone else eventually will, too.

Of course, just knowing someone's weakness isn't a guarantee. You still have to find a way to capitalize on it. But it's enough of a starting point to keep people coming back to the Cowboy, and as a result, fortunes among the powerful maintain a mercurial rise and fall in the Las Vegas valley.

I think the Cowboy thrives on this state of affairs, somehow drawing power from it. Perhaps it fancies itself a potential adversary for the demon one day. Maybe it is the demon in a convenient guise.

Places to Go... Or to Avoid

If you're in Vegas and you have the opportunity to see Jersey Boys, do it. Some of the best money I've spent in my life.

The Strip

Threat: The Neon Gazes Also Into You
Face: Corin Skavis, AKA Big Corey (page 26)

According to the Nevada Gaming Commission, the Strip is a four-mile stretch of Las Vegas Boulevard that runs from Sahara Avenue in the north to Russell Road in the south, bound in by the famous "Welcome to Las Vegas" sign.

Media has written about the Strip so much that talking about it here seems perfunctory. You've seen it on television in glowing aerial establishing shots while watching CSI, or boxing, or the World Series of Poker. It's the home of several enormous resort-hotel-casinos, a kind of tourist trap that we practically invented. You know the names: Mandalay Bay. The MGM Grand. The Paris. Caesar's Palace. Treasure Island. Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, people flow in and out of these places to see a wide variety of stage shows, gamble their money away, drink, eat, dance, and carouse. Police do not enforce the laws against carrying alcohol openly, allowing you to wander the street with drink in hand.

The first casino on the Strip was El Rancho Vegas, which opened in 1941. For decades, Fremont Street dominated the attention of tourists, until the opening of the MGM Grand in 1973 started the beginning of mega-resort development. Now the Strip is our biggest attraction, a Disneyland for adults engulfed in neon hellfire. It isn't all that rare to bump shoulders with celebrities and politicians on your way through—the Strip calls to the beggar and the prince alike.

Transportation about the Strip is easy thanks to the Las Vegas monorail, which runs from the off-Strip Las Vegas Hilton to the MGM Grand. Proposed extensions will eventually take it to UNLV's Thomas and Mack Center and to McCarran Airport.

White Court vampires hunt the Strip, prowling the nightclubs and casino floors looking for the desperate and lustful. A colorful selection of wyldfae mingles with the revelers, enticing the unwary with glamours and promises. However, usually you have to stick out in some way to attract supernatural attention, and most predators try to lure their prey elsewhere before they make their move—the facade of the Strip depends on a collective belief that it's safe.



You know, with all the facilities each of these hotels has, it wouldn't surprise me if supernatural factions used the Strip for conventions just as much as anyone else.

You mean like, White Court family reunions or something?

I can see the adventure now—the Grimoire of Flauvius the Great has been stolen from the Paranet's "Arcane Expo" convention, and it's up to you to find it before the world ends. The divination specialists might have been able to help you, but they saw what was going to happen and stayed home.

You two are enjoying yourselves way too much.

The Venetian Canals

Theme: Deals Within Deals Within Deals

Face: Charon, AKA the Gondolier (page 45)

One of the Strip's mega-resorts, The Venetian, boasts an unusual feature: indoor and outdoor canals that you ride along, courtesy of the hotel's stable of singing gondoliers. The indoor ride takes you along the length of the Grand Canal Shoppes, and the outdoor ride skirts the casino's exterior.

Unbeknownst to most tourists, these canals are also one of the chief places where people of power—material or supernatural—make many of their bargains and business deals. Generous "tips" motivate the gondoliers to disappear into headphones and ignore the conversations that take place, idly rowing around the shops as long as it takes for the business meeting to conclude. The running water grounds out any magic, keeping the playing field even for the participants.

In addition, Charon haunts the canals here, providing a further layer of discretion—he lashes out with force against those who would threaten the canals' neutrality. Mortals not directly involved with Charon don't seem to notice his gondola at all.

The Hanging Garden

Theme: The Seat of Ishtar

Face: Arlene Ghorbani (page 28)

The Hanging Garden is an ultralounge sitting on Las Vegas Boulevard, an anomaly among the strip malls and souvenir shops that usually dominate the spaces between major casinos. It's the stronghold of Arlene Ghorbani and the chief meeting place for the Followers of Ishtar.

The ultralounge is a peculiar phenomenon that arose in the late 1990s and has since become the normative style among nightclubs in Las Vegas, offering an upscale atmosphere with a decentralized layout that allows for the creation of private conversation spaces throughout. You can get VIP "bottle service" for an exorbitant amount of money—this provides you with a reserved seating area for you and your party and, as the name suggests, bottles of alcohol. The emphasis is on drinking and socializing more than dancing; few ultralounges have a separate dance floor.

At the Hanging Garden, the decor is inspired by the Babylonian phenomenon of the same name; its twisted, forking paths seem to grow out of the walls and alcoves, with verdant imported plant life following in kind. Stark stone facades suggest an ancient temple complex, and depictions of Ishtar dominate the bas-reliefs and small shrines that make up the artwork. The music is almost always muted and atmospheric—ambient house on a spine of awzan, the takht coupling with the electron.

Entry to the Hanging Garden is extremely exclusive and by association only—a previous guest of Ishtar must invite you. The dress code is lax compared to other clubs; the Followers insist that one should appear as one does, without pretense. This doesn't prevent the staff and most of the attendees from collectively looking like a Paris fashion show.

The Lucky Penny

Theme: The Weight of Inevitability

Face: Nelson Brinks, AKA The Mutt (page 27)

The Lucky Penny is a small, hole-in-the-wall locals casino near Fremont, in a part of town you really shouldn't go unless you brought along a spare M-1 Abrams tank. The building is in terrible disrepair, and the inside of it constantly smells like one of those cheap air fresheners you get at automated car washes. It's carpeted in colors that no doubt were the peak of fashion in the early part of the century—lots of gold and mauve. It advertises itself as "the place where fortunes turn."

What it doesn't say is that the turn is usually for the worse. It's a haven for the most desperate, broken, cast-out dregs of the city, the people Vegas has eaten up and spat out. They come trickling in at all hours, either to acquire cheap street drugs from the pushers on the corner or in its bathrooms, or because they're clinging to the vain belief that their luck is going to change. If you're here, it's probable that you either have an addiction of some kind or are simply out of your mind.

This is also where those Skavis at the absolute bottom of the food chain come to feed. Unable to hack it in the more demanding environment of the Strip, these rejects come to the Penny for easy prey, often finding willing volunteers among the junkies and the nearly homeless.

Jesus, it's like a gourmet restaurant for White Court vampires. The prix fixe menu includes lust with schizophrenia, and a side of despairing heroin withdrawal.

Sounds like that place could use a good renovation. With a bulldozer. Or explosives. Maybe both.

More respectable members of the White Court sometimes slum it down here, but only to engage in one of their most twisted fetishes—they kidnap the mentally ill from care facilities across the city, drag them here, and feed on them while they're still reeling from confusion and terror.

Because, you know, there's nothing like adding a dose of psychosis to that rush of emotion.

Stay away from this place.

The Fremont Street Experience

Theme: You Never Know Who You'll Run Into

Face: Moira (page 36)

The Las Vegas you know was born on the corner of Fremont Street and Main; this is where the Hotel Nevada opened in 1906—the first such establishment of its kind in the valley—and the site of our first telephone installation. That street block saw many other firsts. Fremont became the first paved street in 1925. When the government re-legalized gambling in 1931, a Fremont Street establishment (the Northern Club) received the first gaming license. Fremont Street popularized the use of neon lighting, earning the nickname "Glitter Gulch."

Before the advent of the Strip, the casinos along Fremont Street were the place to be, the heart of what we now affectionately refer to as "old Vegas"—a romantic notion that belies the blood spilled to create it. Benny Binion made his name here. The Rat Pack performed and caroused here. Mob Central was here.

Now it's a theme park, the Fremont Street Experience. Since 1994, the five westernmost blocks of Fremont have been closed to motor traffic, and the whole length of it is covered in a gigantic canopy of LED lights, turning it into a pedestrian mall. Various light and music shows project across the canopy nightly, set to various themes. The current one plays the Doors and throws around psychedelic phosphorescence, as if you needed a reminder that people are strange here.

The overall effect is a bizarre mix of casino, carnival, and county fair—the walkway is home to a number of odd street entertainers, local artists, souvenir booths, and food carts. Two permanent soundstages showcase variety acts and bands. They've even installed a zipline ride that takes you from one end of the Experience to the other. There's a museum, a graveyard for old neon signs.

Despite the Experience's intent to bring tourism back to the region, it's become fairly popular among locals as well, because it's much cheaper to spend time here—in fact, it's the place in town where you're most likely to accidentally run into someone you know. Many of the more benign supernaturals in the city prowl here, hidden in plain sight among the strangeness.

That doesn't make any sense to me. It doesn't cost you anything to spend time anywhere. Do you have to pay to get in or something?

It makes sense to me. Vegas is one of the only places I've been to where it seems like your money just steadily disappears, even if all you've been doing is walking around. It's like the lights distract you from how much you're constantly spending or something. It's bizarre.

Huh. That makes me think of allowing casinos to make attacks on characters, so you literally have to use Resources to defend against your cash flow shrinking

McCarran International Airport

Threat: Horrors Under Lock and Key

Face: Julio Trevizo (page 41)

The larger of the two major airfields in Clark County, McCarran serves the commercial flight interests of Las Vegas, leaving the lion's share of non-commercial traffic to North Las Vegas Airport on the other side of town. Notably, it's a large source of traffic for Southwest Airlines, which flies more often out of this airport than any of their other terminals. It's consistently within the top twenty high-traffic airports in the world, funneling tourists in from all over the Earth. It's also completely self-sufficient, receiving no monetary support from the county.

In addition to its load of passenger jets, McCarran also serves as the primary cargo hub for air freight bound for Las Vegas from FedEx and UPS, as well as operating a scattering of smaller terminals for private ventures and concerns. The most famous, and simultaneously least interesting, of these is EG&G, the company which provides the United States Department of Energy with planes for their facilities elsewhere in the state (read: the Nevada Test Site and everything it contains).

Among these private concerns are front companies operating under the auspices of the Mafia, (formerly) the Red Court, and a variety of independent criminal interests, allowing shipments of highly illegal substances, arms, and people to make their way here. Though

scrutiny has increased after the 2001 World Trade Center attacks, the draw of bribery ensures that plenty of people look the other way.

Many of the shipping crates that line the runways of McCarran contain terrible secrets—usually the kind that make people willing to kill to keep them safe.

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Threat: The Scent of Easy Prey
Face: Alexander Harrowmont (page 35)

My alma mater, UNLV is a co-ed public university just a short hop east of the southern end of the Las Vegas Strip. Its land grant covers 337 acres, containing four athletic facilities, six discrete venues for the performing arts, and one of the finest library facilities in the state.

Growing out of a small extension from University of Nevada, Reno, in 1951, it has since grown to encompass over two hundred academic programs and a student body of approximately thirty thousand, most of them commuters. The average graduating age is above the national median, with many students coming to the campus after being in the workforce for some time, seeking a second chance at higher education.

Its academics range widely in both liberal arts and technical fields; its schools of architecture, engineering, and hotel administration are nationally known, but so are its departments of English and education. It's highly active in academic research. UNLV is an NCAA Division I school, Mountain West Conference, and its Runnin' Rebels compete across the gamut of intramural sports, most notably in basketball, golf, swimming, and diving.

For all this, however, the university struggles in the midst of an economic crisis, part of the fallout from the national financial crash in 2007. The downturn in Nevada's economy has forced the school to endure crippling budget cuts, endangering dozens of academic programs and hundreds of faculty and staff jobs. The fate of UNLV is one of the biggest hot-button political issues in the state.

And its problems are about to multiply. Long ignored by the supernatural community because of easier prey on the Strip and Fremont Street, some now perceive it as the next fresh, untapped source of mortal energy the city has to offer.

How **do** you pronounce that?
SIN-ECK-DOH-KEY.
Right. Syn it is.

Synecdoche

Theme: An Oasis of Culture
Face: Patricia Ruiz-Borges (page 40)

Pay no attention to the pretentious, overwrought name, because most of the locals just call the place Syn anyway. It contains more local color than pretty much anywhere else in the city.

A snug, dark place nestled in a strip mall across from campus, Synecdoche offers an immense variety of pleasures for the discerning drinker—hundreds of craft beers nestled in a walk-in cooler, constantly rotating taps, and a small upper floor featuring an equal variety of scotch and whiskey from around the world. It's so well-known for its selection that other bars sometimes call Syn to fill their stock.

The homemade chili is excellent and never quite the same from week to week. Habanero chilis are common in most of the batches, but on 9/7/04 they had a fantastic run with a combination of bhut jolokia and bird's eye chilis, and Pabst Blue Ribbon for that extra... oh, I can't really describe it, a savory touch? Probably the best I've had was the 3/22/06, though. I mean, who does Scotch bonnet and chile de arbol with regular sweet bell peppers? Genius, right? Then there was last month's batch, after the owner had gotten back from a sojourn to Thailand and brought a variety of prik khee nu as well as—

Right. Anyway. It's really good.

Entertainment at Syn varies—local bands that don't quite have the clout to play at bigger venues, indie bands that venture in from California or Arizona, eclectic movie nights, special events sponsored by this brewery or that, and alcohol tastings. The owner is a professor in the hotel management college—his Old World Wines class is a perennial favorite among UNLV students. It meets on the premises, of course.

As you might imagine, students and professors use Syn as a gathering place, offering most of the draws of the Strip bars at a fraction of the price and with a much more fashion-flexible atmosphere. It's one of the few places intentionally geared toward locals; for that alone, it remains a favorite watering hole of mine, as it's been for many years.

Herbert apparently loved it here. He scribbled the logo on almost every page of the original document.

I'M NO PRUDE, BUT THIS DOES NOT SOUND APPEALING TO ME AT ALL.

Club Xanadu

Theme: Excess and Abandon
Face: Silk (page 33)

On Industrial Road, a stately pleasure-dome rises from the midst of a street corner filled with burned-out tenements and abandoned commercial zoning. The neighborhood seems unable to claim it—it stands in stubborn defiance of the surrounding decay. At noon, the glittery mosaic plating and faux gold statuary catch the sun to blinding effect—a feature that, now that I see it with new eyes, makes an excellent defense against vampires.

Inside, Club Xanadu is plush and oversexed, all velvet, marble, and dark wood. Its geometry is all curves, and it's divided up into several lounges or rooms that patrons can leave open or subdivide as they desire, creating large party spaces or a series of segmented, more intimate settings. Many of the rooms have stages for your standard stripper routine, while others look like a particular fantasy locale—the Catholic private school, the library, the doctor's office, the dungeon, the cosplay room, the...

Wait, I'm forgetting, you're probably not from here. Let me back up. Xanadu is a fetish club, where discerning adults pay a private membership to meet and have sex in ways they may not be equipped to have at home. You rent the various rooms as availability or appointment permits, for whatever activities you want. Management prohibits alcohol on premises, though they allow the use of aphrodisiacs and opiates.

Inside the doors, anything goes so long as there's consent between the participants. Aside from the front lobby, clothing is optional unless otherwise specified by the rules of that particular room—in other words, sometimes it's prohibited. Sometimes, they have live entertainment—I shall leave the scope of that to your imagination.

The layout is carefully designed to scatter magical energies around, making it difficult for all but the most disciplined to make a focused display of power inside. Thus, it has a secondary function as a safe(r) haven for an assortment of people from all over the spectrum of empowered life. The proprietor, Silk, gives free memberships to anyone who displays a supernatural talent and she consistently reserves some of Xanadu's rooms for that crowd.

Kenneth Mayeda wants to take over the place so badly, he envisions it in his dreams.

Kiel Ranch

Threat: Untamed Dark Energy
Face: The Cowboy (page 46)

One of the oldest historic sites in the area, this modest patch of land in North Las Vegas sits on an artesian well and some wetlands, which originally attracted Mormon settlers into the area in the 19th century. Conrad Kiel originally founded the ranch in 1875. Additional groundwater came from the Las Vegas Springs, creating a beacon of light in the desert and allowing the farm to both self-sustain and supply the area around it with produce.

Time hasn't been kind to the grounds. The Springs ran dry a long time ago, and the well and wetlands are a fraction of their former size. Despite its recognized status as a historic locale, it's received little support and upkeep from local governments. An industrial park now occupies much of its land. People have even used parts of it as a dump. The main remnants are the ranch's original adobe structure, now the oldest standing building in Las Vegas, and a small cemetery once occupied by generations of the Kiel family—the bodies now rest at UNLV for study and preservation. Currently, the ranch isn't open to the public.

Despite this, the land itself still hums with life, and with something else for those willing to look past the surface—a font of dark power, the legacy of a checkered past.

It was a notorious hangout for scoundrels, brigands, and other men of ill character in its heyday. Conrad Kiel, along with two of his associates, shot and killed a man named Archibald Stewart on the grounds in 1884, just three years after the Stewarts had taken over the nearby Las Vegas Ranch. Conrad himself died ten years later, of pneumonia.

Archibald's wife, Helen, rose from this loss to become one of the most significant people in our history. In brief: successful rancher in her own right, first Postmaster General of Las Vegas, first woman elected to the Clark County School Board, provider of the land for the Las Vegas Paiute Indian Colony, historian, writer, and pillar of the community. Business closed in the city the day she died, out of deference.

As for the Kiels? On a trip to the ranch in October of 1900, Helen Stewart, traveling with her new husband, claimed to have discovered the bodies of Edward and William Kiel, Conrad's sons. They'd both been shot, a pistol and a shotgun discovered conveniently nearby.

Authorities ruled it a murder-suicide arising from a duel.

In 1975, UNLV scholars reexamined the bodies and evidence. Someone shot Edward, yes, but in the *back of the neck*, execution-style. A shotgun blast killed William, yes, but not from his own gun, *which had jammed during the conflict and never fired*. Murder-suicide, indeed.

The blood spilled at Kiel Ranch still resonates today, now even more potent than before, given that water no longer runs under most of the site. Practitioners sneak onto the grounds to try to incorporate some of that remaining energy into their magic. It consumes some of them. Many find the taint of it to be more than they bargained for. The especially "lucky" get visited by the Cowboy, a resident spirit who haunts the grounds and stands as an anchor to the past.

These dangers do not prevent a fairly continuous stream of visitors.

The Springs Preserve

Theme: Water in the Desert
Face: Brianna (page 31)

The Preserve is a natural conservation site that stretches over 180 acres of land west of downtown, set apart from the rest of the city by a thick, sound-resistant wall. The spring for which the site is named once provided water to Kiel Ranch and Las Vegas Ranch toward the end of the 19th century, but it hasn't flowed since 1962 due to the increasing demand on its supply from urban expansion. Efforts to conserve the area have been ongoing for decades, striving to protect what remains of the literal birthplace of the city. Once, the oasis that the springs created originally led parched New Mexican traders to name it "Las Vegas" after its lush meadows.

These efforts have kept the Preserve lands verdant and fertile, containing eight acres of botanical gardens and a small wetland habitat now ringed with walking trails. In 2007, it opened to the public. It contains a museum, concert spaces, and educational galleries on sustainable living. It brings in a small amount of revenue from both tourists and locals. Solar energy provides most of its power, and its vehicle fleet is all hydrogen-fueled.

It's also home to a small contingent of Seelie Fae, who guard the site against any potential threats with hawk-like tenacity and efficiency. It's one of the few sites in the valley that borders on the Nevernever, and a lengthy traipsing among the various paths eventually leads to a very isolated part of Summer, one that is consistently so far away from any other part of Faerie that most members of the Court consider it to be of minor importance.

This doesn't stop Brianna and her elves from officiating it as though it were the palace of the Summer Queen herself; while the supernatural community sees her overcompensation as silly, no one ever says this to her face or contests her will on the grounds.

Summerlin Country Club

Threat: Lethal, Crooked Schemes
Face: Katrina Morrison (page 39)

Located in the middle of Howard Hughes' master-planned community of Summerlin—a place in the western part of the valley designed from the ground up to cater to the whims of the yuppie suburbanite—the PGA Tour owns and operates the country club as part of their Tournament Players Club chain. It contains all the amenities one would expect coming from that kind of prestige—several upscale restaurants; a clubhouse with pools, spas, tennis courts, and conference rooms; practice greens; and eighteen holes of extremely challenging golf.

It also serves as a home for all the top movers and shakers in the Las Vegas community—nearly every CEO, politician, doctor, lawyer, casino owner, local celebrity, and otherwise important person has a membership here, and the various gatherings constantly held on site allow you the opportunity to hobnob with the elite—presuming you can get invited.

This also makes it the perfect place to hide backroom deals and crooked schemes over a pleasant disguise of civilization, plot the exploitation of one's fellow man while sipping martinis, rig elections while enjoying a duck a l'orange, and converse in depth about illegal things where one has the perfect excuse to remain isolated with one's partners in crime.

Therefore, the community at the Club is also rife with internal politics and backstabbing; it remains a popular destination for truth-deprived journalists seeking an exposé.

Industrial Road

Theme: Everything You Need...For a Price
Face: Kenneth Mayeda (page 29)

Industrial Road lives in the shadow of the Strip, running parallel to Las Vegas Boulevard for most of its length and passing behind many of the major casinos. Home to a smattering of manufacturing facilities and business complexes, its major claim to fame lies in the fact that it's also the site of some of the city's biggest and best strip clubs, sex shops, and pornographic film studios—if they aren't on the street itself, they're only a block away. Deja Vu, the Can Can Room, Sapphire, Little Darlings, Candy Apple Productions—the list goes on.

The Erotic Heritage Museum sits on the corner of Industrial and Desert Inn, daring anyone to question its legitimacy. Go, if you get the chance. They have a giant phallus made of pennies.

Life on the street tends to lean on the colorful and unsavory side, filling the gaps that the more legitimate businesses won't touch. Prostitution and drug sales abound, with few if any limits for those with demanding or exotic tastes who are willing to drop enough cash. Though the trade of flesh is carried out across the city, this is where the pimps willing to buy another human's life make back on their investment, where the rubbers literally hit the road.

Public attitude and media advertising concentrate on the glamorous, titillating part of the image, but seldom on the gruesome underbelly of it. This sometimes results in tourists getting in way over their heads, a phenomenon that keeps the police continually busy. Still, for the adventuresome, it remains the chief representation of one of the city's legendary draws, a business constructed entirely from the taboo.

Industrial thinking, indeed.

They have a **WHAT**?

Vegas has something for everyone.

Okay, who's a giant phallus made of pennies **FOR**, Waldo?

The Tunnels

Threat: The Shadows Do Not Welcome You
Face: Orpheus (page 34)

Underneath Las Vegas, over three hundred miles of snaking flood tunnels prevent rain from causing untold water damage to the properties built above them, vulnerable to the low absorption rate of the desert sand. The channels are a nightmarish work of genius, running as far as twenty feet below ground level, shrinking into two-foot tall pipes and expanding into huge drainage basins that eventually dump storm water into reservoirs throughout the valley.

They are also home to 1,147 people who—

A moment. The specifics, numbers hurt more than—1,146 people, sorry. Should have seen it coming, Gary, you even had your flashlight with you—

He left the rest of the page blank.

This starts again on the next page.

Anyway, they want to remain off the grid for one reason or another. Usually, they're addicted to something—drugs, sex, the Red Spit. Or they're avoiding crimes they're wanted for in the world above. Or they simply ran afoul of the city's tendency to consume dreams and lives and had nowhere else to go.

They represent the real social cost of living the way we do, and so long as they stay down there, we largely turn a blind eye to them. There's a book about these people called Beneath the Neon which I recommend, if you have an interest—the author now works locally with a group that tries to get people out of the tunnels and into real housing.

The tunnels are dangerous, as you might expect. Insects and disease run rampant, and the deepest of the channels are bitterly cold. The tunnel's inhabitants are desperate to protect what they have or to acquire more, and many are likely to see you as a threat without stopping to ask questions about it. The slightest bit of inclement weather above sends water hurtling through at random, dooming you to drown in the dark. The basest and most savage of supernatural predators use it as an easy hunting ground, dragging away people no one tends to miss.

Campaign Idea: The Tunnel Dwellers

If you needed a reason to assemble a motley crew that could include just about anyone, you can always rely on tunnel dwellers. Nearly everyone in this campaign will have a tragic origin—they need to exist in the tunnels because normal society won't have them. This gives you an opportunity to explore some really dark material—abuse, addiction, transgression.

Just remember, though—when threats come to the tunnels, it's your PCs who are in a position to deal with it. This isn't an excuse to wallow in misery—the tunnel dwellers take their hardships and move forward, in spite of the potential costs.

This reminds me—Will, would you and Georgia like to hit the Ren Faire in Bristol with me this year? And extend the invitation to the rest of the Alphas?

C'mon, man. Just ask Andi out already.

...Uh.

Don't worry, pal, your secret is safe with me.

In "The Ways Between," Mike sheds some light on hobo signs. See page "Hobo Signs" on page 224 for more.

Despite this, the tunnel people have managed to form a community of sorts, scraping lives from what little they find. Hobo signs and other warnings are common in the more populated tunnels, and long lists of names cover the pillars and walls, testaments to the pervasiveness of human error. Their chief occupation—"credit hustling"—involves searching slot machines at casinos for money left behind by the careless and the drunk.

The tunnel people also include the most tragic from among the supernatural community, people whose abilities are a danger to themselves and others, or who simply fell through the cracks and didn't find a mentor figure before their new reality drove them mad. They skitter to the deepest corners of the tunnels and become the bogeymen that other tunnel dwellers speak of in harsh whispers. The irony is that when the aforementioned predators come through, these bogeymen are often the ones who hold the line and keep their predations to a minimum.

Even the Dragon didn't know how deep the proverbial rabbit hole went. I hope never to find out.

Wanderland

Theme: Always on Level Ground
Face: Fortunato (page 30)

Wanderland isn't so much a place as it is an occurrence. A demesne of Faerie that somehow shifts with and overlaps the mortal Las Vegas, it tends to appear whenever the odds in a wager threaten to cripple poor, unsuspecting gamblers, especially if the stakes are extremely high. It also invites in those who walk the streets of Vegas not for the cheap thrill or the fix, but for the simple delight of its unusual wonders.

An incredible number of mortals pass in and out of its boundaries every year and are none the wiser, remembering the incident only for the sudden reversal of fortune it brought them. Rumor has it that a reliable entrance to Wanderland lies in the depths of the tunnels, but the Dragon never tested the theory.

Because of its transient nature, Wanderland has no single appearance—it melds and blends into the surroundings whenever it appears, leaving only small clues of the transition for those who know what to look for. It prizes itself, as an example, on realizing ideals, so if you're wandering in a corner of Excalibur and wondering where they managed to find a minstrel with an actual 15th century lute who sings entirely in Gaelic...well. Welcome to Wanderland.

Once there, though, life couldn't be better—it's impossible to make a wager in Wanderland without knowing the precise terms and the precise odds. No fine print, no hustles, full transparency from the house. That doesn't mean you can't lose. Quite the contrary, in fact; people lose as often as they win, and losses in Wanderland are supernaturally binding, with horrible curses awaiting those who intend to default on their debts. The fact that so many people experience "sudden runs of luck" in Wanderland is a testament to just how crooked the casino system is.

Of course, for the empowered, the wagers are often about a great deal more than just money. Dreams, memories, fantasies, knowledge, favors, and oaths have all been up for grabs. Beings from Vegas and the Nevernever alike come to Wanderland's tables, throwing around cosmic power like we throw around credit, staking destinies like we might stake a mortgage or a car title.

In fact, now that I ponder it further, a suitcase full of mind-altering, prescient psychic impressions is precisely the kind of thing that—

I TAKE IT BACK. FUCK WANDERLAND. FUCK IT AND FUCK ALL THE FORCES THAT MADE IT.

Yeah... Those letters in caps were in Herbert's handwriting, but burned into the paper.



The Sweet Sorrow

So it ends. I thought that getting all this out would help me, would make it stop. But the light's still there, and I can still see the city, feel the city—

238 Big Macs ordered since I started writing. $1,203.58 at the progressives at the Terrible's on Sahara and Jones. 47 days, 13 hours, 8 minutes, 4 seconds until Diane Lombard has a little boy; it'll come out breech. No one saw me do it, there are enough pieces and no one checks those dumpsters anyway. Jason, how will we save the house? Sure, I'll take two. Oh, baby, oh baby, oh—

What else, what else... check Container B-270. Deposit Box 4727 at Luxor. Locker 14 at the Metro PD station on Windmill and Rainbow, combination 36-14-22. Don't ask Gizelle about her shakes, EVER. September 29th, 10:48 PM. Empty night—

Listen, whoever you are, you can fight it, them, the whole thing. I can't. we can't. you. the answer is here.

maybe then it'll finally stop
please come
i'm gambling on you
please

Wow.

yeah, I know.



Russia
Bloody october



Novgorod, Russia, October 1918

It's 1918, and Russia is burning.

Civil war rages with the Bolsheviks struggling against anti-revolutionary armies across the country. As the autumn's first snowflakes appear, the Winter Court of Faerie pushes hard against the Summer Court's presence. Chaos reigns. While the mortal world bleeds itself dry, the madness also infects the supernatural world and predators stalk their prey with increasingly brazen openness.

If someone doesn't impose stability soon, there won't be anyone left for the victors to rule. But whose stability?

Meanwhile, mortals living in the city of Novgorod simply try to survive day to day. The munitions plants and rail hub make the city a major focus for both sides in the Civil War—and when there's a civil war, you don't want anyone to focus on you. Food is scarce. Suspicious comrades and secret police and Red Army press gangs lurk around every corner. The only thing the city's residents can count on is the ever-present fear that saturates everyday life.

The city's supernatural community teeters on the brink of a bloodbath. The Winter Knight wears the uniform of the new regime. Twisted warlocks, predators straight out of legend, and malicious creatures of every description hunt in the shadows.

And above it all, the vicious cruelty of ordinary people pushed beyond their limits demonstrates yet again that you don't need claws or fangs to be a monster.

Does this ring any bells, Paranetters?

A few years ago—I think right after the time the zombies tried to crash his place—Harry dropped off this big crate of old papers at my apartment. Told me it was some important records, and would I mind babysitting it greatthankyouverymuchbye. I put it in the back of my closet and forgot about it.

Fast forward to a couple of months ago, right after Harry… Yeah. I was digging through some of my old stuff and re-discovered the box of records. It's a bunch of old letters, mostly in written in Cyrillic script. I don't read Russian, but Georgia is friends with this post-doc at U of C named Natalya; she's from Omsk and a member of the Paranet, and she does freelance translation. She agreed to translate the stuff pro bono in exchange for being allowed to put some of it out there for other Paranetters.

Turns out, the letters were a treasure trove: the personal correspondence of Simon Pietrovich, vampire hunter of the White Council. Until a bunch of Red Court smoked him early in the war, anyway. The guy was such an obsessive pack rat that he even kept copies of letters he sent to other people. There's so much material, we're only just scratching the surface with what Natalya put out for the Paranet.

It's a dangerous time out there for Paranetters and, according to Simon's papers, the Russian Revolution bears at least a passing resemblance to what we're facing today. You'll see direct translations from sources like Simon and his apprentice Larisa Yevtushenko explicitly called out, along with writings from some of Simon's other informants. My own commentary and stats and such are scattered between.

What'd you do with the papers, Will?

Let's just say they're no longer at my apartment.

Smart. We'll talk about what to do with them next meeting.

FROM THE JOURNAL OF SIMON PIETROVICH, 1923

There have been two major events in European history that clearly illustrate the folly of wizards intervening in mortal political affairs. I was witness to, and some argue involved in, the second. Rooted in the latter half of the 19th century, the situation matured and ripened, producing a fruit as terrible as any the world has seen…

Second? What was the first one?

Harry hinted it was something the Merlin—the original Merlin—did.



I asked Natalya to write up a little context for us, a short overview of the Russian Revolution. That's when she unintentionally taught me some Russian profanity. But she came up with a decent discussion of things.

A Very Brief History of the Russian Revolution(s)

The event most people call the "Russian Revolution" was actually two revolutions, three foreign invasions, and a multifaceted civil war; it gets really complicated. Here are the basics.

Russia of the late 19th century was not a good place to be a peasant, factory worker, miner, or soldier. Poverty and disease ran rampant and the government was a corrupt and tyrannical monarchy; even the more progressive Tsars tolerated little dissent or troublemaking, and Nicholas II, Tsar at the turn of the 20th century, was not progressive. Add a couple of destructive and ill-advised wars, an economic collapse, and a near famine, and you get a smoldering underclass ready to ignite. By March 1917, the people were ready for a change. Factory workers across Petrograd went on strike, and poor and middle class men and women from all walks of life soon joined them. The Tsar ordered the army to restore order, but things weren't any better for the soldiers than for the workers, so most of them mutinied and joined the strike. The Tsar saw the writing on the wall and abdicated, and the February Revolution was a success.

So nobody's going to call out the "White Army" and "Red Army" here? Analogous to vampire courts?

Not that straightforward. The Black Court held sway in Eastern Europe—more on that later—but let's not muddy it up too much.

February Revolution? Before, it says March—this is a calendar thing, isn't it?

Russia used to use the Julian calendar, rather than Gregorian. Throws dates off a bit between East and West.

Who knew you were a history buff, Karrin?

You don't have to be a history buff to use Google, Will.

After the Tsar's fall, power was shared by local soviets (workers' councils, essentially) and a provisional government for about seven months. The soviets were mostly hardline Marxists; the government, while socialist, was more moderate. Conflict between them was inevitable, especially as the soviets became even more radical under the influence of Vladimir Lenin and his Bolshevik faction. In November (October on the Julian calendar) of 1917, the provisional government fell—the October Revolution—and Lenin claimed full power in the name of the soviets.

A coalition of Tsarists, republicans, moderate socialists, and others who were opposed to the Bolsheviks formed an army to put down the Revolution, and vicious fighting erupted as the Bolsheviks' Red Army faced this counterrevolutionary White Army across many fronts. The US, UK, and France landed troops in various parts of Russia to support the White Army.

Meanwhile, Lenin and the Bolsheviks were consolidating political power in the regions controlled by the Red Army. In addition to the enforcers empowered by the local soviets, the Bolshevik secret police (called the Cheka) suppressed dissent and intimidated anyone who might challenge the Revolution. They became feared throughout Russia—both in Bolshevik-controlled regions and behind the lines in White Army occupied areas. Most people either pledged their undying loyalty to the Revolution or tried very, very hard to keep their noses out of politics of any sort.

This is, in a nutshell, where things are by the time we get to October 1918.



Hey, I have a great idea. Let's take one of the most complex and historically significant events of the past three centuries, and condense it into a few paragraphs.

A million historians are wailing and grinding their teeth. Can you hear them?

Not. A. Textbook. "Close enough" is close enough for us.

Simon Pietrovich: A Tale of Russia

So that's the situation by 1918. What you won't learn in any history classes is the role that the supernatural played in the whole debacle. Simon's letters and journals, starting in 1882, help explain how this whole mess came about.

Harry told me over and over that it seems that wizards can't get involved in politics or national affairs without causing a bigger tragedy than whatever they were trying to avoid. Simon Pietrovich was well aware of this, but he was caught between two conflicting demands—loyalty to his friend the Tsar, and honoring the demands that the White Council put on him. He tried walking the line.

And it went badly. Simon watched his friend Nicholas drive his country off a cliff, while feeling responsible for it happening. Ebenezar McCoy almost had to execute his friend Simon for meddling. Simon's apprentice was undone by his own earnest attempts to "help." It's not quite as relentlessly depressing as Anna Karenina, but…

Well, maybe it is. I'll let you judge.

THIS IS SO VERY RUSSIAN.

oh, good idea for a section title!

Why Novgorod?

So you're fascinated by history and you want to take on one of the great tragedies of all time. (What? You'd be surprised how many history majors play RPGs and how many more would give their eyeteeth to get the chance to change it! Our game group has several.)

To show how The Dresden Files RPG can handle big things on a personal scale, we're focusing this chapter on a single city rather than the entire nation of Russia. The question then becomes, what city?

Petrograd or Moscow are the obvious choices. Petrograd was the center of everything during the Russian Revolution, and its history is well known. Moscow is in a similar situation. This might seem like all the more reason to focus on one of those cities, but both are huge, and, given the events occurring there, may be difficult to personalize.

We're lucky enough to have extensive records of one of Simon Pietrovich's students, Larisa Yevtushenko, who lived in the town of Novgorod during the Civil War. Her writings provided a lot of the material in this chapter. Thanks to Larisa, we know that there were all kinds of interesting and horrific mortal and supernatural events happening in Novgorod during the Russian Revolutions.

Didn't Tolkien say something about this?

He said that mortals shouldn't meddle in the affairs of wizards. We're talking about the other way around.

Novgorod was a huge munitions producer during the Civil War, and through Larisa's reports we know of the intrigue around the local soviet, the Novgorod Brass Works, and the saboteur. However, these events never made it into the history books, so player characters can have a measurable impact without tromping all over known history.

If you already know all about the mortal and supernatural history of the Russian Revolutions, you could skip to the Novgorod-specific stuff starting on page 67. But the background makes for some fascinating reading and puts the rest of this chapter in context.

The Best of Intentions

How did Simon Pietrovich even get involved in this sorry state of affairs? His journals and letters hint at a fascinating tale. I've included some of the most pertinent ones, providing context so you can see how the narrative goes.

It appears that someone in the Russian Imperial Government convinced him to teach a few Interior Ministry agents how to fight vampires, presumably Black Court. I have no idea how they found him, but Simon's been around a while, so he may have developed a reputation among some of the nobility in North Russia at the time.

His journals don't contain many details. They imply he was only teaching the Russian military how to identify vampires and how to avoid them...or kill them if necessary. Interestingly, Simon appeared to tutor as many Russian Orthodox priests as soldiers and spies.

If he ever went beyond teaching, Simon didn't commit it to writing. He did mention that the Tsar asked him to go farther more than once, but Simon claims not to have done it.

FROM THE JOURNAL OF SIMON PIETROVICH, 1882

...I have declined Tsar Alexander's request to provide information obtained through divination against Count Merkulov. I attempted to make clear to him that the limits of my assistance would be strictly observed, namely, providing advice and education to select members of the Ministry of the Interior and the Russian Orthodox Church regarding techniques for identification of and defense against vampires, and no more. The Tsar is not accustomed to hearing "No." Although his temper lives up to its reputation, I remain unmoved...

You'll want to cut this bit, Will, and probably all the other references to McCoy being the Blackstaff.

Eventually even that much seems to have caught the attention of folks back at Edinburgh. [redacted] it would have fallen to Ebenezar McCoy to deal with a wizard stepping out of line. As a good friend of Simon's, he tried to use friendly advice to get Simon to knock it off.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM WIZARD EBENEZAR MCCOY TO WIZARD SIMON PIETROVICH, 1889

...Simon, I worry about your continued involvement with the Tsar. Consider how that involvement looks to the council. You must certainly see how it might look improper. They take prohibition against political involvement seriously. Hellfire and damnation, surely you know that I do as well. The people in Edinburgh are beginning to voice concerns.

Do not worry. You are NOT under investigation for misconduct at this time. After so many years of friendship, you know very well that I would tell you as much. But believe me when I say you had best tread carefully...

EXCERPT FROM WIZARD SIMON PIETROVICH'S REPLY, 1889

...Ebenezar, I would not do something so foolish, you know this. I play no political role whatsoever in Imperial government. I teach few soldiers and priests basic defense techniques, and identification methods, this is all. My friend, you should not worry, White Council should not worry, because I also take seriously prohibition against politics. I am not new apprentice.

Nevertheless, your advice is taken in good spirit. I will exercise utmost discretion...

SIMON WASN'T A BIG FAN OF ARTICLES, HUH?

A feature of the Russian language, I'm told. Natalya added them when she translated his Russian, but stuff Simon wrote in English, well, that's his own words as he wrote them.

There are a few letters back and forth over the years containing stuff like this. By the turn of the century, rumors started in Edinburgh that Simon was doing more than teaching some anti-vampire moves to some priests and some spies.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM WIZARD EBENEZAR MCCOY TO WIZARD SIMON PIETROVICH, 1902

...I have received disturbing reports of your friendship with Tsar Nicholas. Is it true you conducted divinations for him? Or that you intervened against his political opponents, most particularly the Imperial Family Council? Worst of all are these rumors that you diverted a river while they were building the damned Trans-Siberian Railroad, for the love of Pete.

Simon, I beg you, stop this nonsense. I speak as your friend—which, make no mistake, I am and always shall be—and I want to avoid acting in an official capacity. Again, and for **the last time**, I must insist you cease and desist, and immediately.

EXCERPT FROM WIZARD SIMON PIETROVICH'S REPLY, 1902

...Ebenezar, I do not know how else to say that rumors are false. I understand consequences if I were to have done these things, both for me and for world. Please, Ebenezar, grant that I am no fool. Building railroad, do people believe that I am child playing with toys? What is next, tin soldiers? Dressing dolls?

Tsar Nicholas has become my good friend. He is not as his reputation describes. He relies on me for personal advice, not political. He knows that he cannot ask me to exercise my art for his benefit. I have been unambiguous on this point to him. I have not done what rumors say and I will not. I will attempt to demonstrate greater discretion so that impropriety does not appear; however, I will not abandon my friend.

However, if we could turn to more pleasant thoughts, you and I need to discuss publication of Irishman Stoker's book regarding vampires...

Oh right, DRACULA had just been released, right?

Just a few years prior, yeah. It was probably making a real impact, or starting to, by this point.

Enter Rasputin

By 1905, the situation was beginning to spiral out of control from Simon's point of view. Things were going very poorly for Nicholas, Simon was out of ideas for how to help, and Ebenezar and the White Council were breathing down his neck. What's a wizard to do? Bringing in help might be a good idea; one of his apprentices rode to the rescue.

FROM THE JOURNAL OF SIMON PIETROVICH, EARLY 1905

... News from East continues to be bad and grows steadily worse; Japan's victories mount with our dead. I knew this war was folly, but I could say nothing. I can say nothing. And today reports come of unrest in St. Petersburg, of soldiers shooting into crowds of workers. Many are dead.

I fear for my friend. He is not reacting well to this spate of bad news. I fear that he will become erratic, that he will buckle under the tremendous pressure. The rumors that little Tsarevich Alexi may have the same bleeding disorder as his royal ancestors may be too much for him to bear.

I have urged him to take some rest, to retire to the countryside for peace and quiet for a little while...

EXCERPT FROM A LETTER FROM AN APPRENTICE OF SIMON PIETROVICH, NAME UNKNOWN, 1905

... Master, I may have found a man who could be of some assistance to the Tsarevich. I know you have instructed me to ignore the spiritualists and holy men and faith healers infesting St. Petersburg, but I know a young lady at Court (one Anna Vyrubova, do you know her?) who introduced me to a Siberian monk named Grigori Rasputin. He is different from the innumerable charlatans that read palms and sell favors to people who do not have anything better on which to spend their money; I saw a spark of real power in his eyes. I believe that he is worth talking to; perhaps he can help Tsarevich Alexi...

Well, that worked out just peachy for everybody, didn't it?

There's an interesting thing about this apprentice (we'll call him the Apprentice, so you know we're talking about someone specific). In the copies of Simon's letters we have, his name was scratched out everywhere it would have appeared. It's like he didn't want anyone to know who this was, erasing him from the record. When a correspondence pack rat like Simon Pietrovich does that, he has a reason. All that we know is that it's a "he;" Simon used the male pronoun.

FROM THE JOURNAL OF SIMON PIETROVICH, MID 1905

... The Tsar and Tsarina have accepted the biomancer Rasputin's assistance for Alexi. Why is it that I feel we have gone a step too far?...

His immediate reaction was on the money. In a long journal entry from 1923, Simon Pietrovich looked back on this situation and saw it for the bad idea that it was. Here's the start of the most relevant bit:

FROM THE JOURNAL OF SIMON PIETROVICH, 1923

...I recognized that Rasputin's talent for biomancy was advanced far beyond my own, and I convinced Tsar and Tsarina to accept Rasputin as Alexi's healer. The Tsarina, in particular, became quite attached to Rasputin, crediting him alone with keeping her beloved Alexi alive.

For all Rasputin's ability, he was not a man of moderate appetites. Where I was able to maintain my anonymity, Rasputin was addicted to alcohol and frequently engaged in public debauchery. His womanizing became as notorious as his drinking, and his willingness to sell his holy blessings to any willing to pay for them in rubles was an open secret. He became unpopular among the people. Whispers and murmurs questioning the Tsarina's close association with him grew...

Was Simon protecting someone?

Justin DuMorne, Harry's master, was one of Simon's apprentices, right?

Nope, stop right there. Harry didn't like talking about DuMorne, so we're gonna respect his wishes. No conspiracy theories involving DuMorne.

Got it.

The Great War and the Beginning of the End

The First World War broke out in 1914. Nicholas remembered Russia's humiliating defeat by Japan ten years previously; the headstrong and foolish Tsar was determined to fight. Simon knew it was a bad idea, but his hands were tied. He couldn't get involved in political decision making—and he claims he didn't.

FROM THE JOURNAL OF SIMON PIETROVICH, AUGUST 1914

Nicholas is determined to go to war. Memories of Crimea and the Far East weigh too heavily on his pride. Damn him! The country is in no shape to fight Belgium, much less Austria, Germany, and the Ottoman Turks at once. I fear this will be his undoing. It will be Russia's undoing, and it will be Nicholas's fault. My God, what am I to do?

I think Simon is selling the Russian Army a little short here, but his point stands.

Keep in mind that the Tsarina was German, which alone guaranteed that she wasn't going to win any popularity contests in Russia during WWI. Also remember that Rasputin was both very close to her and loathed by the public.

Next, Rasputin got rid of Simon by manipulating Nicholas into going to the front, taking Simon with him. You can guess what happened next. Simon summarized it in a pretty ranty journal entry.

FROM THE JOURNAL OF SIMON PIETROVICH, 1915

Nicholas has led the Army to yet another miserable defeat. Thousands are dead, morale is terrible, and the troops are retreating in disarray. If he would let his generals do their jobs, they might have a chance, but even so the Army is poorly equipped, poorly led, and no match for the Germans. He has demanded that I do something with my magic; I had to explain yet again that it would do no good, that I am forbidden to intervene using magic in any way and that even if I could, war had progressed to the point where even a powerful individual could not turn the tide. I could murder dozens at a time with great blasts of flame, but when hundreds of thousands slaughter one another with machine guns and poison gas, even my abilities fade to insignificance.

My Apprentice (illegible) has described the state of affairs in Petrograd as untenable. Without the Tsar's or my supervision, Rasputin feels no need to conceal his rampant whoring and drinking. He is keeping Alexi alive, which keeps him in the Tsarina's good graces; but her fascination with Rasputin is obvious to all, and the people no longer respect her. Apprentice Larisa Alexeyevna reports that the people call him the Madman of Petrograd. Things are bound to explode. I must find a way to convince Nicholas to make peace and end this insanity.

Damn that Rasputin. It's his doing that I'm here, where I can't control the situation. Damn my apprentice, who brought the lunatic to our attention to begin with. Damn the Tsar, who refuses to get rid of him. Damn me, for not being able to just walk away like Ebenezar keeps telling me to do.

Damn it all.

Is it Petrograd or St. Petersburg?

Both. The Tsar changed the city's name from the German "St. Petersburg" to the Russian "Petrograd" early in the Great War. You know—given that his army was locked in a death struggle with the Germans at the time.

That's very interesting, but I think Butters' point is that you should pick one and stick with it. I know, small minds and hobgoblins, but still. It's Petrograd in 1918, so go with that.

Hobgoblins have small minds? Must ask Bob.



It was all downhill from here for Russia. Mutinies in armed forces, strikes among workers, and insurrections among peasantry became frequent. The authority of the long, proud line of Romanov Tsars was evaporating.

Worse for Simon, McCoy's patience had run out.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM WIZARD EBENEZAR MCCOY TO WIZARD SIMON PIETROVICH, 1916

... I am not going to mince words. The White Council received word that you were at the front with Nicholas. We are **very** concerned about this. You have made a damned mess, and while I still give you the benefit of the doubt and don't truly believe that you actually violated the prohibition, **the Blackstaff** is now ordering you to walk away. Immediately. Or, friend or no friend, I will be paying you a visit, and it will **not** be friendly.

For the love of God, Simon, don't make me do that.

EXCERPT FROM WIZARD SIMON PIETROVICH'S REPLY, 1916

...Wizard McCoy, I have received your letter. I understand, and accept your judgment on this matter. I will be returning to my estate in Arkhangelsk within week, and will not return to Court. My Apprentice (illegible) will accompany me, and I will gather my other students to impress upon them the importance of remaining aloof from current turmoil. I will write you again once I arrive.

For those of you keeping score at home, that's a Wizard of the White Council putting his tail between his legs and going home. In case you doubted how scary Ebenezar McCoy can be to people who understand how powerful he is.

Simon wrote to his Apprentice to have him prepare their belongings for travel. He couldn't resist one more potshot at Rasputin, an offhand comment that proved fateful.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM WIZARD SIMON PIETROVICH TO UNNAMED APPRENTICE, 1916

...Please have our belongings packed and made ready for delivery to Arkhangelsk as soon as possible. Apprentice Larisa Alexeyevna will keep watch on Petrograd. I forbid any further contact with Rasputin, the Tsar or Tsarina, or any other member of the Imperial family.

I regret ever laying eyes on the madman Rasputin. He has ruined everything, and has the Tsar and Tsarina under his spell. I wish his mother had smothered him in the cradle. Once again, you are forbidden to see him. Make ready for travel, we will depart for Arkhangelsk together as soon as I return to Petrograd.

The months went by, and Simon was back in Archangel. The war went the way it'd been going—Russia was creaking under its own weight, but there still might have been hope to keep it from coming apart at the seams. Then, very late in the year, Simon composed the following journal entry.

Offhand comment? Sounds like "Will no one rid me of this meddlesome priest?" to me.

Huh?

Thomas Becket? Richard Burton and Peter O'Toole?

It's a story about plausible deniability.

Oh. OH. Huh. Maybe.

Also, is the "Apprentice Larisa Alexeyevna" he mentions Larisa Yevtushenko, the wizard later in this chapter?

The very same.

FROM THE JOURNAL OF SIMON PIETROVICH, 1916

I believe that my Apprentice (illegible) has murdered Grigori Rasputin.

He arrived at my chambers and announced that the Rasputin problem had been tidied up, and that I need not worry about it any longer.

After some strenuous questioning he admitted that he made arrangements for a gunman to kill Rasputin. He claimed to be following my orders, when I wrote that I regretted ever laying eyes on Rasputin. He's always been overeager, such a strong desire to please and to anticipate my wishes. He seems to have read more into my ravings than I intended. I had to restrain myself from incinerating the presumptuous, meddling halfwit on the spot. Making an assassination attempt on the Merlin in broad daylight may have demonstrated worse judgment, but only slightly.

I'm still trying to absorb the implications of this debacle. I would have the staff prepare a guest room for Wizard McCoy, but it is quite possible that my own bed will be available, as I may not be needing it much longer.

Sure enough, in late January of 1917, the following entry was recorded in Simon's journal:



Simon just gave McCoy his apprentice on a platter? Just like that? That's **cold**.

Simon Pietrovich didn't have the aspect Warm & Fuzzy.

How cold was he? Any reason to believe that Simon handed over the wrong apprentice?

That's a disturbing thought.

No conspiracy theories, you two.

FROM THE JOURNAL OF SIMON PIETROVICH, 1917

Today's events are not ones I wish to repeat, ever again.

Ebenezar McCoy arrived today. He bore the Blackstaff. A sword-carrying, grey-cloak wearing Warden was with him, a big Scot whose name I did not recognize. I invited them inside. Ebenezar did not waste time on small talk. He didn't wait for the tea that I invited him to have. He simply demanded to know who was responsible for the Rasputin disaster. I quietly dismissed the servants so we could speak privately, and I told Wizard McCoy exactly what happened, that Apprentice (illegible) claimed that I ordered Rasputin's death. I assured Wizard McCoy that I did no such thing, that my Apprentice had acted of his own accord and initiative.

Wizard McCoy demanded that Apprentice (illegible) be brought to them. I sent for him, and a moment later he arrived. Without a word, the Warden took him away. Apprentice (illegible) was confused, but went willingly. I suspected what was going to happen, but I said nothing.

Before he joined the Warden, Ebenezar quietly informed me that he did not want to pay me another visit unless it was for convivial purposes. I could only agree. What else was I to do? Then, he informed me that the White Council is formally requesting that I serve as its main information source on the growing turmoil in Russia. That I was to gather whatever news, intelligence, and information I could, and regularly report it to the Council. And that I was forbidden from attempting to influence events in any way, save for the protection of myself or my estate in Arkhangelsk. Again, I agreed.

The Council has given me a job to do, one that will presumably both keep me out of trouble and provide a means to keep track of exactly what I am doing. I am both insulted and relieved; I am now the White Council's informant, but if the alternative was to duel Wizard McCoy, I escaped lightly.

Apprentice (illegible) did not return. I do not expect that he will.

And Nicholas II is the last Tsar, President, King, or Patriarch that I shall ever befriend.

Simon took these orders seriously. With some exceptions, he stayed at his estate in Archangel, and he used his apprentices and students to gather information for him. For instance, when the city of Novgorod became a focus of supernatural conflict in the Civil War and Simon lost his initial informant there, he ordered his apprentice Larisa Yevtushenko to Novgorod to observe. You can see the sensitivity that he's still feeling about possible violations of the Laws of Magic; it's pretty obvious he doesn't want a repeat visit from McCoy.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM SIMON PIETROVICH TO LARISA YEVTUSHENKO, OCTOBER 1917

My dear Larisa Alexeyevna,

I send you greetings and I hope this letter finds you well...

...I apologize for the terseness of my letter, but I am faced with a situation of some urgency. As you are aware, I have retired to my estate in Arkhangelsk and wish not to involve myself in the current political situation. My most advanced students have been distributed around the country in order to keep me informed of important events.

You have certainly heard that an unfortunate incident recently occurred in Novgorod. I am aware of the rampant rumor-mongering among my students regarding this incident; please note that there is absolutely no evidence of a single Second Law violation, much less the involuntary conversion of a dozen of the Tsar's soldiers into a drove of hares, so all discussion of such rumors will cease immediately. I trust I have made myself abundantly clear on that point.

However, Second Law violations or no, I do find myself in sudden and urgent need of a new information source. Proceed to the city of Novgorod. I have arranged living accommodations at the Koslovsky Boardinghouse. Upon your arrival, tell the mistress of the house that you are my student, and you will be shown your room. You are to report to me monthly, via the post, any intelligence you can find regarding the supernatural situation and events, especially regarding the Winter Court of Faerie...

But what happened to Rasputin? That's perhaps best described by Simon himself, again from his 1923, 20/20 hindsight journal entry:

FROM THE JOURNAL OF SIMON PIETROVICH, 1923

An assassin shot Rasputin through the head in late 1916.

This setback inconvenienced him for the better part of a month.

I knew Rasputin was a talented biomancer, but I had not anticipated how talented. I learned details much later, through means that I do not wish to commit to writing. Through the power of his magic, Rasputin survived a cranial gunshot wound that would have killed almost anyone else. As his will wrestled with his biology over his fate, Mab, the Winter Queen, appeared to him and proposed a bargain: she would deliver to him life and great power, and in exchange he would deliver Russia to her.

While maintaining the public fiction that he was dead, Rasputin incited revolution in February of 1917, using psychomancy sponsored by Winter. He wielded the lightest, most delicate of touches on the minds of large numbers of people, inciting anger and hatred and lust for justice. He arranged for a young firebrand named Lenin to return to Petrograd from exile in Finland, and then simply awaited the inevitable second revolution—this one with Lenin in public control—in October of the same year.

End montage! The Romanovs—the Tsar, the Tsarina, Alexi, and the rest of their children—were executed, reportedly on Lenin's orders, in July of 1918. Mortal history records the date of Rasputin's death as December 29, 1916. His true fate is unknown.

I WONDER WHAT RASPUTIN HAS BEEN UP TO SINCE THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION...

I'm glad to say that I have no idea. Don't even want to question if he's even still alive...

SOMEONE TURNED A BUNCH OF RUSSIAN SOLDIERS INTO A HERD OF **BUNNIES**? YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING ME.

I **SO** want the whole story on that, but we couldn't find any other reference to it.



Let's follow Larisa Yevtushenko to Novgorod.

A Handy Timeline

Did you follow all that? In case you need a reminder, here are some of the highlights in chronological order:

March 1881: Alexander III becomes Tsar

1882: Simon starts teaching the Ministry of the Interior & Russian Orthodox Church about vampires

1889: McCoy asks Simon to reduce his involvement with Alexander

November 1894: Nicolas II becomes Tsar

1897: Bram Stoker publishes Dracula

1902: rumors about Simon breaking Laws really start flying

1904 – 1905: Russia goes disastrously to war with Japan

1905: the Apprentice introduces Rasputin to Simon and Tsar Nicholas

1905 – 1908: the Revolution of 1905; Tsar Nicholas keeps power with some concessions and much blood shed

1914: Nicholas enters WWI; Simon knows this is a bad idea, but his hands are tied

1915: Simon and Nicholas are at the front, where things are going very badly; in Petrograd, public opinion has turned against Rasputin and the Tsarina

1916: McCoy commands Simon to walk away; Simon returns to Archangel where he remains

December 1916: Rasputin is assassinated by a gunman hired by the Apprentice

January 1917: McCoy deals with the Apprentice, Simon is asked to provide information about Russia to the White Council

February 1917: Rasputin, sponsored by Winter, incites the February Revolution

March 1917: Tsar Nicholas II abdicates

October 1917: Rasputin influences Lenin, resulting in the October revolution

November 1917: Larisa Yevtushenko arrives in Novgorod

July 1918: Tsar Nicolas II and his entire family are executed

October 1918: our story picks up in Novgorod

The City of Novgorod, October 1918

Not only was it a center of transportation and munitions production, but the city of Novgorod also became an important focus of supernatural conflict during the Russian Civil War. In addition to the sources of conflict, we'll discuss important people and places in the city. But first, we need to establish a basic understanding of the city's geography, economy, and climate—the encyclopedia stuff.

We're talking about Veliky Novgorod here, not Nizhny Novgorod—that's a completely different city a thousand miles away.

Can't have too many Novgorods. Gotta keep the postal service on its toes, you know.

There's a couple in Ukraine, too, but they're spelled differently. I can read Wikipedia same as you can.

Encyclopedia

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM LARISA YEVTUSHENKO TO SIMON PIETROVICH, NOVEMBER 1917

Teacher,

As instructed, I have arrived in Novgorod and secured lodging at Koslovsky Boardinghouse. I am, of course, honored that you would see fit to assign me to observe one of the oldest cities in Slavic civilization. Novgorod has been a part of Russian history since the beginning of Russian history, and I will endeavor to report its most recent history to you faithfully, accurately, and completely.

Novgorod was the center of the first great Russian nations a thousand years ago, and as such it leaves a legacy of beautiful medieval architecture—cathedrals and palaces and fortifications—that I have already discovered, despite having been here less than three days. Its residents are proud of the rich history in the city.

Although it is perhaps more accurate to say that they *would* be, if they weren't preoccupied with simple survival. After four years of a devastating war, a near famine, two revolutions, an impending influenza epidemic, and the beginning of a civil war, historical appreciation is not foremost in most peoples' minds right now...

I know most of you hold advanced degrees in Russian geography, but for all you troglodytes out there who don't, here's some basic information to get you oriented to what Novgorod is like.

Geography & Economy

About 100 miles south of Petrograd, Novgorod is an important transport center. It's the hub of a rail system linking the cities of Petrograd, Moscow, and Pskov. The Volkhov River divides the city in two; it's wide and navigable, and it flows from Lake Ilmen just south of the city to Lake Ladoga near Petrograd.

Novgorod is a small city struggling to survive economic collapse, revolutions, and by now a year of civil war. Unemployment, poverty, and hunger are rampant; fit men of military age are a rare sight. Farmers try to scratch out a living, but the 1918 summer harvest wasn't good, and so many workers have been killed in the Great War or conscripted to fight in the Civil War that farm labor is short and food is scarce for most common people. The Novgorod Soviet (the local "workers' council") is prioritizing the war effort; they make sure the munitions plant keeps churning out artillery shells and rifle cartridges for the Bolshevik Army, and that the rail lines stay open.

Climate

Novgorod, like all of northern Russia, has bitterly cold and snowy winters and cool, moderately dry summers. Winter weather can inhibit road and boat travel, but the Volkhov River freezes over in the winter, allowing sleighs, sledges, and ice skates to be used; in peaceful times, children play bandy (a game similar to hockey) on the river and Lake Ilmen. The wooded countryside is lovely, in a Doctor Zhivago sort of way, but make no mistake—the song "Winter Wonderland" was not written by a Russian. For the unprepared traveler or undersupplied farmer, whether it's the frigid air, the blowing snow, or the ravenous wolves, the winter countryside in 1918 Russia is no less deadly than a Bolshevik's bullet.

Butters... Last Friday when you couldn't make the Arcanos session, were you... were you playing a different game with another group?

Will Borden succeeds on his Streetwise check, justifying a GM infodump.

This game doesn't have a "Streetwise" skill...

I'm sorry! It meant nothing, it was just a one shot!

I can't believe I'm reading this.

Supernatural Presence

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM LARISA YEVTUSHENKO TO SIMON PIETROVICH, SEPTEMBER 1918

... There currently appears to be no clear dominant power among the supernaturals in Novgorod. The chaos of the larger national power vacuum exists here as well. The community is still adjusting to the sudden end of the influence of the Black Court vampires; I see copies of Bram Stoker's work around the city, and believe it was as effective here as everywhere else. I suspect there are still a few Black Court present in the region, but they are carefully avoiding leaving overt signs. Of course, the Winter Court of Faerie has long been a presence here and they are pushing hard to achieve dominance.

I find myself hoping someone ends up in charge, one way or another. Numerous predators (one taking on the persona of a monster from local folklore) are using Novgorod as their private hunting grounds. If order is not established here soon, things are going to get very ugly indeed for the mortals.

The Mortal Response

EXCERPT FROM A LETTER FROM AN UNNAMED INFORMANT TO SIMON PIETROVICH, DATED JULY 1918

...Master, you asked me to investigate the means by which the mortal residents of Novgorod cope with the presence of predatory creatures and entities far more powerful than themselves. I will investigate this further, but over the last 50 years the people of Novgorod have dealt with several wars, rampant corruption, famine, disease, and a murderously tyrannical government. Collectively, they barely notice the occasional lycanthrope attack. Supernatural predators are, quite simply, not a great deal worse than what they are already used to coping with...

Who's this "unnamed informant"?

Don't know. Yevtushenko was one of many informants Simon Pietrovich had scattered around Russia. There were others in Novgorod before she got there.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM SIMON PIETROVICH TO LARISA YEVTUSHENKO, JUNE 1918

...While most sane mortals have an innate desire to live their lives with minimal fuss and disturbance, I have been receiving reports that a growing number of people have embraced the current madness. Without being a formal part of the brewing Revolution, they have taken out their anger at the former ruling class in truly creative, if bloody, ways. Of course we know that many have learned how to manipulate the Cheka, and wield the threat of denunciation to get their way in all manner of disputes from serious to petty, but we must investigate whether this bloodlust extends to the supernatural community...

Any of them sit in wine shops, knitting?

Wrong revolution.

Huh?

Haven't you read Dickens?



Mortal Life in 1918 Novgorod

Who's in charge?

The Bolsheviks are nominally in charge, but the Novgorod Soviet handles the day-to-day details of making the city work. They don't exactly do a great job, but they're trying.

How do people get their daily essentials?

Buying and selling for money has been outlawed. All residents have ration cards that entitle them to food staples: bread, flour, oil, salt, potatoes, vodka, sometimes cheese or butter, sometimes tea, and if they're lucky (or have a higher priority ration card) a little meat or fresh fruit or vegetables, if they're in season. It's almost never enough. Sometimes goods like lamp oil and clothing are available, if you know the right people. Prestigious jobs or good connections lead to higher priority ration cards. Food and dry goods are available at designated distribution points. Many residents also participate in highly illegal black market activity, where bartering and occasionally selling for old Imperial rubles still happens.

Who comes running when trouble breaks out?

If it's the sort of trouble the cops or firefighters would respond to in a Western city, look for the NKVD police to eventually get around to investigating, but don't hold your breath. There are volunteer fire brigades who do a decent job, and the Cheka (the Bolsheviks' secret police) mercilessly prosecute political crimes. Petty crime remains a big problem.

So what do Superb (+5) Resources look like here?

Good question. Could be that you have a stash of really useful stuff to barter with: fuel, ammo, forged ration cards, a pile of foreign currency. But getting what you want is often more a matter of who you know than what you have. GMs might sometimes require a Contacts check rather than, or in addition to, Resources when you're looking for a particular item.

How is Novgorod connected with the rest of Russia?

Long-range transport is generally done via the Volkhov River or rail. The rail line through Novgorod is increasingly important to the Red Army war effort, both because of Novgorod's rail hub that connects many of the larger Western cities (Petrograd, Moscow, and Minsk, to name three), but also because the munitions produced at Novgorod's factories are shipped to the front in boxcars along those rail lines.

Government offices have telegraph service to Petrograd and Moscow; ordinary people don't have access to this. The postal service continues to operate more efficiently than you might expect during a civil war; letters and parcels are sometimes opened and searched for counterrevolutionary material, but the mail generally gets through. There is no independent press in 1918 Russia. Radio hasn't taken off yet, and the only newspapers are broadsheets posted on common boards that just repeat Bolshevik/Communist party propaganda. Non-official mass communication—pamphlets, papers, and the like—are suppressed severely.

What are people afraid of?

Well, now we come to it. Fear is about the only thing the Russians aren't short of.

Hunger and starvation is the current top worry for a lot of the common workers; the big Russian cities used to be able to count on rail cars full of the bountiful harvests from all across western Russia and Ukraine and Poland; these have been much less frequent in recent years, and there's just not enough to fill every belly in the city. Every night an awful lot of people go to bed hungry, and it's getting worse—and with the Spanish flu epidemic tickling Russia's borders, a run-down and hungry populace is ripe for decimation.

The secret police are the other major fear. As much as the true believers are worried that counterrevolutionary forces lurk under every rock and behind every tree, most apolitical Russians are simply worried that the Cheka, or maybe a Red Army press gang, will come knocking one night, and they'll never be seen again.

The sort of superstitious beliefs that you need to really, truly be afraid of the dark are frowned on by the Bolsheviks these days. Folks who watch for vampires and witches are fewer than they once were, and they tend to keep it to themselves.

Wait, who the hell are the NKVD?

Based on a quick Internet search, looks like they're the cops. Different group than the Cheka. The NKVD really got powerful under Stalin in the 1930s. Local cops and firefighters were technically in the NKVD.

Game-wise, unless you want to deal with some major mortal intrigue, don't overcomplicate things too much by worrying about them as a separate faction. They're just the local cops, as opposed to the state security Cheka, and—most importantly—they almost always have something better to do.

Knowing what we know now, it's a safe bet that a lot of those "disappearances" blamed on state security have a more...exotic explanation.

Or not. People pushed to the breaking point are capable of some pretty horrible stuff.



Who's Fighting for What

When thinking about how organizations were forming at this point in history, you can't ignore the effect of the recent demise of the Black Court. This was an absolute detonation in the supernatural world; everything was different after that. You combine that with the fundamentally glacial pace at which supernaturals tend to organize themselves and react to change, and you get the situation where the truly organized factions in Novgorod are very mortal-centric. The Winter Fae are about the only supernaturals approaching this situation with any sort of plan or cooperation. The other supernatural entities involved here look like free agents and wildcatters.

This is not unlike another situation where one of the major players, such as another entire vampire court, was taken out of the picture. Sort of like right now, modern day Chicago. Scratch that, modern day *worldwide*.



Well, yeah. We're facing a similar situation right now—the world's been turned upside down, from a supernatural point of view. In 1918 Russia, it was the mortal world, too. Our trick will be to keep ours in the supernatural world.

The Novgorod Soviet

What They Want: A) To protect their own positions B) To protect the workers—when doing so doesn't interfere with A.

How They Accomplish It in Novgorod: Lots of talking. Lots of drinking.

EXCERPT FROM A LETTER FROM LARISA YEVTUSHENKO TO SIMON PIETROVICH, SEPTEMBER 1918

... The local workers' council is, unsurprisingly, predominantly but not exclusively machinists and laborers from the three big factories in the city, with some representation of peasants and farmers from the surrounding countryside. During the Great War, the factories made artillery shells and rifle cartridges for the Imperial Army. Now only the customer, not the product, has changed: the Red Army is taking monthly shipments. The Soviet's job is, officially, to represent the Proletariat in Novgorod, but without the means to enforce their decisions they are subject to the whim of those that can, which is the Bolsheviks and the Cheka, who wield both political and martial power. The Bolsheviks from Petrograd push hard for more and more munitions. The Novgorod Soviet tries to fulfill these demands while nominally providing a voice for the overworked laborers, but in reality they spend most of their time drinking staggering quantities of vodka while talking about what they ought to do. To actually do something would risk losing the positions and lavish ration cards they've won for themselves...



The Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)

What They Want: To ensure that the Revolution succeeds, the White Army and foreign interventionists are defeated, and the Bolshevik Party is in control.

How They Accomplish It in Novgorod: Hovering over the shoulders of the Novgorod Soviet while making marks on clipboards, insisting on increased munitions production.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM AN UNNAMED INFORMANT TO SIMON PIETROVICH, JANUARY 1918

Teacher,

...Petrograd continues to be the center from which the Bolsheviks operate; as you said, despite its status as the Tsar's old capital, it is the first flowering of the Revolution, although Lenin has been seen in Moscow recently. They send representatives out to all parts of Russia nominally to ensure that local Soviets and Red Guards units are maintaining ideological correctness—to spy, in other words. They generally do not bother with subtlety; they know perfectly well who is in charge. Of course, how much that certainty reflects reality depends a great deal on the skill of the local Party representative and the competence of the local Red Guards unit. In Novgorod, the Bolshevik representatives are pushing the local Soviet hard to increase munitions production, even at the cost of worker safety...

Meet the new boss, same as the old boss.

The Cheka

What They Want: To ensure that the Revolution remains pure, that counterrevolutionary ideas and people are suppressed.

How They Accomplish It in Novgorod: Investigating accusations of crimes against the Party and punishing them. Usually with a single bullet.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM LARISA YEVTUSHENKO TO SIMON PIETROVICH, AUGUST 1918

... The Cheka were created by the Bolsheviks in January of this year, intended to be spies, secret police, and specialists at eliminating the troublesome. In practice, they operate largely independently of the Party apparatus, with field agents reporting directly to their own leadership, if they report to anyone at all. Their mandate is to quash ideological impurity and counterrevolutionary thought, and it is up to them to decide what constitutes both. In practice, that goes about as well as you would imagine that it might.

Paranoia is running high among them since the Western Allies landed troops to assist the White Army. Consequently, the Cheka mercilessly prosecute accused counterrevolutionaries. This has inspired vindictive Russians of all stripes to suddenly "discover" that anyone against whom they have been nursing a grudge is engaging in counterrevolutionary behavior. Mortal men and women are terrified of the Cheka, and justifiably so. Their agents show neither mercy nor gentleness; summary execution based upon very little evidence, and sometimes based simply upon accusation, is common. They regularly make a spectacle of public executions. I suppose that once in a while the condemned really *is* a counterrevolutionary, if only because pure chance would seem to dictate it.

In short, Teacher, the Cheka have become home to a number of murderous sociopaths, men with absolute moral certainty but without conscience. They bear watching carefully lest they be infiltrated by creatures attracted to or empowered by such behavior...

So the mortal cops are crazed killers? Who are the monsters here?

The Red Guards

What They Want: To defend the Revolution, and not to get shot.

How They Accomplish It in Novgorod: Taking up arms when called upon, but not too eagerly.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM LARISA YEVTUSHENKO TO SIMON PIETROVICH, JULY 1918

... Teacher, you have inquired as to the competence of the Red Guards militia as a military unit. I have seen them drill, and, honestly, I am not impressed. They are clearly not professional soldiers. Their training and equipment are middling at best, although some of them have combat experience from the Great War or the war against Japan. The unit in Novgorod has a dozen or so of these combat veterans; if forced to fight they might manage not to embarrass themselves too badly, but they certainly could not hope to defeat a competent enemy. If the safety of the Revolution rests upon them then the Revolution is in trouble, but for the fact that no organized force exists that can challenge them—which speaks more to the pitiful state of counterrevolutionary forces than to the quality of the Guards. They owe more loyalty to their own skins, and to their friends and family, than to any political ideology.

It should be noted that here in Novgorod, most of the local NKVD police are also members of the Guards unit.

Counter-Revolutionaries

What they Want: To defeat the Bolsheviks.

How They Accomplish It in Novgorod: Espionage, sabotage, and murder.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM AN UNNAMED INFORMANT TO SIMON PIETROVICH, OCTOBER 1918

... Scattered across every Russian city are people that are not at all happy with the Bolsheviks and their Revolution. Many are doing everything they can make things difficult for the Bolsheviks: sabotaging a rail line here, blowing up a bridge there, hijacking telegraph lines, interfering with munitions production, and other such things. Some of them used to be nobility under the old regime and want to bring back the Tsars; others are moderate socialists who think the Bolsheviks have gone too far. A few are foreign agents from right-wing organizations and Western governments.

Some say that the Bolsheviks overstate the danger posed by these people, in order to justify their own authority and the extreme measures that they take. I do not share that point of view; I believe that the counterrevolutionaries are genuinely dangerous to the new rulers of Russia...



Distributing spies around the country stands a really good chance to still make things a lot worse, if the wrong people find out. White Council members need to keep their heads down and political footprints small.

White Council

What They Want: To remain informed of events without making things worse than they already have.

How They Accomplish It in Novgorod: Distributing spies to Novgorod

FROM A LETTER, ORIGINALLY WRITTEN IN LATIN, FROM SIMON PIETROVICH TO THE MERLIN, MARCH 1918

...As ranking Senior Council for Eastern Europe, I have carried out your orders regarding information and intelligence gathering operations during the mortal political reorganization of Russia. I have sent many reports on the state of the Black Court of Vampires, and the attempt of the Winter Queen to assert her power across Russia. I have assets attempting to learn everything possible regarding her intentions and resources she may bring to bear...



Winter Fae

What they Want: Russia, through the Bolsheviks.

How They Accomplish It in Novgorod: All indications are that the Winter Knight is in town, making sure things turn out his way.

EXCERPT FROM A LETTER, ORIGINALLY WRITTEN IN ENGLISH, FROM SIMON PIETROVICH TO EBENEZAR MCCOY, SEPTEMBER 1918

... With power of Black Court finally broken after thousand years of dominance, Winter Court is finally most powerful single faction in Russia. Queen Mab is asserting, and attempting to consolidate, her power and has apparently decided that Bolshevik rule would suit her purposes best. I have strong reasons to believe that Rasputin recovered from his murder with Queen Mab's help, and he is now quietly influencing events with psychomancy empowered by his Fae patroness. I am convinced he arranged for return of Lenin to Petrograd and influenced workers to support his revolution, which led to fall of interim government.

Influence of Queen Mab goes farther than sponsoring Rasputin, however. Reports of their activity come to me from all across Russia, as well as from Finland and parts of Eastern Europe. I suspect, but know not for certain, that the Winter Knight is active in Russia as I write this, possibly posing as Cheka secret policeman.

I can only speculate about Queen Mab's motivation for this. I do not know what she gains from dominating mortal country, even one so clearly suited to her domain as Russia is…

Winter Is Coming!

Hey, I read that book.

If only someone had built a big wall made of ice...

I cheated and read ahead a little. When Simon Pietrovich talks about the Winter Knight, he's talking about this Bolshov guy you mention in the next section, isn't he?

Seems that way.



Hell yeah. Say hello to my little friend.

Themes and Threats

Based on Simon's papers, here are some threats and themes that apply to Russia in 1918.

Theme: We Are Mortal, Hear Us Roar

Mortal Europe has been engaged in a four-year-long bloodbath, slaughtering each other by the millions using techniques never seen before. Industrial-scale warfare using fire, iron-cased bombs, machine guns with steel-jacketed rounds, poison gas, millions of men moving as one—Mortal Ferromancy, as the Fae call it. These things have gotten the attention of the more observant supernatural types, and the smart ones are a little worried. The mortals have found their fangs and are willing to bite.

Players, invoke this when your mortal PC decides to introduce that demon to his brand new Vickers machine gun.

GMs, invoke this when the wizard PC tries to intimidate the peasant mob and realizes they're not afraid of him.

Theme: No Good Deed Goes Unpunished

Russia is where idealism goes to die. Trying to benefit the workers? Trying to hold the chaos at bay by propping up the authorities? Just trying to protect the innocent while the world goes to hell around you? Watch it blow up in your face. Every. Single. Time.

GMs, compel this to introduce complications whenever someone tries to Do The Right Thing. Compel it mercilessly. This theme could end up a major source of fate points for the PCs.

Threat: Through Dismal Winter

If Russians—and supernaturals—thought that the Great War was a slaughter, they ain't seen nothin' yet. The coming winter promises not only snow and ice and deadly cold, but cruelty and paranoia and a collective madness that will make the French Reign of Terror back in 1794 look like a birthday party. People are afraid—of hunger and disease, of the Cheka, of counterrevolutionaries, of one another.

GMs, compel this to introduce complications when the PCs *aren't* trying to Do The Right Thing. Play up the atmosphere of inevitable doom, of looming disaster, of being on the precipice of calamity.



The Drivers of Conflict

Based on what we gleaned from Simon's papers, there are a half-dozen simmering conflicts that could make everyone's life difficult. We talk about all of these characters in much more detail in "People & Places" on page 76.

Koschei the Deathless (page 101) has been a figure of Russian mythology for centuries. One of the supernatural predators lurking around Novgorod claims to be Koschei. Maybe it really is the immortal sorcerer. Young women are advised not to travel alone after dark.

The Winter Court's presence in Novgorod is represented by the Cheka officer **Nicolai Bolshov** (page 94), who is under orders from both the Winter Court of Fae and his mortal political masters in Petrograd to ensure that the Revolution succeeds at any cost. He is a cruel and remorseless killer.

Alexsandr Durov (page 91) is the Bolshevik representative in Novgorod. He was sent by the party leaders in Petrograd to ensure ideological purity and, more importantly, to ensure that production of munitions and war material remains the top priority of Novgorod's factories. All he cares about is his next promotion, and he drives the workers hard.

Anna Trushina (page 88), head of the Novgorod Soviet (the local workers' governing council), pushes back against Durov's impossible demands, but she must be careful not to push too hard.

Dmitri Yegorov (page 99) is a simple peasant driven to madness by the excesses of the old rulers. He sees himself as a tool of vengeance against the nobility, and his chosen methods speak to the sadism that mortals are capable of resorting to. He has no idea of the danger he brings to the city.

Baba Golovina (page 90) is an bitter, elderly woman who has found a measure of power and relevance in both satisfying old grudges and generating new ones. Her rash and frequent accusations make her a true wild card.

Boris Gulin (page 92) is a black marketeer, smuggler, and thug, and he is making a tidy sum trading in illegal and off-the-books goods. He also shows no mercy to those that cheat him, cross him, or cannot pay their debts.

Jakub Skorski (page 85) is a Polish sorcerer who doesn't care a whit about anyone's laws, either magical or mundane. Years ago, he severely underestimated one of his victims and paid dearly for it. He's looking to return the favor.

Finally, **Baba Yaga** (page 106) herself lurks on the periphery of things, watching and plotting her own inscrutable plots. Crossing her path has proven highly detrimental to the health of many throughout Russian history.

People and Places

The excerpts we've included so far give you a good idea of what Simon has in mind for Novgorod and why the suggested player character Larisa Yevtushenko is there. More letters follow, describing various characters that appear in the city.

Simon's papers give us a pretty good picture of the interesting places and people in Novgorod. I've listed the important ones here; each location has at least one face, and perhaps one or more additional associated characters.

Russian Names

A few things to know about Russian names:

- Diminutives of given names are extremely common, and there are no firm rules about how they're formed; this chapter is peppered with examples.
- It's very common to carry a patronymic where an English-speaker would expect a middle name, obtained from the father's given name modified by some variation of the suffix – ovich (for sons) or – ovna (for daughters).
- Surnames are gendered; a man might be Petrov and a woman Petrova. Surnames were uncommon among the peasantry until just a few decades prior to the Revolution, perhaps explaining why Simon Pietrovich doesn't have one. Or if he does, he's not telling.
- Finally, Russians are rarely referred to by their surnames outside of formal occasions, legal documents, or when referring to someone famous. Russians typically refer to one another by just the first name or, for more familiar relations or friends, the given name followed by the patronymic—such as Simon Pietrovich, meaning Simon son of Peter. Use of the diminutive indicates close familiarity and usually, but not always, affection.

In this section, we introduce people like so: Given Name, "Diminutive" (if any), Patronymic, Surname.

Koslovsky Boardinghouse

Aspect: Sit Down by the Fire and I'll Tell You a Story
Face: Baba Vasilisa, Old Storyteller
Other associated characters: Elena Koslovskaya, Sveta Kaplan, Konstantin Voronkov, Larisa Yevtushenko; these four characters are suitable as player characters. Also, Jakub Skorski, who really isn't.

Larisa Yevtushenko really seemed to fall in love with this place. I'll let her take it from here.



True Names are important in magic, right? How does that work in Russia? Do you need all the diminutives? The patronymic? What if you're writing it and you transliterate it into Latin letters wrong?

In game terms, people will just have to run with what makes sense to them. In real terms, I have no freakin' clue.

This is either a major weapon against Russians or a big advantage for them.

FROM THE PERSONAL JOURNAL OF LARISA YEVTUSHENKO, FEBRUARY 1918

In 1913, Josef Georgevich Koslovsky inherited a big house in Novgorod. He married Elena in 1915, just before the young soldier went off to war with his cavalry unit. They set up the house as a boarding house to make sure that Elena had income during Josef's time away, renting rooms out to pay the bills. Josef joined the Revolutionaries in 1917; given his heroic actions in Petrograd, the Novgorod Soviet allowed the couple to keep the house and continue providing space for boarders. Elena's boarders pay her in ration cards, which she's been using to keep the house up as best she can since Josef died.

That qualifies as unsanctioned commerce—if someone wanted to get Elena in trouble, that would probably be enough to do it.

The big, old house was built in 1845 and has room for up to seven boarders. Lena, as her friends call Elena, has made the house an inviting and comfortable home for those of us who live here; the threshold is surprisingly strong for a boarding house. The rooms are not spacious, but each has either a fireplace or a small wood stove, and there is a sizeable common room where Elena cooks a meal for herself and the residents most nights. The huge fireplace along one wall of the common room is big enough to hold several large cauldrons and cook pots. I have come to enjoy a great deal playing the old upright piano in the corner of the common room, but those times are rare. The fireplace is where I often find Lena or one of the others, Sveta or Kostya or Baba Vasilisa. It pains me to see Lena so engrieved. I hope she can find her happiness, even if she cannot find her Josef.

Unless she is out for her daily walk, visitors to the house will almost invariably find Baba Vasilisa sitting in a rocking chair by that kitchen fire. If they are willing to share a drink of tea (or something stronger) with her, she will always be glad to tell a story from her childhood, and Baba Vasilisa's stories are usually informative, insightful, or both—often startlingly so...

Elena "Lena" Sergeevna Koslovskaya

Suggested PC
Widowed Ectomancer
Motivation: To find out what happened to my husband.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM SIMON PIETROVICH TO LARISA YEVTUSHENKO, OCTOBER 1917

... There are two important things that you should know about Elena. First, she is an ectomancer and a sensitive, and her skill is to be respected, even though she does not make her talent widely known. Second, she has an enemy, one that not only has a powerful patron but is highly dangerous in his own right. As you stay with her, be on guard that you aren't caught in the periphery...

Lena is one of those people so gifted that it drives everyone else a little nuts. She's a lovely young woman, twenty-one years old, with a petite build, long flowing hair, and a pretty face. She's a violinist of virtuosic talent. She's a successful businesswoman in the midst of not just any Communist revolution but *the* Communist Revolution. She's got it all, right?

Not so much. She's one of millions of young widows in 1918 Russia. Her grief is so profound that, despite her talent, she can't bear to play her violin in public; late at night you'll hear her anguish poured out in melancholy strains. Even worse, she believes that she may have indirectly caused her husband's death, and fallout from the entire incident might still kill her.

Lena was raised by a family of musicians and displayed talent not only for music, but also sensitivity to spirits. It took her until she was ten years old to realize that other people couldn't see the ghosts and spirits that she could see plainly. Once she understood this, she stopped talking about them; the priests her family had summoned to drive the devils out of her finally left her alone, assuming their job was complete.

Four years ago, Lena married a handsome young cavalryman, Josef Georgevich Koslovsky, who was about to go off to war. Lena and Josef set up the boardinghouse before he left, making certain Lena would have income no matter what happened. Lena used it as a means to practice both her mundane art—music—and her magical art, contacting spirits of the dead (and there were many during the war years) for the comfort of the living.

Elena "Lena" Sergeevna Koslovskaya

High Concept
Widowed Ectomancer

Trouble
I Must Find My Josef

Other Aspects:
Virtuoso
Proprietor of Kovslovsky Boarding House
Many Enemies
More Talent Than She Realizes
No One Should Be Hurt Like That

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Average	(+1)
Contacts:	Average	(+1)
Conviction:	Good	(+3)
Craftsmanship:	Fair	(+2)
Deceit:	Average	(+1)
Discipline:	Great	(+4)
Empathy:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Great	(+4)
Performance:	Superb	(+5)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)
Rapport:	Good	(+3)
Resources:	Average	(+1)
Survival:	Fair	(+2)
Weapons:	Average	(+1)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Pointed Performance (Performance): When Lena uses Performance to place aspects on a scene, those aspects may be more specific than normal. For example, she can use her music to make a person more open to contact from a spirit, allowing Lena to tag this aspect and help her bridge the gap between her Lore and a ritual's complexity.

Powers
Thaumaturgy [-3]
Ghost Speaker [-1]
Lawbreaker (Fifth) [-1]
Refinement [-3]

Specialties
Thaumaturgy: Complexity (Divination +1)
Thaumaturgy: Complexity (Ectomancy +3)
Thaumaturgy: Control (Divination +1)
Thaumaturgy: Control (Ectomancy +2)

Focus Items
Josef's Portrait (+2 Divination Complexity)

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OO
Social	OOO

Notes
Mediocre initiative, Fair on most defenses. If forced to, she can attack with Weapons at Average.

Larisa refers to Lena as an Ectomancer, but we know Lena has cast Divination, Ectomancy, and Necromancy spells. She is obviously more than a Focused Practitioner. I suspect she has the full range of Thaumaturgic abilities at her disposal, though she may not yet know the full extent of what she's capable of doing with magic.

Lena can cast Epic Ectomancy spells with "No Prep" and control the ritual with a Fantastic Discipline roll—and if there was one thing 1918 Russia had no shortage of, it was ghosts. This means if Lena has just a little time to prepare she can access a wide variety of skills and even summon a defender.

Since her husband's disappearance, Lena has hidden a few circles under carpets in her room and some low-traffic areas throughout Kovslovsky boarding house in case of emergency.

Total Refresh Cost: – 9

Two years after her husband went to war—1916—a man named Jakub Skorski arrived at the boardinghouse looking for a room. He was a war-wounded man of 40 or so, claiming to be a refugee from Poland looking for work in one of Novgorod's factories. Lena rented him a room, thinking he seemed fairly harmless. Not so much.

Oh, he was friendly enough, and he quickly befriended Lena. He took advantage of her worry and loneliness and isolation to gain her confidence. Then he sprung his psychomancy on her, enhancing his mundane but formidable skill at manipulation with just enough magic to push Lena over an edge she wouldn't have contemplated otherwise. Before she realized what was happening, they'd been having an affair for a month.

She was lucky that's all he did. Victims of psychomancy rarely get away without psychological trauma of some kind.

Are you so sure she did? Read on.

As you might imagine, Lena was humiliated, enraged, and devastated all at the same time. She soon planned her revenge, though. She summoned an entity, what she thought of as a ghost. She bargained with it, convincing it to attack Skorski and drive him off. Later that evening, the man was seen running out into the snow in his nightshirt, raving incoherently.

By my reading, that's a Fifth Law violation there. Maybe Second, too.

BASTARD HAD IT COMING.

Hell yeah, he did.

Lena's husband Josef was a member of a cavalry unit that mutinied under Nicolai Bolshov (page 94); always the idealist, Josef joined the fight against the Tsar when Bolshov turned. He returned home when he was injured during an early battle against the Tsar's forces. Lena nursed him back to health—and pointedly never mentioned Skorski. Josef's status as a wounded Hero of the Revolution allowed the couple to continue running their small boardinghouse.

One warm night in June 1918, Josef went for a walk but never returned. That night Lena awoke to see an apparition of him in their bedroom, faintly glowing. He looked afraid, something she'd never seen in him before; she slowly realized that strings, as if on a marionette, were attached through his hands, head, and feet. The strings pulled him up and out of sight, but not before she heard him call out to her, sounding as though he were at a great distance. Had the spirit Lena used against Skorski exacted its price? Or was something else going on?

Lena spends many long nights at her summoning circle, with some token of her Josef's, casting about in an attempt to find him.

FROM THE PERSONAL JOURNAL OF LARISA YEVTUSHENKO, APRIL 1918

... Lena spent another night searching for her Josef. I found her sitting in her circle with a small wedding portrait, lost in some sort of divinatory trance. Of course, I let her be—who knows what would have happened had I spoken or interrupted her. I have advised her of the Laws, and of the mandate we all carry to avoid those from Beyond, and she assures me that she knows where the limits are.

An error may not be intentional, though; I am concerned that lack of sleep is going to cause her to slip. She plumbs such depths of who knows where in her searches that I am concerned that the slightest error will cause irreparable harm, or worse bring something unspeakable back with her...

...Bolshov, her late husband's former commander, regularly looks in on Lena. It is a courtesy she would rather not have. His concern is simply a guise, of course; I believe he suspects her to be more than just a widowed innkeeper, and things could go very badly for her if his suspicions ever crystalize.

THIS IS REALLY INTERESTING. HARRY USED TO SAY THAT GHOSTS WERE MINDLESS IMPRINTS LEFT BY STRONG PERSONALITIES, WITHOUT WILLS OF THEIR OWN.

Harry's perspective wasn't the whole story, it appears.

I wonder if Harry [redacted]

WELL, I SCRATCHED OUT THAT LAST COMMENT, BECAUSE WE ARE NOT TALKING ABOUT THAT. PERIOD. END OF STORY.

SVETLANA "SVETA" VIKTOREVNA KAPLAN

Suggested PC
Bolshevik Monster Hunter
Motivation: The enemies of mortal man must die.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM LARISA YEVTUSHENKO TO SIMON PIETROVICH, SEPTEMBER 1918

...The revolutionary from Karelia was feeling unusually talkative yesterday evening, and finally spoke about her childhood; consequently, I think I may have learned a bit about the fate of Yaphat the Brown Bear, and also of Baron Gagolin, who if I'm not mistaken was an acquaintance of yours, Teacher.

It seems that Svetlana Kaplan was born in a mostly Jewish village on Baron Gagolin's lands and, as you have said, he never did seem to accept that the Tsar ordered feudal arrangements with the serfs to be modified and modernized.

Her mother passed away in childbirth, and her father was a woodsman and fisherman who taught her to hunt and fish and survive in the wilderness, especially how to avoid attracting the attention of Yaphat, the big brown bear that for decades terrorized the villagers in that region. He also taught her his attitude toward authority, and he did not get along with Baron Gagolin at all. You once spoke to me of Gagolin's vicious anti-Semitism, and Svetlana says that he treated her father very cruelly. She learned to hate him, and with him all landowners and taxmen and nobility.

She says that when she was sixteen years old, she returned from hunting to find Yaphat had broken down the door to their cabin and killed her father, and the bear was still in their cabin. She says it attacked her, but she managed to escape, and even wounded it with her hunting knife—however, as she ran off into the forest, she caught a glimpse of the bear assuming human form. He was a werebear, and worse, he was Baron Gagolin.

I have seen few functional adults able to contain the rage that she not only contains, but somehow manages to focus. Woe be to the landowner, taskmaster, or supernatural predator who gets in her way. She was deep into the vodka, admittedly, but she declared last night that it is Lenin's mission to eliminate the human monsters—the kings, the priests, and the exploiters—and her mission to eliminate the inhuman monsters.

Problem with some monster hunters is that they tend to see monsters even where there aren't any.

She's in a target-rich environment, but your point is a good one.

Inherited silver. Clever.

Now twenty-four years of age, Svetlana has the lean, muscular build of an athlete and carries herself with absolute confidence. She knows her mission and will follow it through no matter what. She carries a short but strong oak haft tipped with a razor sharp steel blade (usually covered in a burlap sack) and a variety of knives. When she really means business, she has a big honkin' sawed-off, side-by-side shotgun. From what Larisa's notes say, the thing could knock a tree down, and she has a supply of unusually loaded shells—steel ball bearings, rock salt, silver melted from links of her mother's necklace, and so on.

In October 1918, she's living in the Koslovsky boardinghouse in Novgorod, having befriended the mistress of the house.

Svetlana "Sveta" Viktorevna Kaplan

High Concept
Mortal Monster Hunter

Other Aspects:
My Father Taught Me Well
Well-Honed Rage
I Have a Shell for That

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Fair	(+2)
Discipline:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Great	(+4)
Fists:	Average	(+1)
Guns:	Good	(+3)
Intimidation:	Fair	(+2)
Lore:	Fair	(+2)
Presence:	Average	(+1)
Stealth:	Fair	(+2)
Survival:	Great	(+4)
Weapons:	Superb	(+5)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
On My Toes (Alertness): Sveta gains +2 to her Alertness to determine initiative.

No Pain, No Gain (Endurance): Sveta may take an additional mild physical consequence.

Make It Count (Guns): Once per scene, Sveta may spend a fate point to increase the stress done by her Guns skill by 3.

Finely Tuned Third Eye (Lore): Sveta gains +2 to her Lore when using it to determine the presence of the supernatural.

I Have Just the Shell (Lore): Whenever Sveta successfully makes a Lore assessment to identify a Toughness or Recovery Catch, she automatically has a specialized shotgun shell loaded with the target's Catch, if applicable. She may spend a fate point to have enough shells to last the entire scene.

Hunter (Survival): Sveta gains +2 to her Survival to track something in wilderness or outdoors.

Riposte (Weapons): On a successful Weapons defense, Sveta can sacrifice her next action to turn the defense into an automatically successful attack.

Stress
Mental OOO
Physical OOOO +1 mild consequence
Social OOO

Notes
Superb initiative, attacks and defends with either Superb Weapons or Good Guns and Good Athletics.

Total Refresh Cost: – 5 (Pure Mortal)

I like this kid. Hail warrior, indeed.
She's borderline psycho.
Sometimes the world needs a psycho or two.
Oh, like [redacted].
Eyes, not in writing. Just no.

Konstantin "Kostya" Evgenivich Voronkov

Suggested PC
Changeling Grifter
Motivation: Twofold—locate and protect Summer's beauty; avoid getting killed by angry criminals.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM LARISA YEVTUSHENKO TO SIMON PIETROVICH, APRIL 1918

... I do not like him at all, Teacher. He is a vagabond and a criminal, and the distinct odor of Faerie is about him. He has a past that he does not wish to discuss and that I do not trust. Here is an anecdote that occurred just last Wednesday, to illustrate my point.

I was walking toward the ration distribution point near the railroad station, when Konstantin ran around the corner, grabbed me by the arm, and bodily dragged me into the alley beside the north wall of Saint Sophia's cathedral, and without so much as a "hello" ordered me to "Put up a veil, quickly, or we're both dead." I did so, and not a moment later the notorious gangster Boris Gulin and two of his thugs came around the corner with murder in their eyes. Obviously, they did not see us, and left.

Teacher, I am uncomfortable with the entanglements that this man may bring me into. His petty criminality, his involvement with the Summer Court, his feud with the crime lord. This is precisely what you ordered me to avoid...

Larisa didn't seem to have a problem with Svetlana and her mortal entanglements.

Well, she's a monster hunter. That's not exactly a mortal entanglement.

Lucky for us, Larisa overlooked her dislike and managed to get Konstantin's story out of him in bits and pieces as the months went by. Konstantin was born in the Crimea, to a human father and Summer Court fae mother—nobody knows the precise variety of faerie she was, and Konstantin never knew her. He had no idea of his mixed heritage until the Great War.

He was a drifter and petty criminal as a young man, moving all around Russia and living on his ability to shoplift, pickpocket, and cheat at cards. He made, and squandered, then made back quite a bit of money in those years, but was finally brought low by an Imperial Army press

Konstantin "Kostya" Evgenivich Voronkov

High Concept
Summer Changeling Grifter

Trouble
Deep in Debt

Other Aspects:
Petty Criminal Drifter
Can We Make a Deal?
Boris Gulin Wants My Head
Locate Summer's Beauty
Your Honor, Lady Luck

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Average	(+1)
Burglary:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Fair	(+2)
Deceit:	Superb	(+5)
Discipline:	Fair	(+2)
Empathy:	Great	(+4)
Endurance:	Fair	(+2)
Intimidation:	Average	(+1)
Investigation:	Average	(+1)
Lore:	Average	(+1)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Rapport:	Great	(+4)
Stealth:	Fair	(+2)
Weapons:	Average	(+1)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Infuriate (Intimidate): Konstantin gets a +2 when deliberately trying to get someone angry with him. Any resulting consequences or temporary aspects name him as the target of the anger.

Confidence Tricks (Deceit): Konstantin may attempt complicated sleight of hand, misdirection, and pick-pocketing tricks without penalty and gains a +1 on any attempts with Deceit to create quick distractions. This gives a +1 stacking bonus to attempts to pick-pocket.

Personal Magnetism (Presence): When Konstantin is rolling Presence to establish a "passive" reaction, he makes the roll at +2.

Powers
Glamours [-2]
Seelie Magic [-4]
Wizard's Constitution [-0]

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOOO

Notes
Good initiative, Average physical attacks, Superb or Great social attacks, Average defense against most attacks.

Konstantin can cast minor veils and basic seemings with Superb skill; he casts Seelie magic with 2 shifts, with Fair skill.

His book is a minor enchanted item that allows him one-way communication with the Summer Court.

Total Refresh Cost:
– 9

If this guy can cast veils, why did he have Larisa throw up a veil for him?

He was probably testing her to see if he could manipulate her into helping and to find out how powerful she was.

That cool book isn't an Item of Power?

Maybe for whoever's on the receiving end, but it doesn't really give Konstantin much benefit. Maybe some assistance from Summer, if he's lucky and they're in the mood. Of course, depending on who shows up, that may be more liability than benefit.

gang in 1915. While in detention awaiting the train that would have taken him to his Army induction and pitiful training regimen, and from there to the meat-grinder of the eastern front, he was visited by the strangest person he'd ever met.

His cellmates suddenly fell into a deep slumber, and a very small woman—only a foot tall—stepped into his holding. She introduced herself as Raisa, a distant relative of his mother's, and boy did she have an offer for him. She would ensure that Konstantin would not wind up in the Army. And all he had to do was this one little favor for her. Or, more exactly, her employer. Someone named "Summer," Konstantin thought he heard. Apparently it sounded good to him, and the bargain was struck.

After all, who doesn't like summer?

Also, not the Army. It's a double win.

Except, not.

Raisa easily opened the door of the cell and the two escaped, getting on a train headed north. Raisa revealed that Konstantin was a changeling, and someday would need to choose which of his natures to follow. She explained that his fae heritage is what allowed him to grift so effectively, and why, despite being almost forty years old, he didn't look a day over twenty-five. She also explained that revolution was coming, and that some of the greatest creative minds in the world were in Russia and would need to be smuggled out of the country before Winter took them. She explained that Stravinsky and Rachmaninoff had already left ("Rachmaninoff was a close one," she said), and they were working on getting Prokofiev out. There were others, and they wanted him to go to Novgorod and keep his eyes open. She'd already gotten him a room at the Koslovsky boardinghouse.

Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring," which he wrote after he left Russia, debuted to actual riots, the audience was so shaken up by it.

Think the Summer Court provided his muse?

If Konstantin finds any talented artists or musicians, he's to protect them until emigration can be arranged. And while he's there, he's to report on any overt activity of Winter. He writes his observations and reports in a book she gave him; she assured him that anything he writes in the book will be seen by the right people.

And he's to foil Winter's activity if the opportunity presents itself and he can do so without serious risk to his own cover. Of course. Nothing big.

Also, the bargain he made with Raisa only got him out of conscription. He still has a dozen dangerous, angry men around Russia that he owes money to. One of them is Boris Gulin, a black marketeer noted for his business skill and his lack of pity for people who owe him money.

Whoa! That book is quite an artifact. I'd love to get a look at something like that.

Don't even go there, Eyes. It's faerie magic, and we don't need that kind of trouble.

Maybe Konstantin should have just joined the Army.

Larisa "Lara" Alexeyevna Yevtushenko

Suggested PC
Apprentice to Simon Pietrovich
Motivation: Make up for my mistake.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM LARISA YEVTUSHENKO TO SIMON PIETROVICH, MARCH 1918

... Teacher, to answer the question posed in your most recent letter, I have no idea what happened to the Cheka officer Bochorov and his deputy. News I have heard is that they died in a fire. I was observing ration distribution at the time, and have no notion of what occurred. However, perhaps the new Cheka captain assigned to Novgorod will be less cruel...

No good deed goes unpunished, I see.

FROM THE PERSONAL JOURNAL OF LARISA YEVTUSHENKO, MARCH 1918

... My God, what have I done?

Larisa Alexeyevna is a 34-year-old wizard living in the Koslovsky boardinghouse in Novgorod. She has short, sandy blonde hair and an average build; she often carries a walking stick, and her face seems older than her true age would suggest.

Born to a poor family in Petrograd, Larisa Alexeyevna began her apprenticeship with Simon Pietrovich in 1891 at the age of seven. She lived in Simon Pietrovich's estate (a fortress-like tower near Arkhangelsk) with two other apprentices, both older than she.

Simon Pietrovich was a harsh teacher. He regularly worked young Larisa to the point of exhaustion. He forced her to withstand long periods exposed to the bitter winter cold, to improve her concentration and endurance. He forced her to learn combat evocation through downright cruel means—pelting her with stones and razor sharp shards of ice until she learned to shield and strike back.

During her apprenticeship, Simon Pietrovich was frequently away from Arkhangelsk. Sometimes Larisa accompanied him, and through these travels she learned a great deal about the situation in Russia—both mundane and supernatural. This research led Simon Pietrovich to ask Larisa to serve as an information-gatherer, researcher, and spy when he

withdrew from political maneuvering at the start of the Russian Civil War.

Larisa Alexeyevna began her work in Novgorod late in 1917. She did as she was asked, reported on events and made life more difficult for agents of Winter as she could identify them. She stayed out of politics.

That is, until she had a run-in with a new Cheka officer in March of 1918. Several times, this officer—a man named Bochorov—made it clear he was watching Larisa, that he suspected her of something. One day, he cornered Larisa on a back street on the east side of Novgorod with one young recruit as backup, and stated his intention to arrest her on the grounds of counterrevolutionary activity. That was a death sentence, and Larisa knew it. In a panic, she lashed out, incinerating Borochov instantly. The recruit began screaming, and Larisa Alexeyevna knew she needed to get rid of the witness. She let loose with another mighty fire evocation.

The next morning, two charred bodies were found among a smoldering pile of rubble. It's a mystery, I tell ya.

Of course, this led to a new Cheka officer being sent to Novgorod. In removing the threat to herself, Larisa set up the situation that led to Bolshov coming to the city, which was a tremendous setback for the city as a whole. Her rash act, in self-defense, brought tremendous suffering to Novgorod and a stain to her own soul.

Now, Larisa continues the mission her teacher assigned her while always looking over her shoulder; the Wardens have ways of tracking down lawbreakers, and the Cheka are not known for their mercy.

Simon's notes say the real Larisa Yevtushenko was killed under mysterious circumstances in 1919, but she makes for a great PC.

Did Simon Pietrovich ever find out?

Yevtushenko just recorded this in her personal diary, which stayed private until her death.

Must have ticked Simon off something fierce to realize he'd been lied to.

I'd bet the rent that Simon knew.

Larisa "Lara" Alexeyevna Yevtushenko

High Concept
Wizard Covert Agent

Trouble
Too Many Secrets

Other Aspects:
Simon Pietrovich's Apprentice
Inured to Cold and Pain
Extensive Travels
Stay Out of Politics
Looking for Redemption

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Fair	(+2)
Contacts:	Average	(+1)
Conviction:	Good	(+3)
Deceit:	Fair	(+2)
Discipline:	Superb	(+5)
Empathy:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Average	(+1)
Investigation:	Great	(+4)
Lore:	Great	(+4)
Presence:	Average	(+1)
Scholarship:	Average	(+1)
Stealth:	Fair	(+2)
Weapons:	Average	(+1)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Tell Me Your Story (Investigation): Lara may use her Investigation instead of Empathy on a Reading People roll when they're telling her the story of their lives.

Powers
Evocation [-3]
Thaumaturgy [-3]
The Sight [-1]
Soulgaze [-0]
Wizard's Constitution [-0]
Lawbreaker (First) [-1]

Specialties
Evocation: Elements (Fire, Air, Spirit); Power (Fire +1)
Thaumaturgy: Control (Veils +1)

Rote Spells
Incendo (fire attack, four shifts): Directs a tight beam of magical fire (Weapon:4) at a target. Lara must have her walking stick to cast this rote spell.
Shield (spirit block, four shifts): Creates a hemispheric shield in front of Lara and acts as either Armor or a block. Usually, Lara uses one shift for persistence, so she can do something else in the following exchange without renewing the shield. Her shield amulet is necessary for this spell.
Opertus (spirit block, four shifts): Veils Lara and one or two additional people standing with her. Seeing through the veil requires a roll against a difficulty of Great (+4) unless she expends a shift into persistence. Her shield amulet is necessary for this spell.

Focus Items
Walking Stick (+1 Spirit Offense Control, +1 Fire Offensive Power, evocation)
Shield Amulet (+1 Spirit Defense Power, evocation)

Enchanted Items
2 slots kept open for potions and other "consumable" items.

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OOO

Notes
Good initiative, Fair on most defenses and Average on most attacks unless she's able to bring magic to bear. Uses spells for maximum advantage, able to easily control 3-4 shifts of effect, and she's capable of much more if pressed.

Total Refresh Cost: – 9

Baba Vasilisa

Old Storyteller

Motivation: I know something you'll find interesting.

Face Of: Koslovsky Boarding House

Vasilisa? The name rings a bell...

Baba Vasilisa is by far the oldest resident at Elena Koslovskaya's boarding house. Despite her age—people speculate she's pushing 90, but nobody knows for certain—she never misses her afternoon walk around the city; her lone concession to bitter winter weather is to restrict it to two miles rather than four.

Standing at just over five feet tall, her face is lined by many decades of easy smiles and frequent laughter. Many people of Novgorod look forward to seeing her on her daily walk; she's quick to share an anecdote or a joke or a sip from the flask she carries in her pocket. What she loves most, though, is sitting her "weary old bones," as she says, by the big cook fire at the boarding house and telling stories.

Oh yeah! My grandmother told old stories about Vasilisa the Brave, who outsmarted Baba Yaga. Heh. Simon has a sense of humor, eh? Baba Yaga. Heh.

Um...

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM SIMON PIETROVICH TO LARISA YEVTUSHENKO, MARCH 1918

...Larisa Alexeyevna, I urge that, when the eldest resident of your boarding house speaks, you give her your undivided attention. She is one of the wisest people I have ever met, and you would learn a great deal from her. Almost every story begins with some variation of "Well, when I was a girl..." but despite what you might expect of an old lady telling stories, her tales are usually captivating, commanding the attention of everyone in earshot. She has a gift for telling exactly the right story, with exactly the right insight for the listener or exactly the right information they are seeking. She has lived quite a fascinating life, for a peasant girl; Tsars and witches and vampires and philosophers have all been counted among her acquaintances. A word to the wise, however—do *not* mention her name to Baba Yaga.



Baba Vasilisa

High Concept
Old Teller of Old Tales

Trouble
Outsmarted Baba Yaga

Other Aspects:
Let Me Tell You A Story
Back When I Was Young...

Skills, Powers, etc.

Baba Vasilisa is an excellent source of information and lore for people who will listen to her stories. She has a Great Lore skill and Good for most social skills, but physically she's a weak old woman. Basically, Baba Vasilisa is a plot-level character who can act as a GM infodump, providing useful exposition, a valuable source for a creature's Catch, or a gentle nudge in the right direction.

Jakub Skorski

Mad Psychomancer

Motivation: Elena Koslovskaya is mine.

Face of: Threat No Good Deed Goes Unpunished

Skorski is a drifter from eastern Poland. He spent many years traveling across Poland, Ukraine, European Russia, and much of the Balkans, grifting and using his psychomancy to earn enough to live on. He thought of himself as a ladies' man, but either didn't realize or didn't care that most men don't manipulate the minds of the women they flirt with to get them into bed.

He met his match in Elena Koslovskaya, a woman in Novgorod, Russia. When she realized that he'd manipulated her into betraying her husband who was off fighting the war, she loosed an entity on him that shattered his sanity and ripped his psyche to shreds.



Jakub Skorski

High Concept
Mad Psychomancer

Trouble
Lena Will Submit to Me

Other Aspects:
Lady Killer
Thought Stealer
A Dangerous Mind
Mended But Not Whole
Rasputin's Thrall

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Fair	(+2)
Conviction:	Superb	(+5)
Deceit:	Great	(+4)
Discipline:	Superb	(+5)
Empathy:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Fair	(+2)
Fists:	Average	(+1)
Intimidation:	Great	(+4)
Lore:	Average	(+1)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Rapport:	Good	(+3)
Stealth:	Fair	(+2)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
Channeling, Spirit [-2]
Sponsored magic, Unseelie Magic [-4]
Lawbreaker (First) [-2]
Lawbreaker (Third) [-2]
Lawbreaker (Fourth) [-2]

Rote Spells
Trust Me (Superb Spirit Maneuver): Places a maneuver on someone making them think positive thoughts about Jakub, allowing him to better persuade them to do what he wants. This spell lasts for one exchange and can be prolonged (see YS259). Jakub needs his Amber Pendant to use this Rote. Jakub created this rote prior to breaking the First Law and gaining access to Unseelie magic, so it's not as powerful as it could be.

Focus Items
Amber Pendant (+1 Spirit Offense Control, evocation)
Silver Ring (+1 Spirit Offensive Power, evocation)

Enchanted Items
Cane (Epic Block against attacks for two exchanges): When Jakub is faced with physical danger, he releases the psychic energy stored within his cane. Anyone attempting to attack him will imagine they feel an icy claw tearing through their mind, preventing them from taking any hostile action. While the spell is active, Jakub will usually attempt to flee.

He couldn't possibly have made this item.

Yeah, I'm presuming he got it from Winter.

Wonder what that cost him.

Stress

Mental	OOOO
+1 mild consequence	
Physical	OOO
Social	OOOO

Notes
Fair initiative, Fair on most defenses unless he activates his cane or otherwise uses his magic. He's the sort of warlock that gives Wardens nightmares. He can casually throw around Weapon:5-6 mental attacks with a +8 or +9 targeting roll. I don't even want to imagine what could happen if Jakub decides he's willing to incur a lot of debt with his sponsored magic.

Total Refresh Cost:
– 12



FROM SIMON PIETROVICH'S PERSONAL NOTES

...Skorski's mind was damaged beyond repair, and he fled. He managed to get as far as Petrograd before he gave up entirely. In this city full of homeless and madmen, driven into the street by simple poverty or untreated shell shock brought on by years of war, he thought he would die anonymously and broken, with twisted thoughts of Elena still in his mind.

But that was not to be his fate. Rasputin found him.

Looking for talents he could dominate for his own ends, Rasputin recognized Skorski's spark of ability and used his Winter-sponsored biomancy to restore Skorski's body, and his Winter-sponsored psychomancy to dominate Skorski's mind. Skorski was horribly transformed both in body and mind by Rasputin's magic. His once ruggedly handsome face was disfigured as if burned. His body was stooped and bent. His voice was reduced to a raspy whisper. He was unrecognizable.

Through Skorski, Rasputin learned of Elena and her talent. Rasputin commanded Skorski to bring Elena to him. However, it is a command that will test Rasputin's dominance of Skorski's will. Skorski is still infatuated with Elena, and has no intention of giving her over to his new master. I believe his goal is to protect Elena, but it is the sort of protection Elena might not choose to accept—by dominating her for himself and making her his own. This plan is predicated on Rasputin's dominance of his mind being less than complete.



The Workers' Hall

Theme: Talk Is Cheap, But It's All We Have

Face: Anna Trushina, Head of the Novgorod Soviet

Other associated characters: Nicolai Bolshov, Olga Golovina, Alexsandr Durov

Occupying the building that was once the Church of the Holy Martyrs on the western bank of the river, the Worker's Hall now hosts the Novgorod Soviet. The altars and pews were removed and replaced by long tables and dozens of chairs. Those chairs are occupied almost daily by the members of the Novgorod Soviet—anywhere from a half-dozen to twenty or so workers from the local factories—with Anna Trushina as its head.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM LARISA YEVTUSHENKO TO SIMON PIETROVICH, AUGUST 1918

...I visited the Worker's Hall today, a former church with towering ceilings and stone walls. It stinks of a tavern and is nearly as noisy and chaotic as one, with nothing to absorb the echoing sound of two dozen people all shouting to be heard. This Trushina woman seems willing to listen to genuine grievances, even if she is too cowardly to act upon them...

The hall is typically noisy with arguing Soviet members, most of whom have been sipping vodka for hours. Petitioners and visitors are received irregularly; people complaining about meager food rations and warning of oncoming famine are common. A Bolshevik functionary from Petrograd—Alexsandr Durov or one of his flunkies—is often on hand to make note of proceedings, guard against ideological impurity in the council's deliberations, and insist the overworked factory workers produce more munitions.

What happened to that spirit that Elena originally sent against him, the thing that ensnared her husband's soul? Would that be likely to help Skorski?

Neither Simon Pietrovich's nor Larisa Yevtushenko's notes say anything about it. Could be. Or could be that if Skorski wants Elena he's going to have to take a number.



Anna Vasilevna Trushina

High Concept
Head of the Novgorad Soviet

Trouble
The Vodka Giveth, The Vodka Taketh Away

Other Aspects
Workers Unite!
Nothing Cuts Through Bolshevik Bureaucracy

Skills

Craftsmanship:	Average	(+1)
Empathy:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Fair	(+2)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Rapport:	Good	(+3)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOOO

Notes
Anna believes in the ideals of the Revolution. Her frustration with the Bolshevik functionaries and the loss of her loved ones caused her to turn to drinking to numb her pain.

Total Refresh Cost:
+2 (Pure Mortal)

Fair Endurance? If she's been an alcoholic that long don't you think that would have worn her Endurance down to Average or even Mediocre?

At the time of this writing, it hadn't killed her yet. That's got to speak for something, right?

Hmm.

Anna Vasilevna Trushina
Head of the Novgorod Soviet

Motivation: Look out for the workers but really, what can you do?

Face of: The Worker's Hall

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM LARISA YEVTUSHENKO TO SIMON PIETROVICH, AUGUST 1918

... Personal intelligence report, Head of Novgorod Soviet Anna Vasilevna Trushina

Trushina is a 52-year-old widow. She was elected to be head of the Soviet early in 1918. She had been a fixture for years in the Novgorod workers' movement, agitating for workers' rights alongside her husband. Once the Revolution came, they thought their dreams were coming true, until Alexsandr Durov and his Bolshevik functionaries from Petrograd showed up with their production schedules and their clipboards and their secret police. Anatole, a master machinist and former shift supervisor for the lathe operators at the Novgorod Brass Works, was killed in an explosion at the factory earlier this year, an explosion for which a satisfactory explanation was never found. It may have been counterrevolutionary sabotage, but nobody has proof. His death inspired Anna to mount a successful campaign for leadership of the Soviet.

... Teacher, I have seen some mighty vodka drinkers, but Anna's daily consumption is truly impressive.

Other notes scattered around Yevtushenko's letters reveal that Anna managed to manipulate the Bolsheviks to grant her a slightly less insane production schedule than they originally demanded, but their lack of concern for the people disillusioned her. By October of 1918, the entire Soviet, Anna included, spends less time running the factories and more time in the Worker's Hall, drinking heavily and grousing about "what we ought to do." She lives in an apartment near the Novgorod Brass Works. Anna's and Anatole's only child, Vasili, was killed fighting the Austrians in 1915.

Women and the Revolution

There are a lot better sources for the role of women in the Russian Revolution and Civil War than this book, but it's worth talking about a few points here.

First, gender demographics were really messed up. Because of the wholesale slaughter of military-aged men in WWI, women in their late teens and twenties outnumbered men of the same age by a noticeable margin. Unmarried and widowed young women were a common occurrence.

Second, counter to what modern audiences might expect, many Bolsheviks initially dismissed feminism as a bourgeoisie pastime. At first few, if any, women held positions of power within the Communist party and associated political structures. That started to change in late 1917 and 1918, as many Bolshevik leaders began to see the passionate involvement of women in the Revolution and subsequent Civil War. Within a year or two, women were serving in the Red Army (in all-woman combat units) as well as in positions of government and administration.

By October of 1918, it wouldn't stretch suspension-of-disbelief at all for a woman to hold just about any position within the new government structure, so players who want to play female characters shouldn't let "historical accuracy" get in the way.







Olga Borisovna "Baba" Golovina

Grandmother of the Revolution
Motivation: Prove my relevance.
Face of: Threat Through Dismal Winter

Baba Golovina (literally "Grandmother Golovina"—none dare use a diminutive) is an elderly woman of limited means. She's of tiny stature, stooped over and walking with a cane; she's wrapped head to toe in woolen scarves, cloaks, and anything else she can get her hands on.

Excerpt of a Letter from Larisa Yevtushenko to Simon Pietrovich, February 1918

...and then there is the sad case of Baba Golovina, the old woman who is demanding that people pay her attention by inflicting her bile and bitterness upon the entire city.

She visits the Worker's Hall daily, and loudly berates the Soviet for drinking too much and not providing better for the people of Novgorod. They respectfully acknowledge her complaints and tolerate her rants until she decides to leave. If this were the extent of her behavior, she could be excused as an angry old woman and that would be that.

According to those that know her, she lost her husband to disease, her daughters to childbirth, and her sons and grandsons to war. She is profoundly depressed, angry, and bitter, and she has learned how to manipulate the representatives of the Bolsheviks and the Cheka in Novgorod to carry out her wishes. She's denounced no fewer than twenty people as counterrevolutionaries in the past six months alone, and, of course, not a single one of them truly was. Some were shipped to the front, some were sent to prison camps, most were executed. Long-held grudges went first, people for whom she had been nursing and grooming her hatred over the course of decades; but once she ran out of longtime enemies, she started in on people that simply annoy her.

Because of this willingness to manufacture transgressions to get rid of people she does not like, and Bolshov's propensity to take her at her word, most people are as afraid of Baba Golovina as they are of the Cheka. As food rations begin to run low, especially for the non-laboring elderly, Anna Trushina of the Novgorod Soviet worries that she's in her sights next.

Baba Golovina

High Concept
Bitter Accuser

Trouble
Unmitigated Personal Grief

Other Aspects:
My Good Friend Comrade Bolshov

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Contacts:	Fair	(+2)
Deceit:	Good	(+3)
Intimidation:	Great	(+4)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts

Rule With Fear (Intimidation): Baba Golvina may use her Intimidation instead of her Presence when rolling to represent her reputation.

Subtle Menace (Intimidation): Baba Golvina doesn't need the upper hand or to be in a position of power in order to scare or intimidate someone.

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OO
Social	OO

Notes
She is a frail, old woman. Mediocre on attacks.

Total Refresh Cost: +0 (Pure Mortal)

Alexsandr "Sasha" Gregorevich Durov

Bolshevik Functionary
Motivation: Advance in party leadership.
Face of: Threat Through Dismal Winter

Alexsandr Gregorevich is an ambitious party man from Petrograd. A committed Bolshevik for many years, he dreams of a position among Lenin's inner circle.

He was sent from Petrograd to Novgorod in July of 1918 to ensure that the Novgorod Soviet kept munitions production on schedule, and pleasing his masters in Petrograd is the beginning and end of his cares in Novgorod.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM LARISA YEVTUSHENKO TO SIMON PIETROVICH, AUGUST 1918

Durov gives only cursory attention to things like food distribution or public health, believing those things to be the local Soviet's responsibility; of course, the local Soviet has neither the authority nor the will to push for them in the face of Bolshevik insistence about munitions. Durov delegates major security concerns to the Cheka, an arrangement that pleases Bolshov a great deal. Common criminal policing and firefighting is the NKVD's job. The defense of the city is the Red Guards' job, and as long as they respond when mustered, Durov is not interested in details. No, the only important thing is that those boxcars are filled with rifle cartridges and artillery shells and are delivered to Petrograd or Moscow by the end of the month. Nothing else matters. His next promotion depends on it.

Alexsander "Sasha" Gregorevich Durov

High Concept
Bolshevik Functionary

Trouble
The Party Ignores Me

Other Aspects:
Ambitious as Hell
That's Not My Damn Problem

Skills

Contacts:	Good	(+3)
Craftsmanship:	Fair	(+2)
Guns:	Fair	(+2)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Resources:	Good	(+3)
Scholarship:	Fair	(+2)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Forced Labor (Presence)[-2]: Durov may use Presence to push workers past their limits. If you're working for Durov, he can initiate a contest with you once per session. If you lose, you must immediately take a physical consequence at your lowest free level. He gains the value of that consequence as a bonus on any roll he makes to complete a project where your labor contributed.

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OO
Social	OOOO

Notes
Mediocre initiative, Fair attacks if he has a gun, Mediocre defense against most attacks. Durov is adept at squeezing every last rifle cartridge out of the workers in the munitions plant.

Total Refresh Cost:
+0 (Pure Mortal)

A two-refresh mortal stunt with crazy rules? Will you follow your own manuscript, please?

This stunt is really two rules exceptions that only make sense together, so I wrote them both up with one description. The idea is, say he needs to put together a munitions shipment using Resources. You're his laborer, and he pushes you to, say, a moderate consequence of Exhaustion. That gives him +4 to his Resources roll.

Literally profiting off the backs of his workers. I see it. Harsh.

This guy sounds like a real winner.

I've had bosses like him.



Boris "Borya" Alekseyevich Gulin

High Concept
Smuggler and Trader

Trouble
Wanted by Scores of Enemies

Other Aspects:
Everything Has a Price
Even in Revolution There Is Profit
I Do Not Suffer Double-Crossers
Vicious Thug
A Mind for Business

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Contacts:	Good	(+3)
Deceit:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Guns:	Average	(+1)
Intimidation:	Fair	(+2)
Might:	Fair	(+2)
Presence:	Great	(+4)
Resources:	Superb	(+5)
Scholarship:	Fair	(+2)
Weapons:	Average	(+1)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts

Weight of Reputation (Presence): Borya is a soft spoken man, but the things he does to those who cross him are well known in Novgorad. He uses his Presence to scare people instead of Intimidation.

Mind for Business (Scholarship): Borya adds +2 to any Scholarship roll made to run his criminal enterprise.

Footwork (Fists): Borya is fast on his feet and uses Fists instead of Athletics to dodge.

Shrewd Negotiator (Presence): When negotiating the terms of a deal, Borya adds +2 to his Presence roll.

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OOOO

Notes
Fair initiative, Great attacks with Fists, Defends at Great. Borya isn't about to let a little thing like a ban on the ownership of personal property stand in the way of making a profit.

Total Refresh Cost: – 2 (Pure Mortal)



The Underground Market

Theme: For a Price
Face: Boris Gulin, black marketeer

Novgorod has a variety of underground markets, but the largest by far gathers among a series of rail sidings full of abandoned, broken-down boxcars at the railyard on the north end of the city, near the river. Lots of different people with items to trade show up: smugglers, looters of wealthy homes, criminals, desperate people looking to sell what few material goods they have left. Food, alcohol, forged ration cards, fake passports, counterfeit money, and almost anything else you might want can be found here—for a price. For trade that isn't straight bartering, old Imperial rubles are still accepted by some; American dollars and British pounds circulate freely as well. Several tiny taverns flourish as people sitting on barrels drink glasses of vodka bought from flatcars and the backs of wagons.

If you want to find someone, or be found by someone, the underground market is the place to go first.

FROM THE PERSONAL JOURNAL OF LARISA YEVTUSHENKO, APRIL 1918

...I have located a merchant with a supply of high quality Persian tea for sale! It cost me a king's ransom in British pounds, but it was worth every penny. It has been months since I last had a decent cup of tea. I can smell it brewing right now...

Boris "Borya" Alekseyevich Gulin

Smuggler and Trader
Motivation: To make money, or what passes for it.
Face Of: The Underground Market

Boris Gulin has been smuggling anything he could make a profit on since the turn of the century. He made (then lost, then re-made) a small fortune moving all sorts of goods during the Great War, especially Swedish vodka and Turkish tobacco. His ruthlessness as a businessman (and, when necessary, in more direct ways) is well known among organized criminals in Russia.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM AN UNNAMED INFORMANT TO SIMON PIETROVICH, MARCH 1918

...Gulin trades whatever goods he can find in Novgorod's underground markets—mainly food staples, vodka, and foreign currency, but his specialty is "hard-to-find" items. His reputation is that he can get almost anything a buyer would want. His reputation is also that he deals very harshly with those who cheat him...

The Square

Theme: Bullets Are Cheap
Face: Nicolai Bolshov, Cheka officer

The town square, lined with trees and benches and a lovely little park, is where civic gatherings, speeches, communal celebrations, and the like were once celebrated. Now, it's where the Cheka has built a gallows and makes examples of accused counterrevolutionaries. Sometimes, they don't even bother hanging them; bullets are cheap. The bodies are then burned in the middle of the square.

FROM THE PERSONAL JOURNAL OF LARISA YEVTUSHENKO, AUGUST 1918

...Four more executed this afternoon; I was caught up in a crowd herded to the square. Very sad. One victim wept uncontrollably and refused to cooperate; he was shot where he lay...

You don't see too many people just wandering into the square. Generally, when the Cheka officers want an audience for their making-examples-of executions, they round up enough people to make it respectable and force them to watch.



Looking at the other chapters, it looks like every setting in this book has some secret locale where the bodies are buried. Here, they do it openly and dare you to do something about it.

Why the hell don't the supposed heroes of this town—the four at the boarding house—just corner Bolshov in some dark alley and execute the bastard?

That's what brought Bolshov on them in the first place.

RIGHT. ALSO, WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT IF THE POPULACE KILLS THE SECRET POLICE? THE RED ARMY COMES IN, AND I DON'T MEAN THOSE GUARDS LOSERS, I MEAN THE REAL BATTLE-HARDENED TROOPS. AND I'M GUESSING THEY'LL BE ALL OUT OF BUBBLE GUM, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

Ouch. Yeah, point.

Nicolai Dmitrich Bolshov

High Concept
Mab's Commissar

Trouble
Serving Two Mistresses

We don't know for sure that he is the Winter Knight. What if one of the players wants to play the Winter Knight, or the GM doesn't want Bolshov to have that role in the game?

In that case, just drop his supernatural powers and give him the Pure Mortal Refresh bonus, probably swap his Guns and Weapons skills. His status as a Cheka officer still makes him one of the scariest dudes in town.

Other Aspects:
I Can Trust Baba Golovina
Ruthless Cheka Captain
Great War Calvary Veteran
Sword of Winter's Frost
No One Dares Say No to Me

Skills

Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Contacts:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Great	(+4)
Deceit:	Great	(+4)
Discipline:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Guns:	Fair	(+2)
Intimidation:	Superb	(+5)
Investigation:	Fair	(+2)
Lore:	Average	(+1)
Presence:	Average	(+1)
Resources:	Good	(+3)
Survival:	Fair	(+2)
Weapons:	Great	(+4)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Authority (Intimidate): When Bolshov uses Intimidate on someone who recognizes his authority as a Cheka officer, he adds +1 to his roll.

Interrogator (Intimidate): Once per scene, Bolshov can "read" a target as per the Empathy skill by making a successful Intimidation roll.

Animal Handler, Horses (Survival): Bolshov gains a +1 to Survival checks made to handle and ride animals. This bonus increases to +2 for horses.

Powers
Marked by Power [-1]
Unseelie Magic [-4]
The Sight [-1]
Item of Power (Sword of Winter's Frost—see OW230, except this version confers Supernatural-level physical abilities) [+2]
Supernatural Strength [-4]
Supernatural Speed [-4]
Supernatural Toughness [-4]
The Catch [+1] is trappings of Summer.

These stats aren't the same as the sword in the core book. Did it lose power between 1918 and now?

No, based on recent events, I think I underestimated the sword's power.

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OOOO(OOOO)
Armor:2	
Social	OOO

Notes
Bolshov has Supreme Initiative, Weapon:6 with his sword, Fantastic defense, Great attacks with his sword, and Unseelie magic. Bolshov also has his fellow Cheka officers at his disposal. What really makes him scary is the near absolute authority he wields.

Total Refresh Cost:
– 18

Knights are associated with nobility and aristocracy. I doubt Bolshov would identify with "Winter Knight."

Good point. I think Mab would be willing to humor him on this. How does "Mab's Commissar" sound?

Like he'll shoot you if you cross him.

In other words, perfect.

Nicolai Dmitrich Bolshov
Cheka Captain (Winter Knight?)

Motivation: Ensure that the Revolution succeeds, by any means necessary.

Face of: Threat Through Dismal Winter

Bolshov is the most feared Cheka officer in Novgorod, and that's saying something, because they're all pretty scary dudes. Aside from a small number of highly loyal officers under his direct command, the other Cheka in Novgorod aren't any less afraid of Bolshov than the ordinary people are. It's telling that he's known as "Bolshov" rather than "Nicolai Dmitrich."

He's a slight man, about thirty years of age, with light hair and steel grey eyes. His uniform and Cheka badge are always immaculate, and he's never seen without his revolver and cavalry saber strapped to his belt. He's an excellent rider and a Great War veteran from the Imperial Cavalry, where he served with valor and distinction—until he coldly shot his commanding officer through the head for "crimes against the people" and led his unit into mutiny, leaving the front and riding to Petrograd to join the Revolution.

He was quickly identified as a man with the right combination of revolutionary zeal and lack of conscience, and he was transferred from the Army to the secret police. Since then, Bolshov has taken great pleasure in hunting down enemies of the Revolution. He tends to scoff at trivialities like "trials" and "evidence," preferring summary execution for most counterrevolutionaries—executions he frequently carries out personally. Bolshov is a remorseless killer and, frankly, one of the scariest mortals in Russia.

Wow. He's Marcone, but Russian.

Bolshov sounds like a sociopath, not just a criminal.

OK, so he's the Joker, but Russian.

I THINK BOLSHOV WAS A PAWN. THE QUESTION IS WHO WAS USING HIM—MAB, OR LENIN? GUESS WE'LL NEVER KNOW.

The funny thing is, if he is the Winter Knight, he's someone supernatural folks people could actually do business with. He's bound to the Accords, right? He might be a total nutcase, but he can't just go around murdering wizards and Summer changelings without orders, can he?

He might be operating under a blanket "I authorize you to kill anyone who gets in your way" order.

FROM THE PERSONAL NOTES OF SIMON PIETROVICH, SEPTEMBER 1918

...I am beginning to focus my search for the Winter Knight and have ruled out many of the people I once suspected. As I speculated in my notes from the previous week, I can now rule out Gregori Rasputin with no doubts in my mind...at the moment my suspicion falls most heavily upon Nicolai Bolshov, a Cheka officer assigned to Novgorod. The people are prone to superstition and rumor, so we should not take all of these reports seriously, but people have said that he is perpetually surrounded by a cold, misty fog, and that he brings a chill into the room when he enters and is never affected by even the most bitterly cold winter wind. Some say his piercing stare can freeze a man's heart, and in more than a metaphorical way. If these peasants' tales can be taken to have even a grain of truth to them, he displays many qualities of Winter Knights past...

If this guy really was the Winter Knight, you'd think we'd have heard of him.

Maybe he didn't last very long—this guy made a lot of enemies and Russia was a violent place.



Ration Distribution Center

Theme: Too Little, Too Late, Every Time
Face: Igor Bezrodny, Red Guards captain

In a converted warehouse just beside the rail yard, rations are distributed weekly. Those with unpunched ration cards can obtain the basics of life: flour, cooking and lamp oil, and the like. It's never enough for those who have children or elderly relatives to take care of. The Red Guards manage the center and provide security for the trucks and trains bringing the supplies in; several dozen conspicuously armed men are usually enough to keep people from getting out of hand. Despite that, grumbling at those with higher priority ration cards is common.

FROM THE PERSONAL JOURNAL OF LARISA YEVTUSHENKO, SEPTEMBER 1918

...I witnessed two young mothers, both war widows, fighting one another over the last loaf of bread at today's ration distribution. Both had valid ration cards, but there simply was not enough bread for everyone. This is happening more frequently, and bodes very ill...

The distribution center serves as an informal meeting place where people can gather and talk without much fear of being overheard or spied on. The chaos of the ration distribution makes eavesdropping impossible, and it's a true cross section of the city, so people from all walks of life cross paths here.

Igor Andreyevich Bezrodny
Captain of the Red Guards

Motivation: I don't want to go to the front.
Face of: Ration Distribution Center

Igor Bezrodny is captain of the Red Guards reserve unit in Novgorod. Formerly a shift supervisor at the Novgorod Brass Works, he was friends with Anatole Trushin and his wife Anna Trushina, for many years. He's pushing forty years old, and the only real combat he's seen was in the Russo-Japanese war in 1905. Anna appointed him captain because she thought Igor was trustworthy, rather than for his combat record.

The Guards are made up of local male workers of military age—which is very liberally defined, given how many young men have been killed since 1914. The Red Army regulars see Guards units as cannon fodder—given their inadequate training and miserable equipment, they wouldn't be much good for anything else anyway. And everyone knows it.

Captain Igor Andreyevich Bezrodny

High Concept
Captain of the Red Guards

Trouble
Coward at Heart

Other Aspects:
Old, Not Bold, Soldier
Friend of Anna Trushina
Pathetic Excuses

Skills

Craftsmanship:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Average	(+1)
Guns:	Fair	(+2)
Intimidation:	Average	(+1)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOO

Notes

All Igor wants to do is keep his unit from being called up to the front—not for the good of his men but to keep his own skin intact and to keep his current privileged position.

He can call up the guard and within a few hours have over a hundred poorly armed men at his command.

Bezrodny has Mediocre initiative, Fair attacks, Mediocre defense against most attacks.

Total Refresh Cost: +2 (Pure Mortal)



Igor is doing his best to keep the Guards from being called up, either to go to the front or to provide security for the city. It'd be nice to say that he's doing this to keep his comrades alive by keeping them out of combat, but in truth he's just out to keep his own skin, and possibly the better ration card that comes with the position. That said, with a few hours' warning he can assemble over a hundred heavily (if shoddily) armed men at his command, which isn't something that should be taken lightly.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM AN UNNAMED INFORMANT TO SIMON PIETROVICH, JANUARY 1918

... Bezrodny is just another officer in the new Army who is more interested in maintaining his own privilege and saving his own skin than in fighting for the cause he purports to believe in...

Novgorod Brass Works

Themes: We Must Have More Kaboom

Face: Fyodor Sharonov, counterrevolutionary insurgent

A loud, dark, and dirty factory on the east side of Novgorod, the Brass Works stamps out thousands of rifle cartridges and artillery shells every month. The reciprocating machinery is ear-splittingly loud, and conditions on the factory floor are dirty, cramped, and dangerous. Hundreds of Russian machinists and workers labor here through every single day, with a second shift activated when enough raw material can be brought in to support it. The workers who toil here now nominally own the factory, but in truth, only the names of their taskmasters has changed. The Red Army requires munitions, and every worker who supports the Revolution will work their fingers to the bone to defend it.

Of course, exhaustion and general unsafe practices take their toll; accidents, catastrophic breakdowns, and outright explosions are not uncommon. The factory loses a few men a month to accidents. Some are killed outright; others are horribly maimed.

On top of the dangerous machines, there's a saboteur to worry about. Fyodor Sharonov (page 97) works here as a machinist on the mortar shell line. He intends to cause a problem at some point, shutting down production. With high explosives and hot machinery all over the place, it won't be too hard for him to pull off. The only question is how many of the poor bastards working there will get killed when he does it.

Fyodor "Fedya" Ivanovich Sharonov

Counterrevolutionary Saboteur

Motivation: Foil the Revolution by any means necessary.

Face of: Novgorod Brass Works

Sharonov is a machinist at the Novgorod Brass Works and a member of the Novgorod Soviet workers' council. He attends every meeting and has been appointed chair of one of the several production committees.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM AN UNKNOWN WRITER TO SIMON PIETROVICH, APRIL 1918

...Simon, you had best warn your man in Novgorod to beware of Fyodor Sharanov, who is secretly a Russian Orthodox fanatic and has sworn to destroy the revolution that is persecuting his religion. He is feeding information on munitions production to American and British agents outside the city through a complex system of markings made on rail cars headed into Petrograd. He is intelligent, resourceful, and willing to kill...

Natalya and I couldn't find any record anywhere of Simon Pietrovich having warned Larisa.

Those are turn-of-the-last-century machines, kids. We're talking free-spinning flywheels and exposed gears. The union did not have OSHA on speed dial.

The sort of place you could tell how long a guy'd been working there by how many fingers he'd lost and how deaf he'd gone?

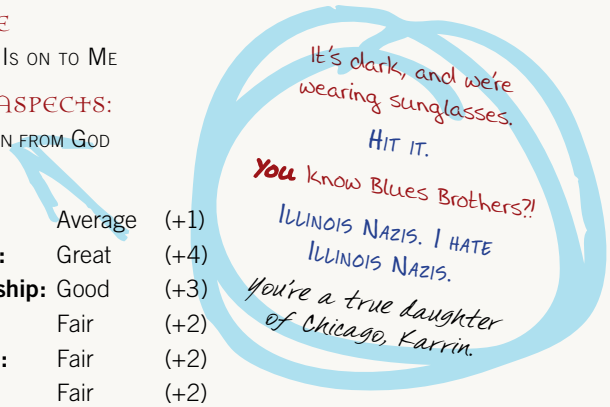
Bingo.

Fyodor "Fedya" Ivanovich Sharonov

High Concept
Counterrevolutionary Saboteur

Trouble
The Party Is on to Me

Other Aspects:
On a Mission from God



Skills

Burglary:	Average	(+1)
Conviction:	Great	(+4)
Craftsmanship:	Good	(+3)
Deceit:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Fair	(+2)
Guns:	Fair	(+2)
Stealth:	Good	(+3)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts

Saboteur (Craftsmanship): Fedya's knowledge of machinery and manufacturing means he knows where the weak spots are. He may use his Craftsmanship skill to attack anything with moving parts.

Personal Conviction (Conviction): Fedya's social presence is rooted in his identity as a person of deep faith. He uses Conviction to determine his Social Stress.

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OO
Social	OOOO

Notes
Mediocre initiative, Fair attacks if he has a gun, Mediocre defense. Fedya would prefer to avoid any direct confrontation.

Total Refresh Cost: +0 (Pure Mortal)

Church of St. Dmitri the Red (Church of St. Ilya)

Theme: So Much Blood…
Face: Dmitri Yegorov, vengeful caretaker

On the northern outskirts of Novgorod, near the river, surrounded by picturesque fields and woods, is a Russian Orthodox Church—the Church of Saint Ilya. Dmitri Yegorov was the mistreated and criminally underpaid caretaker for decades, and when the Revolution came, he took his revenge.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM LARISA YEVTUSHENKO TO SIMON PIETROVICH, SEPTEMBER 1918

…A man at the market today said something about attending services at the Church of St. Dmitri the Red. I have no idea what he is talking about, as none of the underground churches I am familiar with goes by that name. I will investigate and report…

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM SIMON PIETROVICH TO LARISA YEVTUSHENKO, SEPTEMBER 1918

Larisa Alexeyevna,

I have some preliminary intelligence about St. Dmitri the Red. Your corroborating report would be most useful. Based on what I have been told, I can only advise you not to eat before you attend "services" there…

This old church is the stage upon which one of the most horrifying displays of… Aw hell, just read Dmitri's entry.

Dmitri "Dima" Timofeyevich Yegorov

Mortal Spirit of Vengeance
Motivation: Oh yes, they will suffer.
Face Of: Church of Saint Dmitri the Red

Reserved and soft-spoken, Dmitri Yegorov was the caretaker of the Church of Saint Ilya for twenty years, and he was not treated well. The trio of priests who ministered at Saint Ilya either ignored him or berated his work. He was severely underpaid, despite the wealthy parishioners. His wife died of a treatable disease; the doctor that prayed at the church each week refused to see her without payment, and the priests wouldn't loan him the money or even give him an advance on his pay. The priests lived a mile away in a rectory the size of a mansion; he was provided a ramshackle hovel near the church to sleep in.

Then the Revolution came, and Dmitri did not turn the other cheek. Instead, he discovered how much blood two priests can produce. Quite a bit, it turns out.

The locals now call the place the Church of Saint Dmitri the Red. It's drawn a bit of notoriety. Dmitri murdered the two priests with great enthusiasm; the bloodstains on the floor, walls, and ceiling are a testament to his rage. A few of the more radical element have gravitated to him and now help him guard the third priest, Father Vyacheslav, who is being held prisoner in the basement. Yes, this once soft-spoken church caretaker is now a semi-famous murderer—with followers.

I looked around through all the translated notes I could find to see if there's any indication that Simon Pietrovich thought a rogue rage spirit was running around causing this. Nothing. This was pure mortal cruelty—both Dmitri and the priests.

Again, who are the monsters?

Father Vyacheslav envies his dead brothers, for once a week, he is made to take part in a most un-Christian spectacle of death. Every week, radicals—some from Novgorod, some from the surrounding countryside—gather in the woods behind the church late at night to drink, to gamble, and to watch.

Dmitri Yegorov

High Concept
Bloodthirsty Church Caretaker

Trouble
Consumed by Vengeance

Other Aspects:
Hands Drenched in Blood
Growing Army of Followers
I Will Make You Suffer

Skills

Contacts:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Fair	(+2)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Fair	(+2)
Weapons:	Good	(+3)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Rule with Fear (Intimidation): Dmitri uses Intimidation instead of Presence whenever rolling to represent his reputation.

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OOO
Social	OO

Notes
Good attacks with weapons; carries a knife (Weapon:1). Good Defense against most attacks. Mediocre initiative.

Total Refresh Cost: +1 (Pure Mortal)



EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM AN UNNAMED INFORMANT TO SIMON PIETROVICH, SEPTEMBER 1918

...and in the woods nearby the church, Simon Pietrovich, I witnessed an event that haunts even my nightmares, and I am a veteran of many battles.

The caretaker Dmitri arranges for one of the prisoners he or his sons have acquired—a bourgeois convict, a counterrevolutionary, or someone guilty of crimes against the People under the old regime—to be delivered to the church on the appointed night. Some weeks it is two or three prisoners. When I witnessed the event, both prisoners were men, but sometimes a woman is brought. The prisoners are paraded naked in the clearing before the crowd, and taunted and belittled and spat upon in their chains.

In the middle of the forest clearing is a massive iron cage twenty feet on a side, and ten feet high. In the center of the cage is a casket, partially buried and loosely covered in dirt. And inside the casket is...well, is a maimed, half-starved, and utterly mad vampire. Dmitri or his sons dig the dirt away, open it, and quickly run out of the cage. They hurl insults at the vile creature, spitting on it and worse; they call it "Dog" but the assembled crowd has taken to calling it "Sharik." The priest, chained to a tree and still in the filthy vestments he was wearing when Dmitri captured him, his beard wild and his hair matted, raises his cross and shouts prayers in Greek. "Sharik" clearly harbors particular hatred for the priest, and most of the vile curses and oaths it returns to the crowd are aimed at him.

At this point, the prisoner's chains are removed, he is handed a dull knife, and he is cast, screaming, into the cage with the vampire. And then, while the crowd cheers and drinks vodka and bets on how long it will last, they fight.

The vampire has been disadvantaged, in order to extend the fights. It has an iron chain locked to its neck, anchoring it to its own casket. It is missing its left hand and right leg. They keep garlic scattered around the edges of the cage, and they keep Father Vyacheslav on hand to show the cross and to pray, helping to contain the monster.

Of course, the outcome is both bloody and a complete foregone conclusion. It is only a matter of how long it takes. Once it is over, the vampire eats and the drunken spectators cheer. And when the eastern sky begins to glow, the vampire returns to the safety of its casket, the crowd staggers away, and the crows gather to feast on the remains.

Simon, if there really is a merciful, loving God, then I am confident that He has abandoned Novgorod.

That's... That's really messed up.

Simon says elsewhere in his notes that this Sharik is almost certainly Black Court, one of the few remaining in Russia at the time.

CAGE FIGHTS AGAINST A VAMPIRE? NOBODY DESERVES THAT.

And unless they did something to stop it, Sharik's mental domination powers weren't limited in any way. The vamp was probably slowly worming its way into Dmitri's head. God knows what happened when it finally broke him.

Nah, if it was smart, it would dominate the priest.

OH, GOD. AND I READ ALL THIS RIGHT BEFORE BED. THANKS, GUYS. THANKS A LOT.

Wandering Monsters

"Wandering Monsters?" Seriously? Is this 1st Ed or something?

Just a shout-out to the old schoolers out there.

Would you two please knock off the geek measuring?

There are three more important characters worth mentioning. They're not associated with any particular place—they just sort of show up where you least want them to.

Koschei the Deathless

Predator Warlock?

Motivation: Keep alive...ish.

Face Of: Threat Through Dismal Winter

Legends of Koschei the Deathless have been a staple of Slavic mythology for centuries. The stories say that Koschei is a necromancer or sorcerer of some sort, one who preserves his life through completely unnatural means. He's said to hide his soul in a faraway place (most forms of the story say on an island at sea), guarded by numerous animals. A lot of what modern fantasy fans think of as a "lich" applies to Koschei.

Nobody knows if there ever was a real Koschei, much less whether the creature who's assumed his identity in 1918 Novgorod is the real one. The immediate problem, though, is that he's preying on the people of Novgorod; his reputation seems to indicate that he prefers young women. He poses as an old man needing assistance, luring his victims to their fates. Victims are later found dead, partially exsanguinated and with expressions of horror and anguish frozen on their faces.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM LARISA YEVTUSHENKO TO SIMON PIETROVICH, AUGUST 1918

...my current working hypothesis is that he is a Black Court Rukh using the Koschei legend as a decoy. Nobody would think to use garlic against an ancient sorcerer...

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM SIMON PIETROVICH TO LARISA YEVTUSHENKO, SEPTEMBER 1918

...and you should also consider the possibility that the man (or creature) calling himself Koschei the Deathless is a disciple of Kemmler, which could be significantly worse for us all. Please exercise extreme caution...



Sharik

High Concept
Mad Black Court Vampire Prisoner

Other Aspects
Crippled and Half-Starved

Skills

Athletics:	Average	(+1)
Fists:	Fair	(+2)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Notes
Otherwise use stats for a Black Court vampire (YS84). Sharik is crippled and weakened, but still extremely dangerous, with Superb initiative, Fair defense, and attacks with Weapon:4. His current captivity has driven him mad and nearly feral, so he may forget to use the standard BCV mind tricks.

Or maybe he's been controlling this Yegorov character the whole time, waiting until he can regain his strength.

If you go with that, I'd add an aspect like "Faking It Until I Make It" or something.

Koschei the Deathless

High Concept
Ancient Immortal Necromancer

Trouble
My Legend Is Known

Other Aspects:
I Will Have Her for My Bride
My Soul in Pieces
I Am Beyond Death
I Know No Law But My Own

Skills

Alertness:	Great	(+4)
Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Contacts:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Epic	(+7)
Deceit:	Superb	(+5)
Discipline:	Epic	(+7)
Empathy:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Superb	(+5)
Intimidation:	Fantastic	(+6)
Lore:	Fantastic	(+6)
Presence:	Great	(+4)
Resources:	Superb	(+5)
Weapons:	Great	(+4)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
Evocation [-3]
Thaumaturgy [-3]
Koscheian Necromancy [-2]
Living Dead [-1]
Lawbreaker (First) [-2]
Lawbreaker (Second) [-2]
Lawbreaker (Third) [-2]
Lawbreaker (Fourth) [-2]
Lawbreaker (Fifth) [-2]
The Sight [-1]
Soulgaze [-0]
Physical Immunity [-8]
The Catch [+1] is various pieces of his soul, his emerald heart, or his hidden death.)
Mythic Mental Toughness [-6]
The Catch [+0] is possession of one his phylacteries by another, or being convinced that someone possesses one of them.
Refinement [-12]

Stress
Mental OOOO(OOOOOO), +1 mild consequence
Physical OOOO, +1 mild consequence, Armor:3
Social OOOO

Notes
Great initiative, attacks, and defenses. Koschei can comfortably control 8 or more shifts of Evocation in most specializations and even more when it comes to Necromancy.

So, a word of explanation. OW already has examples of Kemmlerian necromancers (Grevane on OW155) and powerful Black Court vamps (OW85). So we decided to stat the worst-case scenario: what if Koschei is real and exactly what the legends say? Normally that'd be a plot device character, but we wanted to see what a full writeup would look like.

We did you the favor of not adding all his specializations in, so maybe you won't die instantly. GMs, if you really want to be evil, feel free to speculate on his refinement bonuses.

This version of Koschei is an ancient and powerful necromancer who has removed his own soul and death from his body, leaving him twisted, skeletal, undead, and lich-like. He also has a penchant for kidnapping beautiful young women for his brides. His necromancy works like Kemmlerian necromancy.

As for his Catch, everyone who has heard the folktales knows where Koschei hides his Soul. It's hidden in the eye of a needle, hidden in an egg, hidden in a duck, hidden in a hare, locked in an iron chest, and buried underneath a green oak tree on the island of Buyan. Or is it his Death you're looking for, hidden in the tear of his hard-hearted daughter? Or do you need his Heart of emerald?

At the very least, you've got a head start. One of those stories must be true, right?

Total Refresh Cost:
– 27 or more

Fat chance of that...

You're never gonna let that go are you?

No kidding! This guy even has his own phylacteries!

PHY-WHAT?

Pieces of his soul bound to physical objects. It's a Lich thing, think Horcruxes.

Just like You-Know-Who.

Actually I think He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named must have stolen the idea from Koschei, the original Dark Lord.

I THOUGHT VADER WAS THE ORIGINAL DARK LORD.

Come on, this is serious.

Koschei the Deathless (BCV)

High Concept
Ancient Black Court Rukh

Trouble
King Without a Court

Other Aspects:
Pact with Baba Yaga
Legends Hide My Nature
The Island of Buyan Hides My Soul
Really Damn Creepy

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Conviction:	Great	(+4)
Deceit:	Fantastic	(+6)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Superb	(+5)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Good	(+3)
Might:	Superb	(+5)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Stealth:	Great	(+4)
Survival:	Fair	(+2)
Weapons:	Fair	(+2)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
All Master Black Court Vampire powers, see OW85 [-19]
Flesh Mask [-1]
Demesne [-1]

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OOO(OOOO) **Armor:2**
Social	OOO
Hunger	OOOO +1 mild consequence

Notes
Weapon:6 attacks, Epic initiative, Great or Superb defenses. Koschei's Demesne is actually the legendary Island of Buyan.

This is the Black Court vampire version of Koschei, largely conjecture based on Larisa's reports and Russian folklore. We theorize he made a pact with Baba Yaga for more power. She gave him his Demesne and Flesh Mask abilities, allowing him to go off into his own personal corner of the Nevernever, the Island of Buyan, when seriously threatened.

Finding the Island requires some worldwalking Thaumaturgy (YS282) of at least Legendary (+8) complexity, but getting there doesn't necessarily do you any favors—then you're facing him on his home turf. To finish him off completely, you need to find the various places where he's hidden his "soul." If you manage to find Koschei's "soul" while he's active, he'll be at your mercy—as a GM, you can handle this with a compel.

Total Refresh Cost: – 21

So the legend is that Koschei hid his soul away on the Island of Buyan, inside a bunch of stuff—a needle, a hare, a duck, a chest, and an egg, I think. Is that right?

Yes, but I like to think of it as a soul-hiding turducken.

You two really shouldn't write on an empty stomach. Also, I thought vampires didn't have souls.

It's just a theoretical build—this vampire had a soul, if the legends are to be believed.

Does this ever get less confusing?



Baron Gagolin/Yaphat

High Concept
Vengeful Werebear

Trouble
A Lord with No Lands

Other Aspects:
In Soviet Russia, Bear Hunts You
Svetlana Kaplan Will Pay
Bristled Tongue, Razor Teeth
Patient Predator
I Will Not Be Ruled by Filthy Peasants

What does "Bristled Tongue" mean?

In Russian folklore, were-creatures are said to have bristles on the underside of their tongues. It also represents the nastiness that can roll off that tongue.

Skills (Gagolin)

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Average	(+1)
Burglary:	Average	(+1)
Conviction:	Fair	(+2)
Craftsmanship:	Average	(+1)
Deceit:	Fair	(+2)
Discipline:	Average	(+1)
Driving:	Average	(+1)
Empathy:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Fair	(+2)
Fists:	Fair	(+2)
Guns:	Fair	(+2)
Intimidation:	Superb	(+5)
Investigation:	Fair	(+2)
Lore:	Average	(+1)
Presence:	Great	(+4)
Rapport:	Great	(+4)
Scholarship:	Good	(+3)
Survival:	Average	(+1)
Weapons:	Good	(+3)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Skills (Yaphat)

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Conviction:	Fair	(+2)
Deceit:	Average	(+1)
Discipline:	Average	(+1)
Empathy:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Superb	(+5)
Fists:	Superb	(+5)
Intimidation:	Great	(+4)
Investigation:	Average	(+1)
Lore:	Average	(+1)
Might:	Great	(+4)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Rapport:	Fair	(+2)
Scholarship:	Fair	(+2)
Stealth:	Fair	(+2)
Survival:	Good	(+3)
Weapons:	Average	(+1)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
No Pain, No Gain (Endurance): Gagolin gets one additional mild physical consequence.

Rule With Fear (Intimidation): Gagolin rolls Intimidation instead of Presence to represent his reputation.

Wrestler (Might): Gagolin adds +1 to Might rolls to maintain a grapple.

Natural Predator (Survival): When in the wild, Gagolin may roll Survival instead of Stealth.

Powers
Beast Change [-1]
Echoes of the Beast [-1]
Human Form [+1]
Claws [-1]
Supernatural Strength [-4]
Inhuman Recovery [-2]
Inhuman Toughness [-2]
The Catch [+1] is any purely supernatural source of damage.

Stress (Gagolin)
Mental OOO
Physical OO
+1 mild consequence
Social OOOO

Stress (Yaphat)
Mental OOO
Physical OOOO(OO),
+2 mild consequences **Armor:1**
Social OOOO

Notes
While in bear form, Good initiative, attacks with Superb Fists at Weapon:6, Great defenses for most attacks. Gagolin believes Sveta is primarily responsible for his misfortune. While she's the focus of his wrath, Gagolin eagerly seizes any opportunity to attack others who have harmed him, such as Bolsheviks and the peasants he formerly ruled over.

Total Refresh Cost: –13



Where are you getting that from?

From my own laments. We Alphas turn into normal wolves. So, magic of any kind pretty much ends our day. I presume it'd be the same for a werebear.

Baron Gagolin/Yaphat

Vengeful Werebear

Motivation: Hunt down the one who ruined everything.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM SIMON PIETROVICH TO LARISA YEVTUSHENKO, SEPTEMBER 1918

...A werebear? You confirm what I long suspected of Gagolin. Be cautious, Larisa Alexeyevna, for Gagolin was never one to let go of a grudge. He is almost certainly hunting Svetlana...

Gagolin was a cruel nobleman in the far northwest of pre-revolutionary Russia, in a region known as Karelia. His tyranny over the peasants who lived on his land was almost as legendary as Yaphat, the giant brown bear that hunted the forests of the region. Turns out, they were one and the same.

As described above, Svetlana Kaplan discovered his secret. When she explained his true nature to the local peasants, the superstitious farmers and villagers never doubted her for a second. They immediately burned his manor house, leaving it a pile of cinder. He fled into the forest, where he remained for years, ruminating on his fate.

The villagers took his home, the Revolution took his title, but Svetlana Kaplan took his secret—and he will never forgive her for that.

And he has tracked her to Novgorod.



Baba Yaga

High Concept
The Baba Yaga

Other Aspects:
Witch of the Rus
Extremely Capricious
The Land and I Are One

Skills, Powers, etc.

Much like the Faerie Queens, Baba Yaga is a force of nature more than a character. Assume Baba Yaga always rolls at Legendary, and add +2 or more to that if she's doing magic. Pure force may put her down or get by her, but can never really destroy her—basically the equivalent of Physical Immunity but with no Catch. Direct confrontation is nearly futile.

You can outmaneuver her because of her capriciousness and perspective blindness—she's confounded by the pure of heart, for example, and presumes everyone must have hidden motives or agendas. She's also vulnerable to having her focus rapidly shift from one thing to another. GMs, if your players come up with particularly clever plans to trick her, maybe she only rolls to oppose at Superb or Fantastic.

If you enter her demesne, always remember to be polite.

She's REAL? Wow! My great-gran told stories about her all the time. I thought it was just old stories.

Russian wizards certainly think she's real. Is it really that weird? I mean, you survived a zombie attack.

Yeah, point.

Wait. Then... Baba Vasilisa, from the boarding house... She really is...

I NEED TO READ UP ON MY RUSSIAN FOLKLORE. LOOKS LIKE THERE'S MORE TO IT THAN WE THOUGHT.

Baba Yaga

Witch of the Rus

Motivation: I seek a servant.

Face Of: Threat Through Dismal Winter

Folklore fans out there know all about Baba Yaga. Witch of the Russian wilds, lives in a hut with giant chicken legs that spins through the forest, flies around on a mortar and pestle. She has three horsemen who serve her: the white (dawn), the red (evening), and the black (night).

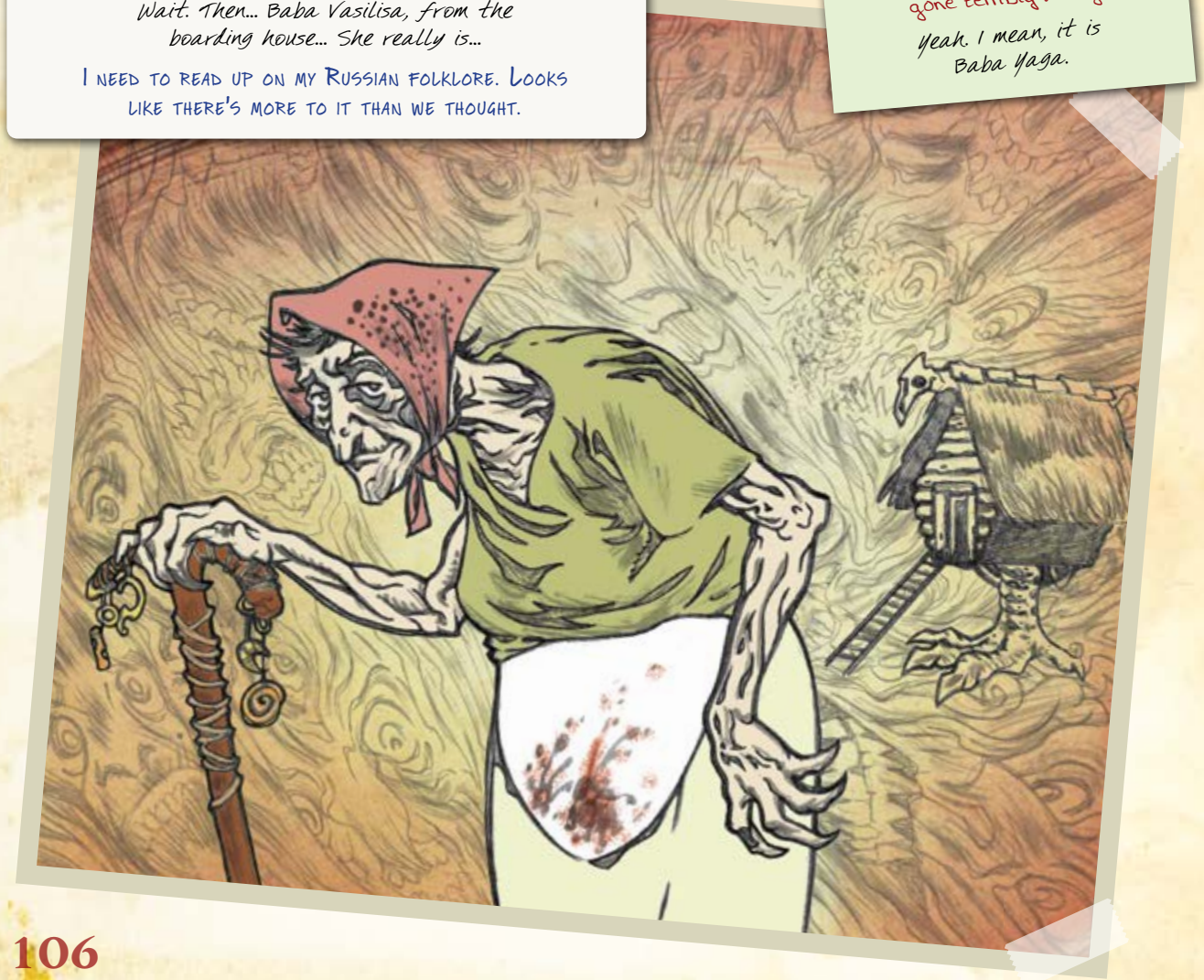
Simon Pietrovich had quite a lot to say about Baba Yaga. These are the most interesting bits, but honestly, reading all of it doesn't shed much more light. She's nothing if not completely unpredictable and inconsistent.

What about the horsemen?

Uh, they're also plot devices, so they do everything at Superb?

Ah. So basically, if dice happen here, something's gone terribly wrong.

Yeah. I mean, it is Baba Yaga.



FROM THE PERSONAL NOTES OF SIMON PIETROVICH, JANUARY 1892

Many of the learned ask me, "What is Baba Yaga?" I tell them, she is not, as far as I can tell, Fae. She is not one of the wise women from the forest. She does not seem to be mortal wizard, nor demon, nor spirit.

The only answer is that she is Baba Yaga.

Every Russian forest is her forest, every Russian stream her stream, every meadow and lake and mountain are hers, and once you enter her domain and attract her attention, time and space mean very little.

She is capricious and tempestuous beyond all reason. She is powerful beyond measure and carries the wisdom of centuries, yet clever children have outsmarted her and the pure of heart confound her. She can be charming and hospitable and helpful one moment, and fly into an anthrophagic rage the next.

What to you or me is a trivial slight or innocuous action, she might decide to take as a grave insult. She has killed and eaten men for crossing the borders of her land without permission, borders that exist only in her mind and that vary with the wind. She has laid curses on people for generations for showing insufficient respect and deference. She has enslaved men for years for failing to correctly answer riddles.

And yet, for others, she has provided assistance and advice. Her expertise in potionmaking is unmatched by any wizard I have ever met, and she is willing to share them with the right person, or for the right price. She carries the experience and knowledge of a thousand years, and again, is willing to share them for a price, or with a person who amuses her or to whom she takes a liking for her own inscrutable reasons...

My Latin isn't so good. "Anthrophagic"?

Greek, Murphy, Greek. Means she eats people. Bones and all, from the stories my great-gran told me.

We covered this sort of vocabulary in Volume 2 of the RPG, Karrin. Try to keep up.

Nobody likes a wiseass, Borden.

This almost sounds like the Nevernever. Think she has a demesne there whose borders blend in with Russia?

Not sure it works that way—but I'm not sure it doesn't.

Thank you, Eyes, that was supremely helpful. What would we do without you.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM SIMON PIETROVICH TO LARISA YEVTUSHENKO, MARCH 1918

...Of course, if you seek Baba Yaga in her chicken-footed hut, I am sorry to say that you will not be able to find her, unless she wishes to be found. And yet, the fruitlessness of such a search is likely a blessing, for if she does wish to be found, I warn you to tread ever so carefully, Larisa Alexeyevna, as things could go very poorly for you before you even realize that you have offended her. She is quite mad.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM SIMON PIETROVICH TO LARISA YEVTUSHENKO, JUNE 1918

Larisa Alexeyevna,

I hope this letter finds you well, and soon enough.

I write to you on a matter of utmost urgency. Yesterday evening I had tea with Baba Yaga, in her hut, as I have done several times before. Thrice during our tea did she offer me power and advice. I believe that she seeks a new servitor. As such, until I otherwise indicate, you are forbidden to visit her.

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM AN UNNAMED WARDEN TO SIMON PIETROVICH, SEPTEMBER 1918

...Please attempt to discover the motivation behind Baba Yaga's refusal to directly oppose the Winter Court's move to dominate Russia. This information is requested from the highest levels.

The Neverglades

Checked the pronunciation on this one, by the way. oh-key-oh-kah-lee.

Geshundheit.

Okeeokalee Bay, Florida



From the Desk of Will Borden

Not long ago I got an email from someone named Alec Bones. The email itself was short, to the point. He said he'd gotten my name from Elaine a few months back. He initially threw my contact information away, but he found himself digging it back up not long after. What got my attention was the reason he dug it back up—from what he said, it sounds like the Fomor were sniffing around his town and he seems to have some insight as to why.

And any place the Fomor are interested in is a place the Paranet needs to pay attention to and lend a hand.

There was an attachment on the email, a lengthy one. It was one long document, a rambling primer on his town, its people, and its current troubles. At first he didn't see the benefit in something like the Paranet, but he was starting to come around. He figured the best way to express his interest was to get us interested in his community, let us know what was important about it.

If half the stuff he says is true...

Well, I'll let Alec tell his story.

Magic Swims These Waters Every Night

My name is Alec Bones and I'm a weregator. Learned it when I was a boy, some thirty-odd years ago now. I'm from a small town in Florida called Okeeokalee Bay; you may or may not have heard of us. It's a tiny town with a lot of surrounding swamp territory. We're out of the way and hard to get to, but we still get our share of visitors.

Okeeokalee is a mix of Hitchiti and Choctaw; it vaguely means "water-home" and that's a lot more accurate and to the point than you know.

Mr. Borden, I'm writing because we need a little bit of help. We keep to ourselves for the most part—despite our part of the tourist trade coming through— and we handle our own problems, but we just ain't equipped to deal with what's been dealt us lately. I'd be grateful if you'd give this document a read and maybe send some aid our way.

What's What in Okeeokalee Bay

The Bay has always been a quiet place for the most part. We're small and tight-knit and, when it ain't tourist season, we keep mainly to ourselves. That's on purpose; keeping to ourselves means we don't attract *too* many tourists, and it keeps us off the map, so to speak. There's a lot of weirdness in the area, and most of it ain't friendly to those who don't know how to avoid, evade, or fight it. We've got everything from water-faeries and wish-granting fish to a pack of panthers too smart for their own good (or ours, maybe). Hell, we used to have a genuine vampire making our lives difficult, before he went and got blowed up. Still feeling the aftershock of that one, though.

AREN'T WE ALL?

It really ain't as bad as it sounds. Most days are just normal days (well, normal-ish). We really only have to deal with the uncanny stuff once a season or so, or when someone ventures too far into the swamp. We usually have things cleared up by summer—summer's tourist season, you see—and we haven't had a tourist go missing or get eaten in something like ten years. Well, until recently. I'll get to that in a bit.

You might be asking how we can take so much weirdness in stride, talk about it like it ain't nothing, simple folk as we are. The truth is, we're used to it. This is what life is like when you live near the Fount.

"Blowed up"? I guess that means it was Red Court.

Seems a safe bet, but I don't think these people know anything about the Courts, vampire or otherwise. A lot of what follows seems like supposition and folklore with very little in the way of known supernatural fact to back it up.

"KNOWN SUPERNATURAL FACT"?

I know, right? Anyway, my point is I'm going to chime in on occasion and make guesses as to what Alec's talking about.

The Neverglades Twist

While I was reading Alec's account, it struck me that this town—Okeeokalee Bay, Florida—would make a great setting for THE DRESDEN FILES RPG. The thing is, it would work best with a different take on city creation. We call it the "Neverglades Twist" and it works really well for small, tight communities. You might want to try it for organizations like a Vampire Court or the White Council, invented cities like Gotham or Metropolis (YS25), or maybe cities built using the Vancouver Method (YS28) or "on-the-fly" creation (YS49).

The idea is that the *people* are a lot more important than the *places*; the ripples matter. Every little action has a great effect, whether you piss off the Sherriff, help the village outcast, or save someone's baby from a monster. Each of these causes an immediate change in the interactions between characters and the city, and this might trickle down to other relationships, locations, themes, and threats.

The city aspects of today are not the city aspects of tomorrow.

YOU'RE READING ABOUT REAL LIFE HORRORS OF THE FOMOR AND YOU DECIDE IT WOULD MAKE A GREAT GAME SETTING? YOU'RE A SICK PUPPY, BORDEN.

I've said before, this game is my way of dealing with stuff. I know you don't get it, Murphy, but you gotta know that I **am** taking this stuff seriously.



The Fount

Piqued your interest, didn't I? "What's the Fount?" you ask. You may be reaching back into your brain, wondering why that sounds so familiar, and why you maybe recognized the name of our humble town.

If this place has a tourist trade then why is it so hard to find on Google Maps?

It's possible that all the ambient magic in the area makes it impossible for satellites and such to pinpoint it.

Okeeokalee Bay is the home of the Fountain of Youth. That's what local legend says, and the tourist trade seems to think the same thing. We're not a big enough deal to draw a big crowd, but people—maybe a couple hundred a year—come here for swamp tours or to see if they can get their cancer cured or their years washed away. The thing that keeps them coming back is that *sometimes* it even works.

That's 'cause the Fountain of Youth is more than just a legend; it's a power source. It lives in our area, but it ain't tied to any one particular spot, certainly not that great gaudy stone fountain we built a few hundred years back to entertain the out-of-towners. It's migratory, hopping from place to place in the Bay but always staying within a half day's walk (or fanboat ride) out from town. Every once in a while the Fount is near enough to that thing the locals visit that someone's cancer actually *does* get cured, or somebody really *does* wake up a few years younger and feeling it. That keeps the myth going, keeps the tourist trade going, and keeps letting us hide it right out in the open. Who's gonna believe that the actual Fountain of Youth lives in a town that sells Fountain of Youth branded beer mugs?

Based on stuff that comes later, my best guess is that he's talking about Summer here.

The Fount itself is…well, we're not quite sure what it is. The prevailing theory (read: what Miss Lizzy says) is that it's some sort of conduit to a world full of vital energy, whatever that means. That's what gives the Fount's water its healing properties. Trouble is, that's what gives it its *other* properties, too.

Any thoughts on rules-y bits here, Will?

Well, we could say that drinking the water mimics our Reiki Healing spell from YS300, or that it provides the equivalent of Wizard's Constitution (YS170) for a certain period of time, like a week or so.



See, the Fount has a profound effect on the ambient flora and fauna. Some of it grows big, some of it grows strange. The swamps around the Bay have probably the highest concentration of intelligent animals that you're likely to find anywhere. I don't mean intelligent like "Oh my, your dog brought you your slippers, what a smart boy!" I mean human-level intelligence, and not always kindly. Remember that pack of panthers I was talking about? This is probably how they came about.

Miss Lizzy has a theory that, when an animal spends a decent amount of time in or around the Fount, it opens itself up to be inhabited by a spirit. This spirit might be friendly, mischievous, or downright cruel; all's fair game from what I hear. Once an animal is inhabited, the spirit is unlikely to leave. I think that it's probably trapped in the animal somehow because some of them just seem spiteful.

Like a ghost or something?

Probably more like a fae spirit. Less haunting, more pranking.

PRANKING? WE'RE TALKING ABOUT PANTHERS WITH FAE INTELLIGENCE HERE. I THINK IT GOES A BIT BEYOND PRANKING.

I once had a catfish the size of a small bear capsize my boat, grab me by the foot, and drag me down toward the bottom of the swamp. Lucky for me I'm a weregator, and that catfish wasn't expecting me to turn into something that could hold its breath, swim just fine, and take that thing apart faster than you can spit. It swam away right quick; I must say that satisfied me to no end.

People don't believe us when we tell them about these things, so we just stopped trying. It's probably because there's no physical change to the animal when you're talking about a spirit inhabitation. When you're talking about a creature of unusual size, it tends to revert back to normal size when it's taken outside the Bay. Miss Lizzy says that its extra bulk reverts to ectoplasm and evaporates.

Creatures of unusual size? I don't believe they exist!

Seems like ghosts don't like the Fount much. You never see them right around the Fount itself—although they haunt plenty of other places in the Bay—and some say that even the mud from around the Fount is bad for them. I've never had occasion to try it, though.

I'd treat any mud gathered from around the Fount as ghost dust (YS304).



Fantastic Flora and Fauna

There's a bunch of *weird* stuff around the Bay, most likely on account of the Fount:

- **Deadheads**: In the deep swamps, there are these big above-ground root-balls on some cypress trees, covered in weird mushrooms, with faces and skulls patterned in the twisted bark. Ghosts can talk through them. I've heard them.
- **"Dinos"**: A lot of reptiles get made big by the effects of the Fount. I'm talking iguanas as big as dogs, sea turtles as big as cars, and gators that are even bigger than that. They can get a mite troublesome.
- **Faerie Creatures**: Miss Lizzy has this theory that faerie creatures come through the Fount all the time, but that most of them don't have bodies. They can't—or won't—inhabit humans for some reason or another, but they've got no problem taking up residence in the bodies of animals. These animals get smarter than their kin and often develop special powers. This is where you get stories about fish that grow to prodigious size and grant wishes when you catch them, birds that sing symphonies, and so forth.
- **Giant Bugs**: About the only things the Fount likes making bigger and weirder than reptiles is bugs. We got a powerful lot of gigantic bugs around here. (Some of that can be chalked up to Withered Jim, but they were around before he started fiddling with them.) They violate all sorts of laws of biology and physics. Bring a shotgun. And maybe a machete.
- **Muckrugs**: Goopy, algae things that want to wrap you up and suffocate you. They're purple and hunt at night. They don't like bright light much, and fire makes them shrivel.
- **Shamblers**: Almost man-like piles of rotting vegetation, shambling around, causing havoc. The Sentinel sends them out to mess with the Conquistador. Iron and steel is the quickest way to make these critters go away permanently.
- **The Skunk Ape**: People have talked about the Skunk Ape in these parts for longer than I can remember. It's basically a big, stinky, shy, Southern version of Bigfoot that lives in these swamps. Unlike the other stuff on this list (which I know for a fact exists), I don't know anyone who's ever actually *seen* the Skunk Ape (except for Missus Simmons, but you gotta take that with some salt), though a few people have claimed to encounter it occasionally. Could be a myth, but given the strangeness in this area I wouldn't rule it out entirely.
- **Vampire Grass**: It's a water plant that wraps up flesh in its fronds and starts sucking out your blood. Unless you're a damned fool, you tear it up by the roots as soon as you feel it bite. Otherwise, you'll get sleepy and fall over into the water and drown while it drinks.

IT'S LIKE EVERYTHING NASTY THAT WE FIGHT UP HERE GOT TURNED INTO A PLANT OR BUG DOWN THERE.

And they have a tourism trade? Horse hockey.

The Sentinel and the Speaker

It might seem like that's an awful lot of power just floating around out there in the swamp; if you thought that, you'd be right. But it ain't exactly helpless. The Fount has a protector us Bayfolk call the Sentinel. I'll talk more about the Sentinel later (page 134) but for now what you need to know is that it's powerful, it's fickle, and it's quick to perceive threats to itself and the Fount.

So how do we, the people of the Bay, get access to those restorative waters? We have a Speaker.

According to local legend, a traveler who settled this area a long, long time ago found the Fount and met the Sentinel. A pact was struck and that traveler became the first Speaker. Now, most Bayfolk can trace their ancestry back for several generations, and most families will tell you that they're related to that first Speaker. The way I understand it, that's why we're allowed to stay so close to the Fount and why we're allowed to keep electing Speakers by general consensus. I suppose that lends a bit of credence to local legend.

That's how the Speaker came about, but what does a Speaker actually do? I can tell you better than most others in town; see, I'm the current Speaker.

So wait, would you make the Sentinel the face of the Fount, or Alec?

Alec's the one people are most likely to interact with so I'd go with him. The Fount's kind of a special case since it moves around so much, though. You're always there by virtue of being in the area, but you're rarely at the actual Fount itself. Might be better represented as a theme or threat than as a location.

See "Neverglades Twist—Three Faces, One Theme" on page 135 for one way to deal with this issue.

Mostly, I keep tourists away from the Fount. Being the Speaker means that I generally know the direction and distance to the Fount at any given time, which means I can steer people away from it while I'm giving swamp tours or taking them to see that great gaudy fountain just outside of town. Sometimes, though, I'm called upon to go visit the Sentinel and ask it for some Fount-water. Sometimes it'll give me the water, sometimes not. Sometimes it asks for something in return—that's when things get interesting.

Lately, the Sentinel's been on edge. It's being stingy with the water and more violent than usual, even with me. Can't say that doesn't worry me more than a little bit.

The Fount could really help a lot of people; it's too bad Alec has to run interference for the Sentinel.

IT SOUNDS MORE LIKE HE'S TRYING TO PROTECT THE **TOURISTS**. IF THE SENTINEL IS AS UNPREDICTABLE AS ALEC SAYS IT IS, HE'S LIKELY DOING PEOPLE A BIG FAVOR BY KEEPING HIMSELF BETWEEN IT AND THEM.

Yeah. Also, remember what Harry always said: magic doesn't necessarily make things easier or better, but it sure does complicate things.

SAYS. LET'S NOT TALK ABOUT HIM IN THE PAST TENSE, PLEASE.



I'll bet he looks his friends up on My Face.

The Everglades

For those of you who can't be troubled to use the Google Wikimacallit (and for those who just can't), let me give you the low-down on the Everglades. It's been called "the River of Grass," Laguna del Espíritu Santo ("Lake of the Holy Spirit"), and Pa-hay-okee ("Grassy Water"). In short, the Everglades are an enormous bit of wetlands in southern Florida.

Around here, we've got pine rockland, mangrove forests, cypress swamps, sawgrass marshes, and something I hear they call a "tropical hardwood hammock." Lots of limestone means lots of aquifers and the like, making this a wet place. It's all "very fascinating geology and hydrology," I'm told. What do I know? I just live here.

Most of the year, if it's not hot and wet, it's cold and wet. So we're dodging hurricanes and wildfires a bunch. In the winter, sometimes we get a freeze—and given the way things usually are, that's almost as bad as a small hurricane. We ain't used to ice down here, unless it comes out of a refrigerator. Sometimes not even then.

Folks been living here long before Europeans showed up—the Calusa, the Tequesta, then the Seminoles, among others. When more folks came, they started building canals and levees, draining a large portion of the Everglades—some say almost half of it!—and changing wetland into farmland.

You can't tame the Everglades, though. It belongs to the wildlife. We got gators, obviously—they hang out on the highway, and they'll eat people who've run 'em over when the dumb saps get out of the car to see if the freaking gator's all right.

We also got manatees, sea turtles, frogs, and all kinds of birds. The state animal is the Florida panther—they live in the Everglades, naturally. Giant cockroaches and palmetto bugs are running around; most bugs are just bigger around here than elsewhere—and that's before taking into account the influence of the Fount or Withered Jim. I heard a story a while back about an explosion of pythons (or anacondas or somesuch snakes) that were brought over from another country and thrived just fine here. And that's just the normal, run of the mill critters.

Rulesifying the Okeeokalee Critters

So, for most of the random weirdness that Alec's talking about in the Bay, you can probably extrapolate from Warped Beasts in OW91-92, potentially adding Hulking Size for particularly crazy mutations.

Vampire Grass and Muckrugs strike me as more of an environmental hazard than an actual opponent. Use the guidelines for that on YS325—Vampire Grass attacks you and has a Weapon rating, and Muckrugs are a block or grapple. For particularly dense occurrences of either, see Challenges on YS324.

For the Skunk Ape, you could probably use something very similar to a Goblin (OW45), but replace Bows (Guns) with Stealth, remove Weapons, Glamours, and Pack Instincts, and change the Catch to something more appropriate to your vision of the Skunk Ape (fire would be a good choice, though you could keep cold iron if you want the Skunk Ape to be a fae creature).

Proper Manners

- Courtesy is important around here. Keep this stuff in mind:
- Treat folks as you would want to be treated, or how they ask to be treated.
- Don't brag or claim more than you are.
- Be modest, but don't be falsely so—if you are doing, can do, or have done impressive things, admit it (but don't volunteer it).
- Offer to share with the less well-off; if you are less well-off, offer to pay, work, or help when shared with.
- New neighbors/brides are tested to see if they will return dishes or plates sent with food. Sending something on a family plate or serving vessel is a statement of trust. Not returning a casserole dish is a betrayal.

The Escalating Okeeokalee Bay Language of Food Brought to Others

- Bread or Cookies = Welcome!
- Cake = Congratulations!
- Pie = Sorry about the broken bones.
- Casserole = I hope the surgery goes well or Welcome to your new addition! or I'm sorry for your loss.
- Ham = Unexpected sudden tragedy; there are no words.



Mundanes in Your Game

Alec sent me huge amounts of information about the Bay, most of it not gameable. Believe it or not, he wrote something on *every resident* of the Bay. Yeah.

Anyway, most of that stuff is sitting in my office and not in this book. I'm not going to make you wade through 927 pages of notes on grocers and florists and gas station attendants (I'm not kidding), but I figured it would be useful to give you a list of names and brief descriptions of some of the more interesting ones for when you need a random mundane NPC in your game.

- **Missie Alpert and the Mallister Boys:** These three are the pranksters of the Bay. Just barely into their teens, Missie eggs the Mallisters (Tom and Jack) into doing stupid things, and those stupid things often involve minor property destruction.
- **Fitz, Gorn, and Hapscomb:** A trio of toughs who work as bouncers and security at the *Lion Queen*. Hapscomb is the smartest of the three and often takes the lead.
- **Hap Marsters:** works in Menendez's General Store & Post Office with Miss Cammy. Nice kid, a bit naïve, knows sign language.
- **Old Rowan Marsters:** Ostensibly retired from working in the Sherriff's Office, but still pretty vital and kind of a busybody.
- **Mark Orson:** Only florist in the bay. Green thumb like you wouldn't believe, and actually has a degree in botany. Knows most of the plants (and folk remedies) in the Bay.
- **Freddie Runcie:** Mechanic-slash-gas station attendant at Gandy's Gas-Autos-Boats. Skilled with a wrench, quick with a smile, and one of the prettiest girls in town. Alby's got a crush on her.
- **Julie Vance:** Runs a little shop full of knick-knacks and souvenirs that's only open during tourist season. The rest of the year she does odd jobs around town.
- **Rick Wayland:** Pit boss at the *Lion Queen*. Kind of a jerk, but always smiles at the high rollers. Scared of the Colonel.

The what now?

Never heard of them, but it sounds like warnings and wardings taught through children's games.

Makes sense, given where those kids are growing up.

Okeeokalee Bay

It's possible that, before getting this letter, you'd never heard of the Bay before. It ain't on those fancy online maps and you can't find us with a GPS (those devices tend to go a bit crazy when you get within ten miles of our town). If you've seen us on a map, it was a paper map.

We've got a tourist trade, like I said, but that don't mean that the Bay is altogether safe for visitors.

Anyway, Okeeokalee Bay proper—that is, the town—is mostly a bunch of houses on a high and dry bit of land, focused around the rough square formed by Town Hall, Menendez's General Store & Post Office, Missus Simmons' Boarding House & Tea Room, and Gandy's Gas-Autos-Boats. A lot of families around here have their farms farther out, or even live on their own separate islands. The *Lion Queen* is probably the outer point of what we'd call "part of the Bay."

The Mundane Community

Not everyone in the Bay is a weregator or a water witch or has the blood of the fae in them, but I wouldn't exactly say that life around here is normal for most folks, by outsider standards. From what I understand, you go to New York City or Boston or Miami and the vast majority of folk don't know a thing about magic or monsters or uncanny things. That just ain't true here.

We're a small community and there ain't a lot of places to hide. As such, everybody's in your business most of the time and hiding a supernatural talent—or curse—just ain't possible. That being the case, we live our lives right out in the open, magic and all. Most folk in the Bay don't have any kind of inborn supernatural power, but everybody in the Bay learns about the uncanny at a young age, and you'd be hard-pressed to find someone above the age of ten who doesn't know the Six Songs of Safety or the Four Finger Fortress (with string or without).

Most of our families have been here for a very long time, and we're all related in some way or another, through blood or through marriage or through ancient pacts. We mostly keep to ourselves for the larger part of the year, growing or making what we need and buying the rest from Menendez's. Some folks sell gas or machinery or a valuable service, and that's where you get your mechanics, electricians, carpenters, and so forth.

We're mainly a barter economy within the Bay; you need something from someone, you've got to trade them something they need to get it. Credit's



pretty big, though when I say "credit" I'm not talking about American Express; I mean trust. People trust each other for the most part, and they're mostly willing to defer payment if they know you're good for it. We're such a small community that that kind of thing is pretty easy to keep track of and pretty hard to exploit.

Of course, we still need money from time to time, especially Miss Cammy and the others who do business with the outside world. Some of that we get from going outside the Bay to do odd jobs or migrant work. Some folk, like Manny, get a regular paycheck from the government and that helps, too. Mostly the money comes from the tourist trade, though. Pretty much everybody participates in the tourist season in some way, whether it's offering tours, selling food and board, peddling knick-knacks, or whatever. Tourists bring money into the Bay, and we use that money to get the things we need. It ain't fancy, but we get by.

The Supernatural Community

Everyone from the Bay knows about the existence of things that most folk outside the Bay would call "outlandish." Our proximity to the Fount touches every one of us. The way I understand it, we live a bit longer than most outsiders, get sick less often, heal from our hurts faster and more completely.

I think it's fair to give Wizard's Constitution to all the Bayfolk to simulate the effects of the Fount on their health.

Maybe more significantly, we take the supernatural as a given here. Nobody who lives in the Bay would deny an outlandish claim just because it's outlandish; everyone's got first-hand experience with that kind of stuff, so we generally take such claims at face value. Education about magic and spirits and whatnot is also part of the standard curriculum in Okeeokalee Bay.

Maybe also give everyone Lore at Average (+1) as a baseline?

Yeah, sounds likely.

There's one way that the Fount makes things a bit harder on us—it isolates us.

Not because it drives folk away; quite the opposite. The tourists come in every year, and magical folk seem drawn to the Fount; they come to visit and they settle here pretty often.

Who knew? Even the supernatural types retire to Florida.

It's just that it seems to foul up technology. Most of us have phones or radios, but only a handful of us have computers and only a few of those have access to the Internet. Internet's hard to get out here, and it seems like those of us who are strong in the craft don't mix well with technology. The Fount itself tends to fry gadgets that get close to it, so things like GPS and cell phones are a no-go around here. I'd guess tourists chalk it up to one of those charming but inconvenient things they have to deal with if they want to see the Fountain of Youth.

Some Bay Vocabulary for the Damnyankee, et al.

- "You got bones in your closet." = You're trying to hide bad secrets.
- "You got ghosts in your town." = You come from a place known for trying to hide bad secrets.
- "That dog won't hunt." = That concept won't work.
- "Come to the front door." = You're a stranger, separate, or kept apart.
- "Just come to the back/kitchen/garage door." = You're family, accepted, and included.
- "Bless your heart." = You can't help your limited/inadequate/unsophisticated response/actions due to your improper upbringing or limited intelligence.
- "That's *nice*." = Fuck you or Fuck off.
- "Well, I just don't know what to say." = You want a response, but I'm not going to give one because it means I will have to be uncharitable.
- "I'm just not as sophisticated as some people." = That's some *freaky shit* that I cannot view as acceptable, but how you lead your life is your private business.
- "Hanging off the drop edge of yonder." = Dying or nearly dead.
- "I don't cotton to that." = I find that grossly unacceptable.
- "Dust-up" or "row" = A fight.
- "Well, I never!" = I actually have.

Who's Who in Okeeokalee Bay

One third of the people in this town have powers of some kind, and he thinks that's **normal**?

Well, I guess if you grew up in an insular community like this it might seem normal...Maybe.

The Bay's a smallish town, maybe a couple hundred folks or so. Pretty much everyone who lives here knows at least a little bit about the supernatural; some folks know a lot more. We're mostly regular folk living in a world that ain't regular. I'd say that two out of three folks in the Bay are just plain old mortals—no special powers or gills or blue hair or anything.

Those of us who are a bit more in the know have taken it upon ourselves to keep folks around here safe. And not just those who live here—tourists come here every year, wanting to see the Fountain of Youth and go on swamp tours and feed a gator and such. We gotta keep them safe, too. As much as we'd like to stay sealed up in our little swamp here, we need a connection to the outside world even if it's only for part of the year. Not to mention the money it brings in.

Nevergiades Twist—Start With People

In normal city creation, you create locations that you think will be interesting and you populate them with people to represent them, fight for them, subvert them, and cause trouble around them. To gamify Neverglades, we did the opposite.

A small town is more about its people than its places, even a town like Okeeokalee that has some pretty strange places. Small towns are close-knit, everybody knows everybody else, and families have histories and roots and a dynastic presence. In Neverglades, we figured we'd capitalize on that.

Alec told us a lot more about the people who live in Okeeokalee than he did about Okeeokalee itself. Trust me, what's in this chapter is culled from reams and reams of notes. We picked the ones who were the most likely to create interesting dynamics and conflicts in play and statted them out as faces of the Bay. Next, we looked for the themes, threats, and locations that they most seemed to represent; then we made them the faces of those things.

Local Folks—and a Couple of Monsters

Anyway, below you'll find an assortment of the more prominent folks in Okeeokalee Bay. I'm telling you what I know, but it's more than likely there's a bunch of stuff I don't know, so I'm filling in the blanks with what I've heard, too. Take that for what it's worth.

Alec Bones

Suggested player character
Your Weregator Narrator
Motivation: Protector of—and from—the Fount.
Face of: Theme The Fount Complicates Everything

What can I tell you about me?

I'm a weregator, which is about what it sounds like—I can turn into an eighteen-foot gator with a bite to match, something I've been able to do since I was a wee thing. It's a family secret, passed down from generation to generation; my Daddy taught me when I was ten, like my Meemaw taught him. One of my daughters, little Marie, is about an age for me to give her the words and kennings. Everyone in the family with the knack gets taught, but being the teacher to the next generation is…well, that's something.

I'm also the Speaker. I'm the only one in the Bay who has any direct contact with the Sentinel that don't involve running away at top speed while the swamp around you comes alive and tries to drag you into it. I wasn't happy about it when the job was given to me and I still feel like it's a huge pain in the ass sometimes, but mostly I guess I can't complain too much about it. Except lately, maybe, with the Sentinel's recent attitude adjustment.

Going along with my responsibilities as the Speaker, I'm also the guy most directly in charge of tourism around here. We don't have an office of tourism or even any kind of body of government to speak of; we just put people in charge of things they ought to be in charge of. I own a fanboat and I know my way around the Water Maze, so I'm in charge of ferrying tourists around the swamp. I'm the only one who always knows where the Fount is, so I'm in charge of showing tourists the fake one.

That kind of thing.

Alec Bones

High Concept
Wise-Ass Weregator

Trouble
I'm the Sentinel's Speaker

Other Aspects
Family Man
Cold Blood, Hot Temper
Manny's My Blood Brother
In Charge of What Passes for Government
I'll Show Y'all About

Skills

Contacts:	Fair	(+2)
Conviction:	Average	(+1)
Driving:	Good	(+3)
Empathy:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Guns:	Great	(+4)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Fair	(+2)
Might:	Superb	(+5)
Presence:	Average	(+1)
Rapport:	Average	(+1)
Scholarship:	Average	(+1)
Stealth:	Fair	(+2)
Survival:	Fair	(+2)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Skills (Gator form)

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Conviction:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Superb	(+5)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Fair	(+2)
Might:	Superb	(+5)
Presence:	Average	(+1)
Stealth:	Fair	(+2)
Survival:	Fair	(+2)

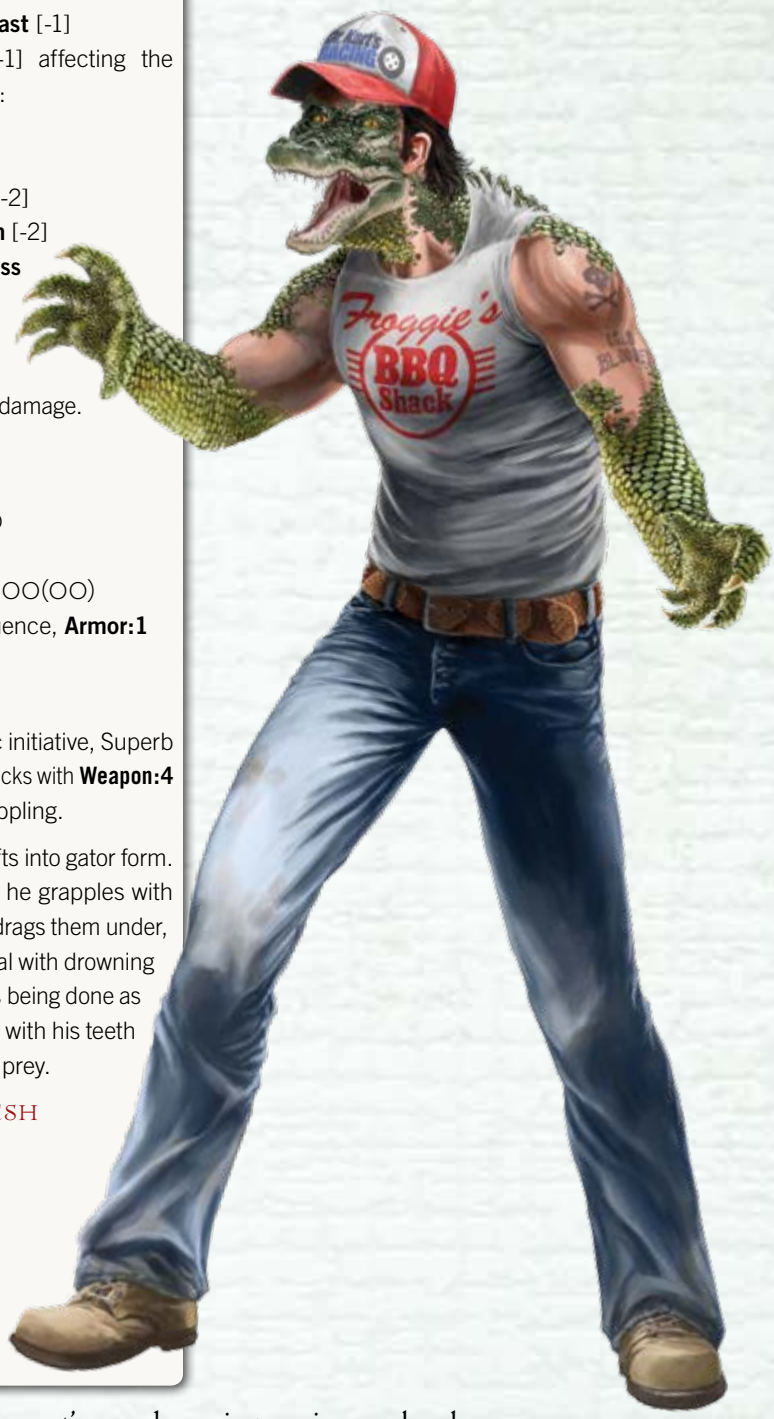
Powers
Wizard's Constitution [-0]
Beast Change [-1]
Echoes of the Beast [-1]
Human Form [+1] affecting the following powers:
Aquatic [-1]
Claws [-1]
Inhuman Speed [-2]
Inhuman Strength [-2]
Inhuman Toughness [-2]
The Catch [+1] is any purely supernatural source of damage.

Stress
Mental OOO
Physical OOOO
Physical (Gator form) OOOO(OO) +1 mild consequence, **Armor:1**
Social OOO

Notes
In gator form: Epic initiative, Superb defenses, Great attacks with **Weapon:4** Fists, Superb Grappling.

In a fight, Alec shifts into gator form. If he's near water, he grapples with his opponent and drags them under, forcing them to deal with drowning on top of the stress being done as Alec clamps down with his teeth and squeezes his prey.

Total Refresh Cost: -8



I guess most importantly, I'm a family man. I'm happily married twenty-five years, got three darling kids (ten-year-old Marie; Cecilia, twenty-three; and my boy, Fred, who just had his thirteenth birthday last Tuesday), and my Momma lives with us out in El Lagarto Cove. When it's quiet, it's nice. *Yeah, nice caveat.*

Nine or ten years ago, a young lady came through here with a bunch of Summer Sidhe, probably looking in on the Fount. I guess I must've made an impression on her because, when she started the Paranet, she dropped me a line. That's why you're reading this right now. I guess it helps that I'm one of the only ones in the Bay with the Internet, and that my computer don't blow up every few days.

Oh, and I can also play the fiddle a bit. They say it's the devil's instrument; I say Old Scratch has good taste. I ain't no Swampjack, mind, but I'm pretty good.



Florida still has state colleges for women?

No. He means Florida State University. It was called Florida State College for Women back in the '20s.

I think Harry would say that she's pulling water out of the Nevernever. The way I understand it, it's real water until there's no power left in it to keep it together; then it just turns into ectoplasm and evaporates.

Uh...is he saying what I think he's saying?

I think so, but I don't think **he** knows what he's saying. We'll probably want to change her name at some point so the Wardens don't track her down. I don't want that on my conscience.

Miss Lizzy

Suggested player character

Educated Aquamancer

Motivation: Be prepared for when the worst happens.

Face of: The Stronghold (page 145)

Formally, we're talking about Miss Elizabeth Matsu Francisco, but we all call her "Miss Lizzy." She's been around the Bay for a good long time, though back in the '20s, she left to attend college at Florida State College for Women. She learned a lot of useful stuff out there in the wider world and brought it back with her to the Bay—and not just academics. See, Miss Lizzy's a water witch, and her sojourn helped her learn to control her talents.

Water witch. Heh. Miss Lizzy don't like that term much; insists on being called an "aquamancer." I suppose there's no harm, even though most people in the Bay don't know what that word means. Heck, I thought I knew what it meant but it turns out I was wrong. See, magic ain't that great for controlling water, it turns out. Miss Lizzy says water grounds out magic, like it does electrical current, so there ain't a lot of magic that can actually affect it. What's important, she says, is the *idea* of water more than the actual stuff. I'm not sure I completely understand what she's talking about, but I've seen her conjure small rainstorms and fill buckets and such. The water she conjures is weird, though; it dries up quick, without much of a trace. Funny, that.

Luckily, she can do things with Fount-water just fine. I've seen her perform damn near miraculous things with the stuff—seeing the future, disappearing into thin air, burning vampires, even bringing people back from the brink of death. Heck, once she even forced me out of my gator form. Don't like to talk about that much.

That ain't her only talent, though I don't think she'd agree. I said she can use Fount-water to see the future, but the truth is that I think the water just lets her do it better.

See, Miss Lizzy gets visions, and they're never good. She says it was one of those visions that prompted her to run off to college to get her education. It was another vision that told her to come back; she said it literally saved her neck.

I think one of her visions also led her to start building the Stronghold. She took one of the oldest, largest houses in the Bay and started fortifying it—reinforcing the walls and doors, setting up extra locks, casting all kinds of magics to do God knows what. Filled it with food and

supplies and such and now she and a whole mess of people—odd relations, old friends, former students—all take turns holing up in there, waiting for the other shoe to drop. I asked her about it one time; she just got that dark look in her eyes and got all quiet. I didn't press the issue.

Despite her propensity for preparing for the End of Days, Miss Lizzy is one of the more forward-thinking folks in town…maybe a bit too much so. She keeps preaching for more connection with the outside world, says we need to "ride the currents of time." I say we already have tourists in once a year and that's enough, but I guess that's a difference of opinion. Doc Lewis and she have almost come to blows about it once or twice.

Still, we've got a lot of good stuff because of her. She brought the state 911 system into town and opened us up more to the tourist trade (I know, I know, I bellyache about it some, but damned if life hasn't gotten a bit better since it started). She's also the one who talked me into contacting you, joining this Paranet thing you and Miss Elaine have going.

Something truly odd is her relationship to the Sentinel. The two have never met as far as I can tell, but she asks me to ask it questions sometimes, and sometimes it even replies and asks questions of its own. The messages are pretty cryptic; I think they're some kind of code, though I don't understand them. Been running a lot of those messages lately since the Sentinel got all uptight with the water.

My Meemaw told me that, before Miss Lizzy left for college, she and Swampjack had begun stepping out together. They were a pretty hot item but apparently Withered Jim took issue with that. Something pretty bad happened that none of them will talk about now, and Miss Lizzy and Swampjack ain't an item no more, or so they say. I'm not so sure, though; on occasion you can see Swampjack heading out to the Stronghold, leading some (read: Missus Simmons) to believe that whatever was once going on between them may have been rekindled of late. If that's true, it might explain why Withered Jim is still so bitter about the whole thing.

Miss Lizzy

High Concept
Well-Prepared Aquamancer

Trouble
Terrible Visions

Other Aspects
Carrying a Torch for Swampjack
White Council Training
Looks to the Outside World
The Stronghold Is My Fortress
Be Like Water

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Average	(+1)
Contacts:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Great	(+4)
Deceit:	Average	(+1)
Discipline:	Great	(+4)
Empathy:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Average	(+1)
Investigation:	Average	(+1)
Lore:	Superb	(+5)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Rapport:	Fair	(+2)
Resources:	Fair	(+2)
Scholarship:	Good	(+3)
Survival:	Average	(+1)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
Cassandra's Tears [-0]
Evocation [-3]
Thaumaturgy [-3]
The Sight [-1]
Soulgaze [-0]
Wizard's Constitution [-0]
Refinement [-2]

Specialties
Evocation: Elements (Water, Spirit, Air); Power (Water +1); Control (Water +1)
Thaumaturgy: Control (Divination +1, Wards +1); Complexity (Divination +1, Wards +1)

Rote Spells
Water Jet (Water attack, six shifts): directs a powerful blast of magical water (Weapon:6) at a target. Lizzy must have her dowsing rod to cast this rote spell.

Focus Items
Dowsing Rod (+1 Water Offense Control and Power, evocation)
Scrying Bowl (+1 Divination Control and Complexity, thaumaturgy)

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOOO

Notes
Fair initiative, Average on most defenses unless she's able to bring magic to bear. Uses spells for maximum advantage, able to safely control 4 shifts of effect.

Total Refresh Cost: -9

MANNY SHILAH

Suggested player character

Fanboat Mailman

Motivation: Keep the Bay connected to the outside world.

Face of: The Water Maze (page 144)

Nobody gets into quite as much trouble in this town as my good friend Manny Shilah; he seems to be a magnet for the stuff. Truthfully, I think he brings a lot of it on himself; see, Manny's fearless. I don't just mean he's brave or boastful or even cocky—that don't quite cover it. I mean Manny doesn't have a shred of fear in his body, and there ain't a fight he'll back down from. It's gotten him (and myself) into quite a bit of trouble on occasion, let me tell you, but damned if I don't keep going back for more. Manny's my blood brother, you see, and around here that *means* something to folks; it's a pact, and not one we enter into lightly.

I don't mean to give the impression that all the trouble we get into is Manny's fault; that ain't it at all. Though he's fearless, he's not stupid; he doesn't go looking for trouble. It does tend to find him, though, and I've got a theory on that.

The Shilah family is old—probably the oldest in the Bay. They've been around for generation upon generation and, legend has it, they were the first family to settle here after that traveler who found the Fount. Legend also says the Shilahs were into making bargains with the local spirits—more than one witch or warlock in the family, and darker things besides. Sometimes those bargains were made in such a way that they wouldn't necessarily plague the mortals that struck them, but they'd stick around for a while, continuing to complicate the lives of the sorcerer's line.

These old pacts have a way of revisiting themselves upon Manny and his kin, I think, and while his brothers and sisters and such might capitulate, Manny never backs down. Hence, trouble.

It ain't *all* trouble, though. Manny's our lifeline here in town, our way of communicating with the outside world. Sure, during tourist season we get a lot of news, but other times of year, it's the mailman who brings tidings, and that's Manny. Manny has his own fanboat—the *Radiance*—and he uses it to deliver mail for us Bayfolk. He also runs the odd swamp tour during the busy season, but mainly he delivers the mail and brings news from outside the Bay. He's one of the only people in town in regular contact with people who don't live here—he travels to Okeechobee, Belle Glade, Clewiston, Moore Haven, and so on through the course of his route—and he's built up quite a network of contacts who can give him news about things that might concern us.

Despite his troubles, Manny's easily the most upstanding member of his family. The Shilahs have fallen on hard times of late, and they're a bit scattered and worse for the wear. His brother can't seem to hold onto a job and his sister… well, let's just say she's got really bad taste in men. Manny gets into scrapes from time to time, and he does enjoy the bottle a bit too much, but he holds down a steady job and he's got roots in the community, even if he spends a good chunk of his time out in the Water Maze, just tooling around in his boat.

Heck, it's probably good he spends so much time out in his boat. Nobody knows the 'Glades better than Manny, that's for damn sure. It's come in mighty helpful on occasion, too; a local boy went missing a while back and we wouldn't have found him if it hadn't been for Manny's knowledge of the waterways. Don't rightly know how that kid got way out into the swamp, but he got home all right, even if he was babbling nonsense about frog-people or somesuch.

Manny's got a way with the ladies, too. He never sees one more than twice and always tells them that he's a "confirmed bachelor," but that don't stop him from stepping out for the occasional "lovely, lovely evening." The ladies seem pretty keen on him initially, but I think he maybe doesn't know how to let them down easily because they tend to be a bit hot and bothered after the fact. Some people (read: Missus Simmons) suspect that Manny may be carrying a torch for someone in secret and either can't or won't approach the object of his affections. He doesn't talk about it to me much, even after all we've been through. Can't say that's not a little bit frustrating, but I ain't gonna pressure him.

WAIT, WHAT? FROG PEOPLE? IS HE TALKING ABOUT THE FOMOR?

It's hard to say but, based on some of the stuff Alec talks about later, I think he probably is.

GREAT, SO THE FOMOR WANT THE FOUNT. THAT CAN'T BE GOOD.

Oh, it gets worse.

I SEE ALEC TOSSING THESE TERMS AROUND BUT I GET THE SENSE THAT HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT THEY REALLY MEAN IN AN...OFFICIAL CAPACITY.

Yeah, I agree. Like I said, these people operate mostly on what they've managed to suss out for themselves. There isn't a White Council presence in the Bay, and I don't think they've had any real contact with any major supernatural group beyond the odd individual. And something tells me that the individuals who have contacted them like to keep them in the dark.



Manny Shilah

High Concept
Fanboat Mailman

Trouble
Lots of Family, Lots of Problems

Other Aspects
Fearless
Pilot of The Radiance
The Bay's Connection to the Outside World
Man of the Swamp
Alec's My Blood Brother

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Average	(+1)
Contacts:	Good	(+3)
Craftsmanship:	Fair	(+2)
Driving:	Great	(+4)
Endurance:	Fair	(+2)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Guns:	Fair	(+2)
Lore:	Average	(+1)
Might:	Average	(+1)
Presence:	Average	(+1)
Rapport:	Average	(+1)
Stealth:	Good	(+3)
Survival:	Superb	(+5)
Weapons:	Good	(+3)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Pilot (Driving): Manny's focus is on boats, not cars. He gains +1 to his Driving when piloting a boat; this bonus is increased by an additional +1 when piloting a fanboat.

Swamp Master (Driving): Manny's extensive knowledge of the water ways surrounding the Bay gives him +2 when using Driving to navigate the Water Maze and other waters around the bay.

Go Native (Survival): Manny is able to survive nearly indefinitely outdoors, living off the land. Scavenging rolls are made at +1, and the time between multiple rolls for a prolonged stay is increased by one increment.

Hunter (Survival): As an experienced hunter, Manny knows how to track game in the outdoors. He gains +2 on any efforts to use Survival to track something in the wilderness or other outdoor area.

Swamp Water in My Veins (Survival): The swamp is practically a part of Manny. He gains +1 to any use of the Survival skill while in a swamp or bog.

Powers
Wizard's Constitution [-0]

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOO

Notes
Fair initiative, Great attacks with Fists, Great defense against melee attacks, Average at range.

Total Refresh Cost: -5

Technically, Manny is a Minor Talent and not a Pure Mortal. However, if you're running a game set in the Bay, you may want to consider allowing mortals to still get the Refresh bonus even if they have Wizard's Constitution. This represents the idea that longevity is just the norm for your setting

Betty Mullins
Suggested player character
Changeling Sheriff

Motivation: Do the right thing—and make sure others do, too.

Face of: Theme Everybody Knows Your Name (page 141)

Betty Mullins has always been strong-willed; I think she gets it from her mother. Not that I know her mother personally. See, Betty was born under what you might call "unusual circumstances." Back when I was a young buck, there was a Spring Hootenanny like we have every year. This one was different, though, 'cause that purple-haired girl showed up and made a beeline for Ryan Mullins. Nobody knew where she'd come from or who she was, but somehow nobody thought that was strange until much later. Funny how that works.

Ryan and that girl disappeared after a little while—nobody quite knows where to—but the next day, Ryan was grinning from ear to ear. We all knew what happened.

Six months later to the day that girl shows up on Ryan's doorstep with a baby that looks about a year old. "Bored now," she says. She hands him the baby girl then she's gone, just like that. Ryan juggled being a single parent while taking over his daddy's business—Mullins Septic & Waste—until his girlfriend (who was pretty upset when that child got inserted into their relationship) came around and decided maybe having a baby girl in the picture wasn't such a bad thing after all. They eventually married.

I've got to say, those two raised that girl right. Betty was a great kid growing up—smart, kind, strong-willed, and with a powerful sense of right and wrong. She was popular with the local kids, not just because of her personality but also because she was the fastest thing in the water. Still is.

Betty Mullins

High Concept
Nixie Changeling Town Sheriff

Trouble
Still New to the Job

Other Aspects
She Gets It from Her Mother
Strong-Willed and Stubborn as Hell
Crack Shot
"Dougie and Me? It's Complicated"
Fresh Scars

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Superb	(+5)
Conviction:	Good	(+3)
Driving:	Average	(+1)
Empathy:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Fair	(+2)
Fists:	Fair	(+2)
Guns:	Great	(+4)
Intimidation:	Average	(+1)
Investigation:	Fair	(+2)
Lore:	Average	(+1)
Might:	Average	(+1)
Presence:	Great	(+4)
Rapport:	Average	(+1)
Scholarship:	Fair	(+2)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
At Home in the Water (Athletics): Betty gets +2 to her Athletics rolls while swimming.

Hand-Eye Coordination (Guns): Betty can use her Guns skill rather than Weapons to throw manual projectiles.

Powers
Aquatic [-1]
Inhuman Speed [-2]
Inhuman Strength [-2]
Inhuman Recovery? [-2]
The Catch [+1] is cold iron and the like.

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOOO

Notes
Epic initiative, Fantastic physical defense. Fair unarmed attacks with **Weapon:2**, Great shot with Guns.

Total Refresh Cost: -8

We don't have a local swim team in the Bay—nothing formal, at least—but Ryan got Betty all signed up with a regional team, and she was the star of that team. Won a scholarship and everything. A couple of the girls on the team were a little put out by that, convinced that she was on performance-enhancing drugs, but that was eventually proven to be nonsense. Tell you what, though, it really surprised everyone when she woke up one day with bright blue hair. After that, fast in the water just didn't describe her anymore; it was like the water was where she was most at home. It was something incredible to see.

Betty used her scholarship to go to Florida Gulf Coast University, and she followed her passion for doing the right thing right into a degree in Administration of Justice. Came back and became a sheriff's deputy under Skeeter Johnston. A month later, Skeeter was a vampire and Betty took over as Sheriff. She's done a great job ever since then.

Now, Betty's not the first changeling we've had grow up in the Bay. We know that there's a choice each and every changeling has to make, and Betty knows it, too. It weighs on her, I think. She loves the Bay, loves being Sheriff, loves the people here, but the water calls to her blood. Heck, some people (read: Missus Simmons) say she goes swimming in the Water Maze every night, and I'd be surprised if there wasn't some truth to that.

She's also a crack shot—according to my daughter Cecilia, she's been that way for a while. Back when they were kids and having a sleepover, Cecilia tells me that a python came in through the window. Betty was brave and strong-willed even back then, and she picked up a letter opener and threw it at the snake, getting it right in the head. Killed it instantly. Thank her momma's influence.

She's still the fastest thing in the water. She can stay under longer than I can when I'm in gator form, and that's really saying something. Even so, she's gotten into trouble out there in the swamp. A few weeks back she staggered into the center of town and collapsed, dripping wet and barely breathing. She was banged up pretty good and she had some kind of creature in a conch shell attached to her. Took us a couple of days to nurse her back to health, and I think she still carries the weight of her injuries.

More evidence of Fomor involvement. We need to start paying a lot more attention to what's happening in the Bay.

Agreed.

It was Dougie Van Horne who found her that night, and he was mighty worried about her. Betty's always been sweet on Dougie, but I think that whole experience intensified her feelings somewhat. She, Dougie, and Miss Cammy used to hang out a lot as kids. When they became teenagers, well, things got a bit complicated. Dougie and Cammy got real close while Betty was away at college, but the boy seems a bit confused since she got back. Betty's been trying to respect that bond, but I think recent events have caused her to rethink things a bit.

Another thing that's been happening since the incident—Doc Lewis has been coming around and asking her a lot of questions. He's always been interested in her mother, but now he wants to study her, wants samples of her blood and hair and so forth. Betty's not keen to give him that stuff—we all know what you can do with that kind of thing—and it's gotten to the point where she bristles at the mention of the man.

Douglas "Dougie" Van Horne

Suggested player character

Human Bloodhound

Motivation: Loyal friendship to those who deserve it.

Face of: Van Horne Island (page 143)

Long as anyone can remember, there have been Van Hornes in the Bay—heck, the only family older is probably the Shilahs. The Van Hornes have lived out on their island for generations, trying their hand at hunting, fishing, trapping, and so forth; what they're *really* good at is dog breeding, though. Folks come from all around to get their coon-hounds. Healthy, spry, and of good solid stock, they're the best in the region—maybe even the best in the South. Not sure how people find out about them; it's not like the Van Hornes advertise at all, but they get plenty of customers.

> **Making Other -Thropes**
>
> You can adjust the Lycanthrope Template to accommodate characters with different animal themes (therianthropes!). Make Pack Instincts and Human Form with Involuntary change optional. Pack Instincts only applies if the spirit is a pack animal, and limiting the powers to the full moon probably only applies to wolf spirits. Lastly select powers from Inhuman Speed, Inhuman Strength, Inhuman Recovery, and Inhuman Toughness appropriate for the animal the character shares a spirit with.

Dougie's the youngest son, and he works the kennel with his brothers. He's got a kinship with the beasts, seems to know them better than anyone else does, like he can talk to them or something. Miss Lizzy thinks he actually can, that something in the way the Van Horne family has gotten close to the dogs' spirits has rubbed off on the family, Dougie in particular.

See, communicating with dogs ain't the only thing that marks Dougie as a bit unusual. Dougie's a tracker, and I don't mean he knows how to spot tracks on the ground or read the signs around him; the boy ain't bright enough for that (ain't being mean, it's just the truth). It's probably easier if I explain it with a story.

Some years back—two or three I think—little Susie French got lost. We were out looking for her all day with no luck, there was just no sign of her anywhere. Dougie and Miss Cammy were at Fort Meyers, and when they got back we told them what was going on. Dougie got this look on his face and then grabbed me and Manny, dragged us to Manny's boat. Manny was driving the thing, but it was Dougie who told us where to go, what turns to take, and he took us right to little Susie. He had no idea how to get back out of the Water Maze, but damned if he didn't lead us right to the girl within fifteen minutes. We asked him how he did it and he just smiled his sheepish smile and shrugged. "I guess I just smelt her," he said, like that explained it all.

Dougie's also…well, he's a big boy. Youngest of the Van Horne men, but also the tallest by a head and the heaviest by at least fifty pounds. He's not fat, though; it's all muscle. Boy's strong, but gentle. I've seen him wrestle gators that got too close to town, seen him lift at least two hundred pounds of collapsed timber off of Myron Holt, even seen him take down an out-of-towner who was getting a bit too rowdy and a bit too handsy with Miss Cammy. Got him in a headlock that the man just couldn't escape from, waited until he passed out, and then carried him to Miss Lizzy so she could tend to him. Like I said, strong but gentle. And loyal like you wouldn't believe. If Dougie likes you, he'll lay down his life for you.

Have you ever heard of anything like this before, Will?

Sort of. This seems similar to what happens to a lycanthrope (YS79), though tied to a bloodhound spirit rather than a wolf spirit.

Maybe you'd call him a kunanthrope, then? I wonder if there are other types of lycanthropes who get inhabited by other types of spirits.

It stands to reason, given what Dougie can do.

That loyalty is never evident more than when Dougie's with Miss Cammy. Dougie's been in love with Miss Cammy since they were kids, following her around like a lost little puppy. She has to know how he feels (how could she not, given her talents?) but she never says anything. She seems more than happy to have him around, though, and the two of them are more-or-less inseparable.

Since Betty Mullins got back in town, though, there's been some tension and confusion among those three young folks. Betty's got a thing for Dougie, and Dougie's got a thing for Cammy, and nobody knows what exactly Cammy wants (least of all Dougie), and Dougie don't seem quite sure how he feels about Betty. One thing's for certain, though—there's been a bit of frost between Betty and Cammy. Oh, they're polite to each other, don't get me wrong, but it don't take a genius to read between the lines.

Douglas "Dougie" Van Horne

High Concept
Bloodhound-thrope

Trouble
In a Love Triangle with Miss Cammy and Betty

Other Aspects
Champion Dog Breeder
Strong, but Gentle
The Heart of the Bay
Loyal to a Fault
Expert Tracker

Skills

Alertness:	Great	(+4)
Athletics:	Fair	(+2)
Driving:	Fair	(+2)
Empathy:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Good	(+3)
Guns:	Fair	(+2)
Lore:	Average	(+1)
Might:	Great	(+4)
Presence:	Average	(+1)
Rapport:	Average	(+1)
Resources:	Fair	(+2)
Stealth:	Average	(+1)
Survival:	Superb	(+5)
Weapons:	Average	(+1)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts

Wrestler (Might): Dougie gains +1 to his Might when maintaining a grapple.

Dog Trainer (Survival): Dougie rolls Survival at +1 when using it for Animal Handling or, where relevant, Riding. He gains an additional +1 when dealing with dogs.

Powers

Wizard's Constitution [-0]
Pack Instincts [-1]
Echoes of the Beast [-1]
Inhuman Strength [-2]
Inhuman Speed [-2]

Stress

Mental OO
Physical OOOO
Social OOO

Notes

Legendary initiative, Good attacks **Weapon:2** Fists, Good defense.

Dougie's preferred tactic is to overpower his opponent, holding them in a grapple until they pass out.

Total Refresh Cost: -8

Miss Cammy (Camila Runcie)

Deaf Telepath Shopkeep

Motivation: Hearing way more than words.

Face of: Menendez's General Store & Post Office (page 143)

Miss Cammy runs Menendez's General Store & Post Office, a job she inherited from her Meemaw (Missus Menendez). She's smart enough that she could do anything; from what I hear she got a scholarship she could have used to get out of town, but she decided to stay in the Bay and run the family store.

I've known Miss Cammy since she was a young girl; she was smart and capable then, and she's even more so now. Most people who meet her for the first time treat her as disabled on account of her being deaf. The signing and writing notes down on paper for them gives them the wrong impression. The fact is, she can hear them plain as day, only she don't use her ears. See, Miss Cammy can hear with her *mind* the way most folks hear with their ears.

Let me see if I can explain that better. The way I understand it, Miss Cammy's brain is a bit like a radio receiver. When you're talking to her, or thinking about her, or even thinking in her general direction, she picks those surface thoughts up. Most of the time that means, when you're talking to her, she gets your intent and your meaning just fine because you're usually thinking the same thing you're saying. Where it can get a bit tricky is when someone says one thing and means another—Cammy just hears what you *mean*, so she can cut right through lies and deception pretty quickly if you're not accustomed to her way of conversing. Disabled ain't hardly accurate at all.

This sounds like it might be skirting pretty close to violating the Third Law, doesn't it?

It might be if Cammy were using a spell to do it, but it doesn't sound like she is. It seems like she's a natural one-way telepath. In any case, I wouldn't want to go ask a Warden about his or her position on it; these people have enough to deal with as it is.

It's not quite like she can read your mind, though. She can't just look at you and tell what you're thinking, or see your innermost secrets. You have to be thinking at her or about her for her to be able to pick it up, though she says if someone's thinking loud enough (like maybe they're panicking about something), she can generally pick that up, too, if she's close enough. Speaking of which, her ability has a pretty limited range—fifteen or twenty feet, maybe. Outside of that range, you might as well not be talking—or thinking—at all as far as she's concerned.

Apparently this knack of hers isn't restricted to just people. One time I was telling her how I felt bad that she couldn't hear birdsong, but she set me straight on that. She says she hears birds—and other animals—just fine, though it ain't like with people. With people she generally gets clear thoughts and concepts, things she can translate into words or just interpret directly. She doesn't seem to need to know your language to do it, though concepts sometimes get lost in translation, so to speak. With animals she says it's more like pictures and impressions. Birds broadcast pretty loud on a regular basis according to Cammy, and she says that being around them makes her feel happy, free. It sounds a bit nicer than what we get, to tell you the truth.

This ability to hear critters came in handy for her, once. She was walking back home from the swamp and she suddenly got the sense that something was tracking her, meaning to catch and eat her. She thinks it was probably a panther, and she says the only reason she got back home safe was because she knew where it was and what it was thinking; she was able to predict what it would do and avoid it that way.

Now, this ability to hear others' thoughts may sound great to you, but it ain't always what it's cracked up to be. Being able to hear what people really think about you can make things awful lonesome, I'd imagine; Cammy's never been on a date or much associated with boys her age, probably because…well, you know how boys are. Dougie's apparently different, though, because she spends a lot of time with him. Heck, they're damn near inseparable. She hasn't said anything about what or how that boy thinks, but I'd imagine it's pleasant enough that she enjoys spending time with him, and Dougie's just plain in love—a fact that's caused some friction since Betty got back into town, let me tell you.

Camilla Runcie

High Concept
Deaf Telepath Store Owner

Trouble
I Hear What People Think

Other Aspects
Loves Dougie, Just Not In Love With Dougie

Skills

Alertness:	Great	(+4)
Contacts:	Fair	(+2)
Empathy:	Good	(+3)
Resources:	Fair	(+2)
Scholarship:	Fair	(+2)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
Wizard's Constitution [-0]

Supernatural Sense [-1]: Cammy can read the thoughts people think about her. These are mostly just surface thoughts, usually allowing her to know what people are saying when they talk to her—but if your mouth is saying something different from your brain, she'll hear your brain. She can also use her Alertness skill to detect lies and strong or hostile thoughts within range of her. She may roll her Alertness skill to defend against physical or social attacks or maneuvers.

Stress

Mental	○○
Physical	○○
Social	○○

Notes
Great initiative, Mediocre attacks, Great defense against most attacks.

Total Refresh Cost: -1

Isn't something like telepathy more of a Lore skill?

Not in this case—Alec keeps describing Miss Cammy's telepathy as more like hearing than like magic.

But lascivious thoughts ain't the only thing Cammy has to contend with. One time, she and Dougie got set upon by Savages. They got away clean, but Miss Cammy wouldn't talk to anybody for a week; closed up shop and everything. After, all she would say was that their thoughts were terrible, all rage and hate. Refused to say anything beyond that, and I respect that decision. Not sure I'd make a different one in her place.

She also said just last week that she's been getting some strange thoughts here and there, mostly at night. They're sort of like animal thoughts, more like impressions and pictures, but they're alien and cold and most definitely do not mean us well. I tried to get more out of her, but she said they were hard to understand. Maybe if they were more than just here and there she could make some sense out of them, but so far they haven't been.

I'd say so. Seems like I work with nothing but **boys**.

What do you mean, Murph? We're perfect gentlemen!

Oh really? Is that why you've been staring at Andi like that?

I...uh...plead the Fifth.

The Birds and the Bees

I'm not going to make the tired old joke about there being something in the water. Since we're talking about the Fount, it really ain't funny at all. But it does seem like a lot of folks are having problems that regard romance and whatnot. Not me, I'm quite happily married, and have been for some time.

But just a quick review:

There's the whole Swampjack-Lizzy-Jim triangle, which has been flaring up and dying down for literally a century now.

There's the more recent Betty-Dougie-Cammy triangle, which has poor Dougie all confused.

There's Missus Simmons, who seems rather intent on moving on from her former marriage with Hank, and she ain't afraid to let the eligible men within her reach know it.

There's Manny, who seems to be the primary target for anyone of a mind to end bachelordom in the Bay, and yet is refusing to carry on further than a date or two with any potential suitoress.

Albus Gandy has too many crushes to keep straight, and not always on who you'd expect.

And that's just the people I've told you about. For every one of them, there's about five other stories just like it among other friends and family here in the Bay—it's just part of the way of life in a small town.

Albus Gandy

Machine-Speaker

Motivation: Machines tell me more than people do.

Face of: Gandy's Gas-Autos-Boats (page 144)

For the longest time, we all thought Alby was a pure mortal, no supernatural talent. That was a bit odd, given the fact that the Gandys have always had one minor talent or another running through their bloodline, but we just figured that sometimes it skips a generation. Turns out, not so much in this case.

Al came late to his talent. Well, that ain't entirely true; he probably always had it but didn't know it was something other people couldn't do until…well, let me explain what he can do.

Alby can talk to machines. We always knew he was a talented mechanic, skilled with things that whir and hum and move about—more than anyone else his age—but we didn't think it was a supernatural talent. His pa, Ferris, sent him to a trade school in the city, wanted to nurture that talent. After about six months, Al came back, told his pa there was nothing that school could teach him that the machines weren't already telling him all the time anyway.

That's when it all sorta clicked and Al became our Machine-Speaker.

I frankly won't trust my truck or my boat to anyone but him.

Ferris got Miss Lizzy to come and take a look at Alby, see what she could see. What she saw was that, yeah, he's a practitioner, but he doesn't even know he's doing it. He's got a very specific and low-level magical talent that allows him to speak to the spirits of all things mechanical and even some things electrical and they just…tell him what's wrong with them.

Albus Gandy

High Concept
Machine Speaker

Trouble
Unrequited Crushes

Other Aspects
Shy but Smart
Absent-Minded

Skills

Alertness:	Average	(+1)
Conviction:	Great	(+4)
Craftsmanship:	Superb	(+5)
Discipline:	Great	(+4)
Lore:	Good	(+3)
Scholarship:	Fair	(+2)

Other skills range from Mediocre to Great.

Stunts

Jury-Rigger (Craftsmanship): Albus has a talent for improvising with available materials. When jury-rigging, his repairs last two scenes longer.

Powers

Wizard's Constitution [-0]
Machine Speech [-1]
Mana Static [-1]

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OO
Social	OO

Notes

Albus isn't a fighter. If someone came at him with a gun or car, Albus would just convince the machine to stop working, i.e., he would use his Mana Static power.

Total Refresh Cost: -3

Machine Speech is just a variation on Psychometry. It only works on items with moving parts or electronics, but in addition to the item's history, Albus also learns how it works and what, if anything, is wrong with the item. Machine Speech works off Craftsmanship instead of Investigation.

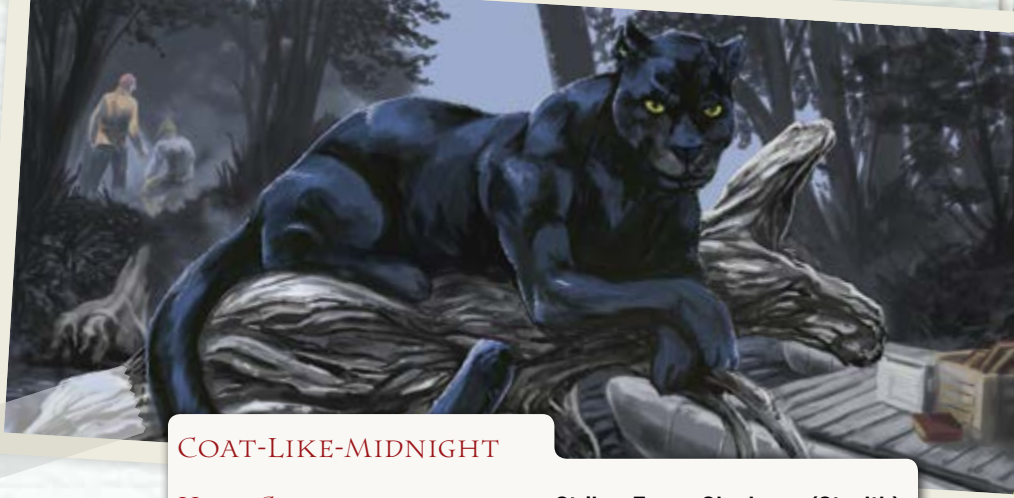
Doesn't magic usually muck up machines? I know Harry can't come near a computer without frying it.

Yeah, but I think that's **magic**, and this is just a magical talent.

Right, because **THAT** explanation makes sense.

I think Butters is onto something here. A wizard or a sorcerer or something would fry nearby tech, especially when casting spells. I don't though, and neither do the rest of the Alphas. Heck, most of us play World of Warcraft every night.

Nerd.



Of course, they tell him other things, too. You bring Alby an old Chevy, he can tell you every person that owned it, what they liked to listen to on the radio while they were driving around, when they sold it, and what condition it was in when they did. He knows the history of machines after he works on them for an hour or two; he says it's like a conversation when he's working on an engine or fiddling with gears.

When he came back to town to stay, it seemed only natural that he set up a machine shop for himself. He opened up Gandy's Gas-Autos-Boats and he's been keeping our vehicles and generators and even blenders and such running for near on seven years now.

Now, there's one more thing you should know about Al. It seems like that time that Miss Lizzy came by to look in on him, test him, see what his talents were…well, it seems like that made an *impression* on young Alby. For the last several years he's been pining after Miss Lizzy, and Lizzy either doesn't know it or won't acknowledge it. Can't say it seems altogether healthy, but I reckon affairs of the heart often aren't.

And speaking of which, Miss Lizzy ain't the only lady old Alby's got a crush on; Miss Cammy once told me that she "overheard" him thinking about Freddie Runcie, his assistant at the gas station. Seems he's sweet on her too. That boy leads a complicated life.

Coat-Like-Midnight

Dangerously Intelligent Panther

Motivation: Everything has a price.

Face of: The Sump (page 144)

Out in a part of the swamp we call the Sump, there's a pack of panthers that have gotten… smarter. I don't mean like circus smart, I mean like human-level intelligence with the instincts and appetite of a beast. The biggest, meanest, smartest one calls himself "Coat-Like-Midnight" (yes, he can talk). We generally refer to him as "Midnight" when he ain't around.

Midnight is sneaky and crafty. He's smarter and stronger than his brethren and he's used his gifts to assert dominance over the pack. Fifteen years ago, the pack wasn't much of a threat; they were disorganized and fought against each other and never presented any kind of organized threat. That all changed when Midnight came along.

Coat-Like-Midnight

High Concept

Spirit-Possessed Panther Lord

Other Aspects

Despotic Pack Ruler

Devilishly Cunning

I Am Due Tribute

Strong and Deadly

Skills

Alertness:	Great	(+4)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Superb	(+5)
Intimidation:	Great	(+4)
Might:	Good	(+3)
Stealth:	Great	(+4)
Survival:	Good	(+3)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts

Rule With Fear (Intimidation): Midnight uses his Intimidation instead of Presence whenever rolling to represent his reputation.

Strike From Shadows (Stealth): Midnight gains +2 to his Stealth roll when rolling against an opponent's Alertness roll during an ambush.

Powers

Claws [-1]
Echoes of the Beast [-1]
Inhuman Speed [-2]
Inhuman Strength [-2]
Pack Instinct [-1]

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OOO

Notes

Epic initiative, Superb defense and attacks with teeth or claws, his strength providing a **Weapon:4**. Midnight also likely has back up in the form of several more possessed panthers from his pack. Use the Warped Beasts stats from OW92, but add the Pack Instinct power.

Total Refresh Cost: -9

People disappear when they go out near the Sump…unless they pay tribute.

Midnight seems to like the idea of lording over the common folk, and he's set himself up as some sort of medieval despot out there on his little tract of land. The thing is, we need to get to the Sump from time to time. We use it to dispose of bodies when we need to (and that happens more than you might think), and every time we do we have to pay Midnight's toll.

Is anyone else concerned about how casually Alec just mentioned disposing of bodies?

I'm sorry, I couldn't hear you over the sound of a talking panther despot.

I wonder what kind of toll you have to pay to a talking panther despot. It's not like he has much use for money. This is disturbing on so many different levels.

I know what you're thinking; why haven't we taken old Midnight down yet? We've tried. There's a bounty on panthers ("painters" as they're referred to around here) in town, and we've tried more than once to organize hunting parties to go out and take Midnight out. Not sure how, but he always knows we're coming and he always has a reception waiting for us. The last time we went out there we had fifteen hunters on our side. We came back to town with five of us badly wounded. Ralph Mather, Sally Jones, and the Burmin boys…well, they didn't make it back at all. We ain't gone after Midnight since.

So far, the only thing that's worked is appeasing him, paying his price, and living with the problem.



So Alec sees someone instantly turned to ashes and the guy who did it "scares him a bit"?!? I suppose that speaks to the stuff they face on a daily basis down there in the Bay.

"The Colonel"

Mysterious Entrepreneur

Motivation: Promises are currency and power.

Face of: The *Lion Queen* (page 143)

The Colonel's been around for thirty or so years, running the *Lion Queen*—an enormous paddle boat that he turned into a floating casino a while back. He caters to locals and out-of-towners alike, and he employs a good chunk of the Bay's population. He's free with a smile and easy with his money. He owns half the Bay's real estate, including my own home, and he's let me slide on mortgage payments more than once. Doesn't even charge me interest when he does. It's a little odd for someone in the casino business to be so forgiving with debts, but I don't think it's cash that interests him.

See, the Colonel is one of the more knowledgeable folk in the Bay when it comes to things of an uncanny—and some would say unsavory—nature. He often caters to clientele who are not, strictly speaking, human; from them, he gathers up debts like nobody's business. That man gathers up favors and oaths and IOUs like nothing I've ever seen, like he's ravenous for them. He only occasionally calls them in—but when he does, you'd best pay up. Bayfolk know that oaths and promises have power; the Colonel seems to know that, too, and seems more able than most to call upon that power when you renege.

One time, some out-of-towners were up at the *Queen* playing poker with the Colonel; I was up there doing some odd jobs, fixing the plumbing and what-not. When they were playing for money, the Colonel wasn't winning any more than anyone else. After a bit, though, things started getting "interesting" as he called it. These folks started wagering promises and oaths, and damned if the Colonel didn't start winning a whole lot more. By the end of the night he had so many of those little scraps of paper that I could scarcely believe the others had even been trying to win, and he cashed in one of those favors. I didn't hear what he asked for, but the guy he asked—a little dark-haired guy, shifty—seemed unwilling to give it. The Colonel gave him three chances to make good, and the man refused each time. A few seconds later there was nothing but a smoking pile of ashes where the man had been standing. Never seen anything quite like that before or since. Guy scares me a bit.

Still, that's a rare circumstance. Most of the games played on the *Queen* are for money and, like any casino, the house always wins. Nice a guy as the Colonel might be, he's a businessman; he's not likely to forgive every debt coming his way. Sometimes people get pretty despondent over such a thing, losing their life savings and all—some folks (read: Missus Simmons) say that there's an unusually high number of suicides out at the *Queen*, but Betty's never found any connection between them and the Colonel other than the obvious.

There's a saying, though: "A conversation with the Colonel will chase the blues away." I found out what that meant on my eighteenth birthday when I went out to the *Queen* for a night of carousing and getting up to no good with my friends. I lost a lot of money and got pretty upset over it and the Colonel sat me down and had a talk to me. Mostly I talked and he listened. I was feeling low and, over the course of the conversation, I got to feeling even lower, like I hit rock bottom. But then it was gone, just like that. Not like I was happy; just

Dude. What does that sound like?
Yeah, I know. Sounds like a Skavis, right?

that the sadness was suddenly gone. Felt kind of empty, exhausted. The Colonel didn't forgive my debt, but he did give me some free chips to win it back with. I managed to reduce my owings down to a manageable level and paid the rest off over the next few years. Kind of lost the taste for gambling after that night, though.

Along with Miss Lizzy and Missus Simmons, the Colonel's one of those who've been pushing for more development in the Bay. Makes sense; more roads and shopping means more tourists, which means more people sitting in his casino. He's financing the roads to the new Wal-Mart out his way and he's buying quite a bit of good-will with that. Folks are excited to be able to get things they can't get easily at the General Store, like those iPods and big old jars of pickles and whatnot. There are those of us who aren't exactly thrilled with the idea, but I guess you can't stop progress. I've also heard rumblings of a business deal with some out-of-towners, turning the whole town into some kind of tourist trap. That's just a rumor, mind, but all the same, I don't much like hearing it.

In addition to the above, there are a couple of other bits of weirdness surrounding the Colonel. First, he hasn't aged a day since he got here. I mean that literally—the man looks exactly the same today as he did when I first set foot on the *Queen*, thirty-some years ago. There's folks older than me who claim the same thing going further back. Some folks say that it's because he loves what he does so much that it keeps him young. I'll admit that the man has a sort of glow about him when he's walking about the casino floor, but I think there's something more to it than that.

The other weird thing is that him and Skeeter were always pretty chummy, and I don't just mean when Skeeter was still Sheriff. The two seemed to like each other back then, but they stayed pretty close even after Skeeter got turned, which is more than a bit odd. Skeeter even came to the casino a few times but he never hurt anyone while he was there. You could tell he wanted to occasionally, but the Colonel wouldn't let him. Not sure what that's about. Also, the Colonel warned us whenever Skeeter was going to come to town to collect new "stock" for himself. It helped us out a great deal, don't get me wrong, but I question the man's motives.

Oh, last thing—I think the man's got a past that might be coming back to haunt him. A month or two back somebody showed up at the *Queen* to see him and neither one of them looked happy to see each other. The stranger called the Colonel "Cosmo" and not in a particularly friendly tone. I'd guess Cosmo's his Christian name, but the Colonel seems to want to avoid using it and I'm not about to start throwing it around in front of him.

The Colonel

High Concept
White Court Vampire

Trouble
My Own Kind Hunts Me

Other Aspects
Owner of the *Lion Queen*
A Proper Southern Gentleman
A Finger in Every Pie

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Average	(+1)
Conviction:	Fair	(+2)
Deceit:	Superb	(+5)
Discipline:	Great	(+4)
Empathy:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Average	(+1)
Fists:	Fair	(+2)
Lore:	Good	(+3)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Rapport:	Great	(+4)
Resources:	Good	(+3)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
Ritual (Curses) [-2]
Emotional Vampire [-1]
Incite Emotion (Despair; Lasting, At Range) [-3]
Human Guise [-0]
Feeding Dependency [+1] affecting the following powers:
Inhuman Strength [-2]
Inhuman Speed [-2]
Inhuman Recovery [-2]
The Catch [+0] is True Hope

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOOO
Hunger	OOOO

Notes
Fantastic initiative, Good defenses. The Colonel isn't much of a fighter. He usually relies on his speed to escape, and uses his Incite Emotion and Emotional Vampire powers if cornered.

Total Refresh Cost:
-11

Yeah, this guy's definitely White Court.

It kind of seems like the **Lion Queen** might be Accorded Neutral Ground, doesn't it?

If it is, he's playing kind of fast and loose with the rules.

Winter, you think?

Could be. It could easily be something associated with death rather than Winter, though; ghosts inhabit pretty cold corners of the Nevernever from what I understand.

Wouldn't getting to the Fount destroy the Conquistador if it were a ghost? I mean, Alec said the mud around it has properties like ghost dust, right?

That's a good point. Huh. Maybe that's why it stops its rampage when it gets to the Fount; the ghost mud discorporates it and it takes a few years to re-form.

Sucks to be it.

Yeah, or anyone in its way.

The Conquistador

High Concept
Haunted Suit of Armor

Other Aspects
Barely Sentient
Path of Destruction

Skills, Powers, Etc.
The Conquistador is a plot-level NPC and impossible to quantify mechanically. It destroys whatever is in its path. Interfering with it is a Legendary or higher difficulty. Only the Sentinel and some potent wards seem to be able to stop or turn it. By all reports, the Conquistador is indestructible.

The Sentinel always stops the Conquistador on its path to destruction, which means it's only likely to be a problem if something's wrong with the Sentinel or if you get in its way before the Sentinel engages with it. You may be able to engage it in a contest of some kind to get it to stop its charge, if you want to contend with those difficulties, but that won't destroy it permanently.



I WONDER WHAT ***THAT*** COST HER.

Next time the Conquistador rises, they might find out.

You know, it really says something about this guy that he doesn't think the land is wild anymore.

The Conquistador
Haunted Suit of Armor
Motivation: Get to the Fount at *all* costs.
Face of: The Darkening (page 143)

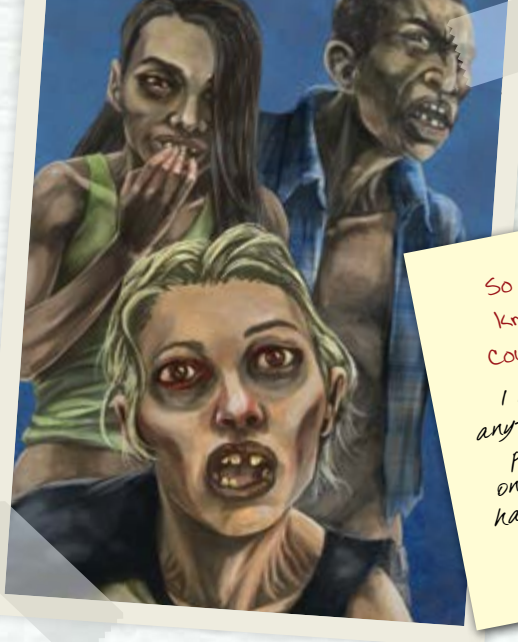
Every season or two, and usually in the dead of night, you can hear an unearthly howl all throughout the Bay, the kind that rattles your bones and chills you to the core. That howl—and the often unseasonably cold wind that starts blowing—is the first and last warning you'll get that the Conquistador has risen again.

The Conquistador is a rusted piebald suit of ancient Spanish armor that, for most of the year, lives somewhere out in the Darkening—an overgrown patch of swamp that's home to all sorts of unwholesome spirits. When the mood strikes it, the Conquistador rises to take up a quest. The quest is always the same: march straight toward the Fount by the most direct route possible, destroying or killing anything that gets in its way. When we hear that noise we take cover and keep watch; you do *not* want to be in that thing's way when it comes knocking.

As you might have predicted, the Sentinel doesn't take too kindly to this. It defends its charge, sending shamblers out to slow the Conquistador down, sap its strength some. So far the Conquistador's never made it to the Fount; the Sentinel always meets it head-on first and, believe me, you do not want to be caught in the middle of that. The Sentinel always wins that fight, but there's usually quite a bit of clean up (and sometimes explanation, if there's tourists in town) to be done afterward. Don't much want to think what might happen the day the Sentinel's strength fails. Whatever the Conquistador wants, it can't be good.

I've only ever seen the Conquistador turn aside from its beeline once. A couple years back, its path led it on a collision course toward Miss Lizzy's Stronghold. It stopped about twenty feet away from the house and just stood there for a minute or two. I swear the air was crackling around it. Anyway, after a couple of minutes it just turned and walked *around* the Stronghold, then continued on its way.

Folks around here say that the Conquistador used to be an actual conquistador, back when the land was still wild. Legend says he tried for the Fount but never quite made it. He got close enough that it changed him, though, and now he's stuck here, tied to the mortal world because of his unfulfilled quest. I've also heard that when the last of its metal bits rust away it'll be free, but I think that's just wishful thinking.



So I guess he doesn't know about the Red Court's addictive saliva?

I don't think he knows anything about the Courts, period. Priority number one in the Bay is going to have to be educating these people on what's really going on in the world.

Ricky "Skeeter" Johnston

Local Vampire (deceased)

Ricky Johnston was a good man. He was my Daddy's best friend. He was a strong, courageous, and profoundly kind man who probably would have been the Speaker if things had turned out different. What happened to him… what happened to him was a sin, pure and simple.

Ricky was always one of the strongest, fastest men in these parts. That, combined with his strong sense of right and wrong, put him in the Sheriff's job at a pretty young age. It was a job he did well, keeping the Bay safe. And folks *felt* safe with him around, watching over them.

Then one day, a stranger rolls into town; that's when the trouble started. The first we noticed of it was some folks getting sick, mostly young women. Doc Lewis said it was an evil spirit, Miss Lizzy said it was anemia. They were both right, it turns out. When girls started turning up dead, no blood left in their bodies, we knew what was happening. By then it was already too late; the vampire had its claws deep into the Bay and there were just as many folks to defend it as wanted to take it down. A brawl ensued, one of the biggest we've seen in these parts in a very long time, and the vampire slipped away.

Ricky led the charge to go after it, took me, my Daddy, and some other able-bodied folks with him. We found the…thing, cornered it. It killed three people and bit Ricky before we took it down, and it thrashed on the ground for a good long time before it stopped moving. We burned it, took our dead and injured back home, and started the process of recovery.

We had no idea that Ricky was infected at first. He was acting a little strange, seemed kind of sick, and that's when Doc Lewis noticed and told us what was what. He told us that Ricky had been partially turned into a vampire, but that as long as he didn't kill anyone and drink their blood he'd be able to control it. For a while we managed to help him keep a grip, but that didn't last nearly long enough.

A year or two after Ricky'd been bit, Maria Esperanza started having these terrible dreams. We found out it was a sorcerer working some sort of magic on her, and Ricky went crazy. He found the sorcerer, beat him senseless, then hunkered down and tore his throat out. Drank the man dry.

After that things were different. Ricky wasn't himself anymore. He left town, but he didn't go far; settled himself on Granja Island with a whole passel of young folk that he kept as his "stock." Why they stayed with him I'll never understand.

We fought with him on many occasions, whenever he came to replenish his stock or got it in his head to make a run for the Fount. Never were able to take him down proper; the man was too sneaky, too quick, too clever. Ricky was always tough to beat in life, and he was even tougher as an undead abomination.

But then one day he just…exploded. I don't quite understand it. He was in town, sneaking about and trying to find more young folk to take up to Granja Island when he let out this ear-piercing shriek and blew up. We thought that would be the end of it, but we were dead wrong; it got worse after that.

See, now we have the Savages to deal with. All those young folk that Skeeter used to feed off of, that stayed with him for God knows what reason? When Skeeter went and blowed up, all those folks he had under his thrall went crazy. Not the good, mostly harmless kind of crazy, either; I'm talking violent, incoherent, eat-your-face-before-they-kill-you kind of crazy. I don't think you can properly call them human anymore. All they do is hunt and kill and eat what they kill. There ain't no thought left in them, just pure evil instinct.

We've managed to put a few of them out of their misery, but there's so many of them, and not enough of us to spare. On top of all that, they're getting bolder and bolder. Once was the time that you'd only encounter them out in the wilds, but we're starting to see them closer and closer to town. A couple times they've even attacked us outright and then fled, like they're testing our defenses.

Have we heard of this happening before?

I don't think so. It may have something to do with the proximity to the Fount, or it may have something to do with Skeeter himself. Or it might just be a fluke.

Either way, we should be looking into this. We want to make sure that this kind of thing isn't happening anywhere else. Considering how many people were addicted to Red saliva...

Yeah. I'll pass the word out to the Paranet.

Dmitri "Doc" Lewis,
Root Doctor of the Bay

Motivation: Save Frank, whatever the cost.

Face of: Theme The Fount Complicates Everything (page 141)

Doc Lewis learned his trade at the knee of his Uncle Woody (Wood Duck Shilah) nearly eighty years ago; the man's almost a hundred years old now. What his trade actually is can be a matter of some debate amongst Bayfolk and the tourists. Folks from outside the Bay see an old man who holds to strange old customs, peddles folk remedies, and don't know much about "real medicine."

So what is this, some kind of PTSD, you think?

Could be. I've had friends on the Force with PTSD, though, and this seems like something... different. Reminds me of... things I'd rather not remember.

They think we call him "Doc" as some sort of ironic nickname, like a fat guy called "Slim" or something.

The truth is, Doc's the closest thing we've got to a doctor in these parts and the fact that he doesn't have any formal medical training doesn't make him any less good at what he does.

What he does might seem odd at first; fetishes and bird feathers and ground up who-knows-what can make people a bit nervous when they've got a broken leg or a festering wound or somesuch. That nervousness goes away pretty quickly, though—about as quickly as your ailment does, as a matter of fact.

Doc don't hold to what outsiders call "traditional medicine;" he holds to his own traditions. He's what you might call a root doctor or a hoodoo man. He knows what he's doing, though. I had a broken leg a while back and Doc set the thing and put a poultice on it for me. That patch of goo stank to high Heaven, but I was feeling better in a week and back on my feet in two. I suspect it might've had some Fount-water in it; I do get requests from him on occasion.

All his healing arts weren't able to save his grandson Frank, though. At least, not yet. Frank was his apprentice until about three weeks ago. The two of them was out in the swamp on Doc's motorboat, collecting the roots, herbs, feathers, animal bones, and whatever else Doc needs to make his potions and poultices. Then they got attacked by some of those Savages. They managed to get away, but Frank got pretty messed up—came back covered in claw and bite marks, his face all beaten to a pulp. What happened next…well, it wasn't pleasant.

Frank came to all of a sudden, howling and screaming like you wouldn't believe. There were a few of us helping Doc tend his wounds—me and Manny and Joe Barnett and Max Adamus—and it took all of us to restrain him. Even with the four of us, Joe and Max got pretty banged up in the process. Frank calmed down eventually, but the panic still hasn't left his eyes. Boy barely talks, barely eats. He ain't himself anymore. He ain't right.

Since then, Doc's been spending a lot more time out in the swamp. I reckon he's looking for a cure for Frank, but he also takes a bottle with him when he goes, and it usually comes back empty. About a week ago he came back with something wrapped up on an old blanket, about the size of a football and dripping wet.

Wouldn't show anyone what it was or even talk to anyone on his way back home, and he's barely left the house except to go back out into the swamp. Doesn't even go to the long-standing card game out on the *Queen* that he used to love so much. Dougie says he caught a whiff of him as he walked by, said he smelled all "cold-fishy." Not quite sure what that means, but it can't be good.

Doc was always a social drinker—an enthusiastic one at that—before Frank got…messed up. He's been hitting the bottle pretty hard lately, though, usually on his own. I've heard him shouting at night, things like "whore" and "betrayer." I can't be sure, but I think he's talking about Miss Lizzy. See, he used to run around with her and Withered Jim back when they were all kids together, and they were pretty close. When all that business happened between Jim and Swampjack, Doc stuck with Jim. Doc might be Jim's only friend in the world, and it sounds like he's still pretty pissed off about what happened way back then. It's trouble brewing, that's what I know.

Oh, and one last thing—Doc's been looking for the Fount. I've learned as much from the Sentinel, who's been really cagey about the whole thing. I half-suspect that Doc and the Sentinel have actually met recently but…no, that's just plain impossible; the Sentinel never meets with anyone but the Speaker. But if it *is* true, I have to wonder why the Sentinel is letting Doc get so close to the Fount, especially given how unhinged he's gotten lately.

This is easily the most worrisome thing I've read so far—and that's saying something. Doc comes back from the swamp with some mysterious, bundled object. He smells all "cold-fishy," possibly like the Fomor. And now the Sentinel is letting him near the Fount? What the hell is going on here?

Dmitri "Doc" Lewis

High Concept
Desperate Root Doctor

Other Aspects
Don't Cotton to Modern Medicine
I Have to Find a Cure for Frank
Hitting the Bottle Hard
Shady Dealings

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Average	(+1)
Contacts:	Fair	(+2)
Conviction:	Great	(+4)
Deceit:	Fair	(+2)
Discipline:	Great	(+4)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Superb	(+5)
Scholarship:	Fair	(+2)
Survival:	Good	(+3)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
The Old Ways Are Best (Lore): Doc Lewis can use his Lore skill to declare appropriate justification for the recovery of moderate physical consequences, and he also gains a +1 on his Lore roll to heal under pressure.

Powers
Thaumaturgy [-3]
The Sight [-1]
Wizard's Constitution [-0]
Refinement [-1]

Specializations
Thaumaturgy: Control (Biomancy +1), Complexity (Biomancy +1); Crafting (Strength +1)

Enchanted Items
Doc Lewis has four slots open for various enchanted items, potions, and poultices with Epic level strength; most will be used for healing.

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OOO

Notes
Good initiative, Average physical defense. Doc Lewis does most of his magical healing through a combination of potions and probably some variation of the Reiki Healing Spell (YS300).

If you want Doc to truly be in league with the Fomor, just give him Sponsored Magic (Fomor Magic).

Total Refresh Cost: -6



It sounds to me like their only doctor is working with the Fomor.

If that's the case, between the Fomor and the Savages, these people are about a month away from being eaten or enslaved.

The Fomor
Alec and the other Bayfolk don't seem to know much about this particular threat, but, if you read between the lines of what Alec is saying, it's pretty clear that the Fomor are in town. They haven't attacked the Bay outright, but it's entirely possible that they could blend in with tourists to do some recon for a strike later. They also may have a spy in Doc Lewis, and it seems like they may have attacked Betty Mullins at some point.

Here's the scary part—they're connected to the Fount somehow. Now, the Fount is a crazy powerful source of magic, and the Sentinel is a crazy powerful creature that may or may not be of fae origin. The Sentinel *might* be able to stop the combined might of the Fomor, but what if it can't? Worse still, what if it just won't? What if it joins them, and they suddenly get both the Fount and the Sentinel in one fell swoop?

The bottom line is that the Fomor are in the Bay and the only reason I can think of is that they want the Fount. If they get it, that would be a Very Bad Thing™.

You can find out more about the Fomor on **page 289**.

I'm seeing a theme here. Sidhe assigned to watch over a portion of the mortal world, over time, become more like the land they oversee. In the Green Lady's case, she became wild and savage. The Sentinel became secluded and secretive like the Bay. I wonder what Brianna will look like in a hundred years or so.

The Sentinel

Guardian of the Fount

Motivation: Protect the Fount at *all* costs.

Face of: Theme The Fount Complicates Everything (page 141)

The Sentinel is a powerful supernatural being that guards the Fount from those who try to find it or use it. The only person it'll let near the Fount is the Speaker—that'd be me currently. Anyone else is chased off or never heard from again. Until pretty recently, it wouldn't even speak to anyone but the Speaker, but for some reason, it seems that Doc Lewis has had words with it, and it's had words back, from what I understand.

You might think that, being the Speaker and all, I'd know a lot about the Sentinel, what it is, and what its motives are. Well, you'd be wrong. Here's what I can tell you.

It's big. Like, eight or nine feet tall most of the time, but I've seen it grow when it wants to. If it was ever human, it's not anymore; it looks like nothing so much as a big old tree-man, all covered in moss and thorns. If it stood still in the middle of the swamp (which it does at times), you'd mistake it for just another bit of flora. It's powerful, too, in a way that I don't think I understand too well. It always seems to be where the Fount is, it always seems to know when someone or something is threatening the Fount, and I've never seen *anything*—even the Conquistador—beat it in a fight. Mostly when someone tries there's not much left afterward.

For shamblers, I'd start with the chlorofiend (OW3Z) and remove Hulking Size. Depending on how many you're throwing at the players at once, you might also remove Inhuman Strength, Inhuman Toughness, or both.

Also, it can summon shamblers—they look like roughly human-sized, human-shaped piles of swamp weeds and other assorted plants. They're reasonably strong individually—not so much that a strong critter can't take them on. But since they mostly attack in swarms, that can be a moot point if they're coming after you.

What is the Sentinel?

Alec's actually got quite a bit of speculation and supposition about the Sentinel in his notes. I thought I'd condense it down to some gameable concepts and present the GM with some options. These options vary in power, severity, and danger level. The scariest part is that any of these three options could be true based on what Alec's notes say. There may even be truth to all three of them. Think on that, and good luck sleeping tonight.

The Sentinel

High Concept
Summer's Guardian of the Fount

Other Aspects
Secretive and Secluded
Bargains with the Fount Water

Skills, Power, Etc.
This version of the Sentinel is a plot-level NPC. All combat skills are at least Fantastic. Assume it has the usual assortment of fae powers, Seelie Magic, Greater Glamours, etc.

Notes
If you want to keep with the fae guardian theme but still have the Sentinel be someone the PCs can confront directly, you can use Brianna (page 31) from *Sins and Second Chances*. Just remove the Ranger theme and go with the base skills and powers.

Option 1: The Fae Watcher

The Sentinel might be one of the Sidhe, bound by some oath to protect the Fount from mortal meddling. From what Alec says, it's got a cunning mind and a tendency to make bargains, particularly where its water is concerned. If it is a Sidhe, it's very likely Summer, and it may even be related to the Green Lady that Alejandra tells us about in *Las Tierras Rojas* (page 177).

Option 2: The Green Knight

I've seen references in other sources to "junior varsity" versions of the Summer and Winter Knights—in Summer's case, the Green Knight. The Green Knight is usually tasked to protect some specific person or area and is given a lot of the same leeway that the Summer Knight is given as far as being able to lie, cheat, and kill in service of Summer, as long as it's doing it in the service of its charge. The Green Knight gets pretty similar levels of power to the Summer Knight, but again, it only gets that power when it's actively protecting its charge.

Option 3: The Fomor Guardian

As if a powerful Summer fae or servitor hanging out in the Bay isn't scary enough, there are more than a few hints in Alec's writings that the Sentinel is connected to the Fomor, somehow. It's been acting up lately, and it seems to have been doing so for about the same length of time that there have been hints of the Fomor hanging around the Bay. The whole thing with Doc Lewis would make a lot more sense if this were true, too. Here's the idea that scares me the most—if this thing works for the Fomor, what does that imply about the Fount?

The Sentinel

High Concept
Summer's Green Knight

Other Aspects
More Tree Now Than Man
The Fount Is My Charge
Implacable Guardian

Skills
Alertness:	Great	(+4)
Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Conviction:	Fantastic	(+6)
Discipline:	Superb	(+5)
Endurance:	Superb	(+5)
Fists:	Fantastic	(+6)
Intimidation:	Great	(+4)
Lore:	Good	(+3)
Might:	Superb	(+5)

Powers
Demesne [-1] The Fount
Marked By Power [-1]
Glamours [-2]
Ritual [-2]
Seelie Magic [-4]
Hulking Size [-2]
Supernatural Strength [-4]
The Catch [+0] is whenever he's not defending the Fount.
Supernatural Recovery [-4]
Supernatural Toughness [-4]

Are you saying this guy is **The** Green Knight? Like the Green Knight of Arthurian legend?

Nope, just saying it's a possibility.

Stress
Mental OOOO, +1 mild consequence
Physical OOOOOO(OOOO), +1 mild consequence, **Armor:2**
Social OO

Notes
This version of the Sentinel was once a man who long ago made a bargain with Summer and became the Green Knight. He has been given tremendous power, but only while he protects his charge, the Fount. Within his demesne and when protecting the Fount, he's nearly a plot-level character.

Besides access to Seelie magic and summoning shamblers, the Sentinel can use his Superb Discipline to create minor veils and seemings. In his demesne he can also use the environment around the Fount to attack or maneuver. He has Great initiative, Fantastic attacks and defense and Weapon:4 Fists.

Total Refresh Cost: -24

The Sentinel

High Concept
Ancient Implanted Human

Other Aspects
Guardian of the Fount
Servitor of the Fomor
Consumes Fount Water Daily

Skills
Alertness:	Fantastic	(+6)
Athletics:	Average	(+1)
Conviction:	Great	(+4)
Deceit:	Fair	(+2)
Discipline:	Great	(+4)
Empathy:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Superb	(+5)
Fists:	Superb	(+5)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Great	(+4)
Might:	Good	(+3)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Rapport:	Fair	(+2)
Stealth:	Fair	(+2)
Survival:	Good	(+3)
Weapons:	Fair	(+2)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
Aquatic [-1]
Supernatural Sense (Sonar)[-1]
Claws [-1]
Sponsored Magic (Fomor Magic) [-5]
Supernatural Strength [-4]
Supernatural Recovery [-4]
Supernatural Toughness [-4]
The Catch [+1] is death or decay magic.

Stress
Mental OOOO
Physical OOOO(OOOO), +1 mild consequence **Armor:2**
Social OOOO

Notes
Fantastic initiative, Superb attacks with Weapon:6 Fists, Superb defenses against melee attacks, Average against range.

This version of the Sentinel is just a really old, really souped-up version of the Implanted Humans found on page 286.

Total Refresh Cost: -19

Would this be a typical Fomor Catch?

No, the Sentinel gets its toughness and recovery powers from prolonged, continuous exposure to Fount water, not from Fomor enhancements.

Neverglades Twist—Three Faces, One Theme

You may have noticed that the Sentinel, Alec Bones, and Doc Lewis are all faces of The Fount Complicates Everything. Not only is that fine in a "city" using the Neverglades Twist, it's actually something you *want* to do at least once. The key is to give at least two of the faces opposing interests, so that they create more conflict in the game.

Doc Lewis wants to get at the Fount water to perform his experiments and maybe give some to his possibly-Fomor co-conspirators. The Sentinel, meanwhile, wants to keep the Fount water safe from anything and everything. If you're playing both of these characters right, the PCs will be caught in the middle of a volatile situation where they *have* to get involved in order for it to be solved. That's drama right there.

If Alec is a PC, he's already in the middle, which should get other PCs involved. Even if Alec is an NPC in your game, the PCs will likely care about the concerns of a character so integral to this tight community.

Missus Simmons

Village Snoop

Motivation: Gossip makes the world go 'round.

Face of: Missus Simmons' Boarding House & Tea Room (page 144)

Missus Simmons has been here a long time. Everybody in the Bay knows her by name, and she remembers everyone else's name—and quite a bit more besides. Truth be told, she's a bit of a snoop and an eavesdropper, but don't ever say that to her face. In fact, don't ever say that. Heck, I'm half afraid she'll overhear me type it. Nobody in town's got a head for gossip like Missus Simmons, and nobody's got the ear of the whole town like she does. If you want everyone to know about something, telling her's your best bet. Especially if it's juicy or tawdry.



I don't want to give the impression that we don't like Missus Simmons. Despite her nosiness and gift of gab, she's generally pretty friendly to Bayfolk and out-of-towners alike. In fact, she's one of the three—along with Miss Lizzy and the Colonel—who're pushing for expansion and connection to the outside world. The tourist season is her favorite time of year; she loves getting gossip and news of the outside world.

Her gossip sometimes stretches the imagination some. She claims to have seen pixies and water sprites out in the swamp, she says she's seen the Skunk Ape, and she even says that she caught a fish that talked to her, promised to grant her a wish if she let it go. I asked her once what her wish was and if it ever came true, but she just kinda smiled at me and said, "A lady's got her secrets."

As dubious as her stories sometimes are, we do believe quite a few of them. Living here, you'd be a fool not to. In fact, a bunch of us actually witnessed her most outlandish story as it happened. Old Hank Simmons, her husband (I hesitate to say "late" even though…well, you'll see) walked out into the front lawn one day and stopped like he was rooted in place. Looked around, smiled to himself, and then turned into a tree. That tree's been there ever since; nobody's sure if it's something he did to himself or something that was done to him, but it ain't been reversed these last fifteen years.

Since then Missus Simmons has been dropping hints with the local bachelors—Manny and the Colonel mostly—that she's essentially a widow woman now. She's also taken the opportunity to do something she'd been wanting to for some time, but she'd always been stymied by old Hank. After he got treed, she went and turned her house into a boarding house. More than that, she converted the entire bottom floor into one of those fancy tea rooms, with cucumber sandwiches and the like. The ladies in town love it; every day at 3 PM sharp, all the womenfolk in town show up there and have tea and gab for a few hours. Missus Simmons even reads tea leaves for the ladies, though Miss Lizzy told me once that she's doing it completely wrong. I gather she might be a bit jealous.

Missus Simmons

High Concept
Town Gossip

Trouble
Compulsive Busybody

Other Aspects
Judgmentally Friendly
Mind Like a Steel Trap
My Husband the Tree
Tea Room Rumormill

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Contacts:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Average	(+1)
Deceit:	Fair	(+2)
Empathy:	Fair	(+2)
Investigation:	Good	(+3)
Presence:	Average	(+1)
Rapport:	Fair	(+2)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts

Eavesdropper Extraordinaire (Contacts): Missus Simmons is an expert at Gathering Information in Okeeokalee Bay; while in town, she gains +2 to her Contacts rolls for that purpose.

Rumormonger (Contacts): Missus Simmons knows just how to get the word out, and gains +2 on her efforts to spread rumors.

Listening (Investigation): Missus Simmons can gain a +4 on her Investigation roll when Listening; however, her Alertness drops to Terrible while doing so.

Powers

Wizard's Constitution [-0]

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OO
Social	OOO

Notes

Fair initiative, Mediocre attacks and defense against physical attacks.

Total Refresh Cost: -3

Swampjack

Itinerant Ancient Minstrel

Motivation: Remember it all, and keep the faith, always.

Face of: Threat Barbarians at the Gate (page 141)

Swampjack's a bit of a local legend in the Bay and, to tell you the truth, it's hard to know where the legend ends and the truth begins. He's a real man, lives somewhere in or around the Bay, visits pretty often, but that man is the center of more folklore and stories than anyone else in the Bay. I'll start by talking a bit about the stuff I *know* is true.

He's talented, and I don't mean that in a "Oh, isn't that fella just so *talented* at the piano, he can play so well" kind of way. What I mean is pick an instrument, he'll play it. And not just play it; he'll make that instrument sing in a way you've never heard before, never thought possible. I've never heard anything quite like it and, if it's not magic, it's damn close. Add to all this one of the sweetest voices you've ever heard and, well…you get the idea.

But that ain't where it stops. We've got a game in the Bay that we play during hootenannies and get-togethers that we call "Stump Swampjack." The idea's pretty simple—ask Swampjack to play a song and if he can't play it or doesn't know the song, you win. We haven't figured out quite *what* you win because nobody's yet won. We've been playing that game for nigh on forty years now.

Which actually brings me to another thing I know about Swampjack—he's old. I don't mean he's decrepit or infirm or even a grey-beard; the man looks like he's somewhere in his early forties, but he's looked that way for as long as I can remember. Heck, Swampjack played and sang at my baptism; I've seen pictures of the day and he don't look a day older today than he does in those photos.

Maybe it's his faith that keeps him young; I've certainly heard of stranger things.

See, Swampjack believes, and believes harder than anyone I've ever met. His faith is a tangible thing, you can feel it around him, hear it in his songs, and when his ire is up, it can hurt to look at him. He don't hold to any particular church—seems to incorporate beliefs from just about every religion in the world—but that seems to make his faith stronger. I've seen him wield his belief like a weapon against the darkness, too, and I'll tell you now that I would not want to get on his bad side.



If the Paranet sends people in to help, do you think they'll get resistance from this Swampjack guy?

It's possible. He seems to avoid rather than confront the tourists, but he may take an entirely different approach with people who are in the know. Anyone who goes in there definitely wants to tread carefully.

Swampjack

High Concept
Itinerant Minstrel

Trouble
My Path Always Leads Back to the Bay

Other Aspects
Really, I'm Just a Man
Musical Genius
Man of Faith, Any Faith
Wrath Management Issues

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Superb	(+5)
Discipline:	Great	(+4)
Empathy:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Good	(+3)
Might:	Superb	(+5)
Performance:	Fantastic	(+6)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)
Rapport:	Fair	(+2)
Scholarship:	Great	(+4)
Survival:	Great	(+4)
Weapons:	Good	(+3)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Pointed Performance (Performance): Normally, Performance only lets a character place general aspects on a scene. When Swampjack uses Performance to place aspects, he may target individuals.

Musical Recall (Performance): Once Swampjack hears a song he can perform it flawlessly.

Powers
Wizard's Constitution [-0]
Guide My Hand [-1]
Holy Touch [-1]
Righteousness [-2]
Channeling (Spirit) [-2]
Sponsored Magic (Soulfire) [-3]

Soulfire? Really?

We wrote it up. Might as well get some use out of it, right?

Stress
Mental OOOO, +1 mild consequence
Physical OOOO
Social OOO
Soul OO

Notes
Fair initiative, Good attacks with Weapons, Good defense against most attacks.

Swampjack's powers are just speculation. The nature of his abilities is something of a mystery.

Although Swampjack was once a warrior, that's long in his past. He won't seek out a fight, but if forced into one or if he loses control of his temper, he unleashes raw holy power in the form of Soulfire.

Total Refresh Cost:
-11

The last thing about Swampjack is that he's pretty firm in his belief that the Bay should stay separate from the rest of the world. We've been getting more and more contact over the years, and it's gotten to the point where we can expect tourists in the spring and summer, and the Bay becomes a much more crowded place during that time. That's the time when you don't see a lot of Swampjack. He's been vocal about the fact that he don't want outsiders coming into the Bay, that it's dangerous and foolhardy and will lead to the ruination of us all.

He also didn't want me contacting you and the Paranet, said outsiders just can't understand what's important about the Bay even if they think they know more about the supernatural world than we do. Not sure I cotton to all that, but there you go.

Now we start getting into the stuff that's likely more folklore than fact. Not sure I believe all this (though I do believe some of it), but I'll report it all just the same and let you make up your own mind.

I said Swampjack is old, but that don't begin to cover it. The man is said to have been a Roman centurion during the time of Christ, though I'm not sure where that story came from. Swampjack won't confirm or deny it. I've talked to him about history, though—I'm a bit of a history buff—and he always talks about historical folk like he was there, like he knew them. We were talking about the Revolutionary War once and he had personal anecdotes about people involved. Civil War, too.

He used to wander a bit further than he does now. These days he sticks mostly to the Bay and the surrounding areas, but he's got stories and songs from all over the world, and I wouldn't be altogether surprised if he'd been just about everywhere.

He was offered some kind of holy sword once and turned it down. I take it that was a big deal.

He's in love with Miss Lizzy. That's likely why he stays near the Bay. They aren't officially together anymore (though they were once), but there's something there, a spark that you can see and feel when they're together. He's helped her out on her Stronghold more than once, and some folk (read: Missus Simmons) claim he sneaks into the building at night to see Miss Lizzy.

Is he talking about a Sword of the Cross?

Withered Jim

Angry Crippled Warlock

Motivation: I trust insects over people; their stings hurt less.

Face of: Big Bug Island (page 143)

Withered Jim is not a nice person. Heh. That's a bit of an understatement—the man's bad-tempered, uncharitable, and just plain mean. He's a bit of a hermit, mostly keeps to himself out on Big Bug Island, running that junkyard, but we see him in town from time to time when he comes to collect the trash. As much as most of us don't like him, he's the one who keeps the streets clean. Distasteful as it might be, we need him around.

Withered Jim's only real friend is Doc Lewis; the two of them hole up in the Doc's house from time to time, drinking and talking. Lately it's been happening more often and I can't help but think that the Doc's trying to get Jim's take on how to fix Frank. Not sure I altogether like the idea of them doing experiments like that. Jim's also on fair terms with Ryan Mullins, for professional reasons, and he's polite—if cold—to Miss Lizzy.

I've mentioned the rumors about what happened between Jim, Lizzy, and Swampjack back in the day. Well, old Jim's got a real bad attitude probably as a result of that whole thing. That ain't all he got, though; his leg got all withered and skelified, and now he limps around on a leg that's near dead. Some folk say Swampjack did it to him, some say Jim did it to himself. Not sure we'll ever get the truth on it.

Withered Jim's got power, but that power's mostly limited to what he can do with—and to—bugs. Calls himself an "insectomancer." Now, the Fount makes bugs plenty big, but the ones out on Big Bug Island are a whole order of magnitude bigger than the norm for this area. Even scarier, all the bugs on that island obey Jim without question. The man's got a pet roach, the size of a pit bull, named "Screech." At night the cricket song will shake the teeth from your head if you're on the island. Not sure how Jim manages to handle that.

I don't want to give you the wrong impression here—we ain't never caught Jim doing nothing downright evil. Sure, he gets up to mischief from time to time. Things go missing, bad things happen, Withered Jim is probably involved somehow. He uses his power for his own selfish ends, and he doesn't much care who gets hurt as a result. But he hasn't done anything to get the townsfolk to really turn against him yet, and he's even helped us out on occasion. He helped us against Skeeter on more than one occasion, and I think those big bugs help keep the panthers and the Savages in line.

Lately, though, it seems like he's gearing up for something big. He's been laying wards and traps out on Big Bug Island, and folks say he's been doing more and more experimentation on his bugs, trying to get them bigger and meaner. He ain't done nothing yet, but I'm afraid that if he does, it'll be too late for us to stop him.



Withered Jim

High Concept
Ill-Tempered Insectomancer

Other Aspects
Crippled Leg
Usually Up to No Good
Commands an Army of Bugs

Skills

Alertness:	Average	(+1)
Burglary:	Average	(+1)
Conviction:	Good	(+3)
Deceit:	Fair	(+2)
Discipline:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Great	(+4)
Survival:	Fair	(+2)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
Ritual [-2] Insectomancy
The Sight [-1]
Wizard's Constitution [-0]

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OO
Social	OO

Notes
Withered Jim's Insectomancy works exactly like Summoning and Binding except it works on bugs rather than spirits and demons. Given the size of the bugs in Okeeokalee Bay, this is a lot more dangerous and impressive than it sounds.

Total Refresh Cost: -3

The Okeeokalee Bay Game

Alec didn't know that the information he gave me was going to get thrown into a roleplaying game. The area is brimming with potential for a rich campaign, though, with two major approaches immediately suggesting themselves.

Gosh, really? You don't say. Imagine not predicting that.

The Natives Game

Obviously, the easiest way to dive into this material is to presume that all of the player characters are natives of the Bay. There are several suggested PCs who are in the dead center of all the conflicts that Alec alludes to; they'd make diverse and dynamic characters over time.

That isn't the only option, however. In your game, you could substitute any one of those characters for a similar character of your own—maybe you like the idea of a black ops Warden being the one who owns the Stronghold instead of Miss Lizzy, or you have a different idea for the long-running family business on Van Horne Island. Maybe you want the Speaker to be someone different from Alec Bones. (We're sure, in fact, that he'd like that, too.)

Just keep in mind that the tight-knit web of relationships might unravel a bit if you start substituting characters, and make sure you bake in equivalent relationships or different ones using your aspects.

Finally, consider that a lot of the entries in this chapter implicitly or explicitly refer to family members related to these characters in one way or another. For example, we have Cecilia Bones, Alec's daughter; Albus Gandy; Freddie Runcie, Miss Cammy's sister; and Ryan Mullins, Sheriff Betty's father. The PCs might be relatives of any of the suggested player characters, which gives them access to the main setting conflicts and allows them to explore some of the individual character issues in depth. What if you're that supposedly deadbeat brother of Manny's, looking to turn over a new leaf in life? What if you're Ryan Mullins, trying to walk that fine line of protecting his daughter and letting her do her job as the Sheriff?

The insiders game ideally focuses on the internal problems of the community, more than the external problems presented by the Fomor and the Savages. While there's some motivation to table your differences in the face of an external threat, the people of the Bay aren't facing that pressure every minute of every day. All it takes is for one person to do something desperate in the name of their goals, and this carefully balanced veneer of politesse could come crashing down around them.

Player Characters in the Nevergladés

Alec Bones (**page 116**)
Miss Lizzy (**page 118**)
Manny Shilah (**page 120**)
Betty Mullins (**page 121**)
Dougie Van Horne (**page 123**)

The Outsiders Game

And, of course, we don't mean the literal, "prohibited by the Laws of Magic" Outsiders. We mean people who come into the Bay from the outside world, whose presence ends up changing the status quo as they encounter the community there and either get involved in local problems or have to deal with local problems as an obstacle to other goals.

The Fount is undoubtedly the source of most inquiries into the Bay. If you can think of a group of people who have a reason to pursue a mutual agenda and a reason why that agenda might involve the Fount, you pretty much have an instant PC group. It could be a coven of wizards, seeking the Fount water as part of a ritual or simply to gain power. It could be a Winter fae and/or Winter allies, trying to suppress the seemingly uninhibited Summer effect of the Fount's waters on the area. It could be a group of cursed humans or minor talents, seeking the Fount waters in an effort to heal themselves.

Whatever the group, the PCs need to have strong ties to one another as a way of magnifying the contrast between the PCs and the community already in the Bay. Allow their relationships a lot of freedom to develop—the Bay may come to welcome them as part of the community, or the characters in the Bay might end up being a pool of antagonists.

Another kind of outsiders game is one where some or all of the PCs are connected to one of the characters and get called into the area as part of advancing an agenda. What if Miss Lizzy reaches out to the Wardens behind everyone's back and calls in a team? What if the Colonel brings in a business partner to help him with the urbanization of the Bay? What if some terrible thing Swampjack did in the past finally comes due, and you're the enforcers?

Any of these options can get you involved in the problems of the Bay quickly, without the spin-up time that a less personal connection might take.

Either way, the outsiders game should feature the external threats of the Fomor and Savages more prominently, because they're the main threat anyone searching for the Fount will likely encounter, as well as being a potential source of panic for anyone whose heart and soul aren't invested in the Bay at the outset.

Obviously, you can mix and match these ideas at your leisure—some PCs are natives, others are newcomers, throw them together and see what happens.

The Nature of the Bay—Threats and Themes

Shockingly, Alec didn't actually give me these themes and threats in the easily digestible way they're presented here. There was plenty of good stuff that would make great themes and threats, though, so I went ahead and presented them in the familiar format.

Threat: Barbarians at the Gates

We've always had to deal with the panthers and other assorted weird wildlife that comes along with the Fount. But since Skeeter blew up, we've had a whole passel of other problems to deal with. The Savages are the newest problem; they're dangerous and unpredictable and we ain't used to dealing with them yet.

Add to that the fact that development interests are creating a clash of the weird and the normal, and you've got a powder keg ready to blow.

Alec doesn't mention it, but this threat should also be used to represent the growing Fomor threat.

Theme: Everybody Knows Your Name

The Bay is a small community and, like in any small community, anonymity just ain't a luxury you get. People remember the stuff you do, and those actions follow you around until the end of time.

You can't often move past stuff or rely on being a random stranger like you can in the big city. When Missus Gandy remembers the time you stole that rhubarb pie from her windowsill when you were eight, or when Swampjack was there when you blasphemed after striking out in Little League, word of those deeds spreads fast and gets forgotten real slow.

The thing is, people remember your good deeds, too. Much moreso than you're probably used to, *you* are your reputation in the Bay. If you help your neighbors out, do kind things, and look out for your friends, people remember that and treat you accordingly. If you're mean, conniving, and manipulative, sooner or later that's going to bite you. It's like social karma.

A similar thing applies to outsiders. In a big city, nobody bats an eye at a new face and that new face can blend in pretty easily. In the Bay, a new face is noticed immediately and watched carefully. Reputation being so important, you're under suspicion until you prove yourself. If you wrong the Bayfolk before they get to know you, they'll ride you out of town on a rail.

Theme: The Fount Complicates Everything

The Fount's been here since before the first people settled the Bay, and it's been complicating things at least that long. Mutated creatures, people fighting over healing waters, the Sentinel making a general nuisance of itself, shamblers everywhere; it can be an interesting place to live.

"Interesting" used here in the Chinese curse sense of the word.

You've also got people in the Bay with wildly differing viewpoints on the Fount. Lots of folks think it's the solution to all their problems and want more of that water, despite the fact that the Sentinel is giving out less and less of it every day.

Breeds some resentment toward me, let me tell you. On the other hand, there are more than a few who think it's the *cause* of all our problems and want to do something about it. Leaving aside the fact that I don't entirely disagree with them, I don't know what they expect to do.

We just gotta live with the thing.

Theme: Isolation vs. Contact

We need tourism to get news from the outside, get cash to buy hard-to-find supplies, and so forth. Nobody denies that contact with the outside world is necessary—though there's many who'd say it's a necessary evil.

On one side, you got folks like Doc Lewis and Swampjack who feel like there's plenty of strangeness here at home, and we don't need to be inviting strangers' problems into the Bay. There's also folks like Manny and Miss Cammy who built their business around keeping the Bay connected in their own way—too much modernization puts them out of a job. Those four lead the charge, but the vast majority of the Bay tends to fall in that camp; we mostly keep to ourselves and want to keep it that way.

On the other side you got Miss Lizzy, Missus Simmons, and the Colonel who are advocating for development, contact, and modernization. They like the tourists, they like the conveniences that the outside world brings with it, and they argue for things like roads, hospitals, proper garbage collection, the Internet, and all manner of other things. A small but vocal minority agrees with them and, as you can imagine, the disagreements between the two camps can get a little heated.

This theme could wind up impacting an outsiders game pretty heavily if the PCs rely on technological gadgets at all. Basically, the GM should feel free to compel this theme like crazy whenever the PC are trying to use modern technology.

I tend to fall somewhere in the middle. On the one hand, I like the Internet, I like finding out about what's going on in the wider world, and I think this Paranet thing that you folks have going will be more and more necessary for us as time goes on. On the other hand, I'm the Speaker. It's my job to protect the Fount from people who would exploit it and, maybe more importantly, it's my job to protect the unwary from the Sentinel, the Fount, and the creatures it creates.

Straddling the fence is only going to do me for a short spell, though; sooner or later I'm going to have to choose a side. Lines are being drawn, and I'm scared someone's going to do something real dumb.



Nevergladєs Twist—Two-Faced Facєs

When people hold your setting together, it might make sense to have one face represent several things—such as a location *and* a theme.

For instance, let's say you're using Isolation Vs. Contact as a theme for your game. Most of the characters mentioned here—such as Swampjack, Manny, Miss Lizzy, and the Colonel—are already faces of locations and you don't necessarily want to change that. You'll also notice that there is no explicitly assigned face for Isolation Vs. Contact.

So choose one or two of the characters to act as faces for the theme as well as for their location.

What? Two faces for one theme? Yup, we've got that covered, too. Check out "Neverglades Twist—Three Faces, One Theme" on **page 135**.

What's Where in Okєєokalєє Bay

Tourists seem to think there are a lot of interesting places to see in Okeeokalee Bay. I've always thought it was the people more than the places that were interesting, but what do I know?

Awhatopotamєє

Theme: Rest in Peace

Face: None; *specifically* none.

Awhatopotamee is an island, a limestone knob that juts out of the middle of the Bay. It's bare rock, no living things on it. Lots of dead things, though; bones litter its shores like you've never seen.

The thing about Awhatopotamee is that things come here to die. You know how elephants are supposed to travel hundreds of miles to die in an elephant graveyard? Well, Awhatopotamee is like that, except for all manner of uncanny critters. One time when we were kids, Manny and I saw some big feathered thing land on the island and just lay its head down. It's an eerie place.

But there's more to it. Maybe it's part of the same effect, but conflict just doesn't happen on Awhatopotamee. More than that, it *can't* happen there. The best you can manage is a mild disagreement, and you'll only remember patches of it when you leave. The island fogs you in ways you can't fathom.

So is Awhatopotamee Accorded Neutral Ground or something?

Or something. The way Harry explained it, you can still have a fight on Accorded Neutral Ground but there will be severe consequences afterward. Awhatopotamee seems to make it patently impossible. Maybe it's Mab's first attempt to enforce it gone horribly wrong, or maybe it's where she got the idea.

Big Bug Island

Theme: Don't Let the Big Bugs Bite
Face: Withered Jim (page 139)

Half this island is covered by the Bay's junkyard; it's where all of our trash ends up sooner or later. You can find some pretty good salvage there if you're keen to look, but I wouldn't recommend it. See, Big Bug Island has that name for a reason.

Withered Jim makes his home here, and the products of his "bugomancy" are everywhere. Go there during the daytime and at least you can see the giant horseflies coming to suck your blood. Go there at night, and you're going to be some giant bug's midnight snack pretty quickly.

It's not just big bugs, though; Jim's magic experiments have wrought some truly strange creatures. Butterflies that shoot light from their tongues, palmetto bugs that can scream in your dreams. I'm not sure why he's making these things, but there has to be a reason. Can't imagine he's up to anything good.

The Darkening

Theme: The Dead Dwell Here
Face: The Conquistador (page 130)

Folks don't go to the Darkening; at least, not willingly. The place is full of Deadheads—large balls of cypress roots, carved with skulls and such—and it attracts ghosts and restless spirits like nobody's business. They talk through the Deadheads. Scream, more like. Constantly. The one time I went into the Darkening, I had to wear earplugs to get through with my sanity intact; the things the Deadheads scream at you will break your mind if you let them.

Also, when the Conquistador rises, this is where he rises from.

Granja Island

Threat: Barbarians at the Gate (page 141)
Face: Formerly Skeeter, now the Savages in general (page 131)

This used to be Skeeter Johnson's base of operations, but when he blew up, it became the domain of the Savages. Lots of ruins out on that island and people go to try to pick them clean from time to time. We don't generally see them again.

The Lion Queen

Theme: Chase Your Blues Away
Face: The Colonel (page 128)

Imagine a small hotel, focused around a large chamber full of gaming tables and slot machines. Now put it on a land-locked steamboat and you've got a good idea of what the *Queen* looks like. Legend says it started as a rowboat and "just grew." I know from experience that legends are often true at their heart, but this one's just for the tourists.

The fact is, the Colonel found this thing as a wreck, fixed it up, and filled it with all manner of entertainment. The party line is that it brings in jobs and money for the bay.

Ignore the disappearances of high-rollers. Ignore the questionable clientele. Ignore the inordinate number of suicides each year.

Van Horne Island

Theme: Best In Show
Face: Dougie Van Horne (page 123)

The Van Hornes have been raising dogs on Van Horne Island for the last few generations, and boy have they ever gotten good at it. What they raise are smart, loyal, strong dogs, used to weird stuff happening around them. They ain't easily spooked and I've seen a Van Horne hound take down one of the Savages to protect its master. They're expensive, though, and in high demand.

The island itself is a modest affair, smallish with a kennel and the Van Horne family home and a good-sized grassy area for the dogs to run and such. They've got a few boats that they use to get back and forth from town, and they ferry outsiders over to their island to take a look at the dogs when they need to.

These sound almost like a lesser version of temple dogs.

Menendez's General Store & Post Office

Theme: If You Can't Find It Here, You Don't Really Need It
Face: Miss Cammy (page 124)

If you need staple goods—flour, eggs, lard, butter, milk, meats (of various types and cuts), bullets, salt, rope, pickles, cloth—the General Store easily handles your request.

If you need something else—AA batteries, computer cable, printer cartridges, latest iPhone case—the General Store *might* have it. (Probably not, unless you ordered it special.)

Menendez's General Store & Post Office is one of the more mundane connections from the Bay to the wider world.

Missus Simmons' Boarding House & Tea Room

Theme: Everybody Knows Your Name (page 141)
Face: Missus Simmons (page 136)
If you're an out-of-towner and you don't know someone in the Bay, this is where you'll stay. Of course, if that's the case, the rest of us will be watching you like hawks.

The boarding house can accommodate six people, couples, or small families, and the dining room is family-style (so if you want privacy, best find somewhere else to eat your meals). Dinner starts at 6:30 PM sharp, and if you're not there you take your chances with whatever's left.

The entire front half of the building is a tea room that opens at noon, but at 3 PM nearly every woman in town comes to the place to gossip, drink tea, and eat cucumber sandwiches. They're generally gone by 4 or 4:30, and the place is shut down around 5 PM.

Oh, one final word: if you stay here, don't expect your secrets to stay secret very long. Missus Simmons is…well, she knows how to find things out and she likes to talk.

Gandy's Gas-Autos-Boats

Theme: Every Machine Has a Story
Face: Albus Gandy (page 126)
Gandy's is a newer establishment, going on seven years old, but it's become an important one in that short time. Before Albus Gandy started fixing up our boats and cars, we mainly had to do that ourselves. Not that we couldn't do it, mind, but Al's just…well, he's a whole lot better at it than anyone else in the Bay. With Alby on the job, our boats and cars are in better repair than ever. Plus it's nice to have a gas station in town again, especially with someone as sweet as Freddie Runcie to help you out.

Of course, getting your truck fixed ain't the only reason to go to Al's. People find stuff out in the swamp sometimes—an old radio, a wristwatch, an abandoned boat. Al's talent for speaking to machines makes it so we can find out what the story is behind these things, and it's a service he's happy to provide. It's mostly a curiosity, but it has, on occasion, proven useful.



The Sump

Theme: Things Don't Come Back
Face: Coat-Like-Midnight (page 127)
When we need to dump bodies, this is where we dump them. It's a boggy region of the Bay that may in fact be bottomless. In any case, it seems to be connected to *somewhere* else. Animals don't linger here long on account of the smell.

Weird stuff tends to surface here from time to time, things that have no business being in this part of the world. Some examples include the ghosts of drug dealers whose bodies got dumped somewhere else, the shades of migrant workers who snuck in or out of the Big Sugar plantations, a Great White shark, a 1957 Thunderbird in almost pristine condition, and at least three kangaroos.

Also, the panthers tend to hang out here a lot. You've been warned.

The Water Maze

Theme: There's No Map of the Maze
Face: Manny Shilah (page 120)
It ain't quite right to think of the Water Maze as being a part of the Bay; more accurately, it's *most* of the Bay and the surrounding area. What we call the Water Maze is a network of thousands of floating islands of dirt and grass and other vegetation, with constantly shifting pathways between them.

Boats get lost here a lot, and it's one of the big reasons why most folk don't know about the Bay. The boats are usually abandoned, sometimes covered in dried blood, and one time filled with the skeletal remains of its occupants.

The Stronghold

Theme: Against the Darkness
Face: Miss Lizzy (page 118)

Essentially, this Southern mansion has grown huge by reshaping itself. Many of the original outbuildings got connected to the main house, and new towers and tunnels are always being built. It's become a fort.

The Stronghold is well stocked with traditional hurricane provisions. There's also a bunch of less-usual supplies. It's surprisingly well defended against the mystical—with a powerful threshold—due to the decades and number of people who've been living there.

Hmm. It's interesting that these people know about thresholds, considering all the things they don't know yet.

Basic survival knowledge when you deal with the supernatural on a day-to-day basis. Plus, Miss Lizzy's a wizard who may well have White Council training, even if she doesn't have much contact with them.

Statting Out the Stronghold

You can probably extrapolate that this place is riddled with wards and traps at the maximum level Miss Lizzy can put out without effort; in a few places, they may go well into the +10 or above range.

Some traditional hurricane provisions:

- canned food
- bottled water
- cots
- sleeping bags
- board games
- small library
- generators
- chain saws
- hatchets
- beer
- toilet paper
- batteries
- Coleman stoves and lanterns
- bug repellant
- sun screen
- sizable first aid kit
- medications
- emergency contact information for all community members

Some, uh, less traditional provisions:

- shotguns, rifles, revolvers, and ammunition for all
- ghost dust
- chalk in eight different colors
- dozen handkerchiefs full of sunlight
- full-out alchemical rig
- horse-portable 18th century fire engine
- kiln

I dunno, these seem like pretty traditional provisions to me.



Las Tierras Rojas
The Red Lands



These letters were written in English, but she often used Spanish words and idioms. I had a friend translate those as best he could, but we left the Spanish name for the Red Court intact here; it's been changed to the more common name in the rest of the chapter.

AND NO, ALEJANDRA CASTILLO ISN'T HER REAL NAME.

"Los Tiranos de la Sangre" means "Tyrants of the Blood," doesn't it? Little on the nose.

MAYBE. IT SPEAKS TO HOW THEY WEREN'T THE ONLY PEOPLE AFRAID OF THE REDS.

South America, Central America, and Mexico

Chichen Itza—the seat of the Red King in Las Tierras Rojas—is where it all went down.

My friends went toe-to-toe-to-fang with some of the worst things I could ever imagine, and I'm still surprised anyone made it out at all.

But in the aftermath, things didn't get all sunny and perfect. And it wasn't until I started going through Paranet reports that I realized that things haven't been sunny and perfect south of the border for a long time.

What follows is a collection of material that I think everyone should read and take some sobering truth from.



My name is Alejandra Castillo, and thanks to the extinction of Los Tiranos de la Sangre, I am free. But I'm in the minority.

There are still many troubles here; drug cartels are a plague, and predators both mortal and supernatural feed on those who are vulnerable. Worst of all, because of the power vacuum left here, we stand on the edge of what could be the bloodiest and most overt supernatural power struggle in recent memory. The Court may be gone, but the land is still red.

Despite all this, for the first time, we have a fighting chance. We have hope.

Welcome to Las Tierras Rojas.

I remember the moment that it happened. I was in a safehouse outside of Huitzilac with other members of the Fellowship, planning a strike. It happened quickly, but not painlessly. Imagine the fatigue of ten years, the echoes of old injuries, the injuries not yet healed, the gradual decay of your body. Now, imagine it happening within the span of a few seconds.

Though it lasted only moments, it felt like hours…I think. Time was difficult to…

When I checked the clock, fewer than two minutes had passed. My companions had died of old age—some of them had decayed so rapidly that I could not identify the remains.

The Fellowship of St. Giles still exists, but we are not what we once were. Many of our members died of old age or during the conflict when the Red Court was destroyed, and those of us who are left are the least experienced. More than that, though, we are all coping with the loss of the power we once had, and with the years that have caught up to us so suddenly. I am no longer what I once was and, though the infection was a violation, I can feel its loss.

About 200 of us remain. Many of the survivors are now too old for active fieldwork and have had to assume purely advisory positions. Others attempt to return to their previous lives. And some of us continue our fight.

You may wonder why the Fellowship still exists with the Red Court gone, and this is a valid question. The answer is simple enough: we cannot stop. Even though the biggest problem in Las Tierras Rojas is gone, there are still many threats to deal with and precious few people who know how to do so. We are a fraction of what we once were, but if not us, then who?

Harry once told me the world always needs someone who stands up and helps.

That is why I am writing to you—you need to know what is happening down here. What happens in Las Tierras Rojas will have far-reaching consequences and people must be warned. We are too few to fight all of the threats, but we can report what we know. We can arm you with knowledge.

My friend Eduardo gave me your name. I heard what you have done for all of us and I want to thank you for that. I also want to tell you what has been happening since and keep you informed of the situation here as it escalates, because you bear responsibility for it. Before too long, we may have need of your help—perhaps even the help of the entire White Council. I hope that you will give it to us.

LAS TIERRAS ROJAS?

Alejandra calls all that territory controlled by the Red Court "Las Tierras Rojas," which translates to "The Red Lands." It's easier and shorter than "South and Central America, along with parts of Mexico."

WILL, WHERE DID WE GET THESE REPORTS?

Um...yeah, I meant to talk to you about this. They were originally addressed to Harry. I guess Alejandra didn't know...

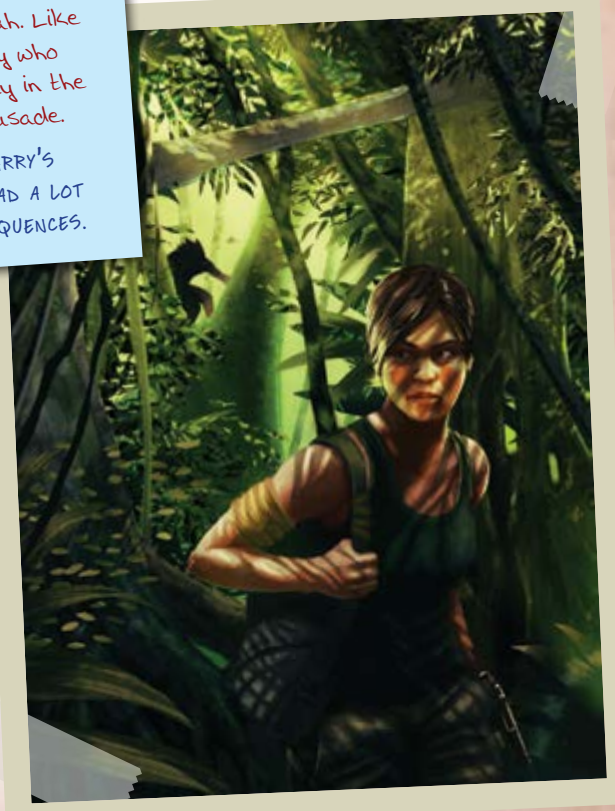
DID YOU...YOU DIDN'T... WILL, WHAT DID YOU DO?

It was important!

WE **WILL** TALK ABOUT THIS LATER.

Holy Hannah. Like that guy who chose poorly in the Last Crusade.

YEP. HARRY'S ACTIONS HAD A LOT OF CONSEQUENCES.



From the Desk of Will Borden

Ever since the events in Mexico, the Paranet's been on fire. Chicago's in upheaval because of the whole Red Court thing, but it's definitely not the only place affected, and it's not even the place most affected by it. It's not even near the top of the list.

The thing is, as lively as Paranet activity's been, there were places that we just weren't hearing from, and it struck me as a little odd. On a hunch, I went down to the post office and checked to see if there was any mail being held for Harry.

As it turns out, it's really not that difficult to pick up someone else's mail.

Among other things, I got a big stack of letters from Mexico, Argentina, Brazil—all over the place, really. When I opened them, though, I saw that they were all from the same person, a woman I'm calling Alejandra Castillo—names changed to protect the innocent and all that.

I've communicated with Alejandra since then and I've informed her of our situation. I got to know a little about her.

Alejandra was born in Mexico City and grew up not really knowing much about the supernatural. Everything changed when she was twenty-two. She was a freelance journalist then, trying to get in good with the local newspapers and make a name for herself. While investigating a lead about a politician she thought was corrupt, it turned out she was onto something a little more dangerous than she expected.

The politician in question—a man named Juan Morales—had some serious pull in the supernatural community and may even have been Red Court. At any rate, the man he sent to meet Alejandra certainly was. She tried to run but the vampire caught her and, on Morales' orders, turned her and left her in an alley. I guess the assumption was that she would wake up, find someone to feed on, kill them, and complete the transformation.

Luckily, Alejandra wasn't the only one watching Morales. A member of the Fellowship of St. Giles, a British woman named Lisa Sterling, was investigating him and saw the whole encounter go down. She was there when Alejandra woke up. She helped Alejandra through the hardest parts of the change and brought Alejandra into the Fellowship.

Fast forward ten years. The Red Court is gone, the Fellowship is at a fraction of its previous size and strength, and more than one major player (and a few minor ones) are trying to fill the vacuum left by the Reds. Alejandra is suddenly ten years older in the span of a few seconds and her mentor, Lisa Sterling, is dead of old age.

To find out what happened, Alejandra contacts a friend of hers, a biomancer I think, who was in good with the Paranet; he'd been a solid source of information in the past. She finds out about Harry and what he did, she starts sending him letters and...well, I guess that's where I come in.

The rest of this document is a series of reports from Alejandra to Harry detailing the current situation in various parts of Las Tierras Rojas; she even gives some historical background about when the Red Court was at the height of its power. I'll chime in when needed, but I'll let her tell most of the story.



Reminds me of what I've been told about Susan.

You should have met her before. She and Harry...He was almost...Yeah.

She didn't deserve the fate she got.

Twisted bastard. Is Morales still around?

Alejandra couldn't find him. May have been because he was Red Court and went pop when all the others did, but there's no way to know for sure, short of running into him again.

The Situation

Las Tierras Rojas is a land in flux, but many are not aware of just how much. Panic gripped us all for a time, and in that panic came fighting, more bloodshed, and more death. Those of us who know about the supernatural are on edge, waiting for large-scale conflict or even war to break out; but despite oppressive martial law in many places, most mortals continue to live their lives as they have been for a long time.

Those in power certainly noticed that the people who used to pay them are different—or simply missing—but the common people, if anything, are breathing a little bit easier, looking over their shoulders a little bit less. I do not think they truly know why; I wish it were otherwise. While the Red Court is gone, many threats still exist. The people here are in just as much danger as they always have been. In all likelihood, the danger is greater—even if nobody wants to see it.

On the fringe—in the villages, farms, and rural parts of the continent—the difference is much more pronounced. In the cities, the vampires were forced to blend in due to the staggering number of angry mortals they would have to deal with should they be discovered; they did not bother to do this with the superstitious peasants in rural communities and isolated farmsteads. More than people in the cities, the villagers and farmers *knew* what was going on. They understood that monsters were real, and that the monsters ruled over the people. They understood that when a young woman disappeared in the night, she would not be seen again. They understood that if she *was* seen again, she was to be feared.

It is these people who have gained the most from the vampires' deaths, but it is these people who are in the most danger without the vampires to protect the herd.

Economy

War zones are not the most stable of economies. When the revolutions and martial law came down, it was as though a flood saturated the fields—first in panic, then in blood. Yet farming, mining, and manufacturing are still as important as they ever were and the people doing these jobs are still doing these jobs. Those who control the companies, however, are feeling the effects.

Most of the important companies in Las Tierras Rojas were long ago infiltrated by the vampires; their loss has caused turmoil within the ranks of the elite. Many companies are now leaderless, and smaller power struggles—mirroring the greater one that spans continents—are taking place.

Climate

South America is, for the most part, a hot, wet continent. It is also a very large continent, and the climates of individual countries or regions can greatly vary. The Andes are cold throughout the year while the desert regions of Chile are hot and dry.

Central America resembles South America in terms of climate but with fewer variations because it is so much smaller. Between December and April there is a dry season, but most of the year is hot and wet.

Mexico ranges from hot and dry to fairly temperate in the Valley of Mexico. The Yucatan coast suffers from frequent hurricanes, sometimes more than one a season.

Once every couple of years, El Niño drives heavy rain through the regions of Las Tierras Rojas that are normally quite dry; this is often when we see the most unexplained disappearances. Rainfall, it seems, masks all manner of deeds.

She's really specific here. Gut feeling? She's seen this a ***lot****.*

Geography

Alejandra didn't say much about the overall geography in her letters, so I'll fill in the blanks.

There are three main features that make up the geography of South America: the Andes, the central lowlands, and the eastern highlands. The Andes is a cold, arid mountain range that runs down the west coast of South America, from Colombia to Chile. The central lowlands—where you'll find the Amazon Rainforest—are hot, wet, and sparsely populated; aside from a few exceptions, the soil simply isn't rich enough to support agriculture. To the east are the highlands of Brazil and Guiana. There's a lot of agriculture going on here—sugarcane and coffee, mostly.

Central America has a lot of tectonic activity going on: earthquakes and active volcanos are pretty serious business down there. Going along with this, there are quite a few mountain ranges, with fertile valleys in between.

Mexico also has its fair share of mountain ranges—even volcanic ranges—and most of the central and northern territories are located at pretty high elevations. There's a lot of hot, dry land here, too.



Those were some of the scariest dreams I've ever had. They were so...vivid.

I hear you, man. I have no idea how people can cope with it.

People deny a lot in order to get by. Look at all the people Karrin and I work with who **choose** not to see all the things we've seen. Even when those things chase after you in the middle of the night and try to kill you.



What's What in Las Tierras Rojas

Las Tierras Rojas is a land of contrasts. The climate simultaneously has both frigid cold and tropical heat, with snow-capped mountains looking down on dense rainforests. Urban sprawl edges into rural farming communities, trendy resort towns back up against vast wilderness. Its people, too, range from simple and honest to worldly and wicked, from superstitious to skeptical to truly knowledgeable about the occult.

Las Tierras Rojas is a land of violence. We have seen gang violence, war, ruthless drug cartels, and countless bloody revolutions. The Red Court were cruel masters, sacrificing innocents on the altar of power, greed, and bloodlust. And of course, as you know, we were recently the site of so many simultaneous deaths that it caused nightmares all over the world.

Las Tierras Rojas is a land of turmoil and change, of power and pain. But it is also a land of faith. The people have endured much, but they have endured. They have endured the cruelty of the Aztecs and the callousness of the conquistadors. They have endured communities crippled by the drug trade and governments so corrupt they had to be deposed. And they have endured the Red Court—creatures so evil and inhuman that humans were less than slaves, food to be toyed with and devoured according to their own dark appetites. But we have endured, and we continue to do so.

And now we must endure a new threat made up of many dangerous creatures who all want the same thing: power. But we will endure. We must. If we don't stop them, who will?

The Mundane Community

When the Red Court was killed, things changed. Gangs, cartels, corporations, and even some countries found themselves without leaders and were forced to adapt. Some did, some did not. Those who adapted became more powerful, better suited to this new Las Tierras Rojas without the vampires; those who did not were swallowed up by those larger and stronger, without mercy.

But there was violence. Revolution, a phenomenon with which we are already well acquainted, erupted everywhere, in every country and every major city. Some regimes were thrown down while others overcame the would-be revolutionaries. The region stabilized more quickly than it has in the past—with surprising speed, actually—but the cost of that speed was human life. Most of the revolutions are over, but the memory persists. People are not inclined to forget.

The huge number of bodies found at Chichen Itza and all over Las Tierras Rojas was a problem for those in power. They needed an explanation, a scapegoat. They chose the cartels—though this did not make sense everywhere—because the people needed someone to blame. Why not the cartels?

This, however, caused problems that those in power did not foresee. They should have.

The cartels were not willing to just stand by and be blamed for mass murder, and the police needed to respond to these charges they were leveling against the cartels. They targeted the cartels, arresting high-ranking members, raiding their supply warehouses, burning their crops. The cover story for the events of Chichen Itza instigated a new war on drugs, and the cartels fought back.

The cartels started targeting the police, murdering them in retaliation for the disruption to their business. The police responded by making more arrests and by "accidentally" killing those who resisted.

The violence continued for many weeks, threatening to consume entire countries before the two power groups reached an uneasy equilibrium. The cartels were too strong, too numerous, and they were beginning to unify against the police and governments. In the end, corruption saved many lives. The police began to accept bribes again, began to look the other way again. Things started to settle back into something resembling normalcy.

Nobody, however, could forget the nightmares. The night the Red Court died, the entire world experienced vivid and disturbing nightmares, and no part of the world was affected quite so much as Las Tierras Rojas, the eye of the storm. Theories were as common as cockroaches in the nightmares' wake. The government was testing mind control. There were drugs in the water. God was angry. Nobody knew what had happened, but everybody was afraid.

And that is where things stand now. Everybody is afraid. Things have settled back into something resembling the status quo, but the peace is fragile. A new revolution could erupt any day, and war and violence are never far from our minds. We fear for the future, for what it might hold.



THAT'S DISGUSTING. THE CARTELS ARE SCUM, BUT THERE'S NO EXCUSE FOR POLICE BYPASSING THE LAW LIKE THAT, AND ACTING LIKE THUGS AND KILLERS.

Their circumstances were pretty extraordinary, Karrin.

IT DOESN'T MATTER. **THE LAW EXISTS FOR A REASON**, WILL.

I know, but haven't you and Harry skirted the boundaries of what's legal in the past? Like with that Black Court thing?

THAT WAS...DIFFERENT. IT NEEDED TO BE...

SHUT UP, WILL.

I figured Alejandra was using poetic license when she said the land was still red. So why do they still call it "Las Tierras Rojas"?

Hasn't been that long since the Red Court was destroyed—more than a few people are probably waiting for them to return. It's probably habit, too. And, yeah, considering the amount of bloodshed she talks about, the name still seems to fit.

The Supernatural Community

While the mortal community reacts to events outside of their understanding, the supernatural community knows all too well the danger we're all in.

When the nightmares first manifested, there was talk of dark times to come. Initially this talk was set aside when news of the Red Court's demise started to circulate, in favor of more pressing and concrete concerns.

Those who served the vampires were suddenly without masters, a situation that many of them had never been in. Many people had been born and grown up in servitude to the creatures. They served the vampires unquestioningly despite the horrors regularly visited upon them and others like them. They served the vampires because it was what they knew how to do, what they had been indoctrinated to do.



With their masters gone, they were at a loss. Some found other masters. They threw themselves to the mercy of other vampires like the White Court or even the Black Court, or they made bargains with the Faerie Courts. They did so not out of any need for protection, but out of a need for purpose. The only purpose they had ever known had been taken from them and, despite the fact that it was a cruel purpose built on lies and subjugation, they needed to replace it with something else. Some succeeded; many simply fell victim to the hungers of the creatures they sought to serve.

Many others—too many others—simply began to wander or they just disappeared. Homelessness became a sudden epidemic and I cannot help but think that this is the cause. Unlike the ones who sought to replace their purpose with something else, these poor souls were simply lost. Broken. They had nothing left, and so they became nothing.

JESUS. THIS DIDN'T EVEN OCCUR TO ME.

I think a lot of things didn't occur to a lot of people.

But this was far from the most significant effect of the Night of Bad Dreams. The destruction of the most powerful and influential presence—supernatural or mortal—in Las Tierras Rojas created a black hole, a power vacuum, of immense strength. Many now seek to fill that vacuum—old gods, old wizards, and fae creatures almost forgotten are returning so that they might seize the power left behind by the vampires.

This power is not only political or symbolic. Think of it—a ritual of unimaginable magnitude was enacted at a place of immense supernatural power, the result of which was the destruction of literally thousands of creatures. Some of these creatures were nearly god-like in power. When all that blood, all that life, all that power was released into the surrounding environment, it had to go somewhere.

The prevailing theory is that it was absorbed by the ley line nexus, making Chichen Itza a place charged by an unprecedented amount of supernatural energy. So far no single faction has managed to take control of the ruined city, but many are trying. They fight each other, each faction acting as a check on the others, but this will not last. Eventually the balance will tip and someone will succeed where everyone has so far failed.

When that happens, God help us all.

Conflict is certainly something there's no shortage of in Las Tierras Rojas. There are a number of conflicts brewing in the region, and some are already boiling over. I'll let Alejandra tell you about them in detail.

What's at Stake: Points of Conflict

Chichen Itza

The power stored at Chichen Itza is easily the most potent source of conflict currently in Las Tierras Rojas. Everyone who knows about that power wants it for themselves, and it is only a matter of time before someone seizes it. While many of the major players—Winter, Summer, and the White Court, most notably—seem to be staying out of the conflict for the most part, there are still some very dangerous beings involving themselves in it.

- **The White Council**: While the White Council has only a token presence in Las Tierras Rojas—ostensibly to study the effects of the Red Court's destruction on Chichen Itza—it is plain that their true objective is to surveil the city and report back to Edinburgh should someone seem prepared to make a move. While they clearly want that power for themselves, they do not currently have the strength to take it or to involve themselves in the minor outbreaks of violence that occur in and around the city on a daily basis. Instead, they bide their time while they recover their strength. I have no doubt that they are studying Chichen Itza, but I believe their purpose is to learn to harness the power stored in the ley lines before anyone else does. Nothing more.

For more about the Keepers, a group that may have been working with the White Council, see page 158.

- **Wyldfae**: Two tribes of wyldfae have come out of obscurity lately and I cannot help but think that Chichen Itza is the reason. Both the Anjana and the Apu have been seen travelling north toward Mexico, and I can think of no other reason for them to go there at this precise moment. The prospect of the Anjana or the Apu getting their hands on that much power is frightening, but not nearly so frightening as what might happen if one of the other groups did so.

IT WORRIES ME MORE THAN A LITTLE THAT THEY'RE STAYING OUT OF THIS THING. IT'S NOT LIKE THEM TO LEAVE POWER ON THE TABLE. I DON'T TRUST IT.

I talked to Bob about it. They think the Faerie Courts are staying out of it because it's not in their nature to go after something like this. I mean, yeah, they acted out of character at the Stone Table, but sources say that was something that **should not** have been possible.

WHAT ABOUT LARA RAITH?

I don't think they have a theory on that. Well, not on that specifically. There are **plenty** of... uh...theories about Lara Raith, though.

YEAH. I'LL BET.

Page page 162, if you want to skip ahead.

- **Manco Capac**: He claims to be the reincarnation of the semi-divine founder of the Inca civilization. I believe that Manco Capac is an immensely old wizard who orchestrated the founding of the Inca Empire, then faded into the background. I think it likely that he has been hiding from the White Council for centuries, but with their strength depleted and the current chaos in Las Tierras Rojas to mask his movements, I believe he has simply come out of hiding at the opportune moment to try to seize Chichen Itza for himself. I do not know what his motives may be, and that frightens me.

More on Capac on page 161 and page 181.

- **The old gods**: Rumors persist that old gods are returning. These gods were once gods of the Inca, but they were imprisoned by the Lords of Outer Night. With the Red Court gone, they have been freed to do what they please, and what they please is almost certainly using Chichen Itza to return to power.

For more on this terrifying possibility, see page page 159.

We have no shortage of potentially horrific outcomes, all of them centered around Chichen Itza.

The Power Vacuum

The death of the Red Court left behind an immense amount of untapped political power. This is less dangerous than what might happen should the wrong group get their hands on Chichen Itza, but the difference is a matter of size rather than intensity. Where a creature or group gaining Chichen Itza would likely threaten the world, a creature or group filling the vacuum left behind by the vampires would primarily threaten Las Tierras Rojas. To us, though, both potentials are equally terrifying.

The Red Court did not control everything in Las Tierras Rojas. Individual governments governed themselves, cartels did their business as they saw fit, and there were many autonomous groups within the region that did as they willed, regardless of the demands or desires of the Red Court. They did not control everything, but they influenced enough to make the difference academic.

Governments still governed their people. Those governments, however, were routinely infiltrated and manipulated by the vampires, who often used more traditional means to keep the people complacent and afraid. There were autonomous organizations that acted independently of—and even against—the Red Court, but all of their decisions were informed by the threat of the vampires—the threat of their power and the wrath of their retribution.

And now they are gone. Outwardly, it seems as though the nations of Las Tierras Rojas have begun to recover from their loss. However, those with the eyes to see know the truth: the governments, the cartels, and everyone else is waiting. Waiting for someone to assert control. Waiting, as they say, for the other shoe to drop.

Any number of groups would gladly take the place of the Red Court. The Anjana and the Apu both want power over the mortals of Las Tierras Rojas. Manco Capac would likely exert subtle but inescapable influence, and the old gods would rule through overt fear and subjugation. The Black Court wants to fill the void, but they do not have the strength. And while the White Court has the strength, they do not involve themselves in the struggle.

And then there are the mortals. There are those within the governments, within the cartels, within the gangs who know that something is amiss, that someone needs to assert control. This is what caused the rash of violent revolutions that we experienced immediately following the demise of the vampires, and I fear that such a thing could easily happen again.

Now **there's** a terrifying prospect. We should all thank our High Holy Whoevers that they don't have the clout to seize the throne.

Yet.

Yeah, thanks for that, Captain Gloomy.

The Police vs. The Cartels

Martial law is a harsh mistress. The streets are tense, but the open warfare we saw not too long ago has cooled. However, do not fool yourself into thinking that it is truly gone. The police are content to accept their bribes for now, and the cartels are content to give them. But this will not last.

Eventually one or both parties will decide that the current arrangement is…unsatisfactory. The police will want more money and drugs. The cartels will want to operate without governmental interference. Money, power, and ambition will drive the corrupt to do what the corrupt always do—they will turn on each other.

I do not know which side will win. What I do know is that many—too many—innocents will be caught in the crossfire. I know that the violence will escalate out of control. I know that things will get much, much worse before they get better.

The Ordo Torca vs. Everyone

"Order of the Torch"?

With an environment charged with so much potential supernatural violence, how could the Church not get involved? Their response to such threats in the past has always been to purge it with fire, and their response to recent events has been no different.

The Ordo Torca (page 163) was already in Las Tierras Rojas, fighting covertly against the Red Court in whatever small ways they could. When the Red Court was destroyed, the Church's response was perhaps more pragmatic than the Fellowship's was—they reinforced their position, sending in more Ordo agents, preparing for the storm to come. Right now, by our estimation, there are no fewer than six hundred members of the Ordo Torca in Las Tierras Rojas. Six hundred modern-day inquisitors.

This may seem like a good thing at first glance. There is a saying: the enemy of my enemy is my friend. Sadly, in reality, this is seldom the case. The Ordo's response has not been tempered or merciful. Their response has been to destroy every perceived supernatural threat they have come across, regardless of who or what it is.

I have seen hedge wizards in small villages—men and women who only made it rain for their



communities, or helped to comfort the sick—cut down or shot dead where they stood, or as they ran away in terror. I have seen clashes between the Ordo and your own White Council, with casualties on both sides. I have seen my own comrades—supernatural beings no longer—murdered for the knowledge they had, knowledge deemed to be dangerous and forbidden.

This is not to say that the Ordo is evil, though they have done—and continue to do—evil things. They kill those who would prey on the weak and innocent as well. They work against those who would take Chichen Itza, for they know the power contained there and what would happen should it fall into the wrong hands.

But they are indiscriminate. They kill without mercy or hesitation, and they believe every murder to be a righteous act. They fight for the right cause, but they do so blindly and without thought to the cost. They are dangerous, but I fear they may be necessary, too.

The White Court

We have been watching the White Court's movements within Las Tierras Rojas, and what we see puzzles us. They have not yet made a move for either Chichen Itza or for control over mortal society. In fact, they have not even strengthened their position within the continent. There is a token presence of White Court vampires—one or two in each city, sometimes as many as three, but rarely more than that.

They behave much as one would expect a White Court vampire to behave, but something is different. They seem watchful, as if they are waiting for something or looking for something. Their victims, too, seem to be specifically targeted, though I cannot detect a pattern.

This behavior worries me to no end because I do not understand it. Something in Las Tierras Rojas is keeping them here, but it is not what the Red Court left behind. I do not trust these vampires. I must find out what they are hiding, what they are looking for.

These guys sound an awful lot like the Wardens.

I noticed that, too. Lots with the "chop now, ask questions never" mentality.

Guys, do you think that a Warden might at some point read this book?

Oh. Right. Yeah, maybe we should leave this part out.

I wouldn't worry. If Morgan was any indication, I'm not sure Wardens read all that much.

If the Whites are that intent on hiding their goals, she's going to get herself killed investigating them.

Yeah, I know. I tried to talk her out of it when I read this letter but I have no idea if it worked.

What? How can you not know?

Ever try to argue your point through snail mail? The only contact info I have is the return address on her envelopes, and I don't even know if she's there anymore. I've done what I can but...

Yeah, OK. I hope she got your letter. I hope she listened.



Themes and Threats

These words are mine, not Alejandra's. I've taken some of the stuff from Alejandra's letters that suggested particular themes and threats and put it below. There's some pretty solid stuff to work from in there. I've extrapolated a bit and filled in some of the game-relevant stuff where appropriate, too.

Crime and Politics

Theme: Blood in the Streets, Money in Their Pockets

Las Tierras Rojas has no shortage of supernatural predators running around threatening to kill huge numbers of people to get what they want. The thing is, there have always been predators in these areas, and not all of them are of the supernatural variety.

Drug cartels peddle their poisons, exploiting peoples' weaknesses to line their pockets. Gangs in inner cities sell those drugs, getting them out to the people who use them. The police may get a few drug dealers off the streets, but they make their way right back out there or are replaced as quickly as they're arrested. On the less seedy—but no less shady—side of things, violent revolutions lead to corrupt despots who oppress their people.

This kind of thing has been going on for decades, even centuries, and the Red Court's destruction hasn't changed that one bit. This stuff still goes on like nothing's changed, and these are the problems that the people living in Las Tierras Rojas have to deal with on a regular basis.

To a lot of people, not much has changed—at least, not yet. Maybe things have intensified, maybe they've gotten a little bit worse, but largely it seems like the same bad guys doing the same bad things. It's good to remind the PCs of this from time to time. Yes, there are Very Bad Things™ happening out there in the dark, but there have always been bad things happening. Just because the big supernatural threats are rearing their ugly heads doesn't mean you get to ignore the more mundane dangers right in front of you.

Enormous Power Vacuum

Threat: Everyone Wants to Be King

Most governments, organizations, and groups of any size have contingencies for emergency succession—a vice-president, a plan for choosing

interim personnel, a special election, etc. It may be shocking to be faced with actually implementing those plans, but it's generally an orderly process because there's a system in place.

There was no system in place for what happened in Las Tierras Rojas. The Reds were in charge for a good long time, and they were *in charge*. They controlled or influenced virtually everything, and there was no safeguard in place in case they should all be wiped out at once. Such a thing was simply inconceivable.You keep using that word. I do not think it means what you think it means.

Now that the Red Court is gone, there are enormous shoes to fill. Sure, they used to be filled by horrible, disgusting, monstrous feet. But still. Big. And those shoes want to be filled. They say that nature abhors a vacuum, but politics hates one even more. Plus those shoes are really, really nice. Everyone wants them. Everyone thinks they'd look great in those shoes.

Okay, it's possible I pushed the shoe metaphor a little too far. But still, my point is valid—everyone wants what the Red Court left behind, and that vacuum wants to be filled. This threat can hammer that home to the PCs, either by using it to complicate their lives with all sorts of enemies or by tempting them with that power.

Supernatural Ground Zero

Threat: Supernatural Ground Zero

No one should be surprised that Harry was the guy responsible for maybe the largest single act of violence in supernatural history. In one fell swoop, he destroyed an entire race of beings *and* unintentionally primed a gigantic, scary well of power. No wonder people all over the world had vivid, terrifying nightmares unlike any they had before.

It's safe to say that it got everyone's attention.

People all over the world are watching Las Tierras Rojas very closely right now. On the supernatural side of the fence, you've got all sorts of power groups wondering how they can exploit the current situation to their advantage, new power groups cropping up in the wake of the Red Court's destruction, and other groups—like the Fellowship—trying to put out fires as best as they can.

On the mortal side, people know something big is happening. They may not have a clear idea of what, but people know that things are different today than they were three months ago. Between mass disappearances, dead bodies, and bad dreams, people are spooked. And, as we all know, when people are spooked, they do stupid stuff. They panic. They make mistakes.

From a gameplay perspective, this threat means that conflict can break out literally anywhere, at the drop of a hat. It means that people and creatures from all over the world can be seen in Las Tierras Rojas looking to cash in. And it means that ancient beings thought to be long dead are resurfacing, looking to take back what they see as rightfully theirs. For a GM, it's a license to drop all sorts of things in the players' laps; just be sure to give them some fate points for their trouble.

Another thing to keep in mind is that Las Tierras Rojas is highly charged with supernatural energy right now. It's not just Chichen Itza, though that's where most of it is. Those ley lines travel all over the region, and the sheer number of powerful beings in the area is bolstering that energy. It's possible that an enterprising player character could tap into that power by invoking this threat. Heck, it might even be a good way to add sponsored magic to a PC.



So it should be pretty clear by now that there are lots of players looking to grab whatever power they can. But there are also some people who want to prevent things from spiraling out of control (like the Fellowship), and a few groups who seem to want to remain neutral during the whole thing.

I'll let Alejandra fill you in on the details.



He certainly did. **Does.** We will **not** talk about him in the past tense.

Who's Who in Las Tierras Rojas

The Keepers

Have you heard of the *Custodes Secreta*, Mr. Dresden? I would be surprised if you had. They are one of the White Council's dirty little secrets and, from what I understand, the White Council does not share its secrets easily. I hear that you have a way of surprising people, though.

From what I understand, the Custodes Secreta—Keepers of Secrets, from the Latin—is an organization within the White Council that has come and gone throughout the years. Most of the time, they are not needed; sometimes, however, members of the Council are inducted into this organization as it is re-formed for a specific purpose. This happened recently, near the beginning of the Council's war with the Red Court.

When the White Council needs spies, they call upon the Keepers. Typically made up of wizards with talents for secrecy and duplicity, the Keepers gather desperately needed information on a particular group or area of the world when normal channels will not suffice. The group is usually made up of younger wizards who don't yet have names for themselves and who operate freely without great fear of being recognized by their enemies.

According to our last updates, Lara Raith still has scary amounts of information.

You may ask how I know this when you do not, and this is a fair question. I did not seek this information. Rather, it sought me out. I was contacted three years ago by a man named Mitchel Blanchard, though I do not think that was his real name. Blanchard approached me in order to gain a contact within the Fellowship of St. Giles so that we might share information about the Red Court. While I would not say that we trusted each other, I will say that we came to rely upon each others' information and assistance.

I learned a great deal about the war from Blanchard, but I also learned a great deal about his own organization. Much of this is guesswork. I read between the lines and made leaps of logic that may or may not prove to be factual, but I

believe that this is mostly true and I believe that it is important.

Shortly after the start of what you call the Vampire War, the Keepers were re-formed and sent to Las Tierras Rojas to gather intelligence on the Red Court. They were to observe and report back only; they did so for at least two years.

Eventually, though, they grew dissatisfied with their passive role. Whether this was because they could not bear to see the suffering of the people, or because they became inspired by the actions of the Fellowship, or because they simply saw an opportunity, the Keepers began to take a more active part in the war. They started planting misinformation, performing assassination and sabotage missions, and even confronting vampires directly. What they did was necessary and right.

The White Council did not agree, deeming the Keepers' actions to be too risky. When the Blackstaff (who they supposedly reported to) found out what they were doing, he severed all ties between the Keepers and the Council, disavowing them entirely. This was the first time they had been contacted directly by the Blackstaff; up until this point, their main point of contact had been a wizard named Peabody, who had given them most of their missions. Peabody, like the rest of the Council, eventually turned his back on the Keepers as well.

The last time I spoke with Blanchard was three months ago when the Red Court was destroyed. With our common enemy gone, our arrangement came to an end. I suspect, however, that the members of the Keepers will not be welcomed back into the folds of the White Council with open arms. As you know, the White Council is not forgiving of perceived transgressions. It is entirely likely that the Keepers continue to operate in Las Tierras Rojas secretly for whatever purpose they deem appropriate. I do not know what this purpose could be, but I hope they are still around, and I hope they are still listening to the plight of the people here. Too few are.

The Old Gods

This is perhaps nothing more than rumor. I have first-hand knowledge of a number of the groups mentioned in this letter, but of these beings I have only whispers and tales, and possibly little more than the lies of a former enemy. If it is true, however, this presents the most frightening of the various possibilities for our future, and it is for this reason that I mention it.

When they were still a power in South America, the Inca conquered many people with many varying religious beliefs. Rather than try to erase the pantheons of their subjects, the Inca simply incorporated these pantheons into their own. This kept their subjects happy and it minimized the threat of rebellion. For the most part, this practice did not threaten the Inca or the larger world, but there was at least one instance where it did.

A little while ago, Thomas was looking over these letters. When he got to this part he made some excuse and left really quickly. When I checked, this page was missing from Alejandra's letters. Weird, huh?

He took the page with him? How'd you get it back?

I didn't. I asked him for it later, but he pretended he had no idea what I was talking about. I'd already transcribed it anyway, so I didn't press the matter. Something definitely spooked him. There's something in this letter that he didn't want published.

YEAH... MAYBE DON'T GIVE HIM A COPY OF THE BOOK.

How does she even know... The existence of the Blackstaff isn't a total secret. Just his identity. At any rate, you'll want to cut this out of the next draft, Will.

WAIT A MINUTE...PEABODY? *THAT* PEABODY? HE WAS CONTROLLING THE KEEPERS?

I can't be sure that it's the same Peabody, but it seems likely. If it is, that's potentially huge; who knows what kind of damage he could have done through the Keepers in the name of the Council?



What I tell you next I learned from a woman named Lisa Sterling. I trusted her absolutely when she was still alive. She learned it from a much less trustworthy source, a captured Red Court spy. They interrogated the creature for quite some time before disposing of it, and most of the information they learned seemed to be of little to no real value. The thing did not break despite the techniques used, a fact that both disturbs and impresses me. Lisa told me this because she found it interesting and amusing from a purely intellectual perspective, not because she thought it held any relevance or import. Now though, I think it may. Now I wish she were here to recount this herself.

There was a tribe conquered by the Inca who worshipped gods that were very real—these gods walked among the people of this tribe and ruled them directly. They granted boons to the faithful and they protected their people, but they were cruel gods who demanded regular sacrifice. Their people were little more than tools and chattel to them, to use and discard at their whim.

When the Inca conquered this tribe—whose name has been lost to time—their gods *allowed* it to happen. It's likely they did this because they knew that they would become a part of a larger pantheon and thus gain more worshippers and power. As their influence grew, so did their potency, but it was not to last.

The Red Court soon infiltrated the Inca, posed as their gods, and usurped the entire pantheon just as they had the Maya. Already very powerful and much more numerous than these old gods—who numbered thirteen—they were able to capture them and bind them. The vampires drank of the blood of these gods and kept them alive so that they might continue to do so. The Red Court averted what could have been a catastrophic event but, in so doing, engineered their rise to power. This event, it turned out, was not much better for the people of South America.

The spy told Lisa that this was how the Lords of Outer Night gained a large portion of their power, leeching it from the blood of gods. I suspect the spy did not think that she would believe its words, that those words would buy it time, prolonging its existence a little bit longer. So it played Scheherazade, feeding its captors lies and half-truths and fanciful tales that nobody would believe.

But now the Red Court is gone and rumors are starting to circulate. Last month, I took shelter in a village in Peru. The people were secretive and quiet, and wanted me gone as soon as the rainstorm died down. One night I followed one of them and saw a religious ceremony unlike any I had ever seen before. The people chanted the name "Supay" and sacrificed a woman, cutting out her heart. I…she died before I could do anything. I left the village. I wanted to come back with help, to find this village again and burn it to the ground. When I tried…I failed.

I do not know that I believe that these old gods ever existed, much less that they're coming back. I do not think the possibility can be ignored outright, though. If they are coming back, it's likely that they will try to regain the power stolen by the Lords of Outer Night. If they are successful, then God help us all.

According to Wikipedia, Supay was a god of the Inca, connected to death and a race of demons.

Oh. Great. Because we don't have enough problems.



Manco Capac

There is another legendary figure of the Inca who seems to be returning in the wake of the Red Court's destruction. Our information is still primarily based on rumor and hearsay, although it is much more certain than the return of the old gods. It is also, however, less troubling—though only slightly.

Manco Capac (page 161) founded the Inca civilization in the 12th century. According to legend, he was the child of the sun god Inti and the moon goddess Mama Quilla, and he ruled the Inca for nearly forty years. He conquered other civilizations, made laws, and is thought to have abolished human sacrifice. He wielded considerable supernatural power and carried a golden staff.

I do not think Manco Capac was the son of a god. I believe he was a wizard meddling in mortal affairs. Whether he was a member of the White Council or not, I do not know. The more I learn about Capac, the more I believe that I am correct that he actually lived and was a wizard with power close to the levels of those on the Senior Council. Further, I believe that he is still alive and still meddling.

Harry always says that Council members—especially the powerful ones—aren't supposed to do this.

Yeah. And this wasn't just meddling. If Alejandra's right, Capac used his power and knowledge to found an entire kingdom that lasted nearly three hundred years. That's pretty major.

That said, I have serious doubts about her theory.

In southern Peru, near Quispicanchi, there is a high concentration of those skilled with magic. Until very recently, they have been secretive and have kept a low profile. However, reports from Fellowship members in the area indicate that, recently, practitioners have been displaying their powers more and more overtly. Further, it is becoming clear that these practitioners are working in concert and toward some goal. Their leader is a man named Aucapoma, who claims to be the reincarnation of Manco Capac.

I do not believe him to be the reincarnation of Manco Capac; I believe him to be the same individual. I know that wizards can live a very long time, and Capac disappeared shortly after the Inca were founded. It is possible during this time he was running from the White Council, who may have branded him as a criminal for what he had done.

I have told the White Council about Capac, to no avail. I have sent them missives asking them to investigate, to see if Capac means harm. I do not—the Fellowship does not—have the resources to investigate Capac when so many other, more potent threats are everywhere. Capac may mean to take the power left at Chichen Itza for himself. On the other hand, he may want to prevent others from doing the same thing. This is the problem: we do not know.

The White Court

The White Court of vampires seems to have a presence in Las Tierras Rojas, but it is not a considerably strong one. Some of them have been seen in Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires as well as in La Costanera; these are places one would expect to see their kind, but one would expect larger numbers than are present. It does not seem to be a truly organized presence; I have heard nothing of the White Court buying businesses or infiltrating the criminal underworld.

Stranger still, my sources say that these vampires seem to be waiting for something. They are never seen in groups larger than two or three at a time and they often do nothing but observe, then disappear.

The White King is clearly not trying to fill the void left by the Red Court; however, he must be interested in something in Las Tierras Rojas for these sightings to make any sense. I doubt that he would ever send agents down into such a dangerous and volatile area to no purpose, so there must be one. What it is I cannot say, but I do not trust these vampires any more than the ones who were destroyed.

I asked Thomas about this. He was pretty evasive. I pressed him a little and I got a "mind your own business" look that, umm, encouraged me to drop it.

I don't like it. I'll see if I can convince him to say something.

Yeah, good luck with that. He hasn't exactly been talkative lately.

Making bargains with the fae? Isn't that a pretty bad idea?

yeah. Pretty bad.

What kinds of... uh...sacrifices do you think these Apu asked for?

oh, the usual. your happiness, ten years from your life, your first born child. That kind of thing.

Maybe a chain of Kwik-E-Marts?

I still remember what happened when Winter and Summer were out of balance with that whole Stone Table thing. If a whole new Court arrived overnight...

The Fae

The Andes are home to a fae kingdom known as the Apu. The Inca and other people used to worship the Apu as mountain gods. Each Apu was associated with its own mountain, rock, or cave, and the people often brought the Apu sacrifices in exchange for favors.

The Apu still live in the Andes and are still protecting their home mountains from those who would threaten them. However, while they used to be content to stay in the mountains and receive the occasional sacrifice from people who still believe in them, now they are taking a more active role in the world.

People have reported strange creatures in the mountains quite a lot of late. I've even heard rumors of "ogres" coming down out of the mountains to walk through the lowlands, heading north. I can only assume that the destruction of the Red Court has emboldened these creatures that used to fear the vampires and that they have designs on the power that the vampires left behind at Chichen Itza. I do not need to tell you, Mr. Dresden, that such a thing could upset the balance of power within the spirit world. Imagine if a new Faerie Court were to come into existence tomorrow.

The Apu are not the only group of fae in Las Tierras Rojas with designs on that power, though. When the Spanish conquistadors came to the Americas, they brought many of their legends with them. More than that, though, they brought with them the Anjana—most likely as stowaways on ships. These creatures are Spanish fae, though they are not the same as the Anjana of Spain. Not anymore.

The Anjana of Spain are kind creatures. They are small and beautiful and they protect those who need protecting. They are even said to bring poor children presents around Christmas from time to time. The Anjana of Las Tierras Rojas, however, have been subjected to the rule of the Red Court and have had to adapt. They are fierce, beautiful creatures, and they still take on the role of protector. Their vengeance toward those who would harm those they protect, however, is swift and merciless. They can be difficult to appease.

The Anjana, like the Apu, have been seen in public more frequently of late. They, too, seem to be looking for a way to profit from recent events. More than this, now that the threat of the Red Court is gone, they are looking for other enemies to unleash their vengeance upon. Not long ago, a man was murdered in his home after a shouting match with his wife. The woman said that a small child with wings like a butterfly had appeared in the house and slain her husband with vicious claws that came from her fingers. The Anjana are looking for enemies—and they are finding them too frequently. If they gained the kind of power the Red Court had, imagine the chaos that would result. Who would they perceive as a threat? Where would their vengeance stop?



The Ordo Torca

The events of Chichen Itza created a beacon drawing supernatural creatures from all over the world, tempting them to try to take a piece of what the Red Court left behind. This has in turn created a highly volatile situation that is somewhat more overt to the casual observer—a brewing supernatural war has made the supernatural more apparent. Common folk on the street know that something is going on, something that they cannot fully explain. Disappearances and strange murders are more common and rumors circulate everywhere about monsters in the streets, in the jungle, and everywhere else.

Little wonder, then, that the Church sent a group of exterminators to investigate.

Put bluntly, the Ordo Torca was formed when it was believed that the Ordo Malleus was not doing enough with its Inquisition. The Church needed people to investigate claims of the supernatural—people with some knowledge of the occult who would destroy it without remorse or compassion. The Ordo took as its symbol the torch—a tool that could be used to both illuminate and to purge with cleansing fire.

Because purges, atrocities, and torture are kinda weaksauce.

Ah, yes. Now I see How very... medieval Europe.



Over the years the Ordo Torca has become more secretive but no less active. The Church is well aware of the existence of supernatural threats; if the Knights of the Cross are God's answer to those threats, the Ordo Torca is man's.

There have been agents of the Ordo Torca in Las Tierras Rojas for some time, watching the Red Court, looking for weaknesses. The vampires' destruction was an enormous shock to the Ordo and to the Church at large, but they recovered quickly. The Church knew that the Ordo would be needed in Las Tierras Rojas more now than ever—they sent more agents to strengthen their position.

Initially the Ordo was under orders to observe and report back to the Church and to intervene only when absolutely necessary. Recently, however, those orders have changed. Las Tierras Rojas is reaching a boiling point and a full-scale supernatural war may soon occur. The Ordo's current task is to stop this from happening by any means necessary.

Let me repeat that—*by any means necessary*.

The Ordo Torca is a group of highly skilled, highly trained, well-equipped soldiers with just enough knowledge of the supernatural to be truly dangerous. They resemble a paramilitary group more than they resemble a branch of the Church, though every member is chosen based on the depth of his devotion as much as for his skill at arms. In the service of their cause, they are not afraid to do things that most people would find morally reprehensible. Like any creation of man, the Ordo is imperfect. They believe that the ends always justify the means, even when those means are as monstrous as the creatures they fight.

I do not mean to paint them as villains. The Ordo has done much to aid Las Tierras Rojas in this dark and dangerous time. They are sometimes indiscriminate in who is sacrificed on the altar of peace, but peace is truly their goal. They believe their holy mission is to stop Las Tierras Rojas from spiraling into chaos; they will do what they must to ensure their success.

The Fellowship of St. Giles



We are not the force we once were.

Even before your actions in Chichen Itza we could not have been called a strong presence in the supernatural world, Mr. Dresden. However, we were effective, even formidable, when we had time to prepare and gather intelligence before fighting our enemies. Our strengths were always our commitment, our agility, and our ability to learn the weaknesses of those more powerful. Though we have lost much of our agility, our commitment and ability to learn are as strong today as they were before. But still we are diminished.

On the day you destroyed the Red King and his minions, you took from us our greatest curse. For many, though, that curse was keeping us alive. This is true figuratively and literally. Our curse drove us, it kept us fighting when others would have given up or been driven mad by the sheer impossibility of the task laid before them. But in a very real, very literal sense, the vampire blood in our veins kept most of us alive long after our bodies should have died—that was not the case for me, but it was for many of my comrades and friends.

Even before the Red Court's destruction, many of my brothers and sisters were slain by the vampires' agents because of one of our own members' betrayal. In a heartbeat, the vast majority of the remaining Fellowship of St. Giles died of old age. Our most skilled agents, the ones with the most experience and the strongest control over their vampire natures, are… gone.

Many of my friends died that night. They did not know it was coming and they could do nothing to fight it. I could do nothing. They simply died.

The remnants of the Fellowship still wish to fight, but many are far too old to be of any use in the field. Men and women who, a day before, were ready to stand up against the vampires coming to kill them—now can no longer dress themselves, much less defend themselves. Those who remain—the young, the inexperienced—face a choice: continue the fight or disappear and live the mortal life so many of us craved.

I feel I must explain something to you, Mr. Dresden, though I think you may understand already. For ten years, my curse was my purpose. I lived for the belief that one day it would end—if not for me, then for others like me. I relied upon my curse, turning a violation beyond imagining into a strength, using it to fight those who had inflicted it upon me. Now it is gone, but my eyes are open and I cannot close them. I see what many others, the White Council included, do not see. I see what you may be completely unaware of. I see that there are powerful forces arrayed against humanity and that we need help. Someone must act, but I fear that the Fellowship does not have the strength to do so on its own.

I chose to stay, as did many others. Still, the Fellowship is currently around twelve percent of its former strength from a purely numerical standpoint. From the perspective of experience and power, we are far weaker. We are now made up of inexperienced field agents led by aged advisors. Our vampiric powers—while they were a curse that we are glad to be rid of—are gone and we are all still coping with that loss. Supernatural strength, speed, and endurance are powerful tools in the fight against those who would corrupt or destroy mortals. To lose them is difficult. As much as I hated it, I would gladly take my curse back if it would help me fight those arrayed against us.

What we do not lack is commitment. We lack numbers, we lack experience, and we lack equipment most of the time; but we are more committed to our cause than ever, even with the Red Court gone. Three months ago, the Red Court was the greatest threat in Las Tierras Rojas. They were a supernatural plague, subjugating the mortal populace without mercy or remorse. And they are gone.

What remains in their wake is not the monolithic threat that the vampires posed. Instead, we have many smaller threats, all scrabbling for the power left behind at Chichen Itza. If any one of these powers succeeds, there is the very real chance that things will be just as bad as before—if not worse. If too many try at once, a war could break out that would threaten to envelop the entire continent—if not the entire world.

We must do what we can to protect those who cannot protect themselves. Though we do not have the power to do so on our own, we know how to gather intelligence and create opportunities. We know how to exploit weaknesses and create new ones. We have no illusions of being David, defeating Goliath against all odds. But with support, with the aid of the White Council, we may be able to make a difference.

These guys would make pretty good PCs, huh?

Yeah, definitely. In fact, Alejandra is one of the suggested PCs in this chapter.

Other Powers

The White Council

The White Council has a token presence in Las Tierras Rojas, but not the presence we need. There is a small contingent of Wardens guarding Chichen Itza, but not nearly enough to hold off any kind of serious assault. There are also a few wizards—most notably a wizard named Lucius von Trappe—who reside just outside of Chichen Itza, ostensibly there to study the effects of so many immortal (as well as mortal) beings dying in such close proximity to a conjunction of ley lines.

Not enough is being done. The Council is still weak from the war with the vampires and I am aware that they have other concerns in other parts of the world, but somebody needs to head off the chaos that is sure to start very soon. If not the White Council, then who?

The Faerie Courts

The Andes have traditionally been a stronghold of the Winter Court while the Amazon has belonged to Summer. There are areas, such as Gran Chaco, that they have fought over for centuries. These two powers, however, have been staying out of the conflict that is building in Las Tierras Rojas and I cannot determine to what end. The fact that neither seems interested in Chichen Itza unsettles me. The fact that they both seem content to let two unaligned nations of Faerie pursue such a prize unsettles me further.

I like this woman. She's my kind of crazy.

I thought you might. This whole situation sounds a little familiar, doesn't it?

Yeah, a little.

Except multiplied by like, a thousand.

At least.

The Black Court

The vampires of the Black Court have always existed here, particularly in Bolivia. With the Red Court in power they kept a low profile. While the two courts were often allies, the Red Court did not tolerate overt Black Court control within their territory. The Black Court vampires, therefore, were relegated to hunting in isolated, rural communities and in very large cities.

With the Red Court gone, the Black Court is becoming more brazen. I have heard stories about entire villages ruled over by Black Court despots who have turned the citizens into little more than slaves and chattel. They are foul creatures who should be destroyed on sight. However, they are a minor threat in comparison to many other groups and they have not yet shown interest in Chichen Itza. For now we must focus on other enemies.

Isn't that what the Red Court did, too?

Does that make it better somehow?

Point.

Although Alejandra talks a lot about the power groups above, she acknowledges that they're not the only ones making waves in Las Tierras Rojas—they're just making the biggest waves. She briefly mentions about half a dozen other players in the area.

Pretty much everyone, no matter how powerful, wants a piece of what the Red Court left behind. That power vacuum is awfully tempting and lots of people are making plays for it, even if they don't really have the manpower to spare.

For a GM, this means that it makes sense for just about any power group from anywhere in the world to have a presence in Las Tierras Rojas. For a player, it means that there are plenty of reasons for characters from all over the world to be here. Go nuts.

Summer vs. Winter

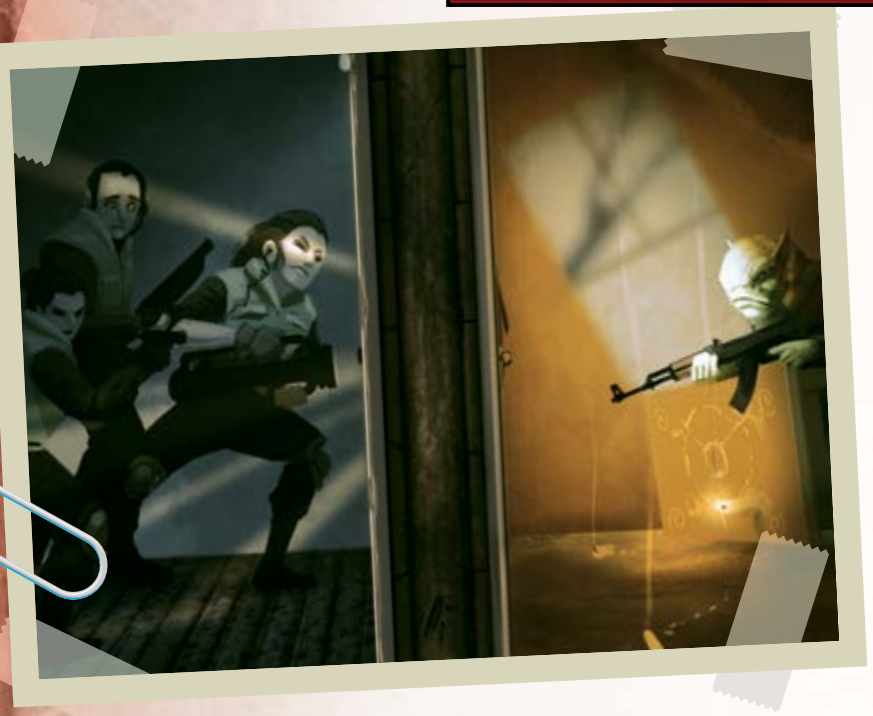
After reading what Alejandra wrote about Winter and Summer and their lack of involvement, I did some research, asked around a bit, and I found out some interesting stuff.

Summer, and to a lesser extent Winter, has always had some influence over Las Tierras Rojas, especially in the wilder areas. But they're so preoccupied with blocking each other that they're not paying a whole lot of attention to what's happening with most of the people of Las Tierras Rojas—this means they've paid little attention to the machinations of the Red Court, or to the abrupt lack of such machinations.

The primary exception is individual fae who may interact with people in some of the remote regions of Las Tierras Rojas, especially in remote communities where you might find young Changelings.

Meanwhile, other parties—including these two groups of wyldfae that Alejandra mentions—are swooping in and trying to steal power right out from underneath them.

From a gameplay perspective this means that Summer- or Winter-aligned characters are fair game, but they're unlikely to receive much support from their respective Courts. Another possibility is that these two groups of wyldfae are, themselves, aligned with the Courts. It's easy to imagine that they're catspaws to affect some sort of end-run around the Unseelie Accords. Yeah, the Sidhe would never do that, would they?



You know, it occurs to me that a clued-in cop, soldier, or criminal might make a really cool PC.

Good call, Butters. I'll be sure to include one or two.

"CLUED-IN COP," HUH? WILL, AM I A SUGGESTED PLAYER CHARACTER IN OUR WORLD?

Um...maybe? I, uh, can't really remember right now.

REMEMBER QUICKLY. I DO NOT LIKE THE IDEA OF SOMEONE ELSE CHOOSING MY ACTIONS FOR ME.

But it's just a game! Right, Butters?

Don't look at me, man. You're on your own on this one.

The Mortal Authorities

The mortal authorities know just enough to be a dangerous element in an already volatile situation. Murders, disappearances, and violent crimes are on the rise, and the discovery of a huge number of corpses in Chichen Itza has both local police and national militaries on edge. Their response has been to increase their vigilance and to react to every threat with extreme force. Martial law has come down and is enforced. There is no flexibility, no room for error.

This has had a number of disastrous effects. First, it makes it more difficult for the Fellowship to move around and do our work. Second, police and military casualties are at their highest ever. This is partially because they are frequently encountering creatures that they do not have the experience or equipment to take on. However, the third effect is that the mortal criminal element—gangs, cartels, and so forth—are pushing back, contributing to the high casualty rate.

A war between mortal authorities and mortal criminals may be much less significant than the war between supernatural power groups that is likely to take place, but it is by no means insignificant. Violence frequently erupts in the streets and both sides often interfere with the supernatural element. Many Fellowship operations have been disrupted because of this and a distressingly high number of innocents have been killed as a result of mortal violence.

Alejandra speaks a lot in her letters about specific people she's been keeping an eye on or has had contact with; I've grabbed all the relevant stuff and put it below, along with some stat blocks. Some of these are pretty much guesswork, while some of it is based on other notes that Alejandra included. There are a lot of interesting folks down in Las Tierras Rojas, representing a wide variety of interests.

Individuals

Alejandra Castillo

Suggested Player Character

Determined Fellowship Agent

Motivation: People are in danger. Something *must* be done.

First and foremost, Alejandra is a woman with the weight of the world on her shoulders. She's driven to do what she believes is right, and any time she falls short of that mark she takes it as a failure. I think she's often rather hard on herself.

Alejandra is driven by some powerful emotions that come from some intense situations. She hides those emotions as best she can; she believes that her emotions are a liability, and relying on them too much or letting them influence her decisions will get people killed.

Spending ten years of her life infected with Red Court vampirism has significantly colored her viewpoint. She hates—I mean *hates*—supernatural predators of any kind. When they're preying on those who can't defend themselves, she feels compelled to step in and stop them.

The problem is that she's no longer as capable of doing that as she used to be. She hated her infection and what it did to her, but she relied on it more than a little. Superhuman strength, speed, senses, and toughness are pretty freaking useful when you're fighting things that go bump, and losing access to that has had some serious effects on Alejandra's personality and sense of self-worth. I think she's realized that she was addicted to her curse in a way, and now that she's "sober," she doesn't know exactly how to cope.

For all that, though, she's still extremely capable. She's in fantastic physical shape, and even without vampiric super-powers she's stronger, faster, and tougher than your average mortal. She also has a depth of experience most people lack; the Fellowship has a lot of intel on a lot of supernatural bad guys, not just the vampires. Alejandra's been a member of the Fellowship of St. Giles for a little over ten years and she's currently one of their top agents; she's probably one of the most knowledgeable people about the spooky side of things in Las Tierras Rojas today.

One final note: she's not crazy about the White Council. She feels that they're aloof, overly bureaucratic, and don't do enough to help people in the world. She respects Harry because he bucks that trend, and because he destroyed her most-hated enemy. However, she's also cognizant that he may have created a worse situation in doing so and she feels that he should take responsibility for his actions. Ultimately, that's why she wrote these letters: to show Harry that his actions had consequences, and in the hope that Harry—and by extension, the White Council—will do something about it.

Campaign Idea: The Remnants

Alejandra could be the focal point of a campaign built around what's left of the Fellowship of St. Giles. Few remain and many of those who survived are too old to do much more than advise, but there are still a few able-bodied, dedicated Fellowship agents kicking around. In this campaign setup, the Fellowship realizes they're in a vulnerable position and surrounded by people—and creatures—who would think nothing of snuffing them out in order to achieve their goals. They've gone underground, even more so than they were before.

The modern Fellowship operates as a distributed network of independent cells, each with a small team of operatives and a few more experienced advisors. They plan missions—rescues, strikes against monster lairs, recon, and so forth—and carry them out as best they can without any powers.

What they do have is a lot of knowledge and intel about the supernatural world, a lot of contacts they can call upon when needed, and a drive to succeed or die trying. Imagine something like Leverage but with vampires and other assorted beasties instead of the rich and powerful. The Fellowship are the ones who look out for the little guy, who stick up for the disenfranchised, who protect those nobody else is protecting.



You really think you can suss out her personality from some letters she wrote?

Hey, I took some psychology classes in college! Just not as many as Georgia...

I'm rolling my eyes at you right now.



While Alejandra talks a lot about other people, she doesn't say much about herself. I've already told you a little bit about her background (page 167); here are my impressions of what kind of person she is based on everything she's written. The statblock is almost entirely guesswork, though I'm pretty sure some of the aspects hit close to the mark.

Alejandra Castillo

High Concept
Fellowship of St. Giles Agent

Trouble
My Curse Is Gone, But With It My Strength

Other Aspects
Protect the Innocent
Unwavering Resolve
Emotions Are a Liability
Red Court Infected Survivor
Talented Fighter

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Contacts:	Average	(+1)
Conviction:	Average	(+1)
Deceit:	Fair	(+2)
Discipline:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Guns:	Good	(+3)
Intimidation:	Average	(+1)
Investigation:	Fair	(+2)
Lore:	Superb	(+5)
Presence:	Average	(+1)
Resources:	Average	(+1)
Stealth:	Fair	(+2)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Redirected Force (Fists): On a successful defense roll using Fists against close-combat attacks, Alejandra may sacrifice her next action to treat the defense as a successful maneuver, placing a temporary aspect such as Thrown to the Ground on her attacker.

Extensive Training (Fists): Alejandra may use her Fists skill instead of Weapons to wield a variety of close combat weaponry: short clubs, staves, katana/bokken, and the like.

No Pain, No Gain (Endurance): Alejandra can take a bunch of punishment before it starts to add up. She may take an additional mild physical consequence.

Tough Stuff (Endurance): The blunt trauma of fists, sticks, and stones pose little trouble for Alejandra. She has natural **Armor:1** (which stacks with any other form of protection she might gain). This does not apply to things like blades, bullets, or burns.

Fellowship Training (Lore): Alejandra gains +1 to Lore when using it to identify supernatural threats. Increase this bonus to +2 when using Lore to identify signs of the Red Court.

This was part of the Tattoos of St. Giles power (YS190), and it covered the mundane training someone got when they joined the order. The magic in the tattoos left with the infection, so this is just a mortal stunt now.

With the magic gone, what happened to the tattoos? Are they gone completely or are they permanently visible now?

Alejandra never mentioned anything about it. I'll ask next time I write her.

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OOOO
	+1 mild consequence
	Armor:1 (vs. blunt attacks Only)
Social	OO

Notes
Good Initiative, Great attacks with Fists, Great defenses, and Good attacks with Guns. Alejandra is very knowledgeable of the supernatural world. She carries an assortment of weapons to satisfy the Catch of the most common supernatural threats in Las Tierras Rojas.

Total Refresh Cost: -3
(Pure Mortal)

Mitchel Blanchard

Suggested Player Character
Embittered Keepers Agent
Motivation: Information is how I will prove my worth to the Council.

Mitchel Blanchard first approached me in Buenos Aires. He asked for the time, which I gave him; five minutes later I noticed a note in my pocket. The note told me to meet him at the Obelisk at midnight if I wanted some valuable information. I had heard that the Red Court was planning something significant, a powerful ritual, and I was in Buenos Aires to meet a White Court contact who I thought might have information on their intentions. Blanchard's note, it turned out, offered me a…more palatable option.

He waited for me at the base of the Obelisk, a tall thin man with nondescript features wearing nondescript clothing. If it had been the middle of the day and a crowd had been assembled, it's unlikely I even would have noticed him. Because we were meeting at midnight, when he was the only one present, I had no trouble recognizing the man who had asked me for the time.

Blanchard turned out to be a valuable source of information. He is an agent of the Custodes Secreta, the Keepers of Secrets; he believed that sharing intelligence with the Fellowship of St. Giles was the best way to combat the Red Court menace.

Blanchard is a man of commitment. He is intelligent, driven, and very easy to underestimate. He uses this last trait to his advantage often—because he is so nondescript, he is easy to overlook. He augments this effect with his magic: he is capable of vanishing from sight entirely, and I have seen him change his appearance with a moment's concentration as well. This is how he moves about unnoticed, how he finds the secrets he collects.

I saw him in combat only once. We were meeting at the Obelisk, but the Red Court must have gotten wind of the meeting. They sent three vampires to kill us, and they very nearly succeeded. Blanchard told me later that he has very little aptitude for combat magic. He can call upon air magic when he needs to, but direct attacks are not his forte. Instead he prefers to use misdirection and deceit. His ability to turn invisible and create convincing illusions allowed him to turn his enemies against each other; two of the vampires were dead at the third vampire's claws. Its confusion made it easy for me to finish off in a more direct fashion.



This sounds familiar for some reason. Are we sure there's not already a game about this?

No, I'm pretty sure we're good.

Okay...

Campaign Idea: Shadow Play

Ever wanted to play a spy thriller where the spies were all magical types? Mitchel Blanchard is your guy, then. Blanchard is a spy, make no mistake, just like all of the Keepers are spies. It's easy to imagine a campaign where the players are Keeper agents or assets, working in the shadows, ferreting out secrets, and using information, misdirection, and subterfuge to accomplish their goals.

A campaign like this needs mysteries to solve, tense chases, secret meetings, double-agents, the works. Punctuate investigative scenes and clue-gathering with action beats to keep the tension high, and make sure the players never know who their allies are and who their enemies are. The world of a spy is a wilderness of mirrors, the world of a magical spy doubly so. Imagine a spy story where people can use magic to alter their appearance, eavesdrop from a distance, communicate silently, and disappear from sight entirely.

Mitchel Blanchard

High Concept
Burned Keepers Agent

Trouble
Left Out in the Cold

Other Aspects
Just Another Face in the Crowd
Still Loyal to the Council
Bitter
Master of Illusion
Master of Tradecraft

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Fair	(+2)
Burglary:	Great	(+4)
Contacts:	Average	(+1)
Conviction:	Good	(+3)
Deceit:	Superb	(+5)
Discipline:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Fair	(+2)
Guns:	Fair	(+2)
Investigation:	Great	(+4)
Lore:	Good	(+3)
Performance:	Average	(+1)
Presence:	Average	(+1)
Scholarship:	Average	(+1)
Weapons:	Average	(+1)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Cat-Burglar (Burglary): Mitchel may use Burglary instead of Stealth for Hiding or Skulking.

Powers
Evocation [-3]
Thaumaturgy [-3]
The Sight [-1]
Soulgaze [-0]
Wizard's Constitution [-0]
Refinement [-1]

Specialties
Evocation: Elements (Air, Spirit, Water); Power (Spirit +2), Control (Spirit +1)
Thaumaturgy: Complexity (Biomancy +1)

Rote Spells
Confundamus (Spirit Maneuver as Illusion, five shifts): An Illusion causes the target to look like Mitchel or one of his allies. The aspect applied can be invoked for effect to make the recipient the target of friendly fire.
Dispareo (Spirit defense, veil, five shifts): Mitchel vanishes from sight with this five shift Block to Perception.
Spiro (Air attack, three shifts for **Weapon:3**) Mitchel launches a focused jet of air at his target.

Focus Items
Ring (+2 Spirit Offense Control, evocation)
Chameleon Talisman (+2 Spirit Defense Control, evocation)

Enchanted Items
2 slots kept open for potions and other "consumable" items.

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOO

Notes
When it comes to fighting, Mitchel would prefer to be long gone before it starts. If he isn't, he probably screwed up. If cornered, he'll use misdirection rather than directly confronting his foes, and slip away if possible.

Mitchel uses biomancy to create disguises for himself, reshaping his features, changing hair color and skin tone, even adding mass with the help of some ectoplasm.

Total Refresh Cost: -9

Officer Eduardo Galleti

Suggested Player Character
Clued-In Police Officer

Motivation: To hell with what they think. I will keep the people safe.

The last time I was in Rio de Janeiro, I met a police officer who surprised me by knowing exactly what I had just killed.

I had been hunting down a Red Court vampire that had been killing children and, through stealth, subterfuge, and more than a little luck, I managed to kill the creature. Officer Galleti saw everything and even helped me by shooting the thing when it was about to kill me.

After the fight, Galleti explained that he had seen things like this before. Most police officers turn a blind eye to the monsters that prey upon the citizens and tourists of Rio, but there are a few who know the truth. Some of these use the truth to avoid dealing with such dangers, choosing to forsake their vows in return for safety. A few, however, believe that it is their sacred duty to protect the people from such creatures. Officer Galleti is one of these few.

For more on the truth, check out page "Rio de Janeiro" on page 189.

Galleti knows much of the truth of Rio de Janeiro and what he did not know I gladly shared with him. To his credit, he did not let his fear show; Galleti is not a man to show his emotions. Indeed, he is a man of few words. When he first learned what was happening in Rio, he shared it with his superiors. He was with the Civil Police then, a detective, and his report caused his superiors to suspend him pending a psychiatric evaluation. His suspension lasted long enough that it was clear he would not get his job back; rather than admit defeat, he enlisted in the Military Police in order to continue to do good. Again to his credit, this did not weaken his resolve.

Galleti now patrols the streets keeping people safe. He knows enough not to get into direct conflicts with the creatures that haunt the night, but he also knows that these monsters stay away from large crowds. He uses that to his advantage, bringing those who are vulnerable into populated areas and seeing them safely home, where they are protected by a threshold.

Campaign Idea: Night Beat

A campaign using Eduardo Galleti as its center is likely to involve cops, crime, investigation, and criminals both magical and mundane. Think of it like a police procedural where the murderer can be a vampire, the arsonist can be a wizard with a penchant for burning things down.

A lot of the tension in a game like this will come from living in two worlds. Eduardo and his allies know about the supernatural, they see it every day and they do what they can to hunt down things that go bump and make sure they stop bumping the good folk. At the same time, though, they have to provide reasonable explanations for these crimes—and how they're following up on them—to their superiors, who probably *don't* believe in the supernatural.

As these people see it, they're carrying out their mandate to serve and protect. However, they often have to bend or even break the law in order to do so, and they're constantly lying to their superiors. Opportunity for drama abounds!



I did a little research about the difference between the Civil Police and the Military Police. Basically, the Civil Police do detective work—they investigate crime and bring criminals to justice. Crime prevention, on the other hand, is the wheelhouse of the Military Police. They're not MPs like we know them; they're a police organization that's also a military organization, and they're kind of like beat cops. What happened to Galleti wasn't quite a demotion, but it wasn't far off, either.

DETECTIVE TO BEAT COP, HUH? THIS SOUNDS **WAY** TOO FAMILIAR.

Is it at least comforting to know that it didn't just happen to you?

WHY WOULD THAT BE **COMFORTING?**

I...uh...you're giving me the look now, aren't you? Yeah, I'll shut up now.

Eduardo Galleti

High Concept

Clued-In Cop

Trouble

Laughing Stock of the Force

Other Aspects

Servir e Proteger

SERVE AND PROTECT. COPS ARE THE SAME WHEREVER YOU GO.

Man of Few Words

Sharpshooter

Discretion Is *Not* the Better Part of Valor

Unwavering Resolve

Skills

Alertness:	Great	(+4)
Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Contacts:	Average	(+1)
Conviction:	Average	(+1)
Discipline:	Average	(+1)
Driving:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Good	(+3)
Guns:	Superb	(+5)
Intimidation:	Fair	(+2)
Investigation:	Good	(+3)

Lore: Fair (+2)
Presence: Average (+1)
Stealth: Average (+1)
Weapons: Fair (+2)
Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts

Fast Reload (Guns): Provided that Eduardo has a supply of ammunition, reloads are rarely an issue. He takes no penalty when reloading as a supplemental action; if he's in a race to see who reloads first, or anything else having to do with his speed or ability to reload, he gains a +1 on the roll.

Pin Them Down (Guns): When Aiming, the aspect Eduardo places on the target cannot be removed so long as they do not move out of the zone, and any attempts to leave the zone face an increased border of 1 as long as he continues to make Guns attacks against that target.

Target-Rich Environment (Guns): Eduardo gains a +1 to attacks with Guns whenever he is personally outnumbered in a firefight.

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OOO

Notes

Great Initiative, Superb Attacks with Guns, Great defenses. When on "the job," Eduardo has access to an assortment of weaponry. His preferred load out is an FN P90 submachine gun (**Weapon:3**), a Taurus PT 24/7 pistol (**Weapon:2**), and body armor (**Armor:2**).

Total Refresh Cost:

-1 (Pure Mortal)

Wait, she feeds on rage? I know we speculated that there might be WCVs out there who ate anger, but Alejandra's actually found an entire secret family of them?

Maybe. She claims the Marinos are unaffiliated so, yeah, it's possible they're wrath-eaters. It's also possible they feed on fear like a certain family we already know about, and Alejandra just misinterpreted what she saw.

Honestly, it's hard for me to imagine that Lara Raith doesn't know about these guys. If they're operating down here, I'd bet it's under her watchful eye, if not by her explicit permission.

Eva Marino

High Concept
White Court Neophyte

Trouble
Overzealous Defender of the Innocent

Other Aspects
Idealist
Monster with a Heart
Peace with the Humans Is Possible
Vigilante
Hell Hath No Fury...

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Contacts:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Average	(+1)
Deceit:	Fair	(+2)
Discipline:	Fair	(+2)
Driving:	Average	(+1)
Empathy:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Fair	(+2)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Intimidation:	Superb	(+5)
Lore:	Average	(+1)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)
Rapport:	Average	(+1)
Resources:	Good	(+3)

The entry for Incite Emotion on YSI73 says the power works off Intimidation for anger or fear and Deceit for all other emotions. Rage, or any other violent emotion, will work off Intimidation as well.

Powers
Emotional Vampire [-1]
Human Guise [-0]
Incite Emotion (Rage), with At Range and Lasting Emotion [-3]
Feeding Dependency [+1]
Inhuman Recovery [-2]
The Catch [+0] is True Serenity
Inhuman Speed [-2]
Inhuman Strength [-2]

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OOO
Hunger	OOO

Notes
Epic Initiative, Great Fists attacks, Superb defenses against most attacks. Eva's a competent hand-to-hand fighter and she can cripple an opponent with her Incite Emotion and Emotional Vampire powers.

Total Refresh Cost: -9

Eva Marino
Suggested Player Character
Idealistic White Court Neophyte

Motivation: I will show people that peace is possible.

I have known Eva Marino for close to two years, since shortly after she found out what she is. Eva is a vampire of the White Court and the youngest daughter of the Marino family, a criminal family who are secretly White Court vampires unaffiliated with the White King.

When I met her, Eva was kneeling over the body of a man in the street. I knew what she was, but apparently she hadn't known until that moment. My intention was to kill her but…I could not. The dead man had clearly beaten her badly and she had fed on his wrath. The rage of his beating had only strengthened her, fueled the demon within her. In the end, the man's fury had killed him. Eva had no idea what had happened; she was hurt, terrified, and nearly paralyzed with confusion. I took pity on her.

Over the years, Eva and I remained in contact. I would not call us friends but we were…of mutual benefit to each other. She gave me information on the supernatural goings-on in South America, poised as she was on the heartbeat of that information network, her family. I trained her. Showed her how to defend herself. Showed her how to control her Hunger. She was in a situation that I knew very well, that I feared more than anything. I felt it my duty to help her avoid killing again.

Sadly, that was not to be. Eva has control most of the time. However, when she sees innocents hurt, she becomes someone else. She becomes the demon. When she is feeding off of one of the underground boxing matches she frequents, or defending herself against an attacker, she is able to restrain her Hunger. She feeds just enough to leave the mortal exhausted and confused, but not in any real danger. When it is someone else, someone who cannot defend himself or herself, she kills without hesitation or mercy.

Let me be clear. I like Eva. I enjoy spending time with her, I enjoy talking with her. I do not trust her. She is a monster; she is what I might have become, were it not for your actions. And if she ever loses control completely, if she ever gives in fully to her demon, I will kill her. Without hesitation or mercy.

Campaign Idea: Payback, Inc.

Eva Marino has all the makings of a successful vigilante: she's a good fighter, she's got a temper, she's well-funded, and she's vengeful. It's not a stretch to think that she might attract like-minded people to her cause and start her own little pack of crime-fighters. The kinds of people that Eva would attract are likely to be people from the fight clubs she frequents, victims of violent crimes that she's stopped, maybe even a cop or two—you could bring Galleti into this campaign, if you wanted to.

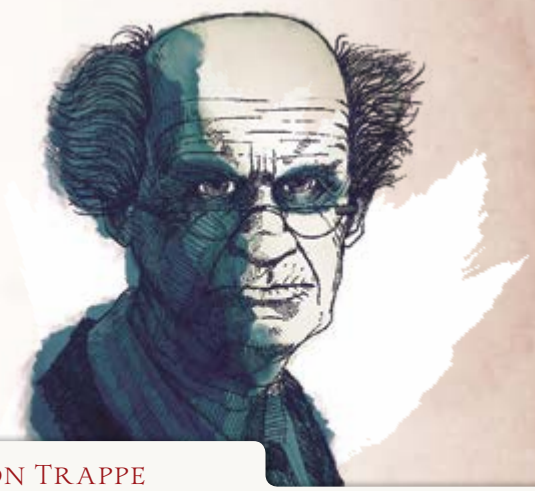
This campaign is one part street-level superhero story, one part crime drama, one part revenge flick. Eva and her allies find people deserving of punishment and they go out and thrash them. Sure, they save people from being beaten or stabbed or murdered, and sure lots of people probably think of them as heroes of the people. But make no mistake, the players will do bad things, and they're more than a little bit monstrous. And really, that's what you want.

You want a lot of internal conflict in a campaign like this. Not emo brooding; I'm talking about situations where killing is easy and expedient, but not necessarily the moral high road. This crew is going to tangle with the cops a lot, and some people are going to be horrified by what they do. Play this stuff up to get maximum drama out of the deal.

Lucius von Trappe

Are the hills alive with the sound of music?

Maybe there'll be Nazis in the second act.



White Council Researcher

Motivation: Knowledge is the key to true power.

Face Of: Chichen Itza (page 184)

After the battle at Chichen Itza, the White Council took very little time in getting a team entrenched in the ruins. Considering how slow they are to act, this might seem something of a minor miracle. However, the Council can always be relied upon to act quickly when acting in its own best interests.

The team they sent down was ostensibly a research team, examining the effects of the ritual on the ley lines at Chichen Itza. I am certain this is part of the reason they were sent, for at least one researcher, Lucius von Trappe, came down with the team.

Von Trappe is slow to action, set in his ways, haughty, and loath to help anyone else unless the situation directly mandates it. In other words, he is the White Council in human form. To all appearances, he leads the team at Chichen Itza, gathering and collating data to be sent back to the Council so that an informed decision can be made.

I have observed the team at Chichen Itza and I have interacted with von Trappe and the other members. This has shown me one very important thing—von Trappe is not in charge, even though he thinks he is. He is a proxy, a figurehead. I believe that one of the other wizards is in charge, possibly one of the Wardens, but they play along with the ruse.

It's clear Alejandra has no love for the Council and I have a feeling that she's projecting some of that onto von Trappe. He may well be a pompous jerk like she says, but I'm pretty sure she's exaggerating a little bit.

Lucius von Trappe

High Concept
White Council Researcher

Trouble
Figurehead and Potential Fall Guy

Other Aspects
Knowledge Is Power
Arrogant
Set in His Ways
Ley Line Expert
I'm an Analyst, Not a Duelist

Skills

Conviction:	Good	(+3)
Discipline:	Superb	(+5)
Investigation:	Fair	(+2)
Lore:	Superb	(+5)
Performance:	Good	(+3)
Resources:	Great	(+4)
Scholarship:	Great	(+4)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
Evocation [-3]
Thaumaturgy [-3]
The Sight [-1]
Soulgaze [-0]
Wizard's Constitution [-0]
Refinement [-3]

That's not going to end well.

Specialties
Evocation: Elements (Air, Earth, Spirit); Power (Air +1)
Thaumaturgy: Control (Diabolism +3) Complexity (Diabolism +2, Divination +1, Wards +1)

Focus Items
Staff (+1 Air Defense Power, +1 Air Offense Power, evocation)
Athame (+1 Control Diabolism, +1 Complexity Diabolism, thaumaturgy)

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OO
Social	OO

Notes
Lucius is capable of basic offensive and defensive evocations, but he's really not a combat wizard. He's more at home poring over a stack of books or negotiating information out of some summoned entity.

Total Refresh Cost: -10

Izel

High Concept
Werejaguar

Trouble
Trusts No One

Other Aspects
Custodian of El Manantí
Predator's Cunning
Reluctant Guardian

Skills

Alertness:	Superb	(+5)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Contacts:	Average	(+1)
Conviction:	Fair	(+2)
Empathy:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Fair	(+2)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Investigation:	Average	(+1)
Lore:	Average	(+1)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)
Rapport:	Great	(+4)
Stealth:	Great	(+4)
Survival:	Fair	(+2)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Izel (Jaguar Form)

Skills

Alertness:	Superb	(+5)
Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Conviction:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)
Stealth:	Superb	(+5)
Survival:	Fair	(+2)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Huntress (Survival): As an experienced hunter, Izel knows how to track game in the outdoors. She gains +2 on any efforts to use Survival to track something in the wilderness or other outdoor area.

Powers
Beast Change [-1]
Echoes of the Beast [-1]
Human Form [+1] affecting the following powers:
Inhuman Speed [-2]
Inhuman Strength [-2]
Claws [-1]

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OOO

Notes
+9 Initiative, Superb defenses against most attacks, Great attacks with **Weapon:4** Fists. In a fight, Izel prefers to use her Stealth and Survival skills to stack up maneuvers on her prey, then tag them all at once for a devastating strike.

Total Refresh Cost: -7



Izel
Werejaguar Custodian of El Manatí
Motivation: Power corrupts; those who wield it must be watched.
Face of: El Manatí (page 185)

Izel came to us a few weeks ago, asking us to look into the disappearances at El Manatí. We already knew of the disappearances and we'd been watching El Manatí for some time, but Izel's insistence made us take closer note. We found out why soon enough; the "disappearances" she asked us to investigate were something much worse.

She guided us out to El Manatí and through the bog, showed us the fresh bodies of children and their parents, the blood-red spring. Something is beginning there and Izel wants to make sure it stops before it does any more harm.

In the short amount of time I spent with Izel, I got a sense of what she is like, but I would not say that I got to know her. She is guarded, suspicious, and does not lower her walls. She asks many questions and answers few, and she is always tensed, ready to spring or flee at a moment's notice. I think she does what she does for the right reasons, but she seems weary, resentful of her position as the custodian of El Manatí.

I learned the most surprising thing about Izel when something large and dark attacked us in the bog. One moment I stood next to Izel and three other members of the Fellowship; the next, Izel was gone, replaced by a large black jaguar. She did not attack our foe, instead retreating to the treetops. This was not cowardice, of this I am convinced. She was clearly maneuvering to a better position, a position from which she could strike more effectively, but before she could strike the creature was gone.

Izel did not talk about her transformation, and I did not ask; I simply helped her gather up her clothes and we continued on our way.

Huallpa

High Priest of Manco Capac

Motivation: The glory of the Inca will be restored!

Face of: Machu Picchu (page 185)

Several weeks ago we discovered that Manco Capac has his own priesthood. They are more than a priesthood, however; Capac has been training these men and women in spellcraft, amassing a small but potent force of people who have the skills of wizards—but who choose not to keep the Council's laws.

The leader of these wizard-priests is a man who calls himself Huallpa, a name taken from the Incan Empire. I do not believe that this man is actually from that empire, though he may be of Incan descent. I believe that Capac has been training and grooming his priesthood over the centuries, waiting for an opportunity such as this to put his plans into motion.

Although I have observed very little of Huallpa, I know that he is charming and urbane, but also cruel. I know that he favors fire magic and that he knows a great many magical rituals. I know that, like wizards I have met, he has the ability to see into men's souls.

So far Capac's priests have been content to bide their time in Machu Picchu, but I do not know how long that will last.

Galena

Mysterious Prophetic Spirit

Motivation: Nobody knows. Galena is inscrutable and doesn't seem to have any sort of rhyme or reason as to whom she helps and whom she runs from.

Face of: The Cave of Hands (page 186)

The being known as Galena appears to be many things. She appears to be a young South American girl. She appears to be wearing simple, old-fashioned clothing, unadorned by ornamentation. She appears to be helpless and innocent.

I have no doubt that she is none of these things.

I do not know what Galena truly is, but she cannot possibly be mortal. A young girl has been living in the Cave of Hands for as long as anyone can remember and, though the descriptions vary somewhat, they are similar enough to imply that people are talking about the same girl. I do not believe that she is mortal. However, her origins are a mystery.

Huallpa

High Concept

High Priest of Manco Capac

Other Aspects

The Inca Will Rise Again!
Blood on the Altar
Zealous Warlock
My Enemies Will Burn

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Fair	(+2)
Conviction:	Superb	(+5)
Discipline:	Great	(+4)
Endurance:	Fair	(+2)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Good	(+3)
Presence:	Great	(+4)
Rapport:	Good	(+3)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts

Leadership (Presence): When Huallpa talks, people listen. When using Presence to command a group he gains +1 on the effort. Further, his efforts to coordinate a group are efficient, moving one time increment faster than normal.

Powers

Evocation [-3]
Thaumaturgy [-3]
The Sight [-1]
Soulgaze [-0]
Wizard's Constitution [-0]
Lawbreaker (First) [-2]

Specialties

Evocation: Elements (Fire, Air, Spirit); Power (Fire +1)
Thaumaturgy: Complexity (Entropomancy +1)

Focus Items

Staff (+1 Fire Offense Control, +1 Fire Offense Power, evocation)
Shield Amulet (+2 Spirit Defense Power, evocation)

Stress

Mental OOOO, +1 mild consequence
Physical OOO
Social OOOO

Notes

Huallpa is a pretty good fire slinger. He can cast seven shift evocations for one stress, with an Epic control roll once his staff, specializations, and Lawbreaker bonuses are all figured in. His ability with thaumaturgy is scary. He's not afraid of breaking the Laws of Magic, and he's in a cult where human sacrifice is acceptable. That's a lot of potential power in the wrong hands.

Total Refresh Cost: -10

Galena

High Concept

Prophetic Spirit

Other Aspects

Inscrutable
The Cave of Hands

Skills, Power, Etc.

Galena is a plot-level NPC, and impossible to quantify mechanically. Assume all social skills are at least Legendary. Other skills are even higher. Galena has some form of Worldwalker and prophetic powers.

Notes

Galena's prophecies are often enigmatic, but they don't have the unbelievability associated with Cassandra's Tears.

I'll say. Galena would be a great way to add some spooky mystery to a game. Creepy little girls who know too much? Yeah, that's good stuff.

She's also good for knowledge dumps. Galena knows too much, like you said, and you can use her to deliver information that the players have no other way to get.



This is my best guess based on third-hand descriptions from Pedro's group. If you want to use the Anjana in your game, Damita's stats are probably pretty representative of the Anjana in general.

WAIT, HOW DO YOU SEE HER UNDER THE LIGHT OF THE MOON IF YOU'RE IN AN UNDERGROUND NETWORK OF CAVES?

I thought the same thing and looked into it. Apparently the Cave of Hands is always lit by moonlight at night, and nobody can figure out why. They're dark during the daylight hours, though.

FUNNY HOW THAT WORKS.

My guess: Galena doesn't like her caves to be dark at night.

Damita of the Anjana

High Concept
Speaker of the Anjana

Other Aspects
Merciless Helper of the Helpless
Vengeful
Small But Vicious

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Superb	(+5)
Conviction:	Fair	(+2)
Deceit:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Great	(+4)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Presence:	Good	(+3)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
Claws [-1]
Diminutive Size [-1]
Wings [-1]
Glamours [-2]
Inhuman Speed [-2]

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OO
Social	OOOO

Notes
Epic initiative, Great attacks with **Weapon:2** Fists, Epic defenses against most attacks.

Total Refresh Cost: -7

She may be fae. Certainly everything I've been told suggests that she cannot lie, though the prophecies she hands out are often vague and open to interpretation. I've never heard of her making a bargain; she gives her proclamations freely and without an apparent desire for recompense. It's possible that she extracts her price after her words have come true. I have heard of people meeting untimely ends after following her wisdom, but I have heard of just as many who have gone on to live happy, full lives.

Galena is a mystery. I do not think she means mortalkind harm. She does not seem to have any particular interest in Chichen Itza or the power vacuum left behind by the vampires. She does not ally herself with any particular group or faction, choosing those she enlightens by her own secret rubric.

Damita of the Anjana

Speaker of the Anjana

Motivation: We protect those who need it, and punish those who deserve it.

Face of: The Atacama Giant (page 186)

At the geoglyph known as the Atacama Giant, under the light of the moon, the Anjana gather in their conclave. Nobody knows what they speak about. Nobody dares to try to find out.

We once sent a team to learn more about the Anjana. They approached the Giant as the moon rose, hoping to speak to the Anjana before the conclave started. Before they got too close they found themselves surrounded by small, winged girls—girls whose fingers were tipped with talons like those of an eagle. One came forward, introducing herself as Damita.

"I am Damita," she said. "I speak for the Anjana. You mortals are perilously close to trespassing on sacred ground. Why have you come?"

Pedro, the leader of the group, told them of the Fellowship and of our mission. He explained that we only wanted to learn about them so that we might coexist peacefully.

"If you live lives of peace," she said, "then we can coexist. Violence begets violence, and we punish those who visit it upon the helpless."



The Green Lady

Summer's Guardian of the Amazon Rainforest

Motivation: You will not violate the sanctity of this land!

Face of: The Amazon Rainforest (page 187)

In the area around the Amazon Rainforest, no creature is more feared and respected than the Green Lady. She has all of the power of a Sidhe lady but none of the restraint. Those who venture into the Rainforest do not simply take their lives in their hands—they put their lives into hers. She is not often kind with that responsibility.

I have heard the Green Lady described as a tall, womanlike figure, taller than a grown man and covered in leaves and brambles. Her skin is like bark and her eyes are two pits of emerald green light. She can speak to the plants around her, command them to do her bidding. They also serve as her eyes and ears. She is known for destroying logging camps, killing tourists, and otherwise keeping people out of her Rainforest.

For all that, she can be bargained with. She has clearly struck some sort of bargain with the people who live in the Rainforest, and people can occasionally pass through if they give her something she values. What she values is anyone's guess; she is known for being capricious and fickle, and she never accepts the same gift twice.

The Green Lady

High Concept
Summer's Guardian of the Amazon Rainforest

Other Aspects
Red in Tooth and Claw
Force of Nature

Skills, Power, Etc.
I'm not sure what the Green Lady's abilities are. Assume she has the typical Sidhe stuff: Greater Glamours, Seelie Magic, the full suite of Supernatural or Mythic powers, and very high Deceit and Survival skills. Other than that, she's a mystery.

Notes
With her lack of restraint, you probably can't rely on the Accords or the Old World rules of etiquette when dealing with her.

Erasmo

Apu Village Guardian

Motivation: Things will continue as they always have.

Face of: The Andes (page 187)

There is a town in the Andes named Colina, and this town has a guardian giant. Giant is, perhaps, the wrong word. He is an Apu, a mountain spirit, and the townsfolk of Colina have named him Erasmo.

For as long as anyone in Colina can remember, Erasmo has been there. He lives in a cave just outside the town, emerging occasionally throughout the day to eat and stretch his limbs. The townsfolk give him gifts—grain, cooked meat, dolls, small precious items. In exchange he gives the townsfolk something they desperately need—protection.

Erasmo protects the townsfolk from predators both natural and supernatural. He keeps away the Winter Court, he keeps away the werejaguars and Black Court vampires in the area. More than that, though, he keeps away the bad weather.

Erasmo

High Concept
Apu Guardian of Colina

Other Aspects
Mountain Spirit of the Andes
Big Friendly Giant
You Wouldn't Like Me When I'm Angry

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Superb	(+5)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Might:	Superb	(+5)
Survival:	Great	(+4)

Most other default skills to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
Hulking Size [-2]
Supernatural Strength [-4]
Supernatural Toughness [-4]
Supernatural Recovery [-4]
The Catch [+3] is cold iron.

Stress
Mental OO
Physical OOOOOO(OOOO), +1 mild consequence, **Armor:2**
Social OO

Notes
Fair initiative, Great defenses in hand-to-hand, Fair otherwise. Great attacks with **Weapon:4** Fists. The weather around Erasmo tends to reflect his mood. Any sudden change in his mood can trigger a corresponding change in the weather. Handle this with a compel, because it usually has unintended consequences for those he seeks to protect.

Total Refresh Cost: -11

The weather seems to respond to Erasmo's moods and, if the people keep him happy, they experience mild weather and good harvests. When Erasmo is enraged, I am told, the storm howls around him, and the winds and snow attack his foes with savage ferocity. That is when he strikes, rampaging through the countryside, destroying houses, and even carrying villagers off for God knows what purpose.

I looked it up. "Erasmo" means "friendly," which makes me think that this guy is one of the good guys.

Angela Vargas

High Concept
Winter's Agent in Gran Chaco

Trouble
In Debt to Winter

Other Aspects
Unseelie Power
Master Negotiator
Subtle, Not So Quick to Anger

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Average	(+1)
Contacts:	Average	(+1)
Conviction:	Good	(+3)
Deceit:	Superb	(+5)
Discipline:	Great	(+4)
Empathy:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Average	(+1)
Guns:	Fair	(+2)
Intimidation:	Average	(+1)
Lore:	Fair	(+2)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Rapport:	Great	(+4)
Resources:	Average	(+1)
Scholarship:	Fair	(+2)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Honest Lies (Deceit): Whenever incorporating a real, valuable piece of the truth (however marginally valuable it may be) into a lie, Angela gains a +2 on her efforts to pass off the untrue parts.

Powers
Sponsored Magic (Unseelie) [-4]

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOOO

Notes
Fair initiative, Average defenses, Fair attacks with Guns. If it comes down to a fight, Angela will use her Unseelie Magic, accruing more debt if necessary.

Total Refresh Cost: -5

Angela Vargas
Unseelie Dealmaker
Motivation: I'll sell your soul so I can keep mine.
Face of: Gran Chaco (page 188)

Gran Chaco is a region in Bolivia, desired by both the Summer and Winter courts. At the moment, Winter seems to have the upper hand. This is perhaps due in large part to the efforts of a woman named Angela Vargas. Vargas is an attorney from Mexico City who practices out of the Tarija Department of Bolivia. She uses her position, her wealth, and her contacts to gather allies for Winter in their war with Summer over Gran Chaco.

This isn't a department as we know it. From what I understand, a department in Bolivia is roughly analogous to a province.

Vargas is first and foremost a dealmaker. She offers people what they want most in exchange for service to Winter, convincing them to sell themselves into servitude. She is charming, beautiful, and utterly convincing to those she entices. I do not know why she works for Winter, but I know why they chose her.

We have tried to get to her in the past, but doing so is nearly impossible. She is surrounded by mortal guards at all times, and her office boasts the best in mundane security. Beyond that, though, she can call upon the power of Winter to defend herself when necessary, and she is not afraid to do so. She is extremely dangerous, and I see her as one of the greater threats in Las Tierras Rojas.







Esteban Ruiz

Corrupt Politician

Motivation: I will do what I must to provide for my family.

Face of: Buenos Aires (page 188)

I do not know quite what to make of Esteban Ruiz. He is highly placed in the office of the Chief of Government and he uses his power and influence to allow all manner of sins to pass unnoticed. The cartels peddle their drugs under the noses of the authorities thanks to his judicious placement of bribes. The Marinos dispose of bodies and evidence with the aid of Ruiz and his people. Throughout, Ruiz lines his own pockets with the fruits of these labors.

More on the Marinos on page 172.

And yet the man is not wholly corrupt. I surveilled him for a time and found that he is a devoted family man with a wife and a daughter with a severe mental disability. He dotes on his wife and daughter, bringing them presents and spending every hour with them when he is not at his office or plying his trade. He also goes to great pains to shield them from his own illicit activities; I do not think they know what he truly does for a living.

He also does not appear to be connected in any real way to the supernatural. Though he aids the Marinos, he seems to think they are a simple crime family rather than a family of vampires—their secret is well kept. He seems completely oblivious to the supernatural presence in Buenos Aires and Las Tierras Rojas at large.

As I've said, I'm not sure what to make of him. He does terrible things, but he does them in the name of his family. He does not seem to be a direct threat—at least not as great a threat as many others. Part of me thinks I may have to deal with him at some point. Part of me thinks that day may never come, so many greater threats do we have to face before he becomes a priority.

Esteban Ruiz

High Concept
Corrupt Politician

Trouble
I Must Provide for My Family

Other Aspects
Friend to the Marino Family
If It's Criminal, My Hand Is in It

Skills

Contacts:	Great	(+4)
Deceit:	Fair	(+2)
Empathy:	Average	(+1)
Intimidation:	Average	(+1)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Rapport:	Fair	(+2)
Resources:	Great	(+4)
Scholarship:	Good	(+3)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts

Personal Magnetism (Presence): Ruiz has a calm confidence that others find appealing. When rolling Presence to establish a "passive" reaction to him, he makes the roll at +2.

Teflon Persona (Presence): It's difficult to make Ruiz look bad in social conflicts. Provided that the people present are aware of who he is, he gains **Armor:1** against any social attacks.

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OO
Social	OOOO

Notes

Mediocre initiative, attacks, and defenses. Ruiz isn't a fighter. On the rare occasions he needs to employ force, he uses his Contacts and Resources to employ some muscle.

Total Refresh Cost: +0 (Pure Mortal)



Ulla Gottschalk

High Concept
Ordo Torca Commander

Trouble
Blind Obedience to the Church

Other Aspects
My Father's Saint Michael Medallion
Special Forces Training
Peace Through Strength
Berettamancer
Good Intel Saves Lives

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Burglary:	Average	(+1)
Conviction:	Good	(+3)
Discipline:	Average	(+1)
Driving:	Average	(+1)
Empathy:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Fair	(+2)
Guns:	Superb	(+5)
Lore:	Average	(+1)
Presence:	Great	(+4)
Stealth:	Fair	(+2)
Weapons:	Superb	(+5)

Stunts
Fast Reload (Guns): Provided that Ulla has a supply of ammunition, reloads are rarely an issue. She takes no penalty when reloading as a supplemental action; if she's in a race to see who reloads first, or anything else having to do with her speed or ability to reload, gain a +1 on the roll.

Pin Them Down (Guns): When Aiming, the aspect Ulla places on the target cannot be removed so long as they do not move out of the zone, and any attempts to leave the zone face an increased border of 1 as long as she continues to make Guns attacks against that target.

Target-Rich Environment: Ulla gains a +1 to attacks with Guns whenever she is personally outnumbered in a firefight.

Leadership (Presence): When Ulla talks, people listen. When using Presence to command a group, she gains +1 on the effort. Further, her efforts to coordinate a group are efficient, moving one time increment faster than normal.

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OOOO

Notes
Fair initiative, Superb attacks with Guns and Weapons, Superb defense in melee or Great at range. Ulla is an expert in small unit tactics and she could qualify as an expert with any small arm from the 20th or 21st century.

Total Refresh Cost: -2 (Pure Mortal)

Ulla Gottschalk
Ordo Torca Squad Leader

Motivation: In the name of God, we will see peace here.

Face of: Rio de Janeiro (page 189)

The last time I was in Rio de Janeiro, I met a woman named Ulla Gottschalk. I had been hunting a sorcerer named James who had killed many in a mass sacrifice, but I was not the only one hunting him. When I found James, he was dead. He was lying on the ground, surrounded by people dressed in nondescript clothing and armed with assault rifles. They saw me.

Thankfully, they did not shoot me where I stood. If they had known what I once was, they might have. They kept their weapons trained on me while one of them stepped forward—a stocky German woman who asked me who I was and what I was doing there.

Rather than be caught in a lie I simply told the truth: that I was a member of the Fellowship of St. Giles, and that I had been hunting the man they had just killed. She seemed to weigh me with her eyes, deciding what was to be done with me. In the end, she decided to let me go.

I found out later that I was talking to Ulla Gottschalk of the Ordo Torca. Gottschalk is a high-ranking member of the Ordo, commander of one of the elite squads, assigned dangerous and important missions on a regular basis. She is an intelligent woman who considers her actions carefully; I think she knows full well the import of what she does. I think, too, that she carries the weight of what she has done.

For all that, she does not hesitate to do her duty. She leads her team to kill without mercy, and she does not question direct orders from the Ordo or the Church. I do not know yet whether she—and the Ordo at large—is an enemy or a potential ally. Time will tell.

Or even a potential PC—it'd be easy to use Ulla and the Ordo as heavies, but it might be a lot more interesting to use them as allies. Remember that Ulla's (and the Ordo's) ultimate goal is peace. They might have questionable methods, but they want to see an end to the chaos and bloodshed. Uncomfortable allies are way more interesting than another villain group in my book.

Manco Capac

Ancient Inca God-King

Motivation: A new empire will spread across the globe, and it will start here.

Face of: Threat Everyone Wants to Be King (page 156)

Little is known about Manco Capac, but what is known is frightening. He was the founder of the Inca Empire, thought to be the son of a god, and he has seemingly returned from the dead. It is my belief that he is no god, nor did he die—I believe he is an ancient wizard who has escaped the radar of the White Council. He resurfaced shortly after the Red Court was destroyed and he brought followers with him. He is powerful and ancient, and he very likely wants the power of Chichen Itza—power that will help him rule the world.

Though I have very little first-hand knowledge of Capac, what I have heard leads me to believe that he has been so long removed from human society that he no longer sees us as people. He kills at a whim, destroying entire villages when they get in his way.

Though he has not made his move yet, it is sure to come. Capac and his followers sit in Machu Picchu, biding their time and feeding their power. They likely view the old gods and the White Council as their greatest threats; the former's power is unknown and the latter may currently be weak enough to be unable to stop Capac.

Manco Capac

High Concept

Sois-Disant Inca God King

Other Aspects

Fire and Blood

Would-Be Usurper of Old Power

This Land Will Bow to Me

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Contacts:	Average	(+1)
Conviction:	Fantastic	(+6)
Deceit:	Average	(+1)
Discipline:	Fantastic	(+6)
Endurance:	Great	(+4)
Intimidation:	Superb	(+5)
Lore:	Superb	(+5)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Resources:	Average	(+1)
Scholarship:	Great	(+4)
Survival:	Fair	(+2)

Powers

Evocation [-3]
Thaumaturgy [-3]
The Sight [-1]
Soulgaze [-0]
Wizard's Constitution [-0]
Refinement [-4]
Inhuman Mental Toughness [-2]
Lawbreaker (First) [-2]
Lawbreaker (Second) [-2]
Lawbreaker (Fourth) [-2]

Specialties

Evocation: Elements (Fire, Air, Spirit); Power (Fire +3, Air +1, Earth +1) Control (Fire +2)
Thaumaturgy: Complexity (Divination +1) Control (Divination +2)

Focus Items

Staff (+1 Fire Offense Control, +1 Fire Offense Power, evocation)
Shield Amulet (+2 Spirit Defense Power, evocation)

Stress

Mental OOOO(OO), +1 mild consequence **Armor:1**
Physical OOOO
Social OOOO

Notes

This guy is one serious fire slinger. He can cast nine shift evocations for one stress, with a +10 control roll once his staff, specializations, and Lawbreaker bonuses are all figured in. That's scary enough, but—like his lackey Huallpa—he's not afraid of breaking the Laws of Magic, and he's in a cult where human sacrifice is acceptable. He can do terrible things with thaumaturgy.

Total Refresh Cost:

-19





Juan Ramirez

High Concept
Psychomancer

Trouble
Addicted to His Own Product

Other Aspects
Psychopathic Criminal
Sadistic Bully
Mind Worm

Skills

Conviction:	Good	(+3)
Deceit:	Average	(+1)
Discipline:	Good	(+3)
Driving:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Fair	(+2)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Guns:	Average	(+1)
Intimidation:	Great	(+4)
Lore:	Fair	(+2)
Presence:	Average	(+1)
Weapons:	Average	(+1)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
Channeling (Spirit) [-2]
The Sight [-1]
Soulgaze [-0]
Lawbreaker Third [-2]
Lawbreaker Fourth [-2]

Focus Items
Ring (Spirit Offense Power +2)

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOO

Notes
Mediocre initiative, Great attacks and defenses with Fists, Mediocre ranged defense. With Lawbreaker powers and his focus, he can easily control five shift mental whammies, enough to crush the will of most mortals. Ramirez is a bruiser with enough power to be scary.

Total Refresh Cost: -7

Juan Ramirez
Cartel Psychomancer
Motivation: Money, power, luxury.
Face of: Theme Blood in the Streets, Money in Their Pockets (page 156)

Juan Ramirez is an agent of the Sinaloa Cartel, perhaps the largest and most dangerous drug cartel in all of Mexico, Central, and South America. He is a simple thug who has gained power and influence within the cartel for one simple reason: he can make people do what he wants them to do.

Ramirez has magical talent, of this much I am certain. I do not think he is a wizard, or even close to a wizard in terms of power. He does have the ability to bend people to his will, though. Through this ability Ramirez is able to keep his own thugs in line as well as to convince people to buy his drugs at far more than their street value. He is a bully and a sadist, and he enjoys making people dance like puppets on strings.

I have seen him meet with Esteban Ruiz, and it's possible that at least some of Ruiz's criminal dealings are due to Ramirez's mental coercion. It would not surprise me if Ramirez has numerous politicians and police officers under his sway, waiting to do his bidding.

Ramirez is not a great threat. He is a cockroach, and he needs to be crushed.

Is his middle name "Sanchez Villa-Lobos"?

Did you just...?

What? You guys aren't the only ones who can quote movies, you know.

Oh. My. God. Murphy's a NERD!

Excuse me?

Nothing. Never mind.

Sinchi Yutu

Death Priest of Supay

Motivation: I will bring Supay back into the world.

Face of: Threat Supernatural Ground Zero (page 157)

Since the night I spent in that nameless village—the village where I first heard the name "Supay" chanted—I have listened for that name to be repeated. I was never able to find that village again, but I did learn more of Supay.

Alejandra first mentioned this village on page 160.

Supay was an ancient Incan god of death and the underworld. He controlled demons and demanded sacrifice. This much I learned from a visit to the library. One day, though, I heard the name spoken in the streets of Asuncion and I stopped to listen.

A man was shouting about Supay, about his return and the burning of the Earth. Spittle flecked his mouth and his eyes were wide. The man was tall and muscular and wore robes of black and red. I asked him what he was talking about, demanded to know who he was and where he had come from.

He smiled a chilling smile and responded that he was Sinchi Yutu, harbinger of Supay. He escaped from my grasp and ran into the crowd; I never saw him again.

Sinchi Yutu

High Concept

Death Priest of Supay

Other Aspects

Wild-Eyed Proselytizer

Supay Is Coming!

Muscle Bound

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Superb	(+5)
Discipline:	Great	(+4)
Endurance:	Great	(+4)
Fists:	Fair	(+2)
Intimidation:	Fair	(+2)
Lore:	Good	(+3)
Might:	Good	(+3)
Performance:	Fair	(+2)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts

Person of Conviction (Conviction): Yutu's social presence is tightly rooted in his identity as a follower of Supay. He uses Conviction instead of Presence to determine his social stress capacity.

Powers

Evocation [-3]

Thaumaturgy [-3]

The Sight [-1]

Soulgaze [-0]

Wizard's Constitution [-0]

Sponsored Magic (Supayian Necromancy) [-3]

Lawbreaker First [-2]

Lawbreaker Fifth [-2]

Specialties

Evocation: Elements (Earth, Air, Spirit); Power (Spirit +1)

Thaumaturgy: Control (Necromancy +2) Complexity (Necromancy +1)

Focus Items

Staff (Spirit Offense Control +2)

Talisman (Spirit Defense Power +2)

Stress

Mental OOOO, +1 mild consequence

Physical OOOO

Social OOOO, +1 mild consequence

Notes

Fair initiative, Good defenses. He can perform Necromancy at the speed of evocation. He can easily control eight shifts of power. His sponsored magic lets him gather as much power as he needs, if he's willing to take on sponsor debt.

Total Refresh Cost:

-15



Is that like Kemmlerian Necromancy?

It works exactly like it, except it also gives the necromancer access to demons at the speed of evocation. That's why it costs the extra refresh.

Oh great. So this guy is basically Grevane, but on a mission **from** a god instead of to **become** a god.

He's not quite as skilled as Grevane, but that more or less sums him up.



There are a lot of really interesting places in Las Tierras Rojas. Not all of them have ties to the supernatural, but some of them sure do. It's clear that Alejandra's been gathering this data for a while, though Lord only knows where she got some of it. The following are snippets from her letters that describe specific places in Las Tierras Rojas we thought would make good focal points for play.

What's Where in Las Tierras Rojas

Chichen Itza

Threat: Power, Power Everywhere
Face: Lucius von Trappe (page 173)

Chichen Itza was once the center of the Mayan civilization. The Lords of Outer Night used it as a place to gather power from ritual sacrifice, and it has seen more than its fair share of blood over the centuries. The city is situated at a nexus of ley lines—a powerful gathering of magical energy—and the temple is directly in the center of the nexus. From that point, vampire priests could use sacrificial energy to amplify the energy of the nexus to perform immensely powerful magics. These magics were usually used to bind, to subjugate, and to terrify the people into submission.

Even after Chichen Itza's fall, the vampires continued to use it because of its location and the power contained within its walls. While their rule was somewhat decentralized, Chichen Itza remained the gathering place where all truly important decisions were made, and where all truly important rituals were performed.

This, as you well know, Mr. Dresden, continued into the modern day.

And you ended it.

Now, Chichen Itza is the supernatural equivalent of a nuclear bomb, waiting to be claimed by someone (or something) powerful enough. The combined vital energies of the vampires who died there—not to mention all of the mortals that died that night—fed into the ley lines within the city. There may very well be places of power more potent, but I do not know where they might be, and it's unlikely that they are as open and unguarded as Chichen Itza.

Chichen Itza is not *completely* unwatched, however. The White Council keeps wizards there to study and to protect, though in reality they are likely staking their claim and biding their time until they are strong enough to seize it for themselves. In addition, the Ordo Torca keeps watch over the city, killing anyone who shows too much interest. There is a truce of sorts between the two groups, but clashes happen on occasion and neither side trusts the other.

El Manatí

Threat: Building Energy, Growing Danger
Face: Izel (page 174)

At the foot of a hill in Veracruz is an ancient bog called El Manatí. It is now an archaeological site, scientists plundering its depths for traces of the Olmec. Long ago, the Olmec people used El Manatí as a place of worship and sacrifice; the archaeologists say that it was important to them because of the natural spring that bubbled up, the hill nearby, and the blood-red color of the earth and stone around. That is part of it. There is more to it, though.

The scientists are not the only ones who have been investigating El Manatí. The Fellowship started investigating the bog years ago, before they came. There were a series of disappearances around the bog, travelers who wandered too close and vanished; it took some time for us to notice the disappearances, but eventually we saw the pattern. You see, something was taking travelers, but only those who traveled with children.

The significance of this was not lost on those members of the Fellowship who knew something of Olmec lore. The ancient Olmec sacrificed many things in El Manatí—wooden busts, toy balls, ceremonial axes…and children. They also practiced ritual bloodletting, strengthening their sacrifices and the bog with them.

You see, there was always something special about El Manatí. It is not near any ley lines and it is not a natural source of power, but something in the water and the earth makes El Manatí a place that stores power exceptionally well. Each sacrifice, each act of bloodletting, each life that was fed to the bog helped to build up a…a charge—stored magical energy for some purpose I do not know. We think it has something to do with the spring, that it instills some property in the water that allows it to store the energy rather than grounding it.

And now, something is starting to collect that power again. We have seen figures in the bog at night, though we do not know who or what they might be. More importantly, we have been approached by a woman called Izel, who claims to be El Manatí's custodian. She is worried that someone is using the bog's power again and she asked for our help; sadly, we have little help to give her.

Machu Picchu

Theme: Ancient Seat of Power
Face: Huallpa (page 175)

Machu Picchu was the seat of power for the Inca until the Spanish Conquest in 1572 forced the Inca to abandon it. Since that time it has become a tourist attraction, an important part of the Peruvian economy. This, however, is changing.

Last month, Machu Picchu closed down "for renovations." We at the Fellowship were suspicious—particularly in light of some of the rumors we had heard—so we dispatched a team to investigate. They came back two weeks later with news that the city is closed, but not for renovations.

Someone has moved into Machu Picchu and is living there. There are at least twelve of them, possibly more, and they seem to be capable of practicing magic. Based on these observations and the rumors we have heard, we drew the most likely conclusion: Machu Picchu has become the base of operations for Manco Capac while he plots his return to power.

Capac's reclamation of the Incan seat of power is not purely symbolic. Like Chichen Itza, Machu Picchu is situated where it is for a very specific reason. While it is not on a confluence of ley lines, one very strong ley line—one of the lines that terminates at Chichen Itza—runs directly through Machu Picchu. This means that Capac and his followers have at their disposal a considerable amount of power as long as they are entrenched there, and I shudder to think what they might do with that power.

Doesn't Carlos have something with Olmec markings on it? Something like that. You can ask him if you want to know more.

Weird that she's mentioned magical springs and in the Neverglades there's that magical Fount. Harry always says water cancels out magic.

Water makes it harder to use magic, especially running water. Little bit of a difference.

Which would mean, what, that those places are strong enough to overcome the effects of water? Holy crap.



The Cave of Hands

Theme: For Those with Ears to Hear
Face: Galena (page 175)

In southern Argentina there is a series of caves, well-known because the walls of these caves are covered with paintings of hands of many sizes—mostly left hands. This is regarded as a curiosity by most, the product of a bygone age to be wondered at, and little more. Those of us who know the truth of the world know better.

The Cave of Hands is not particularly important on its own—but the being that calls the caves home is. Within the caves and the surrounding environs, and only under the light of the moon, you can encounter a young girl named Galena. It is said that, if you can catch her, she will answer one question for you truthfully before disappearing.

I do not know who—or what—Galena is. I also do not know how much of this story is true, but I do know that there is some truth to it, for I have seen Galena. I was in the Cave of Hands seeking her counsel when I saw the girl. She stood no more than fifteen feet from me and simply waited, but when I approached she turned and ran.

I followed her, running after her in my need for answers. I suppose it was foolhardy; I could easily have fallen down a pit or broken an ankle on a loose rock. Neither of these things happened, but neither did I catch Galena. Always she was a few steps ahead of me, always I was a little too slow.

When morning came I found my way out of the Cave, unsuccessful in my task. It is said that she can only be caught by those who are ready to hear the answer to their question. Perhaps I was simply not ready.



The Atacama Giant

Theme: Do Not Transgress, Do Not Trespass
Face: Damita of the Anjana (page 176)

The Atacama Desert is one of the driest—if not *the* driest—deserts in the world. The people who lived there long ago created the Atacama Giant, a huge drawing in the ground depicting a human-like figure that these people saw as a god. It was used as a calendar of sorts, the better to track the all-important rainy season, but it was also a focal point for worship and the site of many magical rituals.

Unlike some places of power in Las Tierras Rojas, the Atacama Giant is not connected to a ley line; it was not placed in its location in order to coincide with a naturally occurring source of magic. Instead, it became a place of power after many years of worship and ritual. The people who created it, believed in it, and lived around it invested it with power that remains there still.

That power, of course, has diminished over the years. It has been a long time since anyone worshipped the Atacama Giant, and there have been those who have leeched power from it, power that has not been replenished. Today, it is seen as a curiosity for the most part, a remnant of ancient times.

There are those who are still drawn to it, though. When the Anjana were stranded here after the Spanish Conquest, they fled to many parts of Las Tierras Rojas. Places of power, like the Atacama Giant, called to them.

The Giant is still connected to the moon, continuing to track the moon's cycles and the seasons. This is a powerful symbolic link to creatures like the Anjana who are also connected to the moon and the seasons. While there are Anjana throughout Las Tierras Rojas, the Atacama Giant is the place where they can be most reliably contacted. They gather around the Giant under the light of the moon and hold their conclaves, and a careful watcher can see it all.



The Amazon Rainforest

Theme: Outsiders Not Welcome
Face: The Green Lady (page 177)

The Amazon Rainforest is a dense jungle that covers a large portion of Brazil, and smaller portions of Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and many other nations. Many different nations lay claim to Amazonia, but they are blind to the true rulers of the jungle.

For as long as anyone can remember, the Rainforest has been the territory of the Summer Court, and they protect it jealously. Deforestation has claimed many of the trees and much of the territory, but that did not come without a cost to those who perpetrated it—a cost in lives. Summer does not tolerate incursions into the Rainforest lightly, and those who trespass on their territory must be prepared to bargain for their own safety or forfeit their lives—or worse.

There are a number of tribes within the Amazon Rainforest that seem to be exempt from Summer's wrath. Perhaps they made bargains long ago that keep them safe, or perhaps they keep themselves safe with their own magic. These tribes practice a very old form of magic, perhaps predating even that practiced by the White Council. It's possible that they even learned this magic directly from the fae, which would go a long way toward explaining why they can move about within Amazonia unmolested.

For the rest of us, the Rainforest is a dangerous place. Unless you are an ally of the fae, or you create an alliance with them or the people of the Rainforest, you take your life into your hands when you enter. The fae that guard the Rainforest are not the Sidhe you may be used to. They are ferocious, red in tooth and claw, and they are not friendly toward mortalkind.

RIGHT. BECAUSE THE SIDHE WE KNOW ARE SO FRIENDLY.

Sure sounds like the Summer Sidhe I met.

The Andes

Threat: The Mountains are Waking
Face: Erasmo (page 177)

Summer is not the only Faerie Court who has a stronghold within South America, though. Where the Amazon Rainforest belongs to Summer, the Andes have long been Winter's domain. The fae of the Andes are cold and cruel, as one would expect from Winter, but they are not the savage monsters that the Summer fae of the Amazon are.

Winter's foothold in South America is not as firm as that of Summer, and they seek allies. Though they are no less dangerous than Summer, the Winter fae are bargain-makers rather than murderers. They trade in favors and promises, giving you your dreams in return. Many people have ventured into the Andes seeking fae to bargain with in order to bring a loved one back or bring rain to a village. Where venturing into the Amazon endangers your life, venturing into the Andes endangers your soul.

Winter is not the only presence here, however. In fact, they are a relatively new presence in the Andes, having only claimed the mountain range for the last thousand years. Before that time the Andes were the domain of the Apu, mountain-spirits who protected villages and settlements in exchange for sacrifice. When Winter came, the Apu were driven into hiding. They slumbered for a long time, keeping out of sight in order to avoid Winter's wrath, and their superior power.

Lately however, the Apu have been stirring. The destruction of the Red Court awoke them, and now they emerge from their mountain homes and seek to claim the power to drive Winter away from the mountain range that used to belong to them.

Where's Sean Bean when you need him?

I know, right?

ARE WE GOING TO SIT AROUND QUOTING MOVIES AND TV ALL DAY, OR ARE WE GOING TO DO SOME WORK?

There's one Sean Bean killed every year. With your kind donation we can make it through one year without killing Sean Bean.

I GIVE UP.



Gran Chaco

Theme: Contested Ground
Face: Angela Vargas (page 178)

Gran Chaco, the hunting land, is contested ground. Both Summer and Winter want it, and they have been fighting over it for centuries. I do not know why they want it, and I do not know why this conflict seems to take precedence over seizing control of Chichen Itza. This worries me more than a little. Though I do not know of any particular source of power in Gran Chaco, that does not mean that one does not exist.

In 1932, their conflict spilled over into the mortal world, sparking a bloody war that lasted three years and killed countless mortals. Though the history books say that Bolivia and Paraguay fought over oil that supposedly existed in the region, the Chaco War was the result of subtle manipulation by both Faerie Courts. There is no oil in the Gran Chaco region, but this carefully constructed lie convinced the two nations to murder each other for years.

Since that time, things have been somewhat quieter, though no less contentious. Both Courts still want Gran Chaco for their own reasons, reasons they are not sharing with the rest of us. Occasionally, battles between the Courts break out, but for the most part they use proxies and catspaws to do their dirty work. They fight with lawyers and businessmen rather than blades or magic.

Still, this is a dangerous place to be caught unawares. If you venture into Gran Chaco, keep the conflict in your mind, always. More than one mortal has been swept up in the conflict, becoming either a casualty or an unwitting or unwilling participant.

Buenos Aires

Theme: Supernatural Information Hub
Face: Esteban Ruiz (page 179)

One of the largest cities in South America, Buenos Aires is the cultural, political, and economic center of Argentina. It is a large cosmopolitan city, a tourist hub. Like any such city, crime is a problem; robbery, murder, and rape are hazards that the unwary must contend with. There is, however, an underbelly that most are not aware of.

Buenos Aires is the supernatural social hub of Las Tierras Rojas. The Red Court frequently used it as a meeting place, as it was the closest thing to a seat of political power that a group of secretive monsters who control things from the shadows can have. Even with the Red Court gone, Buenos Aires continues to hum with activity that mortals are only barely aware of.

A family of White Court vampires lives here—the Marino family, natives all—nearly ten vampires, though they keep their nature a secret from both mortals and supernaturals alike, and they are not affiliated with the White Court proper. I stumbled upon their secret when I first met Eva and realized what she was.

We have been observing them since the Red Court's destruction, and since that time numerous White Court vampires have visited the Marinos, but never for more than a few days at a time, and never in groups larger than two at a time. If the White Court is up to something, it seems the Marino family is involved in it. Perhaps they are preparing to take their place in the White Court.

The Black Court, too, has a presence here, though nothing so organized as their cousins. I have personally seen two Black Court vampires in Buenos Aires and my compatriots in the Fellowship have observed perhaps five more of the foul monsters lurking in the shadows of the city. They prey on the careless and the helpless, picking off lone victims or small groups and feeding upon them. They target tourists almost exclusively, likely because they do not think that tourists will be missed. Though not a great threat, I would like nothing more than to purge them from the city.

Summer and Winter both have presences here, Summer in the Botanical Gardens and Winter somewhere beneath the streets of the city. Neither Court seems to have any particular designs on the city, but they play their

games and spin their plots against each other. Sometimes it seems that they do not know how to do anything else.

Finally, Buenos Aires is where you are most likely to find one of the Keepers. It is here that I met Mitchel Blanchard (page 169), and it is in Buenos Aires—near the Obelisk, always—that we held our meetings. It seems likely that the Keepers are still here; Buenos Aires is the best place to come for information on the goings-on of the supernatural world.

The mortals, as I have said, are mostly unaware of all of this. People go missing or are found murdered and such things are blamed upon the desperate and wicked. Some know the truth, however. There are police officers, politicians, and reporters who know the true nature of their city. Some try to spread this knowledge, and are laughed at for their efforts. Others keep the knowledge to themselves, using it to their advantage. Some few—too few—use that knowledge to protect others from the depredations of supernatural predators.

It sounds like they're here with Lara's blessing which means she's probably keeping them on a mighty tight leash.

I mean that figuratively of course!

Man, I'm hanging out with Bob too much.

So these guys are like...White Court dissidents or something?

Yeah, maybe. Maybe they're on the run from Lara, maybe they simply don't want to be involved in the politics, maybe they want to carve out their own little fief and rule it.

Or maybe Lara does know and lets them think they're pulling the wool over her eyes. Or they're acting unaffiliated on her orders for some reason. Lots of possibilities and none particularly good.

Rio de Janeiro

Theme: Life of the Party, Death on the Streets

Face: Ulla Gottschalk (page 180)

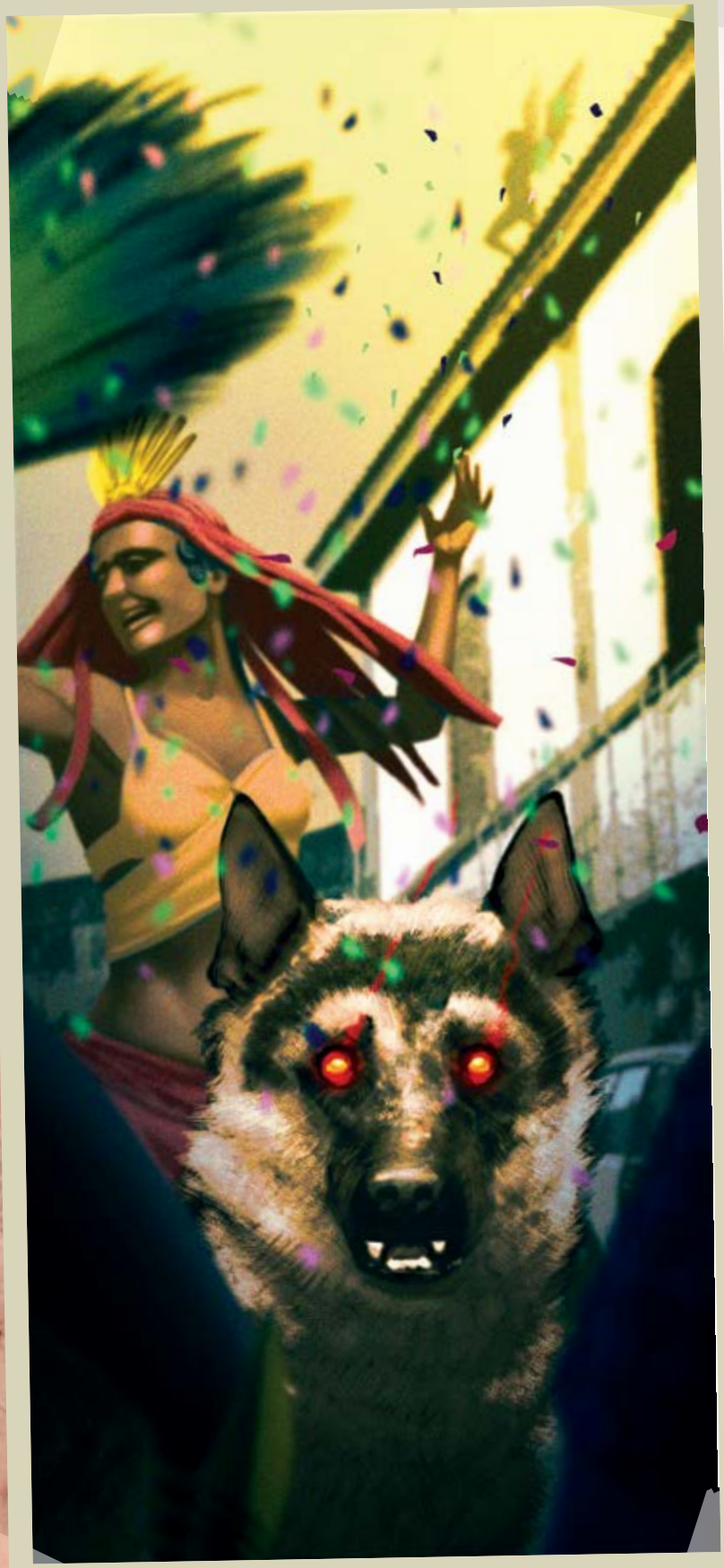
The city of Rio de Janeiro is a dangerous place, a city of vice and hedonism where murder is appallingly common. Where Buenos Aires is a hub of supernatural politics and information-brokering, Rio is a hunting ground. The predators know that no prey is quite so easy as the drunk foreigner who does not believe in you, and they capitalize on that fact daily.

House Raith of the White Court maintains a presence here, unsurprisingly. They are, for the most part, well-behaved for their kind, although I have no doubt they help the city hold fast to its reputation.

The Black Court is perhaps the biggest threat here, with a scourge of at least twenty of the creatures present within the city. They hunt, they kill, and—worst of all—they recruit from the populace and the tourists who come here to engage in their debauchery.

The vampires are not the only major threat here, though; a pack of wererats hunts in Rio. These beasts attack in a swarm, tearing their victims to shreds so they can feed upon them and steal their valuables. These creatures also act as a sort of loosely organized spy network; after all, nobody suspects that a rat is listening in on their secrets.

Rio de Janeiro is not without protectors, though. While the Ordo Torca is all over Las Tierras Rojas, there is a large contingent of them in Rio. We believe there to be at least twenty Ordo members in Rio, perhaps more, and they are extremely well-funded and equipped. They use Cristo Redento, the statue of Christ the Redeemer, as a meeting place, though I do not know where their base of operations is. It is possible that they do not have a single base of operations, operating as individuals and meeting only when necessary. Since the Ordo has arrived in Rio, fewer deaths have occurred at the hands of supernatural predators.



Were-creatures in Las Tierras Rojas

If you want to have oddball were-creatures in your very own game (and really, who wouldn't?), they're pretty easy to make. Use the basic were-form template (YS82) and give them abilities based on their alternate form.

- **Werejaguars**: Inhuman Speed, Inhuman Strength, and Claws. Prioritize Fists (for taking down prey) and Athletics (for running, climbing, and jumping through trees).
- **Wererats**: Inhuman Speed, Diminutive Size, and Pack Instincts. Stealth should be pretty high, as should Athletics.
- **Weredolphins**: Inhuman Speed, Inhuman Strength, and Aquatic. Maybe even Pack Instincts, given that dolphins often travel in groups, and Supernatural Sense to cover their sonar. Athletics should be high for all that swimming, as well as Alertness. Maybe Fists for nosing sharks in the stomach and Rapport for showing off for tourists.

WERERATS? COULD YOU DO THAT, WILL? CAN YOU CHANGE INTO SOMETHING SMALL LIKE THAT?

I wouldn't even know how to try. My wolf shape is pretty much the same size as I am in terms of mass, and I can make myself a little bit bigger when I need to. Harry explained it to me once; he told me that I was borrowing mass from the Nevernever to increase my own.

AH, GOT IT. SO HOW DOES IT WORK WHEN YOU GO SMALLER?

Harry talked to me about that, too. He told me I'd have to find a way to hide my excess mass in the Nevernever somehow, but he wasn't sure how that would work exactly.

Squelch! Ew! Who hid all this mass here?

Nice. That was just the right balance of gross and funny, Eyes. I think some Coke came out through my nose, there.

ANYWAY...HAVE YOU EVER MET ANY PEOPLE THAT COULD ASSUME OTHER FORMS? OTHER THAN WOLF, I MEAN?

I don't think so. I've heard about weredolphins in the Amazon, though.

I...ARE YOU BEING SERIOUS RIGHT NOW?

It's true! I saw it on Wikipedia!



The Ways Between



Traveling the Ways Between

I'm Mike. I'm not a wizard or a monster, but I know a few tricks. I know the ways between places and I walk them. I've been all over this country, from left to right and top to bottom, and I've seen my fair share of weird and uncanny and downright creepy in my day. I've picked up some stories, and got asked to pass them on. Don't quite know why Mr. Borden called in his marker for a bunch of written-down stories, not all of them first-hand, but that's his business, I suppose.

I make good on my debts.

Let me be clear about one thing—this is not advice for heroes. Heroes get themselves killed, usually after they get a bunch of other people killed. Hell, I wouldn't even call this advice. What I *would* call this is a collection of cautionary tales, tales you'll hopefully heed if you get your hands on this document. I don't know what's going to happen with these pages, but if they're useful to someone in need, then I guess it was worth the time it took me to write them down.

The shit you'll find in this document can get pretty scary. Trust me—it's a lot scarier when you're staring straight into the eyes of a thing twice your size that can bench-press a Buick. When that moment is upon you, run. Run like hell. Keep your head down, break sight lines, and stay out of that thing's way. You want to be a hero, well, that's your business. But do it smart or don't do it at all.

Mike's Rules

- Never drink anywhere you don't know the barkeep by name.
- A shotgun to the knee slows down damn near anything.
- If it comes to a fight, you're already losing.
- If you gotta fight, choose the ground.
- If you can't fix it, it's probably not worth taking.
- Fire and water are potent but unreliable allies.
- Pack a knife.
- Pay cash.
- Cell phones are like magic. No, really, magic. Very handy when it helps you out, but an unmitigated disaster the rest of the time.

From the Desk of Will Borden

So I got these reports that I think are good info; I wanted to put them in this book but I wasn't really sure how. Then Murphy had a great idea: why not make a chapter about travel?

See, all of the chapters in this book and in the two preceding books (except for maybe *Las Tierras Rojas*, page 146) assume you're staying in one place. But what if you're not? What if you're going from one place to another and you need some stuff to happen in between? What if you're on the run or you just fancy a game that's a big old road trip? That's why a chapter on travel.

Throughout the rest of this chapter you'll see some stuff that doesn't look like it does in other chapters. We've got two contributors—Mike, who you'll meet in a moment, and Peregrine, a wizard who travels the Nevernever. There's also a campaign for you to try out that ties all the pieces together. I'm going to chime in with boxes like this one to explain things where things need explaining, so keep an eye out for them.

And be careful; it's dangerous to go alone!

Take this.

What exactly did you do for this guy?

I, uh, taught him how to use email.

Okaaaay...



I used to be a monster...

Faerie's Bargain: A Ways Between Campaign Frame

An episodic road trip is all well and good for the occasional game session, but what if you want to string a bunch of them together to create a road trip game? You need some sort of through-line. You need a reason why the PCs are travelling as opposed to staying in place, you need reasons for them to go to all the interesting places where your episodes happen, and you need something they're going to have to resolve eventually in order to conclude their road trip.

Enter *Faerie's Bargain*. *Faerie's Bargain* is a sample campaign frame for a road trip game that follows the travels and travails of three inexperienced players in the supernatural world: Robert Aiello (page 199), Emily Harris, and Ian Harris (page 200). These three are on the run from a fae spirit (Windsnap, page 204) that Robert made a foolish deal with, and they need to find some way to get the spirit off their backs so they can get back to their lives.

Throughout this chapter you'll find boxes like this one that give you hooks for the campaign, as well as information like character stats, themes and threats, and so forth.





The Nevernever

Yeah, I've been to the Nevernever a few times. Of course, there are a few folks who've been there a few more times than I have. Some of what follows deals with the Nevernever, so I figure it's worth talking about it in broad strokes for a bit here. Now, I know just enough to get by, so I'm maybe not the best one to be schooling you on how Nevernever and Faerie and all that stuff works. I've got a wizard friend—lady named Peregrine Lee, if you can believe it—who knows quite a bit more about it all than I do. I asked her to send me some of her notes, so that's what follows for a bit. Enjoy.

Wizard Peregrine Lee is the most awesome name ever.

My Dear Michael,

Enclosed are some of my notes on the Nevernever. I fear they are already incorrect in many ways, if not all together useless.

This is the challenge of creating any sort of a journal of this type. You say something is *always* like this, and then a few pages later, you remember the one time it wasn't, and you feel like you'll be thought deceitful (or worse yet, inept) by those who read your work later.

That issue is only exacerbated by the very nature of the topic I'm tasked to document. There are no absolutes across the whole of the Nevernever. By its very nature, even if there were an absolute truth today, tomorrow it may very well be shifted, altered, or even reversed, at least in some corner of the Wyldlands or within a certain demesne.

Equally difficult is trying to capture the nearly infinite variety found herein, or to put any sort of a categorization to it. I could write a thousand journals, for a thousand lifetimes, and not capture it all.

That may be what I love the most about these horrible, wonderful, deadly, vibrant lands—anything is possible.

Sincerely yours,

Peregrine



How'd We End Up Here Anyway?

Wizard Peregrine "Call Me Pippin, I Dare You" Lee's dramatic descriptions aside, a rollicking Dresden Files campaign might very well end up in the Nevernever at some point.

What could convince an otherwise perfectly rational PC of sound mind to take a trip there? We have some ideas on that.

- **Something You Need:** Someone/something with access to the Nevernever took something from you that you really can't live without. Maybe a key to someone's safe deposit box at the bank; you stole that key fair & square. Maybe a vial of your blood; you'd best retrieve that before someone does something unspeakable with it. Maybe someone got kidnapped; think of the brownie points you'll score with the White Council if you get them back.
- **Short Cut:** When a wizard in some far-flung corner of the world wants to get to Edinburgh, she doesn't name her own price online. She plots out a route through the Nevernever and gets there without wasting time trying to explain to airport security what a blasting rod is. Of course, the Nevernever has dangers of its own...
- **Tryin' to Get Home:** Maybe you didn't *want* to go to the Nevernever at all, but here you are. Maybe something kidnapped you. Maybe you tagged along with someone, then got separated. For whatever reason, now you just want to get home. Good luck with that.
- **Demesne Sweet Demesne:** Wizard Lee talks more about what a demesne is and what it means on page 238 and there are some potential demesnes for your game on page 241. But what happens if you (or someone you know) tries to carve out a little space of the Nevernever for themselves? We included some rules for that on page 254.
- **You Fell Asleep:** When dreaming, we are all capable of creating our own demesne within the Nevernever. There we are potentially both very powerful and very vulnerable. See Dreamers (OW71) for more.

You wouldn't begrudge a wizard his walking stick, would you?

SUCH A NERD.

So are you for getting the reference.

YOU DON'T NEED TO BE A NERD TO GET A LORD OF THE RINGS REFERENCE, ONLY TO MAKE ONE.

In case you're wondering: yeah, she actually talks like that. You get used to it.

—M.

The Wylde Frontier

I'm amused that Mike's notes came with some notes scrawled in the margins already.

The Nevernever is a domain of terror and wonder in equal measure, and is riotously, inescapably, impossibly alive. It is Hades and Shangri-La, distilled down to their bittersweet essence and then smoked through the hashpipe of the gods.

My name is Peregrine Lee. I am an explorer, a wanderer, a sometime apprentice to the Gatekeeper.

In my travels, I have walked across the surface of the moon. I've passed through fertile gardens and dined on plates of gold. I've slept beneath alien constellations, and sampled pleasures beyond mortal ken.

I've also been poisoned, strangled, and imprisoned (more than once). I've been put through tortures physical, mental, and emotional—enough to send a dozen strong-willed men to asylums.

And yet, I remain.

I have been tasked with chronicling what I have found, both as a lesson and as a warning to those who would navigate these beautiful and bloody lands.

I am doomed to fail.

It is impossible to truly comprehend the mercurial nature of the Nevernever. This place is, quite literally, the stuff dreams are made of—fantasies and nightmares alike.

Some regions are home to monsters, terrible and wonderful, mortal or no. The Fair Folk lay claim to much of what lies up against the mortal world, like an asp curling gently around a sleeping babe. But beyond Faerie lies the true Wyldlands, and that is where the impossible becomes *de rigueur*. If you can imagine it, it exists somewhere here on the borderlands between Faerie and What Lies Beyond.



Getting Around in the Nevernever

Our best advice is "Don't overthink this." As you use Survival to navigate through the wilderness, Contacts or Drive for navigating the city, the Lore skill (and maybe Scholarship, if the player can justify it) is what you need to get around the Nevernever. Maybe you can't get to Faerie from that ghost's demesne without stepping outside the Nevernever first, but without a Great Lore roll, you might not know that...

Of course, you might have no way at all of knowing any of this, and the best Lore roll in history won't change that. That's when it's time to ask for directions. Maybe it's a simple Contacts roll; or maybe it's the entire point of the evening's game session, seeking out the fickle wyldfae pixie and tracking down the ancient trinket he demands in exchange for the information you're after.

Or maybe you can't find anyone who knows. Could be that you need to make with the magic; if you have a focus object, a tracking spell might be helpful. But beware, the conceptual directions of the Nevernever can lead you to some weird places in spite of a tracking spell—maybe *especially with* a tracking spell.

Finding the Way

The "reality"—and I use the term loosely—is that distance here in the Nevernever cannot be measured in miles nor meters, nor direction in any sort of cardinal fashion. There exists no North, South, East, or West; even up and down can be malleable to the whims of those who hold sway here. You cannot simply tread straight on towards your destination—even if it seems only a stone's throw away—and be certain you will arrive there. The Way between two locations may require counting steps, turning at hard-to-detect landmarks, or knowing the proper branch of the certain tree to climb to in order to reach the other end of a Way.

It is also possible that, as the colloquialism goes, you simply cannot get there from here.

Within the Nevernever, the connection between one place and any other is a matter of conceptual proximity, rather than physicality; of resonance, rather than reason. You might reach a realm of creativity and passion through a Waypoint located in a seedy hotel room, a pristine jungle glade, an ancient castle ruin, or a Broadway stage—or each of them in some sequence known and understood only to those who have plumbed the secrets of that demesne. To the casual observer, however, even those connections may not make sense. What unites Point A and Point B here in the farthest reaches may only be evident to the owner of said locale—if at all.

Assumption has killed more than one traveler who thought he had a grip on the rules of the land here in the Nevernever. To a person who is used to thinking in three dimensions and finite directions, the Nevernever's infinite possibilities are hard to believe, let alone comprehend.

We also have many things to be wary of, especially considering how near-immortal and nigh-all-powerful—not to mention utterly amoral—some of the residents out here are. While it might be egotistical to fancy myself the Gertrude Bell of the Nevernever, I don't know of anyone who has spent as much time not only exploring this place, but also trying to truly understand it.

We don't know a ton about Harry's mom, but rumor has it that her experiences and understanding of the Nevernever would give Peregrine a run for that title.

To minds raised on finite topography, measurable distance, and fixed directions, conceptualizing the geography of the Nevernever is a Herculean task.

Navigating it is even more so.

Imagine a pizza. You've laid out the dough, and you've spread sauce over it. You could very easily sprinkle on cheese and have a good pie. This is how mortals think of our existence, that we are cheese upon the sauce and dough of creation.

But to think of the Nevernever, this pizza has loads of other toppings both atop and near the cheese, but also mixed into the sauce and baked into the crust. It would not be uncommon or strange then for this pizza to have a piece of sausage rising up amid a pool of cheese, next to a shred of bacon, half-buried and melded into a string of onions and crust. To further develop this pizza, consider stretching it in any direction (without tearing it) and fold pieces unto themselves. That's the Nevernever.

It seems a simple analogy; like most simple analogies, it only goes so far to explain the truth of the situation.

The world is not pizza, and the Nevernever no more pays attention to mundane geography than it does to any other facet of human concepts. Thus, it can't form a nice, even coating around the globe, and it doesn't line up in any sort of a logical geographical sense.

The sausage is near the crust is near the peppers is near the eggplant is near the garlic. That's more like the Nevernever's relationship with the world. The pizza is not just cheese alone, but the combinations of all flavors and textures, all coexisting to form the whole pizza as well as the individual part.

I suggested she use the pizza analogy. It's easier to understand than her first choice for explanation... something about quarks and bosons.

Known Waypoints

Peregrine's pretty concerned about knowing *why* Waypoints work; I just care that they *do* work. I've been collecting Waypoints during my travels, writing down where they are and where they go so I know the quickest (and least risky) ways to get from A to B to Z. Here are a few of the highlights.

There's a cave outside of Los Alamos that'll take you through a haunted forest on your way to the Great White North. Honest to God, it dumps you in the middle of Manitoba. Useful for skipping border crossings if you need to.

My friend Paolo's apartment in San Francisco has a Waypoint just out back. There's a pretty big lake on the other side—so bring your swimming trunks—and if you swim far enough down you'll end up in Lake Superior.

Best way to get out of Florida when someone's looking for you is through a pair of palm trees in front the Old Palms Hotel in Perry. It'll get you out quick, but it'll dump you into somebody's castle. If you can get out the front gate before the guards catch you you'll wind up somewhere in Minnesota.

There's one I found, but I couldn't think of a use for it for the longest time. It drops straight down into a vast underground sea full of God-knows-what (I've never been brave enough to actually explore it), but the fact that it's in a dumpster behind a truck stop on the New Jersey Turnpike leads me to think it's a good place for disposing of stuff.

Like a murdered Teamster boss.



Points of Power

Many Waypoints seem to be located along ley lines, or in other areas of significant energy, or places with strong natural, human, or supernatural import. It sounds so simple. But *energy* is a mutable term, as is *import*. What is core to one being's nature might be insignificant to another, so the potential exists for a Waypoint to open into the Nevernever from almost any location (or to open *out* of the Nevernever into almost any location).

Some folks describe the Waypoints as a series of magical doors, opening and closing between the mortal world and the Nevernever. Or wormholes with their own sense of time and space. Or secret passages behind the stage that is the human world.

My suspicions are that there is no one answer, no more than there is one "right" way to do magic or one true religion. There are just different ways of looking at the infinite stretches of what exists, and trying to apply labels that let our tiny finite minds grasp some sense of it.

There are a few nexus points in the mortal world where clusters of Waypoints are found in a relatively small area, allowing those in the know (or in control of the nexus areas) to enter a wide variety of diverse locations in the Nevernever. Most of these are carefully managed by organized groups of powerful individuals, as they are a potent resource.

Be careful if you stumble across one of these areas. It's unlikely that the individuals in charge of them will take your intrusion lightly.

I think Michael might take offense at that.
Just Michael?

We have to take Peregrine's word for this because the casefiles don't mention nexus points or managers. But it does seem to make sense.

Traversing the Way

Faerie is not all of the Nevernever. Ways lead through personal demesnes, through ghostly hallows, through Dragons' lairs, and even occasionally through the unclaimed Wyldlands between them. These routes are simply much rarer than those within the lands held by the Courts.

Outside of Faerie, it is a rare demesne that contains more than one or two Waypoints; personal demesnes are rarely powerful or large enough to sustain them.

For the most part, a Way is considered sacrosanct—protected passage for travelers upon it, providing they are there with the local ruler's blessing. However, one step out of line, and all bets are off. And those who prey on the lost are sometimes more than willing to use deceit, treachery, or outright force to ensure their targets leave the safety of their path.

Still, threats aside, using the Ways is vastly preferable to trying to explore the Nevernever cross-country over figurative or literal hill and dale. I heartily recommend not entering any demesne without being aware of at least one alternative Waypoint out (and, of course, the location that exiting through that point will deposit one into. No sense leaping out of the frying pan and into the fire).

Okay, I've been seeing it, I've been writing it, but how the hell do I pronounce "demesne"?

Dih-main. A lot like "domain" but with a schwa.

I think you mean "a lot like 'domain' but with an assload of pretension."

Faerie's Bargain: Meet the Player Characters

Robert, Emily, and Ian are designed as PCs. They've only just stumbled into this weirder world, getting their feet wet (Refresh 6). If your group is larger, it's easy to add a significant other or old combat buddy for Ian, a sibling for Robert, a childhood friend of Emily's, etc. The key is to keep this group interconnected—it's very much them against an unfriendly world.

Robert Aiello

Minor Talent, Major Trouble

Motivation: Get out of this without anyone getting hurt.

Robert is a 22-year-old college senior at Millerstown State College, a little school in rural Pennsylvania. He's a charming, if a little new-agey, environmentalist—the sort of guy who wears a lot of hemp, protests industrial development, believes in the efficacy of crystal gazing, and everyone likes him anyway. He's hopelessly in love with Emily Harris, his girlfriend of the past two years, who attends nearby Dauphin University. He's not sure how to deal with Emily's brother Ian, who pretty much scares the hell out of him. One thing sets him apart from his comrades in the Millerstown men's drum circle—his talent for divination is very real.

Robert Aiello

High Concept
Tree-Hugging Seer

Trouble
Broken Pact with Windsnap

Other Aspects
Keep That Gun Away From Me
Anything for Emily
I'm Sorry I Got You Into This
It's a Natural Fiber
There's More to These Crystals Than I Realized

Skills

Conviction:	Average	(+1)
Discipline:	Good	(+3)
Driving:	Average	(+1)
Empathy:	Average	(+1)
Fists:	Average	(+1)
Lore:	Good	(+3)
Performance:	Fair	(+2)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)
Rapport:	Great	(+4)
Scholarship:	Fair	(+2)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
Thaumaturgy [-3]

Specializations
Thaumaturgy: Complexity (Divination +1)

Focus Items
Sonoma Resonant Crystal (Divination Complexity +2)

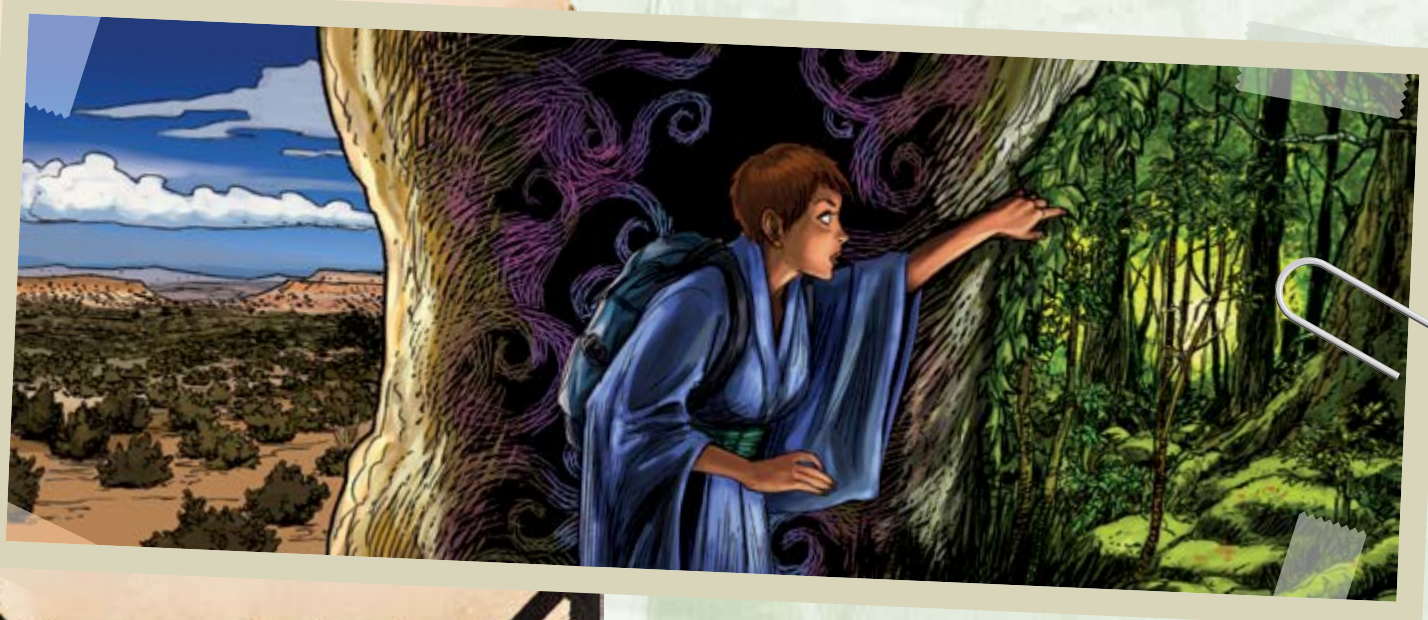
Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOO

Notes
Mediocre Initiative, Fair attacks with Fists, Fair defenses in melee or Mediocre at range. Robert really isn't a fighter. If given the chance, he'll use a veil or illusion to avoid the conflict.

So far, Robert has only exhibited talent with divination and illusions. This means he's a bit more than a focused practitioner, but probably hasn't yet realized the full range of his potential.

Total Refresh Cost: -3



Emily Harris

High Concept
Mostly-Reformed Eco-Terrorist

Trouble
On a DHS Watch List

Other Aspects
Only Robert Truly Knows Me
Back Off, Ian!
I Can Get in There
I Will Make a Difference
Sabotage Is Just Repairing In Reverse

Skills
Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Burglary:	Great	(+4)
Conviction:	Average	(+1)
Craftsmanship:	Great	(+4)
Empathy:	Average	(+1)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)
Rapport:	Fair	(+2)
Scholarship:	Good	(+3)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Saboteur (Craftsmanship): Emily's knowledge of machinery and manufacturing means she knows where the weak spots are. She may use her Craftsmanship skill to attack anything with moving parts.

Cat-Burglar (Burglary): Emily is a thief with catlike tread; she may use Burglary instead of Stealth for Hiding or Skulking.

Stress
Mental	OOO
Physical	OO
Social	OOO

Notes
Mediocre combat skills. Emily is not a fighter, at all. She attempts to avoid conflict if possible and evades if it isn't.

Total Refresh Cost: -0
(Pure Mortal)

Ian Harris

High Concept
Former Recon Marine

Trouble
PTSD

Other Aspects
Semper Fi!
If Robert Hurts Emily, I'll Kill Him
Guardian Angel
Improvise, Adapt, Overcome
"I Must Shoot Him Before He Shoots Me."

Skills
Alertness:	Average	(+1)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Contacts:	Average	(+1)
Driving:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Guns:	Great	(+4)
Intimidation:	Fair	(+2)
Stealth:	Average	(+1)
Survival:	Fair	(+2)
Weapons:	Average	(+1)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Tireless (Endurance): Ian's Endurance is considered Fantastic whenever Endurance might restrict, complement, or otherwise modify another skill. This has no effect when Endurance is rolled directly, however.

Target-Rich Environment (Guns): Ian gains a +1 to attacks with Guns whenever personally outnumbered in a firefight.

Leave No One Behind (Guns): Ian gains +2 to Guns rolls whenever covering an ally's withdrawal.

Marines never retreat.

Stress
Mental	OO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OO

Notes
Average initiative, Great attacks with Guns, Good defenses. Ian knows how to handle himself in a firefight.

Total Refresh Cost: -1
(Pure Mortal)

Emily Harris
Reformed Radical
Motivation: I can fix this.

Emily is a 23-year-old junior at Dauphin University. She's extremely intelligent and has a natural talent for understanding complicated devices and mechanisms both small and large. Emily spent a couple of years after high school involved with an outlaw direct-action environmental group, putting her skills to work in burglary and sabotage. A close call with a federal prosecutor scared her straight, and now she studies environmental engineering (on a full scholarship) at Dauphin. She fell hard for Robert at a gas drilling protest two years ago, and the two have been an item since. She knows Ian means well and is trying not to meddle, but she wishes he'd back off a bit.

Ian Harris
Overprotective Former Marine
Motivation: What's best for Emily.

Ian is a 30-year-old former Marine from Scranton, PA, and Emily's older brother. Although he's been working construction for a year or so, he did two combat tours in Afghanistan and one in Iraq, and he has the scars to prove it. Ever since Emily nearly got in very serious trouble a few years back, he's struggled with the conflicting desire to protect his kid sister from herself while letting her live a life he knows he'll never really understand. He tolerates her tree-hugging boyfriend, mostly because it's so obvious that his feelings for her are genuine and are genuinely requited.

Tapping Places of Power

Tapping a ley line (or some other power source) to open a Waypoint is no different than any other use of sponsored magic; it's just limited in the consequences it can extract.

Ley lines and fonts of power don't have agendas of their own (well, not usually, anyway), so the debt incurred should either be something immediate—maybe the Waypoint can't be closed easily, even if someone nasty is chasing you—or it should reflect how the spellcaster is affected by the crutch that the font provided. Maybe it applies a temporary aspect (Attuned) that makes the next spell the caster attempts without the ley line that much more difficult, because she has, even if only briefly, attuned to that ley line.

This is good advice for any caster using that sort of impersonal sponsorship of their magic, for whatever purpose. No need to confine this to opening Waypoints.

Faerie's Bargain: Themes and Threats

Each episode should have its own theme and threat. Since *Faerie's Bargain* is an overarching story to give structure to the game, you'll need some stuff that spans the whole campaign.

To that end, here's a theme and a threat for the *Faerie's Bargain* campaign that applies regardless of the episode you're playing:

What's Coming to You: A threat intended to represent the calling in of old debts.

We'll All Go Down Together: A theme that holds out the hope that loyalty to a friend has as much power in defeat as in victory.

Example Themes and Threats

If you're designing your own game on the go, here are some ideas to get you started on your own themes and threats.

Because sometimes bad guys make the best good guys.

Bite your tongue, Waldo.

- **Thieves Prosper**: People take what isn't theirs. Sometimes it's for a greater good, sometimes it's not—everything balances out in the end, doesn't it?
- **Where the Wild Things Are**: Maybe they want to eat you. Maybe they want you to join them. But wherever you go, you're either the hunted or the hunter.
- **Have Wand, Will Travel**: You have mojo burning a hole in your pocket and no roots holding you down. But that sometimes carefree lifestyle is funded by those who hire your services.
- **Not All Those Who Wander Are Lost**: It's a big world out there. People don't put roots down for a lot of reasons—some good, some less so.
- **Someone Has To**: And it looks likes that someone is you.
- **Another Turning Point, A Fork Stuck in the Road**: The choices you make *really* matter and have lasting implications.
- **This Modern Life**: Modern life has many advantages; in a short period of time, those advantages have become indispensable.
- **All That Glitters**: Not only might it not be gold, but it's possibly a trap.
- **The Old Country**: History started long before we started paying attention. But just because we don't know about things doesn't mean they don't affect us.
- **Young Blood**: Bloodshed has its consequences. Whether it's a national war or a more personal conflict, the dead seek justice or vengeance.
- **God's Country**: Sometimes those who claim to follow God are avenging angels. Or crazy cultists. Or terrifying reactionaries. The many forms of belief—and how it impacts your characters—show up throughout this campaign.

Mother Nature is a Character

One of the monsters your characters might face on the road is Mother Nature herself. I don't mean personified, although you can go that route too, if you want.

But think about it. What do people worry about when they're far from civilization? Battling the elements, making sure there's enough gas in the car, making sure they have enough food and water, finding shelter from the cold, making sure nothing dangerous finds them during the night—basic survival necessities.

It's boring if the PCs are making shopping lists and micromanaging how many days of supplies they have, but you can represent the influence of nature on the PCs by treating it like a character.

In Your Story, we talked about how you can give environmental hazards their own skills to perform attacks and maneuvers on your characters (YS325). On the road, use that to make the PCs defend against the privations of travel. Tailor the skill rating you give Mother Nature using the guidelines on setting difficulties on YS310-312.

Are they out in the woods with a dwindling food supply? Have them defend against a series of physical attacks with Survival, increasing the difficulty the longer they go without food. Can they get to the next station before fuel runs out? Make it a contest (YS193) using Drive—they run out of gas if they lose. Do they have to cross a long stretch of dangerous terrain? Make it a challenge (YS324) using Endurance, and hit them for physical stress and consequences every time they fail.

Feel free to presume that Mother Nature can use any of the themes in your game as aspects just the same as if they were on an NPC.

Skills on the Road

Some skills are a lot more (or less) useful when you start traveling from place to place, when you're at the mercy of nature and monsters and ordinary humans who might value things other than money.

- Craftsmanship: Stuff breaks down on the road. Need to fix your car? Create a lean-to to help you weather the storm? Make some ground unstable so it's harder for that thing to get you? This is the skill for you. You'll use it to overcome various obstacles, but you'll also use it to make assessments and declarations to represent things like souped-up engines or simple shelter.
- Endurance: Weather. Hunger. Thirst. Forced marches for days on end. These things are much bigger factors in the wild than they are in the nice, comfortable cities of the world.
- Resources: This one might seem like it's less valuable at times because how are you going to spend money when you're in the middle of the wilderness, or when your car gets a flat and there's not a soul in miles? You're not. But that doesn't mean you can't use Resources to make a declaration about what youalready have. Use Resources for flashbacks and retroactive preparedness and you'll find it's just as useful in the wilderness as in the city.
- Survival: Need food, water, natural shelter, or a way through the woods? This is how you do it. This is the skill of the road.

Okay, I get that we're going with a conceit here, but I have to ask the question: if you have to get somewhere and you don't want to deal with all the scary whatnots out there, why drive? Why not take an airplane?

It's expensive, it's not exactly low profile, and planes don't go everywhere. And do you want some slathering monster following you onto a jet with all those civilians?

Plus, think about what happens when someone like Harry's around high-tech gear like, oh, aeronautical electronics.

So air travel bad. Important safety tip. Thanks, Egon.

Modern Technology and the Hunted

The more savvy supernatural hunters learn how to keep tabs on mortal technology. People on the run need to be careful about what electronic tracks they leave behind, lest someone show up that they don't want to see.

If the PCs are flagrant about using technology, don't hesitate to take that as an aspect for you to compel.

Cell phone always on? Hacked GPS.

Use a credit card? Pinged Credit Monitor.

Get on a plane? No Fly List.

And remember that overtly throwing magic around is one of the more efficient ways to brick an iPhone or smoke a laptop. Given GPS hackery, it could wind up being a blessing in disguise for your PCs.

Faerie's Bargain: Windsnap

Malicious Pixie

Motivation: You owe me a favor.

Face of: Threat What's Coming to You

Windsnap is the main antagonist in *Faerie's Bargain*, which also helps connect the episodes. Even if he isn't playing an active role in the episode, chances are that he and his lackeys are behind at least part of what's happening.

Windsnap started out as a minor pixie-like wyldfae, a lot like Toot-toot when we first meet him in the Storm Front casefile. Windsnap developed a pretty good shtick for conning receptive mortals—the more gullible among nature-loving spiritualists and woodsy nature religions became his prime targets. Posing as whatever nature spirit or deity would be most effective for the particular circumstance, he'd promise to teach his mark powerful secrets in exchange for a favor.

The favor was, invariably, something awful that he could use to bring himself vast power. A beloved pet, never seen again. A vial of another person's blood taken without consent. Or worse. Over the years, Windsnap has gotten more and more terrifying.

He has a small cadre of hangers-on and lackeys scattered around the Nevernever and mortal world, many of whom are on the lookout for the PCs.

Other Road Games

If *Faerie's Bargain* doesn't do it for you, there are a myriad of other possibilities for a campaign on the go.

- I Hunt Alone: The Road is a good opportunity to try a solo campaign. One powerful warden is charged by the White Council to hunt down the most dangerous warlocks and lawbreakers. Each day brings her to a new town, a new situation, as she follows her prey's trail.
- Lawbreakers: A small band of minor talents and focused practitioners who made a bad decision try to get away from the ruthless Warden hot on their heels.
- Stranger Than Fiction: The producers and cast of a reality series called WeirdHunters live out of their van as they investigate stories of the supernatural across the country. They're Web-only right now, but any day a cable network's gonna call! If they live that long.
- Magical Geographic Society: A ley line cartographer and his assistants travel the continent, mapping out ley lines, identifying fonts of power, and dodging the nasties that use places like that for hunting grounds.
- Underground Railroad: A darker campaign focusing on a group of selfless Paranetters who find innocent people in supernatural trouble and escort them to safety. No matter who or what they cross, they *will* get 'em out of harm's way.
- Road Trip: Four best friends—and apprentice wizards—acquire a few hundred bucks, an early '70s vintage big-ass red Ford, and a summer off. This won't end well, but it will almost certainly have been worth it.

Fonts of power? I know a weregator who has a few thoughts to share about that.

If Big-Ass Red Ford doesn't wind up as an aspect for one of those PCs, then I can't even talk to you.

Just what the world needs, frat wizards on a road trip.



Windsnap

High Concept
Pixie Playing God

Other Aspects
What Fools These Mortals Be
Favors Due
Grown in Size and Power
Army of Minions, Lackeys, & Servants
Tremble Before Me

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Contacts:	Great	(+4)
Conviction:	Good	(+3)
Deceit:	Superb	(+5)
Discipline:	Fair	(+2)
Empathy:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Fair	(+2)
Intimidation:	Great	(+4)
Lore:	Great	(+4)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Rapport:	Great	(+4)
Stealth:	Fair	(+2)

Most other skills default to Average or Fair.

Powers
Claws [-1]
Glamours [-2]
Wings [-1]
Inhuman Speed [-2]
The Catch [+3] is cold iron and the like.
Inhuman Toughness [-2]

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OOOO(OO), **Armor:1**
Social	OOOO

Notes
Fantastic initiative, Fair attacks with **Weapon:2** claws, Great defense. Capable of creating veils and seemings with Superb skill.

Windsnap is really a con artist and pyramid schemer who has gotten lots of power from favors done for him by foolish mortals, then exchanging those favors for power and influence. As a result, he's no longer a simple pixie, but he really isn't that much of a threat compared to more powerful wyldfae, or Court members. But he is very good at running a bluff and playing up the role of being a powerful nature god. He uses his Glamours to great effect to enhance his Deceit and Intimidation rolls. Plus he's almost never without backup in the form of pixies, less powerful wyldfae, and humans who owe and/or worship him.

Total Refresh Cost: -5

So we're treating the game like a TV show now?

Man, can you imagine if they made a TV show out of our lives? That would be nuts!

What Follows

The words that follow are Mike's, but I've gone ahead and organized them into episodes. What's an episode? I'm glad you asked!

A session on the road shares one basic trait in common with a session in a normal city game—you have to provide something for your player characters to interact with. However, you can't design a scenario the way we recommend it in Your Story, because you don't have the library of references that you built up during city creation.

Therefore, we're going to show you a different way of gathering material for a road game—by creating *episodes*. Think of an episode as a miniaturized version of city creation, but focused only on one particular situation or problem. Instead of a broad swath of faces and locations, you're going to create only what you need in order to present your players with a session full of drama and tension.

Follow these steps to create an episode.

- **Choose the theme.** An episode has a theme just like a city can, but it's specific to that episode.
- **Define the problem.** All episodes need a problem—one that won't get solved unless the PCs get involved. Think of ways to make the players be proactive when you're creating your problem.
- **Choose a threat for the problem.** Because a problem is intractable and impending, it's got a threat to represent it. These work just like threats for a city (YS31) except that they're episode-specific.
- **Create a location.** Your episode has to take place somewhere, so create a location. Because you already have a theme and a threat for your episode, you don't need any for the location. Feel free to pepper it with interesting aspects, though.
- **Create two NPCs.** You can create more, but you need at least two. Here's the trick: one of them is the face of the location, and the other has goals in *direct opposition* to the face. These NPCs are on opposite sides of the problem, so there's conflict.

The rest of this chapter is a series of episodes. You can use them as examples of how to create them, you can drop them into your own game, or you can modify them to suit your needs.

One last thing: if you plan on doing a series of connected episodes, sort of like a mini-campaign that works a bit like a TV series, you'll want to create an overarching theme and threat for the entire trip. Check out *Faerie's Bargain* for an example.



Episodes: The Spaces Between

Europe's where the history comes from, after all.

A very cunning use of flags!

Folks over in Europe have this notion that this is a young country. They look at the founding date for Boston or Philadelphia and point out that their corner pub is older than that, and they all have a good laugh.

It's a load of crap, and it'll get you killed.

Mammoths, saber-cats, and ancient hunters once stalked this land, and were stalked in turn by things far older and far more dangerous. Our nations may be new, but the land—the earth beneath our feet—has seen things that stagger the imagination, countless things, terrible things. And it has not forgotten.

People fought over this land; to this day, they still do. Though they don't know it, they do so for the very simple reason that this land has power. The sprits in this land are ancient and potent, and they scoff at the petty notions of property and ownership that we place on the ground we walk on.

Those spirits are still here. So are the ancient things that used to stalk the darkness. Only instead of hunting mammoths or saber-cats, they now make prey of those foolish enough to let their guard down out in the open spaces between civilization's sheltered spaces.

That's what I mean when I say this is Old Country, big O big C. When you're out there on the road, you are not in the same country as the stockbroker in his penthouse suite or the politician in her big office. You're in Old Country, and here there be monsters.

Wait a second, I thought Joe Magarac was fakelore.

Uh, what?

Fake folklore. Like Paul Bunyan or Thanksgiving in November.

As opposed to real imaginary stories?

Exactly!

I'm just going to let you think about that for a bit.

Lost and Found

Theme: One Man's Trash…

The Scrapyard

In Pennsylvania's Monongahela valley, there's a junkyard with no particular name. It's "Joe's" in the phonebook, and it's got a neon donkey over the gate, but everyone who knows about it just calls it "The Scrapyard." It's in the shell and on the grounds of an old steel plant, and it's a pretty creepy place. The junk seems to shift a bit on its own when you're not looking. Probably just the rats, but disturbing all the same.

The Scrapyard is the kind of place where you can find just about anything you're looking for, and the owner will part with it for a price. All sorts of strange things end up here; more than once, I've found magical trinkets, charms, and other items with a…history to them. Of course, you can't always count on taking home the things you find. Mickey—that's the owner—is a pretty shrewd negotiator and he drives a hard bargain. He tends to barter for things that you'll miss, but he ain't one to deal in dreams or memories or other intangibles. Mickey wants more for the Scrapyard—his "collection" he calls it.

And in case you were thinking about just taking what you find…don't. Back in '82 or thereabouts, a crew of vamps took it upon themselves to try to raid the place, looking to take whatever they could find. You could hear the screams from a mile away from what I'm told, and not a one of them walked out of the Scrapyard that night. This piqued my interest so, naturally, I dug a little deeper.

What I found was…well, it was kind of worry-making. Apparently the locals don't just call it "Joe's" for nothing. Near is I can tell, Joe is some sort of ancient spirit of steel and industry who used to live in the metal of the area. That metal was used to create great mills, but those mills didn't last. One by one, they fell into disuse until they were all just gathering dust. A lot of that steel went other places, but over the last ten years or so, Mickey and his crew have been hunting those scraps down and bringing them back home, gathering them for some purpose they don't feel like sharing. The more of it they gather, the more power the Scrapyard seems to hold. I'd assume this is because more and more pieces of Joe are coming together, and Joe—whatever it is—is starting to wake up.

MICKEY

Guardian of the Scrapyard

Motivation: Bring Joe home.

Face of: The Scrapyard

Mickey don't look like much at first. He's five foot nothing, skinny, and starting to go bald up top (though, to hide it, he wears a tattered old baseball cap so beat up that you can't even tell what team he roots for). He seems like a pretty unassuming guy until you start talking to him; when that happens, you can tell there's power in him.

Mickey's voice conveys confidence the way a singer conveys sadness or hope or longing, like he owns the land and everything on it—including you. His eyes are hard little rivets of blue steel and you can't help but be a little unnerved by the way he stares at you and never blinks.

Don't get me wrong: Mickey's not a bad guy. He's sharp and clever and doesn't believe in charity, and he'll charge you a price you may not want to pay. But the price is always fair, and he's never malicious about it. He simply makes the offer and you can take it or leave it; he rarely seems bothered either way.

He's also never alone in the Scrapyard. He employs a rotating cast of laborers and guards, and there's always somewhere around a dozen of them in the Scrapyard at any given time. Not sure what he pays them, but they tend to be loyal—fanatical even—and they don't take kindly to people making trouble for their boss. Near as I can tell they're all mortal, though.

For whatever reason, Mickey's got his mind set on reassembling the pieces of Joe; he's been doing it for a long time and don't look to let up any time soon. From what I hear, serving Joe gives him pretty potent mojo, too.

Joe's not entirely put together at this point, but that doesn't mean he doesn't have power. He's mainly a plot device, but I'd also allow Mickey access to some Evocation while he's in the Scrapyard to represent the fact that he can call upon Joe to pretty much reshape the Scrapyard at will.

MICKEY

High Concept
Joe's Right Hand Man

Trouble
Scrapyard "Owner"

Other Aspects
Unassuming Appearance
Hard Bargainer
Loyal Workers
Unsettling Confidence

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Average	(+1)
Contacts:	Fair	(+2)
Conviction:	Superb	(+5)
Craftsmanship:	Great	(+4)
Deceit:	Great	(+4)
Empathy:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Average	(+1)
Fists:	Average	(+1)
Intimidation:	Fair	(+2)
Lore:	Fair	(+2)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Rapport:	Good	(+3)
Weapons:	Average	(+1)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Devoted Followers (Conviction): Mickey can use his Conviction rather than his Presence to make command rolls to coordinate his employees.

Powers
Marked By Power [-1]
Incite Emotion (Loyalty, Lasting Emotion, At Range) [-3]
The Sight [-1]
Wizard's Constitution [-0]

Stress

Mental	OOOO, +1 mild consequence
Physical	OOO
Social	OOOO

Notes
Fair initiative, Average attack and defense. Mickey usually has a dozen armed and loyal employees to call on if there's trouble. And while Joe might not be all put together yet, he's still a force to be reckoned with, especially within the bounds of the Scrapyard.

Total Refresh Cost: -6

MICKEY'S WORKERS

High Concept
Loyal Laborers *Goons? Goons.*

Skills

Athletics:	Fair	(+2)
Craftsmanship:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Fair	(+2)
Guns:	Fair	(+2)
Might:	Fair	(+2)
Weapons:	Good	(+3)

Most other skills default to Mediocre, with a few at Average.

Stunts
Work Gang (Craftsmanship): By working together, Mickey's workmen can accomplish breaking, building, or fixing tasks one step lower on the time chart.

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OO

Notes
Carries assortment of weapons—usually clubs, rifles, or shotguns (**Weapon:1** or **Weapon:3**)—used with Fair to Good skill. Defense ranges from Fair to Good, Average initiative.

Total Refresh Cost:
+1 (Pure Mortal)

Saul

High Concept
Champion of Elijah

Trouble
Won't Back Down

Other Aspects
Wields the Rod of Elijah
Tall and Strong
On a Mission from God
Devout Believer

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Contacts:	Fair	(+2)
Conviction:	Superb	(+5)
Discipline:	Fair	(+2)
Empathy:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Great	(+4)
Fists:	Fair	(+2)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Investigation:	Fair	(+2)
Lore:	Fair	(+2)
Might:	Good	(+3)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)
Weapons:	Great	(+4)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
Bless This House [-1]
Guide My Hand [-1]
Holy Touch [-1]
Righteousness [-2]
Rod of Elijah [+2] is a big, hand-carved walking stick said to be carved from the tree grown from Elijah's staff. It's an unbreakable mighty rod that does **Weapon:2** damage. It also grants the following powers when wielded by a Champion of Elijah:
Supernatural Strength [-4]
Inhuman Toughness [-2]
The Catch [+1] is only while in physical possession of the Rod.

Stress
Mental OOOO
+1 mild consequence
Physical OOOO(OO)
Armor:1
Social OOO

Notes
Good initiative, Great attack and defense when wielding the **Weapon:6** Rod of Elijah. Good defense, and Fair to Great attacks otherwise. Saul will stop at nothing to retrieve the Shamir from the Scrapyard. He'd prefer not to have to take it by force, as a lot of people would end up hurt or dead, but he will not be deterred from his mission.

Total Refresh Cost: -8

Faerie's Bargain: Quid Pro Quo
On their travels, Ian, Emily, and Robert run into Saul. Saul seems like a nice guy and, after hearing about Robert's ill-advised bargain, presents them with a bargain of his own. Nearby is a place called the Scrapyard, and in the Scrapyard is something he needs back, a holy relic sacred to his people. If the trio helps him get the relic back, he'll point them toward someone who can help them with their faerie problem. At least, he's pretty sure they'll get help.

If the PCs take Saul up on his offer, he points them toward James and Kaitlin Pauley from Unsafe (page 217), assuring the PCs that the Pauleys are friendly, hospitable, and know a lot of people with magical knowledge. If nothing else, they can at least take shelter there for a few days.

In addition to the above, the PCs gain a pretty potent ally in Saul if things go well for him. He might work well as a recurring ally, or as a quest-giver again later on.

Saul
Elijah's Hand
Motivation: Retrieve the Shamir.

I met Saul a few years back; he pulled my ass out of the fire and for that I'm grateful, but I sure wouldn't want to get in his way. He's a big guy, taller than me by a head or more, and strong. Not strong in that huge, muscly, body builder way, but lean and wiry and made of sinew and tightly packed muscle. He's got a thick Brooklyn accent and carries a length of wood that hits like a wrecking ball.

I asked him about that piece of wood once and he told me it was made from the wood of the tree that grew out of the staff of Elijah the Prophet. He also told me that he was looking for an artifact he called a "Shamir," something he and some other folks were trying to find so they could take it somewhere and keep it safe.

I later found out that the Shamir is apparently one of the ten tools created by God before finishing creation. Each of these tools can do impossible things, like disintegrating any object. Things like maybe providing enough juice to bring a long-disassembled spirit back to life.

Yeah.

Saul told me that he had tracked the Shamir to a place called the Scrapyard, and that he intended to go and get it back.

The Problem
Threat: One Artifact, Two Owners

I think things are gonna come to a head real soon at the Scrapyard. On the one hand you've got Mickey, his band of loyal and very tough guards, and a very powerful spirit that's starting to wake up and might be a touch cranky. On the other you've got a devout follower of the Talmud invested with holy power on a holy quest to get back a holy relic that he believes with utter conviction rightfully belongs under his protection. Oh, and he's stronger than any mortal and carries a stick that can stop a semi.

Those two are going to need some serious mediation and soon; if they don't get it, I predict fireworks on a scale that we haven't seen in a long, long time.

So Saul shows up with an exclamation point above his head?

Okay, so maybe "quest-giver" is a bit too video game-y, but you know what I mean. The term applies, and video games have borrowed enough from tabletop games that I think it's only fair that they return the favor.

Are you guys done being nerds now?

Coming Around Again

It's entirely possible that your game will never go back to the same town twice. That's a bit of a shame—even if you don't do it much, it's nice to occasionally go back someplace and see how things have changed. Even a few notes tucked away for later use will pay huge dividends when the players revisit or even reminisce. Personally, I'm a big fan of the old "map with pins in it" approach, but practical considerations tend to make that map into something digital.

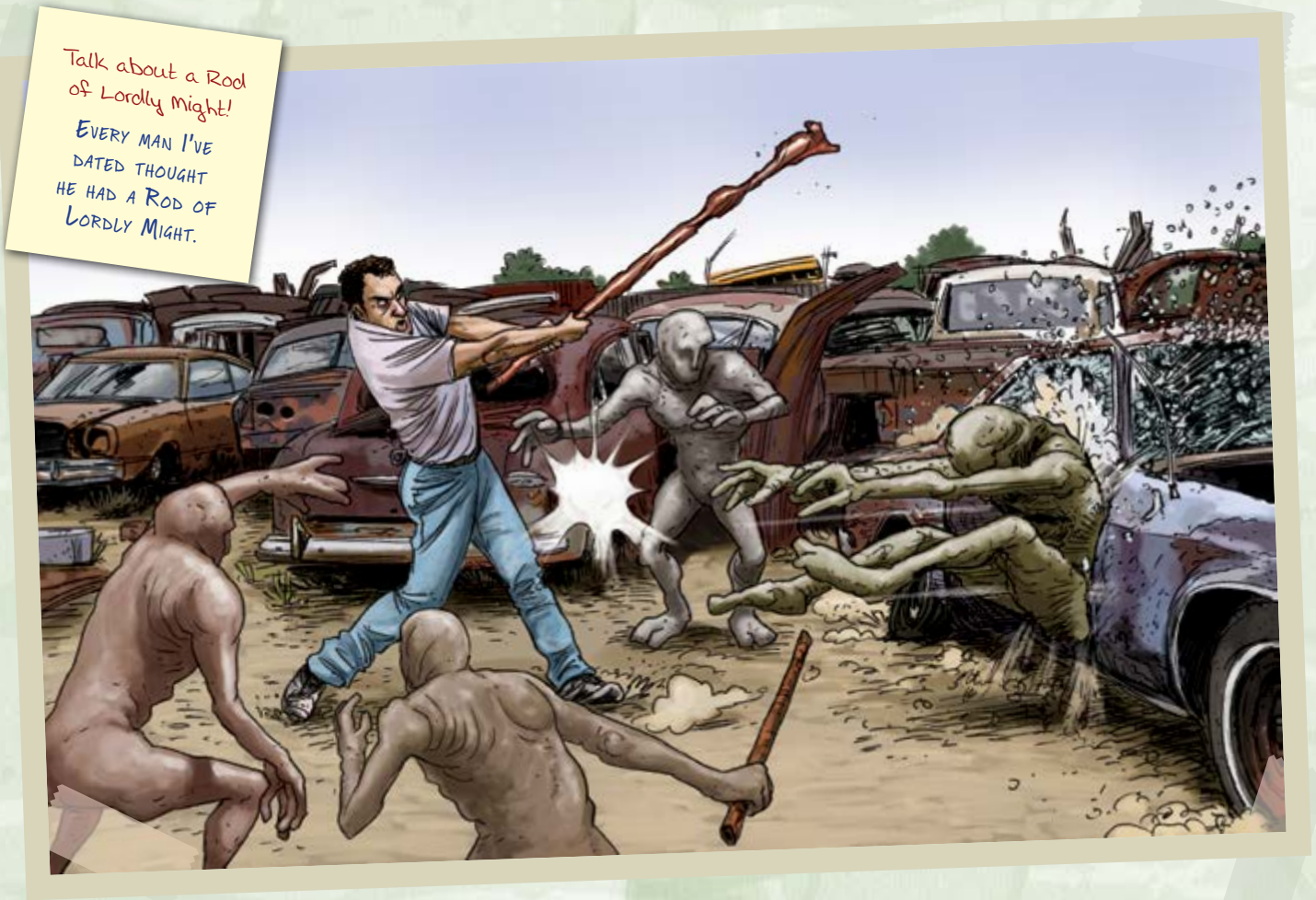
Episodic games don't have the same continuity as city games. In a city game, if you piss off the cops, they stay pissed off until you fix that. On the road, issues don't follow you. Or at least they *usually* don't. Sometimes.

One upshot of the lack of continuity is that when it does come up, it's much more noticeable and meaningful. If someone in Nickburg heard about what happened down in Trevin Junction, that's kind of cool, even if they don't know that the characters were involved. If a character from one place shows up in another place, that throws up a flag—is he looking for the PCs? Does he need something? Is he pissed? A life on the road has little baggage, but what baggage there is can be heavy indeed.

Champions of God

The Knights of the Cross are a great example of the top tier of Champions of God (YS73), but they need not be the only ones in the world. Other such groups may or may not exist in your game. Some might be genuine and empowered; others might be delusional or misinformed.

Whatever they may be, it's important to take a cue from the Knights. While they have the power to do good at large, they have a specific purpose—to combat and, if possible, save the Denarians. They may also do good works, but a specific purpose is essential. Similar organizations should be similarly goal oriented, especially if they're real champions of power. It's rare that any group is generically good. They're created for a purpose, and the greater the focus of that purpose, the greater the focus of the group.





Mountain Tamers

Theme: It's Not Nice to Fool Mother Nature

The Mountain

Several hundred feet above Green's Valley there's a big old hill that's been there forever. Not sure what the native tribes called it before the White Man came, but they knew well enough to avoid it. When Europeans started settling these lands, they called it Speckletop Mountain, owing to the large slab of multicolored granite on its top. That's the name that persists to this day on geological surveys, but that's not what people call it anymore.

Some places in this country are hard, some are hostile, and some are just plain *mean*. The Mountain's one of the third group, I think. Logging accidents, floods, entire towns burned to the ground if they're built too nearby; some places have a soul, and some of them are so old that they don't suffer upstarts like us getting too familiar with them. The Mountain is Old with a capital O, and something lives there. It might be some ancient spirit, or a hoary and powerful fae creature, or it might just be the Mountain itself exerting its will upon the world. Whatever it is, folks have learned to avoid it over time, and a lot of people call it Reaper Hill. Me, I think some places are just too ancient and mean-spirited for names; they just don't apply.

The Mountain, AKA Speckletop Mountain, AKA Reaper Hill

High Concept

Ancient Spirit of Tremendous Power

Other Aspects

Jus' Plain Mean

Skills, Power, Etc.

The Mountain is more a force of nature than a true character. It's a collection of aspects you can use to compel characters in its vicinity.

Notes

While it isn't a character in the normal sense, it still might attack characters it wants to be rid of through rockslides, tremors, or loose rocks causing people to fall. These are environmental disasters that you treat like characters. Give them a Superb to Legendary attack rating, and at least **Weapon:4**.

Mark Caraway

White Collar Pushover

Motivation: Get the roads built.

Face of: The Mountain

As I said, locals have learned that the Mountain is a place best avoided, but Mark Caraway ain't a local. Caraway works for the US Department of Transportation, some kind of middle-management in charge of getting new roads built, improving our ability to get from place to place without having to deal with the kinds of things I'm talking about in these reports. That's not exactly how he sees it of course, but it's true all the same.

Caraway's a nice guy; polite, smart, but kind of nervous and fidgety. I met the man once and he smelled sort of off-white, ambitious but malleable. There's nothing supernatural about him and I'm pretty sure he's not clued-in, but that won't stop him from getting into a whole heap of trouble pretty soon.

See, he's got it in his head that there needs to be a new road connecting Green's Valley to the rest of the world, and that that road needs to go over the Mountain—or through it. I'm pretty sure I know who gave him the idea, too.

Uh...what?

Yeah, Mike sometimes talks about what people smell like, and he always does it in terms of color rather than an actual scent. My best guess is that he's an empath of some sort, but the wires are crossed.

Like synesthesia for a supernatural brain?

I think so. From what I can tell he can sense other peoples' emotional states, but he perceives it as a color that he can smell. I guess he's learned to associate specific colors with specific emotional states, or maybe he just does it instinctively.

That's...kind of awesome. How would you do that in the game?

Probably a Supernatural Sense (YS165) combined with an aspect, something like You Smell Red, Like Anger.

Mark Caraway

High Concept
Federal Transportation Middle Manager

Trouble
Ambitious But Spineless

Other Aspects
I Build the Roads
Ain't From 'Round Here

Skills

Contacts:	Fair	(+2)
Empathy:	Average	(+1)
Rapport:	Fair	(+2)
Resources:	Good	(+3)
Scholarship:	Average	(+1)

Most other skills default to Mediocre.

Stunts

Government Budget (Resources): Mark gains a +2 to Resources whenever he's using it to aid road construction.

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OO
Social	OO

Notes

He's not much use in a fight, and he's not an inspiring leader, either. But he does have the weight of the US Government behind him, and he has the final say as to where the roads get built.

Total Refresh Cost:
+1 (Pure Mortal)



Lazarus

High Concept
Warlock Grifter

Trouble
Bargain with an Outsider

Other Aspects
Charming Deceiver
Predator
Manipulator
Partially-Devoured Soul

Skills

Alertness:	Average	(+1)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Contacts:	Fair	(+2)
Conviction:	Superb	(+5)
Deceit:	Good	(+3)
Discipline:	Superb	(+5)
Fists:	Average	(+1)
Lore:	Great	(+4)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)
Rapport:	Great	(+4)
Resources:	Fair	(+2)
Scholarship:	Average	(+1)
Survival:	Average	(+1)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
Evocation [-3]
Thaumaturgy [-3]
Wizard's Constitution [-0]
Sponsored Magic (Outsider Magic) [-2]
Lawbreaker (First) [-2]
Lawbreaker (Third) [-2]
Lawbreaker (Fourth) [-2]
Lawbreaker (Seventh) [-2]

Specialties
Evocation: Elements (Fire, Air, Spirit); Power (Spirit +1)
Thaumaturgy: Complexity (Entropy +1)

Stress
Mental OOOO, +1 mild consequence
Physical OOOO
Social OO

Notes
Average initiative, Good defenses unless he's able to bring magic to bear. Lazarus isn't afraid of the Wardens or of other consequences for breaking the Laws—something he doesn't hesitate to do. He can make Legendary control rolls when bringing his Outsider-corrupted magic to bear on an opponent. His preferred style is to make mental attacks using Spirit.

Total Refresh Cost:
-16

What does Outsider Magic give him?

I have no idea, and I'm not going to try and find out, either. GMs, you'll just have to be creative here and catch up on your Lovecraft.

Lazarus
Charming Deceiver
Motivation: Your soul is mine.

If Caraway smells off-white, then Lazarus reeks of the sickly green stench of a manipulator, a predator, someone who sees human beings as tools. I listened to a speech he was giving once to a small town; the townies were eating it up, but I couldn't breathe for the stink rolling off of him. I've made it a point to avoid him ever since.

Lazarus is one of those bad pennies, always showing up at the worst possible time, luring the weak away from the community, inciting violence, turning neighbor against neighbor. Nobody seems to get wise to his act; they buy his song and dance about being there to help. I heard that one time he even started a cult right outside of Lannersville, lured all the young folk away. The town got all up in arms until he talked to them; after that everything was fine. Until he disappeared one day and took all those kids with him to God knows where.

The man ain't human. He may have been at one time, but those days are long past and he left his humanity far behind. I'd guess that he probably made a bargain with something bad a long time ago and he's been holding up his end ever since, but that's all it'd be—a guess.

My advice: steer clear of Lazarus. He'll steal your soul right out from under you and have you thanking him for it when he's done.



The Problem

Threat: Reaper Hill Rumbling

As I understand it, the situation is as follows:

Caraway was looking for a place to build a road, something that would help him justify budgets and meet quotas and such. He was looking in the Green's Valley area, and then along comes Lazarus. Lazarus tells him about this great parcel of land he owns, a place called Speckletop Mountain. It's undeveloped and just waiting for someone to come along and build something on it, like a road and a gas station and maybe a strip mall or two.

Well, poor Caraway has no idea that he's being manipulated into a disaster; all he sees are dollar signs and maybe a promotion in his future. He buys the land from Lazarus (who may not have even owned it in the first place, but I don't know for sure), and Lazarus stays on as a consultant and a liaison to the locals.

Right now they're about two weeks away from breaking ground. There have already been a few accidents during the prep phase, but Caraway's just chalking those up to standard industrial mishaps—with Lazarus'…encouragement, I'm sure.

Here's the thing: the Mountain ain't gonna tolerate this. People have tried building things on it in the past, and each time there's been some sort of catastrophe and a dozen or so deaths. A project like this, a big construction project involving hundreds of people? That's a recipe for a bloodbath. And with Lazarus in the mix, I wouldn't be surprised if Caraway just kept on pouring people into the project, trying to plug the hole in the ship with bodies.

Faerie's Bargain: Environmental Protection

This one has an easy *Faerie's Bargain* hook, given that Robert and Emily are both pretty environmentally conscious. Maybe they get wind of Caraway's plans to put a road through some pristine wilderness from a local, and they (much to Ian's irritation, probably) decide that it's worth stopping for a while to try to convince him otherwise. Of course, when they learn that there's a supernatural badass pulling Caraway's strings and that the Mountain can defend itself just fine, things get…interesting.

A Word About Crossroads

Crossroads are pretty easy to avoid if you stick with the more modern highways. Few things carry less real meaning than a cloverleaf intersection with bright markers. The curious thing is that for a country with so many roads, it's surprisingly hard to find a real crossroad.

The thing that makes a real crossroad, not just an intersection, is the element of choice and commitment. When you come to the crossroad, whatever decision you make, you're stuck with it. There won't be side streets, shortcuts, or turnarounds. Practically speaking, this means any real crossroad is going to be out in the middle of nowhere, at the intersection of two country roads that go off in clearly different directions. The closer you get to civilization, the more likely you're going to get the kind of maps that are much more forgiving of your choices.

If you've read even a little, you know that crossroads are where bad things go down. Death waits there. So does Fate. And the Devil. And who knows what else. I've heard a lot of crazy ideas as to why, from the shape of the crucifix to ley lines to a lot of gibberish about the physical manifestation of the symbolism of choice making every turn taken a small ritual. Beats me, but if you're going to see naked folk dancing in the distant light, beckoning for you to come to them, it's likely to be by a moonlit crossroad at midnight.

And the Blues!

Nerd.

Mr. Pot, Mr. Kettle on the black courtesy phone for you.

I'd tell you to steer clear of them, but there's not much to be done about them if you find yourself traveling, especially at night. The nature of a real crossroad is that there's no way to avoid it—if you're going that way, it's the only choice you have. When you find yourself there at midnight, or just as the moon rises, it's probably just a coincidence you don't want to think about too much.





Old Man Oak

High Concept
The Watcher at the Crossroads

Other Aspects
Hoary Old Oak
Scarred by Tragedy
Radiates Misery

Skills, Powers, etc.
Old Man Oak is a plot device level character. He has power, but he's mostly an observer and can't really actively do much beyond absorbing people's emotions and releasing them. Mechanically, he has the entire Incite Emotions (Despair, Misery) package, and can maneuver at Legendary, block and attack with them at Fantastic, and attack with **Weapon:4**. It's unclear whether or not Old Man Oak wants to do this, but it seems that he can be compelled to do so.

Okay, how can this guy possibly know all of this stuff? Is he making it up?

That's possible, but we already know Mike can sense things the rest of us can't. And we have no idea how old he is, but I'd err on the side of "extremely."

You're saying Mike's probably not human.

I'm saying it's probably better for everyone if we take him at his word. Keep reading.

Oh, okay, it *is* because he's an empath. I guess that makes sense.

The Voice in the Trees

Theme: This Place Sees Your Soul

Old Man Oak

Somewhere down south, there's this point where two country roads twist together and come out the other end of each other, continuing on their way. Now, I'm sure I don't need to tell you that important things—strange things, sometimes—happen at crossroads, and this one is no different. There's not much at this crossroads; there are a couple of small towns nearby, but the closest one is a couple miles down the way. Lots of folk come through this way, though, passing from one place to the next, and Old Man Oak sees all of the comings and goings.

Old Man Oak is a gnarly old tree, though "old" doesn't do him justice by a long shot.

There's a face carved into his trunk. No, "carved" is the wrong word because that implies that someone did it to him; I figure that face probably got there on its own or it was there all along. It ain't a scary face and it's easy to miss if you're not looking for it, but it's there. If there's an emotion on that face then it's most likely sadness, weariness. Old Man Oak's seen a lot, you understand.

His bark has a hole in it, a few feet higher than his face, from a bullet fired in the Civil War. That bullet carried a young man's blood, his life's blood spilled a month after he signed on with the army. Those boughs have been the anchor for nooses in their time—more than one midnight lynching took place under the auspices of his leaves. More recently a young couple carved their initials into his side and then went off to get married; it was only years later that the woman learned she had married an angry drunk.

All that stuff happened, all that and more, within the shade cast by Old Man Oak.

And he took it all in.

See, Old Man Oak absorbs emotions from the people he sees and the events he witnesses and he stores them up. Sometimes he lets them out, and sometimes they get into other peoples' heads. There's a good reason why so many unfortunate things have happened on, under, and around Old Man Oak; there's also a good reason why the closest town is a mile away. I don't think he's evil as such; I just think he's a magnet for misfortune.

Sounds like a Skavis.
Sounds like someone to avoid.

Veronica

Biker Vamp

Motivation: Your misery strengthens me.

Face of: Old Man Oak

Veronica looks like every pin-up fantasy of a biker chick you can imagine; she's got that bad girl image down pat. The thing is, it's a lot more than an image. She's coy and sassy and challenging in just the right way, but she's a legend among the bikers for the things she's done and the trouble she's made. Word is she once took down seventeen guys in a barroom brawl, that she's been in every local jail in New Mexico, and she once jumped a bus on her bike while both were on fire.

Veronica's a White Court vampire. She's a consummate predator, careful and smart and absolutely ruthless. But she doesn't tend to leave corpses behind, just folks who find themselves sore and drained the next day, only barely remembering how they ended up in jail or passed out by the interstate.

Now this part's mostly a rumor and I can't verify it, but the word is that she used to run with a pack of vampires, a biker gang that gave her the boot. They kicked her right out but for some reason they let her live. I'd imagine that wasn't entirely their choice and that there are grudges on both sides. I'd also imagine that that's why Veronica's been so careful about not leaving a trail.

Faerie's Bargain: The Wrong Kind of Trouble

While looking for a place to bed down for the night, Robert is drawn to a crossroads near a small rural town. He's not quite sure what or why, but something's tugging at him and doesn't stop. It's Old Man Oak, calling to him.

While Robert and Emily are busy investigating the tree, Ian gets distracted by that cute biker a little ways off, the one who looks a bit like an old girlfriend.

Veronica

High Concept
White Court Biker Babe

Trouble
Hunted by Her Family

Other Aspects
Getting into Trouble Is So Much Fun
Trust Me—What Could Go Wrong?
Do It For Me

Skills

Conviction:	Average	(+1)
Deceit:	Superb	(+5)
Discipline:	Average	(+1)
Driving:	Good	(+3)
Empathy:	Great	(+4)
Endurance:	Fair	(+2)
Fists:	Good	(+3)
Guns:	Fair	(+2)
Intimidation:	Average	(+1)
Lore:	Average	(+1)
Might:	Good	(+3)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)
Rapport:	Great	(+4)
Resources:	Average	(+1)
Weapons:	Fair	(+2)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Two Wheel Terror (Drive): Veronica may use her Driving skill instead of Intimidation whenever she's operating a motorcycle.

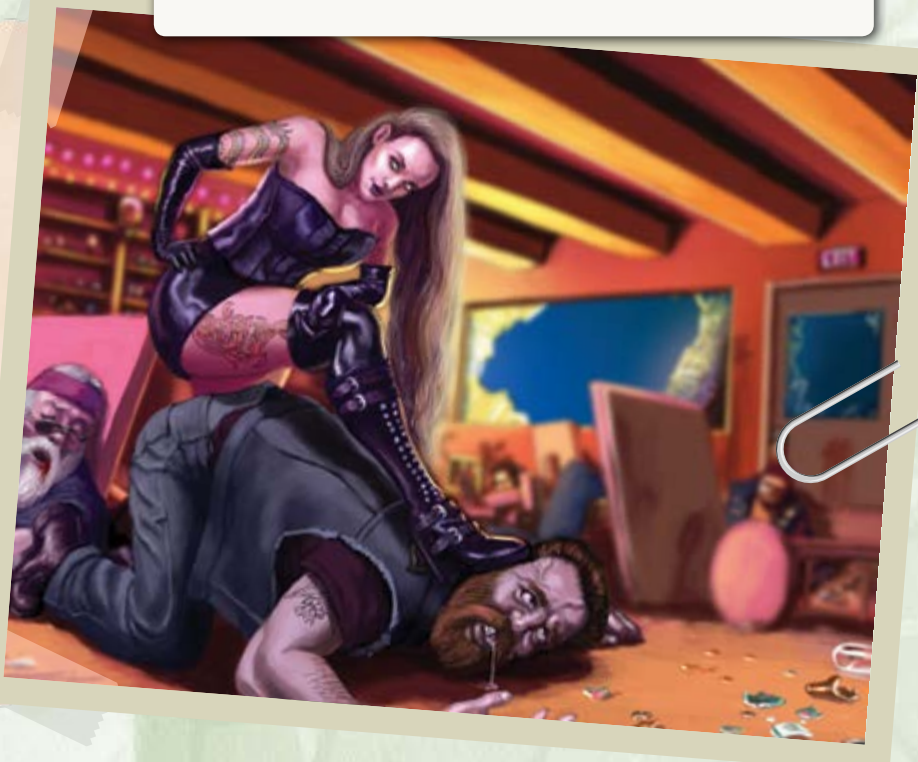
Powers
Emotional Vampire [-1]
Human Guise [-0]
Incite Emotion (Despair) [-1]
Feeding Dependency [+1] affecting the following powers:
Inhuman Recovery [-2]
Inhuman Speed [-2]
Inhuman Strength [-2]

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOO
Hunger	OO

Notes
Great initiative, Good attacks with **Weapon:2** Fists, Good Defense in melee or Average at range. When it comes to a fight, Veronica mostly relies on her Incite Emotion and Feeding powers. With relatively low Discipline, she probably feeds frequently. Becoming one of her "friends" is likely draining.

Total Refresh Cost: -8





Oh, so they're like the Belmonts!

The Belmonts?

Yeah, you know, from that video game, Ca—

Oh I know. I just didn't realize you were so old school.

Gotta represent.

Frank Collins

High Concept
Collins Family Patriarch

Trouble
Loves His Family

Other Aspects
Monster-Hunting Legacy
Man on a Mission
Black-and-White Worldview
Hard But Honorable

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Fair	(+2)
Contacts:	Average	(+1)
Conviction:	Great	(+4)
Discipline:	Good	(+3)
Empathy:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Good	(+3)
Guns:	Superb	(+5)
Intimidation:	Fair	(+2)
Lore:	Good	(+3)
Might:	Fair	(+2)
Presence:	Great	(+4)
Weapons:	Good	(+3)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Pin Them Down (Guns): When aiming, the aspect placed on the target can't be removed so long as the target doesn't move out of the zone. The border is increased by +1 for any attempts to leave the zone, as long as Frank continues to make Guns attacks at that target.

Target Rich Environment (Guns): Frank gains a +1 to attacks with Guns whenever he is personally outnumbered in a firefight.

Leadership (Presence): When using Presence to command a group, Frank gains +1 on the effort. Further, his efforts to coordinate a group are efficient, moving one time increment faster than normal.

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OOOO

Notes
Fair initiative, Good physical attacks and defenses with **Weapon:2** axes and assorted blades. Superb Guns and access to a small arsenal of usually **Weapon:3** firearms. Frank's family is also similarly armed, skilled, and experienced in monster hunting.

Total Refresh Cost: -1 (Pure Mortal)

Frank Collins
Monster-Hunting Dad
Motivation: Rid the world of monsters.

There's a lot of people named Collins in this country; but when I talk about the Collins Family, I'm talking about a very specific group of people. One of the first of the line got hung in Jamestown for eating his own wife in the winter that nearly wiped out the whole colony, but that ain't what they're famous for now. Every one of them's in the know—passing down information from one generation to the next—and they're all some kind of ruthless, too. They've turned that combination to their advantage in their family business—hunting monsters.

The Collins family is spread out all over the country, organized into little independently operating families, kind of like a cell structure in a terrorist organization.

Not that I'm equating them with terrorists, you understand.

Wink wink, nudge nudge, say no more.

Frank's the patriarch of one of these little families. He and his wife Clarisse recently moved into a cabin not too far from Old Man Oak with their daughter Josie and their son Frank Junior. They make life pretty hard for supernatural folks in the area. They say they hunt monsters, but they don't see much of a distinction between a *real* monster (like Veronica) and someone who happens to have a few extra talents (like you or me). Don't much matter to Frank if you try to help people or not; if you're not mortal by his estimation, you're a danger.

Of course, there are exceptions; Frank's not a totally unreasonable man. I ran into him a while back, saved him from a pack of ravening *somethings* that wanted to eat his face. He doesn't like me much, but he understands the value of a debt and he knows that they must be honored and paid. Still, he's a hard man who sees things in black and white most of the time.

If he's got a soft spot, it's his family. That man loves his family and woe unto you if you harm them in any way. If you need to hit him where it hurts, well, that's it. Just be sure you're prepared to deal with the consequences of such a tactic.



The Problem

Threat: Collateral Damage

The trouble started when Veronica moved into the area. Now, Veronica's trouble enough all on her own, but somehow she got wind of what Old Man Oak was and what he could do and, as you might guess, that interested her quite a bit. She's been hanging around, trying to lure the young folk out to Old Man Oak. She gets them drunk, gets them high, gets them to do stupid things, then brings them back to the tree to realize the extent of their mistakes. Then she just feeds on the waves of misery that come off of them.

She got pretty comfortable in that routine, got fat and happy, never mind that the towns nearby were seeing record numbers for violent crimes and suicides. But that's just when things *started* getting bad. Things didn't really get bad until the Collins family showed up.

Frank Collins was following Veronica's trail for a while and he finally tracked her down to Barlow, the small town near Old Man Oak where she's renting a room. He and his family bought the cabin just outside of town and started gearing up for a fight. They got several.

Veronica (and her enthralled youngsters) and Frank (and his family) have clashed on a number of occasions in the last month or so, bloody shootouts in the middle of town or out in the woods that always end with a bunch of people injured or dead or drained to the brink of death. The real problem is that it's a stalemate. Veronica's not going anywhere; she doesn't want to give up this great thing she's got and she's too tough for Frank and company to take down on their own, especially with all the meat shields she's been collecting around her. And Frank… well, he's just too damn stubborn to give up.

Not sure how much more the town of Barlow can take. And now that the bodies are piling up, I wonder if Veronica's old cronies will come investigate?

Unsafe

Theme: Shelter in the Storm

The Safehouse

Nestled in the woods not far off the beaten path near the border of Idaho and Montana is a little cottage that doesn't look like much. It's a smallish affair, a couple of rooms and some space around to grow food, a car in the driveway (such as it is), and a middle-aged couple to tend it.

Thing is, that cottage has the strongest threshold I've ever come across, and the folks inside are not without knowledge. They're mortal, nothing particularly special about them from a supernatural point of view, but James and Kaitlin Pauley are about as clued-in as mortals can be without having actual power. What's more, they're kind and generous in a way that's uncommon these days. They'll take you in, keep you safe for a night or two. All they ask in return is that you help them tend the land, do some chores, maybe go hunting for them, and leave the place in better shape than you found it. That, and don't overstay your welcome—they don't like it when folk stay more than a few days, and they *will* drop hints to that effect.

I've taken to calling this place the Safehouse, for reasons that should be pretty obvious. I stop by whenever I'm in the area (every few years or so), I always bring a gift, and I always do what they ask me to do and more. If you're ever in the area, I'd suggest you do the same; there are dangerous creatures in those woods and not a lot of other safe places to stay, and I sure wouldn't want their hospitality to dry up.

James Pauley

High Concept
Co-owner of the Safehouse

Other Aspects
Craft Beer Connoisseur
Family Man

Skills
Alertness:	Fair	(+1)
Conviction:	Good	(+3)
Empathy:	Superb	(+5)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Guns:	Great	(+4)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Rapport:	Great	(+4)

Other skills range from Mediocre to Fair.

Stunts
Home Defense (Guns): James adds +2 to any Guns roll made in defense of hearth and home.

Stress
Mental OOOO
Physical OOOO
Social OOOO

Notes
Fair initiative, Great or Fantastic attacks with Guns, Mediocre defenses.

Total Refresh Cost:
+1 (Pure Mortal)

I'm imagining a pair of ancient shotguns hung above the mantel. I'd want to at least be in the next county over if there was something around that forced the Pauleys to take those guns down.

Kaitlin Pauley

High Concept
Co-owner of the Safehouse

Other Aspects
I Will Fear No Evil
Faith Is My Shield

Skills
Alertness:	Fair	(+1)
Conviction:	Superb	(+5)
Empathy:	Great	(+4)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Guns:	Good	(+3)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Rapport:	Great	(+4)

Other skills range from Mediocre to Fair.

Stunts
Devout Words (Conviction): The strength of Kaitlin's faith alone allows her to give others pause. She may use her Conviction skill to perform a block in a physical conflict, potentially preventing someone from making a conflict action against her.

Powers
Bless this House [-1]

Mike said Kaitlin was just a normal person with no supernatural ability, but I'm not sure he realizes the literal power someone with True Faith has.

Stress
Mental OOOO
+1 mild consequence
Physical OOOO
Social OOOO

Notes
Fair initiative, Good attacks with Guns, Mediocre defenses. If attacked, Kaitlin will use her Devout Words stunt to stop her assailant in its tracks, giving her and James time to bring their shotguns to bear.

Total Refresh Cost:
+0

James and Kaitlin Pauley
Keepers of the Safehouse
Motivation: Provide a safe place to rest.
Faces of: The Safehouse

James smiles a lot. Not in a creepy or sleazy way, mind you; his face is open and honest and genuine, and he's got a great sense of humor. A real connoisseur of craft beers, too. Not sure where he gets them, though I'd imagine it's more than just me who'll bring him a six-pack or a case as a thank-you gift. He's always willing to share a bottle with you, and I've spent more than one night in friendly conversation with James over a couple of pints. Damn fine cook, too.

Kaitlin's a bit quieter, a bit more considered in how she contributes to a conversation. I can say without hyperbole, though, that she's one of the smartest, bravest people I've ever met, and she's got a towering faith that fills me with awe. In fact, I'm pretty sure she's the reason the house's threshold is so strong; they both make that place a home, but I have a feeling something else protects them, something I'm not capable of understanding fully.

Friendly as they are, they won't abide those who violate their trust, break their rules, or otherwise make things worse for them. One strike and you're out. I've seen it happen; it's like they just *revoke* their protection, and then you're outside the threshold just like that. Can't quite explain it, but there you go.

Honestly, I'm not sure this is even possible. I've never heard of someone having that kind of control over a threshold.

You really need to ask that, after everything you've seen? Look at what Michael and even Charity can accomplish with faith alone.



The Tarantula

It's not really a tarantula; that's just what I call it. I call it that because "big scary fucking spider the size of a small barn" is kind of a mouthful. This thing's like no spider you've ever seen. Obviously it's huge; that much I've covered already. But it's not entirely of this world either; there's a spiritual component to it that makes me think that it lives at least partially in the Nevernever or lives there some of the time. Not sure where it came from or how long it's been living in those woods, but my guess would be "a long time."

Every few years, the Tarantula spawns, and you've got dozens of little baby spiders running around the woods for a few weeks. They're smaller, sure, like a Buick is smaller than a townhouse, and they hatch hungry. Luckily, the Tarantula eats its young, and it always manages to get them all after a few weeks. As far as I *know*, none of them ever get away. Those woods are dangerous during spawning season, though.

Thing is, that ain't the real threat. Sure it's bad, but it's infrequent. The rest of the time, ol' Tarantula sleeps, and when it sleeps, it spins. The way I understand it, it spins a great web over the area in its dream-form, and that web catches the dreams of others. The lucky ones have bad nightmares or go insane; the others are devoured entirely, body and soul. Sometimes, right before spawning season, the Tarantula will lay eggs in the dreams of its victims before releasing them. When this happens, the victim suffers from a wasting sickness until a spider the size of a Chihuahua crawls out of the corpse. You don't kill that thing, it'll grow. Fast.

Now, the Safehouse is in those woods, but it'll keep you safe from all of this, spiders and dream-webs alike. At least, that used to be the case. Things are starting to change for the worse, though.

Wait, I thought dreams were isolated bubbles or something.

Kind of, yeah. I think the idea is this thing has a bubble too, just a big one. That moves.

Ugh. Like a spider hamster ball.

I'm talking out my ass here. This is way too weird for me to speak to authoritatively.



The Tarantula

High Concept
Gargantuan Dream Spider

Other Aspects
Spiritual Dreamcatcher
Nightmare Weaver
Eats All Its Young
Web of Dreams
Sleeping Giant

Skills, Powers, etc.
The Tarantula is a plot device level character. Assume that it's Epic at most physical and dream magic based things, and it probably doesn't even bother with social niceties. If it catches your dreams, it can drive you insane with nightmares, or attack and devour you.

The Tarantula's Brood

High Concept
Baby Giant Dream Spiders

Skills

Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Might:	Fair	(+2)

Most other skills default to Mediocre.

Stunts
Webslingers (Endurance): These giant spiders can spin giant webs with Great Endurance rolls, which can be used to create blocks, and to maneuver with aspects like Caught in a Web or Sticky Strands of Webbing.

Spins a web, any size!

Catches cars, just like flies. Look out! These things are not your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man.

Powers
Claws (Venomous) [-3]
"Human" Form [+1] Inhuman Strength is unavailable until the spider has grown into a pony-sized threat.
Inhuman Strength [-2]
Spider Walk [-1]

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OO

Notes
These things start off the size of small dogs and they only grow bigger. Mediocre Initiative, Great attack and defense with **Weapon:2** poisoned fangs at small dog size; when pony-sized, the fangs become **Weapon:4**.

Total Refresh Cost:
Unknown, likely in the neighborhood of -6.

The Problem

Threat: Looming Nightmares

James and Kaitlin are in a bit of a bind right now. See, the threshold that keeps them safe is starting to erode; season by season it gets weaker. They first noticed it when they started getting bad dreams—not full-on night terrors, just mildly bad—on a regular basis. The dreams have been getting progressively worse, and they're decidedly spider-themed. The Pauleys know about the Tarantula—heck, they're the ones who told me about it. They've known about it for a while and their threshold has kept them safe. They stay inside at night, batten down the hatches during spawning season, and everything's fine.

They're not sure how long their threshold is going to last at this point. They're not stupid; they know they can't stick around much longer and they'll probably just pick up and go to some other remote place pretty soon. If they do, that's bad for you and me. It means that there's a big stretch of very dangerous country between Idaho and Montana where there's no safe shelter, and that ain't good. There's also the fact that I'm pretty sure it's the Pauleys' threshold (along with the running water on the other side of the woods) that's keeping the Tarantula from expanding further. If they leave, who knows where it might wind up.

Not sure what's eroding the threshold. It could be the Pauleys getting weaker from the strain of constantly fighting off the Tarantula's mental attacks. Could be that the Tarantula's getting stronger. Could even be that there's a third party doing this deliberately, someone (or something) with a vested interest in either getting rid of the Pauleys or loosing the Tarantula (more likely the latter).

At any rate, they told me to find them some help, so that's what I'm doing.

Faerie's Bargain: Pit Stop

If the PCs got referred to the Pauley's by Saul (see page 208), they've got a pretty compelling reason to stop by the Safehouse. If not, it's easy enough to drop it in their path and it'll be hard to resist a warm bed, a hot meal, and true safety for a few days.

Of course, when they learn about the Pauleys' predicament with the Tarantula, they'll owe them enough to want to help them. If the PCs help the Pauleys with their spider problem, the Pauleys repay the favor with some supplies for the road and the name "Diego Garza." They assure the PCs that Garza can help them find someone to get Windsnap off their backs.

Rough Waters

Theme: Old Bargain, Old Secrets

Tom's Crossing

There's a small town on the Mississippi River that's not on any map; the residents call it Tom's Crossing, population of a couple hundred. To a casual observer, it seems like a pretty typical Southern fishing town; the folks ply their trade on the river and sell their catches at the larger, land-locked towns.

Tom's Crossing ain't a typical town.

*By now I think Mike only needs to call out what **is** typical.*

A spirit lives in the river, maybe it's even an old god of some sort, called the Piasa. It travels all up and down the Mississippi, but it makes its home near Tom's Crossing. Has for a very long time. See, back when Tom's Crossing was founded, the locals found that there was something big and dangerous in the river, and they were scared. It was capsizing boats, making it hard to fish or even cross the river if they needed to. People were dying.

Rather than pick up and move away, the people of Tom's Crossing reached out to the Piasa, made contact. It talked back. They struck a bargain, way back then—the people would keep the Piasa a secret, make sure nobody found out where its lair was. In exchange, it wouldn't hurt them and would make sure their fishing harvests were bountiful. That's a deal that's been in place for generations, and it's still in place now.

The Piasa itself is big, but I understand it can make itself small—about the length of your arm—when it needs to. It's a serpentine creature with horns, red eyes, a cat face, and a fish tail. It's not mean or malicious, but it's curious and wild and protective of its home and its waters. Individual mortals don't mean much to the Piasa, so it thinks nothing of killing (or eating) a few of them from time to time. Never does that to the people of Tom's Crossing, though.

Diego Garza

Font of Supernatural Info
Motivation: Protect the Piasa.
Face of: Tom's Crossing

Diego's not the mayor of Tom's Crossing—I don't think the town has a mayor, as such—but he's the one in charge. He runs the gas station and general store, and he's plugged firmly into the supernatural world. He doesn't have any power—unless you consider it a power that he's the one who speaks to the Piasa—but what he lacks in supernatural clout he makes up for in knowledge.

I'm not sure where he gets his information, but he seems to know pretty much anything on the spooky side of things that happens within a few hundred miles. If I had to venture a guess, I'd say that the Piasa is supplying that information to him, maybe as an addendum to the bargain or maybe just because they're friends or something. He sells that information, though, and most supernatural folk in the area know to come to him for good intel.

I met Diego when I was staying in Tom's Crossing on my way to somewhere. I was out for a midnight stroll and there it was: the Piasa, big as life and twice as scary. It was talking to Diego and, when it spotted me, Diego convinced it not to just eat me on the spot. He filled me in on the town's background and the ancient bargain, and he swore me to secrecy. I've kept that promise until now, and the only reason I'm telling you all this is because Diego won't. He needs to, though, because Tom's Crossing—and the Piasa—are in danger.



The Piasa

High Concept
Ancient River Spirit

Trouble
All Riled Up

Other Aspects
Boundless Curiosity
Wild as Water
Bargain with Tom's Crossing

Skills, Powers, etc.
The Piasa is a plot device level character. Consider it to have Epic skill for physical confrontations, and Superb for just about anything else. It also can summon up and control at least 5 shifts of power for mind, divination, and water-based magic with ease.

If you really want to stat up the Piasa, a Lesser Dragon (OW38) is probably a good place to start, but add Aquatic and the Modular Ability to switch between Hulking and Diminutive Size. Also the Piasa's Breath Weapon would be water-based. And it has access to magic, probably either Evocation and Thaumaturgy with a focus on mind, divination, and water, or its own form of Sponsored Magic.

Diego Garza

High Concept
The Boss of Tom's Crossing

Trouble
Unwilling to Accept Help

Other Aspects
My Buddy, the Piasa
Information Broker
Plugged into the Supernatural Grapevine

Skills

Contacts:	Superb	(+5)
Conviction:	Average	(+1)
Empathy:	Great	(+4)
Investigation:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Good	(+3)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Rapport:	Great	(+4)
Resources:	Good	(+3)

Other skills range from Mediocre to Fair.

Stunts

Ear to the Ground
(Contacts): Diego has his fingers on the pulse of things, with plenty of friends who can give him a heads up. The difficulty of any Getting the Tip-Off roll is reduced by two.

Supernatural Connections
(Contacts): Diego has a lot of contacts in the supernatural world. He may use Contacts instead of Lore when researching information on the supernatural world.

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OO
Social	OOOO

Notes
Mediocre combat skills. Diego isn't a fighter at all.

Total Refresh Cost: -0 (Pure Mortal)

Faerie's Bargain: Information Trading

Whether they found Garza through the Pauleys (page 218) or found Tom's Crossing on their own, Garza is a wealth of supernatural knowledge. He'll part with some of that knowledge, but only if Robert, Emily, and Ian help him figure out what's got the Piasa all riled up.

If they're successful, you can use Garza to point them in pretty much any direction you want. He's plugged into the supernatural scene and knows a lot about a lot of people. If you've got a particular endgame in mind, Garza is a great way to point your PCs in that direction.

Auntie Ten

High Concept
Little Old Witch for Hire

Trouble
Stirring Up Trouble

Other Aspects
The Evil Eye
I Curse You
Will You Pay My Price?
You'd Best Be Polite
I Could Tell You Stories

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Contacts:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Superb	(+5)
Deceit:	Good	(+3)
Discipline:	Great	(+4)
Empathy:	Good	(+3)
Intimidation:	Great	(+4)
Lore:	Superb	(+5)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Resources:	Good	(+3)

Most other skills default to Average or Fair.

Powers
Channeling (Entropy) [-2]
Thaumaturgy [-3]
The Sight [-1]
Soulgaze [-0]
Wizard's Constitution [-0]
Refinement [-2]

Specializations
Channeling: (Entropy); Control (Entropy +1); Power (Entropy +1)
Thaumaturgy: Control (Entropomancy +1); Complexity (Entropomancy +1)

Rote Spells
Evil Eye (entropy attack, five shifts): Consider this rote to be a really focused and weaponized hex or curse. It doesn't cause a direct blast; rather, something will go catastrophically wrong either with or around the target which causes them **Weapon:5** damage. Auntie Ten must use her pestle to cast this rote.

Focus Items
Pestle (Entropy Offense Control and Power +1)

Stress
Mental OOOO, +1 mild consequence
Physical OO
Social OOOO

Notes
Auntie Ten is an old woman who isn't much use in a fight. She has Fair initiative, but Mediocre attacks and defenses. However, if she can bring magic to bear she can easily control 5 shifts of effect, and even more if she has time to prepare.

Total Refresh Cost: -8

So is this Baba Vasilisa gone bad?

It could be. Perhaps Baba Yaga finally caught up to her, and she made some sort of bargain? If you want to go that route, giving her Sponsored Magic would be the way to do it.

Auntie Ten

That Little Old Lady

Motivation:

Will, you didn't fill in Auntie Ten's motivation.

Wait, it happened again?

Huh?

I swear I've filled that out before, at least twice. I'll do it again, but this is beyond spooky.

You know those stories where the travelers meet the old lady by the side of the road? The one who rewards those who are kind and curses those are rude to her? Yeah. Those aren't just stories.

Back country is full of witches. Half of them are just crazy folks, but some of them have a little bit of talent—enough to sour milk or scare kids. But hidden among them are a handful with real power. The dumb ones end up attracting unwanted attention from wizards and the like, but the smart ones keep their heads down, don't do anything flashy, and stay in business. Scariest one of these I ever met is Auntie Ten, and Auntie, if you're reading this, I don't mean no disrespect by it. Just trying to keep some dumbass kids from pissing you off.

Auntie's been around at least a hundred years—possibly many, many more—and by all accounts, she was pretty hot stuff back in Russia before she came to America in the early 1900s. Throughout the 1970s, anyone who knew where to find her little shop in Brighton Beach and who could ask politely could have their enemies hexed or pursue similar entertainments. That was all open, minor stuff, but if you really knew what to ask, this little old lady—and no one's ever described her as anything else—could provide. Stories tie her to organized crime, politics, and almost every other dirty dealing in the area.

Reminds me of the old lady by the fire in Russia.

Holy crap, you're right. The timeline even works out.

All well and good, but here's why you care—sometime around 1977, she closed her shop and disappeared. There was no shortage of commotion surrounding this—some important people who depended on her services were left abruptly in the lurch. Now she's reappeared, near Tom's Crossing.

The Problem

Threat: The River's Rage

Here's where we get to why all this is important, and why I'm even telling you about Tom's Crossing and the Piasa in the first place. It's angry. Something is stirring the Piasa up, making it good and mad, and the river around Tom's Crossing is raging right along with it. A few buildings have been destroyed, a few people have died. So far it's localized to the town, but it's starting to spread as the Piasa gets madder, and if the Piasa goes out on a rampage there's no telling what kind of destruction it could wreak.

This all started right around the time Auntie Ten showed up. Yeah, I thought the same thing. Now, I don't know *for sure* that Auntie's behind the Piasa's epic temper tantrum, but coincidences get my hackles all up and this one's really bugging me. What does Auntie Ten have to gain? Is she trying to control the Piasa? If she succeeds, what then? What are her intentions? Seems to me we need to answer these questions, and find a way to calm the beast down.

Morris's Bane

Theme: Work, If You Don't Mind Danger

The Pit

On a railroad bridge there's a collection of scrawled hobo signs. Most of them are worn with the decades, illegible, but there's one that's clear as day, brand new. It tells you to go find a man named Morris if you're looking for work and fair pay, and that's exactly what Morris provides.

Dale Morris runs the Aberforth Coal Mine, and he's the most recent in a long line of people to do so. Every few years a new manager comes in because, I'll tell you, the Pit will chew you up and spit you out. That's what the locals call the mine: "The Pit." Sounds ominous, doesn't it.

Doesn't seem like much on the surface. It's a coal mine owned by some energy company or other, tasked with the job of keeping profits high and costs low. Morris handles this by keeping a close eye on the books and by hiring day laborers that don't come anywhere near those books. He pays you cash money, under the table, and he'll pay a fair wage. Day laborers being what they are, though, that fair wage is considerably less than what he'd pay if he were hiring *on* the books.

Faerie's Bargain: Looking for Work

Money can be hard to come by when you don't have a steady job. Enter Dale Morris and the Pit. Ian probably looks like the perfect laborer.

Alternately, coal mines are pretty big polluters, so you can get Emily and Robert involved that way, too. In either case, finding the demon changes everything.



Hobo Signs

There's no one true "Hobo Code"—the ad-hoc, word of mouth nature of these things means a certain amount of flexibility is the nature of the beast.

These signs are usually easy to spot if you know to look for them, usually scratched out or etched in something impermanent, like chalk. Occasionally they get worked into more permanent decoration like signs, but at that point you're getting close to secret society territory, which is more trouble than it's worth.

Aren't hobos all but extinct?
Yes, their light is all but extinguished from the galaxy...
SI USED TO RUN ACROSS A FEW. THEIR LIFESTYLE EXPOSES THEM TO MORE SPOOKY STUFF THAN ALMOST ANYONE ELSE.
And someone's leaving them hobo signs. You know that can't be good.


Religious Folk Here


Doctor Here


Vampires


Be Afraid


Wiseman/woman here


Kindly Folk


An Ass Kicking awaits you here


Dangerous critter


Wizards (Yes, it's a pointy hat)


Safe Place


Supernatural Community here

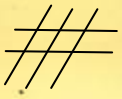

Left


Right


Dangerous Place


Keep Your Mouth Shut


Forward


The Shit Has Hit the Fan


Be ready to defend yourself


Here



Dale Morris
Guilt-Ridden Mine Manager
Motivation: Keep the demon appeased.
Face of: The Pit

I've worked for Morris a time or two. He's a harried man, always rushing from place to place, and he moves as if he's struggling under a weight. Smells sort of orange-yellow, like a mixture of panic and guilt. He pays well, treats his workers well (for the most part), but tolerates no drunkenness or disorderliness; if you're there, you're there to work.

Morris rarely comes into town; seems like a bit of a loner. As I understand it, every manager of the Pit has been the same way, keeping to themselves and not socializing with the locals. I suspect I know why. See, the last time I worked at the Pit I found out what Dale's secret was, what secret every manager of the Pit has kept for God only knows how long.

There's a demon in the bowels of the Pit.

Some time, long ago I'd wager, some poor fool broke a seal or incanted a ritual or some nonsense and released a demon into the world. The demon's bound to the Pit, it can't get out, but it can make a huge amount of trouble for anyone who wants to mine the Pit if they don't keep it appeased. I'll bet you're asking the question now, "Why do people still try to mine the Pit?"

Greed, that's why. See, the Pit is a profitable mine, far more profitable than any other coal mine in the region. The coal's always easy to get to, the mine never collapses, and it reports record profits year after year. I'd imagine its demonic inhabitant has something to do with that.

Dale Morris

High Concept
Manager of The Pit

Trouble
At War with His Demon

Other Aspects
Alcoholic
Greedy

Skills

Craftsmanship:	Fair	(+2)
Empathy:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Average	(+1)
Intimidation:	Average	(+1)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Scholarship:	Fair	(+2)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOOO

Notes
There's not much to this guy. He's just your basic fairly competent middle manager. A middle manager with a dark secret, but nothing else special.

Total Refresh Cost:
+2 (Pure Mortal)





Bright Eyes

High Concept
Demonic Bargainer

Trouble
Imprisoned in the Pit

Other Aspects
Haunts the Shadows
Fire in the Hole
Escape Plans

Skills

Conviction:	Superb	(+5)
Deceit:	Great	(+4)
Discipline:	Superb	(+5)
Empathy:	Great	(+4)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Good	(+3)
Rapport:	Good	(+3)
Weapons:	Good	(+3)

Most other skills default to Average or Fair.

Powers
Breath Weapon [-2] is Fire
Claws [-1]
Cloak of Shadows [-1]
Domination [-2]
Human Guise [-0]
Supernatural Speed [-4]
Supernatural Strength [-4]
The Catch [+2] is a weakness to holy items and expressions of genuine faith, affecting the following powers:
Supernatural Toughness [-4]

Stress
Mental OOOO
+1 mild consequence
Physical OOOO(OOOO)
Armor:2
Social OOO

Notes
Always goes first in initiative, Great attacks and defense against most attacks. **Weapon:6** claws & strength. Good breath weapon attack at **Weapon:2**. Dominates with a Superb Discipline.

Total Refresh Cost:
-16

Bright Eyes
Hungry Demon
Motivation: Escape The Pit.

That's what they call the demon, "Bright Eyes." At least, those who know about it and are still alive, which is a small number. It's a name that's been handed down from manager to manager according to Morris, and he thinks it's because all you remember about it after you talk to it are those two points of light, boring into your soul.

Bright Eyes has a bargain with the managers of the Pit, and that gets passed down from manager to manager. I don't know the particulars of the bargain, but based on what I've learned about the goings-on at the Pit, my guess is that Bright Eyes keeps the mine profitable and safe and the manager has to feed it a worker or two every couple of weeks. Since these workers are mostly transients, nobody notices the disappearances.

As far as powers go, I've heard a few things but none of it's substantiated. I've heard the thing has the strength of ten men, that it can blend into the shadows, that it can creep into your mind and root around in there, and that it can burn a man from the inside out in a matter of seconds (though it likes to take longer). Proceed with caution.

This needs to stop NOW.
Agreed, but we're not exactly overflowing with people to send down there to do battle with demons.
Yeah, I know. But this place is going on the List.
Um...just how long is that List at this point?
Really, Will? You're going to get snarky with me about this?
never mind.

The Problem

Threat: The Shackles Are Weakening

This arrangement isn't ideal but, all things considered, it could be a lot worse, right? Well, if it ain't worse, it's gonna be really soon.

Is he serious with this? I do NOT like this guy.

mike Yeah, I don't think Mike tends to go out of his way to help people. Still, he sent us all this stuff presumably so WE could help people, and that's a step in the right direction.

Here's what Morris and his predecessors didn't know—they've been helping Bright Eyes escape this entire time. It's not like a demon has to eat on a regular basis in order to stay alive; those souls it's consuming are a source of power. It's been building that power up, growing it slowly for some purpose that can't possibly be good. I did some digging with the hobo crowd and it seems like this thing's getting more powerful over time. Not only that, it's getting hungrier; it's asking for more and more souls and paying more and more for them.

I think Bright Eyes is gearing up for a prison break, probably sooner rather than later. At one point, this was a problem that could wait, but that time is getting further and further behind us. Sometime very soon, someone's going to have to stop the flow of souls and maybe enact some kind of binding or banishment to get rid of this thing, and that ain't gonna be easy.



Stuck in the Middle

Theme: Don't Fuck with Helman

The Wolf's Den

The Wolf's Den is a dive bar on the Interstate in the middle of nowhere, the only food and gas for miles in any direction. Doesn't get a lot of business, except bikers and truckers and the occasional misguided traveler. It's a rough bar in a spot where the police aren't likely to come to your rescue, but that doesn't mean you're *always* taking your life in your hands by stopping there to take a leak or grab a burger and a beer.

Dave Helman

High Concept
Half-Troll Barkeep

Other Aspects
Not in My Bar!
Bite as Bad as His Bark
Big, Tall, and Mean Lookin'

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Average	(+1)
Craftsmanship:	Average	(+1)
Deceit:	Average	(+1)
Driving:	Average	(+1)
Empathy:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Great	(+4)
Fists:	Superb	(+5)
Intimidation:	Great	(+4)
Might:	Superb	(+5)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)
Rapport:	Average	(+1)
Weapons:	Good	(+3)

Other skills default to Mediocre and Average.

Stunts
Footwork (Fists): Dave is fast on his feet and has been in enough fistfights to know how to make himself a hard target. He may use Fists to dodge attacks instead of Athletics, in all the circumstances where Athletics might apply.

Powers
Inhuman Strength [-2]
Inhuman Recovery [-2]
Inhuman Toughness [-2]
The Catch [+3] is Cold Iron and the trappings of Summer.

Stress
Mental OOO
Physical OOOO(OO) **Armor:1**
Social OOO

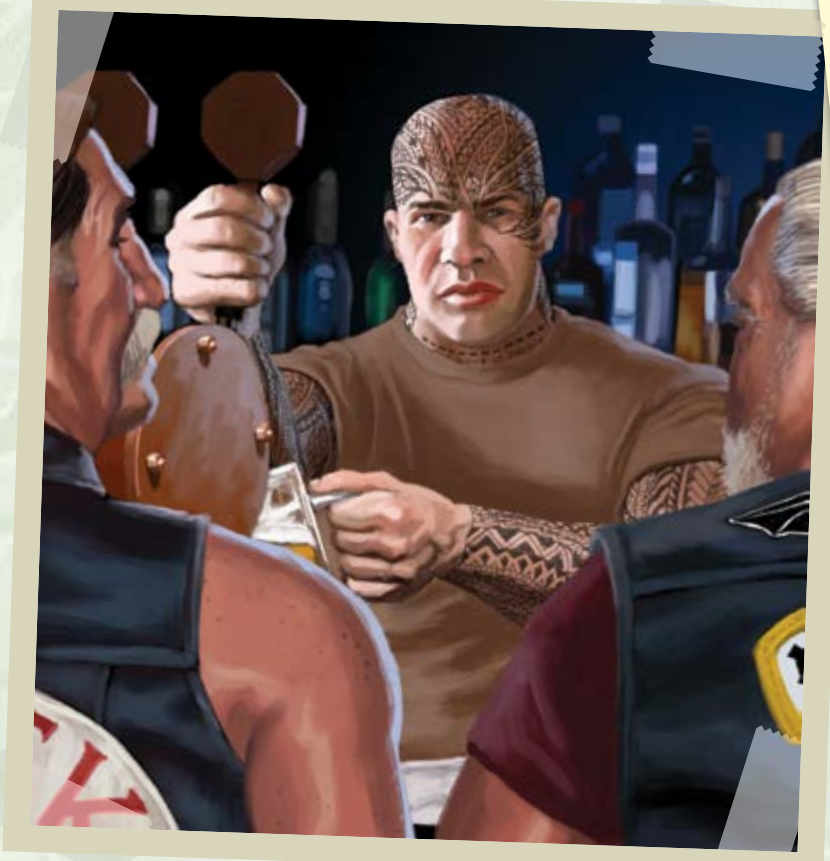
Notes
Fair initiative, Superb attacks with **Weapon:2** Fists, Superb defenses against most attacks with Footwork stunt. Dave is a real bruiser.

Total Refresh Cost: -4

Dave Helman
Peace-Keeping Barkeep
Motivation: Not in my bar, you don't.
Face of: The Wolf's Den

The tough-looking son of a bitch behind the bar is Dave Helman. You do not mess with Dave Helman. He's six-two, about 300 pounds, shaved head, covered in tattoos, with fists like great stone clubs. I have my suspicions that he's not *entirely* on the mortal end of the spectrum, but I haven't verified them yet. And believe me, I haven't asked.

Helman doesn't tolerate fights in his bar, and he can damn well back up his glower. He's faced down bikers on crank, and those who aren't intimidated by him quickly learn the error of their ways. Now, this doesn't mean he's got your well-being at heart. The man cares about his bar, not about you. He'll sell you food and pour you beer, and as long as you don't start trouble, you're pretty safe. Out on the open road though…hope you're on good terms with your guardian angel.



Do we know for sure that Helman's a changeling?

No, this is pure speculation. It's more fun for the game if he is, though.

Ruby

Dealer of Meth and Rage

Motivation: Respect my authority.

A biker gang called the Diablos uses the Den as a base. They're pretty serious into the meth business, and they'll make sure you regret it if you get in the way of that. Helman mostly tolerates them, but they don't get any special treatment from him. If a fight starts in the Den, it's usually one of the Diablos who starts it…and it's usually Helman who ends it.

The leader of the Diablos is probably the meanest woman I've ever met, Ruby. Ruby's quick, smart, thoughtful, and a big enough badass to take on any one of her gang without trouble, and probably two or three of them if she needed to. Not that I've ever seen her need to; her gang respects her to the point of worship.

I'm pretty sure she's got some martial arts training from before her meth-dealing days because that woman is *fast* and *brutal*. I once saw a biker (not a Diablo) come after her and, within the span of three or four seconds, she had broken both of his arms, a leg, and probably some ribs. They had to carry that guy out of the Den on a makeshift stretcher, and she just smirked as they did.

Training is only part of it, though. I've had occasion to talk to Ruby (not something I'd care to repeat), and she smelled *wrong*. It's hard to explain…it's like there were two smells on top of each other, one of them her normal smell of calm confidence and ruthlessness, the other a hot white tannic stink of pure fury. My guess is she's possessed by a spirit of rage that gives her strength as long as she keeps it sated. I'm pretty sure Helman doesn't know about the rage spirit and, in a fight, I honestly don't know which one would win. I might hedge my bet toward Ruby, but it would be a close thing.

Ruby

High Concept
Rage-Possessed Biker

Other Aspects
Former Cage Fighter
The Diablos' Head Honcho
Just Plain Mean

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Contacts:	Average	(+1)
Conviction:	Average	(+1)
Deceit:	Average	(+1)
Discipline:	Fair	(+2)
Driving:	Fair	(+2)
Empathy:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Superb	(+5)
Intimidation:	Great	(+4)
Might:	Good	(+3)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)
Weapons:	Average	(+1)

Other skills default to Mediocre and Average.

Stunts
Lethal Weapons (Fists): When attacking an unarmored opponent with Fists, Ruby is considered to have **Weapon:2**; against **Armor:1** she has **Weapon:1**.

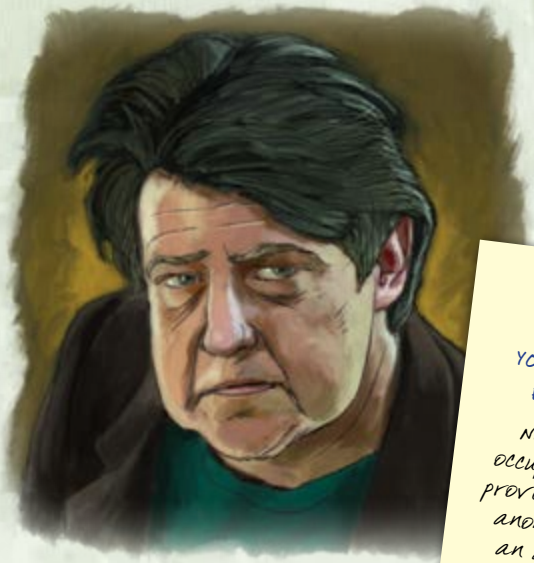
Powers
Demonic Co-Pilot [-1]
Inhuman Speed [-2]
Inhuman Strength [-2]
The Catch [+2] is peaceful emotions and symbols of true peace, affecting the following powers:
Inhuman Toughness [-2]
Inhuman Recovery [-2]

Stress
Mental OOO
Physical OOOO(OO)
Armor:1
Social OOO

Notes
Fantastic initiative, Superb physical attacks and defenses, **Weapon:4** Fists. Ruby is quick and brutal.

Total Refresh Cost: -8





Will, does the name sound familiar to you? I don't think I've ever heard of him.

Nope. Given his, ah, occupation, I'd guess he provides his information anonymously or under an assumed name. Or maybe "Derek Gentry" *is* an assumed name.

Derek Gentry

High Concept
Worldwalking Thief

Trouble
Addicted to Challenge

Other Aspects
Second Story Man
Cool Under Pressure

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Burglary:	Superb	(+5)
Contacts:	Average	(+1)
Conviction:	Average	(+1)
Deceit:	Good	(+3)
Driving:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Average	(+1)
Fists:	Fair	(+2)
Investigation:	Fair	(+2)
Lore:	Good	(+3)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)
Resources:	Fair	(+2)
Scholarship:	Average	(+1)
Stealth:	Great	(+4)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts

Hairpin Maestro (Burglary): Poor tools are no trouble when picking locks. Any increase to difficulty due to poor tools (such as having only a hairpin and a credit card) is reduced by up to two.

Safecracker (Burglary): Any lock-picking effort takes place two steps faster than usual on the time table.

Powers
Worldwalking [-2]

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOO

Notes
Good initiative, Great defenses, Fair attacks with Fists. If Derek finds himself in a fight, it means he screwed something up.

Total Refresh Cost: -4

Derek would make a great PC if you were going with the "Thieves Prosper" theme.

Indeed.

Faierie's Bargain: An Old Friend

Ian and Derek go way back. They knew each other growing up and, though Derek didn't go into the service with Ian, they kept in touch. Ian put out some feelers to find Derek when the trio went on the road, and now he's heard about his friend's predicament. How can he leave him to his fate?

Derek Gentry

Walker of the Ways

Motivation: Get the info, get out.

Derek's a friend of mine; in fact, he's how I heard about the Paranet. Don't know if he's actually a member, but I do know that he provides you guys information from time to time. He's a talent; don't know how, but he's got the ability to step back and forth between here and Faerie at will, and it makes him damn good at his job.

Derek's a thief and sometimes a spy. He's one of the best around, and he specializes in stealing strange and unusual things or getting at very closely guarded information. He's gonna be kind of pissed that I mentioned all this—he does like to play up the man of mystery angle—but the situation being what it is, I think he'll forgive me.

Not too long ago, Derek was telling me about a job he was gearing up for, something involving some very violent people out in the middle of nowhere. Said it was an interesting challenge, and that the thing he was being sent to steal was pretty valuable. He seemed excited.

Then things went bad.

The Problem

Threat: Powder Keg, Meet Fire

From what I've managed to piece together over the past few weeks, Derek's target was one of the Diablos, maybe even Ruby herself. Not sure what he was set to steal, but it went all sideways and now Derek is Ruby's prisoner. He's been held in the Wolf's Den for the past few weeks and, for the moment, that's the safest place for him. For some reason, Helman won't let Ruby take him out of the bar, and he certainly won't let her do anything to him while he's in the bar.

Ruby's none too happy about it. She wants to have a conversation with Derek (if by "conversation" you mean "enhanced interrogation techniques"), wants to find out who sent him and what he was sent to steal. What we have in the Wolf's Den right now is a stand-off. The Diablos are afraid of Helman, but Ruby's not, and neither of them are going to back down. At some point, probably soon, one of them is going to strike and then all hell will break loose.

As far as Derek goes, he seems to be stuck. Not sure why he can't just step into Faerie to escape, but something's keeping him grounded. If Ruby wins the fight, Derek's as good as dead. If Helman wins…well, I really have no idea what he's got in store for Derek.



The Go-Bag

The go-bag—or bug-out bag—is the one bag you grab when you need to get out the door fast. There's a temptation to put everything you could possibly need in this bag, but that's a bad temptation. This is the crap you don't want left behind when something angry and fangy is busting down the door. If you can replace it, it shouldn't be in this bag, with a few exceptions.

Some are obvious. Keep some cash in the bag, car keys, multi-tool—things that live in your pockets anyway. Less obvious is your hairbrush—really your whole bath kit. Yeah, it's easy to replace with a trip to the drugstore, but your hair is another matter. There are people and things out there that can do terrible things to you with a few strands of hair. Don't make it easy on them.

Good point. Time for a haircut.

Keep a pack of smokes and a lighter in the bag. I don't care if you smoke or not—it ain't for you. Nothing starts a conversation like being able to offer a man a smoke or a light. Opens doors.

One warning—the more stuff you've conveniently stashed in your go-bag, the bigger a problem it'll be if it gets stolen, so take precautions. Keep an eye on it, obviously, but also try not to pick a bag that looks expensive. Some hoodlum gets the idea that you've got a laptop in there and you've just booked a reservation at Hotel Trouble.

Faerie's Bargain: Grab That Go-Bag

Robert's Go-Bag:
Two divination crystals
A piece of chalk
A bag containing a few ounces of salt
$78 in cash (twenties and small bills)
A pocketknife
A hairbrush

Emily's Go-Bag:
Three fake IDs
A box of paper clips
A flathead screwdriver
A roll of electrical tape
A bottle of caffeine tablets
$205 in cash (mostly twenties)

Ian's Go-Bag:
A magazine for his Glock containing seven live 9mm rounds
A straight razor, bar of soap, and a towel
A pocketknife
An address book with names & numbers of contacts
A pair of dry socks
$40 in cash (tens)

What's in your go-bag Karrin?

You can't see me, but I'm glaring at you right now. It's extremely intimidating.

She's right, it is.

Stone and Water

Theme: New Lands, Old Magics

Concretehenge

Out in central Pennsylvania there's an old, flooded granite quarry. Locals used it back in the '50s and '60s until they ran out of the good rock; after the granite supply dried up, so did the town. Aston, PA, just emptied out over the course of a couple of years, but that doesn't mean nobody's been back there since.

I wouldn't call it a tourist attraction—not exactly. Most folk don't know anything about it. But the clued-in know that something happened in the Aston quarry not long after the town emptied out, something that changed it for the weirder.

Go back to that quarry now, you'll see what looks like a small lake. The whole thing's filled up and, though it's only a couple hundred feet wide on its widest end, boy, is that thing *deep*. That ain't the weird part, though; quarries get filled with water all the time—the government comes in and floods them to keep them from being a hazard to those who might fall in and break every bone on the way down. I guess drowning's considered safer than falling to your death.

No, the really weird part is that there's an island in the middle of the quarry that has no place being there. It's just out there, like it grew up from the ground, maybe fifty or sixty feet wide, defying all sorts of rational laws. But wait, it gets even more oddball than that. In the center of that island, laid out in a pattern no doubt perfect to someone's way of thinking, is a stone circle.

Don't look at me like that. It's a stone circle, menhirs and all, except that this one's made of concrete. The menhirs are big slabs of poured concrete, taken from somewhere and transplanted here, arranged in a circle for who knows what purpose and left to the elements. The whole thing's been there for at least six years, but nobody knows exactly when the circle—or the island—showed up. Folks in the know have taken to calling it "Concretehenge."

Seriously, don't look at me like that.

The Lady of Mountain Tears

Captive Water Faerie

Motivation: Break free of my bonds.

Face of: Concretehenge

The government may or may not have filled the Aston quarry—jury's still out on that one—but they goddamn well don't own the thing. Not anymore. Now that place is the domain of the Lady of Mountain Tears.

See, the Lady rules over artificial depths. Mostly it's quarries and reservoirs, though I've heard of her Court playing around in floodwaters, water hazards, and other odd places from time to time. Hard to tell if she's one of the kind fae or the wicked ones, but she and her folk have a sense of humor, I'll tell you that. Ever been swimming in a flooded quarry or even a swimming pool and you feel something grab your foot and give it a little tug? Yeah, that's probably her Court having a good laugh at your expense.

There's a difference?

Don't tell Harry's godmother I said that. Or anyone. Ever.

The Lady of Mountain Tears

High Concept
Ruler of Artificial Depths

Trouble
Bound to Aston Quarry

Other Aspects
The Power of Concretehenge
Mischievous Court Attendants
Loves to Bargain
Wants to Escape

Skills, Powers, etc.

The Lady is a plot device level character. She is a Fae Lady with dominion over all artificial bodies of water. She's assumed to be Legendary at most things and even better at others, especially where water is involved.

However, she's currently bound to the Aston Quarry and that limits her influence—she would do almost anything to get free.

Crap.

What?

So, there's a powerful water spirit that wants to get loose badly enough she's willing to wheel and deal and she's guarding a powerful locus of power. You know any convenient water-oriented folks who might want to take advantage of that?

Oh.

Right.

Crap.

Also right.

There's those who think that the Lady built the island and the circle atop it, and there's those who think that she had nothing to do with it. I'm not sure myself, but what I do know is that she guards it, and she'll only let you across to it if you offer her something in exchange. Yeah, like most fae, the Lady loves a good bargain. Also like most fae, she's probably getting one over on you if you strike one with her. She does like gifts of the sea—shells, pearls, driftwood, coral—so bringing something of that nature will strengthen your bargaining position a bit.

There's a rumor about the Lady. Though her Court moves around a lot, the Lady herself is bound to the Aston quarry, bound to guard Concretehenge. Whatever geas keeps her there also chafes her mightily. She's intent on finding some way to break it, but either she doesn't know how or can't say. You can bet she's got a plan, though.

The Problem

Threat: Enemies at the Gates

Somebody wants Concretehenge, somebody who's going to great lengths to keep their identity a secret. Whispers and rumors is what I've got mostly; questions asked here, people interrogated there, the odd poor soul who's had his mind completely broken by some form of magical brain-reading ritual. Somebody wants it, and wants it bad.

The good news: they don't know where it is yet. At least, I don't think they do. From what I've heard, they're still asking around about the 'Henge; they know it's a place of power, but they haven't managed to trace it to Aston—or even Pennsylvania—just yet.

The bad news: it's a matter of time. Sooner or later they're going to find Aston, find the quarry, find the 'Henge. They'll learn about the Lady and they'll figure out how to give her what she wants, and then they'll get exactly what they want. I have a feeling that wouldn't be a good thing.

Breaking the Formula

Hey, thought I'd chime in and use this episode as a teaching opportunity. Sometimes there isn't a second NPC. Sometimes (like with *Stuck in the Middle*, page 227) you have an NPC that acts as a face but doesn't necessarily have a direct stake in the conflict. That's totally fine!

Don't feel the need to stick slavishly to the format of an episode. As you can see from the multitude of episodes in this chapter, the formula works pretty well and can be applied most of the time. Every once in a while it doesn't work quite right, though, and in those cases it's fine to monkey with it a little bit. Rather than distorting your episode to match the established structure, it's better to twist the structure to match the awesome adventure idea you have in mind.

Tying it All Together

There are a couple of obvious choices for the villain in this episode, but this is also an opportunity to insert your own bad guy. If your group is on the road as a departure from your regular city-based game, you can throw this episode in to remind the players that your bad guy is still out there, doing bad things in their absence.

Faerie's Bargain: The Power to End it

Concretehenge is one possible setting for the dramatic ending of your *Faerie's Bargain* campaign (see Cripple Creek Bridge on page 238 for another). Concretehenge is a place of power, and by the time the PCs find it, Robert might have enough supernatural knowledge to harness that power in order to frighten Windsnap off or even defeat him for good. Of course, *getting* to Concretehenge poses its own problems, not the least of which is that it might require bargaining with another faerie.

If you're not ready to bring the campaign to a close, the PCs might do the Lady a favor, gaining a favor in return—something that might help them defeat Windsnap in the end.



Wake Up, Dreamer

Theme: Sealed Away, But Stirring

Pallium

In upstate New York there's a mental hospital, its name lost to time. At least, *I* don't know its name; the sign's faded beyond readability and I've never had the means nor the inclination to investigate what that place was once called. It's been abandoned since around the '30s from what I've heard, though some say it goes back even further than that. It's hard to find any first-hand accounts.

The reason for that is two-fold. First, the place is pretty old. Anyone who remembers the place first-hand is either dead or not bothering to talk about it anymore, so digging up information is difficult. Second, people avoid the place nowadays. It's got a reputation for being haunted, but that ain't quite right. See "Points of Power" on (page 198).

What's on the other side? Well, that's kind of a difficult question to answer. Folks who've been through that Waypoint—and I'm not one of them; I've got no reason to go down that particular rabbit hole—call the place Pallium, but accounts about it conflict. Some say it's a dark mirror of the building on this side, others say it's a crystalline castle in the sky, still others call it a twisted forest or a tranquil mountain copse or a Buddhist temple or an airplane hangar. Heck, people who use the Waypoint even describe the place as being near to different things in the Nevernever, like it moves around or something. Nobody's story is the same, except for one thing—Pallium has an occupant.

Patient X

Prisoner of Pallium

Motivation: I shall be free.

Appropriately enough, nobody describes the occupant quite the same either. Some say man, some say woman. Some say old, some young; some beautiful, some hideous; some say it's a talking tree or a giant sparrow or what have you. The form varies from story to story, but there are a few things everyone agrees on—it calls itself Patient X and it longs to be free.

It's not a trickster or a faerie or a god or a ghost. Patient X is confused. Can't make its mind up about who it is, who it was, who it wants to be. It likes company, and it'll talk your ear off about lives that it thinks it remembers, people who may never have existed, events that occurred hundreds or thousands of years ago. More than that, though, it wants to be free. It's always very clear about that—Patient X is a prisoner in Pallium, and it wants out.

There's a rumor that I heard a while back about a patient at the hospital that fell asleep one night and never woke up, just kept on sleeping. Things started falling apart at the hospital shortly afterward and the dreamer got lost in the scuffle. The rumor says that dreamer's still there, that he (or she) is Patient X, trapped in his (or her) little pocket demesne on the other side, kept asleep under lock and key by the Justinians. I have no idea if this rumor is true, but I thought I'd pass it on.

Patient X

High Concept

Mysterious Prisoner of Pallium

Trouble

Unsure of What (S)He Is

Other Aspects

Ever-Changing Nature

Wants to Be Free

Shell Shock

For King and Country

Skills

Alertness:	Average	(+1)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Driving:	Fair	(+2)
Empathy:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Guns:	Great	(+4)
Intimidation:	Fair	(+2)
Stealth:	Average	(+1)
Survival:	Fair	(+2)
Weapons:	Average	(+1)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OO

Notes

Average initiative, Great attacks with Guns, Good defenses. In this form, Patient X is a British veteran of the Great War. The Shell Shock and For King and Country aspects are specific to this form. The rest are universal.

Total Refresh Cost:

+2 (Pure Mortal)

The Refresh cost lists the Pure Mortal bonus because this form is a straight mortal. Statting each form as a discrete character is much easier than trying to build Patient X with shapeshifting powers with an involuntary change limitation.

Patient X's stats are going to vary a bit; we just picked a form and statted it out, but feel free to use whatever you want. Alternately, you could run Patient X as a plot device. Not because it's powerful in its current form, but because its exact stats don't matter—they're whatever they need to be to suit the situation and can be changed on a whim.





Vincent Garrow

Keeper of Pallium

Motivation: You shall not pass.

I'll bet Ian McKellen has that bumper sticker on his car.

Face of: Pallium/The Abandoned Mental Hospital

Garrow is the leader of a group of religious types who call themselves the Justinians. The way I hear it, St. Justin was a synthesis, a guy who embraced and learned other philosophies and faiths to be able to fold them into the Church of his day. The order, which takes his name, has a similar perspective, and they're open to everything from quantum mechanics to wizardry as part of creation.

The reason I mention them is that, if you go poking around that old asylum, trying to make your way to Pallium, he's gonna try to stop you. He's not going to attack you outright; he's a nice enough guy and he doesn't believe in violence as the first response to something he doesn't like. But he will warn you away in a stern fashion, and he does go about that area armed.

The Justinians make it their business to collect the possessions, parts, and works of St. Justin. They've accumulated quite a bit of esotery over the years, and it's made people like Vincent Garrow something to be reckoned with. Garrow's got magical talent, maybe even wizard-level talent, though he's not part of the White Council. He's also got one or two potent artifacts that he carries around with him, one of which is a magic sword that'll slice right through concrete like it was butter.

He's a nice guy, but he's not to be messed with lightly.

Now, I don't know exactly why he's so keen to keep people away from Pallium, but I have my suspicions. If Patient X is a prisoner within that demesne, my best guess is that it's Garrow and the Justinians who're keeping it there. They keep a close watch on that old asylum and they very rarely let people through that Waypoint. I hope they have a good reason for keeping that poor soul a prisoner. My gut tells me they do, but my gut's been wrong before.

Vincent Garrow

High Concept

Pallium's Guardian Sorcerer

Other Aspects

Justinian Leader

Firm But Fair

Ancient Artifacts

Skills

Alertness:	Average	(+1)
Athletics:	Fair	(+2)
Conviction:	Superb	(+5)
Discipline:	Good	(+3)
Empathy:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Average	(+1)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Investigation:	Fair	(+2)
Lore:	Great	(+4)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Scholarship:	Fair	(+2)
Weapons:	Great	(+4)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers

Evocation [-3]

Thaumaturgy [-3]

The Sight [-1]

Soulgaze [-0]

Wizard's Constitution [-0]

Specializations

Evocation: Elements (Earth, Fire, Spirit); Control (Spirit +1)

Thaumaturgy: Control (Wards +1)

Focus Items

Wand (Spirit Offense Control +1)

Enchanted Items

St. Justin's Sword: Cuts through anything (it counts as a **Weapon:3** sword at minimum in all circumstances); 3 times/session acts as a **Weapon:5** item; uses two item slots.

2 slots kept open for various potions and other magical trinkets (Strength 5).

Stress

Mental OOOO

+1 mild consequence

Physical OOO

Social OOOO

Notes

Average initiative. Great physical attack and defense with a **Weapon:3** sword. Able to safely control 3-4 shifts of effect with his magic. Vincent usually gives people fair warning about not disturbing the Pallium, giving them a chance to leave the area.

Total Refresh Cost: -7

Quarrel

Power-Grasping Wyldfae

Motivation: What's best for Quarrel...

The thing is, as good as the Justinians are at policing *this* side of the Waypoint, there's only so much they can do about the *other* side.

How do you police the Nevernever? Hell, beings of god-like power still only control small fractions of what exists; how would a mortal organization hope to come close to that?

And don't think people—and otherwise—haven't figured this out. There's one in particular, a wyldfae named Quarrel, who warrants special attention. Wyldfae. See, that suggests that Quarrel is neutral, that he isn't aligned with either of the Courts, but that ain't exactly true. Quarrel would like nothing more than to curry favor with Titania, and he'll do anything he can to become her favorite little freelancer.

Oh, Titania is "gravely concerned" about the "incursion of predatory wyldfae" on her territory, but apparently there's "little to be done about such matters" when they're "perpetrated outside her Court's lands." Yeah, you're not fooling anyone, Titania.

Quarrel may be in the Queen's pocket to some extent, but don't think that makes him under her control. Remember what she said about "predatory wyldfae?" Yeah, that's Quarrel to a T. He's cunning, vicious, and he loves gobbling up the smaller fish to expand his own power. Sure he wants to get in good with Titania, but ultimately he's doing what's best for Quarrel, and nobody else.

Faerie's Bargain: Who Holds the Leash

Windsnap is wyldfae, but he answers to someone. At some point, the trio finds out that the someone that Windsnap answers to is Quarrel, everybody's favorite predatory wyldfae. What do they do with this information? Do they try to form an alliance with Windsnap against Quarrel in exchange for Robert's release from his debt? Enter into yet another bargain, this time with Quarrel: get Windsnap off our backs and we'll help you get Patient X? Ally with the Justinians against both wyldfae?

The Problem

Threat: Who Holds the Prisoner Holds the Power

From what I hear, Quarrel's been taking a keen interest in Pallium and Patient X lately. Maybe he wants to deliver it to Queen Titania, maybe he wants to keep it for himself and increase his own power to the point where he no longer needs to be her lapdog. Either way, bad news.

One thing I'm certain of: Patient X is powerful. Maybe it's a demon or an Archfae or an Outsider, but whatever it is, I'm pretty sure that Garrow and his crew have a good reason to keep Patient X trapped and confused. If that's the case, Quarrel getting his hands on Patient X could result in his power multiplying a hundredfold.

Freeing Patient X could be even worse.

Of course, I could be way off-base about the Justinians. Maybe something else entirely is keeping Patient X trapped, and their angle is to grab some of that juice for themselves. I don't *think* that's the case but, like I said, I've been wrong before.

Yeah, this makes me a little nervous. Should we be antagonizing a Faerie Queen like this?

Hey, those are Mike's words, not ours.

Yeah, but we're printing them!

Do you honestly think Titania's going to read this book? Are you that afraid to poke the bear with a stick?

Hey, those are your words, not mine!

Quarrel

High Concept

Power-Grasping Wyldfae

Other Aspects

Deceitful
Cruel
Self-Centered
Vicious
Seeks Titania's Favor

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Superb	(+5)
Conviction:	Fair	(+2)
Deceit:	Fantastic	(+6)
Discipline:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Great	(+4)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Fair	(+2)
Might:	Great	(+4)
Performance:	Fair	(+2)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Stealth:	Superb	(+5)
Weapons:	Good	(+3)

Other skills range from Mediocre to Fair.

Powers

Claws [-1]
Supernatural Speed [-4]
Supernatural Strength [-4]
Supernatural Recovery [-4]
Supernatural Toughness [-4]
The Catch [+3] is Cold Iron
Greater Glamours [-4]

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OOOO(OOOO)
Armor:2	
Social	OOOO

Notes

Supernatural initiative, Great attacks with **Weapon:6** Fists, Epic defenses. Quarrel can hold his own in a stand up fight, but he prefers to use deception and stealth to maximize his advantage.

Total Refresh Cost: -18

On Traversing the Nevernever

The geography of the Nevernever relies less upon tangible landmarks and more upon the conceptualized natures of the individuals of power within given areas. A Dragon's lair may "border" (that is to say, be directly accessible to without leaving the Nevernever) the subterranean domain of a tribe of wyldfae who specialize in mining gold and precious minerals. It may also share a connection (albeit a carefully guarded one) with the demesne of a Wizard, who specializes in transmutations, with whom the Dragon has established a tenuous relationship over the centuries.

Between such directly connected locations, travel is possible completely within the Nevernever, so long as the traveler knows the route. And doesn't fall victim to predators. Or "natural" disasters. Or opportunistic bandits. Or traps laid for unwary travelers.

In the Nevernever, no route is likely to be entirely safe, even if it is straightforward.

An Occurrence at Cripple Creek Bridge

Theme: Deceptively Deep Rabbit Hole

Ms. Lee helped me piece together a bit of weirdness I've been puzzling on for a long time. Never quite had the guts to push on it—figured that'd break too many of my rules.

In the woods of Oregon, there's a place that's gotten pretty famous for roadside disappearances. People and cars just vanish without a trace. Over the past few years, these stories have grown more frequent. Could be as many as thirty, forty people just plucked off the face of the Earth.

I'll let the wizard take it from here.

I played a cover of "Up on Cripple Creek" at Oktoberfest a few years ago.

Sorry I missed that.

Really?

NO.

On the Nature of Demesnes

What is believed to be, *is*.

That, at its core, is the concept of a demesne. Or so I have been made to believe—I've never had one myself. Whether a vast kingdom ruled by a triumvirate of fae goddesses, a personal realm claimed from the Wyldlands by a mortal spellcaster, or a temporary tract made manifest by the dreams of a mortal being, a demesne is reality as conceptualized by its "owner."

That is why the Nevernever is (to the best of my understanding and experience) potentially both infinitely large and constantly in flux. From every mind and every spirit spring forth new vistas, new potential, and new reality.

In the Nevernever, will and concept are not only imposed upon reality; they are reality itself.

I FOUND OUT WHAT "DEMESNE" ACTUALLY MEANS. APPARENTLY IN FEUDAL TIMES, A LORD'S DEMESNE WAS HIS ESTATE OR MANOR, AND THE LANDS HE HELD TITLE TO.

Sure, but in the game, I'm basically making it a pocket realm belonging to a particular character, which exists in the Nevernever.

You're saying Faerie is a "pocket realm"?

You try writing game rules for something that doesn't even follow the rules of real reality.

YOU'RE THE GAME RULER.

Game Master.

WHATEVER.

Cripple Creek Bridge

Threat: Sorrows and Misfortunes Unending

One of the few single-lane truss bridges left in the United States, the Cripple Creek Bridge spans the Clackamas River on OR 224 in Oregon, which wends through the sylvan grace of the Mount Hood National Forest. To look at it is to look at a stranger, a ferromantic golem burned into the landscape like a lit cigarette pressed against a painting. It stands in defiance of fecundity, decay where growth wants to be, rust against verdancy.

You see, the Cripple Creek Bridge no longer actually exists—at least not in a state that any sane driver would traverse—even though a score of people drive over it every day. The grief and confusion of a young man named Matthew Davis gives the bridge material form, a demesne

so close to the borders of the Nevernever and the mortal realm that it is nearly impossible to distinguish between the two.

On the mortal side, things are more atmospheric than threatening, a sense of malaise settling upon you without reason, quickly passing as you cross and continue on your way. The less fortunate may encounter Matthew himself, while he pines for his lost love, but avoiding him is easy. Simply allow your self-preservation instinct to take over and run away.

In the Nevernever, the level of danger and disorientation increases considerably. The road always leads you back to the bridge, even if you keep travelling in the same direction. Strike out into the woods, and no method of marking your direction will work. You may randomly stumble upon pieces of Matthew's memory given form—the high school dance where he first found love, the petrol station where he worked, his car barreling through the woods at breakneck speed on its way to an appointment with destiny. And here, in his territory, Matthew's shade is inescapable and tireless, dogging the hapless traveler without end.

Matthew Davis

Wandering Shade

Motivation: To find Lisa and rest at last.

Face of: Cripple Creek Bridge

Matthew Davis was an unremarkable, if well-liked, young lad. He grew up in Waterloo, Oregon, and occasionally ran into small trouble with the local police—nothing (according to those who remembered him) unexpected from a boy of his age. He graduated from the local high school without honors or much in the way of a future ahead of him, except for his long-time sweetheart.

Her name was Lisa Meyers. Their betrothal was announced in the paper—such is the nature of news in a small town. One might fall in love with her based on her engagement photo alone. Unfettered golden tresses, ocean eyes, room-halting smile, all framed in near-perfect symmetry.

Three weeks later, both Matthew and Lisa had perished.

No one knows precisely what occurred, but the car was a twisted mess in the river below. Matthew's body was still behind the wheel, and Lisa's was thrown clear, never to be recovered. After several days of searching, it was assumed her body washed downriver in the storm runoff.

Ghost stories = creepier/darker/sadder than most plots. Handled well, they can be very memorable. Ghosts were people before something went wrong. Never forget. Ghosts = People + Tragedy.





Matthew Davis

High Concept
The Shade of Cripple Creek Bridge

Other Aspects
Powerful Will
Looking for His Lost Love
Master of His Demesne

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Great	(+4)
Discipline:	Great	(+4)
Empathy:	Good	(+3)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
Demesne [-1]
Inhuman Strength [–2]
Spirit Form (Poltergeist) [–5]
Swift Transition (No Mortal Home) [-1]
The Catch [+2] is that a ghost can only be hurt in the mortal realm by those it has acknowledged. If confronted in the Nevernever, Matthew still has **Armor:2** against attacks unless they're specifically structured as counter-measures against ghosts (like ghost dust).
Physical Immunity [-8]

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OO
Social	OOO

Notes
Good initiative, Average attacks and defense against most attacks with **Weapon:2** from strength. Ghosts like Matthew are tough, especially when confronted on their home ground. However, the players might be able to find something that could break his hold on the world and lay his spirit to rest; chances are it has to do with his lost love, Lisa Meyers.

What sort of thing are you thinking about?

Well any good ghost story has a mystery element to it. Solve the mystery and you might be able to lay his spirit to rest. Perhaps Lisa's Broken Engagement Ring lays somewhere in the rushing waters beneath Cripple Creek Bridge.

Total Refresh Cost:
-15

If you look at the bridge using the Sight, you can see the scars of the accident. Metal trusses twisted and torn, the intervening years taking their additional toll. It is, by any measure, unsafe to drive upon.

How fast was this kid going to do that kind of damage to the bridge? No wonder he feels guilty.

In death, Matthew's shade still looks for his lost love, reliving the night of the accident over and over again. I have met shades before, but not one with so powerful a will, nor such a total command of the environs.

When I encountered him, I was only able to make a hasty escape by conjuring an illusion of his beloved. In that moment, I knew I was in his demesne as well—Lisa Meyers came to life in a way I knew would be impossible on Earth, with much less effort than I expected.

I opened my third eye and learned the truth of things. Then I ran, far and fast and hard, before he realized my deception.

Vasiliki Petros
Wizardly Aristocrat
Motivation: To rule and guard her subjects as the legacy of her blood demands.
Face of: Lefkos Pyrgos
Unlike many of the individuals I've chronicled, learning about Vasiliki Petros was akin to what I imagine a newspaper journalist goes through during an interview with a celebrity. I do not know what favors she believes she has curried from Rashid in exchange, but she was quite cordial and gracious with her hospitality, and she answered my questions as fully as I could have expected anyone to do.

The daughter of a politician, married to a shipping magnate, Petros considers herself an academic and advisor, rather than a ruler of any sort. Her highest desire, she says, is for her city and its people to prosper into their full potential.

However, if her demesne—throne and all—is any indication, it seems likely that some of her desires remained officially unspoken.

In the mortal realm, she has a great deal of political power in the city of Thessaloniki, Greece. Officially, Ms. Petros' title translates to something akin to "Community Guide," although she assures me in very good English that the nuances do not translate well. I have no doubt, in speaking with her, that she has a very specific vision for her city's future—one where her hands firmly hold the reins.

Petros' Demesne: Lefkos Pyrgos (The White Tower)

Petros' corner of the Nevernever is a replica of the White Tower, one of Thessaloniki's most notable landmarks. In the mortal world, the Tower was built in the 16th century and served at various times as both fortress and prison before its current incarnation as a museum. Lefkos Pyrgos looks akin to its mundane namesake from a distance—a tall cylindrical tower of stone, crenellated around the upper edge, with a smaller, also-crenellated tower-room on its roof.

Unlike the mundane version, however, Petros' tower is guarded at the entrance by a pair of wyldfae gruffs wielding huge, double-headed axes. If I wasn't an invited guest, the pair (each a full head and shoulders taller than me) would have been quite intimidating. Other subjects perform sundry tasks, keeping the lawns maintained and so on. Petros always refers to them that way—they are subjects, not servants.

Guards aside, the first level of the tower could be mistaken for that of the mortal one, which is one of the primary stops for any visitor to the city. The ground floor is appointed with all manner of artifacts from the city's dramatic history. Some of these are physical items "recovered" from their previous owners at Petros' behest. Others are replicas, reproductions of antiquities lost to the city's great fire, or the Nazi occupation, or several skirmishes and wars that have taken their toll on the city's history. Beyond there, however, the similarity ends.

At the center of the room is a throne upon a raised dais, complete with red carpet leading to the base of the regal chair. It is from there that Petros leaves aside all pretenses of being the modest, helpful, community minded philanthropist she pretends to be in the outside world. Here, there is one word and one law, and that law is Petros.

Vasiliki Petros

High Concept
Wizardly Nevernever Inhabitant

Other Aspects
Ruler of Lefkos Pyrgos
Experienced Fae Negotiator

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Conviction:	Superb	(+5)
Deceit:	Fair	(+2)
Discipline:	Superb	(+5)
Empathy:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Average	(+1)
Intimidation:	Average	(+1)
Rapport:	Average	(+1)
Resources:	Fair	(+2)
Survival:	Average	(+1)
Weapons:	Fair	(+2)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
Evocation [-3]
Thaumaturgy [-3]
The Sight [-1]
Soulgaze [-0]
Wizard's Constitution [-0]
Sponsored Magic (Seelie Magic)[-2]
Refinement [-3]
Inhuman Mental Toughness [-2]
Demesne [-1]

Specialties
Evocation: Elements (Fire, Air, Spirit, Water); Power (Fire +1 Air +1) Control (Fire +2)
Thaumaturgy: Complexity (Wards +1)

Focus Items
Staff (+2 Air Defense Power, evocation)
Wand (+2 Fire Offense Power, evocation)

Enchanted Items
Four slots kept open for potions and other "consumable" items.

Stress
Mental OOOO, +1 mild consequence
Physical OOO
Social OOO

Notes
Good initiative, Great defenses unless she's able to bring magic to bear. Uses spells for maximum advantage, able to safely control 7-shift fire evocations.

Vasiliki gained access to Seelie magic through a bargain with one of the Summer fae living near her territory. She is careful not to overuse it so she can avoid becoming indebted to the fae.

Total Refresh Cost:
-15

Singh

High Concept
Ferrovax's Dragon Lackey

Other Aspects
Behold My Glory
Pretentious and Ostentatious

Trouble
Mutinously Greedy

Skills, Powers, etc.
Singh might not be a capital "D" Dragon, but he is still a dragon, which means he has Supernatural Strength, Toughness, and Recovery, Claws, Hulking Size, and Breath Weapon. He also possesses Marked By Power, Human Guise, and his Demesne.

Notes
Singh is a plot device level character. Assume he presents a Fantastic challenge at most things, and raise that to Epic if you encounter him in his Demesne. However, he is quite vulnerable to flattery and being treated like a "Real Dragon."

Total Refresh Cost: -17 and possibly more.



Far be it from me to try to protect a dragon, but maybe you want to change some identifying details here before this goes to print. I wouldn't want to be the one responsible for informing Ferrovax about this.

Noted. I'll change it for the final version.

Singh
Servitor of Ferrovax
Motivation: To be seen as a "Real Dragon."
Face of: The Silver Lair

I heard this story! Except it was the guy at the gas station who noticed and had to convince the driver to come back in the store.

There are dragons, and then there are Dragons. Singh is one of the former, much to his chagrin.

To the unknowing, Singh seems to typify dragonkind. Every time I have encountered him in the Nevernever, he has worn his "natural" form, that of a four-legged serpentine Oriental dragon with golden scales and long, sinuous whiskers. On the sole occasion that I had the misfortune to cross paths with Singh in the mortal world, he appeared as a short, wiry Eastern Indian man of middle age, with greedy dark eyes and an unmistakable aura of self-aggrandizement. If you have to deal with him, choose your words with caution.

He responds well to flattery, and never forgets (or forgives) an insult.

Singh is quite ostentatious about his role as Ferrovax's "right hand man," although whether the Dragon sees him that way or not is something I do not know. What I do know, however, is that Singh is a weasel. Over the centuries, Singh's goals have wandered from the straight and loyal path. A glance around his demesne shows that he has begun sequestering away tidbits of his own wealth, feathering his own nest with gold, gems, and durable artworks. Whether Ferrovax is aware of his aide-de-campe's mutinous collection is also unknown—although, if he is aware, he has not yet taken public umbrage to Singh's actions.

As Ferrovax's servitor, Singh is accorded certain respect and prestige within the community of those who realize his role. However, this is not enough for the envious dragon. He seeks to carve out a niche of recognition on his own merit, to be seen as a "big fish" in his own right within the sea of the Nevernever. Unfortunately for him, denizens of the Nevernever tend to have extremely long memories, and most see him predominantly as Ferrovax's pawn.

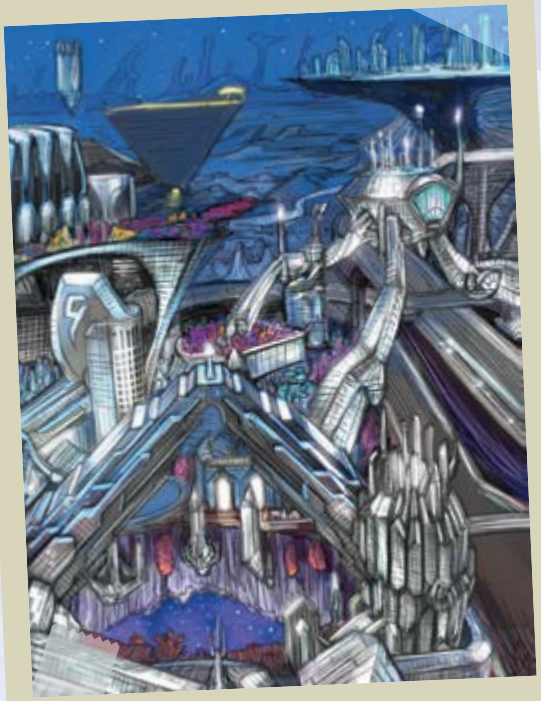
Singh's Demesne: The Silver Lair

As the demesne of a dragon who fancies himself a Dragon, the Silver Lair exudes an overwhelming air of wealth and security. Every effort has been made to press upon every visitor that this territory is "Home to Someone Important."

The structures themselves are not dissimilar to certain architectural features I've heard about in the American city of Las Vegas—casinos and nightclubs designed to give the impression that they are both larger and more regal than they truly are. Every path approaching the Lair itself offers ample opportunity to appreciate the opulence of the buildings, and the structures themselves are a testimony to sumptuousness—white marble, sweeping stairways, overstated architectural features.

Within the Lair, the ceilings are high, and the walls are adorned with art arranged in such a way that no visitor could help but notice each featured piece. Unfortunately, the one thing missing from his collection is a modicum of style or true elegance.

In his efforts to impress, he only manages to overwhelm. Even if Singh himself did not brag about his acquisitions (and the associated influence and desirability that owning each piece carries with it), it would be difficult to walk through his demesne without having the impression of having visited a garish and in-no-way subtle museum of invaluable-yet-ultimately-unsatisfying works.



The Problem

Threat: Contested Ensnaring Hotbed

Those unfortunate enough to end up on the Nevernever side of Cripple Creek Bridge inevitably become trapped there. One cannot simply walk in, turn around and go back the way one came. Those who survive find refuge only in the neighboring territories belonging to Ms. Petros and Singh. But neither is particularly interested in helping people return to their homes.

Petros gladly protects anyone who swears fealty to her, but she demands they become part of the kingdom she is building—what most people do not realize is that, in the Nevernever, a spoken oath has tremendous power. It's too dangerous, she reasons, to ask any stranger of the Ways to travel without escort, but at least she can offer a life free from the predations of the Wyld.

Singh offers an alternative that at first seems too good to be true—a life of endless luxury among the revelers in the clubs and casinos of the Silver Lair, sampling its empty pleasures. Yet they are doomed to remain indefinitely as his window dressing, ambition and desire leeching out the longer they stay. Robbed of their will, those tragic souls lose sight of everything they've left behind.

I suspect there is *some* price that would get either Petros or Singh to aid a traveler in returning home, but I cannot imagine what it would be, or which would be the lesser of evils to deal with. Nor do I have the power to help free the poor, doomed mortals these two prey upon, though the sight of them tears at my conscience.

It may be possible to put Matthew's shade to rest and use the Waypoint after, but without any knowledge of where Lisa's body rests, it's hard to say what would satisfy him. And that would only be the beginning of a bigger problem—unclaimed, stable Waypoints are prime supernatural real estate, and would surely draw both Singh and Petros into open conflict to see who could claim it, with those aforementioned mortals as fodder for the battle.

Lots going on here if you want a game scenario. You could play this as a trip through Memory Lane with Matthew and have it be an isolated ghost story, or get into making the devil's bargain with either of the two neighboring powers.

If the PC knows someone specific who disappeared and finds them among Petros' and Singh's subjects, that might induce them to try to free some of the other trapped people as well.

Makes me wish I had an army I could send. Poor bastards.



Faerie's Bargain: Into the Fire

This episode may fit best as the end of your *Faerie's Bargain* campaign, providing a reason for everything to come to a head. Or it may be another step along the way (see Concretehenge on page 232 as another possible site for the final episode of your campaign).

An easy hook here is simply to plunge the PCs into the Nevernever while they're on the run—a chase scene with Windsnap and some cronies ends with both crossing the bridge (which could be anywhere in your campaign—you don't need to send the PCs to Oregon if that doesn't make sense). Windsnap would be just as powerless as the PCs in Matthew's territory, so it would provide them the opportunity to escape one problem at the expense of another.

Of course, that also means that Windsnap could make bargains with Petros and/or Singh to ultimately force Robert to make good on his bargain.

For a more subtle hook, Windsnap could try to trap them deliberately by offering a parley—he's tired of the fight and the chase, and he offers them a second bargain to escape their debt. Someone else who owes Windsnap a debt disappeared around the bridge, and Windsnap wants that person recovered, in exchange for letting Robert's debt go at last. Of course, that person is now in either Petros' or Singh's clutches.

All of these are good sources for unexplained weirdness in a road game. Not everything has to be tightly connected to your episode—throwing in a one-off can add some cool atmosphere.

Just be prepared to drop the hint quickly that this is a one-off, or swing the focus a bit if the players glom onto your cool mysterious baddie and won't let go.

Urban Legends Roaming the Ways

Regardless of where you are, there are some stories that seem to just show up. I've seen enough to have my doubts about the truth of a few of these, but I've also seen enough to know not to just dismiss stuff you hear from multiple sources.

Ax-Wielding Animals

Why do serial-killing animals use axes as their weapons of choice? You got me.

Bunny Man

Back in the '70s, a few people in Virginia reported seeing an axe-wielding guy in a bunny suit. Now for you and me, it's natural to suppose that people saw some kinda monster and *assumed* it was a guy in a costume, but you and me also know that a dude in a bunny suit swinging an axe is pretty far out on the ass end of weird all by itself.

Goatman

This guy's not wearing a costume. He's a bonafide half-man, half-goat using an ax to kill people or frightening them so bad they jump off a bridge. He has this tendency to jump on cars, sometimes slashing tires to make it easier to get at the folks inside. He's been heard of around Beltsville, MD, and Pope Lick Creek (I don't name 'em, I just report 'em) in Louisville, KY. He's got these strong goat legs and endless stamina, so no human's ever caught him.

Don't try to foist the blame for this wacky stuff on science. It's far more likely to be a Gruff, or some other **magical** creature. There isn't any science I know of that can create a successful human-animal hybrid.

What about **genetics**?

No, not genetics.

Not even **mad** genetics?

You want to see a mad scientist, Borden? Keep it up!

The Bunny Man

High Concept
Ax-Wielding Nut Job in a Bunny Suit

Trouble
Insane

Other Aspects
Real Life Urban Legend
Get Off My Turf

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Empathy:	Great	(+4)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Stealth:	Fair	(+2)
Weapons:	Great	(+4)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OO

Notes
Fair initiative, Great attacks with Weapons, Great defenses in melee, Mediocre otherwise. The Bunny Man carries an axe and wears a bunny suit.

Total Refresh Cost:
+2 (Pure Mortal)

This is too crazy. This can't be real.

This guy's only a six on the weirdo scale. You should see some of the people who end up in lockup on a Saturday night.

Goatman

High Concept
Science Experiment Gone Wrong

Other Aspects
Axe-Wielding Freak
Human-Goat Hybrid
Mad Scientist

Skills

Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Great	(+4)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Might:	Great	(+4)
Scholarship:	Good	(+3)
Stealth:	Fair	(+2)
Weapons:	Great	(+4)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
Supernatural Speed [-4]
Supernatural Strength [-4]

The Catch [-0] is unknown—maybe radiation or strange chemicals.

Radiation doesn't work like that... You know what? Now I'm mad.

Easy there, Banner.

Supernatural Recovery [-4]

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OO

Notes
Always goes first in initiative, Great attacks with Weapons using a **Weapon:6** axe, Superb physical defenses, Mediocre otherwise.

Total Refresh Cost:
-12

The Killer in the Backseat

High Concept
Crazed Killer

Other Aspects
Lying in Wait
Knives Are My Favorite Tools

Skills

Burglary:	Good
Stealth:	Great
Weapons:	Good

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OO
Social	OO

Notes
He hides in the backseat of cars and surprises victims with a brutal knife attack.

Total Refresh Cost:
+2 (Pure Mortal)

Seems like a great tool for GMs to nudge PCs who don't know what to do next—mechanism to introduce clues or story hooks.

If it's me, and I'm a GM who wants to throw a prophetic aspect on a road game, this is the way to make it show up.

*Uh... you **are** that GM.*

Precisely.

The Jersey Devil

High Concept
Monster of the Pine Barrens

Other Aspects
Underground Lurker
Land Shark Candygram
Blood-Curdling Scream
Uncertain Origins

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Superb	(+5)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Might:	Great	(+4)
Stealth:	Good	(+3)
Weapons:	Fair	(+2)

Most other skills default to Average or Mediocre.

Powers

Breath Weapon [-2]: The Jersey Devil can let loose an ear-splitting sonic attack.

Burrowing [-1]: The Jersey Devil can move through sandy soil, eliminating or reducing some borders, and travel underground using Athletics.

Claws [-1]

Wings [-1]

Inhuman Speed [-2]

Supernatural Strength [-4]

Supernatural Senses [-2]: Sonar useful both underground and in the air.

The Catch [-0] is unknown, affecting the following powers:

Inhuman Recovery [-2]

Inhuman Toughness [-2]

Stunts

Death From Below (Stealth): The Jersey Devil gains +2 to Stealth when hiding or ambushing from underground.

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OOOO(OO)

+1 mild consequence, **Armor:1**

Social	OO

Notes
Superb initiative, Great physical attack and defense, with **Weapon:6** teeth and claws. Fair sonic scream attacks with **Weapon:2**.

Total Refresh Cost:
-18

Why does this thing have both Burrowing and Wings? It doesn't make any sense.

The Jersey Devil that Mike describes seems to be a cross between an underground shark and a chicken, but the descriptions of it over the years are so varied, you could give it just about any feature you wanted in your game.

But why does it fly if it can swim through sand?

Hitchhikers

I'm sure your mama warned you against the danger of picking up strangers along the road, because your mama was a wise woman. You never know the intentions of that person looking to get in your car. Some hitchhikers, though, are in a category all their own.

The Vanishing Hitchhiker

Seems like these hitchhikers are mostly young, and usually female. She may offer you some cryptic advice or prophecy. When you get to her destination, she just disappears. Sometimes she leaves behind a sweater or umbrella or something. You ask around and it turns out she's been dead—maybe a week, maybe a few years, maybe lots of years.

Killer in the Backseat

You might not be aware of all the hitchhikers you pick up. There are plenty of stories of people and, y'know, not-people sneaking into the car when you aren't paying attention, planning some mischief for when you're unawares. You'll want to be careful if you stop to get gas or to clear debris off the road. And if someone follows too close, flashing their high beams at you, it's at least worth seeing if there's anything lurking in your backseat.

Other Weird Stuff

Some things defy categorization. So I'll just put those here.

The Jersey Devil

For going on hundreds of years now, there've been stories about a creature lurking in the Pine Barrens of New Jersey, and I'm not talking about that Marty Brodeur fella. If you're smart, stay away from the Barrens. If you're not smart, here's what I know. The Jersey Devil looks like some kind of dinosaur—not a big one, maybe as tall as a man (STILL not talking about Marty Brodeur)—with lots of teeth. Nasty enough, but the thing is, it can burrow like a sonofabitch. Sandy soil up in the Barrens must be just right for it. Thing's like a shark in the dirt—it dives out of sight, comes up and pulls you right down. That's how it goes without attracting attention—it doesn't leave bodies behind.

Mike must be a Rangers fan.

Devil's Chairs

Usually carved out of stone, you find these seats in locations where you wouldn't expect them. You often find them in cemeteries, but sometimes they're also just carved into rocky terrain. It's said that if you leave an unopened can of beer by some of them, the can'll be empty by morning—sometimes without having been opened. I didn't believe it myself, but then I witnessed it once at this cemetery in Cassadaga, Florida. Damned freaky way to go through a six-pack, if you ask me. Rumor is that other gifts of a similar ilk are often welcomed.

Sit in one of these chairs, especially at midnight, most especially on a particular night like Halloween, and something will happen. It might be a good something, like some luck or the answer to a question. It might be a bad something, like no one ever sees you again.

These are another way for the truly brave to get information. Maybe a straight roll, with positive results giving good things and negative giving bad things, no invocations allowed? Pure, dumb luck. Whim of the spirits.

Yeah, I could also see a scenario where some other force is behind the mystery of a particular stone chair, using it to solicit gifts and carry people off in the night.

Cursed Cars

If you find yourself needing to pick up a new set of wheels mid-trip, you'd best be careful, and not just of the used car salesman who can smell desperation from a mile away (although be afraid of him, too). I hear that some cars, having been in an accident that killed the driver, kinda get a taste for it. By driving one of these cars, you take your life into your hands. Even more than normal, I mean.

That seems like something a wizard's death curse could do, even if it's an awfully pedestrian way for a wizard to go.

I see what you did there.

Cursed Cars

High Concept
Possessed Automobile

Other Aspects
Tragic History
Vintage Classic
Suicide Machine
A Taste for Mayhem
It's Alive!

Will, did you catch a drive-in triple feature of Duel, Christine, and The Car or something?

Body by Detroit, Soul by Hell.

Will you two get serious?

Skills, Powers, etc.
The simple route is to just compel the Cursed Car's aspects on whoever is driving it.

The more elaborate option is to stat one up as an Item of Power with a heavy curse attached. See *Cursed Car.*

Additional powers you might consider adding to it include Blood-drinker or Emotional Vampire (Fear or Wrath), and perhaps some of the Speed, Strength, and Toughness powers with the Catch probably being something related to its former owner or victims. You should definitely include these powers if you want to make a driverless Cursed Car to relentlessly pursue your players down the highway.

Cursed Car [-4]

Description: You are the proud new owner of a Cursed Car. Whether the car's possessed by a ghost, a demon, a spirit, or something else, it's almost alive and it hungers for something.

Must: You must have an aspect related to your ownership of the Cursed Car.

Skills Affected: Driving, Intimidation, others.

Effects: *Item of Power* (Cursed Car) [+2]

Driverless. The Cursed Car has a will and a mind of its own, and it can drive itself with a Great Driving skill.

It's a Car. A Cursed Car is always a motor vehicle. Most often it's a car, although occasionally you find cursed trucks or motorcycles. Most often it's an old classic car—modern vehicles just don't tend to have the same soul, nor do they have the time to acquire the history or investment needed to make a possessed car.

Unbreakable. As an Item of Power, a Cursed Car cannot be truly destroyed except by a ritual or exorcism dedicated to that purpose. Cursed Cars can be damaged, but they will always repair themselves eventually.

Vehicular Manslaughter. A Cursed Car grants its driver +1 to Driving and has the ability to make attacks at **Weapon:6** with Driving.

Powers:

Demonic Co-Pilot [-1] A Cursed Car grants its driver a skill bonus to further its agenda while behind the wheel.
Claws [-1]
Hulking Size [-2]

Spellcasting Addendum

Those pesky supernatural critters not making their magic adhere to the rules you wrote!

I know, right?

Since the Small Favor casefile, we've encountered a lot of things that convinced us we need to elaborate on some of the magic rules. That, and we know a local group who throw the bones every Tuesday night at Mac's—they've been... extremely creative with stretching the magic system. We thought it would be a shame if they had all the fun.

So, without further ado...



Sponsorship and the Aspiring Wizard

When you look at it, it seems inevitable that nearly every wizard becomes Faust at some point. Not that the bargains they make are so extreme or so automatically damning, but ultimately, the mortal frame can only handle so much magic before needing the assistance of what Harry often calls "mojo." Harry himself acquired and used many kinds of sponsored magic over the course of his storied career, and it's likely the PCs in your game are no different.

It would seem at first glance, though, that many kinds of sponsored magic grant access to abilities a wizard might already have, or have something similar to—if your wizard already knows fire evocation and then gets sponsored for Hellfire, do you track their use separately? Does one subsume the other? How do you calculate refresh costs?

As we mentioned in our examples on YS290-292, knowing a little something about magic provides a price break on sponsored magic, which normally costs -4 refresh. For absolute clarity, it's +1 discounted from the cost if you have the Evocation (YS180) *or* Thaumaturgy (YS181) powers, and +2 if you have both.

Ritual and/or Channeling don't provide this price break, so you're looking at -8 refresh total to be a sponsored practitioner nearly any way you slice it (and -9 if it's Soulfire, see page 250), if you want any other magic besides what the sponsor gives you.

Now, having a sponsorship doesn't necessarily mean you use the sponsor's methods all the time—it simply means that you have the option of indulging in the benefits the sponsorship provides. You can also still cast your mortal magic the way you always have and retain its flexibility. That's why full wizards who take on sponsorship are so damn scary—they can do all their own magic, and *also* turn up the juice an extra notch.

The Full Might of a Sponsor

In the original manuscript, we underestimated the degree to which sponsor debt can come to the aid of a wizard. Originally, in YS288-289, we said that a sponsor could spend a fate point on your behalf in exchange for debt or, in extreme circumstances, pay any other associated cost of spellcasting (like stress and consequences, covering the difference in a failed Discipline roll, or compensating for prep) at the rate of 1 point of debt for every 2 shifts of effect.

The implication in the manuscript is that you can only incur this debt when you're specifically casting the sponsored version of your magic. Turns out, this isn't the case. In the Changes casefile, Harry describes drawing upon "cold power" to fuel *all* of his magical arsenal after becoming the Winter Knight, not just ice spells and decay-related effects.

Thus, as long as you can relate what you're doing to its agenda, pretty much *any* magic you're capable of doing can be supported by your sponsor. The only drawback is that the spell takes on more of the character of that sponsorship, giving the GM license to subtly alter the effect you're going for—or, at the very least, make it obvious what kind of magic was involved.

Example: *Harry Dresden is in the middle of a long fight with zombies, having encountered a sudden run of freelance necromancers in Chicago. His reserves are drained—his mental stress track is full, he already has a mild and moderate consequence, and there's still a large horde standing between him and the Blue Beetle.*

He decides he wants to try an earth evocation—not his usual strong suit, but something he figures he can use in a zone-wide effect to knock a bunch of zombies off-balance at once so he can make a break for his car. His player, Jim, looks at the stress cost for the spell and sighs.

Then he remembers he has Sponsored Magic: Hellfire on his sheet. He decides he has to pay the piper to pull this off, and he incurs some debt to keep from suffering stress.

The spell manifests as hellish pits opening up in the earth and swallowing the zombies, rather than the simple tremor he was aiming for.

His friends look at him funny.

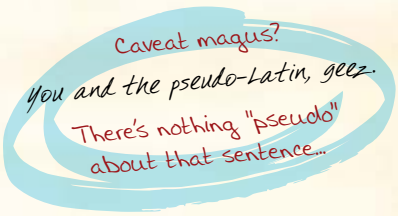
The sponsor can also affect more than just your magic.

At Chichen Itza, Harry pushed himself further and harder than he ever had in his whole life, buoyed by his new status as the Winter Knight. Even when he wasn't casting spells, he was faster, stronger, and simply better than he's ever been. He took hits he shouldn't have been able to take (or avoided them altogether), hit harder than he ever has before—he was completely transformed by his sponsor.

This information has caused us to completely re-evaluate what it means to be a Knight (see page 283 for more details), and brought us to an inescapable conclusion: *once a sponsor has hold of you, nearly anything you do on their behalf could incur debt if you choose*. Have to take a consequence because someone hit you? Call on the sponsor. Run out of fate points for normal invocations? Call on the sponsor. There seems to be no limit to what the sponsor will pay for.

Keep in mind, though, that this debt can come with a horrible price when the sponsor calls the marker due. Enough debt, and the sponsor is basically taking control of your actions and using you as a pawn. Let the wizard and Knight beware.

Sometimes it doesn't even have to go that far, and it doesn't just happen to wizards. I was only borrowing a Sword of the Cross, and just the one experience of having another being speak **THROUGH** me was creepy enough.



Calling in Debt

GMs, if you find that your players are turning to the sponsor at every single turn, remember that it's unlikely a sponsor will allow debt to accumulate higher than a character's spent refresh. After that, the sponsor's thrown down enough power that they could have come and dealt with the problem themselves, rather than relying on a proxy. Sponsors don't take kindly to having their gifts squandered, and they tend to want debts repaid sooner rather than later.

We recommend allowing the sponsor to make direct "will to power" mental attacks against an obstinate character, much like those plot devices we talk about on page 316, forcing them into concession with the sponsor's will. Use the amount of debt as the rating, so 5 points of debt is a Superb (+5) that the sponsor can just hit the character with whenever.

Also, keep in mind that a sponsor can just say no sometimes. You don't want to abuse this, because the player *did* spend refresh on the power, but at 5 or more debt, it's reasonable to have the sponsor want more on their investment.

Soulfire, New and Improved

Our information on what soulfire could do was pretty limited at the time we wrote Your Story. Harry's more recent casefiles gave us a great deal more insight into what happens when a wizard gets hold of it.

Harry originally described soulfire as a kind of "magical rebar," able to strengthen and reinforce magical constructs. His first significant use of it was to create a giant spectral hand that he could control, a feat that would probably require ectomancy under normal circumstances.

Later, he discovered that nearly any kind of magic he did could be made sturdier and more robust through the addition of soulfire—illusions got sharper and more precise, evocations hit harder (especially against anything vulnerable to True Faith, like vampires), and thaumaturgical rituals manifested as being somehow more "real."

More "real"?

That's my best guess, from reading the casefiles. Harry always said that the primary component of magic was force of will. When Harry describes using soulfire, it seems like...the world is forced to perceive and acknowledge it more. Look at his sanctum invocation from the TURN COAT case. The spirit might not have even noticed him at first, but as soon as he poured soulfire into his ritual, he pinged on the spirit's radar and Harry suddenly became more worthy of its attention.

Fascinating.

Another notable difference to other forms of sponsored magic is that Harry doesn't seem beholden to the sponsor in any particular way. His encounters with the Heavenly Host have been...somewhat contentious, and he certainly didn't have the kind of faith in God that Michael does, or even Murphy does. None of the archangels have ever made direct demands of Harry that we know of, or suggested that he alter his behavior or his goals.

DOESN'T.

Huh?

DOESN'T HAVE THE KIND OF FAITH. NOT **DIDN'T**. DOESN'T.

Uh...right. Sorry.

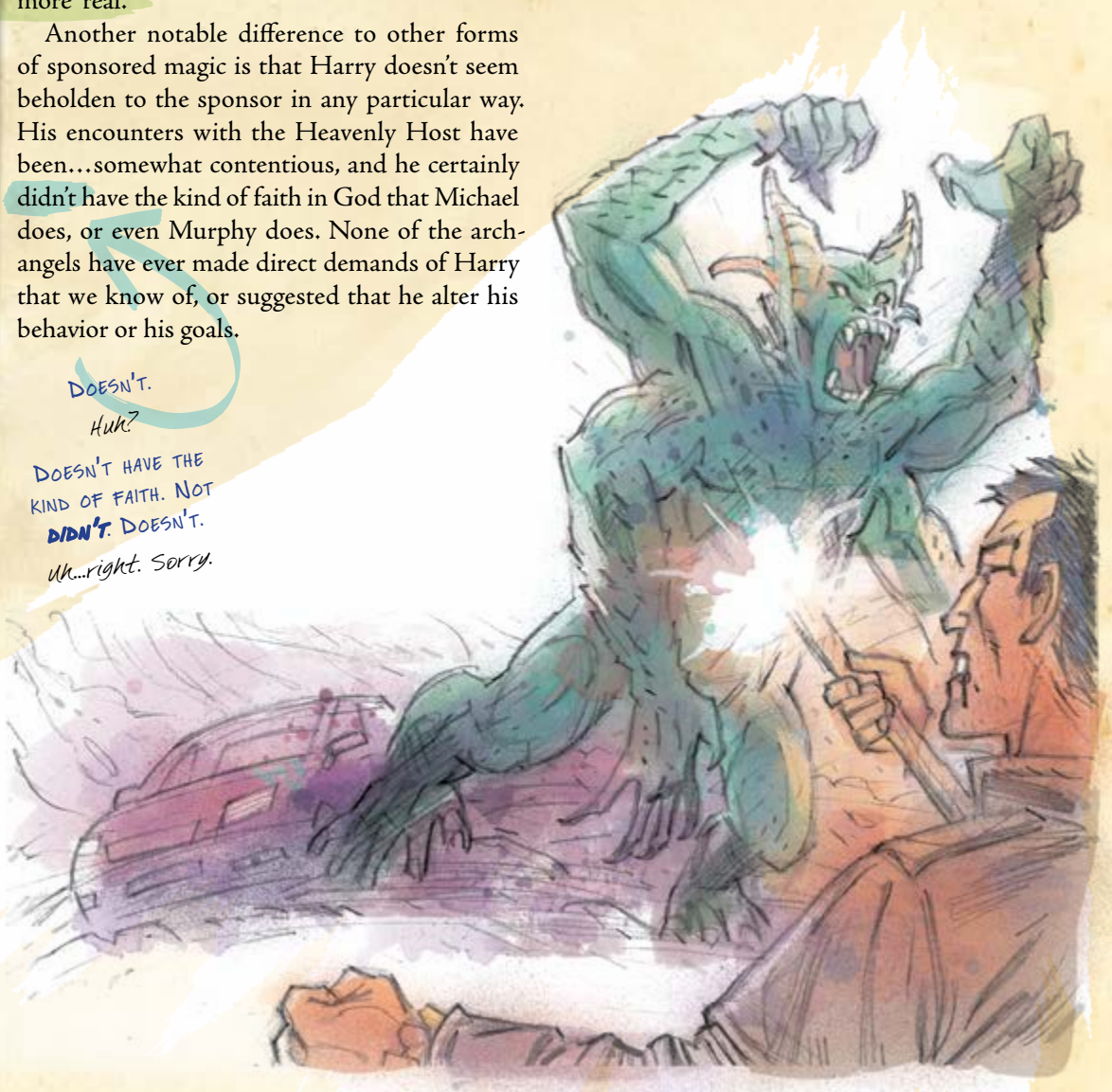
However, that doesn't mean that you get a free lunch to throw holy might around. The use of soulfire comes at a steep price—it literally drains your soul. Throw enough of your soul into your magic, and you'll be left tired, listless, and drained of the desire to do anything proactive. Your passions diminish, your wants and needs seem less important...basically, you become less of who you are.

That's a worst case scenario, though, and it isn't permanent—turns out that souls actually do grow back, through rest and engaging in life-affirming activities, like time with loved ones, simple fun, and whatnot.

Unfortunately, we don't know what soulfire looks like outside of being an upgrade for mortal magic—Michael and Sanya don't seem able to manifest anything similar, so our understanding is, sad to say, incomplete.

SERIOUSLY?

Yeah, Bob pretty much confirmed this. Crazy, isn't it?



The Mechanics of Soulfire

Soulfire is a -3 refresh sponsored magic. You can't even take it if you don't have some kind of mortal magic to begin with. By default, it confers the following benefits:

It allows you to make ectoplasmic constructs with evocation's methods and speed, as described in YS288.

Using it satisfies the Catch for anything that's weak against holy or divine power.

It provides a +1 bonus to power or complexity for any magic that's related to pure creation. With evocations, this probably manifests most often as blocks, but for thaumaturgy it could be wards, illusions, conjurations, veils, crafting, or anything that speaks to *Making Something*.

Even against creatures for whom soulfire wouldn't satisfy the Catch, infusing your magic with soulfire allows you to treat a supernatural creature as though its Toughness is one level lower—Mythic becomes Supernatural, Supernatural becomes Inhuman, and Inhuman goes away.

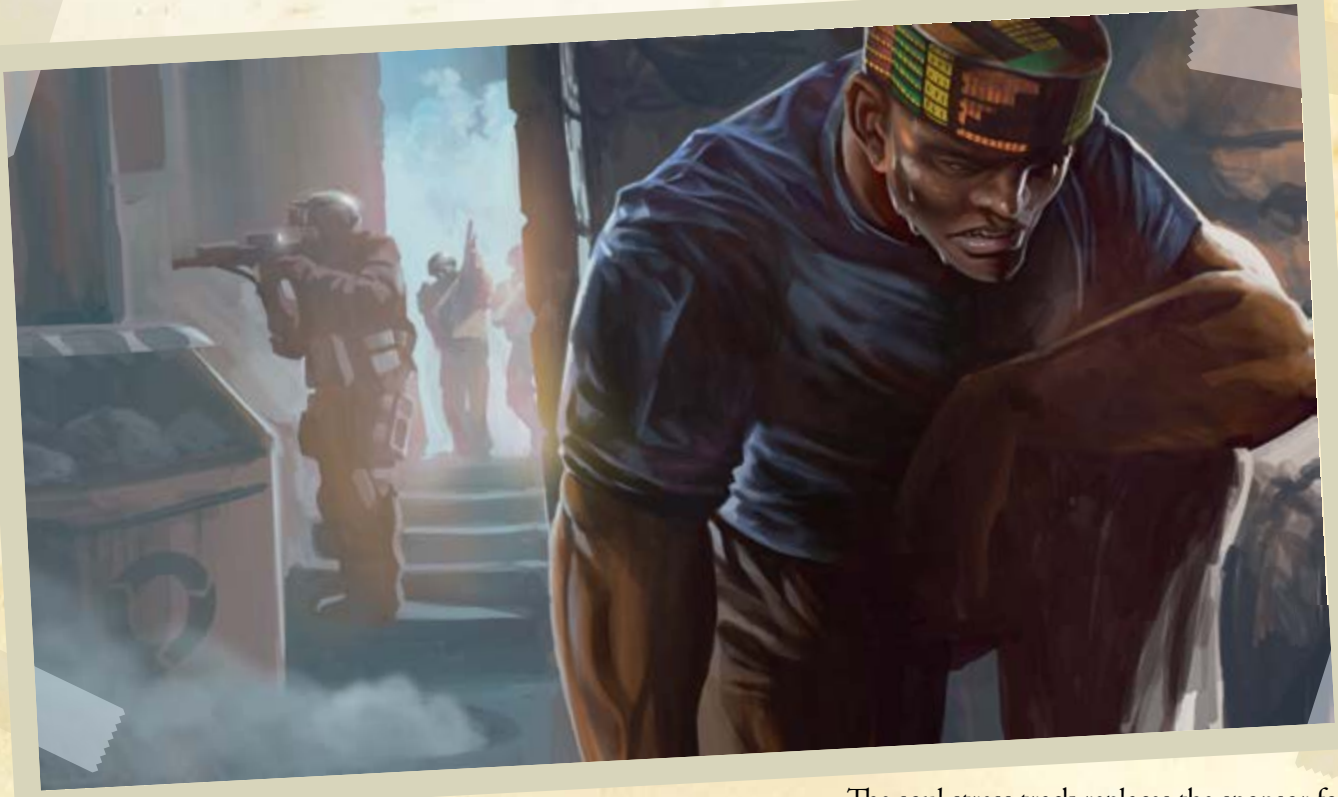
Unlike most sponsored magic, you don't ask your sponsor for debt to help you pay the costs for magic. Instead, you get a new stress track, called **soul stress**, which you can self-inflict to deal with any associated magic costs.

Could Physical Immunity become Mythic Toughness, that way?

I don't know. Harry never got the chance to...well, you know.

HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO CORRECT YOU TWO?





The Soul Stress Track

The soul stress track defaults to two boxes, like most stress tracks. You can opt to increase its size by taking more refresh in the Soulfire power, -1 per box.

The track can only take self-inflicted stress for magical purposes—no one can attack this stress track, and you can't use it to absorb stress from any other source. You must choose to use it to enhance your spells.

You also get a single mild consequence slot to reflect the impact on your soul if you push it far enough, which Harry has described as numbness or listlessness. Moderate or severe consequences might be expressed as shell-shock or depression, even going so far as I Feel Dead Inside or something similar.

Recovery from this stress and these consequences is particularly difficult—the rules for Wizard's Constitution or any of the Recovery powers do not apply, nor do the standard rules about recovering stress.

As with standard recovery, you have to spend a scene doing something to justify starting your recovery (see YS220)—as we said, it needs to be something life-affirming, like serious relaxation, engaging with loved ones, pursuing something creative, and so on.

Stress goes away immediately after you justify recovery. The consequences recover as per the default rules.

The soul stress track replaces the sponsor for all practical intents and purposes—you don't get the sudden ass-saving properties that come with other sponsored magic, but you don't incur the kind of debt and bondage to another entity and its agenda either.

Example: *Harry Dresden needs to throw a spirit attack at a vengeful entity coming to eat the soul of one of his clients. It has proven immune to pretty much every form of normal magic he has, so the next time he encounters the entity, he has a different plan.*

He wants to send the thing a significant message, and thus conjures a serious, serious attack—10 shifts. This forces him to eat a 4-stress hit, which he takes on his mental track.

His Discipline roll doesn't quite make it, coming in at a Fantastic (+6). Fortunately, he has the option to take backlash, and he does, shunting it over to his soul stress. He takes a 4-stress soul hit, which he takes as his extra mild consequence (Listless), as well as a 2-stress hit to one of his open boxes. The spell goes off as a Fantastic (+6) attack, with a potential **Weapon:10** *effect.*

After the fight, that Listless aspect and the stress remain, unlike with normal recovery. It isn't until much later, when he attends the weekly Arcanos session with the Alphas, that he's able to clear that stress and start recovering from his soul-related consequence.

Magic and the Nevernever

A wizard will inevitably interact with the Nevernever and its denizens at some point. Whether it's consultation with a ghost or bargaining with pixies to clean your house, eventually you end up interacting with an entity that makes its home in the Nevernever. Enough of those interactions and eventually you'll find yourself traveling there, too.

Once there, you'll discover that the Nevernever contains a great number of possibilities for doing magic that the mortal world doesn't have. The Nevernever responds to a wizard's emotions in a raw, unrestrained way, and is thus more sympathetic to the exercise of personal will. Unlike Earth, where almost no one acknowledges that magic even exists, the Nevernever runs on magic—every being you encounter produces or draws mojo from somewhere.

This sympathy means that everything magical you do in the Nevernever is bigger, brighter, and more dangerous.



Easy Evocations

Perhaps the biggest benefit to doing magic in the Nevernever is that available power is so prevalent, *you can shortcut the process of casting an evocation spell entirely, and simply roll your Conviction as a skill to do evocations*. No calling power, no worrying about stress—just aim your will at the target and let fly.

You don't get the usual benefits of evocation this way—it really just means you can use your skill like other skills to do the basic conflict actions (attack, maneuver, block). If you roll a Great (+4) on a fire attack, you wouldn't consider it a Weapon:4 Great attack, like you would with a normal evocation; instead, it's just an attack at Great (+4).

Likewise, you don't get to assign shifts to duration or any of the other special effects of evocation—in order to do that, you have to call up the spell as normal. So your options are limited, but you get a major benefit over being on Earth—reflexive, immediate spellcasting at the drop of a hat (or a die).

Any power bonuses you have from focus items or Refinement (YS182) count as adding to your skill for the purposes of this roll.

The Nevernever Stress Track

Much like with soulfire, you get a Nevernever stress track to draw from while you're there. It's based on your Discipline (using the same formula as Endurance or Conviction, from YS130), and we tend to think of it as the "impression" you make in the Nevernever—an additional well of mojo for you to call upon, should you need it.

You don't automatically get any consequence slots from this stress track (unless your Discipline is really high), so while it doesn't let you stack those, it does provide you with more flexibility in determining how you deal with spell stress. You can use it pretty much in any way you can use mental stress for magic, before or after the roll—simply mark it on your Nevernever stress track instead.

Between this new stress track and the ability to cast reflexive evocations, it seems as though the wizard is an unmitigated powerhouse in the Nevernever, right? Wrong.

Drawbacks

There is no such thing as a free lunch.

Calling on magical energy in the Nevernever is not something a wizard can do *invisibly*—start throwing your will around, and the Nevernever itself is going to respond to your actions. Creatures who inhabit the demesne you're in will know instinctively that there's a wizard around, and some creatures might even come out to see what's going on—or worse, see if they can consume or suborn the new (and possibly crunchy) source of magical energy in the neighborhood.

CONSUME?
Remember the giant centipedes and spiders? Yeah, consume.
OUCH.

Thus, you can presume at any time, after you've cast your first spells, that hiding from anything in the Nevernever that wants to find you is impossible unless you shut down the font for a while. Also, at any time, the GM can compel you to have a beastie of an unfortunate size, shape, and appetite show up—consider it a compel of a scene aspect the Nevernever always has, called In the Nevernever. Catchy, huh?

Second, the Nevernever makes you pay dearly for magical energy you can't control. Any backlash or fallout you deal with ***doubles*** in value—miss that Discipline roll by 3, you're talking about 6 shifts of backlash or fallout. The smart wizard will bring some extra fate points along, just in case.



Location, Location, Location

Another thing the Nevernever-traipsing wizard has to think about is that not all demesnes are quite the same—they take on the properties of the powers that rule there. In Summer, everything is verdant and fecund, with rolling meadows, lush mountain streams, and towering trees as far as the eye can see. In Winter, cold and stone predominate the landscape, with tall and unforgiving peaks, rough terrain, everything frozen in the downswing of entropy.

These thematic associations also impact the magic you can do while you're there. Just like on Earth, where the wizard has to push against the collected power of mortal disbelief, in those demesnes, the wizard might find himself pushing against the theme or concept that rules there.

The GM should represent a specific demesne in the Nevernever with scene aspects that reflect the kinds of ideas that the environment is sympathetic to. Aligning your magic with those aspects allows you to take advantage of those scene aspects to boost what you're doing in the usual way. Finding out how a certain demesne is aligned might take an assessment action as usual, but in some cases, this will be self-evident (like using fire magic in a fire realm).

Example: *The action for the evening's session takes Evan Montrose into the Nevernever to calm a fire spirit terrorizing Baltimore.*

*The GM sets aspects on the scene when he arrives in the spirit's territory—*Everything's on Fire, The Heat of Rage, *and* Passion Gives You Power.

If Evan gets fed up with the creature and starts blasting away with reckless fire magic, he'll be able to do so at quite the bonus—every aspect is taggable for those kinds of spells, which means a potential +6 bonus to whatever he wants to try.

On the other hand, if he wants to try something like a spirit binding, to soothe the creature's emotions, he'll be dealing with at least a Great (+4) threshold (for the two emotion-related aspects), in addition to whatever he'll need to overcome the spirit's will.

Ouch.

The Dirty Wizard's Guide to Thaumaturgy

Hey, Waldo—I'm playing with the idea of Cheer-Saving Thaumaturgy to simplify spellcasting in general. It starts on page 264. Let me know what you think.

Working with thaumaturgy can be a pretty involved process—the system is open and flexible, providing a lot of room for options, but also some potential headaches as you're wrangling around the math. Plus, some of the thaumaturgy types have effects that seem to fall "between the cracks" of the basic guidelines in Your Story.

We're going to try to break that down for you some. If something here contradicts the original manuscript, presume this text is correct.

A Review of the Basic Steps

Just for posterity.

Figure out what you want to do, so you know how complicated the spell is going to be. This complexity is represented in shifts, like any other action.

Make sure you have a symbolic link (YS267) to your target, and a ritual space to perform the spell in, even if that's just a crude chalk circle you hastily draw on the floor. If you don't have these things, you need to acquire them somehow.

Determine if you need additional preparation—is the complexity higher than your Lore skill, after you take your Refinement and focus items into account? If so, do additional preparation according to the guidelines on YS266. If not, don't worry about it.

Cast the spell. You do this in exchanges, like in a conflict. Each exchange, you call up and try to control part of the spell's power, as with evocation. The only difference is that, as long as you don't fail, you can total up the power you control each exchange, until you match or exceed the spell's complexity.

If you successfully cast the spell, what you want happens. If you fail at any point during the casting, *all* the energy you stored up either becomes backlash or fallout (YS271).

Skip the Dice

We mention this in Your Story somewhere in the middle of the section on thaumaturgy, but we figure this time we'll put it right out front—*casting a ritual spell is subject to the same guidelines as calling for any other roll in the game.* That means that if there's no significant pressure on the character and if success and failure don't both present opportunities for drama, then for the love of everything holy, *don't worry about it.*

That might mean that a large percentage of what your PCs do with thaumaturgy won't require rolling after preparation. That's perfectly okay. We elaborate more on this and other magical short cuts in *"Cheer-Saving Thaumaturgy"* on **page 264**.



The Hardest Part—Complexity and Effect

Figuring out the complexity of a spell, and how the effects ultimately manifest, is probably the single hardest part of dealing with thaumaturgy.

A Quick Summary

- Is the spell like a simple action? Complexity = action difficulty.
- Is it like an assessment or declaration? Complexity = assessment/declaration difficulty.
- Is it like an attack? Complexity = the attack roll you want.
- Is it like a maneuver? Complexity = the maneuver roll you want.
- Is it like a block? Complexity = the block roll you want.
- Is it a sprint? Don't bother (see Sprints on page 257).

When in doubt, the guideline always is: *try to relate the action to any one of the basic game actions, and go from there*. Yes, there will be some fringe cases that don't fall into any of those categories, but we'll get to those in a minute. For now though, consider the following:

Simple Actions: Use this when your spell overcomes any obstacle that just requires you to beat a difficulty in order to pull it off, and doesn't have any secondary effects like an aspect or stress. ***The complexity is equivalent to the action difficulty***. So this includes stuff like that handy lock-picking rote, that subtle "hey, don't pay any attention to me" vibe, that "danger sense" spell, and anything else that mimics a skill trapping for a simple action.

Because you're using thaumaturgy to overcome the obstacle in question, you'd best have a reason why you need magic, or else you might as well just roll the skill. Maybe you really suck at something otherwise, you lack the tools, you're up against supernaturally prescient opposition, etc.

Assessments: Use this for anything that requires you to beat a difficulty to discover an aspect or learn a fact. Most applications of divination and psychomancy fall into this category. ***The complexity is equivalent to the assessment difficulty***.

The difficulty depends mainly on whether or not the target can resist the attempt—a lot of psychomancy involves getting into someone's mind, which means they'll be able to use Discipline to resist (also, that's very close to Lawbreaking; tread carefully). So, assessment with magic should be really, really easy (Good or less) if the target can't resist your spell, and based on your target's Discipline if they can resist it. (Remember, a target's Discipline+4 is a pretty standard guideline to ensure success.)

Declarations: Oddly, it's not very useful to think of ritual magic in terms of declarations. In the game, we use declarations more often to establish things that have always been true in the game, but that we hadn't bothered to make up yet. It's more about the players making something retroactively true than it is about the characters doing something new. So, don't worry about it, or ***follow the guidelines for assessments***, with success allowing the wizard to declare what aspect or fact he "discovered."

Attacks: Attacks cover any magic intended to harm or permanently change the physical and/or mental state of a target. Pretty much any magic in this category, directed against mortals, is a violation of the Laws of Magic. Tread carefully. These are your mind whammies, your trap spells, inflicting disease with biomancy, and so on—basically, if it sounds hostile, it's an attack.

Transformation and shapeshifting spells also qualify as attacks. There's no way to alter the form of a being without doing damage to it, even if the recipient doesn't view your actions that way. The human body was not meant to have wings, turn into a wolf, lift trucks, multitask with total concentration, or any of the other potential benefits that transformative magic can give you. We'll discuss that more below, because it's an edge case (see page 262).

In normal cases, presume the complexity is based off the target's Discipline, and equal to the severity of the hit you'd need to do in order to inflict the effect you want. Treat it just like an attack roll in a conflict.

Example: *Our Sorcerer-of-the-Week wants to hit Billy Borden with a mind whammy that paralyzes him with the fear of being killed, making everything around him seem like a lethal threat.*

Billy's sheet in Our World *says that he's got a mental stress track of 3 boxes, and a Discipline of Average (+1). Let's presume he doesn't know about the attempt, so he doesn't get to roll.*

Our bad guy wants this to hit hard, and goes for a severe consequence (6 shifts). This would make it seem like he'd only need 10 shifts—one to match the Discipline, and 9 more to inflict a 3-stress hit and a severe consequence. Right?

Nope. Remember, you can also take a hit by spending multiple consequences. So Billy could elect to take that mind whammy as a mild (2 shifts) and a moderate (4 shifts) consequence instead. Unless our bad guy is willing to bring even more mojo, he can't do anything about that.

Billy could also elect to be taken out, but he probably doesn't want to do that—it would save him from having to take the consequences, but it'd also give Sorcerer-of-the-Week carte blanche to say what happens to his mind.

Keep in mind that all the normal rules for stress and consequences apply here, so you have to take that into account. Just like with evocation, you can't control how your target elects to take the damage—you can only throw your power at them and see how it lands.

Maneuvers: Probably the most versatile category for thaumaturgy, this includes any spells that put an aspect on a target or change the environment in some way. Conjuration counts for this, as do curses, illusions, and weaker veils and wards.

The complexity for placing scene aspects is the same as for a simple action, and the default guideline is a Good (+3) difficulty, or a 3-shift complexity, presuming there's no additional interference from a threshold or ward. This represents the standard wall of disbelief you have to push through in order to exert your will on Earth—if you're in a place where people are inclined to believe in magic (or alone, such as placing a maneuver on a scene or casting a spell on yourself), this may go down all the way to Mediocre.

The complexity for placing aspects on a target is based on their Discipline, modified by however much you think you'll need to attain success. Think of it just like a maneuver roll in a conflict.

Remember! You can do more than one maneuver and add their value together, for multiple invokes.

Blocks: Wards, veils, and the barriers you set up in order to keep a summoned entity from getting at you are all examples of magical blocks. These are really easy—***the difficulty is based on however many shifts you think you'll need to keep someone from overcoming the block***. Remember, someone will almost always get to actively roll against a block, so their skill+4 is never a bad way to go. Corollary: If you don't know what the opponent's block roll is going to be, 10+ shifts is almost always a great way to go. If your opponent is capable of rolling a Legendary (+8), you probably have bigger problems than how many shifts your ward spell needs.

- Sprints: Sprinting with magic is almost never worthwhile, see our extended discussion under *Transportation and Worldwalking* (YS282).





How Long Does My Effect Last?

Simply put, if there's already a way of describing how long something lasts, then that's how long it lasts. If you want it to last longer than that, your spell needs to be more complex, to the tune of one shift per step up the time chart (YS315).

If it doesn't (as usually happens with simple actions), then presume the magic sticks around until the next sunrise, and then dissipates.

Keep in mind that the result of a spell doesn't necessarily have to be magical. If you use magic to assess an aspect, that doesn't "wear off" at all—you're not going to spontaneously forget what you learned. But if you're propping up a wall with magic, then once the magic dissipates, the wall will fall.

In sum, the question of duration breaks down like this:

- Simple action: probably until the next sunrise. (Around "an afternoon" on the time chart from YS315, if you want to extend.)
- Assessed/declared aspect or fact: permanent.
- Stress and consequences: as per the normal recovery rules. If you want the damage you do to be "immune" to normal recovery for a time, you'll have to add complexity on the time chart. Presume you're starting at the "15 minutes" rung—under normal circumstances, you could drive straight to the hospital and start the recovery process in the very next scene.
- Maneuver aspect or conjured item: goes away after that scene. If you want the aspect to stick around, you'll have to buy more time and increase your complexity. Start at "a few minutes."
- Block or veil: until the next sunrise. As with simple actions, you can extend from "an afternoon" on the time chart.

What About Contests?

Contests are a good way to express any kind of thaumaturgical spell that affects a target, but the effects can't be expressed as an aspect or a consequence—in other words, effects for which the result is entirely in the fiction of the game, without a mechanical counterpart. If the target can't resist, something simply happens in the game world.

For example, consider a spell that just puts someone to sleep for a while. You don't want to harm them in such a way that they'd take a consequence, and you don't want to leave an aspect on them to battle with—you just want them to pass out.

We don't really have any rules for being asleep in the game; it's just a binary narrative detail that is either true or untrue. So, we could choose to represent that as a contest against a target's Endurance—the spell induces them to sleep, forcing them to either fight through the sudden fatigue or succumb. It's not automatic (again, no free lunches), but you can stack the deck in your favor with enough mojo and preparation.

Cat & Mouse (YS194) is the best format for these kinds of spells. ***The complexity is based on how strong you want the spell's "skill rank" to be for the contest, plus one shift for each round of the contest*** (usually three rolls, but could be more). As we've said before, going +4 above your target's skill is always a good move.

Thus, for a sleeping spell like the one described above, against a target with Good (+3) Endurance, you'd want 10 shifts of complexity—give the spell a roll of Epic (+7), which "hits" the target three times. At the end of those three rolls, if they haven't accumulated any shifts—poof, asleep.

As with simple actions, effects like this usually last until the next sunrise or until some other supernatural force attempts to interfere with the magic, whichever comes first.

Once again, keep in mind that you'd only roll for a spell like this *if both success and failure are interesting, dramatic outcomes*. If not, again, don't worry about it. It's not cheating to say that the target just falls asleep if that's the only interesting outcome.

Combat Thaumaturgy

The Mac's crew has asked a lot of questions about using thaumaturgy in the middle of a conflict. In Your Story, we said that was a no-no unless you're sponsored.

Here's the thing—calling up the power for a spell isn't any different than doing evocation, in terms of how much time it takes. Once everything is set up, the wizard can feed power into the spell as quickly or slowly as desired. So *if the entire preparation stage is done*, then yes, you can make a roll to summon power for a spell in every exchange of a conflict.

Summoning power isn't the part that makes thaumaturgy so slow. Preparation is. It takes a long time to position your symbolic links just so, arrange any other components or foci as you need them, research the proper incantations, bargain for a minor power boost from the fae down the street, and so on. So if a conflict starts and you haven't had time to do any of that, you're hosed—even the smallest amount of spell preparation would take far longer than any conflict scene does, at least in story time.

This remains true *even if you have a Lore skill high enough to cover the spell's complexity*—in terms of story time, the wizard still has to prepare the spell, you just don't have to expend any extra *game time* on the effort.

Harry's most basic tracking spells still require him to draw an unbroken chalk circle, prepare his symbolic link to do whatever he needs it to do, and get himself into the proper state of concentration to call up power. Even if he can shave that to a matter of minutes, that's still an eternity of time compared to the length of your average fight—it doesn't even take a second to pull the trigger of a gun.

Or grab your wrist and pull you into an armlock. Or tase you. And so on.

Thus, if the fight starts and you still have prep to do, you can pretty much forget it.

However...

If you absolutely must have the scene where the wizard is trying to pull off a ritual after a fight starts (which we understand, because there's potential for drama in that), then we recommend the following:

First, limit this to any spell where the wizard has enough Lore to meet or exceed the spell's complexity. That's the only thing that gives you a shot at this.

Second, make a separate challenge (YS324) using Lore for the wizard to complete before he can call up power for the spell. The difficulty is the spell's complexity, and it requires a number of shifts equal to the spell's complexity (so if the complexity is 5 shifts, it's Superb difficulty and needs 5 shifts to complete). This represents the prep he has to do first. He can make a roll on this challenge every exchange.

The wizard must concentrate wholly on this task, taking an assumed roll of Mediocre on any defense rolls that may be required. If anything happens to distract the wizard from the preparation (like taking stress or consequences), he has to start the prep challenge over.

Example: *Harry Dresden gets the bright idea to attempt a divination spell in the middle of a fight—he's hoping to uncover a vital weakness in the seemingly invincible summoner that he and his friends are fighting. He starts to set up the spell as his friends make a defensive wall around him, trying to keep any of the summoner's minions from getting through.*

His Lore is Great (+4), and the GM decides that the summoner is too distracted by Harry's friends to do much in the way of resisting, so she sets the complexity at 4 shifts. Harry thus qualifies to start prep.

The GM creates a prep challenge for Harry, at Great (+4) difficulty, requiring four shifts in order to finish prep.

In the first exchange, Harry rolls his Lore and gets a +1, giving him a Superb (+5) and 1 shift toward the challenge. He gets his circle together and starts chanting.

In the second exchange, he fails the roll by 2, but invokes his Wizard Private Eye *high concept and stays even. He gains no shifts, but he doesn't lose any either.*

The third exchange, a minion manages to get past the defensive line and attack him! His defense is effectively at +0, but the minion rolls horribly, getting a Terrible (-2). Harry gets a lucky break—not only can he continue prep without interruption, but he rolls really well and picks up another 2 shifts on his prep roll.

In the fourth exchange, Harry invokes Not So Subtle, Still Quick to Anger *because he's tired of this crap, to help him get his last shift.*

He's made it through prep, and can now bring down the power for his ritual starting on the next exchange.

Casting Magic on Yourself

When you're the target of your own spell, some things become a great deal easier. First, you don't require any kind of symbolic link for your spell, because you already have the best one possible—you're right there. Second, you can't resist your own effects, so you save shifts on complexity that you might have spent trying to overcome the resistance of another target.



All other restrictions still apply. For example, most maneuver-based spells require a 3-shift complexity if there are any witnesses to the casting regardless of the target. So, the best place to do that is in alone in your sanctum, where you can effectively accomplish it for free.

Edge Cases and Clarifications

As described above, not all of the thaumaturgy types in Your Story fall neatly into the default categories and some could use a bit of clarification or correction. So, here it is.

Summoning and Binding

To be clear, summoning an entity to come see you is a *contest*, not a conflict. You're not really doing anything lasting to the entity—you're just calling it to a location. What it does when it gets there is something you have absolutely no control over, save for your skill at bargaining. So use the guidelines above, aiming to win against the entity's Conviction skill.

A container ward (YS276) is a block, so its complexity is equal to what you want your block roll to be against that entity if it tries anything.

Binding is an attack—you're seeking to transform the will of an entity so it serves you. You don't always have to push for total control, and it's a prohibitively expensive proposition to do so—a minimum of 27 shifts for an entity with Mediocre (+0) Conviction (as in, enough shifts to where no roll and amount of stress or consequences taken will prevent it getting taken out). By the time you're done with the preparation for that, you'll probably have cost yourself more than the entity's service is worth in sacrifices, oaths, and other bargains (see *"Adjudicating Preparation"* on YS268 for all your options on paying the cost of prep).

By contrast, slapping a consequence or two on an entity can gain you a powerful ally, if temporarily, allowing you to use your fate points to compel that entity to do your bidding as long as the consequences remain. This doesn't mean you're entirely safe from it, but those are the risks when you play with Faustian magic.

The Zombie Horde and You

Another idea brought up in summoning is the use of hordes of servitor creatures to do one's bidding.

Let's be very, very clear: the people who are capable of doing this either have A) plot device levels of their own or borrowed mojo, B) extremely good sponsorship deals or other bargains, or C) both. Your best hope, if this is an ambition in your life, is to go for B—and may whatever gods you believe in have mercy on your soul, because you can bet that help like that is only coming at a steep, steep price.

For an example, see Binder (**page 345**).

Sanctum Invocations

Harry did a particular kind of summoning variant called a **sanctum invocation** in the Turn Coat casefile. Based on ancient shamanic practice, a sanctum invocation involves the practitioner seeking out a place of presence and power, invoking the spirit of the place (the **genius loci**) with a ritual and thus gaining its full attention, and then…directly interacting with it.

This interaction isn't exactly an introduction, a challenge, staking a claim on the land, a battle of wills, or a tea party, but it could include elements of all those things. It depends on the spirit's nature.

If the ritual is successful, this initiates a partnership or peerage between the wizard and the genius loci, allowing the practitioner to draw on the latent energy of a place according to the rules for *"Places of Power"* on YS292. (Note that very ancient and powerful genius loci may also grant intellectus for their area.)

If unsuccessful, it's *bad*—you've just appeared on the radar of an entity of power that can also control the environment around you. And who might physically manifest to kick your ass for you.

Rules-wise, it doesn't seem like a sanctum invocation would be very difficult, provided you know the spirit is there. The main problem is shunting enough mojo to get its attention. Thus, we suggest handling something like this as a contest-based spell—you win the contest, you get the genius loci to come out and acknowledge you.

After that, though, all bets are off, because the idea is to establish mutual respect and partnership, rather than dominance. Genius loci are plot device levels of impossible to bind—your only hope is to cut a deal, which will draw on your abilities in negotiation or whatever else the spirit might test you with.

For a specific example of such a spirit, see Demonreach on page 348.

Are you serious, Will?

Yes. It was a chance encounter. I don't know what he was doing there or why he was in a drinking contest. But he lost and was very talkative afterwards.

WONDER IF HE EVEN REMEMBERS THAT.

I don't know. Got a lot of good info for the book, though.

SNEAKY BASTARD.

We live in desperate times.

Conjuration

Harry's recent case notes, along with some other information provided by Mort Lindquist after a drinking contest at Mac's, have shown that we were off the mark regarding conjuration. Specifically, we misjudged the stability of conjured ectoplasm.

Once it's in the mortal realm, ectoplasm requires a near-constant and sustained feeding of magical energy to remain stable. As soon as it doesn't have sustainable power, any ectoplasmic construct will just dissolve into goo and disappear entirely.

In game terms, conjured items are a maneuver-equivalent action by default—they have just enough juice to stick around for a scene and then melt away afterward. That's good for you, in that it makes conjurations less complex, overall—you only need a 3-shift complexity most of the time (see page 266), and you can put an aspect on yourself or the scene representing the object. It's bad in that if you want your item around for more than a few minutes, you're looking at more complexity as per the time chart on YS315.

If you want it to do more than just exist as an aspect, that's also going to require more complexity. So if you want an ectoplasmic sword for an upcoming battle, and you want it to be Weapon:2, you'd need 3 shifts to make it and 2 more for the effect, making it a 5-shift spell.

Likewise, if you want it to look real, that's even more shifts—every one you add gives it a block against anyone's Alertness or Investigation rolls to notice something's off. So if you want an ectoplasmic sword that looks like a normal one, you might need 10 shifts (3 to make it, 2 for the Weapon rating, and 5 to give it a Superb against detection).

And keep in mind that complex technological devices aren't really possible—you'd have to be able to envision each moving part in the construct, and mortal minds just aren't resilient enough to handle that.

All this combines to support our original conclusion—most of the time, it's better to just go out and buy something you need. As a tool, it's only useful in very specific applications, or if you have a sponsor who can let you do this stuff at the speed of evocation with no prep.

Transformation

A unique application of transformation (or biomancy/psychomancy, if you go with themes) magic that the Mac's crew has asked about involves the use of thaumaturgy to temporarily bestow a character with the benefits of a particular supernatural power, such as Toughness or Shapeshifting.

The main principle of transformative magic that we have from Harry's notes is this—*the more you alter a body, the worse the consequences for the original form*. Our bones were simply not meant to handle super-strength, or moving faster than normal, or taking extreme punishment, or whatever.

It's different when you have something as a supernatural power—whatever magic fuels a power is a natural part of you and doesn't carry the usual side effects. Temporary dabbling can be extremely dangerous, though—such magic always leaves its mark.

(Also keep in mind, even on a willing subject, this skirts afoul of the Second Law, and hence you probably shouldn't be doing it in the first place unless you want to meet a few Wardens for a chat.)

So here's what you need for this particular kind of magic.

A temporary aspect that fills in for the high concept requirement for the power in question. This is a maneuver-equivalent action, and defaults to a complexity of 3 shifts, even on a willing subject. (This means that, yes, if you want the enhancement to go longer than a scene, you also need to pay for extra duration just like with any other maneuver.)



Enough complexity to cover the refresh cost of the power. 1 refresh is equivalent to a fate point, and a fate point is normally worth 2 shifts of effect, so you need 2 shifts of complexity per refresh point.

Enough shifts to inflict a mental or physical consequence on the target of value equal to the previous step. The target can take this voluntarily, which means you don't need to bring the power yourself, but on an unwilling target, you have to do it just like any other attack spell.

As you can see, the costs escalate pretty rapidly. Let's work some examples.

Keep in mind that even at the lowest levels of consequence, just starting the recovery process would be extremely hard. How do you correct Reshaped Shoulder Blades, anyway? It'd need more than a hospital stay, and maybe even a further application of biomancy to correct.

Necromancy

This section is, of course, mainly to show you how the bad guys do it. We know that none of you would ever consider using necromancy for any reason in your games, even under duress, because it would violate the Fifth Law.

Unfortunately, if you're looking at completing the preparation requirement for a spell, nothing succeeds quite like human sacrifice. The power of a mortal life force, drawn into a spell, allows for one of the quickest and easiest doses of mojo imaginable. Though it's distasteful to think of it in these terms, just totaling the value of inflicted consequences alone gives you 20 shifts. Kill two people, and you can prepare just about any spell imaginable. It's not hard to see what makes this path tempting, if you're sociopathic enough to murder when it's not a crime of passion.

Reaching out to contact a dead mortal's spirit falls under the same guidelines as summoning and binding (see YS272 and earlier in this chapter on page 261).

Our best estimate for animating a corpse is that you need one shift of complexity for everything you want the summoned creature to do—every skill rank costs a shift, every power or stunt costs two shifts per point of refresh, and every aspect costs another two shifts. This makes summoning some basic creatures rather easy, and insane necromantic creations really hard.

Wanna know how I got these scars?
Oh yeah, just what I needed—the thought of the Joker with actual magic tricks. Thanks for that.

Werewolf for a Night

Fake high concept of In Touch With the Beast = 3 shifts

Additional duration of "an afternoon" (starting from "a few minutes" for maneuvers) = 5 shifts

Cost for werewolf powers suite = 16 shifts (-8 refresh, doubled, for Beast Change, Echoes of the Beast, Inhuman Speed and Strength, Claws, and Pack Instincts)

The target must take 16 shifts worth of consequences, which means that the price for this spell probably includes an extreme consequence, as the subject's mind tries to cope with the realities of experiencing life through another body.

Total complexity on a willing subject is 24 shifts.

Aaaaaand this is why the Second Law of Magic doesn't say anything about intent. It just says, don't do this.
Yeah.

The Mild Version

Of course, it's easy to just grant somebody a temporary physical or mental boost—granting an aspect of Hyper-Concentration only needs a maneuver (plus duration), and only costs the subject a mild consequence. This kind of thing is also much less invasive than the magic we've talked about above, which means the Wardens probably won't come looking for you.

Let's work some examples.

Garden-Variety Romero Zombie

Skills			Stunts/Powers
Fists:	Good	(+3)	**Inhuman Toughness (-2) [Catch:** Can be shot in the head (+2)] (0 shifts)
Endurance:	Superb	(+5)	
	(8 shifts of complexity)		

Total complexity is 8 shifts.

Nightmarish Bone Golem

Skills			Stunts/Powers:
Athletics:	Superb	(+5)	**Mythic Speed:** (-6)
Endurance:	Superb	(+5)	**Mythic Strength:** (-6)
Fists:	Superb	(+5)	**Physical Immunity (-8) [Catch:** Will falter when the summoner dies (-0)] (40 shifts)
	(15 shifts)		

Total complexity is 55 shifts. But hey, sacrifice three people...

Jesus, Will. That isn't funny.
I'm trying to ease the sting of how much that idea terrifies me. It turns out that what makes necromancy so dangerous is not that it's hard... it's that it's horrifically easy if you're willing to take the lives of others to see it done.
Yeah, and you shouldn't fucking make light of that. Harry wouldn't.
I'm not Harry, as you've been so recently fond of pointing out.
Whatever.



Cheer-Saving Thaumaturgy

The Alphas have only one sacred rule at the gaming table: ***He who kills the cheer springs for beer***. All of us lead pretty stressful lives, so it's important to have a reminder to leave our tensions at the door and use the game as an opportunity to relax.

The gaming group at Mac's has no shortage of actual ritual practitioners, and we've noticed that something comes up at their table quite a bit—the ritualists routinely kill the cheer whenever thaumaturgy happens because, in a sense, the rules are almost *too* right. It's easy to get into a place where you want to count every last shift and make every last die roll, even if doing so isn't always fun for everyone else.

If this has been happening to you, we'd like to offer an alternative for those more interested in the *narrative* impact of ritual magic than sweating the details.

Amen.

Yeah, we got lots of Mac's from Harry breaking that rule.

After all my talks with Bob, I understand where Harry was coming from.

Which is why you've paid for beer the last four games.

Do You Even Need To Roll?

I know, we already mentioned this earlier in this chapter. But this bears repeating and it's particularly important as a guideline for Cheer-Saving Thaumaturgy: thaumaturgy is just like every other dice roll in the game—*if both success and failure aren't interesting, don't even bother with dice*. If you read the casefiles like they're, say, urban fantasy novels, you'll find that most of the thaumaturgy Harry does is really just to get him to the next part of the "story."

That's a terrible idea, Will. No one would read those.

There's no tension or drama in Harry mucking up a tracking spell, for example, because the result of failure is that his investigation would stall. That's pretty boring. Likewise, GMs, if you already know that you have some cool plot device that's going to muck up the tracking spell halfway into following its trail, asking the player to roll for it is pretty anticlimactic at best, and a jerk move at worst.

Same thing goes for summoning—is it really interesting to go through the process and have the monster *not* show up? Isn't it better to skip to the interesting part, where the monster is trying to break out of the circle you made?

So, before you do anything with thaumaturgy, ask yourself where the interesting stuff lies and cut straight to that. If that means there's no dice rolling, that's okay.

How to Save the Cheer

Cheer-Saving Thaumaturgy (or CST for short, because I don't want to keep typing that) sacrifices some of the flexibility of the original in order to save you some headaches. It's not really supposed to replace the old system—although, for some of you, it might (aside from really big spells).

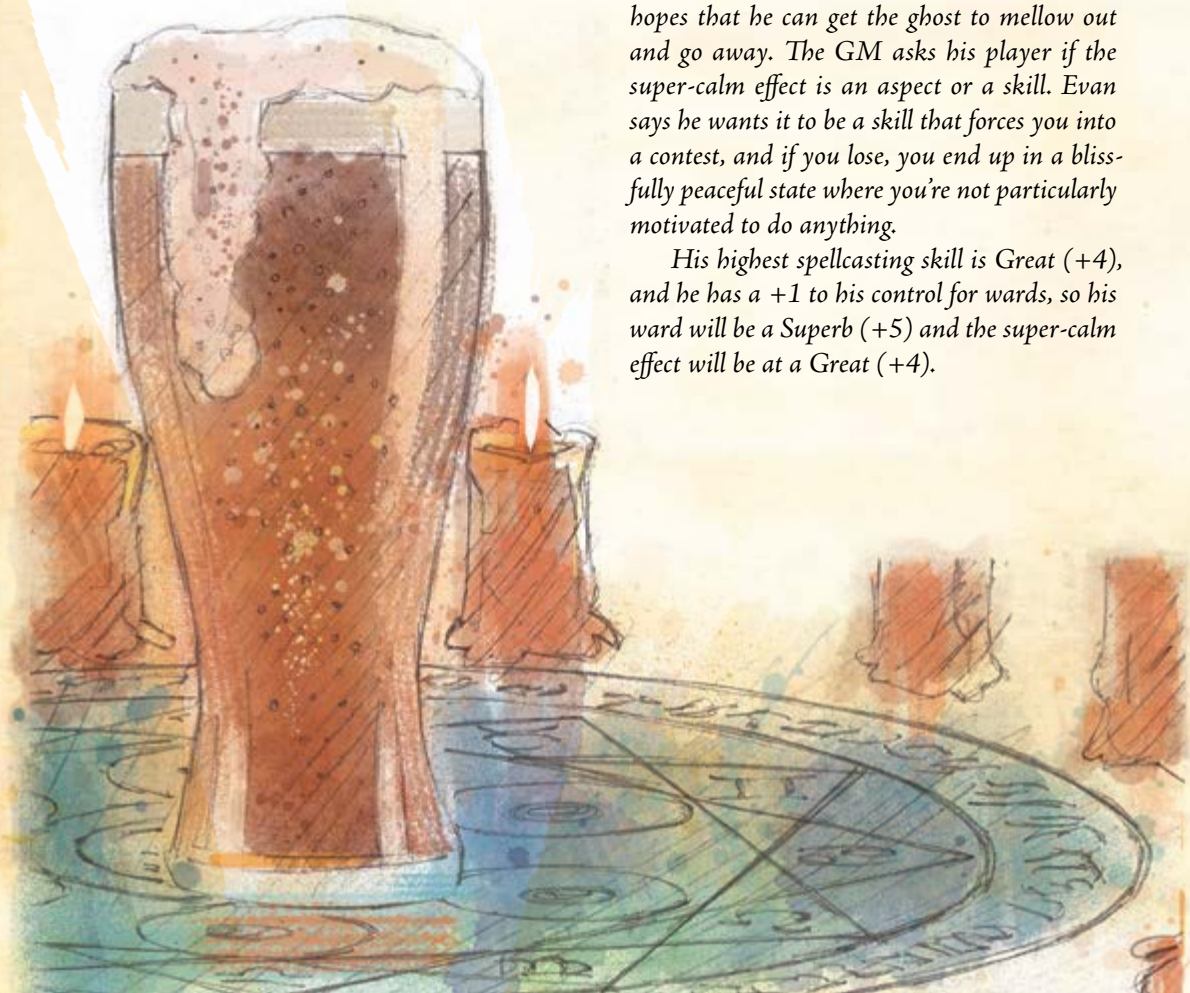
Here are the steps for saving the cheer.

Step One: What Does the Spell Do?

Obviously, you still have to figure out what you want out of your spell. Describe it first in general terms, then come up with what that looks like mechanically.

For the purposes of CST, your effect is going to look like one or more of the following:

An aspect that you stick to a target, an object, or a place, similar to making a maneuver, except it sticks around longer than a scene. (Example: A low-level entropy curse might place Horrible Luck on a target. An enchantment to make a certain place seem extra pleasant might stick a Joyful Aura on it.)



Forcing your target to take one of their physical, mental, or social consequences. (Example: Direct damage spells like Victor Sells' heart explodey spell, invasive mental trauma, and so on. These are always Lawbreaking—YS232—so don't do these.)

A block of a certain value, or a "skill" that your effect gets to roll to do its thing. (Example: Wards and trap spells, illusions that you want to be able to affect other people, etc.) If you need to determine a value, assume that it defaults to the caster's Lore, Conviction, or Discipline, whichever is highest, plus any specialties they have from their powers.

A story detail that doesn't really need mechanics—if the spell happens, whatever you say becomes true in the story. (Example: Most tracking spells, portals to the Nevernever, summonings, etc. Basically, any time you can just say, "Well, X just happens.")

Example: *Evan Montrose and his friends are holed-up in an old ghost town, on the run from a rogue spirit who broke away from the Wild Hunt.*

Evan wants to ward the mansion they're resting in and afflict anyone who trips the ward with a feeling of supernatural tranquility, in the hopes that he can get the ghost to mellow out and go away. The GM asks his player if the super-calm effect is an aspect or a skill. Evan says he wants it to be a skill that forces you into a contest, and if you lose, you end up in a blissfully peaceful state where you're not particularly motivated to do anything.

His highest spellcasting skill is Great (+4), and he has a +1 to his control for wards, so his ward will be a Superb (+5) and the super-calm effect will be at a Great (+4).

Step Two: Figuring Out Preparation

This is usually where most of the cheer-killing happens, with calculating how many shifts of complexity a certain spell is and everything that entails.

The main reason we have complexity in the game is to determine how much preparation your wizard needs to cast the spell. Bigger, more complicated spells require more from the wizard, whereas less complicated spells might be accomplished with stuff the wizard has on hand or at his sanctum.

From a story perspective, though, what we're really trying to show is *how far the wizard's willing to go to get what he wants*. And when a wizard needs to jump through hoops to prepare a spell, it's usually for one of these reasons:

- The wizard is pressed for time and the ritual usually takes a while.
- The wizard needs to do more research or acquire more knowledge on the specific kind of spell.
- The wizard needs a stronger symbolic link to the target for the spell.
- The wizard needs to summon up more power for the spell than is readily available.
- The spell depends on certain difficult conditions being met (like at a specific time of day or a certain location, during a blizzard, etc.)



So, instead of worrying about the precise complexity rating of the spell, do this:

- Presume that for any ritual spell worth making a big deal over, one of the things on that list is always true; pick one that seems to make sense.
- Then, for every additional effect the spell has from the list in Step One, add another item from the list here in Step Two.
- If the spell needs to last longer than the next sunrise, add another.
- If the spell is going to significantly alter the storyline of your game or your setting, and you want to let the wizard do it anyway, feel free to demand all five.

Example: *Evan Montrose's ward/trap spell has two effects from the Step One list—it has a block rating and it has a skill that rolls against you to calm you down.*

So, he has to pick two items from the prep list to be true about the spell. He decides that to work on the ghost, he needs a stronger symbolic link to it, and he's pressed for time because the ghost is going to attack that night.

Step Three: Run Preparation Scenes

Now that you know what problems the wizard's facing in spell prep, you need to figure out what he's going to do about it. Sometimes, that'll be simple, and you can handle it with a few declarations or by taking a consequence. Sometimes, you'll need to run whole scenes in order to make it happen, like breaking into someone's house for a good symbolic link.

Play the scenes out and roll dice as normal if you need to. If anything goes wrong for the wizard during a prep scene, it's an indication that something needs to go wrong in the spell.

Example: *Evan knows that he needs a stronger symbolic link and he's pressed for time. Unfortunately, he's in a ghost town, so he doesn't have a lot of resources available to him.*

For the symbolic link, he decides to carve an effigy of the spirit from wood, from his memory of their last encounter. His Craftsmanship is only Average (+1), and the GM decides that since he wants to affect the spirit at a Great (+4), that should be the difficulty to carve a sufficient model.

He comes up just a bit short and doesn't want to spend any fate points, so the GM says, "Well, you can use the thing you carved, but your spell might have unintended side effects." Evan sighs and decides to go through with it anyway.

The pressed for time thing is a little harder to deal with, because no skill rolls can really help with that. His player thinks for a bit, then asks the GM, "Hey, I'm in a ghost town... Is there any way I could make contact with the local spirits and draw on their power to save time?"

The GM asks to run the scene where Evan makes contact with the ghosts. Evan and the spirits end up bargaining back and forth, with Evan eventually making an oath to help the shades find permanent rest if he survives... or become a permanent resident of the town himself if he doesn't.

Step Four: Making the Spell Happen

In CST, for the most part, once the wizard has jumped through the appropriate hoops for preparation, you can presume he has cast the spell. The story consequences you're going to get from prep are more than enough drama without fussing with the details of casting. Remember that anything that goes wrong during prep should influence the outcome of the spell and create complications.

If you really want to do the casting roll, we recommend using the standard system and assuming a default requirement of ten shifts, so you'll need two or three rolls and there will be the opportunity for something to go wrong.

Example: *Evan completes his preparation and performs the ritual. His effigy was a little imperfect, so the GM decides that his ward has a* Weak Spot *that the spirit can tag once for free, to try to get past the ward or resist the calming effect.*

All that accomplished, the group skips forward to the scene where the spirit attacks...

Evocation Tips and Tricks

Evocation is the more straightforward of the two methods of spellcasting, but through reviewing Harry's casefiles we continue to learn more and more about it all the time. Here's how you can use some of what we've learned in your game.

The Philosophy of the Elements



The classic Western medieval elements that form the basis of how most White Council wizards understand magic are fire, water, air, earth, and spirit (also referred to as "will"). These names do not carry a literal meaning by default—Harry's fire evocations certainly do resemble literal fire in many ways, but the strange energy shield Warden Ramirez calls up has little in common with a literal manifestation of water.

Likewise, manifestations of earth magic we're aware of have involved gravity and magnetism, and air magic has created fog and storms. The literal elements are loose guidelines at best, and in Your Story, we tried to collect them to give you an idea of how each element could manifest.

What we have learned since is that each element of magic really represents more of a philosophy than a literal substance. Attitudes, beliefs, and perspectives of the wizard become manifest in the use of a particular element, amplified to a level that allows them to literally manipulate reality. Younger wizards tend to manifest their magic more literally; older wizards demonstrate effects that might seem to skirt outside the boundaries of any element, but make sense when you consider the philosophies involved.

In turn, you can usually tell what kind of elements a wizard is good at by taking a measure of their demeanor and personality, the front they present and the will behind it. There's no way to separate the magic from the wizard—one is essentially an expression of the other.

We provide these ideas to you as a way of helping you conceive of wizard characters, and to help you stretch the boundaries of the elements in play.

Where did you learn all this? I thought pretty much every wizard we know is young, by wizard standards.

Bob **really** likes to talk. When you get him going

Fire

Fire magic is born from passion, emotional intensity made manifest. The energy from it comes from the rawest of feelings—rage, joy, love, hate, fear, anything on the deep end of the human emotional landscape.

As a result, most of its manifestations are very…disruptive, just like those emotions can be when not held in check. The release of its energy unbalances the status quo of nature, just like those emotions unbalance us. From blasts of white-hot, destructive energy to shields that seem to burn and warp the very air, the use of fire magic leaves indelible marks of its passing in both people and environments. It's possible that its effectiveness as a spiritual cleansing force is related mainly to the fact that emotion and passion are so endemic to the human soul—in the hands of a wizard, love may in fact be able to conquer all.

You get downright poetical when you discuss the elements, Will. You channeling your inner frustrated author?

Fire magic gone awry is basically the equivalent of a magical tantrum, where the emotion becomes so overwhelming that it obliterates any sense of focus or purpose, merely lashing out at whatever is nearby. While this is dangerous in the short-term, it has less potential for long-term consequences than any other element—once the emotional energy is burned out, it's spent.

It's hard to imagine what advanced applications of fire magic might look like, as we typically imagine emotional stability, rather than release, as being a default facet of maturity and experience. Harry notes that Warden Luccio was able to bring pinpoint strikes of fire magic—in sharp contrast to his blasts—suggesting that subtle, controlled feeling has as much a place in fire magic as raw, unrestrained passion does.

Yeah, I don't know anyone who fits that description at all...

I have no idea what you're talking about.

Can't imagine why you'd even bring it up.

Wizards good at fire magic will tend to be emotional themselves, getting very easily invested in people and things, and experiencing every kind of emotion intensely and without restraint. Some might consider them constantly surrounded by personal drama or hopelessly irrational.

I wonder if that's why Ramirez is still a virgin.

Excuse me?

Have you ever known anyone in their teens or early twenties who was able to handle sex in an emotionally balanced way?

...Right. Point taken.

Water

Water magic is also based on emotion, but it stands as a sharp contrast to fire in nearly every way—where fire is about the release of passion and intense emotion, water is about tranquility and balance, about maintaining the natural status quo at all times. Where fire magic releases energy into the environment explosively, disrupting and consuming, water seeks to redirect, disperse, and shift energy around with as little consequence to the universe as possible.

Thus, water manifestations create very little in the way of new or imposed energy, opting instead to redirect or redistribute forces that are already in motion, trying to balance the equation of nature. Water attacks may, for example, disassemble like super-accelerated erosion, taking a large mass and redistributing it into the environment in smaller chunks—nothing was technically destroyed, as that mass still exists; it's just configured differently now.

The dispersing shield Ramirez uses works on a similar principle—it breaks down the force and mass applied to it and disperses it out in the same quantity, but rendered harmless. In the Turn Coat casefile, Harry describes Listens to Wind as simply not being there when Shagnasty's attacks land, which could be a very advanced version of a water block. The advanced water wizard probably effects a great deal of change to his circumstances without appearing to have expended very much effort at all.

Water magic gone awry represents a failure on the part of the wizard to balance the equation of nature, with the wizard as the focal point for nature's attempt to right itself again. In game terms, this means that even if the wizard releases the energy with fallout, the consequences will *still* rebound back onto the wizard.

Wizards good at water magic will have the same sense of balance that pervades the use of the element—meditative, focused, tranquil types. They aren't emotionless by any means, but they do possess a sense of calm.

Air

From Harry's notes, this seems to be a lot like Elaine's magic.

Air magic is powered by the application of intellect—reason, logic, cause leading into effect. It's the most procedural and most calculated of all the elements, the most premeditated. This might make some easily mistake it for water, but there's a key difference—water seeks to balance existing forces, whereas air has no problem introducing new ones. Those new forces, however, will be precise and focused and *correct*, for lack of a better term. They have the stability of calculation behind them, as the wizard forces the universe to conform to his additions.

Thus, air manifestations are powerful, but they aren't random or furious like fire. Instead, they're *neat*. There's an organization to them. A wind gust flashes out to hit you just so.

Lightning rains down on a dime-sized target, burning nothing else but that circle. Fog assembles at just the right thickness to block your sight. An air shield deflects the path of an attack just enough to keep the wizard from harm.

When this goes awry, the calculation goes wrong, resulting in chaos and insanity—much like the unpredictable path of a raging tornado, or the chaos of a raging storm. It can have devastating random consequences on an environment and anyone in it, and, unlike the fallout from fire magic, can last a while after the wizard's original loss of control.

We don't have a lot of examples of advanced air magic to draw on, but for game purposes, we imagine talented air wizards controlling whole zones' worth (or multiple zones' worth) of people with their effects, precisely shaping the motion of larger battles and confrontations.

Air wizards tend to share the calculating, logical personality of the element—they analyze and understand everything in terms of order and reason, and some might perceive them as lacking imagination. Jokes about Vulcans would probably be appropriate.

Earth

The contrast to air, earth magic relies on instinct and intuition—basic, primal impulses operating on a supernatural level. The least structured of all the elements, earth magic manifests in reflexive command of the basic forces of nature (gravity, electromagnetism, and perhaps weak and strong nuclear forces) and seeming to always be "on the ball." It's not neat and precise like air magic, or chaotic like fire magic—the effects are unplanned and improvisational, coming from the gut, yet they always seem to work extremely well.

We know of overt earth magic doing things like creating earthquakes or changing the direction of gravity, but it can also manifest as extreme ease of action on the wizard's part. Instead of a literal shield, an earth block might look like a series of coincidental dodges, with the wizard just instinctively knowing which way to move to avoid the attack. Instead of some electromagnetic distortion zapping people, an earth attack might look as though the wizard was really, *really* good at hand-to-hand fighting, always managing to slip past the opponent's defense.

This might explain how Morgan was so good with that Warden sword. I mean, that and a century's worth of practice.

Oh, true. Hadn't thought of that.

Perhaps the most advanced application of earth magic doesn't look like magic at all—just the right things happening in response to anything the wizard does, always working out in his favor.

When earth magic goes awry, it's the karmic opposite of being "on the ball." Failure is spectacular, and even basic actions and efforts don't work out as intended, tailored to go wrong in the worst way. If the wizard has brought overt natural forces into play, they rebound to create exactly the opposite of the wizard's intended effect. If he wanted to knock the other guy down, he gets knocked down instead. If he wanted to slip past the enemy's defenses, he'll find himself giving the enemy an opening.

Earth wizards tend to live life by the seat of their pants—they're not necessarily wild, but they trust their gut and act on impulse a great deal. They're bad planners, but great in a crunch. They answer their primal drives with enthusiasm and verve, whether it's food, drink, or sex.

Spirit

Spirit magic is probably the simplest element to understand, as it carries no elemental connotations whatsoever—it's the raw expression of the wizard's will, pitted against the universe itself. It's driven by confidence and ego, by the wizard's raw power of belief in her ability to impose her will on others and her environment.

One Element or Two?

We recognize that there's a duality in spirit magic, given what we now know, that might tempt some of you to treat spirit as two separate elements for the purposes of specialization and refinement. Doing that certainly won't break anything, and would seem to model wizards like Harry, who do very little with mind but plenty with force.

Something to consider, however, is that very few White Council wizards would explore mind magic as a practice even if they had a natural talent in it, because of the ease with which mind evocations violate the Third Law. Thus, a wizard with a specialty in mind would find it almost useless, and the fate of that character in any game would be short-lived or dominated by their need to run from Warden squads should they decide to start using those powers in earnest.

Unless of course, you're using the mind magic on the Warden squads, like Peabody did.

Point.

WELL, WE HAVE SEEN MOLLY DO SOME...THINGS.

I'm not including that.

WHAT HAPPENED TO KEEPING THE PUBLIC INFORMED?

What happened to being loyal to a friend?

SHE HASN'T EXACTLY BEEN ACTING FRIENDLY LATELY.

I'm talking about Harry.

LOW BLOW. BUT HAVE IT YOUR WAY.

Spirit tends to fall into two "scales" of operation—force magic, which we're very familiar with thanks to Harry, and mind magic, which we know less about, given that a great deal of it violates the Third Law of Magic.

Force magic tends to appear as very direct manifestations of light or telekinesis. It is neither subtle nor clever, being a physical representation of the wizard's brute, psychic power. Spirit shields are simple, forcefield-like constructs, barriers of raw will the wizard can interpose between herself and danger. Attacks slam foes with powerful, invisible shoves and punches, or scintillating bolts of pure energy. More sophisticated applications of force could be able to create more complex structures, or cause massive amounts of sudden destruction as the wizard wills a thing to simply be *gone*.

Luckily for us, force magic has the least potential for danger if the wizard can't control the power she calls—either you have the willpower to make something happen, or you don't. Force magic fallout tends to fizzle rather than burst, continuing on the path it was summoned until its momentum runs out.

Mind magic has no outward manifestations, for obvious reasons. In this case, it's not the external universe the wizard's imposing her will on, but the will of another being, allowing the wizard to alter something inside someone's head. It is a cobweb-fine and subtle kind of magic compared to force, an odd study in contrasts despite their elemental relationship. The applications are almost too numerous to mention, but all of them are fairly horrific and invasive.

Mind magic going awry can have terrible consequences for the victim and caster alike, leaving deep psychological traumas and scars that normal methods cannot heal easily, if at all.

Some effects with spirit fall in the middle, like veils, which seem to involve both a literal bending of light as well as a mind effect that alters perception.

Spirit wizards, regardless of whether they favor force or mind magic, have in common a very powerful sense of conviction, confidence, and rock-solid willpower. They have an almost glacial stubbornness—once committed to an idea, it can be very difficult to keep a spirit wizard from making it into reality.

Shield Spells and Combat

In the Your Story rules, evocation is something you usually have to decide on beforehand or on your turn. This can be a little dicey with shield spells, because they work as a block action instead of a defense roll, taking up your action for the turn. This fits generally with a lot of the fights Harry gets into—he readies his shield bracelet before going into a fight, or he can't and is toast (which is why it's nice that he had the enchanted duster).

However, there are some times in the case-files where Harry pulls together a hasty shield as a sudden reaction, more akin to what we'd call a defense roll, and he's gotten better at it over time. Some of the Mac's crew have also remarked that this should be an option, and sent us piles of combat logs from their games to prove their point.

So, here's the thing: there is no such thing as a free lunch. Those sudden, ass-saving actions on Harry's part take a lot out of him, especially if he's already throwing magic around. If you want to do a shield spell as a defense instead of a block, you're more than welcome to, but remember that you have to pay all the associated costs for the spell and make a Discipline roll just like with any other spell.

Also, you can't modify a defense spell in any way—no armor substitution, no duration, just a sudden burst of your will against an attack. You'd still have to use an action to set up a block later. And finally, if you bone the Discipline roll, it's backlash and/or fallout, just like any other magic.

If you're already casting more magic in that exchange, those costs can pile up quickly—it's way better and more efficient to take an exchange and put up a block that you can make lasting.

Let's work an example.



Example: *Harry Dresden (around the time of the* Storm Front *case, 'cause we're using those stats) wanders into an ambush and immediately gets beset by waves of full-auto Weapon:3 gunfire. Two of the attackers roll terribly and Harry dodges their attacks with ease, but the third gets a lucky Superb (+5). Harry decides to react with a magical defense, throwing up his spirit shield.*

In order to avoid the attack completely, Harry would need a roll of Fantastic (+6), so his defense requires 6 shifts of power. His Conviction is Superb, and he lacks other bonuses, so he takes a 2-stress mental hit.

He now has to make a Fantastic roll with his Discipline to pull off the spell, starting at Great (+4) (he has Good naturally, and his shield bracelet gives +1 control bonus). He rolls a +1, and invokes Wizard for Hire *to bump him +2 more, for a final result of Epic (+7).*

His shield flares up momentarily and deflects the last of the gunfire.

So, before his first turn, he's already spent a fate point and taken a 2-stress mental hit, and needs to re-establish his shield if he wants any more use out of it. But at least he didn't get shot yet!

Hexing

Review of the casefiles shows that, among wizards, Harry seems especially prone to the hexing effect, even compared to wizards who are far older and far more experienced. Several members of the Senior Council interact with technology that they shouldn't, if we use Harry's standard as a rubric. Despite being centuries old, Ebenezar McCoy drives a 1931 Model A Ford truck, and rode on a motorboat to reach Demonreach with Listens to Wind and Ancient Mai without encountering any problems.

Likewise, we know that Listens to Wind stays current on mortal medicine by attending medical school every decade, whereas Harry continually stays away from hospitals out of fear of shorting out some hapless patient's dialysis or life support.

We cannot, at this time, explain the reason for this discrepancy. It could be that something in Harry's nature makes him more prone to hexing than other wizards, or it could be that experienced wizards are able to suppress their excess magical energies more efficiently than Harry does, whether through force of will or prowess in their magical talents.

We offer these options as potential ways to deal with this in your game:

- **Aspects**: Involuntary hexing, as we say on YS229, is handled with compels. Thus, you might consider an aspect that speaks to either a natural resistance to hexing, like In Tune with Technology or a tendency to make it more severe, like Bane of Computers. In our increasingly technological world, either flavor of aspect could present opportunities beyond just dealing with hexing, so we think they might be a worthwhile investment.
- **Stunts or Powers**: Another option might be to offer a Discipline stunt to dampen your magical presence. This would allow you to block yourself from potentially hexing something, following the guidelines on YS258 to help determine a difficulty. This might also be an option you could take under Refinement (YS182), which you could take multiple times to stack with your Discipline and ensure that things never get out of hand.
- **Both**: You can always combine these options, if for whatever reason you have a lot of hexing-related instances in your game.

Because I always did want to run that game set in CERN's research labs.

Wizards and the Large Hadron Collider...yeah, that sounds like a great idea.



Evocation and Simple Actions

We're mostly familiar with the applications that evocation has in conflict—causing destruction, protecting the wizard from harm, and affecting the environment in fun ways. However, over the years, Harry has also used minor evocation effects to accomplish tasks that this game would define as a simple action—using fire magic to cut open a lock, using force to move objects around, and so on.

We don't see any reason why you couldn't do the same, just like with the defense rolls we discussed earlier—if you're willing to pay the piper, go for it. You need to summon enough power to succeed at the roll, pay the appropriate costs, and succeed at a Discipline roll, just like with any other evocation. If you're facing a Great (+4) lock, that'd be a 4-shift spell.

Remember that this only extends to actions in the physical realm that you can solve with the application of brute force—spirit magic isn't going to help you fix your car, unless all it needs is a swift kick. To get specific, trappings from Athletics, Burglary, and Might are most appropriate for this. Question everything else.

And again—only do this if there's dramatic interest in success and failure. If all it's going to do is inflict stress that will wear off immediately anyway, then it's not worth the effort. Handle it as a declaration instead: "I'm a White Council Wizard, and this fate point says that door is no problem."

Example: *Evan Montrose and friends are getting chased through a system of caves by a hostile, mojo-eating shade that happens to be very hungry. They round the next corner, and the GM cackles as she describes a huge rockfall that's blocking the way forward, which is going to force them into a corner as the beast comes for them.*

Evan's player says, "Can I use a push of air to blow the rocks out of the way so we can keep running?"

The GM assents and says that it'd be an Epic (+7) to do it quickly, given the volume of rock and the sheer weight. She also wants him to do the spell, because the chance for failure is dramatically potent.

Evan summons up the spell. He needs an Epic, so that's 7 shifts of power. His effective Conviction for an offensive air spell is Great (+4), so he takes a 4-stress mental hit (ow).

Then he rolls. His Discipline is an effective Superb (+5) with his bonuses, and he gets a lucky +2 on the dice, barely making it.

He points his staff and shouts, "Rafale!" as a sharp blast of wind scatters the rockfall enough to create a temporary opening. They run.

Fun with Items

Here's a grab bag of topics related to items and spellcasting.

Sharing Potions

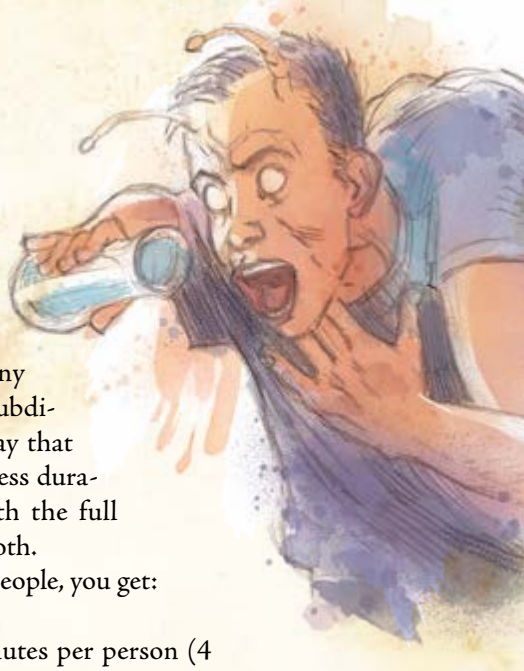
You don't always have to drink an entire potion. All of the liquid is enchanted, from a tiny sip to a full chug, so it's easy to get multiple uses out of a potion or share its effects between people.

How you're going to accomplish this split depends on how the potion's shifts have been assigned. If it's all straight into efficacy (like the escape potion on YS303 that gives you a 5-shift sprint action heedless of normal barriers), then it's easy—each drinker takes a portion of the shifts available. When Harry and Susan split it, one got 2 shifts and one got 3, basically enough to get out the front door.

This works the same way for shifts that a potion has invested in duration, such as the scent suppression potion on YS304. In this case, all four shifts go into duration, because the presumption is the drinker will be willing (as in, the maneuver aspect it gives you costs zero shifts). So if two people split it, they'll get about a half hour benefit each; if more than that drink it, then it lasts a scene.

Obviously, that raises the additional question of what happens when you have both.

Let's make up a potion and see.



When you split the effect of a potion, you have to split both the shifts of duration and the shifts of effect. It doesn't make any sense that you'd be able to subdivide the potion in such a way that you'd get the full effect and less duration, or a weaker effect with the full duration. You have to split both.

So divided between two people, you get:

- **Duration**: A few minutes per person (4 shifts each, starting from "instant")
- **Effect**: Good (+3) or 3 shifts of auto-Rapport for one person, Fair (+2) or 2 shifts of auto-Rapport for the other

Divide it by three, and it's not even worth it anymore:

- **Duration**: Half a minute for one person, and a minute for two others (2, 3, and 3 shifts respectively)
- **Effect**: Fair (+2) or 2 shifts of auto-Rapport for two people, and Average (+1) or 1 shift of auto-Rapport for someone else

At that point, you might as well ask the wizard to make you more potions.

The Goin' Clubbin' Potion

- Duration: A few hours (8 shifts, starting from an original effect duration of "instant")
- Effect: Confers an automatic result of Superb (+5) or 5 shifts, whichever is better, on any Rapport action taken to impress or make a good impression in a public place (5 shifts of effect).

Something you wish you had in college?

I'm a happily married man and have no regrets, thank you very much.

I don't know, Will. At the medical examiner's conference in Vegas, some of my...nerdier friends and I tried to get into Tao, and really just getting past the doorman would have been enough. I wouldn't discount the "moment of charisma" potion.

I can't even imagine you at a nightclub.

I CAN'T IMAGINE YOU WITH FRIENDS NERDIER THAN THE ALPHAS.

Propless Magic

It's a given that a wizard relies on implements and tools as part of any spellcasting. They're an essential part of helping the wizard create constructs for holding magical energy—even just pointing a magic wand helps to give you something to focus on when you're channeling power. Evocation can get away with just these touchstones, as most of the construct is in the wizard's mind. Thaumaturgy, on the other hand, requires even more elaboration, using props to represent symbolic links and ritual emblems, giving a physical counterpart to the mystical latticework the practitioner is weaving together.

Dude. **Dude.** Seriously? What?

Even when they don't have access to physical implements, wizards rely on physical gestures and incantations in their work. Movements and utterances can play a large part in making a construct as well, though it's more difficult—that +1 bonus from your blasting rod can spell the difference between a successful casting and backlash, but you're not completely hosed as long as you can use verbal and somatic components.

Once again, however, the practicalities of field work sometimes demand that a wizard cast a spell completely undetected, using nothing but the power of the mind.

That's telekinesis, Kyle.

How about the power... to move you?

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TWO TALKING ABOUT?

Sometimes, a wizard may also need to call from an element outside of his comfort zone (as in, it's not one of the three elements he picked when he took the Evocation power), for which he has no tools. This kind of magic is the ultimate leap of faith, literally trying to make a wish come true.

If you try to do this in your game, understand that it's impossible to do with thaumaturgy—your only bet is to find a sponsor that allows you to do that kind of magic spontaneously, as though it's evocation, or make a one-time deal to pull it off that we'd prefer not to contemplate. Sponsors don't worry about props and magic, because their will is powerful enough to compensate.

You know, the word "impossible" just makes me want to write the stunt or power that allows it.

Your table, your rules. In the book, I have to roll with what I know.

Presuming you're doing evocation, everything suddenly becomes very difficult—essentially, you turn your evocation into a thaumaturgy spell, except you have to incorporate prep and everything right in the moment.

First, your spell requires double the number of shifts to be successful. Want a Weapon:5 evocation? You need 10 shifts.

Second, you cannot call that power down all at once—you must split it across at least two exchanges, if not more. So you're paying the stress cost to call down power separately each time. (The final roll you make is your skill roll against whatever someone else might try to do.)

Third, any Discipline failure releases all the accumulated energy into backlash and/or fallout.

This is why wizards use props, say arcane words, and wave their hands around.

Example: *Evan Montrose has been taken prisoner by a unique species of wyld fae that he's learned is only vulnerable to fire magic. The wyld fae have taken all his accountrements, and fire magic is a form he doesn't do. Nevertheless, he silently gathers up his rage and prepares to send it against the guard to his prison, attempting to do an entirely propless effect.*

He wants a serious attack—he decides to bring a Weapon:6 flame column down onto the guard. That would normally only be 6 shifts of power, but because he's propless, he needs 12 to do the same thing.

His Discipline is Great (+4), and he has no bonuses. Just to be safe, he decides to only bring in 3 shifts at a time, across four exchanges. This is well under his Conviction score, so each attempt only costs one mental stress—doing this is going to fill his mental stress track completely, but it carries much less risk of backlash or fallout.

He makes all four of his casting rolls with the help of some aspect invocations, and his spell finally goes off. The hapless, unnamed NPC guard doesn't manage to dodge very well and literally dies in a fire.

Evan frees himself and makes a break for it. As long as he can hold out long enough for his stress to go away, he might stand a chance of avoiding or circumventing his captors...

Spellcasting Powers and Stunts

Harry's later casefiles reveal that there's a tremendous versatility to how wizards operate and what abilities they have—at times they stretch the boundaries of what we originally included in our Evocation and Thaumaturgy powers, back in Your Story. The following is our attempt to bridge that gap as much as we can, taking into account some of what we've seen in Harry's more recent cases. Anything below is likewise fair game for your wizard PCs as they develop over the course of your campaign.

Wizards with Powers

Perhaps one of the biggest revelations about wizarding came from the Turn Coat case, where Harry documents Senior Council member Listens to Wind battling with an entity he called "Shagnasty" (actually a skinwalker, see page 361). During the battle, Listens to Wind drew upon a magical talent we didn't know was possible—he shapechanged into a variety of different forms, entering a contest of sorts with the skinwalker, from which he emerged victorious.

Our system for Evocation and Thaumaturgy simply can't handle the speed, grace, and effectiveness of his magic in this case, especially considering that he seems to have done it at no great cost to himself, which flies in the face of everything we know about transformation magic.

However, we do have one notion that could explain it—if he had True Shapeshifting as a supernatural power, there'd be no question of how he pulled it off.

Didn't you tell me that Harry always described your shapeshifting as the ability to do one spell, really really well?

Yeah, but I figured that's just because Harry would see every kind of power as a magic spell, given that he's a wizard. Now, I'm not so sure.

Huh... You know, I could see someone using this justification to indefinitely advance in their own themed powers suite, without ever buying everything in the wizard template. It'd certainly help explain some of the more interesting one-offs we hear about.

Yeah, no doubt. When he was drunk at Mac's, Mortimer told me he could draw on the abilities of any ghost he could command and call them to him instantly. That's certainly not evocation, and I'd have no idea how to model it except with a power.

Well...he was also drunk. Keep that in mind.

This forces us to conclude that it is possible for a wizard to get sufficiently advanced enough at a particular kind of magic to perform it, for all practical intents and purposes, as a power, rather than as a spell by our rules. This would allow wizards access to practically any ability across the spectrum of powers, justifying it as extreme skill—Toughness powers could be advanced shielding magic, Greater Glamours could be advanced illusion magic, and so on.

It's clear, however, that this kind of power boost isn't available willy-nilly to any wizard. Most wizards are trained in the White Council's systems of magic—there might be some variations, but they agree on and have canonized most of their magical theory. So, for a wizard to have another supernatural power, they'd need to do one of the following:

- Come from a magical tradition other than the White Council mainstream.
- Have some sort of unique or specialized training beyond what the White Council teaches.
- Have a great deal of experience or time to figure out how to take on a power.
- Have a sponsorship that grants powers.
- Have a combination of any of the above.

Here, then, are some guidelines for when your wizard can start taking powers.

The Whole Package

At minimum, you have to be a full wizard before you can start branching out. So you have to have all -7 refresh of the wizard template powers, either at character creation or eventually as the result of milestones.

Thus, a focused practitioner can't normally jump from just knowing ectomancy to having a Spirit Form—even though they're thematically related, you need a rigorous and full understanding of how magic works in a general sense before you can do something like that on a regular basis without paying the usual transformation penalties as described on page 262.

Specialist Practitioners and Powers

Some players might like the idea of starting the game as some kind of strange, off-the-wall practitioner or outlier; they may want to start out with a combination of powers different from the wizard template, even though they might be considered full wizards in the game world given all the refresh they've spent. While we like the idea of differentiating wizards from other character types by using the template, nothing prohibits you from mixing and matching as you choose.

Our general advice if you're going to do this is that the more specific you get with the high concept, the better. If you allow this in your game, it shouldn't be an excuse to just throw together a cherry picked list of powers that seem cool.

A houngan or mambo from Haiti might, for example, take Thaumaturgy, The Sight, Soulgazing, a smattering of psychic abilities, and the Ghost Seeker power, as their abilities would reflect their devotion to the Vodou religion and its folklore.

We still recommend that you make any such character fill out the full wizard package before moving further by taking powers, but it's up to you.



A Change in High Concept

At some point, before you go from "normal" wizardry into these advanced applications, something in your high concept has to change in order to explain how you're able to learn the powers. Listens to Wind is deeply entrenched in the ways of the Illini tribe, and has been for centuries. Our high concept for him in Your Story is probably all wrong—we're betting that at the core of his identity stands his devotion to his tribe, their folklore, and their practices. We don't know if he's fully sponsored or not, but it wouldn't surprise us to learn that he is.

Either way, he has a different way of viewing the nature of magic, a perspective that makes True Shapeshifting seem much more natural to him. No one is a blank slate, either—the powers you choose need to thematically relate to your high concept.

Your character needs to exhibit some kind of similar shift. It might happen, as we said, as part of a sponsorship deal. It might happen as a result of devoting yourself to a new path of study and becoming a strict adherent of its tenets. It might happen simply because the campaign has been going on a while and you've had several major milestones.

Regardless of how you justify it, that needs to be in place before you take up powers.

Mental Toughness

Another thing we've noticed is that many advanced wizards seem able to casually throw around power much longer than their younger counterparts. They simply don't tire out as quickly or as often, and have a tremendous amount of staying power in a fight. This is especially true of the more advanced Wardens, like Captain Luccio and Morgan.

We believe that, to some degree, the presence of sponsorship accounts for this phenomenon—whenever you need more juice, a sponsor is always happy to help. Some of it might also be explained by wizards taking powers as described above, having integrated certain kinds of magic so fully that it no longer costs them stress.

For everyone else, we presume the existence of Mental Toughness powers. A product of learning how to more and more efficiently channel magical energy over time, it has the dual effect of fortifying a wizard's mind to a preternatural level, turning their psyche into a fortress that can withstand a hideous level of mental

assault. *Stubborn and calcified* doesn't even begin to describe these wizards—it's a Herculean effort to get one of them to change their minds about even the smallest thing.

Here's our best guess as to what those powers look like.

The Catch [-0]

Description: Your mental fortress is not sacrosanct—there is some weakness that even you cannot overcome.

Skills Affected: None

Effects:

A Hole in Your Mind. You must specify something that shatters your mental reserves and stability, robbing you of the ability to draw on your Mental Toughness in certain situations. You must always represent this as something related to an aspect—a good guideline is a situation that would normally result in a compel. Any aspects that you have related to your convictions or beliefs, negative personality traits, or facets of your self-image might all suggest a good subject matter for the Catch.

It's harder than normal for someone to assess your Catch, even if they discover the aspect it's associated with. Getting it out of you would require supernatural means, such as winning a soulgaze or mental invasion (which you'd get to use your Toughness against), tricking it out of you in a conflict using Deceit, or lengthy torture.

Even if a circumstance that fulfills your Catch were to come up by coincidence, it would still take a successful Empathy assessment to discern the effect on you.

Not "varies"?

No, I don't think so. I can't imagine someone that good at keeping their shit together would ever be easy to suss out. You have to have personal knowledge of the subject to even have a shot. So I don't think it'd ever give you a discount.

What About Recovery and Immunity?

Mental damage does not get a counterpart to the Recovery and Immunity powers you get on the physical side. It seemed inappropriate, given the nature of mental damage.

There simply is no quick way to heal mental trauma—it sticks with you long after physical scars heal, haunting your dreams and nightmares, usually requiring counseling or other long-term care to make any kind of headway against it. Many normal mortals live with the fallout from mental trauma the rest of their lives.

So while these powers do make it more difficult to mess up a wizard mentally, what damage *does* get through will be pernicious and terrible, and there simply is no way to come back from that without going through normal recovery.

Immunity is the same way—we don't consider it possible to be completely immune to mental assault. No matter how composed and collected you are, something will always be able to get to you, given enough time and effort.

Besides, a hypothetical Mental Immunity power would give wizards a free lunch when it comes to casting magic, and, as we have reiterated several times now, there is no such thing. If you have this, you're a plot device or an entity capable of sponsorship, and while we know that strange things can happen in a campaign, we're not going to take things that far.

I can attest to that. I still have nightmares from what happened to me with Kravos, even though it's been years.





Inhuman Mental Toughness [-2]

Description: You have an unusual amount of mental fortitude and can deal with strain better than any normal human can.
Musts: You must attach this power to a Catch, and you must have at least -2 refresh invested in Refinement if you are a mortal wizard.
Skills Affected: Conviction, other mental skills.
Effects:

- ***Mind Fort.*** You have **Armor:1** against all mental attacks.
- ***Staying Power.*** You have two additional boxes of mental stress capacity (YS202).

Supernatural Mental Toughness [-4]

Description: Your mind can survive traumas that would drive most people insane.
Musts: This power replaces Inhuman Mental Toughness. You must attach this power to a Catch, and you must have at least -4 refresh invested in Refinement if you are a mortal wizard.
Skills Affected: Conviction, other mental skills.
Effects:

- ***Mind Castle.*** You have **Armor:2** against all mental attacks.
- ***Inexhaustible.*** You have four additional boxes of mental stress capacity (YS202).

Mythic Mental Toughness [-6]

Description: Your mind is nearly unassailable. It might be strong enough to survive your body's annihilation.

AKA Sauron-level Toughness.

Right. The closest we've seen to this in practice was Corpsetaker in the Dead Beat casefile, and she didn't seem able to survive in Luccio's original body after Harry, well, you know.

Musts: This power replaces Supernatural Mental Toughness. You must attach this power to a Catch, and you must have at least -6 refresh invested in Refinement if you are a mortal wizard.
Skills Affected: Conviction, other mental skills.
Effects:

- ***Mind Fortress.*** You have **Armor:3** against all mental attacks.
- ***Machine-like.*** You have six additional boxes of mental stress capacity (YS202).

More Examples from Recent Cases

Here are some spells, items, and potions from Harry's more recent casefiles, to give you more ideas on how to build things.

The One-Woman Rave

Introduced to us by Molly Carpenter, this spell creates a dazzling, blinding display of multicolored flashes and lights, to which she can also add sound if she chooses.

Type: Spirit evocation maneuver

Power: Varies depending on need, typical for Molly is 4-6 shifts, with 1 or 2 kept in reserve for duration

Control: Roll Discipline plus appropriate bonuses

Duration: One exchange by default, may last longer if additional shifts are invested

Opposed by: Target's Discipline roll

Effect: If the spell hits, the target has an Insanely Distracted aspect stuck to them for as long as the spell lasts.

Variations: You could expand this to a scene aspect rather than targeting an individual, affecting everyone present. You could also use those shifts for a block instead, misdirecting attacks or maneuver attempts because of the "flash-bang" effect of the light show, or stalling a sprint action because the target mistakes the lights for more damaging magic (roll Discipline to oppose). You could expand the block out to a whole-zone effect as well.

Really? It's **that** distracting?

I have great focus, Waldo, and I couldn't even glance at her when she was doing this at Chichen Itza. It was like staring at an IMAX kaleidoscope with Death Metal music blasting in your ears on 11. Believe me, it's distracting as hell.

Basic Phonoturgy

Harry used this spell in the Changes casefile to get the drop on some Red Court vampires who were cluttering up his office building.

Type: Air evocation block

Power: Varies depending on block strength and duration

Control: Roll Discipline plus appropriate bonuses

Duration: One exchange by default, may last longer if additional shifts are invested

Opposed by: Target's Alertness roll

Effect: If the wizard succeeds at the spell, the immediate area around the target (usually the wizard himself) is trapped in a bubble of suppressed sound, which blocks any attempts using Alertness to hear anything. If someone caught in this effect can't see the wizard, this allows the wizard to ambush that person as per the rules under the Stealth skill (YS142). Unfortunately, the suppressed sound also affects the target's own Alertness skill—someone sneaking up behind the target will have an equal chance at an ambush.

Variations: You could expand this effect to cover a whole zone for two more shifts, plunging everything into silence. Combined with turning the lights out, this would create an extreme sensory deprivation zone that could be useful for sudden escapes.



Goes Bump
Addendum



The Monster Mash

Since we started getting reports in from the Paranet, we've learned that the rabbit hole goes a lot deeper than we thought in terms of what's out there—at this point, we're ready to accept that nearly anything that's ever been mentioned in anyone's folklore either exists or references something that exists. There really is so much variety out there.

Harry's recent cases have helpfully shone some light on a few kinds of supernatural creatures. Read on.

Angels

Archangels (Update)

We haven't really learned any new information about archangels themselves, but we've learned something about how rarely they appear—it's unlikely that more than one or two people out of any generation will see them. This is one of the reasons why people have a hard time interpreting any clear motivations or goals of the Almighty—any direct missives from above usually get sent via an archangel, and even those messages are often cryptic at best. When messages are rare and enigmatic, a lot falls to individual interpretation.

As an example, if an archangel had appeared to Father Roarke (page 349) before the events of "The Warrior" casefile to tell him that ~~Harry had "clearance" from above t~~ [redacted] happened.

Do we really want to divulge any information that could help people track down where the Swords went?

Good point.

Demons

Binder's Minions

Description: Dressed in plain grey suits and fedoras, Binder's minions are humanoid males of average height and weight, with identical features, grey-green eyes, and expressionless faces. And then you notice the mouths on the palms of their hands—serrated shark teeth in each one, and a purple-black tongue that drips mucus. All the better to eat you with. Some also have tentacles.

First Appearance: Turn Coat

What We Know: The summoner known as Binder (page 345) has a crew of thugs he can summon from the Nevernever to do his bidding. They're the backbone of his mercenary operation, and he offers their services to the highest bidder. In the Turn Coat case, he used them to great effect in his attempt to collect the bounty on Warden Morgan. He also brought them during an assault on the island of Demonreach, when he tried to kill Harry and friends.

Powers: For the most part, they seem to operate within the realm of normal human capability—their main strength is numbers. At best, they're capable of some movement-related special effects that devotees of action movies would say resemble "wire-fu." At times, it seems like they just don't pay their gravity bill. They also coordinate with each other really well, as if they share a kind of hive mind. Otherwise, they're a gang of thugs, brutish and violent, with little purpose but to cause havoc in the most direct way available.

Weaknesses: Pretty much anything that will kill a person will also destroy their ectoplasmic shell—bullets, blades, fists, explosions, etc. This doesn't destroy them, but it will send them back to the Nevernever for a while.



Binder's Minions

High Concept
Summoned Demon

Other Aspects
Ectoplasmic Shell
Strength in Numbers

Skills

Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Stealth:	Good	(+3)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Natural Sprinter (Athletics): The demons gain +2 to sprint actions.

Powers
Claws [-1]
Pack Instincts [-1]

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OO

Notes
Mediocre initiative, Great attacks, Great defense against most attacks.

Total Refresh Cost: -2

If there are a lot of these guys in a scene, I'd probably represent them as a challenge from YS324—give the mob 10 or 15 shifts before you can defeat or get away from them, and set the difficulty to overcome them at Superb (+5). Every exchange that the PCs aren't free of the mob, have each of them defend against a Superb (+5) attack. Lather, rinse, repeat.

Butters, why'd you have me put these guys under demons? They seem more like constructs to me.

Data from my sources. Also, the math just doesn't add up. A normal mortal summoner would have to expend a lot of energy to just keep a few of these guys around, let alone the hordes that Binder had. So the only logical conclusion is that he's got some kind of sponsorship or bargain going that lets him command bunches of these guys at a time.

Wonder what sick shit he had to pull to make that deal.

Ik'k'uox

High Concept
Red Court Demon

Other Aspects
Chimeric
Easily Distracted
Unconcealable

Skills

Alertness:	Great	(+4)
Endurance:	Superb	(+5)
Fists:	Superb	(+5)
Intimidation:	Great	(+4)
Might:	Great	(+4)
Presence:	Good	(+3)

Powers
Claws [-1]
Hulking Size [-2]
Supernatural Speed [-4]
Supernatural Strength [-4]
Inhuman Recovery [-2]
Supernatural Toughness [-4]
The Catch [+0] is Holy Power.

Stress
Mental OO
Physical OOOOOO(OOOO)
+1 mild consequence; **Armor:2**
Social OOOO

Notes
Supernatural Initiative, Superb attack with **Weapon:6** Fists, Fantastic defenses with Athletics and Supernatural Speed.

Total Refresh Cost:
-17

Doesn't this normally give more of a discount, like with vampires' Catches?

This is more limited than the general "Holy Stuff" Catch vampires have. An Ick's Catch requires something like Soulfire or a Sword of the Cross.



Ik'k'uox (aka "Icks" or "Devourers")

Description: Icks are huge semi-humanoids—about the size of a bull. Their heads and shoulders are malformed—a fusion of human, jaguar, crocodile, and wild boar. Their warcry burbles like a tea kettle and you can hear their hearts beating from yards away, although you might smell them first. Icks stink. They seem to be some sort of demon associated with the Red Court vampires; they share the spongy, black flesh of unmasked ones—even the eyes, tongue, and mouth. Icks can move equally well on two legs or four. They're very fast and tough and extremely strong; they have wicked claws.

First Appearance: Changes

What We Know: According to the Fellowship of St. Giles (page 164 and OW89), you don't fight one of these creatures—you run and pray someone slower catches its attention. That, of course, didn't stop Harry Dresden and friends from fighting and eventually killing one.

During the Changes casefile, an Ick tried to kill Harry in the home of a corrupt policeman under the Red Court's employ (Rudolph, page 341). It took the combined efforts of Harry, Mouse, Molly Carpenter, and Thomas Raith to drive the thing away. Harry was later able to kill it, but only in the Nevernever, and only after accepting the mantle of the Winter Knight.

Powers: Physically, it's tougher, stronger, and faster than any human. It's probably an exceptional tracker as well.

Weaknesses: Unknown, though we might speculate that holy powers are just as effective against it as the Reds. Massive application of force seems to work—Harry literally dropped the ceiling of the Erlking's hall on its head to stop it. It can be distracted fairly easily, which is part of what kept Harry and friends alive when it and the Reds were chasing them down, but that's not always a permanent (or viable) solution. Also, the stench and audible heartbeat mean that you always know it's coming.

Faeries

Goblins (update)

Since Our World came out, we've learned that there's a lot more variety in goblins than we thought.

Harry Dresden described goblins as "ninjas from Krypton." You can't dismiss them as average dumb supernatural thugs—they're smart, sneaky, and ruthless. As the Erlking's servitors, they all have powers related to hunting and killing—some have raw physical power, some track almost as well as a divination specialist, some have beast powers similar to a were-animal. The potential variety is endless.

Goblins are built on asymmetry. Their features don't line up evenly—one eye or ear is bigger than the other, this part droops while another part is firm, one arm may be withered while the other is densely muscular, etc. Goblins aren't a consistent size or shape—some goblins are thin and ropy, others are huge and hulking, and others are somewhere in between.

Goblins tend to wear armor and use weapons, inscribed with dark green and black geometric designs—presume they have at least Weapon:2 and Armor:2 in addition to other powers.

They also command a unique kind of magical fire that glows green. From a distance, it's about as hot as a campfire; when touched, it's infinitely hotter — potentially as hot as or hotter than the sun.



Sidhe Knights (update)

The Changes casefile really opened our eyes to the potential of the Sidhe Knights. Admittedly, we knew next to nothing about them before, but it seems that the mantle comes with a lot more benefits than we previously thought.

A careful read of the casefile shows that Harry neglects to comment on a nearly exponential upgrade to his physical capabilities after he takes on the mantle of the Winter Knight. It allows him to completely ignore his broken back and gives him full mobility, but the benefits don't end there.

He runs circles around the Ick (and Susan as a half-vampire Red Court infectee for that matter) during their encounter in the Erlking's hall, keeps pace with Arianna (page 359) during their Chichen Itza duel, and goes into hand to hand combat with Red Court vampires that he wouldn't have thought about engaging before. He pits his will directly against the oldest of the Red Court, gets shot to pieces while wearing faerie armor—all of this, and he doesn't really stop to comment on how unusual it is.

His magic also gets a boost of some kind, allowing him to use all his own abilities plus Winter magic and weave them together in imaginative combinations.

Obviously, having the full support of the Winter Court in your endeavors is also a pretty amazing perk.

Don't come down on Harry for not filling you in on all the details. He was a little preoccupied at the time.

So, what, we're talking about a sudden upgrade of +10 refresh or something like that? Some Speed and Toughness/Recovery and Unseelie Magic? Seems pretty simple.

It doesn't seem like Harry got a sudden complete upgrade to me. In the casefile, I don't get the sense that Harry was aware of what powers he had. It was like, suddenly when he needed to be fast, he was fast, and when he needed to beef up his will against the Lords and Red King, he could. Almost like there was just a pile of raw mojo sitting there, waiting for him to shape it as his needs demanded.

Hm. That sounds almost like a modified version of Modular Abilities—the mantle comes with a certain amount of refresh set aside for you to buy powers with as you need them. There's probably a minimum level of it, also—unless you start as a Pure Mortal, it'll probably be a one-way trip into negative refresh, the loss of individuality that Harry always feared.

Ghosts (update)

"So "ghost in the machine" isn't just a saying.

Nope. It's also a classic album by the Police.

Information provided by Mortimer Lindquist (OW174) suggests that we only really scratched the surface of ghosts in our entry from Our World. As with goblins, it seems ghosts are more varied and interesting than we originally thought.

It's almost best, according to Mort, to consider a ghost to be a new kind of entity entirely, rather than attempting to ponder its relationship with the deceased person who gave rise to it. Though the imprint or memory left behind serves as the beginning of a ghost, it doesn't in any way contain the soul of the person whose energy brought it into being.

He's sure about that?

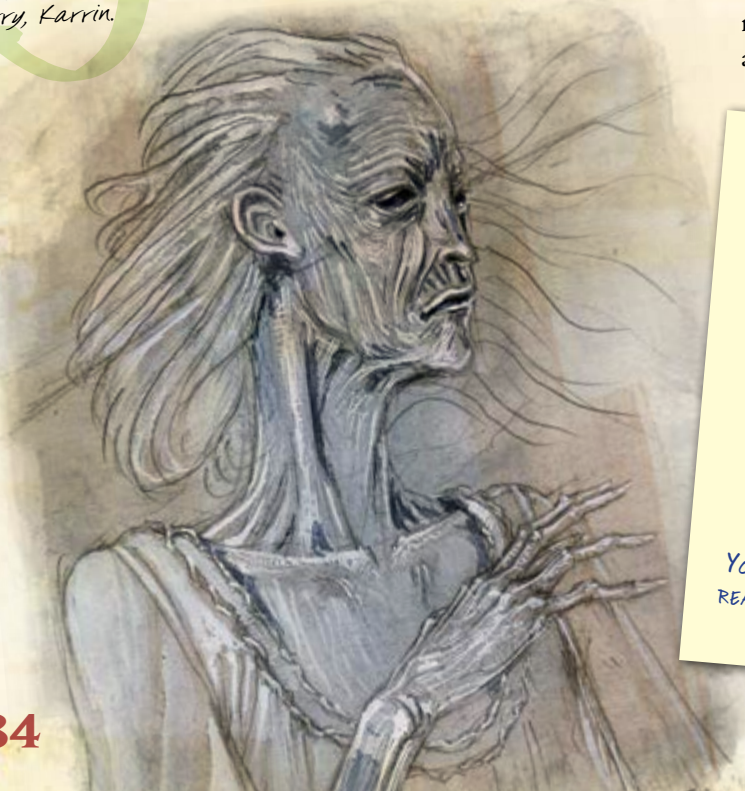
He was insistent. But maybe he tells himself that to make his job easier to deal with.

Thus, a ghost isn't necessarily doomed to hopelessly follow the patterns that it once held in life, though that often happens as a result of growing despair and insanity. Many shades simply can't comprehend or can't deal with the reality of their new existence; when they finally give in to madness, they become creatures like Agatha Hagglethorn—powerful and terrible, using their power to destructive ends.

Other ghosts can apparently remain quite sane after their transition, and retain a sense of self-image and self-actualization. Mortimer claims to know many shades who act as sentient and independent as the living do, like the late Collin Murphy.

Lindquist mentioned my dad and this is how I find out?

Mort was pretty plastered at the time, but... yeah, you actually weren't supposed to find out. Sorry, Karrin.



According to Mortimer, most shades can't interact with the living at all, but they do retain an ability to interact with machines, especially if those machines are in motion. This may be why some ghost hunters report their instruments suddenly losing battery charge or other malfunctions—it's one of the ghosts' only conduits to interact with us.

He also told us that memories are the currency of a ghost's existence—they represent a ghost's sense of identity, they're used to power supernatural attacks against one another, and they're the source of all the strange supernatural tricks ghosts can pull off; ghosts literally bleed memories when they're injured, losing them forever. Perhaps the most tragic kind of ghost are the ones who have bled out enough of their memories that they've essentially forgotten who they are, losing their own will, only capable of doing anything when another will directs them to.

Finally, it seems as though a shade can be destroyed by the light of day, if it isn't sheltered in some kind of safe haven or sanctum. This is probably the main reason you only see ghosts manifest at night.

As you've guessed, representing all of this in a game might be...challenging. The best information that Mort Lindquist provided is fragmented, but it implies that ghosts have their own...plane of existence, you might say. In that plane, ghosts are just like us—they can talk to each other, fight and hurt each other, use mojo on each other, just like they did in life. Interacting with the living is more difficult, unless you've put refresh into the appropriate powers.

That's a pretty hefty package, though—Spirit Form with Poltergeist is -5 refresh, and Swift Transition is -2, and you're suggesting they can hex as with Mana Static, another -1. So that's -8 before you include any other powers.

Maybe that's why a lot of the ghosts we see manifest physically are batshit crazy—they're easy candidates for negative refresh.

Point.

You guys do realize that your rules reflect reality and not the other way around, right?

Gods (update)

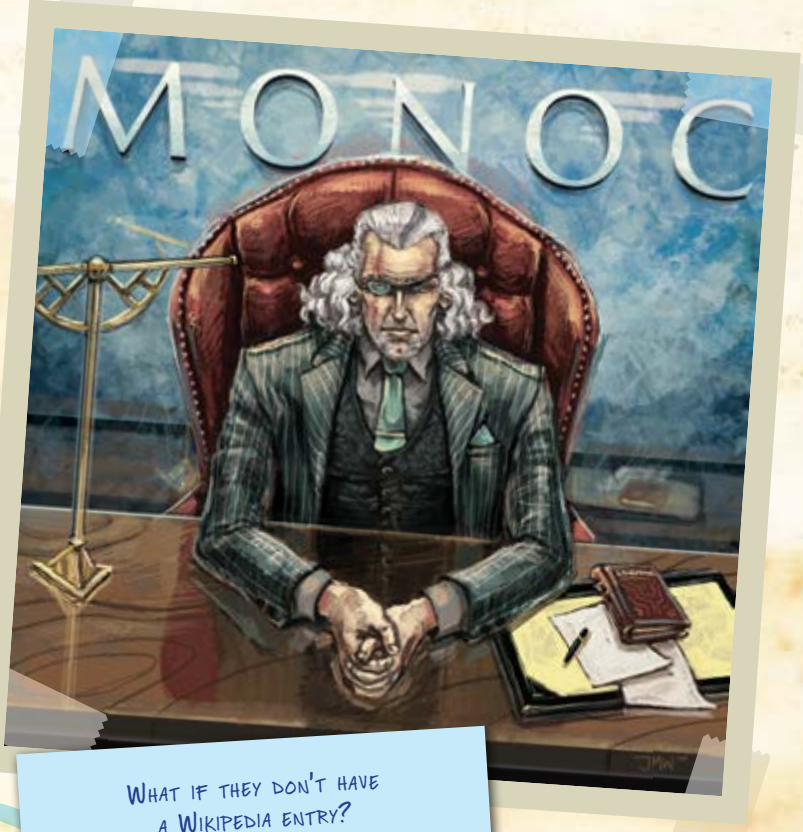
According to a highly placed and well-informed source, many gods are now only venerated by a handful of worshippers, and the power of their blood is spread out among a thousand offspring. You could consider them mostly "retired," with a few exceptions, like the Faerie Mothers and the White God (AKA the God of Abraham, the Christian God, etc.).

This doesn't mean that they're powerless or dormant, however. Many gods still carry out agendas in the supernatural and mortal worlds, through proxies or—more rarely—direct intervention. Nowadays, they simply operate away from the public eye, or in a disguise that allows them to blend in better with the present day.

Pretty much any god you might run into who has a Wikipedia entry is still operating on a plot device level and is pretty much unfathomable to us. We might be able to contest their will with supernatural aid, but there's no destroying a god—at least not with any power currently known to us. Pretty much all of them have enough strength to field emissaries of power (YS75) who act in their name, or provide sponsorship (YS287) to a follower, allowing them access to magic attuned to the god's nature.

See *Plot Devices and You* on page 316 for details on how to handle gods. (Hint: Run away.)

In the casefiles, we've encountered a number of beings who might be classified as gods. See Kukulcan (page 353), the Lords of Outer Night (page 296), and Donar Vadderung (page 364) for details, as well as Meditrina Bassarid (page 344) for an example of a lesser deity.



What if they don't have a Wikipedia entry?

Well, a god's power seems to be directly related to how much they're remembered and worshipped. So here, "checking Wikipedia" means "Here's how you know who's still in the public eye, enough to be carrying some serious mojo." A god no one's ever heard of might still have power, but not at the level of a plot device.

Someone ought to look into that.

Technically, weren't the Maenads just human servitors of Dionysius?

Harry seemed to think she was a bit more than mortal. At least, that's the way I read it in his casefile. I'm not really sure where else to put her, without making a silly list of demigods and demi-demi gods.

Funny...I thought that was par for the course in RPG supplements.

Cute.





Mortals

Implanted Humans

Description: Highly varied, but they tend to be larger-than-average humans who smell *wrong*—a horrible combination of stagnant water and rotting fish. They often have gills or other aquatic animal features grafted onto them, which they hide under large, bulky coats and other similar clothing.

First Appearance: Internal Paranet dossier entitled "Aftermath" (see "Nothing," page 358)

What We Know: Human servitors of the Fomor (page 287), these people are conditioned to be absolutely loyal to their masters, without any regard for individuality. The Fomor seem to excel at grafting parts onto human beings for their own purposes without killing the subject, and they use these servants mostly as raw muscle and manpower.

Powers: Reported abilities of implanted humans include sonar and enhanced sense of smell, as well as strength and speed in excess of normal people. We can surmise that many of them breathe underwater, given the gills. We've probably only scratched the surface of these guys, and it's likely that the Fomor are capable of a far greater range of physical alteration than we've seen so far.

Weaknesses: In the implanted humans we've faced or heard of, their enhanced abilities haven't changed the nature of their mortality—they bleed and can die though any normal means, though you have to hit them fast and hard if you want a good chance of success.



Implanted Human

High Concept
Servitors of the Fomor

Other Aspects
The Innsmouth Look
Unquestioning Loyalty

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Conviction:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Superb	(+5)
Guns:	Great	(+4)
Might:	Good	(+3)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)

Powers
Aquatic [-1]
Supernatural Sense (Sonar)[-1]

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OOO

Notes
Good Initiative, Superb Fists or Great Guns attacks, Great defenses against most attacks. This is a base. The Fomor "build" these guys to whatever specifications they need. Individual implanted humans may have any assortment of Creature Features (YS162) or Toughness (YS184) powers as needed. Some may even have Sponsored Fomor Magic (page 287).

Total Refresh Cost: -2

Nevernever Races

Fomor

Description: Generally humanoid writ large (7' or so) with froglike features. They have huge feet and hands, bulging eyes (jaundiced-yellow around septic green), sunken noses, wide and blubbery mouths, legs several inches too long and weirdly bendy, bloated bellies, and skin that's way too loose. They speak with a bubbling, sibilant voice that's oddly accented.

First Appearance: Internal Paranet dossier entitled "Even Hand"

What We Know: The Fomor are an ancient race of water dwellers, apparently related to the Jotuns (page 289). They may be the Fomorians of Celtic mythology, who appear as adversaries in many stories involving the Tuatha Dé Danaan.

Whatever their origins, they're known as formidable sorcerers, shapeshifters, and seers among their supernatural peers. Much of their trade among the supernatural community apparently involves the shaping of flesh into different, twisted forms—it's possible that they're the ones who created the warped servitors used by the Denarians in the Death Masks casefile (OW55). Though they don't often become involved in mortal affairs, they have no qualms about keeping human slaves for their purposes, altering the slaves' biology and conditioning them into servitude (see Implanted Humans, page 286).

They are signatories of the Accords, and we know that there's a gate to the realm of one of their rulers, King Corb, underneath Lake Michigan.

They've appeared twice thus far, that we know of. Once, one of their lords (see Mag, page 355) violated the territory of Freeholding Lord John Marcone and was killed in the ensuing engagement. The second time, we intercepted a Fomor who had captured mid-weight supernaturals for a purpose we didn't have time to ask it about—the efforts of Karrin Murphy and friends destroyed it and saved the prisoners.

Furthermore, we know that they're running this operation in several major cities across the world.

And apparently a small town in the Everglades.

Fomor

High Concept
Fomor Sorcerer

Other Aspects
Amphibious and Frogfaced
Mortals Are Beneath Me
Shaper of Flesh

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Fair	(+2)
Conviction:	Great	(+4)
Discipline:	Great	(+4)
Endurance:	Fair	(+2)
Fists:	Fair	(+2)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Superb	(+5)
Presence:	Good	(+3)

Most other skills default to Mediocre.

Powers
Aquatic [-1]
Fomor Magic [-5]
Inhuman Strength [-2]
Inhuman Mental Toughness [-2]
The Catch [+0] is unknown. Maybe dehydration to counter their aquatic nature?
The Sight [-1]
Wizard's Constitution [-0]

Stress

Mental	OOOO(OO)
Physical	OOO
Social	OOO

Notes
Fair initiative, Fair attacks, and Fair defense against most attacks. Able to easily control 4 shifts of Evocation power. **Armor:1** vs mental attacks. See *Fomor Magic* for more details on their form of sponsored magic.

Total Refresh Cost:
-11

New Power: Fomor Magic [-5]

Fomor magic is a kind of sponsored magic similar to Seelie and Unseelie Magic—if you have Evocation and/or Thaumaturgy, reduce the cost by 1 for each that you have.

It allows you to do entropomancy (YS285) with evocation's methods and speed, gives you Water and Spirit/Mind as evocation elements, and gives a +1 power bonus to deliberate hexing attempts. If you have Evocation already, you can assign "Fomor" as an element of evocation and give it specialization bonuses—if you do, those bonuses stack with any Water and Spirit/Mind bonuses you already have. (In other words, you get to double dip when you normally wouldn't be able to.)

As a type of thaumaturgy, you can do transformation and biomancy. As long as the items in question follow the "organic and like a sea-creature" theme we've seen, you can also do crafting. Again, if you have Thaumaturgy already, you can make "Fomor" into a thaumaturgy theme and give it bonuses, which will stack with any of the named themes above if you have them as well.



Will, where'd you learn all this? I've never read this Paranet dossier.

Justine sent it to us, no explanation included.

Interesting.

Be warned. Whatever their plans, it's clear that in the wake of the Red Court's power vacuum, they've decided to try to become a major player.

Powers: Their main abilities center around their unique form of sorcery. We know they're capable of shield spells and direct, lightning-like evocations similar to mortal wizardry, and they can hex and work entropomancy like nobody's business. They're also very adept at enthrallment magic, easily able to pacify subjects for capture or transport.

On the thaumaturgy side, they're very good at transformation magic and biomancy, which they use, Frankenstein-like, to implant servitors or create new patchwork creations from parts of other living things (see Gorilla-Sharks, page 299).

In fact, they have some form of biological crafting that defies easy categorization. They employ weapons in combat that seem to be made of living tissue—we know about pseudo-grenades that shoot bunches of urchin-like spines rather than exploding, and we've seen bizarre growths (both stuck to walls and launched from bazooka-like tubes) that spit acid at people. We don't know if this is magic or if it's just normal equipment.

Oh, one very important note: running water does not affect Fomor magic like it does mortal wizards. This presumably has to do with their inherent aquatic nature, but we're not really sure.

Weaknesses: Presuming you can get past their magical defenses, they seem to be vulnerable to most of the same things that would kill us—Marcone and Murphy each killed one with gunfire.

Fomor Bio-Gadgetry

Fomor bio-gadgetry and weapons can be modeled in a couple of ways.

One is to just treat it like regular equipment with a funky undersea biological color. Game-wise, there really isn't any difference between a normal grenade and one of those barb-shooting coral balls, or between a Kevlar vest and biological scale mail made from mollusk shells attached to the skin. So for most bio-gadgetry in the hands of Implanted Humans or Fomor, treat it like normal equipment, weapons, and armor, perhaps with an aspect like Undersea Biotech.

The other way is to treat the bio-gadget goodies as either enchanted items or powers.

Jotun

Description: If we follow the mythology, the Jotun are literal giants, with insane strength and some affinity for nature. We mostly know about fire and frost Jotun from the Ragnarok myth, so we can presume there are other types, perhaps connected to other elements (such as water or earth) or types of terrain (such as forest or mountain).

Descriptions vary widely, from hideous multi-headed creatures with claws and deformities, to ancient and wise beings of majesty.

First Appearance: Changes (mentioned only)

What We Know: Not a whole lot, other than the mythological record. They're giants and they're enemies of the Aesir and Vanir. Donar Vadderung said they had "retreated"—meaning that their predestined confrontation at Ragnarok has not yet come. Many of the Norse gods intermarried with them, which doesn't help clarify their general relationship any.

Powers: They're big and strong. They may have bestial features. Other than that, your guess is as good as ours.

Weaknesses: Same thing here. Maybe elemental opposition bothers them, like fire Jotun don't like ice?

Fire Jotun

High Concept

Fire Giant

Other Aspects

Bestial Features

An Ancient Race

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Fair	(+2)
Conviction:	Good	(+3)
Discipline:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Great	(+4)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Intimidation:	Great	(+4)
Might:	Superb	(+5)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)
Weapons:	Superb	(+5)

Powers

Channeling, Fire [-2]
Hulking Size [-2]
Mythic Strength [-6]
Supernatural Toughness[-4]
The Catch [+2] is Cold Magic and Mjölnir.

Stress

Mental OOOO
Physical OOOOOO(OOOO)
Armor:2
Social OOO

This how the Jotuns are generally described, but the Jotuns of note mostly seem to be described as stately creatures or figures of beauty.

Notes

Great initiative, Superb attacks, Superb defense against melee attacks. Any weapon used by a Jotun will be **Weapon:3** because it will be big. Their Strength brings it up to **Weapon:9**. They are Legendary Grapplers—when lifting or breaking things, their Might is an off-the-charts +17.

This example is a Fire Jotun, so it can do fire evocations. Change the magic to suit the individual Jotun when making different types of giants.

Total Refresh Cost:

-12





Kenku

High Concept
Crow-Faced Warriors

Other Aspects
Master of Kenjutsu
Like the Wind

Skills

Alertness:	Great	(+4)
Athletics:	Superb	(+5)
Conviction:	Good	(+3)
Deceit:	Great	(+4)
Discipline:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Weapons:	Superb	(+5)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
Echoes of the Beast (Raven) [-1]
Glamours [-2]
Supernatural Speed [-4]

Stress
Mental OOOO
Physical OOOO
Social OOOO

Their weapons are mundane, but of exceptional quality.

Notes
Supernatural Initiative, Superb Attacks with **Weapon:3** katanas, Epic defenses against most attacks. Higher refresh versions can have additional Creature Feature (YS162) powers. Some may even have Eastern-themed Evocation and Thaumaturgy.

Total Refresh Cost: -7

Creepy as hell but they helped save our collective asses.

Kenku

Description: Crow-faced beings, with long yellow beaks, black glassy eyes, black feathers, and blue blood. They move and leap with inhuman grace and speed. And they carry sharp katanas.

First Appearance: Changes

What We Know: More than likely, they're the *karasu-tengu* from Japanese folklore, somewhere between a spirit, demon, scion, and faerie, depending on who you're asking. They're known for being masters of the sword, for teaching their arts to mankind, and for testing people's character in mischievous ways.

They also owed Ebenezar McCoy a favor; they showed up to help Harry and friends at Chichen Itza in the battle against the Red Court.

Powers: Again, it depends on who you ask. Preternatural skill with the sword is pretty obvious, and they're wicked fast and precise in combat. Legend attributes various kinds of magical abilities to them—telepathy, teleportation, invisibility, and illusions, to name a handful. Basically, ninja magic. Seriously.

Weaknesses: No idea. We know they bleed, but they were fighting the Red Court at the time, so it's hard to know if they're vulnerable to mortal injuries or not.

Thanks for writing this up for me, Waldo. I hate thinking about these bastards.

Don't mention it. I steered clear of the zombie stuff myself.

Naagloshii (Skinwalkers)

Description: A vague morass of animalistic forms stuck together—Harry describes seeing parts of a cougar and a bear, but with reptilian eyes, as well as claws and oversized fangs. It was covered in fur. It's possible that the appearance of any specific one of these creatures is highly individual, but this is the best information we have. Also, because they're so adept at shapeshifting, it's probably safe to assume that we never saw the "true" form of the creature.

Harry opened up his Sight to it. His description is extremely vague; it's mostly descriptions of pure *wrongness* in every one of the five senses, assaulting his mind simultaneously—the stench of rotten meat, stale BO, and mildew along with the sound of nails on a chalkboard, the taste of rotten milk and spoiled fruit, the pulsing of a maggot-eaten corpse, etc., etc. Just looking at it nearly took him out; he had to do some serious mental self-bludgeoning just to desensitize himself to the experience.

First Appearance: Turn Coat

What We Know: Millennia ago, these immortal semi-divine beings (though our sources said "semi-divine" wasn't precisely right) were sent as messengers of the Holy People to teach humans the Blessing Way. They were supposed to leave this world when the Holy People did, but some did not—and their selfishness led to their corruption.

They feed on the fear of their victims and they enjoy hurting people. Though limited to living on tribal lands in the American Southwest—they "leak" power while away—they can sense people passing through their territory. And they love to hunt wounded prey.

They are simply ***evil***, in every sense of the word. Selfish, destructive, corrupt…evil. They leave a "psychic stench" wherever they go, which is why viewing them with the Sight can potentially drive a person mad.

Powers: They are shapeshifters *par excellance*, able to assume the form of any animal or creature they wish; they can combine properties from multiple creatures to create the ideal effect. They're extremely good at magic and have strong defenses against it, in some cases even turning the energy of a spell back onto the caster. They can veil and hex at will. They hit harder, move



Naagloshii (Skinwalker)

High Concept
Semi-Divine Shapeshifter

Other Aspects
Pure Evil

Offensive to Every Sense

Skills
There's not much point in trying to make a Naagloshii's skills conform to the "pyramid" rule. They're nearly plot device level creatures. If you need to make a roll for one of these things, assume they have a Legendary skill level.

Powers
Emotional Vampire [-1]
Glamours [-2]
Mythic Speed [-6]
Mythic Strength [-6]
Mythic Recovery [-6]
Mythic Toughness [-6]
The Catch [+1] is Native American holy magic.
True Shapeshifting [-4]
Mimic Form [-2]
Evocation [-3]
Thaumaturgy [-3]

Stress
Mental OOOO
+1 mild consequence
Physical OOOO(OOOOOO)
+1 mild consequence **Armor:3**
Social OOOO
+1 mild consequence

Notes
One of the most terrifying and deadly things out there short of gods or Faerie queens. If one of these is in town and you have a marker with a supernatural heavyweight, call it in.

Total Refresh Cost:
-30

faster, and are just plain tougher than nearly anything we've ever heard of.

They also apparently eat magic from the souls of empowered beings they devour. We're not precisely sure how this adds to their power, but Warden Morgan assured Harry that it does.

Weaknesses: Certain magic taught by Native American tribes (especially the Navajo) can apparently cripple a skinwalker or even destroy it outright. They can be exorcised by a ritual known as an Enemy Way—a variant of the Ghost Way intended to banish threats—when performed by a true shaman of tribal blood.

Otherwise, only pure power seems to work, and you need a *lot* of it. Harry managed to bloody a skinwalker's nose a bit by amping with soulfire (page 250), but only Listens to Wind was able to drive it off, and he's a member of the Senior Council.

Lastly, weird glowing symbols on the cottage and tower of Demonreach (page 348) were able to keep Shagnasty (page 361) from approaching it during the Turn Coat case—but we have no idea what that was all about.

The only report we have of one being killed was in the Fifties, when Warden Morgan dropped a nuclear bomb on one in Nevada.

That's right. An A-bomb.

We strongly recommend you do not engage, if at all possible.

As I recall, there are also lesser skinwalkers, right?

Yeah, mortals who learned the magic that skinwalkers handed down after their corruption. True skinwalkers can possibly sponsor a mortal, probably focusing on the shapeshifting stuff in exchange for corrupt behavior. Either it's a unique kind of sponsored magic, or simply an excuse to take those kinds of powers as part of an Emissary of Power character.

So, lesser skinwalkers are just able to shapeshift? Into any form they want to?

Yup, more or less.

Psychophagic Mites

Description: Invisible to mortal eyes. In the Sight, they appear as tiny, nasty crablike things, with hard shells and pincers.

First Appearance: Minor casefile entitled "Day Off"

What We Know: Psychophagic mites are a form of Nevernever parasite that are attracted to expressions of primal, primitive energy, attaching themselves to your aura if you expose yourself to the Nevernever while engaging in primal acts. They're really just pests—they're problematic if you don't detect them early, but easy to get rid of once you do.

Powers: While you're infected, the mites feed off of the emotional energy created by fulfilling your basic urges—food, sex, power, etc. They induce you to continue doing whatever actions will feed them until they've hollowed you out of emotional energy, then they move on.

Weaknesses: A basic magical circle will cut off their connection to a person through the Nevernever. From there, it's a matter of basic thaumaturgy to get rid of them, though apparently the spell can be time-consuming.

Psychophagic Mites

High Concept
Parasites from the Nevernever

Stress
Mental OO
Physical OO
Social OO

Powers
Emotional Vampire [-1]

Notes
The best way to use these may be to simply represent infection with an aspect. If you think it's warranted, you can have the target roll Discipline to resist infection.

Total Refresh Cost: -1

Thanks for leaving out how we learned about them. Considering the current circumstances, I think that'd be best.

Old Ones and Outsiders

Mistfiends

Description: A black cloud capable of independent motion, with black tendrils swirling out of it.

First Appearance: Turn Coat

What We Know: A mistfiend is a rare gaseous being from the far reaches of the Nevernever. It appears to be related to mordite (OW15) in that it simply renders anything it touches lifeless, but we're not sure about the precise relationship there—does mordite "grow" into a mistfiend eventually? Is the mistfiend made from mordite? Do they simply share a common origin? We don't know.

From the sheer amount of inherent wrongness, we also presume it's possible that mistfiends come from Outside of Creation.

Powers: It moves incredibly fast and seems to ignore most barriers that aren't airtight. Within its area of coverage, it can create magically-enhanced darkness that normal light can't penetrate. Finally, the tendrils simply disintegrate any living tissue they touch, turning it into ash. Even minor brushes result in lost limbs.

Anything worse is certain death.

Weaknesses: Harry didn't stick around to see the mistfiend get taken down, so we don't precisely know how it happened. He says the Senior Council managed to contain and banish it, so we can presume that means you have to trap it in a circle and push it off this plane of existence with sheer magical will. If anything else works, we don't know about it.

This seems a little powerful for a stunt. Are you sure this shouldn't be a power?

I thought about making it a power option for Made of Death, but I don't think it's out of line for a stunt. It's something a "normal RPG character could do." You could also have a stunt called "Spray 'n' Pray" that did the same thing for Guns.

Good luck hitting anything if you try something like that.

And that'd be why defenders get +2 to their roll.

New Power Option: Always On

The mistfiends require a new power option for Gaseous Form.

Always On. Gaseous Form is your natural state. You don't need to take any action to manifest this ability.

New Power: Made of Death [-5]

The fundamental wrongness of your nature can destroy anything you touch. You have **Weapon:5** with any Fists attack you make. If a character is taken out (YS203) with this power, the only possible result is death. If coupled with the Gaseous Form power, you may still make attacks with this power while in a gaseous state.

Mistfiend

High Concept

Gaseous Cloud of Death

Sort of like Mister after I fed him smoked salmon. Never. Again.

Other Aspects

Fundamentally Wrong Nature

Impenetrable Darkness

Skills

Alertness: Epic (+7)
Athletics: Fantastic (+6)
Conviction: Good (+3)
Discipline: Fantastic (+6)
Endurance: Superb (+5)
Fists: Epic (+7)
Presence: Great (+4)
Other skills at Mediocre, Average, Fair, Good, or Great.

Stunts

The Mists Rise (Fists): A mistfiend may use Fists to attack an entire zone; however, all targets get +2 to their defense rolls.

Powers

Supernatural Speed [-4]
Myrk (See OW48) [-1]
Gaseous Form (Always On) [-4]
Physical Immunity [-8]
The Catch [+2] is magic
Made of Death [-5]

This basically makes something a walking Sphere of Annihilation.

A floating one in this case.

Stress

Mental OOOO
Physical OOOO, +1 mild consequence
Social OOOO

Notes

Supernatural Initiative, Epic attacks with **Weapon:5** Fists, Legendary defenses against most attacks.

Total Refresh Cost: -21



Einherjar

High Concept
Immortal Viking Warrior

Other Aspects
The Honored Dead
From the Land of Ice and Snow

Skills

Alertness:	Great	(+4)
Athletics:	Superb	(+5)
Conviction:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Fantastic	(+6)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Guns:	Great	(+4)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Fair	(+2)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)
Weapons:	Superb	(+5)

These skills are a baseline. Individual einherjar will have varied skills reflecting their personal experience. Some will have one or more Fantastic combat skills.

Stunts
Blade Dance (Weapons): Centuries of practice have honed the einherjar's skill with weapons to amazing degrees. When einherjar show this skill off, they may use Weapons instead of Intimidate for the Social Attacks trapping.

Einherjar will likely have an assortment of other combat stunts to reflect their individual expertise.

Powers
Inhuman Recovery [-2]
The Catch [+1] is special.

Stress
Mental OOO
Physical OOOO, +1 mild consequence
Social OOO

Notes
Great initiative, Superb attacks, Superb defense against most attacks. Their Recover ability represents the nightly healing of their wounds from the day's fighting. Their "Special" catch is that, while no source of damage prevents their Recovery, it only occurs at night and while not actively in battle. They are also not able to use the Shrug It Off trapping of Recovery.

Total Refresh Cost: -2

What about their ability to recover even when slain? Inhuman Recovery powers are nice, but they aren't ***that*** good.

I'm relying on the general rules for Taking Someone Out. While the winner gets to decide the nature of the Taken Out result, it must fit into the fiction established during play. Any sort of permanent, final death Taken Out result simply wouldn't be appropriate to apply to any character with an einherjar High Concept.

There's potential for abuse there.

Maybe, but remember there are plenty of terrible things you can do to a character besides killing them. Also, these guys really aren't meant to be PCs.

Scions

The Einherjar

Description: They look like humans of Viking stock. Because they're all soldiers and warriors, they're universally large and solidly built; they're usually dressed for battle even when not on the battlefield.

First Appearance: White Night (except we didn't find out what they were until Changes)

What We Know: Mythology tells us that the einherjar are Norse warriors who died in battle and were escorted to Valhalla by valkyries. There, they spend every day engaged in a neverending party of battle "practice" (AKA battle), magical wound healing at Odin's behest, feasting, and preparation for their eventual conflict with the Jotun on the day of Ragnarok.

Apparently, the valkyries can also whisk them away from this fate to work as mercenaries here on Earth. John Marcone employs a number of einherjar via Monoc Securities. They helped during the assault on the Raith Deeps, but we didn't know they were anything more than mortal mercenaries at the time.

Powers: None. Really—they gain nothing from being brought back to this world, except the chance to fight as a mortal again. They're very highly trained combatants, however, with literally centuries of experience at killing lots of things. They don't seem restricted by ancient practices and are just as good with machine guns and Kevlar as with axe and mail.

Weaknesses: They're mortal. It's possible that they recover from injury faster than normal people do, as a result of Odin's blessing, but that's speculative.

Spirits (Update)

Just a short note here, but through Harry's casefiles, we've learned that the number and variety of spirits in the Nevernever is almost unlimited and too innumerable to mention. Basically, for every fundamental idea, concept, natural phenomena, or emotional state, there's a kind of spirit that expresses it in a raw form. Harry only mentioned a handful when he went looking for information on his daughter's whereabouts in the Changes casefile: nature spirits, messenger spirits, spirits of water and flame, and the Tylwyth Teg.

One connection we have made is that elemental spirits generally follow the same breakdown we gave in the magic addendum (page 267)—so fire spirits tend to be emotion spirits, air spirits tend to be knowledge spirits, and so on.

Who are they?

The Internet tells me they're faeries who show up in Welsh folklore. They don't follow either of the Courts, so I'm guessing they're either wyld fae or their own supernatural nation. Their king's name is Gwyn ap Nudd in the legends. Harry was apparently on good terms with him. Other than that, I've no idea.

Boogeyman, aka "Boggle" or "Boggart"

Description: An indistinct and vaguely humanoid shadow, usually no bigger than a raccoon, when you can even see it at all.

First Appearance: Minor casefile "AAAA Wizardry"

What We Know: Boogeymen are weak phobophages (OW81, under "Spirits") who feed on the fear of children. They often choose to make their homes in a child's dark closet or under the bed, which is part of what gives rise to those nearly universal fears. Normally, they incite the children to nightmares and then feed off the psychic energy produced.

Powers: Fairly straightforward. They can't even be perceived by adults most of the time—an effect similar to a high-quality veil that can even withstand supernatural detection. They can incite fear and feed on it, similar to certain families of White Court vampire. You can't really interact with them physically.

Weaknesses: Mind magic or direct psychic confrontation can cause them to flee. They're cowardly by nature and won't put up much of a fight if met with determined resistance.

Boogeyman

High Concept

The Beast Under Your Bed, in Your Closet, in Your Head

Other Aspects

Phobophage Not Just For British Tween Wizards

Skills

Deceit:	Great	(+4)
Discipline:	Average	(+1)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Stealth:	Superb	(+5)

Most other skills default to Average or Fair.

Powers

Incite Emotion (Fear, At Range) [-2]

Emotional Vampire [-1]

Feeding Dependency [+1] affecting the following powers:

Greater Glamours [-4]

Physical Immunity [-8]

The Catch [+2] is mind magic or psychic contact.

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OO
Social	OO
Hunger	OOO

Notes

Their glamours don't work on children—this can be handled as a compel against their high concept.

Total Refresh Cost: -12



Vampires

Lords of Outer Night

Description: We never got to see them directly. We only know that they were towering, seven-foot tall, millennia-old Red Court vampires, and each of them wore traditional Mayan accoutrements and had an individual mask. We can presume an extreme version of the usual—flabby black greasy skin on a vaguely man-bat looking frame.

Harry didn't dare look at them through the Sight.

First Appearance: Changes

And last, God willing.

What We Know: The thirteen closest lieutenants of the Red King (page 353), the Lords of Outer Night posed as gods to the Mayans and soaked up the benefits of their worship in both blood and mojo.

With the bloodline curse of Duchess Arianna turned against the Red Court, we presume that Harry destroyed them. Good riddance.

Powers: The Lords were probably the closest that mortal beings ever got to becoming gods. Using will alone, each of them could simply assault and shatter minds; their mystical strength was nearly unparalleled. Add to that, probably, all the other benefits of being a Red Court vampire, maxed out.

Weaknesses: Standard Red Court weaknesses, although they probably had magical or other defenses that allowed them to all but ignore them. Unless the Almighty directly intervened on your behalf, you probably wouldn't stand a chance. They had flesh masks that lasted much longer than those of their younger kin, allowing them much more time in the daylight than normal—you can presume that weakness didn't apply for all practical intents and purposes.

Lords of Outer Night

High Concept
Ancient Red Court Vampire Lord

Other Aspects
Evil
Cruel
Masters of Las Tierras Rojas

Skills, Power, Etc.
The Lords of Outer Night posses all of the abilities of Red Court vampires, and few of their weaknesses. Assume all combat abilities are Legendary or higher.

Notes
These guys are serious bad news. If you encounter them, your best bet would be to run.

Good thing they aren't around anymore.

Red Court Vampires (Update)

There are no more Red Court vampires anymore. They are gone. Totally. At the end of the Changes casefile, Harry destroyed them all.

Even the infected who hadn't fully turned had the vampire part ripped out of them. For the older ones, who were relying on the curse to keep them young and healthy, it was an instant death sentence—they withered away to nothing in moments, as time took back its due. For the younger ones, it was an instant cure.

For a first-person account of this, look at Las Tierras Rojas on page 146.

It's possible, according to our sources, that individual Red Court vampires survived Harry's actions, but they would have to be ensconced deep in realms of the Nevernever, completely cut off from the mortal world. If there are any left, it's only a handful of individuals, and not enough to constitute a supernatural nation in any sense.

Thus, the additional information we've uncovered about the Red Court only serves groups who have games set before their demise or in an alternate reality where Harry didn't destroy them.

That said, here's what we learned.

The politics of the Red Court were extremely fractured, and they were often torn apart by intra-factional warfare. It's a cliché, but one of the main reasons why the Red Court failed to wipe out the White Council was internal strife. One of these divisions involved the "First Maya," or the oldest of the species, which had a stranglehold on the top echelons and prohibited any younger vampires from moving past a certain point in the hierarchy.

In your games, you might take advantage of that to complicate an existing problem—have Red Court vampires maneuvering against one another for territory, slaves, power, or any combination of the three.

We also know that they were trying to muscle in on John Marcone's territory in Chicago, operating out of the suburbs. This adheres to the letter of their agreement when Harry dueled Duke Ortega (OW203)—they weren't technically operating *in* Chicago—but not its spirit. Red Court in your games will likely act much the same way.

Finally, we've learned a little bit about the capabilities of older Red Court vampires:

First, they can use their flesh mask to appear as whomever they want, rather than an idealized version of their mortal selves. Handle this as possession of the Mimic Form power (YS177).

Second, as with the Lords of Outer Night, it may be possible for RCVs to eventually "buy off" the sunlight weakness, because their flesh masks last long enough that they can effectively ignore the other limitation. You can treat this as a reduction of the Catch discount to +1 instead of +2, and require a Must in the high concept aspect relating to their age or power.

Third, older RCVs can emit a primal hunting cry to spook potential prey, allowing them a direct "will to power" mental attack with Intimidation. If you defend against it successfully even once, however, you're immune to any ill effect of hearing it again (except for the fact that an older RCV is somewhere near you).

Finally, a piece of interesting trivia—it seems that older RCVs are in danger of being lost to the hunger; eventually they become little more than feral beasts.

The Red Court call them "blood-slaves," and that's pretty much exactly what they are—so far gone that they don't even have the will to create a flesh mask and no thoughts other than the acquisition of blood. They're junkies with the capability for supernaturally enhanced temper tantrums.

So, how do we represent that?

Oh, I imagine that you'd just take the refresh from Flesh Mask and use it for something else.

White Court Vampires (Update)

Very short note here: it seems that the blood of a White Court vampire, when consumed, functions as a passion-inducing drug and aphrodisiac. If your particular brand of eliminating supernatural threats involves biting or eating them, be warned.

Something you want to tell us about, Will?

No, not ever. Thanks.

Warped Animals

Fae Centipedes

Description: Centipedes, only enormous, dwarfing a person in size.
First Appearance: Changes
What We Know: These creatures were guarding the garden of the Leanansidhe (page 325) in the Nevernever. It's possible they exist elsewhere in Faerie, but we don't know for sure.
Powers: Big, strong, fast. They also have a unique way of dealing with being cut into pieces—each piece grows into a full new creature.
Weaknesses: We aren't sure. Harry never managed to defeat this creature; he only stalled it until he could escape back to the mortal realm.

Fae Centipede

High Concept
Colossal Faerie Centipede

Other Aspects
Unbreakable Carapace
Creepy Crawly

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Superb	(+5)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Intimidation:	Fair	(+2)
Might:	Great	(+4)
Presence:	Average	(+1)

Powers
Claws [-1]
Hulking Size [-2]
Supernatural Speed [-4]
Supernatural Strength [-4]
Physical Immunity [-8]
The Catch [+2] is the trappings of Summer.

Stress
Mental OOO
Physical OOOOOO, +1 mild consequence
Social OOO

Notes
Supernatural Initiative, Great attacks with **Weapon:6** Fists, Great defenses in melee, Good at range.

Total Refresh Cost:
-17

I'm assuming these things don't have the typical fae vulnerability to iron. Harry would have found a way to use that against the one he fought if they did. The Leanansidhe had one guarding her garden, so they're probably creatures of Winter. If that's the case, I assume the trappings of Summer will work against them.

I notice there's no "multiply when cut into pieces" power on that statblock.

I'd play that out as the result of a compel. It seems like the right situation—Harry arrogantly thinks he's triumphed, then has his hopes dashed when his opposition doubles.

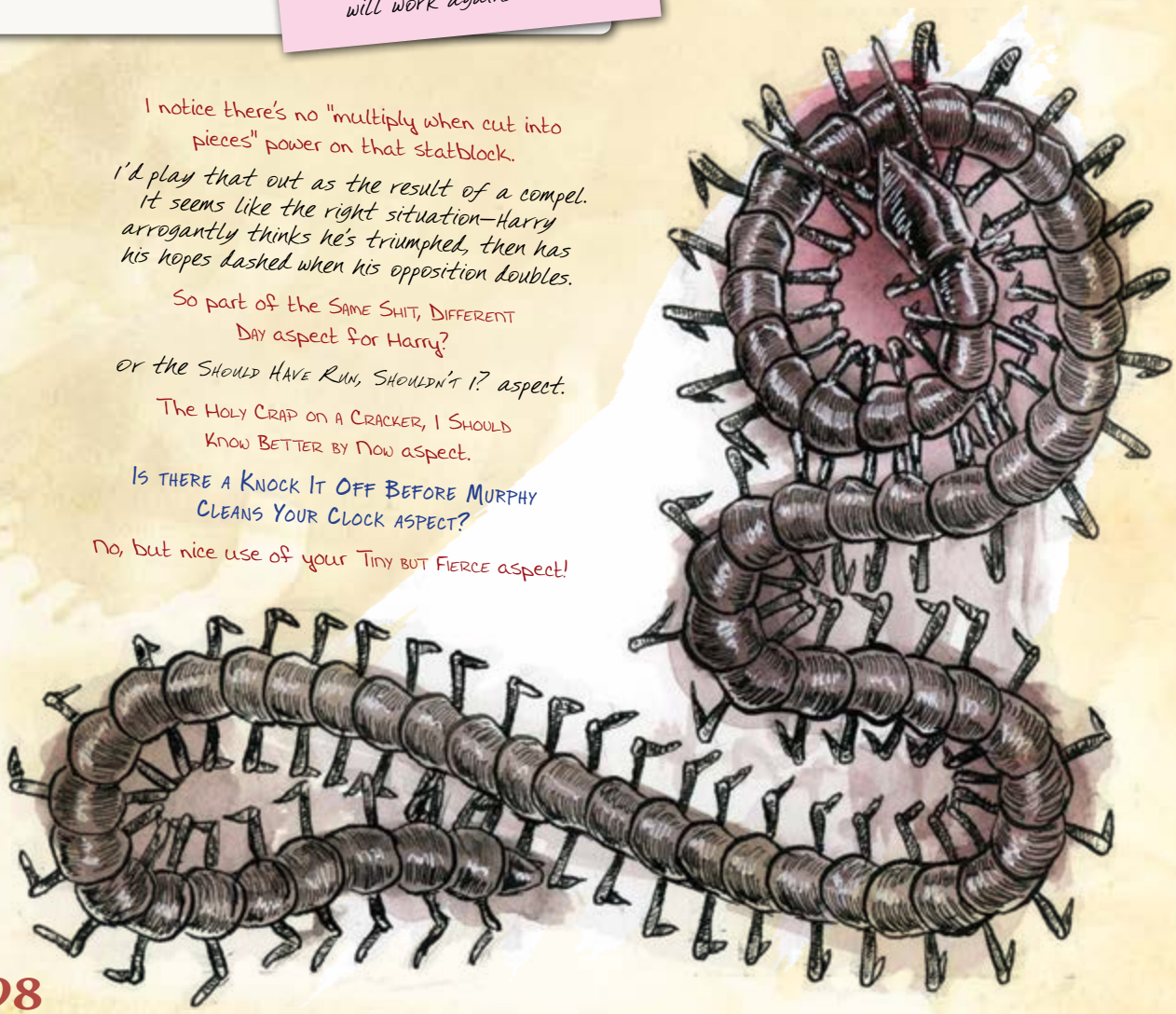
So part of the Same Shit, Different Day aspect for Harry?

Or the Should Have Run, Shouldn't I? aspect.

The Holy Crap on a Cracker, I Should Know Better by Now aspect.

Is there a Knock It Off Before Murphy Cleans Your Clock aspect?

No, but nice use of your Tiny but Fierce aspect!



Fae Spiders

Description: Orbweaver spiders are the size of a pony, with bodies of gray, blue, and white. They have human-esque mouths and can speak. 'Nuff said.

First Appearance: Turn Coat

What We Know: Creatures of Winter, about a dozen of these tried to block Harry's passage to Edinburgh when he was using the Ways to get around. Also, Peabody gated in about a hundred of them to harass the Senior Council and cover his escape into the Nevernever during the assault on Demonreach.

Powers: Strong, fast, and poisonous. They can do everything a spider can do, but bigger and better. They are excellent hunters and they enjoy drinking blood.

Weaknesses: They probably don't like fire very much, or Summer magic. And Harry was able to intimidate them with a show of raw magical force.

Gorilla-Sharks

Description: Well, the name fits. They're gorilla-like creatures with a different head grafted on, squashed and flat, with gaping mouths and rows of shark-like teeth. They lurch as they move, as if they aren't quite put together correctly.

First Appearance: Internal Paranet dossier, "Even Hand"

What We Know: The Fomor lord known as Mag (page 355) created or summoned these beings as foot soldiers and threw them against John Marcone's defenses during their dispute.

Powers: Incredibly strong. Hulk smash. They also tend to attack in numbers.

Weaknesses: Not terribly tough or smart. A barrage of auto-shotgun fire worked fine for Marcone and Hendricks—the gorilla-sharks practically walked into the shredding zone.

New Creature Feature: Web [-2]

You may can spin a web like a spider, cover an area with sticky ectoplasmic goo, or some similar effect. Make a Weapons attack. If successful, the target is subject to a Block against movement, with strength equal to your Weapons skill. A subsequent successful attack, or an attack made while invoking an appropriate aspect, will convert this Block to a Grapple.

Sticky [-1]. This upgrade to Web allows you to place a Webbed aspect on a zone. While this aspect is in place, all zone borders are increased by a value equal to your Weapons skill.

Fae Spider

High Concept
Orbweaver

Other Aspects
Arachnids of Unusual Size

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Superb	(+5)
Deceit:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Stealth:	Fair	(+2)
Survival:	Fair	(+2)
Weapons:	Great	(+4)

Powers
Claws (Venomous) [-3]
Pack Instincts [-1]
Spider Walk [-1]
Web (Sticky) [-3]
Inhuman Speed [-2]
Inhuman Strength [-2]

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OO

Notes
Epic Initiative, Great attacks with **Weapon:4** Fists, Fantastic defenses against most attacks. If possible, orbweavers will ensnare their foes with their web, inject them with their poison, then retreat to a safe distance while the poison does its work.

Total Refresh Cost:
-12

Gorilla-Shark

High Concept
Weird Fomor Minion

Other Aspects
Freakishly Strong
Good Swimmer

Skills

Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Endurance:	Great	(+4)
Fists:	Superb	(+5)
Might:	Superb	(+5)

Physical skills default to Good, other skills to Average or Fair.

Powers
Aquatic [-1]
Supernatural Strength[-4]

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OO

Notes
Mediocre Initiative, Superb **Weapon:4** Fists attacks, Great defenses against ranged attacks, Superb against melee attacks.

Total Refresh Cost: -5

Who's Who
Addendum



More Cases, More Faces

Since we published the original manuscript of The Dresden Files RPG, Harry Dresden has been a busy, busy guy. Two more major cases and a handful of smaller ones have brought more people into his life and also brought significant changes to the people who were already there. In addition, the Paranet is starting to work very well as an information clearinghouse—some of the dossiers we've gotten are significant enough that we've decided to include them in this book as their own chapters.

As before, we've collected what we know about the people in these casefiles and presented it here. Where there's new information, we've updated older entries, too. Some of this is speculative because we don't always have enough info to fill in blanks—we've indicated that for you, so take it with a grain of salt when you see it. Remember, nothing beats independent verification.

It's more than two, isn't it?

Yeah...look, it takes a while to compile all this info! I'm doing my best to keep up.

I'M NOT SURE I'M COMFORTABLE WITH THE "AFTERMATH" FILE GOING PUBLIC, WILL. SOME OF THE OBSERVATIONS I MADE ARE...PERSONAL.

Feel free to redact whatever you need to.

GOOD. I WAS GOING TO.

Some Initial Housekeeping

First of all, any of the people from Our World have the potential to be significantly more powerful now than they were when we originally published. Most of the original statblocks reflect what they were like the last time we saw them in a casefile. Exceptions to this are Harry and Murphy—we presented them as they were during the Storm Front casefile, because they made good example PC-like characters that way.

On OW137 we discussed how Harry might have grown over time from there, but keep in mind that this growth could apply to *anyone else in that chapter as well*. So if you want a good "present day" picture of any of the entries, add from 3 to 5 refresh (spent or not) and 6 to 10 skill ranks as a good ballpark figure.

Obviously, this only works for people who have seen a relatively large amount of action since the Small Favor case—if they were lucky enough to keep a quiet life after meeting Harry, there may not be any dramatic change to their statblock at all. For people we know a lot about, we do some of the updating ourselves in this chapter.

The Senior Council

Harry's more recent cases have been instrumental in showing us what the higher-tier wizards of the White Council can actually do.

We low-balled them.

A lot.

You can assume that any of the Senior Council wizards and any other powerful spellcasters from the original manuscript were off by -10 refresh, if not more.

The *Spellcasting: Addendum* (**page 248**) showcases a couple different methods of handling the kinds of things we've seen extremely powerful wizards do. You can assume that they would spend this -10 refresh bump for any of the options presented there.

For Those Who Have Passed

Not everyone in Harry's life survived the last couple of years. The final throes of the Red Court war, as well as its aftermath, have seen the loss of some of our nearest and dearest. It's not all darkness, though—great and powerful purveyors of evil also lie among the fallen.

Generally speaking, if someone died between the Small Favor case and now, we didn't update their game information, at least not in mechanical terms. Some exceptions exist among the bad guys, because we feel that we (and you) should get at least some wholly positive benefit from their existence.

I CAN APPRECIATE WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO DO WITH THIS GAME, WILL, BUT I'M STILL UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE IDEA OF OTHER PEOPLE DECIDING WHAT I DO, EVEN IF IT'S FICTION.

BAD GUYS EXIST IN REAL LIFE TO PROVIDE STATS FOR YOUR GAME?

Hey, I'll take whatever perks I can.



They sent **THREE** Senior Council members after Harry?

Yep. There were serious fireworks that day.

I thought he said any single Senior Council member could probably wipe the floor with him.

Harry's reputation counts for a lot. It's very hard to predict him. He told me once that they basically look at him like he's Anakin Skywalker—too powerful too soon, with the chance of tipping over the edge and becoming a monster at any moment.

I... hm. Never mind, I don't want to get into it.

Ancient Mai

High Concept
Senior White Council Wizard

Other Aspects
Wisdom of the Ages
Speak Softly but Carry a Big Stick
My Face Tells You Nothing
Political Survivor
Order Brings Harmony

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Fair	(+2)
Contacts:	Great	(+4)
Conviction:	Fantastic	(+6)
Deceit:	Great	(+4)
Discipline:	Fantastic	(+6)
Empathy:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Fair	(+2)
Intimidation:	Great	(+4)
Lore: Epic (+7)		
Presence:	Great	(+4)
Resources:	Good	(+3)
Scholarship:	Great	(+4)

Other skills default to Fair or Good.

Powers
Evocation [-3]
Thaumaturgy [-3]
The Sight [-1]
Soulgaze [+0]
Wizard's Constitution [+0]
The Catch [+0] is unmitigated societal chaos.
Mythic Mental Toughness [-6]
Refinement [-11]

Specializations
Evocation: Elements (Earth, Wood, Spirit, Water); Control (Earth +3, Wood +2, Spirit +2, Water +1); Power (Earth +3, Wood +1, Spirit +2, Water +1)
Thaumaturgy: Control (Veils +2, Wards +2, Ectomancy +1), Complexity (Veils +1, Wards +1)

Focus Items
Wand (Earth Offense Control +2)
This is speculation…

Stress
Mental OOOO(OOOOOO)
Armor:3, +1 mild consequence
Physical OOO
Social OOOO

Notes
Ancient Mai has Discipline enough to casually control 6 shifts of Evocation in something she doesn't specialize in; in Earth, her best element, that jumps to 9. She likely has several items to aid in her defense; despite all her power, she will most likely deem it prudent to withdraw from a conflict if the option is there.

The Catch for Mai's Mythic Mental Toughness is all about her notion of an ordered society—in a situation where she can't fall back on the rules and stricture of Council interaction, she's outside of her comfort zone.

Total Refresh Cost:
-24

Character Updates

Here's the scoop on the people we already know.

Ancient Mai

Original Entry: OW100

Harry wrote more about Ancient Mai in his Turn Coat casefile.

Smart and quick-witted, she was one of three Senior Council members (Listens to Wind and McCoy were the others) sent to confront Harry on Demonreach during the events of that case. She appears to be the Council's resident expert on etiquette and protocol, written and unwritten. She expects people in her presence to know and observe these rules of etiquette flawlessly—if you're not capable of talking the talk around Ancient Mai, she probably reasons that you don't deserve to be in her presence. Her passion for order is one of the things that makes her relationship with Harry Dresden frosty, if not directly adversarial.

Don't make the mistake of thinking that her insistence on formality is a crutch. When she dropped the gloves on Demonreach, she was deadly and efficient, singlehandedly holding off dozens of enemies at a time.

We have said this about other wizards before, but it bears repeating again with her: Do Not Mess With Ancient Mai. Period. Do. Not.

She has "subtle and quick to anger" down to a science. The best thing you can do is convince her that you're not even slightly relevant to her interests and hope she turns her attention elsewhere.

As an aside, while we doubt she carries her judge's accreditation from the American Kennel Club, she knows her dogs. She identified Mouse (page 333) as more than just a Tibetan temple dog—he's a Foo Dog, which was instrumental in establishing Mouse as a character witness during the trial of Donald Morgan (page 332).

The Archive (aka "Ivy")

Original Entry: OW100

Not much new information here, but Harry made a really interesting observation about the Archive in the Changes casefile. The Archive doesn't involve herself in the events of the world any more than she has to—she's supernaturally obligated to record the news and avoid making any, if that makes sense.

Despite this, Ivy got involved enough to nudge Harry in the right direction by sending him to talk to John Marcone (page 329), which led to a further encounter with Donar Vadderung of Monoc Securities (page 364). As a result, she's indirectly responsible for helping Harry destroy the Red Court, an action that has changed the supernatural balance of power tremendously.

This falls far outside what's permissible for the Archive, as far as we know. We speculate that the overlap between Ivy and the Archive isn't perfect, and that at times the mortal side of the equation is able to make compromises that the supernatural side cannot.

We don't know what this will mean for Ivy's future as she goes into her teenage years (she'd be in high school by now), or whether Harry's cultivation of her human side will prove to be a good thing or a complete disaster.

Bob the Skull

Original Entry: OW110

It looks like we can say for certain that Bob has the Sight, or at least some form of it. During the Changes case, he could tell things about Harry's aura and soul—he commented that it had "gone crazy" in response to the pressures he was under at the time (page 311), and that a bit of Murphy's soul had rubbed off on his after a hug. This could explain how he gets a lot of his knowledge—simply by perceiving the true nature of everything he runs across.

He also showed some ability to shield people against mental assault, even the crushing willpower of gods, joining his own will with Harry's during their final confrontation against the Lords of Outer Night and the Red King (page 296 and page 353 respectively) at Chichen Itza.

The Archive ("Ivy")

High Concept

The Archive

Trouble: Too Young for This Responsibility

Other Aspects

Knowledge Is My Shield

On the Shoulders of Giants

Tortured by the Denarians

Look, a Kitty!

Kincaid's Contract

Skills, Stunts, Powers

No change from entry on OW102.

Notes

Ivy has grown up a bit, but the burden of being the Archive is still too much to ask of someone her age. Heck, it's probably too much to ask of anyone of any age.

Bob the Skull

High Concept

Skullbound Spirit of Intellect

Other Aspects

Knowledge Can Be Dangerous

Many Wizards Owned Me, Dresden Named Me

Magical Lab Assistant

Flawless Memory

My Price Is Porn

Skills, Powers, etc.

Bob has a Fantastic Lore and Scholarship at a minimum, and even higher in areas of knowledge that he specializes in—like Winter Court Fae, Potions, Spells, Enchantments, and Supernatural Creatures. He also has a Superb Discipline when it comes to creating shields against mental assaults. He also has the ability to detect auras and true nature of things similar to the Sight.

You might treat Bob as a stunt, or more likely as an Item of Power that lets whoever possesses Bob have his skill rolls stand in for theirs.

Does this mean I'm no longer a Pure Mortal?

It depends, have you taken him as a stunt or as an Item of Power?

Let me check my character sheet.

You aren't a Pure Mortal, you're a Pure Geek, Eyes.

Butters, I don't know if I'm comfortable with including even these two paragraphs. Harry wanted all references to Bob removed from the original manuscript.

I know, but this is mostly going to be passed around to Paranet members anyway, so I think it's fine.

Not fine. Harry wanted it out, and this will get the Wardens on your ass.

Seriously? I'm leaving a whole, whole lot of information out.

Like what?

Like, I gave him the Internet. I mean, he's energy. It's energy. You see where I'm going with that?

Good God. What have you done?

Georgia McAlister Borden

High Concept
The Alphas' Den Mother

Trouble
Married to Will Borden

Other Aspects
Born to Wealth
I Don't Have a Privileged Attitude
Pillar of Strength & Calm
Self Defense Instructor
Very Pregnant

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Great	(+4)
Discipline:	Great	(+4)
Driving:	Average	(+1)
Empathy:	Great	(+4)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Good	(+3)
Investigation:	Fair	(+2)
Lore:	Fair	(+2)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Rapport:	Good	(+3)
Resources:	Good	(+3)
Scholarship:	Great	(+4)
Stealth:	Good	(+3)

Other skills default to Average or Fair.

These skills represent Georgia in her mortal form. As a wolf, she can shuffle her skills, swapping Empathy and Scholarship for Athletics and Fists.

Stunts
Counselor (Empathy): Georgia's skill can be used to justify another character's recovery from moderate or severe social or mental consequences.

Powers
Beast Change [-1]
Echoes of the Beast [-1]
The Catch [+1] is any purely supernatural source of damage.
Inhuman Recovery [-2]
Human Form [+1] affecting:
Claws [-1]
Inhuman Speed [-2]
Inhuman Strength [-2]
Pack Instincts [-1]

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OOOO(OO) **Armor:1**
Social	OOOO

Notes
In human form, Good attacks, defenses, and initiative. In wolf form, Claws & Strength give her **Weapon:4** with her Great "unarmed" attacks, Epic Initiative, and Superb physical defenses.

Total Refresh Cost: -9

Georgia McAlister Borden

Original Entry: OW114

Georgia Borden has been through a lot lately: the Night of Nightmares (page 150) which immediately followed the conclusion of the Changes case, as well as capture (which makes this the second time she's been kidnapped) and mental torture at the hands of the Fomor.

She is also very pregnant and has a graduate thesis due. (This juxtaposition may make you laugh. Don't. There's enough stress in mortal life surrounding college—just imagine piling supernaturally-related problems on top. Besides, even if you've been pregnant, you haven't met her thesis advisor.)

Through it all, she's demonstrated mental reserves and strength of will to rival anything, mortal or otherwise, that you're likely to meet. Years running with the Alphas have put her in incredible physical shape and turned her into a formidable warrior. As an example, she's been invited to continue teaching a women's self-defense course on U of C campus—as in, she fights that well *outside* of wolf form.



Flattering, supportive, and unnecessarily defensive all at the same time. You're married, all right.

Did she start dyeing her hair brunette?

No, she stopped dyeing it blonde. It goes with the whole "natural, no make-up" thing she's doing now. I'm, uh, fond of the change.

How's everything with the soon-to-be baby?

Despite all the recent stress, things are going okay. Hope it lasts.

William Borden

Original Entry: OW114

Will Borden's life has seen some recent changes, both mundane and supernatural.

On the mundane side, Will got a job for a Chicago engineering firm, where he makes pretty decent money, even if he does have to travel a lot. Although his wife Georgia (see previous entry) is buried both in her graduate studies and the concerns of imminent motherhood, they somehow still find time to play Arcanos (their favorite roleplaying game) with Waldo Butters (page 306), Andi Macklin (page 354), and, until recently, Harry Dresden (page 309).

Along slightly less mundane lines, Will, Georgia, and the rest of the Alphas all set up mutual power of attorney with Harry Dresden in case of...incident. Harry also made sure that Will and the Alphas were as clued in to the supernatural goings on as they could be, finally breaking his long-standing habit of doling out only "need to know" information. Furthermore, Harry instructed the Alphas that if they ever needed him and couldn't find him, to look up one Karrin Murphy (page 334). Unfortunately, that came up a couple of months back.

With Harry [redacted] missing, Murphy, the Alphas, and a few like-minded others have all banded together to form the Chicago Alliance, a group that tries to cover the weird side of Chicago that Harry used to. Will has been pushing the Alphas to stretch their shapeshifting abilities, to learn more and hone what they already know. Together they've started working out how to use the ability in a regenerative way.

Finally, Will is starting to appreciate that the nuances of power are more complicated than he thought—he mouthed off to John Marcone a couple of months ago Dresden-style, and ended up way over his head with a knife in his arm. He's glad that most of his potential enemies are of the "super strong and fast and tough" variety—he'll take that kind of confrontation over another tangle with Marcone any day.

Just can't find the right word for it. Damn it.

See Murphy? I had to do it, too.

YEAH, I SUPPOSE IT'S OKAY IF YOU'RE SHARING IN THE EMBARRASSMENT.

I don't know what you two are complaining about. You both get statted up like action heroes, and I'm stuck being research guy!

Hey I gave you Fair Fists, and honestly, that was being a little generous.

Who's being generous, Mr. Great Athletics and Great Scholarship?

FROM READING THE ORIGINAL GAME BOOKS, WILL, IT SEEMS YOU'VE BEEN CLUED-IN CLUED IN FOR A WHILE.

Technically, we didn't complete the first manuscript until after the TURN COAT case. I just rewrote and expanded and clarified what we already had down, and didn't have time to add in all the new stuff.

I NOTE YOU DIDN'T MENTION YOUR RECENT ISSUES WITH DANIEL CARPENTER ABOVE.

Not important.

William Borden

High Concept
Head Deputy of the Chicago Alliance

Trouble
People Look Up to Me

Other Aspects
Street-Smart
Georgia's Husband
Committed Gamer
I'm No Harry Dresden
It's Will, Not Billy

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Contacts:	Average	(+1)
Conviction:	Fair	(+2)
Craftsmanship:	Fair	(+2)
Discipline:	Average	(+1)
Empathy:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Good	(+3)
Intimidation:	Average	(+1)
Investigation:	Fair	(+2)
Lore:	Good	(+3)
Might:	Average	(+1)
Presence:	Great	(+4)
Rapport:	Good	(+3)
Resources:	Fair	(+2)
Scholarship:	Great	(+4)
Stealth:	Fair	(+2)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

These skills represent Will in his mortal form. As a wolf, he can shuffle his skills, swapping Presence and Scholarship for Alertness and Fists.

Powers
Beast Change [-1]
Echoes of the Beast [-1]
The Catch [+1] is any purely supernatural source of damage.
Inhuman Recovery [-2]
Human Form [+1] affecting:
Claws [-1]
Inhuman Speed [-2]
Supernatural Strength [-4]
Pack Instincts [-1]

Stress
Mental OOOO
Physical OOOO(OO) **Armor:1**
Social OOOO

Notes
In human form, Good attack, Great defense, and Good initiative. In wolf form, Claws & Strength give him **Weapon:6** with his Great "unarmed " attacks, Epic Initiative, and Superb physical defenses.

Total Refresh Cost:
-10

Doctor Waldo Butters

Original Entry: OW118

The Great and Mighty Butters served as Harry Dresden's on-call wizard EMT; he helped stabilize Donald Morgan (page 332) during the Turn Coat case. He's never far from his portable medical kit and arcane go-bag, in which he keeps things like chalk, holy water, Kevlar outergarments, and ritual-grade garlic—everything a scientist on the go needs. He's cemented his friendship with Will Borden and the Alphas. He's known in the Chicago Alliance by the codename "Eyes."

Despite having no talent for actually performing magic, Butters is getting more and more proficient at understanding *the way* that supernatural power works, possibly even surpassing Harry Dresden as a pure theorist. He's become the Chicago Alliance's go-to guy for arcane research and knowledge, and he's much aided in those endeavors [redacted]

Though he claims to be terrible in a fight, this hasn't stopped him from getting into a few and proving his worth. During the Changes case, to Stevie D's (page 350) misfortune, he proved that a portable defibrillator can be an effective weapon when used improperly.

Okay seriously. No one needs to know that.

Fine, I'll take it out next draft.

Is it wise to just give away my codename here, Will?

If Bob's entry goes in, this goes in too.

Bob's entry is coming out because it might get the White Council breathing down our necks. Your codename won't.

Point.

Waldo Butters

High Concept
Clued-In Medical Examiner

Trouble
I'm Down the Rabbit Hole Now

Other Aspects
Physician to the Chicago Alliance
Musician's Soul
I've Spoken With the Dead
Bob's New...Caretaker
Polka Will Never Die!

Skills

Alertness:	Great	(+4)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Contacts:	Average	(+1)
Conviction:	Average	(+1)
Deceit:	Fair	(+2)
Discipline:	Average	(+1)
Empathy:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Average	(+1)
Fists:	Fair	(+2)
Investigation:	Great	(+4)
Lore:	Superb	(+5)
Performance:	Good	(+3)
Presence:	Average	(+1)
Rapport:	Good	(+3)
Scholarship:	Superb	(+5)

Most other skills default to Mediocre.

Stunts

Fleet of Foot (Athletics): When sprinting, Butters gains a +2 to Athletics.

Medical Examiner (Scholarship): Butters may use his Scholarship instead of Investigation to find clues when examining a corpse.

Doctor (Scholarship): Butters may use his Scholarship skill to declare appropriate justification for the recovery of moderate physical consequences when outside a medical facility, and for the recovery of severe physical consequences within a medical facility. For research purposes, he gains +1 on Scholarship for any medical research and an additional +1 in forensic medicine.

I Have Just the Thing (Lore): Butters is prepared for just about anything. When he makes a Lore assessment to determine something's Catch, he happens to have something on hand made of that material, as long as it isn't a one of a kind item or something intangible like True Love. If he spends a fate point, he's found some way to weaponize even intangible Catches like True Love.

Find Weakness (Lore): Butters adds +2 to any Lore roll made to assess a Catch.

Ritual Expert (Lore): Butters may add +1 to any roll for the Common Ritual trapping of the Lore skill.

Arcane Researcher (Lore): Butters may add +1 to any roll for the Arcane Research trapping of the Lore skill.

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOO

Notes

Butters has been through the crucible of battle with Harry and company. While he's not as capable as Murphy or the Alphas, he's no longer the squeaking fragile creature he was in earlier case files.

Total Refresh Cost: -5 (Pure Mortal)

Dude, seriously?

Well, you have to admit, early on, uh...

Seriously?

OK, I'll change it in the next draft.

Michael Carpenter

Original Entry: OW125

Michael Carpenter, the Fist of God, is slowly healing from the terrible injuries he sustained on Demonreach, when he was shot while attempting to board a helicopter. He's practically blind in one eye. He sustained permanent nerve damage, resulting in one leg being entirely rigid. If you know anything about his former athleticism, it's tough to watch the severe limp.

But the injuries that nearly ruined his body also forced him to put down Amorrachius, one of the Swords of the Cross, something he's dreamed about for years. With more time to concentrate on his construction business and family life, both are flourishing. His wife no longer wonders whether he'll come home when he leaves in the morning. He's able to coach his daughter's softball team. Just another average family man.

And he is grateful beyond words.

This doesn't mean that he's completely free from supernatural attention, though. A couple of years back, an agent from the Church's Ordo Malleus (see Roarke Douglas, page 349) kidnapped Michael's daughter, Alicia, and attempted to steal the swords. He and Harry Dresden were able to rescue her without incident, and Michael went against Douglas in a one-on-one duel and prevailed handily.

Though he wishes to remain retired, it's possible the Fist of God hasn't lost as much of his fighting ability as we all thought he did.

Honestly, I'm not going to speculate on a full statblock for Michael after Demonreach. It feels insensitive. Probably he no longer has a physical skill above Good (+3), and his high concept has changed to Retired Knight of the Cross and another one of his aspects should reflect his injuries. What he'd want most is to disappear from these files altogether.

Makes two of us.

Molly Carpenter

Original Entry: OW123

Molly is…well, to say that she's a little different now than she was when we wrote the original manuscript is a little like saying that the car is a little different after the accident. Between seeing heavy combat and injury at Chichen Itza and her mentor's…disappearance, Molly is not coping terribly well.

That's because she was madly in love with him.

Yeah, I read that in the files. Crazy.

I don't think it's that strange.

Harry's disappearance apparently triggered the Doom of Damocles, and the Wardens are hunting her. She's been able to avoid pursuit by disappearing into Chicago—even the Alliance can't keep a firm track on her most of the time. While she apparently held herself together at Chichen Itza, Harry's observation that her psychic sensitivity makes her a bad combat mage seems to be true. Something inside her has just...broken. She mutters and talks to herself. She sees things that aren't there. She complains of blinding headaches.

I've tried to talk to her a few times with no joy. She's messed up, in a bad way.

It's an unfortunate path for someone who was shaping up to be a really potent magical prodigy. Lots of wizards saw it. Harry didn't take her on as a student just out of friendship with her father. Warden Donald *freaking* Morgan (page 332) got over his urge to chop her head off and offered to teach her how to open portals to the Nevernever. Harry's godmother Lea saw serious potential in her way back in the Grave Peril casefile. Hell, Senior Council member Listens to Wind offered to teach her healing magic. Taken together, that's the magical equivalent of an advanced graduate degree, if she'd had the chance to take them up on their offers.

Her magic is rooted in subtlety and misdirection rather than Harry's "nuke the entire installation from orbit" approach. Her ability with veils and illusions continues to improve; her "One-Woman Rave" spell (page 279) would get her work in any club in New York if it wouldn't hex the sound system. Her wizard senses are second to none; she was the one who detected the problem with Mac's beer in the "Last Call" case. She managed to figure out how Peabody pulled off his manipulation of much of the Senior Council in the Turn Coat case.

We hope she comes back from the brink. We need her.

The more I think about this; the more I think we need to axe this whole entry. There are still Wardens out there, so we officially do not know where Molly Carpenter is. As far as we know, she vanished about the same time Harry did. That's the deal. Got it?

Makes sense. I'll delete it from the next draft.

Molly Carpenter

High Concept
Psychologically Broken Wizard

Trouble
On the Run from the Wardens

Other Aspects
Psychic Oversensitivity
Harry's Shoes Are Too Big
Not as Innocent as I Look
You Can't Tell Me What to Do
Master of Veils and Illusions

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Burglary:	Average	(+1)
Conviction:	Good	(+3)
Deceit:	Great	(+4)
Discipline:	Superb	(+5)
Empathy:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Fair	(+2)
Fists:	Average	(+1)
Intimidation:	Fair	(+2)
Investigation:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Superb	(+5)
Might:	Average	(+1)
Presence:	Average	(+1)
Rapport:	Average	(+1)
Stealth:	Great	(+4)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunt:
Sexy and She Knows It (Deceit): Molly adds +2 to any Deceit roll when using her sex appeal to maneuver.

Powers
Evocation [-3]
Thaumaturgy [-3]
The Sight [-1]
Soulgaze [+0]
Wizard's Constitution [+0]
Lawbreaker (Fourth) [-2]
Glamours (Spell) [-1]

Specialties
Evocation: Elements (Spirit, Air); Power (Spirit +1)
Thaumaturgy: Complexity (Divination +1)

Rotes
One-Woman Rave (Spirit maneuver, 4-6 shifts) Puts an aspect of Insanely Distracted on a person, scene, or zone.

This spell is written up in detail on page 279.

Focus Items
Four unassigned slots. Molly has not created her foci or any enchanted items yet, outside of her two little wands.

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOO

Notes
In Molly's case, Glamours isn't Faerie magic. Her mastery over illusions and veils is so high she isn't limited by the constraints of standard evocations and thaumatergic rituals.

Total Refresh Cost:
-11



Because Molly is really good at illusions and veils, I gave her Glamours. But it's not like the Wizards with Powers section on page 275 of the Spellcasting: Addendum, because she can't do it for free. Throwing around illusions still tires her out.

What about a limitation on Glamours requiring to pay stress for duration but not power? This could be a general power option for use when using powers to simulate enhanced ability with certain spells.

Good plan. Here, check this out:

New Power Option: Spell
Spell [+1]. This power represents your mastery of some type of spell. You follow the power's normal rules for effect, except you must summon and control shifts of power, using Evocation or Channeling, equal to the duration of the power's effect.

Harry Dresden

Original Entry: OW134

And now we come to Harry Dresden. He's had at least three major transformative events recently. The first rearranged his priorities. The second brought him great power, at great cost. The third…

Let's say we have nothing meaningful to say about his state after the third one.

Before we get into all that, let's talk about general things that have happened to Harry.

In the Turn Coat casefile, Harry made the supreme error of looking at a skinwalker (page 291) with his third eye open. Skinwalkers are some of the vilest creatures in all of creation, and the sight of its true nature just about blew Harry's sanity out the back of his skull. He recovered after a fashion, but we're not certain of what the long-term repercussions will be. The same skinwalker later killed one of the Alphas, Kirby, near Will and Georgia's apartment.

When not dueling with ancient shapeshifting demons, Harry was passing his skills on to younger wizards. Widely regarded as the most talented investigator on the White Council, he established a reputation as an excellent teacher when he decided to start instructing young wizards in the art of investigation, both mundane and magical. We included one of his classes in the original manuscript, entitled "AAAA Wizardry;" you can find it at the beginning of Our World.

He and Warden Carlos Ramirez spent a lot of time teaching at an academy for young Wardens, informally called Camp Kaboom, with the goal of producing capable combat wizards for the war against the Red Court. And, of course, he continued mentoring Molly Carpenter in her training as a wizard. Her talents are rubbing off on him, too; his skill at quick veils improved dramatically, as a result of him needing to fake it well enough to demonstrate superiority as a mentor.

Harry has bonded himself to the island of Demonreach, claiming it as a sanctum, which allows him to access the island's latent energy (and intellectus, page 348). The island is the source of a dark ley line, and even Harry isn't quite experienced enough to master its power. Fortunately, he received some instructions from Listens to Wind on how to use the intellectus, at least, to aid in combat.

I'm Not So Wild About Harry: Update

Not so many alternate Dresdens in these recent cases. Folks seem to have stopped offering him power—he's got a certain number of options on the table already.

- Turn Coat: A Harry Dresden-Raith (OW139) turn is possible, but not likely, at least not from Lara. (It's doubtful Madeline would keep him around; she'd probably just eat him.)
- Changes: Of the two options, Harry took one: he offered to become the Winter Knight. The other potential would have been allowing himself to be turned into a Red Court vampire, as the Eebs advised, but that would have done nothing, since the bloodline curse was aimed at Ebenezar McCoy, not Harry. Still.

you know, this section was already inappropriate enough in the original manuscript, but I think I'm going to get rid of all this speculation. I actually threw up after finishing it.

you know, I remember back when I expected not to start losing good friends until old age. Now I'm wondering, "Who's next?"

YOU CAN'T THINK THAT WAY. IT'LL EAT YOU UP INSIDE. TRUST ME ON THAT.

Later in that battle, Harry rescued Thomas from the skinwalker and gave the creature a good fight before running out of juice; this is most certainly not something he could've done a few years ago. His power and skill impressed Listens to Wind, which isn't easy to do. (Based on Harry's notes, Listens to Wind throwing down on the skinwalker must have been quite a sight to behold.)

I THOUGHT YOU WERE ON DEMONREACH THAT DAY, WILL.

I was...distracted at the time.

And it's not just Harry's raw magical power that improved. He demonstrated a greater general ability to plan ahead, properly apply resources at his disposal, and even analyze political and interpersonal situations when necessary. He's in no immediate danger of being described as "subtle," but *finesse* at least entered his vocabulary.

Ability or willingness?

Touché.

Harry continued to meet interesting entities from all corners of creation. Tops among the new ones is probably Odin, AKA Donar Vadderung, the CEO of Monoc Securities (page 364). Turns out the All-Father kind of liked our hero, and he provided a great deal of intel to Harry during the Changes case, leading him to Chichen Itza.

Relationships with various women in his life have also progressed. Harry's relationship with Anastasia Luccio came to an end at the conclusion of the Turn Coat case, when they

Harry Dresden

High Concept

Champion of Underdogs and Longshot Causes

Trouble

The Temptation of Power

Other Aspects

Our Mother's Legacy

Subtle nod to Thomas. I like it.

Legendary Wiseass

Legendary Wiseass. One more than Epic. I see what you did there.

You're welcome.

Hard Choices and Harder Bargains

Brothers and Sisters in Arms

Molly, My Young Apprentice

Eyes, the Star Wars joke is cute, but I don't like what you're implying here.

I'm stunned that you actually noticed.

You really need to get over the idea that all I ever do in my spare time is practice Aikido and clean my guns.

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Burglary:	Average	(+1)
Contacts:	Superb	(+5)
Conviction:	Fantastic	(+6)
Craftsmanship:	Average	(+1)
Deceit:	Average	(+1)
Discipline:	Fantastic	(+6)
Empathy:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Superb	(+5)
Fists:	Fair	(+2)
Guns:	Fair	(+2)
Intimidation:	Great	(+4)
Investigation:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Great	(+4)
Presence:	Great	(+4)
Rapport:	Fair	(+2)
Scholarship:	Average	(+1)
Stealth:	Average	(+1)
Weapons:	Average	(+1)

Stunts

Fleet of Foot (Athletics): When sprinting, gain +2 to Athletics.

Powers

Evocation [-3]

Lawbreaker (First) [-1]

Refinement [-4]

The Sight [-1]

Soulgaze [-0]

Sponsored Magic (Demonreach) [-1]: Grants intellectus while on Demonreach Island; other effects/demands unknown.

Isn't this more like a demesne? In the original manuscript, Gel called it a Place of Power and made it a 3-refresh power, but I was working on very little info at the time.

Harry couldn't assert direct control of the island, so it's not a demesne. We don't really know much of anything about the other effects of his relationship with the genius loci. Sponsored magic fits best. I figure he gets the standard price break on sponsorship for already knowing magic that you put in the Spellcasting: Addendum, and the -1 discount for only getting the benefits while on the island from your original entry. Hence, -1.

Sure, makes sense.

Sponsored Magic (Soulfire) [-5]: Extra -2 refresh grants an additional two boxes of soulfire stress.

Supernatural Sense (Listening) [-1]: +4 to Investigation to hear things, but Alertness drops to Terrible while Listening.

Will, I moved this over to powers. Bob has explained to me that this is actually a very subtle use of water magic.

Huh.

Thaumaturgy [-3]

Wizard's Constitution [-0]

Specializations

Evocation: Elements (Air, Earth, Fire, Spirit); Control (Fire +1); Power (Fire +2, Spirit +1)

Thaumaturgy: Complexity (Divination +1); Control (Divination +1); Frequency (Crafting +1)

Focus Items

Staff (+1 Offensive Control for Spirit)

Blasting Rod (+1 Offensive Control for Fire)

Shield Bracelet (+2 Defensive Control for Spirit)

Enchanted Items

Four slots kept open for potions and other items; see **"Harry's Gear Loadout"** on page 312. Default strength/frequency is Great (+4) effect with 2 uses per session.

Rote Spells

Defendarius (spirit block, 7 shifts): Creates a hemispheric shield that acts as either an Epic (+7) block or Armor:3 for one exchange. Harry often uses the seventh shift to give him Armor:3 for two exchanges.

Forzare (spirit/force attack, 7 shifts): Hits a target with raw kinetic force (Weapon:7). Requires his staff to cast. Doesn't set things on fire.

Fuego (fire attack, 8 shifts): Directs a tight beam of magical fire (Weapon:8) at a target. Requires his blasting rod to cast.

Ventas Servitas (air maneuver, 6 shifts): Uses a blast of air to knock things over, disrupt enemies, call things to his hand. Places an appropriate aspect on the scene for one exchange. Maneuver roll is at Fantastic (+6) for all practical intents and purposes.

Stress

Mental OOOO
+1 mild consequence

Physical OOOO
+1 mild consequence

Social OOOO

Soulfire OOOO

Total Refresh Cost: -20



both realized she was being manipulated by the Wizard Peabody (page 336). Harry heard both from Susan and from Murphy that Molly is in love with him, or at least she thinks she is, a situation that Harry thought they'd put to rest years ago. Finally, Harry's friendship with Murphy both deepened and grew more complex.

Harry's literal faerie godmother, Lea (page 325), possessed a certain gem that once belonged to Harry's mother; during the CHANGES case, Lea returned it to him. With this gemstone, Harry learned details of the Ways (page 193), allowing him to easily navigate through the Nevernever. Lea also claimed that the gem came with a deadly legacy, though we don't yet know what that means.

Now let's get into the big changes.

Harry discovered he had a daughter with Susan Rodriguez page 339). The archangel Uriel (page 343) confirmed to Harry that the child is, in fact, his daughter. Named Maggie Angelica, she'd been kidnapped by the Red Court (specifically Duchess Ortega) with the intent of performing a bloodline curse on her, which would wipe out her entire bloodline—Harry, Thomas Raith, and the child's great-grandfather, who is, as it turns out, Ebenezar McCoy (this made Harry believe he wasn't the main target of the curse).

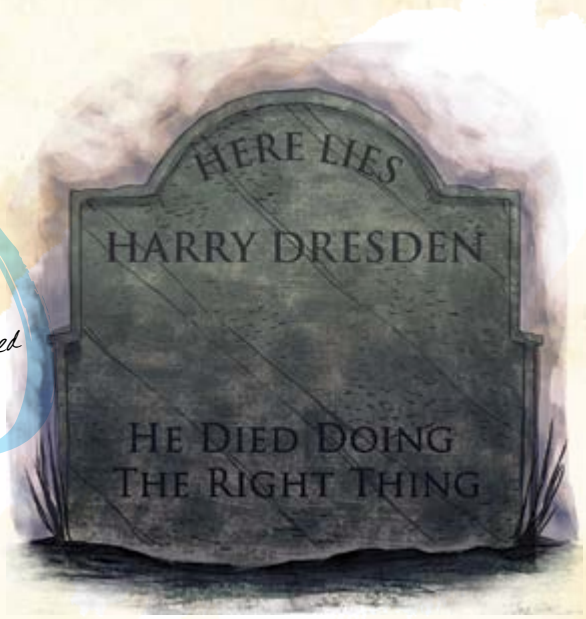
The CHANGES casefile is well-named in oh, so many ways. Aside from learning about his daughter, the Beetle was permanently wrecked (which, honestly, probably qualified as an act of mercy at that point), his apartment and all of its contents burned down (a fancy-pants new summoning circle, Little Chicago, his silver bear belt buckle, many of his notes and books, etc.), his cat Mister went MIA, his office was literally blown up by the Red Court, and he was paralyzed from the waist down in a fall while rescuing his landlady from said fire.

That's when he made his second big change—he chose to become the Winter Knight.

He couldn't abandon his daughter to be murdered by the Red Court, not because his own life was on the line, but because Maggie was his little girl, and he'd be damned before he let monsters destroy her. Mab offered the only way that he could repair his broken body in time to ride to the rescue. After a brief conversation with Uriel, Harry summoned Mab.

Mab mentally projected Harry to the Stone Table. There, Harry killed Lloyd Slate (page 341), after which Mab claimed Harry as her Winter Knight through a ritual whose physical intimacy symbolized the supernatural bond established between them. For a moment, he saw the breadth and depth of her power, and her *purpose*—he called her "the darkest defender the world has ever known."

Once that happened, Harry gained all sorts of power. He started using ice magic at a high level of skill; Lea even commented on how adroitly he used opposing elements of fire and ice. His magical and physical endurance, his recovery, speed, strength, and toughness became genuinely impressive. He managed to throw enough power to shatter his blasting rod. He saw through the glamour worn by Lea's chauffeur Glenmael. And while he wasn't able to stand up to the raw will of the Red King without Bob's mental shielding, he managed to mentally sucker punch one of the Lords of Outer Night.



YOU CAN STOP WRITING RIGHT THERE, WILL. Hadn't planned on going further.

A WORLD WITHOUT HARRY: UPDATE

Essentially, if Harry had died at any point during the TURN COAT case, Morgan would be missing in action (either eaten by Shagnasty or grabbed by Madeline Raith and Binder, probably to be handed over to the Black Council), leaving Peabody the traitor still in place close to the Senior Council with a perfect cover.

(There's also a chance Ancient Mai would have tried to tear down Harry's shield crystal construct, killing herself, Listens to Wind, Ebenezar McCoy, and a handful of Wardens, as well as blowing the top off of Demonreach.)

If Harry had died at any point during CHANGES, the White Council would be crippled by the loss of Ebenezar McCoy, Senior Council member (and the Blackstaff). And that also means the loss of the central node of the Grey Council. And the Red Court would still be around.

ACTUALLY, MISTER'S OKAY. We know that NOW. We didn't then.

...intimacy? Yeah, they had crazy faerie sex. And Mab made sure everyone in Faerie saw it. FIGURES.

Harry's Gear Loadout

Over the course of his travels, Harry has amassed an amount of enchanted gear well in excess of what his actual allotted slots would indicate. This may happen to your wizard characters as well, as your campaign progresses.

The easiest way to handle this is to look at your character's enchanted item slots as a "bank" of freeform points to spend on their gear for the session. Every minor milestone affords you the option of switching out your gear for the next session, provided you stay within the limit of your total free slots. Or, you can keep your slots open and declare you have a certain piece of gear or upgrade the effectiveness of your gear during the session. This is basically an expansion of the rules for potions on YS280, except now it covers enchanted items as well.

Harry's standard enchanted gear loadout consists of two items. His force rings act as a Weapon:4 force attack twice per session, and his enchanted duster gives him a free Great (+4) force block or Armor:2 twice per session. He has two slots open, which means he might have additional items like potions, or he might upgrade his usual two items in strength or frequency according to the rules on YS280.

Here's some of the other gear he's amassed, which he could sub in when needed:

- **Little Chicago (4 slots)**: Substitute focus item, +1 to both complexity and control for divinations, unlimited uses. (Note: In game terms, that means that Harry would mysteriously not be able to call on the benefit of any other enchanted gear in the same session he uses Little Chicago to help him with spells.)
- **Sword Cane (2 slots)**: Substitute focus item, +1 offensive control for Earth evocations. Also happens to be a Weapon:2 sword.
- **Dead Man's Shroud (1 slot)**: Provides a Great (+4) block to any action taken by a ghost twice per session.
- **Bear Belt Buckle (1 slot)**: Allows Harry to ignore the effects of a moderate or mild physical consequence twice a session. That doesn't make them go away, though, which means this can come back to haunt him later.
- **Unicorn Hair Rope (2 slots)**: Acts as a "Catch" of sorts, nullifying the effect of Inhuman or Supernatural Strength once a session. Only works in his apartment.

And it seems that he hasn't lost any of his other mojo. He used soulfire to make very convincing illusions, as demonstrated when the Eebs (page 350) assaulted FBI headquarters. He killed the Ick (page 314) in a duel in the Erlking's hall, and later went up against Duchess Arianna (page 359), using the full scope of his magical might to destroy her and wreck the Red King's minions in the battle that followed. He combined Winter magic with soulfire to slay the Red King as well.

He was simply unstoppable.

Sacrificing Susan Rodriguez to fuel the bloodline curse that was intended to claim the life of their daughter, he also slew the entire Red Court in one fell swoop.

Entire as in, the *whole* Red Court. Every last one.

His third big change came from a sniper's bullet aboard the *Water Beetle*, Thomas' houseboat, not long after the dust began to settle from Chichen Itza.

Someone has apparently killed Harry Dresden. Our teacher, our champion, our friend.

There's no body, however. We're hoping that what's true in the comics is true for us, too, and that he'll come back to us again one day.

And I am going to find whoever fucking did it and teach them what it means to beg in vain for mercy. I swear it.

Thanks again, Butters, for writing this up. Looks good.



Margaret Dresden

Original Entry: OW140

Harry's mom becomes a more interesting—and darker—figure with every factoid we learn about her.

The Wardens considered Margaret a threat to the Laws of Magic—she liked to dance on the edge of grey areas, and she agitated for change in the Laws because they had nothing to do with right and wrong. (Since the Laws limit wizardly interference in the mortal world, all sorts of chaos and disaster would have ensued if they'd been changed.)

The letters from Simon Pietrovich collected in the "Bloody October" chapter are terrifying enough, and there's no definitive proof he even took sides.

Point tabled. For the moment.

Captain Luccio (page 327) didn't like her at all; the word "bitch" came up. She also characterized her as "complex…brilliant, erratic, passionate, committed, idealistic, talented, charming, insulting, bold, incautious, arrogant, and short-sighted." And, in Luccio's experience, Margaret knew more about the Ways than anyone ever, before or since.

This knowledge was related in some way to a gem that she carried, one that was later passed on to Harry through the Leanansidhe in the Changes case. With that gem, Margaret was able to understand the Ways on an instinctive level, knowing not only where they were, but where they would be as the cosmos changed. This power, according to Lea, surpasses even that of many fae. Having this knowledge came at a very high price—Lea described it to Harry as the inability to sleep restfully ever again. She might have been speaking literally or figuratively; we don't know.

Margaret also made some kind of bargain with Lea. We don't know what it was, but it's provided considerably powerful protection for Harry for his entire life.

For what it's worth, McCoy's and Margaret's tempestuous relationship is what tipped Duchess Arianna off to Ebenezar and Harry being related; at a banquet years ago, the two "fought like family," according to McCoy.

Really, now.

Yes, really. The White Council would be forced to choose sides in mortal conflicts on whatever they felt the "just" or "right" side was, rather than standing apart. History would have been entirely different, and possibly not for the good. That's if it just didn't fraction into nationalistic little pieces, all at war with one another. The Laws are about constraining power as much as they're about anything else.



Hey, Butters—how would you handle that gem in a game?

I figure it would save the character from having to make rolls against getting lost in the Nevernever. And I'd compel the hell out of Eternal Sleep Dep.

The Erlking

Original Entry: OW143

We get slightly more description of the Erlking during the Changes case, when Harry and Susan coincidentally ended up in his hall while trying to evade the Eebs (page 350). After taking off his helmet, Harry and Susan saw his face. While it shared all of the asymmetrical features of his goblin kin, any repulsiveness was muted into roguish distinction. Of special note were his crooked nose, scarred face, and white, even teeth. (Oh, and instead of amber this time, his eyes burned red.)

The Erlking can be quite elegant and charming—until he gets bored of the old courtesies. He revealed that he'd almost caught Harry and his friends on the slopes of Arctis Tor as they were trying to escape Faerie during the Proven Guilty case. Harry managed to catch him in a poor turn of phrase so the Erlking had to treat them as guests, but Harry didn't manage to escape a harrowing trial by combat against the Eebs.

Fortunately, he won.

The Erlking

Notes

The plot device remains a plot device. We have nothing useful to add to his original stat block.

The Erlking's Hall

If you enter the Nevernever from inside the Chicago FBI headquarters on Roosevelt Street, you'll fall into a cavernous medieval dining hall, lit by green goblin light. A double row of trestle tables stretches the length of the hall, which runs easily a hundred yards. Seated at those tables are goblins (page 283). At the end of the center aisle between those tables stands a large dais with a stone throne. And seated on that throne is the Erlking (page 314).

If you're lucky enough to escape, you'll return to the mortal world in a Bass Pro Shop in Bolingbroke. If you're unlucky enough to not escape, you'll spend time in the chambers of the hall, which are filled with "diverting devices" that goblins love to employ on unwelcome visitors.

Sigrun Gard

Original Entry: OW148

We have a little more information on our favorite valkyrie. Perhaps the most interesting tidbit is that she introduced Harry to Donar Vadderung (page 364), her real boss, to whom she gives total obeisance—as in bended knee, bowed head, ancient world obeisance.

By contrast, she doesn't take this approach with her erstwhile employer, John Marcone. She approved of Murphy wiping Will Borden's blood from Marcone's knife before returning it, despite knowing what kind of advantage that could have brought him. She filled Murphy in on the supernatural entities muscling in on Marcone, possibly without his knowledge or consent. It's difficult to comment on the precise nature of her relationship with him, which is odd, considering that Marcone is accustomed to demanding absolute loyalty from those in his employ. All that said, she continues her friendship with Marcone's henchman, Hendricks.

She knows a kindred spirit when she sees one. After Murphy confronted the Fomor in the "Aftermath" case, Gard greeted her by saying, "Hail, warrior." Gard also told her that Marcone owes her a debt and offered her a job with Monoc Securities.

Sigrun Gard

High Concept

Honest-to-Odin Valkyrie

Notes

Gard's strength is actually higher than we initially thought. She has Supernatural Strength, which brings her refresh cost to -17. There are no other changes from her entry on OW149.

Got anything else regarding that odd runic magic she uses?

She brings it out to play in that "Even Hand" dossier Justine sent us, and she has a rune-etched dagger that can open Ways into the Nevernever. I'd work it largely like Ritual (Crafting) with a bunch of item slots—the runes are the equivalent of enchanted items that you can inscribe onto ritually consecrated objects, and they burn up when used.

The Gatekeeper (aka "Rashid")

Original Entry: OW150

In Turn Coat and Changes, we finally learn more about Rashid, who seems to take professional pride in being cryptic and mysterious.

Harry finally got a good look at his face. It's long and sharp-featured, with skin weathered like old leather. He has a short beard and wears his silver hair in a stiff brush cut. He sports a pair of horrible scars from his hairline to his jaw, bisecting his steel eye. The steel eye may have the ability to scan the future or probabilities or something, and may explain why Rashid is positioned where he is on the Senior Council.

He was full of advice for Harry just before the confrontation on Demonreach in Turn Coat, despite (because of?) his shock at Harry claiming the island as a sanctum. He warned Harry that the island holds a grudge (against Rashid in particular, which is why he can't set foot there), and he revealed it to be the *source* of the dark ley line there, rather than just being along its path. He made it clear that he doesn't know whether Harry is on the Black Council; he said Harry is either a magnificent liar or terribly ignorant.

He also suggested that Harry might end up taking on the White Council itself sometime in the future. While that prediction has potentially horrific consequences, it's another piece of data that suggests Harry's recent disappearance may not be permanent.

Like I keep telling you guys.

Rashid seems to have a nose for trouble, showing up right when Harry is about to step in it. His motives remain frustratingly murky.



The Gatekeeper

Notes

I know we took our best shot at giving the Gatekeeper stats in Our World, but, uh…yeah. Let's just say that we underestimated him. A lot. He's a full-on plot device, what with seeing the future and potentially knowing time-related magic and all that.

Plot Devices and You

You might have noticed that several of the characters and critters we wrote up in both the original *Who's Who* and our updates in this book are referred to as "plot devices." We use this catch-all term to describe demi-gods, legendary beasts of incredible power, and anyone else whose supernatural might is either mysterious enough to escape precise definition or goes off the scale of what the game can accessibly handle. We don't really want to speculate on what a -100 refresh character might look like (and you shouldn't either), so we've created the plot device shorthand as a way of getting around such a migraine-inducing task.

You know, the fact that we're having to represent more and more of the people we encounter as plot devices is probably not good for us...

There are enough of these characters now that we figured it'd be a good idea to talk about the common features that plot devices share, in case the more masochistic GMs of the world have a hankering to use these kinds of characters in their games.

Catch-all Skills

Plot devices don't bother with the skill list—most of them are impossibly old or have some other benefit that gives them a wide variety of competence at a wide variety of actions. Instead, we describe their capabilities as general categories of action and give them a rating. The GM might choose to use that rating as a simple difficulty—basically like a block (YS210) whenever you act contrary to the plot device's wishes—or she might roll it as a skill in the usual ways.

A good example of this from Our World is Cowl (OW130). We describe most physical challenges that involve him as Good or Great; we allow him Superb on anything involving contacts, knowledge, or influence in the supernatural community; and anything magical he does gives him Epic or Legendary.

For anything that isn't covered, the GM can assign any rating she sees fit. Stuff that seems appropriate to the plot device's aspects should be at least Good; stuff that isn't should be Fair or lower—these represent arenas where the PCs might have the upper hand. (In Cowl's case, we might imagine that he'd only be Fair or Average at cotillion, or teaching your average kindergarten class. Thoughts like these help us sleep at night.)

Will to Power

Most plot devices are either sponsored by something powerful enough to give them nearly unlimited mojo, or they themselves are beings capable of sponsorship. Therefore, as far as game mechanics go, they can directly express their will as a simple skill roll, rather than dealing with the rigmarole of calling power, taking stress, and trying to control its output. They don't *really* have unlimited power, but compared to the rest of us, they have enough mojo that tracking it would be silly—they're not going to run out.

Thus, when plot devices do something with magic, they only need to roll their rating. The result is how many shifts their spell effect has. They don't need to go through the process of calling up power and controlling it like you do—they can just have whatever they want. That's why they're plot devices.

So this means that plot devices who can evocate are pretty much the scourge of the battlefield. Mortal wizards are terrifying enough, but when you get a creature who can just roll an Epic (+7) evocation—which means you dodge an Epic (+7), Weapon:7 attack—without breaking a sweat, you know you're in the big leagues.

Avoiding TPKs with Plot Devices

The occasional kind-hearted GM might choose to keep the odds a little more even for the PCs by not "doubling up" the effect (effort/Weapon) on a mojo attack. After all, the point of plot devices isn't so much to automatically wipe out the party as it is to inspire the PCs to find different ways to solve their problems besides head-on confrontation.

This is especially true for beings that can make direct mental attacks (see the Red King, page 353), since, unless their minds are warded, the only defense most PCs will have against that is their Discipline skill.

Go Around, Not Through

Some plot device characters are just enough like you and me to still have stress tracks and consequences (like Ivy, OW100-102). These characters, presuming you can hit them, *can* be taken out if you can bring enough "firepower."

Others are simply an order of magnitude beyond us, and we're never going to beat them in a direct conflict, period. Thus, they have no stress tracks and take no consequences—at best, landing a high-powered hit on them in a fight creates a temporary aspect as if your hit was a maneuver (YS207). When you're going up against one of these, ask yourself what *else* you want out of mixing it up. Is the real goal past the plot device? Can you achieve your goals without defeating him? Can you go around the plot device or somehow distract him?

To represent progress toward a goal when you're dealing with a plot device, the GM can set up a challenge (YS324) so you can give the plot device "defeat conditions," even if you'll never be able to actually overpower him. Of course, he'll be able to inflict stress and consequences on you in the normal way.

Making Your Own Plot Device

In Your Story, we included a long section of detailed guidelines about how to balance opposition against the PCs, how much refresh you should give them to spend relative to the characters, and all kinds of other fun tips for navigating the maze of making sure your evil zombie-ninja-wizard-shapeshifter doesn't obliterate the PCs with a thought, while also avoiding getting obliterated with a thought.

Now is when you get to throw all that out the window.

As stated above, plot device characters are in your game to inspire the PCs to try creative methods of getting what they want, because the direct solution, for the most part, simply isn't going to work. So you don't have to play by any rules of balance or restrict yourself in terms of what your plot device monstrosity can do.

However, it's important to establish a few anchor points, so you can keep a sense of consistency to your plot device during play. Let's review those.

Aspects

The aspects of a plot device are super-important, because they represent one of the best ways that PCs can get around them—by assessing their aspects and finding ways to force the plot device into a compel. So, no matter what, always make sure your plot device has a definite high concept and trouble, as well as a handful of other aspects that demonstrate personality and connections. The idea is to give yourself a general idea of the nature of the plot device's character; this makes all your subsequent decisions easier.

To save yourself some work, consider allowing your players to make Lore declarations (YS116) to add aspects onto a plot device during play—give sketchy, mysterious details about a powerful force, and let them do the work of getting access to the information necessary to declare something about it. You can design a whole session or two around that, if information on the plot device is very well guarded.

You can also do that ninja trick of treating any assessment actions (YS115) they make like declarations, having them "discover" stuff they're actually making up on the spot. As with all such sleight of hand, though, be transparent about the fact that you sometimes do this with your players.

Sounds like geek-speak for how Harry finds a weakness in some big bad nasty and then exploits the hell out of it.

Exactly. Now you're getting it.

Next thing you know she'll be throwing dice with us on Saturday nights.

Tell you what, Wally. I'll join you guys for nerd night and you join me at Dough Joe's for Aikido.

Okay, maybe not.



Skills

Plot devices don't have skills, per se, just rated categories of action. You only really need to look over the aspects and anything else you know about the plot device, then ask yourself two questions:

What is the plot device likely to try to do during play?

How does the plot device usually respond to conflict?

Once you know that, you can start assigning ratings. Consistency is key here. Generally speaking, anything that's part and parcel to the nature of the plot device should be Superb or higher, and anything that isn't or represents a weakness should either not be rated or be rated at Good or lower. Even plot devices aren't omnipotent—Harry's casefiles show us that a little bit of ingenuity can go a long way when dealing with supremely powerful entities.

And I wouldn't generally recommend the irreverence route—Harry has God's own luck when it comes to that. If it were anyone else, I could see some fickle god just crushing him out of spite.

In many of his cases, Harry relies both on bargaining skills and a healthy dose of irreverence to get around gods and demigods. Seems like the more powerful they are, the less they're used to having someone, especially a mortal, respond in any other manner except blind obedience.

Yeah, Harry's king of circumventing plot devices by figuring out how to contest them as a peer, and then capitalizing on that. Nothing beats assessment actions for dealing with plot devices—finding that one place where they're at Good or Fair can spell the difference between a successful encounter or getting chewed to pieces.

So, let's say you have a plot device in your game, the embodiment of the Egyptian god, Thoth. A quick Wikipedia search tells us that he was the mediator between good and evil, master of mortal and divine law, and the inspiration of all forms of literature, philosophy, religion, science, and magic.

Knowing this, it seems pretty simple to answer our first two questions. In the game, we know Thoth is probably going to show up as some kind of preternatural judge, good at seeing into the heart of matters or working to correct an imbalance between good and evil.

He might also be summoned or consulted to suppress or aid some sort of cosmic discovery, or he might be participating in a magical working of great power. You'll notice that he could just as easily be a "good guy" as a "bad guy"—in the upper echelons of the supernatural world, it's hard to tell one from the other.

So when we're talking about his "skills," we can presume that he's Superb or better at trying to find nearly anything out about nearly anything—in fact, we'll probably just assume he knows whatever information he needs to. He can pretty much corner the market on assessment actions, and he can't be tricked or outsmarted where raw knowledge is concerned.

We also know he's called upon to be a judge of both mortals and supernaturals alike, so we can assume that he's Epic or Legendary at seeing through deceptions, lies, and disguises of both a mortal and a magical nature. You just don't pull one over on Thoth.

He would probably favor social and mental conflicts over physical ones—he can call you out on your faults and play on your fears and dreams with the best of them. At least Superb in any of these situations. If he's in a physical form, and you're able to keep the conflict strictly in a physical realm, that's probably Good or Fair.

So now we have a basic rubric for deciding what happens when you go against Thoth.

As an extension of what we were talking about above, this is the kind of thing Harry would often do...I mean, what he often does—he'd research or investigate to figure out that Thoth isn't a physical, "fire-and-brimstone" kind of god, and then bring some serious Michael Bay style antics to that confrontation and hope to come out on top, at least long enough to accomplish a certain goal.

Then there's the trick of getting Thoth to only attack you physically.

Well, I'm not Harry, so your guess is as good as mine on that. As we're painting him, though, Thoth seems bound to truth and fairness in his nature—there's always the potential you might extract a promise from him to compete on even ground.

LIKE A HANDICAP IN GOLF. FASCINATING.

Now I have a mental image of Harry playing golf with Thoth. Thanks.

By the way if you want a quick high concept and trouble pair for nearly any god from ancient history, I Am X and Mortalkind No Longer Worships Me isn't a bad place to start.

Powers and Stunts

With powers, you need to make a decision at this point about the "weight class" of your plot device—is he close enough to PC-like characters that you can express what he does in terms of the powers in the game, or does he defy categorization or understanding?

If the former, just go ahead and pick whatever powers seem appropriate from Your Story, starting on YS160. Remember to provide an appropriate "skill rating" for that power or stunt if the skill summary you made above doesn't already provide that. Also remember that you can pile on as many powers as you want, because you don't have to worry about calculating refresh.

If the latter, you can skip directly to just writing down stuff your plot device can automatically do, and the sky's the limit. Look at the usual limitations of powers and intentionally violate them. Shapeshifting says you have to pick one form? Your plot device can have any form he wants. Physical Immunity says it needs to have the Catch? Your plot device simply doesn't.

So, let's go back to our Thoth example. We know he needs to have mind magic out the wazoo, so we give him some direct "will to power" stuff and say that he can hit you with Legendary mind whammies—he can shred your confidence, call your darkest secrets into the light, burn out the parts of you that govern inspiration and knowledge, etc. etc.

Beyond that, we can follow up on what we said about his skills and decide that he has supernatural cognition, can see into the future and the past for nearly anything he wants to know about, and can instinctively sense supernatural "imbalances" like those caused by incursion from the Outer Gates. Finally, to top it off, he's unaffected by all veils and glamours.

I mean, it's Thoth, not Thalassa or some other minor deity—even in a diminished profile, he's still one of the Egyptian gods we remember most.

So, basically this is what I did for the skinwalker entry on page 291.

Ayup.

Stress and Consequences

As stated above, if you want the plot device to be someone you can bring down with enough of the right firepower—just on the cusp of defeatable—go ahead and assign stress tracks and consequences. Most of the time, plot devices get four or higher stress and extra consequence slots as a matter of course.

Otherwise, any attack that lands simply creates a maneuver-equivalent you might be able to use to temporarily get around the plot device. Choose a different goal that the GM can make into a challenge, or run the hell away.

Thoth probably needs no stress tracks, just as a guess. Even engaging him physically likely only distracts him long enough for you to get away.



Do not forget, Will—you agreed to be my designated driver to Oompahfest this year, as payment for that bit of extra research. How you can even read some of Harry's case notes is beyond me.

Sometimes I'm not even sure myself.

He Who Walks Behind

Original Entry: OW76

The first couple times through, it seems we misread Harry's Blood Rites casefile. We originally thought HWWB was also called "The Lord of the Slowest Terror." But going over the notes again, it looks more like HWWB is the "captain of destruction" of an entity (an Old One?) called TLotST. Therefore, the ritual that the Evil Eye franchise (see OW228 for the members) was using during that case was addressed to TLotST, not HWWB.

Our bad.

Justine

High Concept
White Court Info Merchant

Trouble
True Love With Thomas Raith

Other Aspects
I Know What I'm Doing
Drop Dead Gorgeous
Tougher than She Looks
Lara Raith's Personal Aide

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Fair	(+2)
Contacts:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Good	(+3)
Deceit:	Fair	(+2)
Empathy:	Great	(+4)
Investigation:	Fair	(+2)
Lore:	Fair	(+2)
Rapport:	Fair	(+2)
Stealth:	Fair	(+2)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Honest Lies (Deceit): When incorporating a valuable piece of truth into a lie, Justine gains +2 on her Deceit roll to lie.

The Social Graces (Empathy): Justine gains +2 to her Empathy when determining initiative in a social conflict.

Won't Get Fooled Again (Empathy): Once she's discovered that a particular person's lied to her, Justine gains a +2 on any future Empathy rolls when dealing with that liar.

Occultist (Vampires, Lore): Justine gains a +1 to Lore rolls dealing with vampires, and an additional +1 for White Court vampires.

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OO
Social	OOO

Notes
Justine can still play the harmless victim, and to a large extent she actually still is one, but she's gotten a lot craftier about using that ability to gather information.

Good initiative, Fair physical and Great social defenses.

Total Refresh Cost: –2 (Pure Mortal)

Justine

Original Entry: OW159

Since becoming Lara Raith's personal assistant, Justine has blossomed in some interesting ways. Making the most of her capacity to seem innocent and harmless, she's become something of an information broker and spymaster, collecting tidbits of information and passing them along covertly.

Her mastery of deception nearly allowed her to pull a fast one on John Marcone, whom she managed to involve in a conflict between the Raiths and the Fomor (page 287). This ended up working out to the city's advantage, as Marcone managed to stop what might have been a full-on incursion into Chicago by the Fomor, had the situation escalated any more than it did.

And she sent the Paranet a full dossier on the matter. When you see us referencing "Even Hand" anywhere, you can thank Justine.

More recently, during the Turn Coat case, she was injured when Shagnasty (page 361) attacked Raith Manor in pursuit of leverage over an information-seeking Harry Dresden—which it found, in the form of kidnapping Harry's brother, Thomas Raith (page 338). During the aftermath, she had an inadvertent slip of her usual restraint and spoke openly of Harry's blood relationship with Thomas in the presence of Captain Luccio (page 327).

You said we can be a little "looser" because we're not distributing this openly, but this information might still be too sensitive to get out there at all.

Good point. Noted for the next draft.



Kirby

Original Entry: OW162

This is a personal note from Will Borden.

In the original manuscript, Kirby didn't want me to talk about him a great deal. He barely showed up in Harry's casefiles, and as long as he could do his part with the Alphas, he was all right being a footnote otherwise.

However, I believe he deserves more than that.

Kirby was a bold, passionate individual. His capacity for mayhem was amazing—I think that, as a straight-up bruiser, he was probably superior to anyone in the Alphas, mainly due to a complete disregard about the toll his body was taking to achieve his goal.

He partied like he fought. Every one of our stories that ends randomly in the campus clinic with people covered in blue paint, or with people waking up naked in the middle of a football field, or with our best attempts to sweet-talk the campus police, you can bet it started when Kirby suggested we have a few drinks or he dared someone to do something dumb. He really lived it up, almost every moment of his life.

His relationship with Andi (page 354) was a reflection of this—hot and heavy, crazy and kinky, but at the end of the day, always committed. That was the other side of him. Despite all the chaos that surrounded him, he'd never let anyone get seriously hurt and he would never ever abandon his loyalties. It'd be easy to mistake him for a hedonistic, beer-swilling jock type, until you saw the extra mile he'd go for his friends, and the places where he'd draw the line.

Kirby was also the Alphas' regular Arcanos GM, and he was a damn good one. He was exceptionally good at making up villains you could understand and yet loved to hate. He always created a sense of tension and worthy challenge. He openly cheated if it meant allowing players to be proactive and awesome. He managed expectations between players better than anyone I've ever met. I always felt at his table that I could be who I wanted to be and make choices that, because they meant something to me, would also matter to the game.

I didn't realize how much those afternoons spent vicariously taking on fantastic supernatural evils would prepare me for the life I live now. Obviously, you can't compare risking your own life with risking your character's life, but the impulse I have to make a difference, the thing keeping me going into the darkness when every reflex in my body tells me to run and hide—maybe it's silly, but I look back on years of gaming and I see the beginnings of that impulse taking root in my mind.

Kirby, more than anyone else, encouraged me to exercise that impulse across all those years. He taught me that fighting evil is a worthy enterprise, even more so when you can stand with your loved ones and friends. He inspired me more than words can say.

Now he's dead, his throat ripped out in combat with the skinwalker that Harry called Shagnasty (page 361). But he was Kirby right up until the end—bold and passionate, yet committed to his cause, the kind of hero that everyone secretly wishes to be, in games and in life. We wrote the original manuscript to keep you safe from the things he regularly faced off against.

Goodbye, Kirby. I will never forget what you taught me, and I will never stop fighting.

A fitting tribute, Will. I think he'd have liked it.

Amen.

Aeron LaFortier

Original Entry: OW165

LaFortier was a Senior Council member heavily involved in White Council politics.

He was a diehard supporter of the Merlin (page 322), and he cultivated extensive contacts outside the wealthy Western nations. Wizards from smaller, less powerful nations saw him as an ally.

He also hated Harry Dresden. We learned that he cast the first vote of "warlock" when Harry came up for trial years ago, something that Harry had suspected for a while. We don't know the source of this animosity, but we can speculate that LaFortier and Justin DuMorne (OW141) had some sort of prior relationship. Perhaps.

LaFortier was murdered by a mind-controlled Luccio during the Turn Coat case. The responsible party turned out to be Peabody (page 336), who originally seemed to be little more than a glorified accountant. LaFortier's seat on the Senior Council now belongs to his protégé, Grigori Cristos (page 347), as a result of Grigori's political manipulations.

Arthur Langtry

High Concept
The Merlin

Other Aspects
Plans Within Plans
Necessary Measures
No Compromise on the Laws
Politics Is My Favorite Game
Practicing Wizard When the Hills Were Young
Power Beyond Measure

Skills, Powers, Stunts
The Merlin is a plot device level character. Legendary plus for all magic, social, and combat skills. It's impossible to stat his ability with magic.

Notes
The Senior Council are the most powerful wizards on the planet, yet including the Merlin in their number is like having Joe DiMaggio on your nephew's Little League team. He is, in all probability, the most powerful mortal on the planet.

Some More Named Wardens
- Chandler (AKA "Steed"; British; Luccio's aide-de-camp)—**page 347**
- Ilyana (Russian)
- Yoshimo (Shiro's distant cousin, suffered a broken leg in the Dead Beat casefile)
- "Lucky" (Asian; on Ancient Mai's personal staff; broke his ankle and froze half to death getting a message to Mab)
- MacKenzie (Canadian)
- "Wild Bill" Meyers (Texan)
- Simmons
- Thorsen (Scandinavian; also known as Warden "Bejorn," "Bjork," "Yorgi," and other Harry nicknames.)

Arthur Langtry (AKA "The Merlin")

Original Entry: OW165

Reminder: the Merlin is the most powerful wizard on Earth, head of the White Council of Wizards. As Harry has said, you don't get that way by collecting bottle caps. While the Gatekeeper is creepy, and the Blackstaff is terrifying, the Merlin runs the whole show. Shiver at will.

He's crazy-good with temporary wards and large-scale (zones wide) sound and light illusions—he managed to create a tactical battle plan *in the minds of every wizard present* during the trial of Donald Morgan (page 332), when Peabody (page 336) unleashed a mistfiend (page 293) to cover his escape. His staff is plain, long, and white—Harry couldn't identify the kind of wood it's made from. He wears tactical gear when he expects combat—bandoliers of potions, a holster for his blasting rod, that sort of thing.

He's known Ebenezar McCoy since McCoy was 16 years old, which puts Langtry alive earlier than the mid-18th century. He thinks McCoy is insufferably arrogant and annoying, but respects his abilities. Interesting, given that one might say the same thing about his relationship with Harry Dresden.

He's wicked smart, both about magic and about politics; he knows that if he made the existence of the Black Council known, open civil war would erupt among wizards as many would desert the White Council and side with the rebels. This is partially why he caved to Cristos after LaFortier was killed (see Cristos' entry, page 347).





The White Council of Wizards

The Turn Coat case in particular brought to light a great deal of new (to us) information about the White Council.

The White Council has existed since before Roman times, in one form or another. And since it was formally founded by *the original Merlin*, that tells you something about him, eh? The headquarters has shifted from time to time (Alexandria, Carthage, Rome/the Vatican, Constantinople, Madrid), but since the end of the Middle Ages, it's been based in Edinburgh (see below)—again, thanks to the original Merlin.

White Council formalwear seems to be a lot like academic frocks and military uniforms, with robe color and little flourishes signifying all sorts of accomplishments, titles, and honorifics. Black robes indicate full White Council members, black robes with purple stoles (usually, though Rashid—page 315—wears a purple robe) signify Senior Council members, and brown robes are worn by apprentice wizards.

Many wizards accessorize with stoles, typically blue (for a regular Council member) or red (for a wizard with at least a century of service to the Council). Master alchemists wear a braided silver cord. Master healers wear a gold-stitched caduceus. A copper chevron on the collar indicates a doctorate in some scholarly discipline. Master exorcists wear the Seal of Solomon.

Also, because wizards are very long-lived, many of them manage to build up quite a bit of wealth over their lives, even with conservative investments. Acting together, the financial power of the White Council is formidable, and they're pretty good at wielding it like a weapon when they need to. Think Arthur Langtry is powerful magically? He could ruin nations with one call to his broker.

We've learned that, due to some hard-won experience in the Vampire War, the Council now mandates that all Wardens undergo psychic self-defense training. By the conclusion of the Turn Coat case, many—perhaps even most—young Wardens were compromised by the traitor Peabody, ranging from seemingly minor sleep trances to being turned into supernatural suicide bombers.

Caduceus?

That symbol of a winged staff with intertwined snakes that doctors use.

Dare I ask about the Seal of Solomon?

A Star of David in a circle, basically.

one thing I'm not clear about is how they handle the whole "not dying" thing. Don't banks get suspicious if an account holder comes to make a withdrawal two hundred years after she opened the account?

A good accountant can work some pretty impressive magic, too. A couple of in-the-know and well-paid accountants and brokers, and they're set.

They weren't doing that before?

Given the nature of the Third and Fourth Laws, the Council probably doesn't have too many people who are very skilled in psychic defense. It's kind of a blind spot of study for them—too much potential for accidents.

Hm. Will, contact Carlos, see if he's willing to provide us any written material on that. Could come in handy, if it'll work for non-wizards.

Got it.

The Hidden Halls of Edinburgh

Centuries ago, the original Merlin won a bet with a lord of the Daoine Sidhe, thus procuring the Hidden Halls of Edinburgh. A successor later established it as the redoubt and fortress of the White Council of Wizards.. Located underneath the "Auld Rock" (Castle Edinburgh) itself, it also sits at one of the largest convergences of ley lines in the world—much like Chichen Itza.

The tunnel complex is essentially a city, even more vast and more complicated than the city it lies beneath—losing your way is all too easy. The walls are filled with glowing light-crystals, bas-reliefs of important moments in the Council's history, and innumerable world-class, heavyweight wards.

To pierce its defenses, you'd need the sheer power of a god—and not a retired one (page 364), either. And then you'd have to fight the seven oldest and most powerful wizards on Earth, alongside dozens of battle-trained Wardens, and hundreds of other Council-grade wizards. You want to visit? Get an invitation.

Harry's notes call out a number of interesting locations within the installation. There are multiple guard stations and checkpoints, inside and out, manned by Wardens—twitchy, trigger-happy Wardens, after the stunt Peabody pulled. You'll also find Wardens in the War Room, the Worry Room, and the barracks, which include lockers and a small kitchen.

The War Room is, as you might imagine, a spacious, well-appointed meeting room used by the Council's war leaders to plan and coordinate military action. Near the War Room is the Switchboard Room, where rock-solid early-20th century telephone equipment connects the installation to the outside world.

In contrast, the Worry Room (yeah, that's what they call it) is basically the Warden bar. It's one of the most private and secure areas in the complex, intended to be a place Wardens can drop their guard and relax for a minute—something that's been increasingly difficult lately.

There's "the Ostentatiatory," a huge fancy ballroom, vestibule, and common area connecting the offices and chambers of the Senior Council, complete with a buffet, a stage, and a podium. It's often used as an audience chamber for visiting dignitaries. This is where the Duchess Arianna (page 359) offered truce in the Vampire War during the CHANGES case.

There's the Speaking Room, essentially a big auditorium, where they held Warden Donald Morgan's (page 332) trial.

Finally, there are innumerable offices, private chambers, luxurious chambers for Senior Council members, libraries, kitchens, guest quarters, rec rooms, gyms, and more.

Have fun storming the castle!

Wow, that's like totally state of the art for powerful wizards.

I CAN SEE THE SARCASM DRIPPING RIGHT OFF THE PAGE.



The Leanansidhe (aka "Lea")

Original Entry: OW169

When last we saw Harry's literal faerie godmother, she was imprisoned in the frozen fountain of Arctis Tor in some sort of twisted tough love exercise of Mab's. Lea later called it "exquisite pain" and seems to have bought into the entire thing, which suggests that it's valid to question the relative health of their relationship.

Apparently, she got better, because she showed up in Changes with newly emerald green eyes, silver streaks in her red hair, and raw power burning a hole in her pocket. Lea acted as Mab's voice during the whole…ritual…on the Stone Table when Harry became the Winter Knight (see Harry's entry, page 325). Once completed, Mab took off Lea's leash, telling her to go with Harry on his quest, and to "indulge herself." And with the gloves off, the depth of the Leanansidhe's power is *staggering*.

She negotiated aggressively with Donar Vadderung on Harry's behalf, and he is not the sort who suffers that from just anyone. She put the predator spirit—i.e., the vampire part—of Susan (page 339) and Martin (page 330) to sleep, then cocooned them in green silk, with little more than a thought. She insta-crafted badass magical armor for Harry *and* Susan (in her limo driven by a magical chauffer—perks of being Mab's lackey, we presume). She transformed the entire Chichen Itza strike team into hounds (!!) for swift travel. She summoned the Grey Council during the battle, then disguised herself as a Lord of Outer Night, infiltrated the pyramid temple, and killed two of the vampire lords outright.

In other words, she's hell on wheels. Or ice skates. Or whatever.

Aside from her raw power, she also showed a humanity—well, so to speak—that hadn't been evident before. She gave Margaret's gem (page 313) to Harry, and admitted that Margaret was better at finding and predicting Ways than most fae. She has continually upheld her bargain to protect Harry, as evidenced by his experience in her garden in the Nevernever. She even offered—apparently of her own free will and without expectation of any quid pro quo—to take Susan's body from Chichen Itza and lay it to rest with all the honor and respect Harry would wish.

As of this writing, she remains one of the most unpredictable beings in Harry's life.

Will, do you know anything about how faerie debts pass on from person to person? Is it always family or can other types of bonds work also?

I'm not sure what you mean.

Well, if Harry is actually dead, then what happens to Lea's agreement to protect him? Does it go away, or does it pass to someone, like Maggie or maybe Thomas? And what about Molly? Harry's oath to take her as an apprentice has supernatural weight, right?

No idea. But I don't like the implications.



The Leanansidhe

High Concept

Harry's Faerie Godmother

Other Aspects

Cruel and Vindictive

Power Is My Drug of Choice

Loves to Win

Mab's Handmaiden

Finally, a Chance to Indulge Myself

Skills, Powers, etc.

This is another one of those plot device characters. You get around Lea, not through her. Assume she presents challenges of Fantastic or better to social conflict; in mental, magical, or physical conflict, most mortals outside of Senior Council wizards don't stand a chance. She stands second in power to Mab herself, probably rivaling or even outclassing the Winter Lady.

Total Refresh Cost

Second in power to Mab? Call this incalculable.

Listens to Wind

High Concept
Senior Council Wizard

Other Aspects
Little Brother
Illinois Medicine Man
Patient and Quiet
I See Ley Lines
Friend of the Blackstaff
Friend of Martha Liberty

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Fair	(+2)
Contacts:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Fantastic	(+6)
Discipline:	Epic	(+7)
Empathy:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Great	(+4)
Intimidation:	Fair	(+2)
Investigation:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Fantastic	(+6)
Presence:	Great	(+4)
Rapport:	Superb	(+5)
Resources:	Average	(+1)
Scholarship:	Superb	(+5)
Survival:	Fair	(+2)

Powers
Evocation [-3]
Thaumaturgy [-3]
The Sight [-1]
Soulgaze [+0]
Wizard's Constitution [+0]
Refinement [-10]
True Shapeshifting [-4]
Modular Abilities [-10] (8 Form Points)
Mythic Mental Toughness [-6]
The Catch [+0] is unknown.

We haven't seen this tested in the casefiles enough to even make an educated guess..

Specializations
Elements (Earth, Water, Spirit, Fire); Control (Earth +2, Water +1 Spirit +3, Fire +1); Power (Earth +2, Water +1 Spirit +3, Fire +2)

You'll find that info about the elements on page 267

Stress
Mental OOOO(OOOOOO) +1 mild consequence, **Armor:3**
Physical OOO
Social OOOO

Notes
Listens To Wind's skill with shapeshifting can't really be replicated with Evocation or Thaumaturgy. He's still using magic when he changes form. He's just really, really good at it. See **"Wizards with Powers"** for more discussion of this.

Total Refresh Cost:
-37

As much as I'd love to see LTW lower the boom on some mortal evildoers, his willingness to do so doesn't seem like something we should advertise. Redact this.

Yeah, good point. I'll yank it next draft.



Listens to Wind (aka "Injun Joe")

Original Entry: OW175

Listens to Wind is one of those guys that just about everyone wants to know better. He's one of the most powerful members of the Senior Council. He really started to show what he's capable of in the Turn Coat and Changes casefiles (the observant reader may be picking up on a distinct pattern regarding these two cases).

He's a specialist in exorcisms and restorative magic, easily the most skilled healer on the White Council (possibly the world). He has medical degrees from 20-odd universities and goes back every decade or so to keep current. He offered to teach Molly some of what he knows of healing magic (and, through Ebenezar, to teach Harry how to deal with the rage of being on the wrong end of terrible injustice).

A long time ago, he was a medicine man of one of the Illinois tribes, but he refused to intervene when their enemies gained the upper hand and wiped the tribe out, because the White Council forbids its members from intervening in mortal political affairs. These deaths weigh on his conscience, and he admitted to Harry that he would not make this mistake again.

He was among the Senior Council wizards who confronted Harry on Demonreach and he fought in the battle there against Madeline Raith, Binder, and Binder's minions. He taught Harry how to use Demonreach's intellectus to direct the battle. He also fought the skinwalker singlehandedly, demonstrating amazing adeptness at shapeshifting magic.

In the Changes casefile, he was affected by Duchess Arianna's disease curse and was unable to join the cavalry to save the day at Chichen Itza.

His skills seem to be highly refined water magic: powerful healing, shapeshifting, ability to suppress hexing while going back to med school every decade or so.

Talked to Bob a lot about this. It's part of the notes I gave you on the basic elements for the spellcasting refresh.

Excellent.

Captain Anastasia Luccio

Original Entry: OW176

Luccio played a big role in the Turn Coat and Changes cases, and we learned a great deal about her history.

In her youth, she was a sought-after model, posing in various states of undress for artists across 18th century Italy. She was also known as a dancer; Lara Raith once saw her perform. Somewhere along the line, she picked up some serious chops in sensual and therapeutic massage. Even in more modern times—especially since she picked up her new body, thanks to Corpsetaker (OW129)—she still catches men's eyes. She enjoyed a brief romantic relationship with Harry Dresden. Donald Morgan, her former student, was in love with her for years and years.

Alas, Harry and Anastasia weren't meant to last. We've learned that her relationship with Harry was artificially induced by mind-controlling magic. Molly was the first to notice that her mind showed signs of tampering; it came out later that Peabody messed her up but good, using her not only to spy on Harry but also to get LaFortier out of the way. Morgan chose to take the fall for that, and the official story from the White Council is that Morgan was LaFortier's killer.

Aside from that, we learned that she's pretty good at veils—she's more practiced than Harry, but doesn't quite have the raw talent that Molly displays. She knew Margaret LeFay (page 313) and didn't like her much. She thinks the Paranet is a good idea, and she's trying to build support for it among the White Council. Warden Chandler is one of her allies; she trusts him enough to ask him to pass messages to and from Harry—fortunately, despite what happened between them, it seems their working relationship remained intact.

Also, she knows about Thomas and Harry, and about Harry and Maggie, and keeps both secrets to herself.



Anastasia Luccio

Notes

No change from her entry on OW762.

Attention Paranetters: Just because she thinks the Paranet is a good idea doesn't mean she wants to hear about your new crystal ball or the pixies that live in your garden.

I'm interested to see if she gets her Wizard's Constitution back over time.

You think she might?

Well, is the power a result of using magic, or is it one of the things that lets you use magic? I doubt it's the latter. Most of her abilities seem to be intact.

I guess we'll just have to wait and see.

Mab, The Winter Queen

Original Entry: OW179

Could anyone ever know the Queen of Air and Darkness? Despite her playing a central role in the Changes case, she's as inscrutable as ever.

After he broke his back, Harry summoned her and negotiated his service as Winter Knight, something she's been wanting for years. Harry's mind and spirit were brought to the Stone Table, where Lea served as Mab's voice. (Her true voice would have destroyed Harry; it's part of her power.) Once they reached an agreement, she ordered Harry to kill Slate (page 341) with a bronze knife (which she called "Medea's bodkin"), and then she and Harry…ahem… consummated the bargain in a very intimate yet very, very public ritual.

But through the ritual, Harry was made aware of the true breadth and depth of her power, the real scale of what's at her command and, perhaps most frightening, her purpose—Harry said she's "the darkest guardian the earth had ever known."

I like what Sanya said. I kind of can't believe Harry wrote it down.

Sanya's wisdom is great. I can't tell you how much I needed that laugh when reading Harry's notes.

So, yeah, she's a psycho power-mad icy death faerie, but dammit, she's OUR psycho power-mad icy death faerie.

That doesn't make me feel any better.

Mac

Original Entry: OW180

The biggest thing we've learned about Mac is that he can actually speak in complete sentences requiring more than trivial grammar. He just usually doesn't see the point in bothering.

Beyond that, the mystery continues. He refused to take painkillers after getting the crud kicked out of him in the "Last Call" case (where a Maenad calling herself Meditrina Bassarid infected his beer with a contagion focus, using the popular beverage to reach a wide variety of people with her magic. Messing with Mac's beer really is the greater sin, as far as we're concerned).

He took food outside to Mouse who was standing guard at the door, a favor he won't do for people. Although the pub is Accorded Neutral Ground, he keeps a small arsenal of guns and a big honking baseball bat behind the counter. We know he keeps a journal, with a plain leather binding, written with a cipher.

Finally, according to the "Aftermath" dossier, Chicago's supernatural community perceives his bar as a zone of safety.

Mac

Notes

No update to his entry on OW180.



I want to like Mac, but he knows a lot more than he lets on, and I wish he would step up and DO something for a change.

Each of us in our own way. There's value in just knowing there's someplace to go and find people like you, y'know?

I know this is kind of Captain Obvious of me, but clearly there's something going on with him that we don't know about.

John Marcone

Original Entry: OW187

Gentleman Johnny Marcone, Freeholding Lord of Chicago, gangster and criminal mastermind. Yes, he's involved in the corruption of every level of Chicago government—maybe even higher than that.

But… (You knew there would be a *But…*)

He defends his territory (read: Chicago) from incursions of supernatural monsters. Now, you may argue that one monster defending his hunting ground from other monsters isn't doing the prey any favors, but things are rarely clear-cut with Marcone. He's fought off vampires. He's fought off ghouls. Most recently, he helped stop an incursion by the Fomor when Justine (page 320) dragged him into a dispute between Lara Raith and a Fomor sorcerer named Mag. We don't want to say that the guy cares—because, believe me, he doesn't—but…

And there's that word again.

He may not have limits, but he has *rules*. People on his payroll don't hurt children. Period. Those who cross that line tend to wake up dead. He's involved with historic architectural preservation. He financed and provides headquarters to the "Brighter Future Society," one of the Chicago Alliance's front operations to provide shelter and other services for people victimized by the supernatural. He offered Murphy—*Murphy*—a job, believing he owes her a debt for her attack on the Fomor.

Despite being a pure mortal, Marcone has demonstrated incredible resourcefulness and staying power as a Freeholding Lord—frankly, he's still one of the most dangerous people you could ever meet, and despite his personal lack of phenomenal cosmic blow-shit-ups, we advise *extreme* caution.

Even though he's on our side. Sort of.

Still smarting from that knife he put in your arm, Will?

You don't have to keep rubbing it in, thanks. I got the point.

Point! Ha! Stabbing humor.

Really, I'm jealous. If it had been me, I'd still have an ugly scar.

I have a scar. It's not on my arm

John Marcone

High Concept

Freeholding Lord of Chicago

Trouble

Swimming in Dangerous Waters

Other Aspects

A Cold Tiger's Soul

I'm Loyal to Those Who Are Loyal to Me

No Mercy, But No Cruelty

Bring Order to Chaos

No Hurting Kids

Skills

Alertness:	Great	(+4)
Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Burglary:	Fair	(+2)
Contacts:	Fantastic	(+6)
Conviction:	Good	(+3)
Deceit:	Great	(+4)
Discipline:	Superb	(+5)
Empathy:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Superb	(+5)
Guns:	Superb	(+5)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Good	(+3)
Presence:	Fantastic	(+6)
Rapport:	Good	(+3)
Resources:	Fantastic	(+6)
Scholarship:	Fair	(+2)
Stealth:	Fair	(+2)
Weapons:	Fair	(+2)

Other skills default to Average.

Stunts

Paranoid? Probably. (Alertness): Marcone gains +2 to Alertness when rolling against surprise.

I Know Just the Guy (Contacts): When Gathering Information, Marcone's efforts are at +1, and are one time increment faster.

Nose for Competence (Contacts): Marcone gains +2 to Contacts when hiring competent and knowledgeable employees and contractors.

Calm Blue Ocean (Discipline): Marcone gains +2 to Discipline when rolling to keep emotions under control.

The Social Graces (Empathy): Marcone gains +2 to Empathy for social conflict initiative.

Subtle Menace (Intimidation): When the context of power is absent, or Marcone's victim is actually in a superior position, Marcone's victim does not get any advantage bonus.

Leadership (Presence): When using Presence to command a group, Marcone gains +1 on the effort. His efforts to coordinate a group happen one time increment faster than normal.

Filthy Lucre (Resources): Marcone gains +2 to Resources whenever using it for illicit purposes.

Taking Aim (Guns): Marcone may use his Guns skill rather than Weapons for thrown weapons.

Trick Shot Artist (Guns): When attacking with Guns, Marcone gains +2 on the roll for shots taken at things (not characters), such as ropes holding chandeliers, etc. (Particularly effective when used with Taking Aim.)

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OOOO

+1 mild consequence

Notes

Marcone's skills now paint a more accurate picture of his capabilities, both in a toe-to-toe fight and in the corridors (or back alleys) of power.

Total Refresh Cost: -8

(Pure Mortal)



Martin

High Concept
St. Giles Fellow

Trouble
Triple Agent

Other Aspects
Bland and Unobtrusive
I Watch Susan's Back
Sudden Violence
Devoted to My Cause

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Fair	(+2)
Burglary:	Fair	(+2)
Contacts:	Fair	(+2)
Conviction:	Good	(+3)
Deceit:	Superb	(+5)
Discipline:	Superb	(+5)
Driving:	Great	(+4)
Empathy:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Average	(+1)
Guns:	Great	(+4)
Investigation:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Fair	(+2)
Rapport:	Average	(+1)
Stealth:	Great	(+4)
Weapons:	Average	(+1)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
Tattoos of St. Giles [-2]
Addictive Saliva [-1]
Blood Drinker [-1]
Feeding Dependency [+1] affecting the following powers:
Inhuman Strength [-2]
Inhuman Recovery [-2]

Stress
Mental OOOO
Physical OOOO
Social OO
Hunger OOOO(OO)
+1 mild consequence

Notes
Martin prefers to keep his distance unless swift, violent extraction is needed. He'll use a sniper rifle, a speeding car, or a grenade to deal with a problem long enough to get himself and his allies gone. He has Good initiative, Fair defense, Average attacks if using Weapons or Fists, and Great attacks with Guns. If he has to rely on his infected powers, he heals fast and can swing **Weapon:2** punches with his bare hands.

Total Refresh Cost: -7

Martin

Original Entry: OW190

Martin—"Mr. Bland" from Harry's perspective—was an interesting guy. He traveled the world as an agent of the Fellowship of St. Giles and he'd been a member for more than a hundred years. He partnered with Susan for the last several of those. He was an experienced undercover agent.

He also proved to have a giant pair of cast iron cojones when he turned out to be a double (triple?) agent playing a razor's edge spy game with the Fellowship, the White Council, and the Red Court.

At the climax of the Chichen Itza battle in Changes, he proclaimed his loyalty to the Red King, whom he'd served as a priest for fifty years; he presented Susan and Harry as gifts to the Red King as though he intended to betray them. Shortly thereafter, Susan lost control and killed him, finishing her transformation into a Red Court vampire.

As Martin lay dying, Harry soulgazed him and learned his true agenda—everything was proceeding according to plan. With Susan turned, Harry could kill her and activate the bloodline curse that was originally set up for Ebenezar McCoy. Instead of following McCoy's blood, it would follow the Red Court's blood—ending them once and for all.

Harry kept to the plan.

Son of a bitch sacrificed Susan and made Harry into a murderer for the sake of "the plan."

Whether you agree with his methods or not, what he did took serious stones. Don't forget, he sacrificed himself, too.

Hail the conquering hero.

Regarding the Fellowship of St. Giles

The Fellowship is essentially obsolete. Between the actions of the traitorous Martin (page 330) and the effects of the bloodline curse (page 353) killing the Red Court elements of their lives, there are very few of the Fellowship left.

Alejandra, who supplied us with the info for Las Tierras Rojas, has some interesting insights into all of this. Her account is...sobering.

Ebenezar McCoy (AKA "The Blackstaff")

Original Entry: OW192

We've known this for a while, but McCoy is one of the three or four most powerful beings outside the Nevernever, and honestly he doesn't drop very far in the rankings if you include the Nevernever, too. With the Blackstaff at his command, he can, when he has to, kill at will. We presume that counts for any other massive violations of the Laws of Magic. He's especially adept at force magic.

He's been around for well over 250 years, as evidenced by the fact that he met Listens to Wind during the French and Indian War. He knows more about Demonreach than he's letting on. He continued to be Harry's teacher and advisor, even when they didn't see eye to eye; McCoy taught him a spell that allows them to speak with one another across any distance.

He's also Harry's maternal grandfather. This probably put a bit of a fire under him to come riding to the rescue with the Grey Council at Chichen Itza (he even called in his favor with the Kenku, adding their strength to the fight). The bloodline curse was aimed at him, an act of revenge by Duchess Arianna for the murder of her husband, Duke Ortega.

He views the White Court as allies of convenience at best, and seems to think that they're the White Council's natural enemies ("you don't make friends with food"). He seems to be unaware that Thomas Raith is his grandson.

Another note about Harry's family stuff—nix it.

The Blackstaff

We can confirm that there is, indeed, a physical Blackstaff. Ebenezar McCoy (**page 331**) uses it during the Changes case.

We regret our curiosity now.

It's made from dark, twisted wood, unmarked by any carving. McCoy summons it when he needs it, and it coalesces out of the darkness and shadows, pulsing with dark power. Harry had a sense that it was alive somehow, that it knew its purpose, and that it *needed* to fulfill that purpose, as often and as spectacularly as possible.

Ebenezar McCoy

High Concept
Senior White Council Wizard

Trouble
God Help Me, I'm the Blackstaff

Other Aspects
Grandfather of Harry Dresden
White Council's Black Bag Man
Patient Teacher
Respected Scholar
Grey Council Founder

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Contacts:	Great	(+4)
Conviction:	Epic	(+7)
Deceit:	Great	(+4)
Discipline:	Epic	(+7)
Empathy:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Fantastic	(+6)
Fists:	Fair	(+2)
Intimidation:	Superb	(+5)
Lore:	Fantastic	(+6)
Presence:	Great	(+4)
Rapport:	Good	(+3)
Scholarship:	Superb	(+5)
Survival:	Good	(+3)

Most other skills default to Average or Fair.

Powers
Evocation [-3]
Thaumaturgy [-3]
The Sight [-1]
Soulgaze [+0]
Wizard's Constitution [+0]
Refinement [-9]
The Catch [+0] is threats to his family; he doesn't take them too kindly.
Mythic Mental Toughness [-6]
Item of Power (The Blackstaff) [-4]
Grants the following:
Sponsored Magic (The Blackstaff) [-2]

Specializations
Evocation: Elements (Air, Earth, Fire, Spirit); Control (Air +1, Earth +1, Fire +2, Spirit +3); Power (Air +1, Earth +1, Fire +2, Spirit +3)
Thaumaturgy: Control (Divination +3); Complexity (Divination +2); Strength (Crafting +1)

Focus Items
Staff (+1 offense control for Spirit, evocation)
Rings (+1 offensive power for Spirit, evocation)

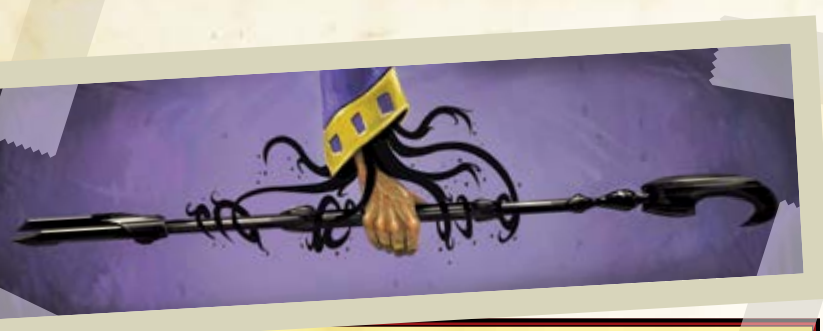
Stress
Mental OOOO(OOOOOO)
+2 mild consequences
Armor:3
Physical OOOO
+1 mild consequence
Social OOO

Notes
Good initiative, Fair on most defenses unless he uses magic, in which case he can easily control 8 shifts of Evocation in his specialized elements. When using Spirit magic that jumps to 10 shifts! When McCoy is wielding the Blackstaff, all bets are off—he can use its Sponsored Magic and he gets an additional +3 to his control roll when casting spells that break the Laws, allowing him to easily control 13 shifts of power.

Total Refresh Cost: -28

Using the Blackstaff, McCoy violated the First Law of Magic over *two hundred times* in just a few seconds, snuffing out the life force of the Red Court's hired soldier goons with just a thought. He suffered no immediate ill effects, except that the Blackstaff produced veins of venomous black ooze, which crawled over his hand, causing him visible discomfort. He squelched them with an effort of will, but who knows what the burden of that thing is doing to him?

Any guess what this means in game terms?
Hell, no.
Yeah, me either.



The Blackstaff

The Blackstaff [-4] (Item of Power)

Description: The Blackstaff is much more than a mere Focus Item—it's an Item of Power that has been handed down throughout the ages, along with the title of "The Blackstaff." The Blackstaff is the only Wizard who has the authority and permission to break whatever Laws of Magic they see fit to accomplish their missions. How are they able to do this without going completely to the Dark Side? The Blackstaff is the answer; it absorbs the corrupting influences that come from breaking the Laws, and it offers power in return.

Musts: You must have been granted the Blackstaff by the White Council.

Skills Affected: Conviction, Discipline, Lore, others

Effects:

- **Unbreakable.** As an Item of Power, it cannot be broken, save through dedicated magical ritual predicated on perverting its purpose.
- **It's a Staff.** It is a dark, twisted, wooden staff.
- **Lawbreaker.** The Blackstaff wants to be used, it wants to break the Laws, and it grants a +3 bonus to any spellcasting roll that uses magic in a way that would break one of the Laws.
- **Absorbs Black Magic.** The Wizard who possesses the Blackstaff doesn't have to worry about breaking the Laws of Magic so long as he is using the Blackstaff—he doesn't have to take any of the Lawbreaker powers. However, if the Wizard breaks the Laws while not using the Blackstaff, he's immediately subject to spending the refresh to take the Lawbreaker power of whichever Law he broke, but he gains no extra benefit from that power.
- **Sponsored Magic.** The Blackstaff wants to help. It eats the dark magic that comes from breaking the Laws and it acts as a source of Sponsored Magic; it's more than willing to grant power in fate points in return for debt. Take a look at the new Sponsored Magic rules on page 248.

I guess that's how he did **it** in the game.

Yeah, but was he taking more fate points, or was he buying off his debt?

I don't know which one of those options horrifies me more.



Warden Donald Morgan

Original Entry: OW196

Morgan's fortunes changed quite a bit since we last saw him. He kicked off the Turn Coat case in dramatic fashion by showing up on Harry's doorstep, wounded and on the run from Wardens. He figured that if anyone would help him hide from the Wardens, it'd be Harry. He was right.

He'd been accused of murdering Aleron LaFortier (page 321); he not only took the fall to protect the real killer—Luccio (page 327), who was mentally dominated by Peabody (page 336) when she did the deed—but he went on the lam rather than let the White Council lop his head off.

Morgan was an arrogant ass, but he could be noble when he wanted to be. Again, think twice before putting the truth about Morgan in here—don't let his sacrifice be in vain.

Noted.

While on the run, he passed through tribal lands claimed by a skinwalker Harry called Shagnasty (page 361). Whether Shag smelled blood in the water and went after the wounded Morgan as a target of opportunity, or whether the creature was an instrument of the Black Council (the existence of which Morgan denied), it wound up following Morgan to Chicago. This wasn't the first skinwalker Morgan encountered. One targeted Morgan back in the '50s; he lured it onto a nuclear test range in Nevada where it was vaporized in one of the open-air atom bomb tests they conducted back then.

Morgan was Luccio's apprentice. He also carried a torch for her for about a hundred years, and it hurt him deeply when he figured out that she and Harry had a thing going. When Luccio paid Harry a visit, Morgan, Molly, and Mouse ended up tangling when Molly tried to get a (highly illegal) peek into Luccio's head (Mouse ended up taking a bullet, but he got better).

Isn't one of the themes of the Bloody October chapter that mortal humans are getting really dangerous to supernatural types?

Geeks with engineering degrees, represent.

Yeah...considering our Vegas dossier, I wonder if that whole incident was actually part of something larger going on.

The Turn Coat case came to a climax when Morgan shot and killed Peabody, but sadly, he was also fatally injured in the process. As he lay dying of his wounds, he admitted to Harry that Luccio was LaFortier's real murderer, and that he hadn't told anyone of Molly's Lawbreaking.

Oh, and you'll want to cut that bit about Molly's Lawbreaking along with mentioning LaFortier's actual murderer.

Nobility of sacrificing himself for Luccio aside, he was pretty much a bully. I've known cops just like him.

He was a bully the good guys could use at the moment. Come on, he nuked a skinwalker, that's pretty bad ass.

Mouse

Original Entry: OW198

There's a lot more to Mouse, Harry Dresden's dog, than we originally thought.

It's increasingly clear that Mouse has, at the very least, human-level intelligence.

He worked with Vince Graver (page 352) to uncover the traitor on the White Council, identifying him with a growl during Morgan's trial during the Turn Coat case. He took care of Harry when Harry was more than a bit out of it after Susan's call at the start of the Changes case—he hung up the phone, shut the car door, and guarded the doorway of McAnally's while Harry and Mac were having a Serious Discussion. Mac showed Mouse particular respect by bringing him food and water, which he rarely does for any bipeds.

Even Lea treated him with respect during the journey to Chichen Itza—more respect than she did the others, who she turned into hounds (she had a good reason, but still). That's when Harry realized (or, at least, confirmed) that Mouse was capable of communicating at a level at least equal to human beings; Lea said that Harry just needed to learn how to listen.

Lea and Mac aren't the only ones who see Mouse as more than just Dogasaurus Rex. Ancient Mai calls him a Foo Dog, and Esmerelda Baptiste (page 351) calls him a "mountain ice demon from the land of dreams," which is measurably more awesome than "Foo Dog," even if it means the same thing.

Under the Sight, Harry saw Mouse as a calm, steady aura of silver and blue. He trusted Mouse to warn him when something was up and he could judge the level of threat by the tone of Mouse's growl. Both Ancient Mai and Lea were baffled about how Harry won Mouse—on the way to Chichen Itza, Mouse claimed it was the other way around, and that he'd won Harry.

In terms of raw competence, Mouse is not someone you want lining up opposite you. He is capable of making the earth shake. At a sprint, he can keep pace with a car. He and Thomas cooperated to drive off the Ick (page 282). He took a bullet for Molly during the Turn Coat case, and accompanied her from Chichen Itza during the Changes case.

We don't know where he is now.

Thanks for the discretion, Will. Not a problem.

Mouse

High Concept
Sacred Guardian Foo Dog

Trouble
I Won Dresden

Other Aspects
Dogasaurus Rex

Mighty Mountain Ice Demon from the Land of Dreams

Steady Aura of Silver and Blue Light

His Bark & His Bite Are Both Ferocious

I Cheat—a Wizard Taught Me How

Skills

Alertness:	Superb	(+5)
Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Conviction:	Good	(+3)
Deceit:	Fair	(+2)
Discipline:	Fair	(+2)
Empathy:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Superb	(+5)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Intimidation:	Great	(+4)
Might:	Good	(+3)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)
Rapport:	Fair	(+2)
Survival:	Fair	(+2)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Track by Scent (Alertness): Mouse uses Alertness instead of Survival to track.

Unity of Senses (Alertness): Mouse uses Alertness instead of Lore to pick up on the presence of the supernatural.

Powers
Marked By Power [-1]

Claws [-1]

Echoes of the Beast [-1]

Inhuman Speed [-2]

Inhuman Strength [-2]

The Catch [+1] is unknown, but possibly black magic or demonic powers.

Inhuman Recovery [-2]

Sacred Guardian [-1] Attacks from full Foo Dogs like Mouse satisfy the Catch for most profane, dark, and demonic creatures and spirits.

Supernatural Senses [-2] Foo Dogs can detect unnatural presences & supernatural influences, with enough detail to know whether it's time to attack or just growl.

The Bark [-2] The bark of a Foo Dog can use Intimidation to create a block several zones wide against mind-clouding supernatural effects (see OW80 for more).

Stress
Mental OOO

Physical OOOO

+1 mild consequence

Social OOO

Notes
Mouse is a bit more than your average Temple Dog—he's been revealed as a full Foo Dog. He has a Great attack with a **Weapon:4** bite that satisfies the Catch against most evil creatures. He has Superb defense, and Legendary +1 initiative. Mouse can also block against mind clouding effects, and maneuver against non-corporeal entities at Great with The Bark.

Total Refresh Cost: -15

It comforts me to no end that she also died after Chichen Itza. Also, Will, is the personal information really necessary? In fact, why do I even need to be in your game?

Karrin Murphy

Original Entry: OW199

Other than Harry, Karrin Murphy is probably the most prominent character in the casefiles. Thus, we've seen her change and grow almost as much as Harry has.

Her friendship and partnership with Harry has deepened. While she's suspicious of almost everyone else, she and Harry seem to have left behind a lot of the trust issues they had earlier in their friendship. Sometimes their relationship threatened to blossom into something more—a few instances of slight supernatural nudging revealed a core of deep feeling between them, such as in the "Love Hurts" case, when the Red Court vampire Baroness LeBlanc ensnared them in an experiment to create love in humans as a weapon against the White Court.

Harry named Murphy the executor of his will and entrusted the Swords of the Cross to her if something were to happen to him. He also gave her an amulet that let her through the wards on his apartment and allowed him to track her whereabouts.

Her understanding of the supernatural has grown. She took basic magical countermeasures against Binder (page 345) during the Turn Coat case, and thought to wipe Will Borden's blood from Marcone's knife before giving it back to Gard in the "Aftermath" case.

She's a highly competent fighter, and she's been developing that skill with renewed intensity. She's added staff fighting to her repertoire of Krav Maga, Shaolin Kung Fu, Savate, boxing, Aikido, and other martial arts that most people have never even heard of. She trains daily. She's a master marksman. And who knew that she could wield Fidelacchius like a freakin' samurai?

At Chichen Itza, she carried the Sword into battle against the Red Court. And through her, an archangel of the Lord literally proclaimed God's terrible judgment upon the vampires, and the servants of Darkness fell at her sword like wheat before the scythe. By Harry's account, it was one of the most terrifying displays of mortal badassitude in recent history, but we beg to differ—a few months later she geared up and took out a nest of freakin' Fomor (page 287) without any supernatural assistance whatsoever (though some of her friendly neighborhood Alphas also participated).

No. Absolutely not. Remove all references to me having the Swords, and forget that you know it. Goes for you too, Eyes.

Got it.

Yeah, I missed that on this pass. I've got it flagged.

I appreciate the flattery on a certain level, Will, but really, there's no need for all the hyperbole. "Wheat before the scythe"? Seriously?

You know, most of the time I wouldn't argue with you. However, this time, it stays. You're a damn action hero, Murphy, and an inspiration to all of us. Deal with it.

This is a little awkward.

Well, you're too important to leave out.

You wouldn't want to miss out on your 15 minutes of fame, would you?



Sigrun Gard, valkyrie of Odin, greeted her with "Hail, warrior," in the aftermath of "Aftermath."

A third generation cop, she's on "indefinite suspension" from the Chicago PD after the events of Chichen Itza. She figures her new job description is "unofficial supernatural cop." Harry told the Alphas to go to her if they ever got into trouble and couldn't find him. She recruited Billy to be her second-in-command of the nascent "Justice League of Chicago" or "Chicago Alliance," as we've taken to calling it. She won't take up one of the Swords in her keeping, believing that the hand that wields the Sword is more important than the Sword itself.

If she ever gets sick of doing the Justice League thing, she has three other offers on the

First of all, redact this. Second, it's not just that. I honestly can't get over what happened with the archangel. Giving something the power to just...take you over like that...I don't know. I can't do it.

Karrin Murphy

High Concept
Head of the Chicago Alliance

Trouble
On the Supernatural Radar

Other Aspects
Don't Judge Me by My Size
Avenging Angel
Aikido Master
Champion Marksman
Someone Has to Watch Over the City While Harry Is Missing

Skills

Alertness:	Superb	(+5)
Athletics:	Fantastic	(+6)
Burglary:	Average	(+1)
Contacts:	Fair	(+2)
Conviction:	Great	(+4)
Discipline:	Great	(+4)
Driving:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Superb	(+5)
Fists:	Superb	(+5)
Guns:	Fantastic	(+6)
Intimidation:	Fair	(+2)
Investigation:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Great	(+4)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)
Scholarship:	Average	(+1)
Stealth:	Good	(+3)
Weapons:	Average	(+1)

Other skills default to Average or Fair.

Stunts
Sweet smoking Conan! What? Are these good?

Hard Boiled (Discipline): Murphy gains +2 to Discipline rolls defending against mental attacks and maneuvers by criminals and suspects.

Martial Artist (Fists): Murphy can make assessments and declarations related to fighting styles and fighting culture using her Fists skill at +1.

Redirected Force (Fists): On a successful defense roll using Fists against close-combat attacks, Murphy may sacrifice her next action to treat the defense as a successful maneuver, placing a temporary aspect such as Thrown to the Ground on her attacker.

Extensive Training (Fists): Murphy may use her Fists skill instead of Weapons to wield a variety of close combat weaponry: short clubs, staves, katana/bokken, and the like.

Pin the Tail (Investigation): Murphy gains +2 to Investigation rolls when trying to keep track of a target during Surveillance. When Shadowing someone using Stealth, she may use Investigation to complement her Stealth skill.

Scene of the Crime (Investigation): At a crime scene, Murphy gains +1 to Investigation rolls. She arrives at findings one time increment faster than usual.

For Harry.

It's Clobberin' Time (Fists): Add 3 to the damage of a Fists attack on a successful hit, once per scene, for a fate point. This stacks with any other damage-increasing stunts for Fists.

Lethal Weapon (Fists): Murphy's hands are lethal weapons. When using Fists to strike an unarmored opponent, she is considered to have **Weapon:2**. Against opponents with **Armor:1**, her Fists attacks are **Weapon:1**. There is no benefit against more heavily armored opponents.

Step Into the Blow (Fists): When Murphy uses Fists to defend against a close-quarters attack and fails that defense, she may sacrifice her next action to counterattack immediately (with Fists) at +1. She may only sacrifice one action per exchange in this way; when she has sacrificed her next action once, she doesn't have a "next action" to sacrifice if she's attacked a second time.

Fast Reload (Guns): Provided that Murphy has a supply of ammunition, reloads are rarely an issue. She takes no penalty when reloading as a supplemental action; if she's in a race to see who reloads first, or anything else having to do with her speed or ability to reload, gain a +1 on the roll.

Pin Them Down (Guns): When Aiming, the aspect Murphy places on the target cannot be removed so long as they do not move out of the zone, and any attempts to leave the zone face an increased border of 1 as long as she continues to make Guns attacks against that target.

Target-Rich Environment: Murphy gain a +1 to attacks with Guns whenever she is personally outnumbered in a firefight.

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OOOO
	+1 mild consequence
Social	OOO

Notes
Murphy has grown a lot. She's sharpened her skills and learned all sorts of neat tricks to pull out in a fight. Heck, she's basically a real life action hero at this point.

Total Refresh Cost: -10
(Pure Mortal)



table. One, she could take up Fidelacchius (or Amoracchius, but aesthetically we'd prefer her with a katana) and become a Knight of the Cross; presumably, if Almighty God speaks through you, it's tantamount to a job offer.

Second, Marcone has offered her a position as a troubleshooter for his outfit.

Third, Sigrun Gard thinks she has the makings of a valkyrie, should she want an office at Monoc Securities. We shall see.

The Chicago Alliance
- Karrin Murphy
- Will Borden and the Alphas
- Waldo Butters
- Molly Carpenter
- Daniel Carpenter
- John Marcone

Samuel Peabody

Original Entry: OW205

Samuel Peabody was a complete and utter bastard.

He didn't look like much physically. Slender and reedy, he had short, curly white hair and perpetually ink-stained fingers. He looked exactly like what he was, a master bureaucrat with a classic case of OCD. Ebenezar McCoy once called Peabody indispensible as the Senior Council's administrative aide, a job that came with a lot of trust and access to the most powerful wizards on the planet.

He abused the hell out of that position.

Since they can't use computers, the White Council's paperwork is all hard copy; Peabody made sure the Senior Council used a specially tainted ink to sign all the red tape that goes with such a massive old organization. The ink helped Peabody subtly manipulate the Senior Council's decisions and subvert their free will.

Under Peabody's direct control and influence, Anastasia Luccio (page 327) murdered Aleron LaFortier—a crime for which Donald Morgan (page 332) took the fall. But during Morgan's trial in Edinburgh, Mouse fingered Peabody (with some photographic backup from Harry) as the White Council's traitor. Seeing that the jig was up, Peabody bolted, covering his escape by releasing a deadly mistfiend (page 293) and using a sort of magical post-hypnotic trigger to neutralize most of the Wardens in his way.

As he fled, Peabody showed that he was stronger than he looked—a dangerous knife-fighter, a dab hand with potions—and seemed to have some skill with water magic, especially acid. Peabody was also particularly good at opening Ways (he knew one to Demonreach, for example) and tried to escape Edinburgh through the Nevernever. Fortunately, Morgan caught up with him there and ventilated him before he could escape for good, but not before Peabody had dealt critical blows to the White Council.

For starters, LaFortier's murder allowed Grigori Cristos (page 347), LaFortier's protégé and a suspected Black Council member, to be elevated to the Senior Council. It also robbed the Wardens of their most experienced and feared warrior. Lastly, Peabody was probably the traitor feeding information to the Red Court, so he was also responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Wardens, Warden trainees, and wizards…and thousands of innocent civilians in the gas attack in the Congo.

Peabody died of the wounds Morgan gave him, and right-thinking people everywhere are happy about that.

Samuel Peabody

High Concept

Black Council Mole

Other Aspects

Prim and Proper

That's Highly Irregular

Complete and Total Unremitting Douchebag

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Contacts:	Great	(+4)
Conviction:	Good	(+3)
Deceit:	Superb	(+5)
Discipline:	Great	(+4)
Empathy:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Average	(+1)
Lore:	Superb	(+5)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)
Rapport:	Average	(+1)
Scholarship:	Average	(+1)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers

Evocation [-3]
Thaumaturgy [-3]
The Sight [-1]
Soulgaze [+0]
Wizard's Constitution [+0]
Lawbreaker (Third) [-2]
Lawbreaker (Fourth) [-2]
Lawbreaker (Seventh) [-1]
Refinement [-8]

Specializations

Evocation: Elements (Air, Earth, Spirit); Power (Air +1, Earth +1, Spirit +1); Control (Air +2, Earth +1, Spirit +1)

Thaumaturgy: Control (Psychomancy +1, Worldwalking +1), Complexity (Psychomancy +1, Worldwalking +1), Crafting (Frequency +1, Power +2)

Focus Items

Staff (+1 Defensive Control for Air)

Enchanted Items

14 slots, items unknown. Assume several are kept open for potions.

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOO

Notes

We know that he is a Crafting Specialist. Lawbreaker Seventh is for his dealing with mistfiends, and it's just a given with Black Council involvement.

Total Refresh Cost: -20

Lara Raith

High Concept

Secret Queen of the White Court

Other Aspects

Dominating Daddy Dearest

Dead Sexy

Thomas Is My Brother

Justine Is My Hostage

Catspaws Make Good Politics

Assets Are Expendable

A Sailor on Every Ship

Skills, Stunts, Powers

Contacts: Superb (+5)
(Reevaluated up from Good)

No other changes from entry on OW208.

Lara Raith

Original Entry: OW207

Unbeknownst to most, Lara Raith is still the functional head of the White Court's Raith family and the White Court itself. We've learned a bit more about her capability, and a whole lot more about how and what she thinks about certain people and things she's encountered.

She has some sort of history with Anastasia Luccio (page 327), whom she saw dance in Naples two centuries ago. Harry didn't get a good feel for the nature of this relationship; it might be unimportant, but that seems unlikely.

As for the White Council in general, Lara considers them hide-bound, unable to deal with today's concerns, and a relic of a former age. While she's close enough to her sisters, she had no love whatsoever for Madeline Raith—Lara ended up killing her on Demonreach during the battle against Binder's demons during the Turn Coat case, fulfilling an ambition she said she had had since they were both children. And following that case, when Thomas was nearly killed by the naagloshii (page 291), she made damned sure he was nursed back to health, even sending family bodyguards with him when he ventured out after his recovery.

Finally, we've learned that Lara has a disturbing (although maybe not surprising) amount of pull with the US Navy. She arranged for a warship to be off the coast during the Chichen Itza battle and called in a helo to evacuate Molly, who needed urgent medical attention. Who knows what other influence she has on the national or military scale?

Harry said he might not have done the world a favor when he helped Lara take over the White Court. I'm starting to think he was right.



Madeline Raith

Original Entry: OW211

The late Madeline Raith was an undisciplined and unsubtle White Court vampire, pretty much the opposite of the patient and sly operators we're used to seeing. When Harry first met her at Club Zero during the Turn Coat case, Madeline foolishly pushed Thomas's (page 338) buttons a little too hard. She wound up crucified to the table with Justine's (page 320) hair sticks and burned by a caress of her hair. (Justine is the object of Thomas's pure and True Love—anathema to these White Court vampires—so this was special torture for Madeline.)

If another White Court vampire, like Lara, suffered that insult, she would have plotted and manipulated her way to exacting the most excruciating payback possible. Not Madeline. She tried to take her revenge on Demonreach in the Turn Coat case, siding with the Black Council and attacking alongside Binder (page 345) and his minions. She literally threw in against Lara and Harry, sending a concussion grenade their way and nearly killing them both.

Madeline's choice of sides was unwise, to put it mildly. Once she recovered from the concussive blast, Lara proceeded to disembowel and, um, "eat" her cousin (in the emotional sense rather than the "blood rare steak" sense, but dead is dead).

As a thank you for Harry letting him live, Binder gave Harry Madeline's cell phone. After the Demonreach fight, the cell phone was found to have numbers for restaurants in Algeria and Egypt. This was either her Black Council contact, or she *really* liked falafel.

Club Zero

Club Zero is an *extremely* exclusive nightclub where the rich and beautiful of Chicago go to indulge themselves. It has no permanent location, floating around the city every so often, to keep the "riffraff" away. Pounding techno, red lights, a pall of cigarette (and other substances) smoke over everything. And more.

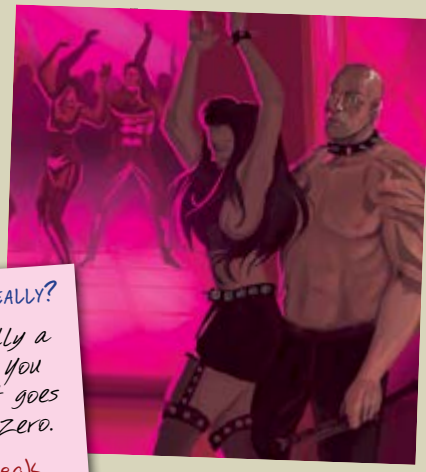
Couches and chaise lounges. Private nooks. A drink (and other substances) menu you wouldn't believe. Syringe disposal containers. Lines of white powder. Cage dancers. Stripper poles. Bondage equipment. Patrons in every degree of dress and undress, all going wild. Scenes being played out. People—often more than two, and sometimes up to nineteen at once—having sex wherever and whenever.

Zero. Zero limits. Zero inhibitions. Zero restraint.

Club Zero: a miasma of hungry needs that seek to be sated, but can *never* be. Is it any surprise it's a White Court front?

Thomas first met Justine (page 320) here when she was just sixteen.

During the Turn Coat case, Harry and Thomas met Justine here to trade information, and Thomas "confronted" Madeline Raith.



Sixteen? Really?

That really a surprise? You know what goes down at Zero.

So to speak.

Thomas Raith

Original Entry: OW212

Thomas Raith, our favorite conflicted White Court vamp, was an important part of both the Turn Coat and Changes cases. During the Turn Coat case, he demonstrated top-notch cooperative combat skills—alongside Mouse, of all creatures. Together, they fought off the Ick (page 282), driving it away from Harry's apartment.

Things turned not-so-good for him in Turn Coat, when the naagloshii Harry called Shagnasty (page 361) captured Thomas, intending to trade him back to Harry for its true target, Donald Morgan (page 332). It was not gentle with Thomas; he was tortured and he gave in to his demon, killing a couple of young women before Harry and Molly came to get him on Demonreach. While Shag and Harry (and later Listens to Wind) threw down, Molly found Thomas in an abandoned cottage where they hid from the skinwalker. Thomas was in an extremely weakened state and barely resisted killing Molly; they did share a soulgaze, however. Since then, Thomas has taken a slightly different perspective on his life, distancing himself from the efforts he used to make to keep himself human, much to Harry's dismay.

In the Changes case, in fact, he demonstrated top-notch cooperative combat skills—alongside Mouse, of all creatures. Together, they fought off the Ick (page 282) driving it away from Rudolph's house. No small feat.

Thomas Raith

High Concept
Returned Prince of the Raith Family

Trouble
Justine Is Still My True Love

Other Aspects
Loyal to My Brother
Lara's Proud of Me
Why Fight It—I'm a Monster
All I See Is Food
Please, Trust Me

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Conviction:	Fair	(+2)
Deceit:	Fantastic	(+6)
Discipline:	Great	(+4)
Driving:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Superb	(+5)
Fists:	Good	(+3)
Guns:	Superb	(+5)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Investigation:	Great	(+4)
Lore:	Fair	(+2)
Might:	Average	(+1)
Presence:	Average	(+1)
Resources:	Fantastic	(+6)
Stealth:	Fair	(+2)
Weapons:	Superb	(+5)

Other skills default to Average or Fair.

Powers
Emotional Vampire [–1]
Human Guise [–0]
Incite Emotion (Lust; At Range) [–2]
Feeding Dependency [+1] affecting the following powers:
- **Supernatural Strength** [–4]
- **Supernatural Speed** [–4]
- **Supernatural Recovery** [–4]
- **The Catch** [+0] is True Love.

Stress
Mental OOO
Physical OOOO +1 mild consequence
Social OOO
Hunger OOOO

Notes
If he's armed, attacks are usually at Great. Thomas tends to favor swords (**Weapon:2**, **Weapon:6** with his strength) and kukri knives (**Weapon:1**, **Weapon:5** with his strength). He's usually also armed with a Desert Eagle pistol (**Weapon:3**), though he'll bring other firearms whenever the need arises. His initiative is Supernatural when he's using Speed, and he dodges most attacks at Fantastic. He can incite lust in targets using Deceit; the target defends with Discipline.

Total Refresh Cost: -14

Carlos Ramirez

Original Entry: OW215

We haven't seen a whole lot of Carlos in the past couple of cases, probably because his job as Regional Commander keeps him busy on the west coast. If he'd been able, his long-standing friendship with Harry might have led him to Chichen Itza during the Changes case, but he, Chandler (page 347), and several other friends attempted to free fellow Wardens confined for having the audacity to suggest that Duchess Arianna Ortega (page 359) should just be destroyed during the peace talks in Edinburgh. Cristos (page 347) captured and detained them all in the White Council's headquarters, effectively taking allies such as Carlos, Chandler, and Luccio (page 327) out of the picture.

Technically speaking, Carlos should be one of the Wardens in pursuit of Molly Carpenter (page 307), but he's been fairly passive about his responsibilities on that front. Considering the flirtation suggested between them during the White Night casefile, this isn't too much of a surprise.

You should redact this part, Will. It could get Ramirez in trouble with the Wardens.

If the White Council gets hold of this, a lot of other things will get their Warden panties in a bunch first. Like maybe you and Bob?

Oh. Um. Right.

Susan Rodriguez

Original Entry: OW219

We saw Susan Rodriguez, Harry's ex, for the last time in the Changes case. Over the last several years, she and Harry had intermittent contact at best. She left Chicago to join up with the Fellowship of St. Giles, a group that aided those afflicted with Red Court venom but not yet turned. With them, she learned how to control her affliction, turning it into a source of power to fight the Red Court. She was learning from a Fellowship operative named Martin (page 330), a man that Harry didn't think a whole lot of, but he seemed competent. Susan seemed to like him, anyway.

What she neglected to tell Harry is that she was pregnant with his child. At the beginning of the Changes casefile, she arrived in Chicago to let Harry know of little Maggie's existence, and also that Maggie had been kidnapped by the Red Court. After the initial shock wore off, Susan and Harry started working on a plan to get her back.

Given that Harry was involved in the plan, it lacked subtlety. The final move was a frontal assault on Chichen Itza, crawling with Red Court vamps about to sacrifice little Maggie and initiate the bloodline curse, which would have slain everyone blood-related to Maggie—not only Harry and Susan, but also Ebenezar McCoy (page 331), Maggie's great-grandfather.

Wearing faerie battle armor made by Harry's godmother Lea, and swinging Sword of the Cross Amoracchius (on loan from Harry, its caretaker until a Knight comes forward), she reached the temple at Chichen Itza with a few of the others including Harry and Martin. There, Martin tricked her into vamping out, killing him in revenge for his perceived betrayal, and completing her conversion into a true vampire.

It was part of Martin's plan, though, to put Harry in a position where he could kill the youngest Red Court vampire on the sacrificial table and release the bloodline curse on the Red Court itself. Once it was clear to her what would happen, she accepted it as her fate. And that was that.

She sacrificed herself, accepting death to destroy humanity's greatest foe.

Susan should be counted among history's great heroes. She won't be. But she *should* be.

I notice that you're keeping the details about how her return impacted them pretty...sparse, Will, considering how much he talked about it in the case notes.

Yeah, well, Harry's not here to advocate for his limits. We don't really know how it would have developed. Harry said there was no chance for the two of them after finding out she kept his kid secret from him, but that might have been his immediate anger talking. And now we'll never know. So I didn't figure it'd be worth including, especially if he comes back and reads this.

Susan Rodriguez

High Concept
Red Court Infected

Trouble
My Daughter Is Maggie Dresden

Other Aspects
Fellowship of St. Giles Agent
Former Paranormal Reporter
Dresden and I Are Done

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Contacts:	Fair	(+2)
Conviction:	Fair	(+2)
Deceit:	Fair	(+2)
Discipline:	Great	(+4)
Empathy:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Guns:	Fair	(+2)
Investigation:	Superb	(+5)
Lore:	Fair	(+2)
Rapport:	Good	(+3)
Stealth:	Fair	(+2)
Weapons:	Fair	(+2)

Most other skills default to Average.

Stunt
Ear to the Ground (Contacts): The difficulty of any Getting the Tip-Off roll is reduced by 2.

Powers
Tattoos of St. Giles [-2]
Addictive Saliva [-1]
Blood Drinker [-1]
Feeding Dependency [+1] affecting the following powers:
Supernatural Strength [-4]
Inhuman Recovery [-2]

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OOO
Hunger	OOOO(OO)

Notes
Susan has Great initiative, Great attacks and defenses, if she chooses to use her vampiric powers in a fight. Susan can take physical punishment others couldn't, thanks to a quick recovery afterwards, and can swing her bare fists with **Weapon:2** force, crushing bone and knocking doors off their hinges. Susan has to be careful about using her Inhuman and Supernatural abilities too much; if she uses the full spread, her Feeding failure check is made against Great difficulty (4 shifts). The tattoos help, but a run of bad luck could leave her ravenous.

Total Refresh Cost: -10

Would the curse have taken out Thomas, too, through Margaret LeFay? Or doesn't it work up-and-down bloodlines like that?

That's a good question. Based on how it took out the whole Red Court, it seems likely that it would. I'll ask Bob about it.

I don't know, Will. To me, it sounds more like she **was** sacrificed. The fact that she came to terms with it at the end doesn't alter the fact that she was manipulated—it wasn't exactly her choice.

Still, what she did took courage, especially given that she had to fight her new demon for a moment of clarity.



Sanya

High Concept
Knight of the Cross

Trouble
The Only Knight

Other Aspects
Agnostic
Do the Right Thing
A Man of Many Contradictions
Former Host of Magog
Rosanna Broke My Heart and Their Hold
Esperacchius, Sword of Hope

Skills

Alertness:	Great	(+4)
Athletics:	Superb	(+5)
Conviction:	Fantastic	(+6)
Discipline:	Great	(+4)
Endurance:	Fantastic	(+6)
Fists:	Good	(+3)
Guns:	Great	(+4)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Investigation:	Average	(+1)
Lore:	Good	(+3)
Might:	Fair	(+2)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)
Scholarship:	Average	(+1)
Stealth:	Fair	(+2)
Survival:	Average	(+1)
Weapons:	Superb	(+5)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
Bless This House [-1]
Guide My Hand [-1]
Holy Touch [-1]
Righteousness [-2]
Sword of the Cross [-3]

Stunts
Target-Rich Environment (Guns): Sanya gain +1 to attacks with Guns whenever he is personally outnumbered in a firefight.

Way of the AK (Guns): Sanya gains +1 to attacks made with guns of Russian or former Soviet manufacture.

Riposte (Weapons): On a successful defense with Weapons, Sanya may sacrifice his next action to turn the defense into an immediate, automatically successful attack with shifts equal to the amount rolled on the defense.

Wall of Death (Weapons): Sanya may use the Weapons skill to make spray attacks against opponents in the same zone as him.

Stress
Mental OOOO
+1 mild consequence
Physical OOOO
+1 mild consequence
Armor:2
Social OOO

Notes
Esperacchius is a long, heavy saber (at least **Weapon:2**), which Sanya wields with Superb ability. Aside from that simple deadly fact, as a Sword of the Cross it also allows him to spend a fate point to ignore a target's supernatural defenses (satisfying the Catch) for the scene.

Sanya's initiative is Great, and his defensive options start at Superb (Athletics) or Superb (Weapons). When fully suited up, he's usually equipped with a military grade assault rifle at **Weapon:3** which he uses with Great ability. He also favors modern tactical armor (Kevlar and the like) providing **Armor:2** against many (but not all) things.

Total Refresh Cost:
-12

Sanya

Original Entry: OW223

Sanya, a Russian of African heritage and an agnostic, is currently the world's only active Knight of the Cross.

Normally, it takes three Knights to protect the whole world, but Sanya's been covering all the positions for the last couple years...and doing it *well*. He shows the same knack for convenient timing that the other Knights and Father Forthill have shown, as he arrived just in the nick of time to help save Harry's neighbors (the Willoughbys) in the Changes case. The building was on fire (again, not Harry's fault) and Harry severely injured, but Sanya got them out and used his EMT training to provide effective first aid.

He fought at Chichen Itza, wielding Esperacchius in the final battle against the Red Court.

He has a unique and well-developed sense of dry Russian humor, though he still has trouble picking up American colloquialisms. He also seems very willing to understand how complicated the supernatural world can get, without judging people for their actions. When talking to Harry about his decision to become the Winter Knight, he didn't display any disapproval and in fact commended Harry for the extent he was willing to go to save his daughter—and then offered Harry a quick death if Harry ever lost his soul.

Lloyd Slate

Original Entry: OW229

After being tortured by Mab for eight years for betraying her, Slate was a wreck; in addition to many necessary pieces and parts either removed or withered, all of his remaining skin was tattooed with the word "traitor" in a hundred languages.

Slate finally died during the Changes case when Harry Dresden killed him on the Stone Table to become the Winter Knight.

Detective Jerome Rudolph

Jerome, ha. Like that jerk professor in REAL GENIUS.

Except for the genius part.

Original Entry: OW223

Jerry Rudolph is an Internal Affairs bully who lied in order to finger Harry when the Red Court blew up Harry's office building in the Changes case. (Agent Tilly—page 362—knows this, for what that's worth.) It's pretty obvious he's gone rogue, acting without the authority of his superiors and very likely under pressure from (or perhaps bought off by) the Red Court. He lives in Crestwood in a quarter-million dollar home, which Chicago cops can't typically afford. Make of that what you will.

He's also a total wuss who freezes up under pressure. When the Red Court assaulted FBI headquarters, he buckled, unable to process what was happening around him; he was about as effective a leader as Sir Robin, who bravely ran away, away.

And he almost shot Mister. Asshole.

We can't all be Rambo, but cops aren't supposed to fold like that in combat. He pretty much got me fired, too, the corrupt SOB. What a waste of perfectly good carbon.

That guy is lucky the Almighty has got his back. If Mab found out what he'd said... Man.

I know there's no doubt, and I know that from some angles we can see it as an act of mercy, but it's still hard for me to believe Harry did this.



Toot-Toot

High Concept
The Very Model of a Pixie Major General

Other Aspects
Generous of the Za Guard!
Proud, But Loyal to the Za Lord
Big Damned Hero Ain't he just!
Armed With Iron
We're Winter Now

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Contacts:	Superb	(+5)
Deceit:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Investigate:	Superb	(+5)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)
Rapport:	Fair	(+2)
Stealth:	Great	(+4)
Weapons:	Great	(+4)

Most other skills default to Average or Mediocre.

Stunts
Captain of a Faerie Band (Contacts): When using the faerie info network to gather information, Toot-toot's efforts are 2 time increments faster.

Ear to the Ground (Contacts): Toot-toot has +2 Contacts when working the faerie info network.

Powers
Diminutive Size [-1]
Wings [-1]
Glamours [-2]
Inhuman Speed [-2]

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OO
Social	OOO

Notes
Epic initiative, Great attacks with Weapons, but even when armed with his **Weapon:1** swords, Toot-toot can only ever deal 2 points of stress. Fantastic defense against most attacks. Toot-toot is not so wee anymore, but he's still small enough to retain his Diminutive Size.

As long as Harry keeps Toot and his comrades full of pizza, they're happy to provide Investigation services while Harry is doing other things. If Harry is really willing to splurge on the pizza, Toot can call out the Za Militia in addition to the Za Guard to cause distractions or give a foe the death of a thousand cuts.

Total Refresh Cost: -8

Toot-Toot

Original Entry: OW237

Toot-toot, the Major General (the very model!) in charge of Harry's wyld fae "Za-Guard," is one of those characters who's clearly growing. Physically, I mean. Getting larger. During the Turn Coat case, he's about a foot tall, and by the Changes case he's easily fifteen inches high.

He's brave as hell, too—he attacked Shagnasty (page 361) in Harry's defense (and got swatted pretty hard for his trouble) and served as a major information source for Harry, locating Susan for him when they were separated during the Changes case (she'd been arrested by the FBI).

He's sensitive about what sort of fae he is; he snaps at Sanya that he's *polevoi*, not *domovoi* (in other words, a field spirit rather than a house spirit). When challenged by Harry about where he learned Russian, he didn't seem to understand the question, responding as if speaking Russian was as natural as speaking any other language. He and his troops have started painting their faces half-blue, like a tiny warband of Picts, to signify their new allegiance to Winter.

So, they're Pict-sies?

Terry Pratchett beat you to that joke.

Oh.

Uriel

Original Entry: OW238

The Watchman of Heaven is an interesting guy, for an archangel. He had several conversations with Harry during the Turn Coat and Changes cases, appearing in guises such as "Jake the Janitor" from "The Warrior" case, and a tall young man with longish blonde hair and blue eyes in Changes.

When Harry tried to summon him in Changes for aid, he seemed amused, informing Harry that such a thing would be no obstacle to him; yet he understood and participated in the very human ritual of accepting an offered swig of scotch. He was very much *not* amused by Harry proposing to send the the Lord God Almighty a bill for his services at the end of "The Warrior" case.

He also seems pretty flexible when it comes to revealing information. He gives Harry the final confirmation that Maggie really is his daughter in Changes, and he reveals God's general plan for humanity in "The Warrior" ("He's all about free will; He wants people to have good things and a good life, but He won't gift wrap them for you"). He doesn't mind telling Harry the cosmic consequences of his actions from time to time—as he did in "The Warrior," when he showed Harry that a bunch of seemingly inconsequential things he did while on the case added up to great good in the world.

We remain uncertain of his overall motives regarding Harry, as he didn't make any moves to stop Harry from becoming the Winter Knight.



Uriel

High Concept
The Watchman of Heaven

Other Aspects
Arch-freaking-angel
An Old Testament Kind of Guy
His Spook

Skills, Power, Etc.
All skills are Legendary or more. Wings with Human Guise, and any other power an angel might have.

Notes
Uriel is a pure plot device.

New Characters

Here are some of the people we've read about or encountered recently.

Kevin Aramis

Kevin was the manager of Windfall, a White Court front company. When Morgan was on the run during Turn Coat case, Madeline Raith (page 337) coerced Aramis into betraying/implicating the White Court of vampires against the White Council of wizards, by claiming that Harry was the owner of the company and used it to wire funds into Donald Morgan's account.

Maddie eventually ate him.

Meditrina Bassarid

High Concept
Maenad on a Mission

Trouble
I Must Regain My Former Glory

Other Aspects
Everything You Desire and More
Mortals Must Be Taught a Lesson
Spirits of the Gods
Beer Snob

Skills

Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Great	(+4)
Deceit:	Superb	(+5)
Discipline:	Good	(+3)
Empathy:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Good	(+3)
Intimidation:	Great	(+4)
Lore:	Great	(+4)
Weapons:	Good	(+3)

Most other skills default to Fair or Average.

Powers

Incite Emotion (Additional Emotion, Lasting Emotion, Potent Emotion) [-4] Lust and Rage
Inhuman Strength [-2]
Inhuman Toughness [-2]
Inhuman Recovery [-2]
The Catch [+3] is symbols of sobriety and moderation
Marked By Power [-1]
Sponsored Magic [-4] Dionysus (Alcohol, Lust, Debauchery, Madness, Frenzy)

Stress

Mental OOOO
Physical OOO(OO) **Armor:1**
Social OOO

Notes

Fair initiative, Good attacks and defenses, strength adds **Weapon:2**. Meditrina can Incite Emotions of Lust and Rage at Epic or Fantastic skill and may make mental attacks with **Weapon:4**. Her sponsored magic mostly revolves around thaumaturgic and evocation mind whammies with a specialty in enchanting alcohol of all kinds.

Total Refresh Cost: -12

Wait, didn't Harry think that Bassarid specifically targeted Caine because of his dislike of Mac, so that Harry would chase him down?

Doesn't track. If Caine were an important component of her plan, she'd have already known how to contact him, and wouldn't have needed to bribe Decker to get his address. I'm pretty sure it's just a coincidence.

Meditrina Bassarid

In the words of the always-classy Burt Decker, Meditrina Bassarid appears as a woman with "blue-black hair, green eyes, long legs, and great tits." But she's not a woman. She's not even human, but a demi-goddess—a maenad. Her first name comes from a Roman goddess of wine and her last name is another term for the hand-maidens of Dionysius.

In the "Last Call" case, she came to Chicago to place a contagion focus on Mac's (page 328) dark ale, for which he'd received a large order from Worldclass Ltd.—an upscale catering firm serving the private boxes at United Center, where the Chicago Bulls play. This contagion focus would open up a psychic link to Dionysius, the god of revels and ecstatic violence, and take the drinkers into his embrace—leading them to party, with wanton sex and carnage. (Bassarid's sisters have been doing the same thing in Europe at football/soccer matches for years, apparently.)

She stopped at Decker's shop (Left Hand Goods) to acquire ritual components for the contagion focus, most important of which is bloodstone. Unfortunately, Decker's stock is crap—he'd sold the last of the pure bloodstone to Caine (page 346). Bassarid bribed Decker to give her Caine's address, and she recruited Caine into her plan—he'd give her the bloodstone and cause a distraction at McAnally's so that she could place the contagion focus, and she'd "wipe the smile" off of Mac's face.

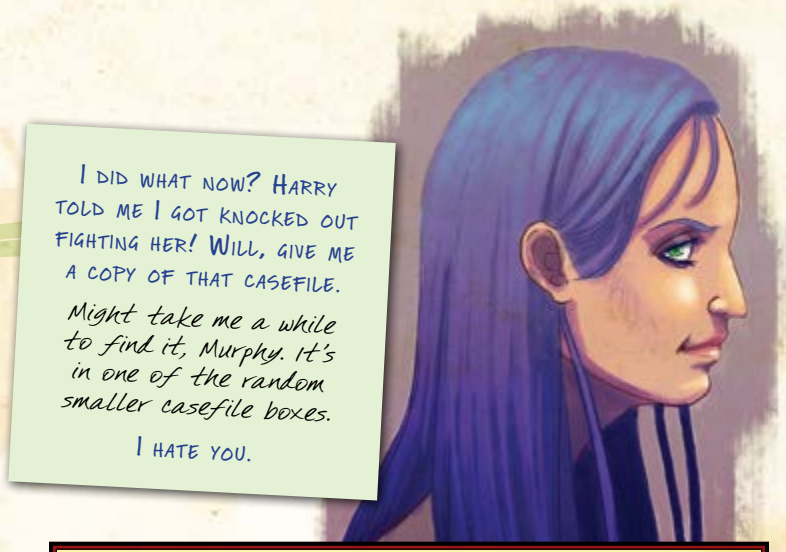
It's unclear whether the riot at McAnally's the next day was a mistake or a test run. True, a riot at McAnally's would screw up a lot of spell-casters who could have meddled with Bassarid's plan, leaving them injured, addle-witted, and confused. Plus, Chicago's major supernatural irritant—Warden Harry Dresden, a known regular at the pub and friend of the owner—would be wrapped up with trying to solve the mystery, so she could have easily driven straight to the big game without interference. Win-win.

However, sparking a riot on Accorded Neutral Ground violates the Unseelie Accords—which means Mab (page 328) will be ticked. You've got to have some real stones to risk pissing off the Queen of Air and Darkness on purpose, just for a test.

Only if you're a signatory. If Bassarid's group isn't, Mab won't care. Trust me, I used the same argument during the Small Favor case.

Murphy caught up with her while she was posing as a city health inspector at United Center checking up on Mac's beer. She laid a mind whammy on Murphy and things got... er, a tad steamy. Then Harry burst in, he and Bassarid had a little chat, he insulted her, then she and Murph tried to kill him. You know, the usual. Luckily, Harry managed to knock them both out after taking a little damage of his own.

Shortly afterward, Bassarid disappeared from the hospital. Her current whereabouts are unknown.



I DID WHAT NOW? HARRY TOLD ME I GOT KNOCKED OUT FIGHTING HER! WILL, GIVE ME A COPY OF THAT CASEFILE.

Might take me a while to find it, Murphy. It's in one of the random smaller casefile boxes.

I HATE YOU.

Binder (aka "Ernest Armand Tinwhistle")

Binder is a blocky Cockney bulldog of a man of average height. He's heavy and solid with muscle (plus a beer-gut), and has blunt features, grey-green eyes, and greying hair in a buzz cut. He's also a career criminal.

His main claim to fame in the supernatural world is the ability to summon and control a squad of demon-esque thugs from the Nevernever and hire them out to people for nefarious deeds. See page 281 for more details on Binder's crew.

He'd carved out a nice little career for himself until he ran into Harry Dresden during the Turn Coat case. Even though he was working with Madeline Raith (page 337) and participated in the battle at Demonreach, he still got outmaneuvered, detained by the police, and shot in the knee. He also had the fear of Harry Dresden thrown into him; in return for his life, he spilled all he knew of Maddie's connections to whoever her "employer" was—the Black Council?—to Harry.



The Black Council

We have some new information on the Black Council since we talked about them in the manuscript. Harry believed that the Merlin wouldn't want us talking about this stuff, for fear that it would cause people to lose confidence in the White Council, but another thing Harry believed in was frequently telling the White Council to piss off. We think he'd want us to talk about it.

Harry discovered that the Black Council has started outsourcing some talent; Madeline Raith was working for them in some capacity, with Binder as a first-tier subcontractor. (They're already working like a major government agency. We can't tell if that bodes well or ill.) Madeline's contact, according to Binder, was a wealthy non-native English speaker, probably learned from a Continental. Cell phone records indicate she made calls to restaurants in Algeria and Egypt.

Harry had a shot at revealing the identity of a Black Council member—he strongly suspected that Peabody had an unseen chaperone on Demonreach during the Turn Coat case. Whoever it was slipped away in the chaos.

Binder

High Concept
Supernatural Gang Leader

Other Aspects
Career Criminal
Pact With a Dark Power
That Wizard Is Scary

Skills

Alertness:	Average	(+1)
Athletics:	Fair	(+2)
Conviction:	Average	(+1)
Discipline:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Average	(+1)

Other skills default to Mediocre.

Powers
Sponsored Magic [-10]

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OO
Social	OO

Notes
Binder's Sponsorship only lets him summon his minions, which he can do at the speed of evocation for the cost of one per shift. In a fight he tends to hang back and let his minions do the work.

Total Refresh Cost: -10

This sponsored magic is insanely powerful and the -10 refresh cost pretty much ensures it's solely the domain of NPC villains.

Herbert Orson Caine

Upon first meeting Caine, Harry described him as a beefy (though a bit gone to seed), violent, heavily tattooed bruiser, and only a couple of inches shorter than Harry. Bald, but with a bristling beard, he has scars around his eyes and a lumpy oft-broken nose—implying that Caine's a fighter, but only a middling one. (*Harry* was able to outfight him physically, without using magic.)

He wears black leather and enough heavy rings to serve as brass knuckles. His voice is thick and dull. He's a homebrewer, specializing in mead—and he was trying to win the blue ribbon at the Night of the Living Brews in the "Heorot" case. (The fact that Mac's won that year—and the disappearance of his own keg of Caine's Kickass mead—seems to have irritated him.)

When we next meet him in the "Last Call" case, we learn that he's also an ex-con, mugger, extortionist, and a rapist. He also dabbles in the dark arts and is a regular shopper at Burt Decker's Left Hand Goods. Charming.

Caine reached an agreement with Bassarid (page 344)—he gave her his bloodstone and made a ruckus near closing time at McAnally's, and she messed Mac up good with her mind magic. It's probable she also gave Caine a "demonstration" of that mind magic, to intimidate him into going along with the plan.

Herbert Orson Caine

High Concept
Bullying Ex-Con Rapist

Other Aspects
Homebrewer
Dabbler in the Dark Arts
Not So Bright
Dirty Street Fighter

Skills

Conviction:	Average	(+1)
Craftsmanship:	Fair	(+2)
Discipline:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Fair	(+2)
Fists:	Good	(+3)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Fair	(+2)
Might:	Average	(+1)

Other skills default to Mediocre.

Powers
Ritual (Crafting) [-2]
Refinement [-1]
Lawbreaker (Third) [-1]
Lawbreaker (Fourth) [-1]

Enchanted Items
8 slots kept open for potions.

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OOO
Social	OO

Notes
Mediocre Initiative, Good attacks with Fists, Good Defense in melee, Mediocre at range. Caine is pretty small time compared to some of the stuff we've seen, but even a "bit player" like this can cause a lot of damage if given the chance.

Total Refresh Cost: -5

Why does Caine need bloodstone?

Bloodstone: Also known as heliotrope, it's a form of chalcedony. The mystical powers attributed to it through folklore are the full bag A to Z (it's a floor wax AND a dessert topping!), depending on your source. But for what we can piece together from what Bassarid was trying to do, here are the best cases for using it as a ritual component in the contagion focus: cleanses the blood, liver, and kidneys; heightens one's psychic powers; opens all doors and rends bonds and walls asunder; and acts as an aphrodisiac.

In Caine's case, I'm betting he had it for that last reason. Maybe trying to make magic roofies?

I THOUGHT HELIOTROPE WAS A FLOWER?

It's both! And, if you put the gem and the flower together in the right way you turn invisible! Insta-Veiling!

WHERE DO YOU GET THIS STUFF?

I Googled it. That's folklore. Bob said it probably wouldn't work like that, though—but if you used them both as ingredients in an invisibility potion, they'd probably serve well just because of collective belief.

Warden Chandler (aka "Steed")

Chandler is a young man, lean and fit, with cobalt eyes, sharp cheekbones, and an Oxford accent. He's well-bred, well-educated, and well-tailored. Under his Warden cloak, he wears fashionable and expensive suits, shirts, and ties. Sometimes he affects a bowler. Instead of a rod or staff, he carries a silver-headed walking cane. He's smart and not shy of reminding you of it, and he has a certain flippant British wit. He's reasonably close friends with Carlos Ramirez (page 338).

Chandler is one of the White Council's home guard; he's always working near Captain Luccio (page 327) and the Senior Council—he seems to serve as Luccio's aide-de-camp. (Also, due to this proximity, he always has the good dirt on what's happening.) There are indications that he's quite skilled and powerful—he's sent to man guard-posts in and around the Hidden Halls of Edinburgh (page 324) by himself, when those stations are usually manned by *five or six* Wardens at a time.

Grigori Cristos

Senior Council member Cristos is a tall, spare Greek man with a strong and smooth baritone voice, a flowing mane of grey hair, a dark beard, and dark eyes. LaFortier's (page 321) protégé, he's lived throughout southern Asia for the past few centuries; he distinguished himself in the fight with "that rakshasa raja" a few years ago ("offstage" during Harry's White Night case). He likes to wear his formal Council robes open, to show off the designer business suits worn underneath.

He is, in the words of one highly placed source, an "unpleasant bastard." Cristos wants power, plain and simple. It's said he's building influence by trading on people's fears—of the Vampire War, and possibly on the existence of the Black Council. After the murder of LaFortier, he went to the Merlin (page 322) and essentially said that he and his allies—perhaps a third of the entire White Council—would secede if he didn't get LaFortier's seat on the Senior Council, despite his being fairly far down the seniority list. A deal was struck, and now Cristos is on the Senior Council.



Warden Chandler

High Concept
Well-Tailored Warden

Other Aspects
Luccio's Aide-de-Camp
Oxford Educated
Suave, Sophisticated Gentleman
Tons of British Fortitude
If You Could Only Look This Good

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Contacts:	Fair	(+2)
Conviction:	Superb	(+5)
Discipline:	Superb	(+5)
Empathy:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Great	(+4)
Investigation:	Great	(+4)
Lore:	Great	(+4)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Rapport:	Fair	(+2)
Resources:	Good	(+3)
Weapons:	Fair	(+2)

Other skills default to Average or Fair.

Powers
Evocation [-3]
Thaumaturgy [-3]
The Sight [-1]
Soulgaze [+0]
Wizard's Constitution [+0]
The Catch [+0] is a disheveled appearance.
Inhuman Mental Toughness [-2]
Refinement [-6]

Specializations
Evocation: Elements (Air, Spirit, Water); Control (Air +2, Spirit +2, Water +1); Power (Air +2, Spirit +2, Water +1)
Thaumaturgy: Control (Divination +1, Wards +1), Complexity (Divination +1, Wards +1)

Focus Items
Silver-Headed Cane (Air Offense Control +1, Air Offense Power +1)

Stress
Mental OOOO(OO)
+1 mild consequence
Armor:1
Physical OOOO
Social OOOO

Notes
Chandler has enough Discipline to safely control 5 shifts of Evocations; with Air or Spirit, that jumps to 7 shifts. He has Good physical defenses, Fair attacks, and a Good initiative. Chandler's Catch is tied to his impeccably natty suits—if his clothes should become dirty or tattered, or his appearance become unkempt, he loses his Mental Toughness bonuses.

Total Refresh Cost:
-15

How exactly is "disheveled appearance" a Catch?

My thinking was that Steed is all about looking—and therefore being—suave, cool, and sophisticated. He's got the whole British superspy thing going and his fashion sense is his armor against the world. Strip him of it or mess with his suave appearance and you lower his mental shields as well.



Grigori Cristos

High Concept
Politicking Senior White Council Wizard

Other Aspects
Power for Its Own Sake
Let's Make a Deal, Connected as Hell
Play on Their Fears

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Fair	(+2)
Contacts:	Superb	(+5)
Conviction:	Superb	(+5)
Deceit:	Great	(+4)
Discipline:	Great	(+4)
Empathy:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Intimidation:	Average	(+1)
Lore:	Superb	(+5)
Presence:	Good	(+3)
Rapport:	Average	(+1)
Resources:	Great	(+4)
Stealth:	Average	(+1)
Weapons:	Fair	(+2)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Powers
Evocation [-3]
Thaumaturgy [-3]
The Sight [-1]
Soulgaze [+0]
Wizard's Constitution [+0]
Refinement [-7]
Supernatural Mental Toughness [-4]
The Catch [+0] is mental attacks focusing on isolation, exploiting his reliance on his contacts and political network.

More speculation, but he's so reliant on backup from powerful supporters, it seemed like it fit.

Specializations
Evocation: Elements (Earth, Spirit, Water, Fire, Air); Control (Earth +1, Spirit +2, Water +1, Fire +1, Air +2); Power (Air +1)
Thaumaturgy: Control (Divination +2, Wards +1), Complexity (Divination +2, Wards +2)

Stress
Mental OOOO(OOOO)
+1 mild consequence
Armor:2
Physical OOOO:
Social OOOO

Notes
All Specializations are just speculation. While Cristos is a powerful wizard, he doesn't pack anywhere near the same punch as the rest of the Senior Council.

Total Refresh Cost:
-18

Harry (page 309) suspected that Cristos could have been Peabody's confederate—and thus a member himself of the Black Council—but there's no proof. Our highly placed source just thinks he's stupid.

If Cristos is on the Black Council, assume he has multiple lawbreaker stunts. He might be sandbagging his power as well.

Demonreach

Demonreach is the name Harry bestowed upon an island several miles out in Lake Michigan, an island that doesn't appear on any maps, charts, or official records of any kind. It connects to somewhere nasty in the Nevernever, and a huge ley line of dark energy wells up from the island. Bad things happen to just about everyone who's gone out there.

At some point in the 19th century, government people figured out the place was bad news and expunged it from all official records (and as many unofficial ones as they could get their hands on). Still today, you can spot evidence of the existence of a small port facility and village on the shore, there to support fishermen and loggers and who knows who else back when the island was occupied. In fact, one of the surviving cottages on the island bore glowing runes that discouraged a skinwalker from approaching.

In the Turn Coat case, Harry claimed the island as a sanctum, hoping it would give him an advantage in the battle against Madeline Raith, Binder, and the rest of that gang. While he conducted the ritual, the island's genius loci (and the reason why we're classifying Demonreach as a person in *Who's Who*) manifested itself as a twelve-foot tall humanoid figure wearing a dark, voluminous cloak.

Harry described it as proportioned wrong to be human; its shoulders were too wide, its stance too crooked, and it walked with a drag-thump limp. Oh, and the foxfire green eyes. Those weren't too human, either. Rashid the Gatekeeper warned Harry about the loci as he was approaching the island; Rashid himself refused to set foot on the place (it "carries a grudge," he says).



DID MRS. O'LEARY'S COW PERCHANCE HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THIS GREAT PURGE OF OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL RECORDS?

Whoa.

THERE WERE A BUNCH OF LARGE, SUSPICIOUS FIRES UP AND DOWN THE LAKESHORE THAT FALL, YOU KNOW.

There are still a lot of pleasure boaters out on Lake Michigan; I'm surprised people don't stumble across Demonreach more often. It must have ways of not being found.

Later that night, Listens to Wind taught Harry how to make use of the intellectus (OW292) that Harry's attunement to the island granted him access to, in order to hold off Madeline Raith and Binder's forces during the desperate battle.

Ebenezar McCoy's journal mentions Demonreach's "original purpose" and the "mantle" associated with it, but Harry never figured out exactly what McCoy was alluding to.

Evelyn Derek

A lawyer working at Smith Cohen Mackleroy, she has deep green eyes, raven black hair, narrow elegant features, long legs, and a cold and reserved demeanor; she's an elegant dresser—rimless glasses, well-cut suit-dress, expensive shoes. She has a fantastic poker face.

Under the thrall of Madeline Raith (page 337), she hired Vince Graver (page 352) to keep tabs on Harry during the Turn Coat case, but her enthrallment was broken after she shared a soulgaze with Harry Dresden.

Father Roarke Douglas (aka "Buzz")

This fit, middle-aged US Army chaplain was also a sniper for the Rangers, trained in demolitions, and a parish priest in Guatemala, Indonesia, and Rwanda. He was reserved and calm in the face of crisis, showed great courage in protecting his parishioners.

Recruited by the Ordo Malleus (page 350), Father Douglas worked alongside Shiro (OW242) much the way Father Forthill (OW147) worked with Michael Carpenter (page 307). When Shiro died, he was devastated. When Fidelacchius passed into the care of Harry Dresden (page 309), he began arguing for "preemptive intervention"—striking at the forces of darkness first. When Amoracchius also came into Harry's hands, Douglas started believing that Harry was the agent of an enemy power, tasked with keeping the Swords out of play; he spent a year trying to convince the rest of the Order of the same. Then, he went off the rails.

Using contacts like the Venatori Umbrorum (OW73), he studied up on magic enough to know how to deal with Harry, and even got a one-shot amulet that blocked a force evocation.

Evelyn Derek

High Concept
Attorney

Skills

Deceit:	Good	(+3)
Scholarship:	Good	(+3)

Other skills default to Average or Fair.

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OO
Social	OO

Total Refresh Cost: +2 (Pure Mortal)

So, being a lawyer in this game just boils down to being educated and a good liar?

Father Roarke Douglas

High Concept
Rogue Ordo Malleus Agent

Trouble
Evil Must Be Stopped at any Cost

Other Aspects
Former Army Ranger Sniper
Demolitions Expert
Faith Through Superior Firepower
Of His Own Accord

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Good	(+3)
Craftsmanship:	Great	(+4)
Fists:	Good	(+3)
Guns:	Superb	(+5)
Investigation:	Fair	(+2)
Lore:	Fair	(+2)
Stealth:	Great	(+4)
Survival:	Fair	(+2)

Most other skills default to Average or Mediocre.

Stunts

Demolitions Training (Craftsmanship): Roarke is trained in the use of explosives using Craftsmanship to attack and maneuver against structures.

Sniper (Guns): With a properly adjusted rifle and brace or a turn to aim, Roarke suffers no penalties due to range.

Stress

Mental	OOOO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOO

Notes
Fair initiative, Good attacks and defense, Roarke is a Superb shot and he specializes in high caliber military grade sniper rifles at **Weapon:4**.

Total Refresh Cost: +0 (Pure Mortal)

He started sending Harry photos of Michael, implying that Michael was in danger.

Douglas kidnapped Michael's daughter Alicia from softball practice, right under the noses of Harry, Michael, and Molly (page 307). Setting up a trade with Harry (Alicia for the Swords), he wrapped the little girl in detcord on top of a building.

Harry saved her.

Harry and Michael caught up with a Sword-wielding Douglas on the shores of Lake Michigan, where, despite his injuries, Michael handily defeated Douglas in a melee duel armed only with a baseball bat. They took him into custody and remanded him to the care of the Church.

The Ordo Malleus

Approximately 200 to 700 priests of the Roman Catholic Church know of the mission of the Knights of the Cross. But maybe only 4 to 6 know the full details and deeper meanings of what they're *really* doing (that includes the current Pope); these few are the power behind the Ordo Malleus, or the "Order of the Hammer." Members of the order are sworn to secrecy—not even the Knights know the full details of their support structure.

Originally tasked with casting demons out of people, their organization has lasted two thousand years and helped millions of people suffering under the yoke of dark magic. They've fought gods, vampires, faeries, and warlocks. They have a "witness protection program" for those under threat of supernatural retaliation. They keep records of—and hide away—any recovered coins of the Denarians (OW55).

The world knows of them in a different way—they are the basis of the Inquisition.

The Ordo itself is not directly responsible for the Inquisition's historical atrocities, however—those happened as a result of the Ordo losing control over its membership as power got into the heads of its members. The public face of the Inquisition grew much bigger than the Ordo itself; in the wake of its excesses, the Ordo went underground and exists only as a phantom in the infrastructure of the Church.

Today, the Ordo Malleus recruits people singly, after years of observation, focusing on the highest levels of personal and ethical integrity possible. As Father Douglas showed us, however, there is still the possibility for failure.

And for those who think the Ordo Malleus isn't doing enough, on page 163 Alejandra tells us about the Ordo Torca, which is active in Las Tierras Rojas, among other places.

Steven Douglas

High Concept
Chicago Hit-Man

Trouble
Strange Professional Code

Not that strange. The most professional mercenaries don't like doing what they're good at for free.

Like the Joker in "The Dark Knight."

I was thinking about Kincaid, but okay, sure.

Other Aspects
Gun for Hire
Up Close and Personal
I Got a Rep to Consider

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Good	(+3)
Guns:	Great	(+4)
Intimidation:	Fair	(+2)
Weapons:	Good	(+3)

Most other skills default to Mediocre, with a few at Average.

Stunts

Connected (Contacts): Stevie D gains +2 to Contacts when networking within organized crime.

Sidearm Specialist (Guns): Stevie D specializes at close range kills with a pistol; he gets +1 to attacks with Guns when using a pistol in the same zone.

Target Rich Environment (Guns): Stevie D gains +1 to attacks with Guns when personally outnumbered in a firefight.

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOO

Notes
Great shot with a gun; carries a pistol (**Weapon:2**). Good initiative and defense.

Total Refresh Cost: -1 (Pure Mortal)

Steven Douglas (AKA "Stevie D")

Stevie D is a heavyset Chicago hit-man, specializing in sidearms, who's rumored to be the one who murdered John Marcone's sub-lieutenant, Torelli (OW238). Stevie D was supposedly hired during the Changes case by Susan Rodriguez (page 339)—it was actually Duchess Arianna of the Red Court (page 297) under a reshaped flesh-mask—to take out Harry Dresden for $20,000 up front, and another $20,000 on completion.

He found Harry at St. Mary of the Angels and tried to kill him, shooting Butters (page 306) in the back and breaking Father Forthill's (OW147) jaw in the process. Butters got revenge by being prepared with body armor and shocking Stevie D unconscious with a defibrillator.

Later, Stevie D was apparently glad Butters wasn't dead, since that wouldn't have been professional. Strange code of conduct there.

The Eebs

The Eebs (AKA Esteban and Esmerelda Batiste) were a notorious husband-wife team the Red Court used for fieldwork. Sharing a gruesome variation of love for one another (some say merely complementary insanities), they seemed more emotional than other RCVs. They referred to themselves in the plural. They were old enough Reds that they could hide in the shadow of their flesh-masks (page 297) and they apparently had their own properties and chattel.

They believed that since they were not of the "First Maya," the Red King (page 353) would never name them to the Circle of the Red Court, no matter how many prizes they brought him. But they wouldn't turn against him to, say, support Duchess Arianna (page 359), for fear of his response.

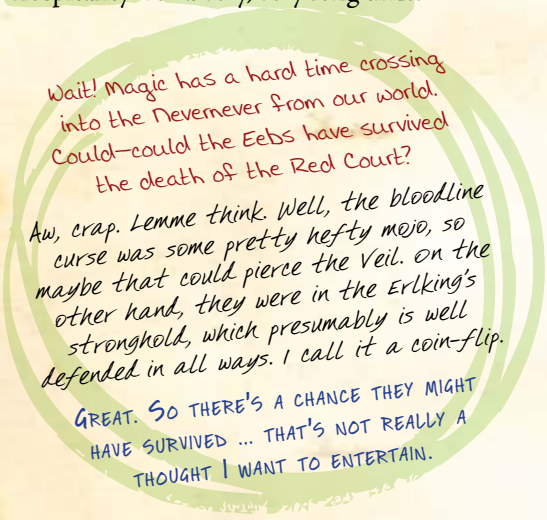
During the Changes case, they followed Martin (page 330) and Susan (page 339) to the data center in Harry's (page 309) office building as part of a scheme to upset Arianna's plans for the wizard. They were possibly behind the hit outside the Chicago FBI headquarters on Rudolph (page 341)—unless Arianna was.

They definitely went to Rudy's fancy house to try to kill him (along with the Ick, page 282), but were stopped by Harry, Molly (page 307), Mouse (page 333), and Thomas (page 338). During that assault, they had a long, mannered,

and threatening conversation to try to talk Harry out of "participating" in Arianna's stratagem, and offered several unappealing options to him. They were driven off by the timely arrival of Harry's friends.

Later, they and their team (including the Ick) assaulted the FBI building in an attempt to get Harry and Susan, following them through a portal to the Nevernever that led to the Erlking's Hall (page 314). After they and Harry bandied words with the Erlking (page 314), their competing claims led him to declare a trial of blood and skill—read "combat"—to determine who was in the right. Neither of the Eebs participated in the duel, sending in one of their team and the Ick.

After Harry and Susan were victorious, the Erlking sent them on their way…but the Eebs and their team were taken away to suffer goblin "hospitality" for a very, very long time.



Esmerelda Batiste

A tiny woman no larger than a child (about 4'6")—though she still has the proportions of an adult—Esmerelda appears to be around nineteen years old. She has very straight light brown hair, pale and delicate features dusted with faint freckles, a clear soprano voice, and eyes of differing colors: one an icy, pale blue and the other a deep, dark green. She also smells wrong—like mildew and formaldehyde. That's your first clue she isn't human.

She's devious, excitable, petulant, prideful—and *extra insane*. Despite being a kill-crazy wrong-smelling vampire, she also possesses that certain feminine mystique that can be…disconcerting. She shares some sort of deep bond with Esteban, and refers to herself (and himself?) in the plural.

Esmeralda Batiste

High Concept
Red Court Vampire Troubleshooter

Other Aspects
One Half of the Eebs
Natural Born Killer
Totally Fucking Insane
Smells Wrong

Skills

Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Discipline:	Average	(+1)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Superb	(+5)
Guns:	Good	(+3)
Intimidation:	Fair	(+2)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)
Stealth:	Great	(+4)

Other skills default to Average and Fair.

Powers
Addictive Saliva [-1]
Blood Drinker [-1]
Claws [-1]
Echoes of the Beast [-1]
Flesh Mask (with Cover) [-2]
Feeding Dependency [+1] affecting the following powers:
Cloak of Shadows [-1]
Supernatural Strength [-4]
Supernatural Speed [-4]
Supernatural Recovery [-4]
Supernatural Toughness [-4]
Domination [-2]
The Catch [+2] is sunlight and holy stuff; no armor on belly.

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OOOO(OOOO)
Armor:2	
Social	OOO
Hunger	OO

Notes
The Eebs are basically your standard Red Court vampire on steroids.

Total Refresh Cost: -22

Esteban Batiste

High Concept
Red Court Vampire Troubleshooter

Other Aspects
One Half of the Eebs
Cold and Calculating
Do What I Say!
Smells Wrong

Skills

Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Discipline:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Superb	(+5)
Guns:	Fair	(+2)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Investigation:	Fair	(+2)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)
Stealth:	Great	(+4)

Powers
Addictive Saliva [-1]
Blood Drinker [-1]
Claws [-1]
Echoes of the Beast [-1]
Flesh Mask (with Cover) [-2]
Feeding Dependency [+1] affecting the following powers:
Cloak of Shadows [-1]
Supernatural Strength [-4]
Supernatural Speed [-4]
Supernatural Recovery [-4]
Supernatural Toughness [-4]
The Catch [+2] is sunlight and holy stuff; no armor on belly.

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OOOO(OOOO)
Armor:2	
Social	OOO
Hunger	OOOO

Notes
The Eebs are basically your standard Red Court vampire on steroids.

Total Refresh Cost: -20

New power options for Flesh Mask

Cover [-1]. Your Flesh Mask is strong enough to provide some protection from sunlight or any other exposure-based part of your Catch. You can be out and about by day, but must remain in the shade; this still won't protect you from direct exposure. All other parts of your Catch work as normal.

Shelter [-2]. Your Flesh Mask is strong enough to protect you even from direct exposure to sunlight or any other exposure-based part of your Catch. All other parts of your Catch work as normal.

"Frogface"

Notes

There's nothing particularly special about good ol' "Frogface"—just use the stats for the Fomor on page 287.

Glenmael

High Concept

Sidhe Lord Chauffeur

Skills

Alertness:	Fantastic	(+6)
Drive:	Fantastic	(+6)

Other skills default to at least Good or Great.

Powers

Supernatural Speed [-4]
Greater Glamours [-4]

Notes

Being a Sidhe lord, Glenmael undoubtedly has a lot more than what's listed here. But we haven't seen enough to speculate further.

Vincent Graver

High Concept

Ex-Cop Private Investigator

Trouble

Too Much Integrity

Other Aspects

Exceptionally Nondescript
Keeps His Mouth Shut
Soft Spot for Dames
Plenty of Guts With a Fair Share of Stupid
My Fee Up Front, Plus Expenses

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Contacts:	Average	(+1)
Deceit:	Fair	(+2)
Empathy:	Fair	(+2)
Investigation:	Great	(+4)
Rapport:	Average	(+1)
Resources:	Fair	(+2)
Stealth:	Good	(+3)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts

Pin the Tail (Investigation): Vince gains +2 to Investigation rolls to keep track of a target during Surveillance, and can use Investigation as a complement to Stealth when Shadowing someone.

Blend In (Stealth): Vince gains +2 to Stealth rolls to hide in a crowd.

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OO
Social	OOO

Notes

Good initiative, Average attacks and defense.

Total Refresh Cost: +0

(Pure Mortal)

During the Changes case, she identifies Mouse (page 333) as a "mountain ice demon from the Land of Dreams." Interestingly, her bat-form arms are a third longer than her flesh-mask ones.

Esteban Batiste

Esteban appears to be a man of medium stature (perhaps 5'6"), with a short brush of red hair, a black beard, and bronze skin. Along with his wife Esmerelda, he's one of the notorious Eebs. He shares some sort of deep bond with her, and refers to himself (and herself?) in the plural.

During the Changes case, he was stern, commanding, oddly charming, much more rational than his bride, and much more focused.

"Frogface"

One of the lesser sorcerers of the Fomor (page 287), "Frogface" and his implanted human (page 286) retainers (also see "Nothing," page 358) set up a base in a seedy Chicago waterfront warehouse to initiate a "talent search"—kidnapping minor supernaturals for use in Fomor magic (page 287) during the "Aftermath" incident.

While he was trying to use a Fomor seashell (page 288) to mind-control Marcy (page 357), Murphy put six rounds from her P-90 into his head. And that was, as they say, that.

Glenmael

Glenmael was Lea's (page 325) chauffer during the Changes case. He drives a post-WWII era emerald green stretch limousine, with a stretched hood, tailfins, and chrome grill. He appears to be a thin young man of medium height in a black suit, impressively good-looking, but that was only until Harry decided he wasn't human. That's when Harry saw his fae form—a young Sidhe lord, with sunny hair bound in a braid past his waist, feline amber eyes, wearing an emerald tunic and tights accented in deep violet. He's capable of veiling the car and seems to drive with supernatural ability.

Vincent Graver

Vincent Graver is a PI, and Harry reported that he's a good one, the kind that actually has integrity. He's a thin, clean-cut twenty-something with medium brown hair, medium brown eyes, medium height—the perfect nondescript sort of person to be a private investigator, even if his blue Mercedes isn't exactly nondescript.

He used to be a cop, working in vice, when he discovered that beating up women was a turn-on for Chicago councilman Ricardo Dornan. When he pushed too hard on that, he got reassigned to Special Investigations. He immediately resigned.

Harry retained his services during the Turn Coat case, collecting information in the ongoing investigation into who framed Morgan.

Kukulcan
(aka "The Red King")

The King of the Red Court was a little guy (say, 5'2" or 5'3"), well-muscled, with long black hair. He overcompensated for this stature by possessing phenomenal power on the scale of some gods. We're talking cosmic power.

Over millennia, he became so addicted to the blood that his behavior started to unravel. This explains, in part, why the Red Court was utterly inconsistent in the Vampire War against the White Council; following his dictates, they'd be brilliant and aggressive one second, and then insane and/or idiotic in the next. Factions within the Red Court—including one led by his daughter Arianna (page 359)—started maneuvering to remove him from the throne.

During the Changes case, Harry Dresden (page 309) confronted him at Chichen Itza and defeated him in battle before sending him and the rest of the Red Court to their deaths.

The Bloodline Curse

As we understand it, the bloodline curse the Red King and the Lords of Outer Night intended to use on Harry's daughter was a more powerful version of the heart-exploding spell that Victor Sells was using in the Storm Front case. In the "upgraded" version of the spell, the energy goes beyond just the one victim and travels to everyone related to the victim, killing them as well. Had the Red Court succeeded, they would have taken out both Harry and Ebenezar McCoy, the original intended target of the spell.

Fortunately for Harry, the process of creating a Red Court vampire creates a familial association similar to a human bloodline, thus allowing Harry to fell the whole Court by reversing the spell on them. The cost was great, but the victory was total.

Obviously, the energy required for such a spell is massive and its particulars can't really be statted in game terms. It's a plot device kind of spell, and only possible because the Red King and the Lords of Outer Night are akin to demigods.



Kukulcan

High Concept
The Red King

Trouble
Insane Blood Junkie

Other Aspects
Freaking Big Bad God Complex
Bow. Down. Mortal.
The Will of Ages
Irrational and Paranoid Monster

Skills, Powers, etc.

Kukulcan was a plot device level character—he was the next best thing to a god and had been so for thousands of years. His will was a nearly physical thing that could crush most mortals to the ground with a thought. If you need any numbers, start with Legendary +1 and go up from there, especially in his places of power like Chichen Itza. Go against him directly and you lose.

But, like most powerful entities, he could be outmaneuvered if you were very good or very lucky. But he was also a certifiable lunatic who was sliding dangerously into an erratic spiral of addiction, which made him a lot more vulnerable than most of the other plot device level characters you might face. Unfortunately he also usually had back up with him in the form of the Lords of Outer Night, armies of Red Court vampires and infected, as well as humans all enthralled to his divine will.

Unless your name is Harry Dresden.

He had help, Will, and it cost nearly everything.

Baroness LeBlanc

High Concept
Red Court Research Specialist

Other Aspects
Need to Breed the Livestock

Skills

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Fair	(+2)
Conviction:	Average	(+1)
Deceit:	Fair	(+2)
Discipline:	Fair	(+2)
Endurance:	Fair	(+2)
Fists:	Good	(+3)
Lore:	Good	(+3)
Resources:	Great	(+4)
Stealth:	Fair	(+2)

Powers
Standard Red Court Vampire Abilities (see OW88) [-11]
Ritual (Pyschomancy) [-2]

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OOO(OO) **Armor:1**
Social	OO
Hunger	OOO

Notes
As a magic practitioner, LeBlanc is a relatively minor talent, but vampires don't need magic to be dangerous.

Total Refresh Cost: -13



Baroness LeBlanc

Encountered during the "Love Hurts" case, Baroness LeBlanc was a Red Court vampire who appeared as a beautiful young woman of medium height, wearing glasses and a lab coat; she spoke with a British accent. Working at the Tunnel of Terror ride at the Illinois State Fair, she was working on creating love between mortals—using subtle and invasive mind magic.

She had two goals with this nefarious plan. One: To generate love to help armor mortals against the depredations of the White Court (thus, minimizing the influence of vampiric competition). Two: Increase the population (thus, increasing the amount of food for the Red Court).

Of course, the process had some side effects—a small percentage of the "test pool" (read: "victims") had aberrant reactions, leading to three suicide pacts between couples within less than two weeks. (One of the "couples" was actually a brother and sister, Greg and Cindy Bardalacki, driven by the mind-whammy to incest. Charming.)

As she wasn't an experienced practitioner, she was using a focus artifact (much like the belts used by hexenwolves, OW93) to generate this love. It was the seatbelt in the Tunnel of Terror's car. While investigating, Harry and Murphy also came under the influence of this magic, but they managed to overcome its effects long enough to put an end to her schemes.

She had two mortal thralls (OW83): her assistant "Maroon" and Stu the Carnie.

But really, why would you bother?

Andi Macklin

A redheaded, long-legged Alpha, the image of Andi Macklin would have been at home as nose-art on a WWII bomber. And she knows it—she appreciates being appreciated, and she isn't shy about showing it. Adventurous, open, always game, Andi has always loved trying new things.

She and Marcy (page 357) were briefly involved while in college (and remained friends afterward), but she eventually became an intense and steady item with Kirby (page 321). Their escapades were the stuff of legend among the Alphas, until they were brought to a tragic end by Kirby's death at the hands of Shagnasty (page 361) during the Turn Coat case.

Andi was also in that fight, but she escaped with a far better fate—she merely had her arm, shoulder, and ribs broken, and her head and face (and maybe her skull?) terribly beaten up. She spent her recovery and rehabilitation living with Georgia (page 304) and Will Borden (page 305), though she may not be completely recovered—during the "Aftermath" incident, Andi seemed more affected by the Fomor mind magic (page 287) than the other Alphas were.

You may want to step that back a bit. According to my observations, uh, she seems to be healing up just fine. In my medical opinion.

In your "medical opinion." OK.

Well, yes. If I'm forced to doctor live patients, I want to do a good job.

BUTTERS, IF YOU EVER EXAMINE ME AS THOROUGHLY AS YOU HAVE ANDI, I'LL DECK YOU.

MAG

What little we knew of Mag comes from the "Even Hand" dossier. He was a cantrev lord of the Fomor, and a powerful Sorcerer Lord of the First Rank. He looked like a typical Fomor—a repellent froglike humanoid standing about seven feet tall. He wore a coronet of coral and an intricately embroidered blue robe over clothes that seemed to be made of seaweed.

Mag was an extremely powerful sorcerer and had the typical haughty and imperious attitude and disregard for mortals that are common to the Fomor. He first violated the territory of John Marcone in pursuit of Justine and a child slave who had escaped his captivity. While Justine was pleading with Marcone for sanctuary, Mag barged in and demanded the return of his property from the petty mortal who had dared to sign the Accords. Marcone and his bodyguards stopped Mag's initial assault and put him out on the street.

After being rebuffed by the mortal Freeholding Lord, Mag summoned up his forces and assaulted Marcone's headquarters, intent on retrieving his property and on teaching an upstart mortal a harsh lesson in the way of the world. Unfortunately for Mag, Marcone was more than prepared for a magical assault on his property and eventually defeated his minions, killed Mag, and returned his corpse to King Corb along with the weregild owed for killing a signatory of the Accords of Mag's stature.



ANDI MACKLIN

HIGH CONCEPT

MEMBER OF THE ALPHAS

OTHER ASPECTS

REDHEADED BOMBSHELL

I'LL TRY ANYTHING TWICE

KILLER FIGURE

SMALL AND SWIFT

LIFE GOES ON

SKILLS

Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Athletics:	Fair	(+2)
Deceit:	Good	(+3)
Empathy:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Fair	(+2)
Fists:	Fair	(+2)
Performance:	Good	(+3)
Presence:	Great	(+4)
Rapport:	Good	(+3)
Stealth:	Fair	(+2)

These skills represent Andi in her mortal form. As a wolf, she can shuffle her skills, swapping Deceit, Empathy, Performance, Presence, and Rapport for Alertness, Athletics, Stealth, Endurance, and Fists.

STUNTS

Sex Appeal (Rapport): Andi has +2 Rapport to her seduction rolls against those receptive to her advances.

POWERS

Beast Change [-1]

Echoes of the Beast [-1]

The Catch [+1] is any purely supernatural source of damage.

Inhuman Recovery [-2]

Human Form [+1] affecting:

Claws [-1]

Inhuman Speed [-2]

Inhuman Strength [-2]

Pack Instincts [-1]

STRESS

Mental	OOO
Physical	OOO(O)
Social	OOOO

NOTES

In human form, Andi has Fair attacks, defenses, and initiative. In wolf form, Claws and Strength give her **Weapon:4** with her Good "unarmed " attacks, Epic Initiative, and Great physical defenses.

TOTAL REFRESH COST: -9

Mag

High Concept
Fomor Sorcerer Lord of the First Rank

Trouble
Immortal Hubris

Other Aspects
Ancient, Devious, and Wicked
Master of Entropy
Possessive Hunger
Shadows of the Depths
Amphibious, Scabrous, and Squamous

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Contacts:	Good	(+3)
Conviction:	Superb	(+5)
Deceit:	Great	(+4)
Discipline:	Fantastic	(+6)
Endurance:	Superb	(+5)
Fists:	Good	(+3)
Intimidation:	Great	(+4)
Lore:	Fantastic	(+6)
Might:	Good	(+3)
Presence:	Great	(+4)
Resources:	Great	(+4)

Most others skills default to Average or Fair.

Powers
Aquatic [-1]
Fomor Magic [-3]
Evocation [-3]
Thaumaturgy [-3]
The Sight [-1]
Inhuman Strength [-2]
Superhuman Mental Toughness [-4]
The Catch [+0] is an affront to his sense of the natural order; of humans and other lesser creatures not knowing or keeping in their place.
Wizard's Constitution [+0]
Refinement [-10]

Specializations
Evocation: Elements (Fomor, Spirit, Water); Control (Fomor +3, Spirit +2, Water +1); Power (Fomor +3, Spirit +2, Water +1)
Thaumaturgy: Control (Entropomancy +2, Biomancy +1); Complexity (Entropomancy +2, Biomancy +1); Crafting (Frequency +1, Strength +1)

Rote Spells
Sphere of Entropy (Fomor/spirit attack, 11 shifts): gathers surrounding shadows into a black sphere of entropic annihilation at **Weapon:11** directed at a target. Mag must have his twisted staff to cast this rote spell.
Shield of Darkness (Fomor/spirit block, 11 shifts): creates a cloak of random shadows that surround him like a living thing protecting Mag from harm; it acts as either Armor or a block. Mag can use one shift for persistence, so he can do something else in the following exchange without renewing the shield. His coronet of coral is necessary for this spell.

Focus Items
Twisted Staff (+1 Offensive Power, +1 Offense Control for Fomor)
Coronet of Coral (+1 Defensive Power, +1 Defensive Control for Fomor)

Enchanted Items
Mag has four slots available for various Fomor Bio-Gadgets or Enchanted Items with Epic level strength.

Stress
Mental OOOO(OOOO)
+1 mild consequence
Physical OOOO
+1 mild consequence
Social OOOO

Notes
Good initiative, attacks, and defenses, **Armor:2** against all mental attacks. Mag and other high-ranking Fomor sorcerer lords can easily control 10 shifts of spirit/Fomor magic and 9 shifts of water/Fomor magic, and 7 shifts of Entropomancy that they perform at the speed of evocation. Mag can deliberately hex technology with 6 shifts of power, and his 1 Power category on the deliberate hexing table starts at the 7 Power Cost level.

Total Refresh Cost: -27



Marcy

While mostly remembered in the casefiles as the "mousy" Alpha, Marcy excelled in the 3D animation field (had a job at Skywalker Ranch, pretty much any nerd's dream). She has the best nose for scents among the Alphas and in all ways is a stand-up gal.

She and Andi experimented with a relationship in college which didn't work out—yet it was amicable and they remained roommates, partially through the influence and mutual friendship of Georgia (page 304).

Marcy returned to Chicago right before the Changes case and renewed ties with the Alphas, just in time to get wrapped up in Murphy's "Aftermath" case. Along with Will (page 305), she served as "bait" to help lead Murphy to the Fomor base in Chicago. Then, the three of them tore the place up.

Unfortunately, Marcy got shot by one of the Fomor "urchin-guns" and now her right shoulder looks fairly hideous, misshapen and half-melted.

Maria

While on the hunt for Georgia Borden during the Aftermath incident, Karrin Murphy ran into a woman too scared to talk, in a scenario that her years in law enforcement found all too familiar. The woman called herself Maria and hinted that she was terrified of Ray, the abusive superintendent of her apartment complex.

Murphy provoked Ray to attack her and also showed him why doing so was an *extremely* bad idea, then forced him to promise that he'd resign. That gave Maria the courage to drop Murphy a vital clue. Score one for the good guys.

Or so she thought. Maria turned out to be one of Marcone's plants, sniffing out people who'd operated in the drug trade behind his back. The fragility and fear had all been a ruse.

As far as we know, Maria, if that's even her real name, still works for Marcone.

Have to hand it to her, she had a hell of an act. It's hard to pull one over on me.

Yeah, I think I'm not going to do a statblock for her. She might just be a couple of aspects and a high Deceit skill, or she could secretly be sporting a character sheet a mile long. Until we know more about her work for Marcone, there's no way of knowing precisely what's what here.



Marcy

High Concept

Mousy Member of the Alphas

Other Aspects

Nerdy as Hell
Small and Wiry
Battle Scars
Not So Mousy After All

Skills

Alertness:	Great	(+4)
Athletics:	Fair	(+2)
Empathy:	Good	(+3)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Fair	(+2)
Performance:	Good	(+3)
Scholarship:	Great	(+4)
Stealth:	Fair	(+2)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

These skills represent Marcy in her mortal form. As a wolf, she can shuffle her skills, swapping Empathy, Performance, and Scholarship for Athletics, Stealth, and Fists.

Stunts

The Nose Knows (Alertness): Marcy has the best sense of smell of all of the Alphas. When using her sense of smell, she can use Alertness instead of Investigation to examine a scene, with +1 to her Alertness roll, and she arrives at her findings one time increment faster than usual.

Powers

Beast Change [-1]
Echoes of the Beast [-1]
The Catch [+1] is any purely supernatural source of damage.
Inhuman Recovery [-2]
Human Form [+1] affecting:
Claws [-1]
Inhuman Speed [-2]
Inhuman Strength [-2]
Pack Instincts [-1]

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OOO

Notes

In human form, Marcy has Fair attacks, defenses, and Great initiative. In wolf form, Claws and Strength give her **Weapon:4** with her Great "unarmed" attacks, Epic Initiative, and Superb physical defenses.

Total Refresh Cost: -9

Thomas and Maggie in one entry? You know you have to cut this, Will.

Margaret Angelica Mendoza (Rodriguez-Dresden)

The daughter of Harry Dresden (page 309) and Susan Rodriguez (page 339), her existence was kept secret from Harry until her kidnapping by Duchess Arianna of the Red Court (page 297) kicked off the Changes case. She has dark eyes and an infectious smile.

By not telling Harry about his daughter and placing her with a foster family (the Mendozas), Susan was attempting to protect little Maggie from her parents' various enemies. Obviously, it failed. The vampires who took her tore the Mendozas apart, limb by limb—Martin (page 330) and Susan had to jigsaw puzzle the parts back together to realize that Maggie was not one of the dead.

Little Maggie was intended to be the human sacrifice at Chichen Itza that triggered the bloodline curse (page 353) aimed at Ebenezar McCoy (page 331), which would have had the side effect of taking out Harry, Susan, and possibly Thomas Raith. Harry believed he was the intended target until very late in the case, when he realized the truth at Chichen Itza.

She's been placed in the Church's "witness protection program;" Harry knew that she needed to disappear, and that he could never know where.

No Statblock for Maggie, but "Daughter of Harry Dresden" is a tough Trouble to have to deal with.

I would not be surprised if she follows the family tradition and becomes a wizard of note.

It would be nice if she could just have a normal life and not be burdened with all of this, but you're probably right. Harry will have a stroke if he reads all of this about Maggie, you know that, right?

"Nothing"

High Concept
Implanted Human

Other Aspects
Built for Violence
Not That Human Anymore
Large and in Charge
The Innsmouth Look
I Obey My Master

Skills

Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Great	(+4)
Endurance:	Good	(+3)
Fists:	Superb	(+5)
Guns:	Great	(+4)
Intimidation:	Good	(+3)
Might:	Good	(+3)
Presence:	Good	(+3)

Other skills default to Average or Fair.

Powers
Aquatic [-1]
Supernatural Sense (Sonar) [-1]
Superhuman Strength [-4]
Inhuman Reflexes [-2]

Stress

Mental	OOO
Physical	OOOO
Social	OOOO

Notes
"Nothing" is a good example of a top-of-the-line Implanted Human created for combat by the Fomor. He has Legendary Initiative, Superb Fists attacks at **Weapon:4**, and Superb defenses against most attacks. He can also make Great Guns attacks with his Urchin Launching Tube at **Weapon:4**. Nothing and others like him will usually act as the leader of a squad of similarly enhanced Implanted Humans (see Implanted Humans on page 286, but add Inhuman Strength and Speed).

Total Refresh Cost: -8

"Nothing"

This individual was huge (standing around 7'4"-7'5"), heavy with muscle, but on an athlete's build. He sported a shaved head, dark skin, blue-white eyes, and a very deep voice. He moved as if he were accustomed to violence. He was an implanted human, a servitor of the Fomor (page 287). He called himself "Nothing."

During the "Aftermath" case, Nothing met a disguised Murphy and "bought" Will and Marcy from her for the Fomor (page 287), taking them to the Fomor base in a seedy Chicago waterfront warehouse.

Frogface (page 352) was Nothing's master—he kowtowed to the Fomor and was kicked hard for his trouble. Though individuality isn't a big thing with implanted humans, Nothing seemed to be in charge of his fellows. He also knew how to use at least one Fomor magic item—a tube-like weapon that shot acid.

Murphy, Will, and Marcy took him, his crew, and Frogface down hard, freeing many Chicago semi-supernatural sorts from a dark fate we can only speculate on.

Duchess Arianna Ortega

Describing Duchess Arianna's appearance is kind of a moot point—she was a sufficiently ancient and powerful Red Court vampire that she could change how her flesh-mask looked to suit her purposes. That being said, here are three ways she appeared during the Changes case:

- A gorgeous, tall goddess with skin like milk or polished ivory, luxurious dark hair, and twilight-blue eyes; she used this form when addressing the White Council alongside Grigori Cristos (page 347).
- Same facial features—more or less (nose a little longer and sharper)—as above, but with red-brown skin, icy black eyes, and six inches shorter; she used this form in the duel with Harry (page 309) at Chichen Itza.
- Duplicating Susan Rodriguez's (page 339) appearance; she used this form to hire Stevie D (page 350) to perform a hit on Harry.

Said to be "older than human written languages," Arianna was apparently the daughter of the Red King (page 353)—but whether that's purely figurative (made into a vampire by him) or both figurative and literal (his natural-born daughter whom he then turned into a vampire) is unclear. She hated Europeans, which is why she took a conquistador husband, Paolo Ortega (OW203)—to bend him and break him. She'd call for him, then send him away; give in to him, then reverse course.

A couple decades ago, right after Margaret LeFay (page 313) took up with Lord Raith (OW209), the pair shared a dinner with Arianna and Ebenezar McCoy (page 331). Thinking of him only as Margaret's mentor, they tried to get his support for some sort of scheme. Ebenezar and Margaret fought—in fact, they fought like family. Raith missed it, but Arianna filed the information away for future reference.

This explains why Paolo lived mostly in Brazil, when Arianna hung around in Mexico. It also explains why Lea gave Harry's armor a "conquistador" motif—just to piss her off.

Duchess Arianna Ortega

High Concept
Duchess of the Red Court

Trouble
Consumed with Vengeance for Paolo

Other Aspects
Eyes on the Red Throne
Ancient Power
Vampire Wizard

Skills

Alertness:	Superb	(+5)
Athletics:	Superb	(+5)
Contacts:	Fantastic	(+6)
Conviction:	Epic	(+7)
Deceit:	Superb	(+5)
Discipline:	Epic	(+7)
Empathy:	Great	(+4)
Endurance:	Superb	(+5)
Fists:	Good	(+3)
Intimidation:	Great	(+4)
Lore:	Fantastic	(+6)
Might:	Great	(+4)
Presence:	Fantastic	(+6)
Rapport:	Great	(+4)

Resources: Legendary (+8)
Other skills default to Good.

Powers
Addictive Saliva [-1]
Blood Drinker [-1]
Claws [-1]
Echoes of the Beast [-1]
Flesh Mask (with Shelter, see page 352) [-3]
Evocation [-3]
Thaumaturgy [-3]
The Sight [-1]
Soulgaze [+0]
Refinement [-10]
Mythic Mental Toughness [-6]
The Catch (Mental) [+0] is mental attacks that exploit her obsession for vengeance.
Feeding Dependency [+1] affecting the following powers:
Cloak of Shadows [-1]
Mythic Strength [-6]
Supernatural Speed [-4]
Supernatural Recovery [-4]
Mythic Toughness [-6]
The Catch [+2] is sunlight and holy stuff; no armor on belly.

Specializations
Evocation: Elements (Air, Earth, Spirit, Water); Control (Air +3, Earth +1, Spirit +1, Water +2); Power (Air +3, Earth +1, Spirit +1, Water +2)
Thaumaturgy: Control (Divination +1, Wards +1), Complexity (Divination +1, Wards +2)

Stress
Mental OOOO(OOOOOO) +1 mild consequence, **Armor:3**
Physical OOOO(OOOOOO) +1 mild consequence, **Armor:3**
Social OOOO
+1 mild consequence
Hunger OOOO
+1 mild consequence

Notes
Arianna's not much of a hand-to-hand fighter due to her age. She's only as skilled as an average RCV, although she is stronger and tougher. In a normal fight she relies on her magic, using her hand-to-hand abilities to keep her opponents on their toes.

Total Refresh Cost: -44

If she had the Sight, wouldn't she have been able to see Harry when he was hiding in her own steam cloud?

She probably just wasn't using it. I don't know if it affects supernatural creatures the same way it does humans, but having the Sight up during a magic duel could be very distracting. Maybe she thought she could rely on her regular senses.

-44? Good grief. Why didn't you just make her a plot device?

In case people want to reenact Harry's battle with her?

Have I mentioned lately how twisted this whole "playing games based on real people" thing is?



The future reference was sparked by Harry's actions during the Death Masks case, where his involvement resulted in Paolo's death at McCoy's hand. Later, during the Proven Guilty case, Arianna tried to buy Harry on eBay. Then—and this is the event that kicks off the Changes casefile—she discovered that Harry had a daughter with Susan.

- Arianna kidnapped little Maggie (page 358) to use as a sacrifice/trigger for a bloodline curse (page 353), which would do three big things for her:
- Kill Harry Dresden (constant irritant)…
- Kill Ebenezar McCoy, Blackstaff of the White Council (and murderer of her husband), which would...
- …Build her capital within the Red Court sufficiently to knock her father off the throne. She had numerous reasons to do this, but one was to create an opening so she could ascend to the ranks of the Lords of Outer Night (page 296).

Interestingly, Arianna had her fingers in many mortal pies, thanks to her wealth. She purchased the building that held Harry's office (and raised his rent and planted explosives around his office under the guise of removing asbestos), and probably held interests in Datasafe, Inc. (supposedly a company that provides secure backups to a multinational import-export company) and Nuevos Verita, Inc. (the new owners of Harry's office building).

During Changes, she left Mexico (the first time in 180 years!) to visit Edinburgh and talk to the White Council about a truce in the Vampire War—and she later stopped off in Chicago at some point to hire Stevie D to shoot Harry. (She may also—though we don't know—have been behind the hit outside the FBI headquarters on Rudolph, page 341.)

During Harry and Arianna's duel at Chichen Itza, Arianna used mostly water and air magic, while Harry used force, fire, and—thanks to his new sponsorship—Winter magic.

Harry won. Duchess Arianna is dead.

Mythic Recovery and Concession

In the conflict rules (YS206), we state that when you concede or get taken out in a conflict, you receive a fate point for every consequence you've taken. In a sense, you can look at it as being compelled for having those consequences all at once.

However, the Mythic Recovery power (YS186) allows you to recover from all physical consequences before the beginning of the next scene after you're out of a conflict. So it would seem that with Mythic Recovery you can get a free lunch when conceding, because you'll get the fate points for cashing out, and then you can drop all the consequences which gave you those fate points.

We do not like free lunches. At least, not in terms of the game.

Thus, a character with Mythic Recovery *receives no fate points from physical consequences when conceding from a conflict*. The "compel" you're taking for concession has no teeth—especially because you get to mitigate the outcome—and therefore isn't really valid as a compel at all.

If the character is taken out, however, you do get the fate points, because you're not allowed to mitigate the result of being taken out in any way.

Elisa and Natalia Raith

Half(?)-sisters to Lara (page 337) and Thomas Raith (page 338), Elisa and Natalia are also White Court vampires.

Elisa has silver body piercings on her eyebrow, nostril, lower lip, and nipples. She has close-cropped dark hair, except for where her bangs cover one of her eyes. She favors wavy-bladed swords.

Natalia seems to be taller and more muscular than her sister, with long hair. She prefers exotic axes. (Also, Shagnasty bit her fingers off during the Turn Coat case.)

Both sisters participated in the combat on Demonreach (page 348), armored in extreme motorcycle leathers—I'd call it **Armor:1** or **Armor:2**—and were armed with guns and hand-weapons.

Natalia and Elisa Raith

High Concept

White Court Vampires

Other Aspects

Combat Trained

Dangerously Sexy

Lethal With Lead and Steel

Stunts

Fully Auto Florentine (Weapons): When wielding a small gun (pistol or SMG) in one hand and a melee weapon in the other, Natalia and Elisa may add half the damage bonus of the gun to a successful Weapons attack.

Notes

Use the generic White Court Vampires on OW90, but give them Good Guns and Weapons—in battle they wield swords, axes, and submachine guns with deadly effectiveness.

Ray

Ray's an average, douchebag thug. He's the nasty superintendent of an apartment building near the Bordens. He allows drug dealers and worse to operate in his parking lot, and he bullies his tenants. Murphy had a run-in with him during the "Aftermath" case and put the fear of God into him.

He is also on John Marcone's shit-list—Marcone even set Maria (page 357) to keep an eye on his activities.

Ray

High Concept

Douchebag Thug

Other Aspects

Big Fat Bully

Skills

Fists:	Fair	(+2)
Intimidation:	Average	(+1)

Other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stress

Mental	OO
Physical	OO
Social	OO

Notes

There's not much to this guy. He's just your run of the mill asshole.

Total Refresh Cost: +2 (Pure Mortal)

Shagnasty

Shagnasty is the name Bob and Harry came up with for the naagloshii (page 291) that hunted Donald Morgan (page 332) in the Turn Coat case. It tore a path of death and despair through Chicago that everyone who witnessed it will never forget.

Harry became aware that something was very, very wrong early in the Turn Coat case; while he was driving, he made the mistake of opening his Sight to get a better idea of what he was dealing with. Seeing Shagnasty's true form very nearly broke his mind (and body—he wrecked the Blue Beetle). He recovered for a while at Will and Georgia's apartment, but while he was there some of the Alphas went out to see if they could track it down.



Shagnasty

Notes

You can just use the entry for the naagloshii on page 291. Maybe tweak it with some aspects, like I've Killed Your Friends Before or something.

Unfortunately, they did. Andi Macklin (page 354) was critically wounded. Kirby (page 321) did not survive.

The naagloshii was hunting Warden Donald Morgan (page 332), who passed through its lands as he tried to evade the White Council. It's possible that the Black Council sent the naagloshii after Morgan, but more likely that it sensed a wounded wizard (and one that had killed a naagloshii in the past) and began stalking him, looking for an opportunity to make a kill.

Later in the Turn Coat case, it captured and tortured Thomas Raith, hoping that Harry would trade Morgan for his brother. It cruelly reintroduced Thomas to his long-suppressed nature as a predator. Harry arrived and gave the naagloshii a good fight for a little while, but inevitably began to fatigue and would have been killed had Listens to Wind (page 326) not bailed him out. The shapeshifting battle between Listens to Wind and the naagloshii was a really heavyweight bout—the wizard eventually prevailed, driving the naagloshii off.

Seriously? The old landlady warrants this much attention?

If recent events have taught us anything, what's going to save this world are everyday heroes, Eyes.

Mrs. Spunkelcrief

Mrs. Spunkelcrief was Harry Dresden's (page 309) landlady, before the events of the Changes case burned her boardinghouse down. Mostly deaf, with a bad hip that required walking with a cane; she lived on the ground floor of the house and rarely left it. A feisty, tiny old lady, she appreciated Harry shoveling the stairs and walk when the weather was bad. Though she was never nosy, she sometimes gave him static about taking care of his apartment—like fixing the doors after one of his "wild parties" (e.g., when the zombies blew down his door during the Dead Beat case).

Here's the definition of "feisty": woken up in your bed by a strange man (Harry, trying to warn her that the building was on fire), you immediately punch him, and then have a .38 revolver in your hand.

Here's the definition of True Courage: your home is on fire, your upstairs tenants (the Willoughbys) are trapped, your only able-bodied tenant is injured, you are old, weak, deaf, and have a bum hip. What do you do?

You try to climb the ladder to save the upstairs tenants. Obviously.

Mrs. S couldn't do it herself, though not for lack of trying. Luckily Sanya (page 341) arrived on the scene to do it for her.



Special Agent Barry Tilly

An FBI agent, Barry Tilly has fish-white skin and ink-black hair; he's also fairly short. But he has a hell of a glare, intimates that he's capable of violence, and he's willing to demonstrate that. He's an Aikidoka (a skilled practitioner of Aikido) and taught Murphy (page 334) staff fighting.

During the Changes case, Tilly and his team were led to Harry's apartment by Rudolph (page 341). He knows—due to having a mild, supernatural "truth-telling" sense—that Rudy lied to finger Harry. He questioned Harry on two occasions and was instrumental at minimizing Red Court vampire damage and casualties at the Chicago FBI headquarters.

He also accepts the weirdness that comes to town quicker than most.

"Third Man"

There was a mysterious person—who Murphy said sounded "plainly human"—working for the Fomor (page 287) as some sort of scientist (biologist, chemist, doctor, or supernatural versions of any of these). He needed to analyze Will and Marcy's blood in the "Aftermath" case to determine what drug had been used on them.

Aside from those sketchy details, he seemed to have a great devotion to Frogface (page 352)—even to the point of saying "My life for the master."

That's a trick question. Marcy and I were shamming!

Mrs. Spunklecrief

High Concept
Landlady

Trouble
Elderly Lady with a Bum Hip

Other Aspects
Feisty
True Courage
Every Day Hero

Skills
Empathy:	Average	(+1)
Guns:	Average	(+1)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)
Rapport:	Fair	(+2)
Resources:	Good	(+3)
Scholarship:	Average	(+1)

Other skills default to Mediocre.

Stress
Mental	OO
Physical	OO
Social	OOO

Notes
The world needs more Mrs. Spunklecriefs.

Total Refresh Cost: +2 (Pure Mortal)

Barry Tilly

High Concept
FBI Special Agent

Trouble
I Know When People Lie

Other Aspects
Hell of a Stare
I'm a Different Kind of Asshole
Aikido Master
Rolls With the Blow

Skills
Alertness:	Good	(+3)
Athletics:	Good	(+3)
Contacts:	Fair	(+2)
Empathy:	Superb	(+5)
Fists:	Great	(+4)
Guns:	Good	(+3)
Intimidation:	Great	(+4)
Investigation:	Good	(+3)
Presence:	Fair	(+2)

Most other skills default to Average.

Stunts
Armed Arts (Fists): Tilly may use his Fists instead of Weapons when wielding a staff or baton.

Read the Surface (Empathy): When Tilly first reads someone with Empathy it takes less than a minute.

Human Lie Detector (Empathy): Tilly gains +2 to Empathy to detect lies.

Redirected Force (Fists): On a successful Fists defense, Tilly may sacrifice his next action to treat the defense as a successful Fists maneuver.

Stress
Mental	OOO
Physical	OOO
Social	OOO

Notes
Good initiative, Great attacks and defense with Fists. He also carries a sidearm (**Weapon:2**) used with Good skill.

Total Refresh Cost: -2 (Pure Mortal)

Are we sure this guy isn't a little bit supernatural? The way he read Dresden seemed kind of scary.

He might be a Minor Talent, but if so, his talent is minor enough that game-wise it's just a stunt. Although he did take his first "close encounter" awfully well.

Maybe he just always wanted to believe.

Tilly is good people. Let's just leave it at that.

"Third Man"

High Concept
Fomor Servant Scientist

Trouble
My Life for the Master

Other Aspects
Science Takes Time

Skills
Alertness:	Fair	(+2)
Conviction:	Average	(+1)
Lore:	Good	(+3)
Scholarship:	Good	(+3)

Most other skills default to Mediocre or Average.

Stunts
Doctor (Scholarship): The "Third Man" can attempt to heal moderate physical consequences outside of a medical facility and severe physical consequences inside of one. He also gains +1 on Scholarship for medical research and an additional +1 to research Blood Analysis.

Scientist (Chemistry) (Scholarship): The "Third Man" gets +1 to use his Scholarship for scientific research in the field of Chemistry and an additional +1 to research in the specialized field of Bio-Chemistry.

Stress
Mental	OOO
Physical	OO
Social	OO

Notes
The "Third Man" has Fair initiative, and Mediocre attacks and defenses. He can make Good scientific research rolls and Great to Epic scientific research rolls in his chosen fields of study—mainly analyzing blood for his Fomor Masters.

Total Refresh Cost: +0 (Pure Mortal)



Donar Vadderung

High Concept
CEO of Monoc Securities

Other Aspects
The All-Father
God with a Lower Case "g"
Ruler of Asgard

Skills, Power, Etc.
Mr. Vadderung is a plot device level NPC, and impossible to quantify mechanically. Assume all social skills are at least Legendary. Other skills are even higher.

Notes
Vadderung is capable of making direct physical and mental attacks or just about any type of assessment with his Legendary plus skills. He can also teleport just about anywhere.

Monoc Securities

The first time we heard reference to "Monoc Securities," we thought it was a financial services company—but it turns out to be a security and consulting firm run by a Norse god. They provide consulting and manpower (read "mercenaries," read "Einherjar") for clients in need of supernatural security. They aren't cheap. Their CEO is Donar Vadderung, who (as we noted) has an impressive resume, including job titles like "All-Father" and "Ruler of Asgard."

Harry visited their corporate headquarters (somewhere near Oslo, maybe?), escorted by Sigrun Gard. The home office houses many mercenaries in extensive barracks, has an armory with stores of weapons from every area of warfare, and includes a steel reception area with highly intimidating receptionists who use computers made from mist. (Look up Muginn and Huninn, when you get the chance.)

They're hiring valkyries, having actively solicited a resume from Murphy.

A security firm run by a Norse god is a whole lot cooler than a financial services company, you got to admit.

Donar Vadderung (aka Odin)

So, the CEO of Monoc Securities, Sigrun Gard's boss, the person maintaining a museum/armory of every weapon ever, is essentially the god Odin (retired, more or less; see page 285).

He appears as a gigantic (taller than Harry!) man in good shape, lean and spare (but heavy in the shoulders), in perhaps his early fifties with long, shaggy, thundercloud-grey hair, but with a short, neat beard. His single eye is ice blue; the other eye is covered by a black cloth patch, and hideous scars indicate why it's gone. He's capable of bringing raw will to power and using it against people (see our notes on page 316, in "*Plot Devices and You*".)

He knows things. More things than you'd expect. Wisdom and foresight have always been part of his profile in addition to what we usually associate with Nordic mythology, so Monoc's intelligence network is incredibly vast in both the mundane and supernatural worlds. He used some of that information to point Harry Dresden in the right direction during the Changes case, and later answered Lea's direct summons for assistance, fighting alongside the Grey Council at Chichen Itza.

His staff is a spear (presumably Gungnir), and he can create "lightning doorways" that provide direct teleportation.

That's it? No chapter to sum things up, bring things to a logical conclusion? The book just stops?

Well, it's more of a reference book. People don't usually read it from cover to cover...

Just seems odd for it to end so abruptly. Anyway, I want one more look at this after you've taken out all our notes and the redacted data. Got it?

Got it.

Got it.

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