

# WHITE WOLF QUARTERLY

SPRING 2007  
VOLUME 4

**FREE**

MAY TO  
SEPTEMBER

## WORLD OF DARKNESS

URBAN LEGENDS

## MAGE: THE AWAKENING

MAGICAL TRADITIONS

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# HOWLINGS

Unlike the previous quarterly, nothing interesting or catastrophic happened during the development of this one. One might credit this to having backups of our backups, or a set system of fail-safes in case of disaster, but alas, they were never used.

So instead, I took the time that was to be spent fixing the problems that never arose and read the material in the pipe. I play tested **Changeling: The Lost**, gave my two cents on **Exalted: The Lunars**, and edited the new demo for **Scion: Hero**. I read text file after text file (and Pdf's, when I was lucky enough to snag one) of the other upcoming projects. Trapped at my front desk prison, I had nothing to do but read and think. From this, I've come to the only logical conclusion:

Summer is going to kick ass.

Go, read, buy, play, NOW! The games are bigger, the stakes are higher, and the content is more beautiful than ever. This is the summer you've been waiting for: the Summer of Awesome.

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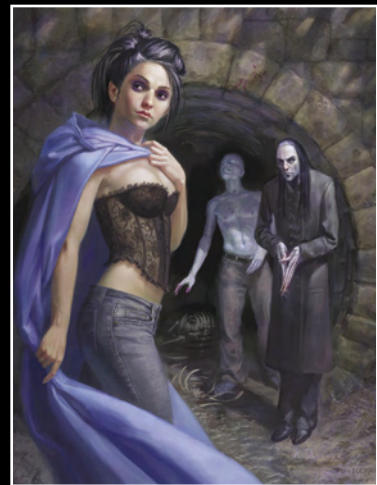
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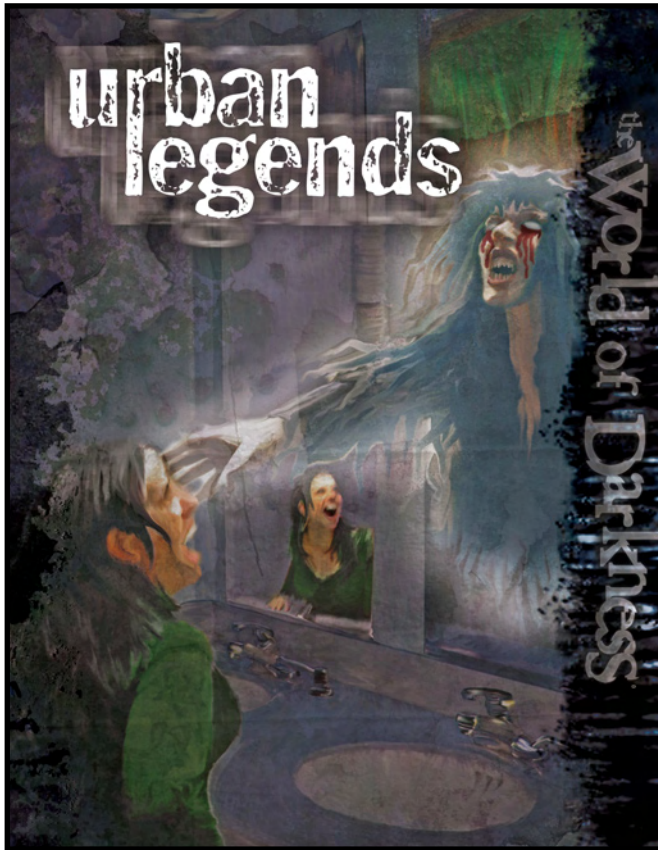
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“This story is totally true!”



*May you live in interesting times*

Urban Legends: we've all heard them. Strange stories that happened to a friend of a friend of our cousin, creepy tales and silly rituals we dare each other to do when the world is dark and we should be asleep. There's even a TV show dedicated to proving them wrong: scientifically examining the truth or fiction behind the myths of our time. Luckily, in this world, these legends rarely have any legs to stand on. This is a world of the computer, the electron and the calculator. This is a world without the supernatural.

The World of Darkness isn't as lucky. Ancient myths are already true in this world. Vampires stalk the night, preying on man like leeches. Men change to wolves and back, stalking human and spirit to maintain balance. Magic has been channeled into the world from the supernal realms, a genie that cannot be put back in its bottle. The divine spark has been stolen from Heaven, tormenting those soulless it animates to quest for what they never had. If these, the greatest legends of all mankind, are true, what does that say of the urban legends we tell each other in the dark?

World of Darkness: Urban Legends is a book of such myths and legends. The first four chapters are presented as outlined stories for any game, but the last chapter is just rumor after rumor, a collection of tales and folklore, with just enough facts that they could happen any time, anywhere, to anyone. After all, sometimes the truth is stranger than fiction...

## The Hook

“Okay, I got one. Gather 'round, ladies.

“One night (dark and stormy, of course) my cousin was driving with her boyfriend. They lost the keys somewhere around Oak Street. Back seat, listening to the smooth jazz station, the whole deal. All of a sudden, just as you-know-who was rounding third, the radio switches over to the news.

“‘This is an emergency alert,’ it says, ‘A man has escaped from the Hill Hospital for the Mentally Unwell. He is considered armed and extremely dangerous. This lunatic is missing his left hand, and may be using a hook in its place.’

“Well, my cousin's stupid brave, so she wanted to keep going, but her boy had kind of lost his charge. So they got back in the front seat and started driving home. “By the time they were home, they'd managed to work each other into a real terror. Didn't help that they'd hit a raccoon or something her dad's house. Her boyfriend got out of the car, then came

around to open her door... and stopped dead.

“He stopped abruptly. Jesus.

“So she said ‘what, what is it?’ and he didn't say anything, just kept staring in terror. She shoved the door open and turned around to look... and then she freaked, too. He says she even fainted.

“Because there, hanging from the door... was a hook!”

## History

Moses Ezekiel MacDonald was born a long time ago. Too long by half, he figures every time he wakes up. Once upon a time, though, he was too young — too young to join the Army and spit in the Führer's face. Moses was walking in the woods one day when he met the Devil, or at least somebody about the right height. Now, Moses wasn't afraid of anybody, German or Devil, so they got right to talking.



# the World of Darkness®

“Devil,” said Moses, “How am I going to get in the Army?”

“Lie,” said the Devil. “It’s what I’d do.”

“Devil, I can’t even grow a beard. Give you my soul if you’ll help me out.”

“I’ve got a lot of souls,” said the Devil, “but I’m sure I can think of something else. Tell you what, you go town and you sign up for the Army, and I’ll make sure you get in and I’ll make sure you see action.”

So Moses shook the Devil’s hand, and he went down to town. Sure enough, they took him, and a year later, he was starving in a foxhole in the French countryside. One day, during an advance, he stepped on a landmine. As he lay there bleeding, he saw the Devil again.

“You here for my soul, Devil?” he asked.

“I told you, son, I don’t need souls. I’m starving out here, though. All the meat is mangled and charred. I don’t suppose you need that hand?”

Moses started to argue, but he realized that the rest of him was all torn up and that his left hand was the only part of him he was sure was intact. A deal is a deal, so he let the Devil gnaw it off.

“You’re a plain dealer,” said the Devil, “And I really don’t need one of those in Hell. Kill one more man for me when you get home, and I’ll make sure you live a good long time.”

Sure enough, some Frenchmen found Moses within the hour and got him to safety. After he recovered, Moses shipped back to the United States, and he killed his brother-in-law not a day after he got off the boat.

At least, that’s how Moses remembers it all. That’s why he’s been locked up in a mental hospital for the last 60 years.

## Motivations

Hospital staff or law enforcement agents try to recapture Moses and make good protagonists. Moses may also still have living relatives who are afraid that he’ll attack them. Teenagers or others may encounter the escaped lunatic on a lonely road.

## The Story

The story begins as Moses escapes once again from the mental hospital in which he has been held, killing an orderly in the process. Moses’ memories are damaged; he’s had at least two

life-changing encounters with a powerful supernatural force, and has greatly simplified them. Each time, it took a passing interest in his problems and helped him in a small way. The creature might be a mage, a spirit, a vampire with blood sorcery or a stranger being — perhaps one already playing a role in your chronicle. For all of Moses’ intents and purposes, however, it might as well be the Devil.

The basics of Moses’ memories, despite some core misconceptions, are correct: he sacrificed his hand to a being, and that being extended his life and improved his health. This supernatural protection keeps Moses fit despite years of confinement, and allows him to recuperate from injury with unusual speed. While his wounds don’t actually heal any faster than those of an ordinary human being, Moses can shrug off pain and keep moving when hurt in ways that would cripple another mortal. Use the statistics for the Monster Hunter (World of Darkness Rulebook, p. 207) for Moses, and allow him to ignore wound penalties.

Moses has replaced his left hand with an old-fashioned



# the World of Darkness®

hook-style prosthesis. (Through some supernatural influence, the hospital staff has not been able to remove the hook. The staff members instead force Moses to bundle it up in an old cloth — which he removes when he escapes.)

Although he was originally left-handed, Moses is proficient with using his right hand to perform complex tasks. He has secretly sharpened the hook to a razor-like edge, with which he maims or kills anyone who interferes with his freedom. The hook deals lethal damage.

Dr. Paula Connelly has administered the Hill Hospital for the Mentally Unwell since the '60s, and she's a firm believer in tradition. While the hospital has welcomed a few younger doctors and some newer treatment strategies, Paula keeps it a virtual prison, believing that the patients need protection from each other just as much as her staff and the community need protection from them. She is well aware of Moses' capacity for violence; he's escaped three times before and been recaptured. The hospital has not kept official records of these escapes, but rumors of a hook-handed maniac in the woods near the hospital have never gone away. To avoid any interference in running the hospital, Paula does her best to conceal these escapes. However, she ultimately cooperates if she has a genuine need for the characters.

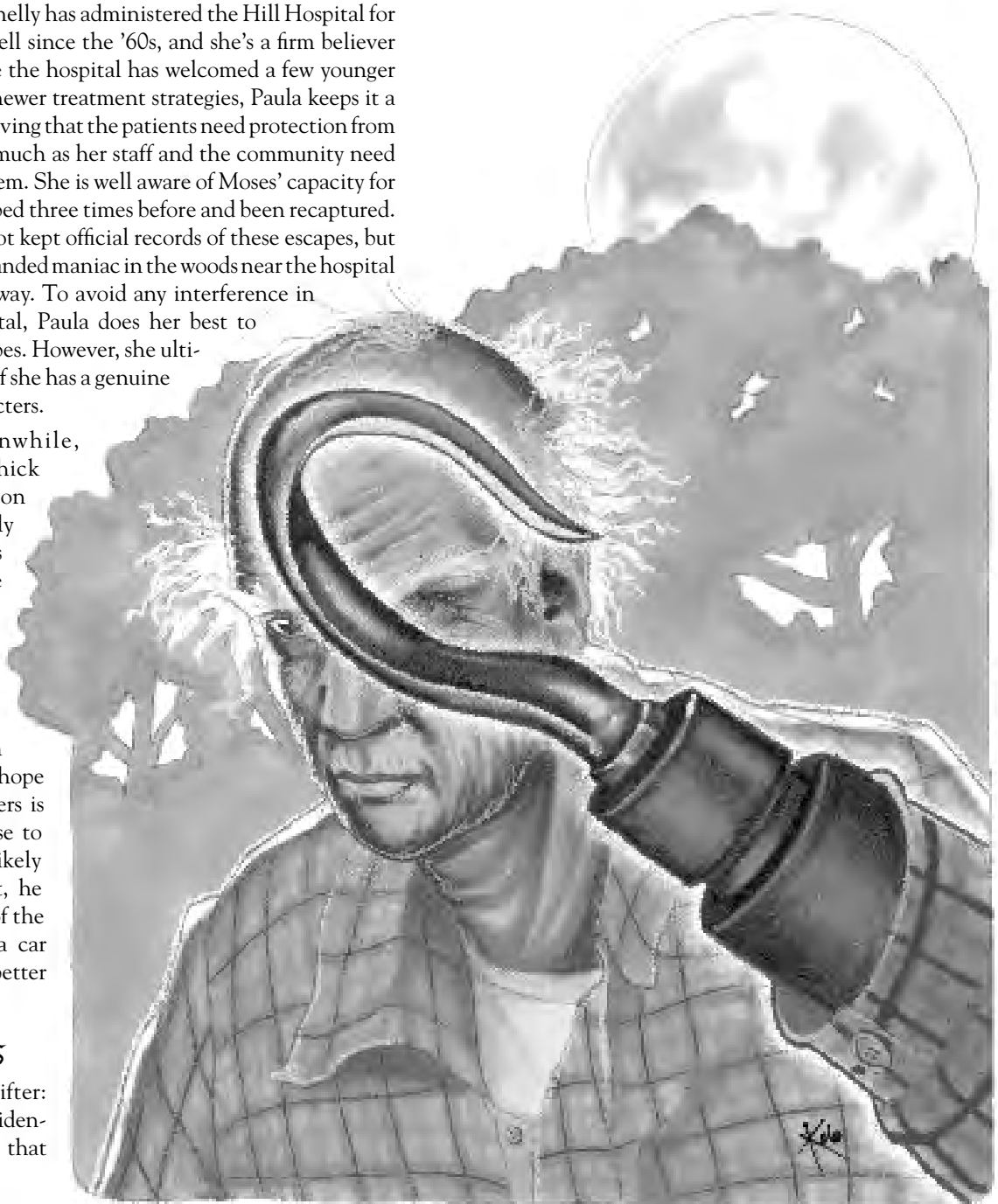
Moses, meanwhile, is roaming the thick woods, surviving on wild game. His only desire is to keep his freedom, but he lacks most real-world social skills, and can't drive an automobile. With the hospital tucked far away in the woods, his best hope for evading searchers is to get someone else to help him, most likely by force. At night, he stays within sight of the road, waiting for a car to slow down, or, better yet, park.

## Variations

- **Shifter, Shifter:** The lunatic can be identified by the hook that

replaces his hand... and only by that hook. His appearance is fluid, allowing him to take the form of anyone he wishes, but he can't regrow his missing hand or remove his prosthesis.

- **Handling the Truth:** The real story isn't the hook, but how the patient lost his hand, and who imprisoned him to keep it a secret. Moses lost his hand to cancer after handling a strange, metal object he found by the side of the road. Soon, men in dark suits came and took him to the hospital, and now no one will believe him at all.





*A Storytelling Game of Beautiful Madness*

# CHANGELING™

## THE LOST



**AUGUST 2007**

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## THE BLURRED LINES OF TRUTH AND LIES

Excerpts from *Magical Traditions*.

The world is blanketed in a reality that lies to everyone within. This reality keeps people shrouded in darkness eternal and prevents them from knowing the truth that can light the way to Ascension. However, there are some individuals who manage to see a faint glimmer of light within the darkness, yet remain Sleeping. These individuals practice old traditions that are passed down from years, decades, even millennia of study and work. Despite their slumber, they still believe that they practice true magic, and even the Awakened find secret truths within these practices; harnessing them for their own paths to the ultimate goal that each Mage tries to gain.

### AS ABOVE, SO BELOW

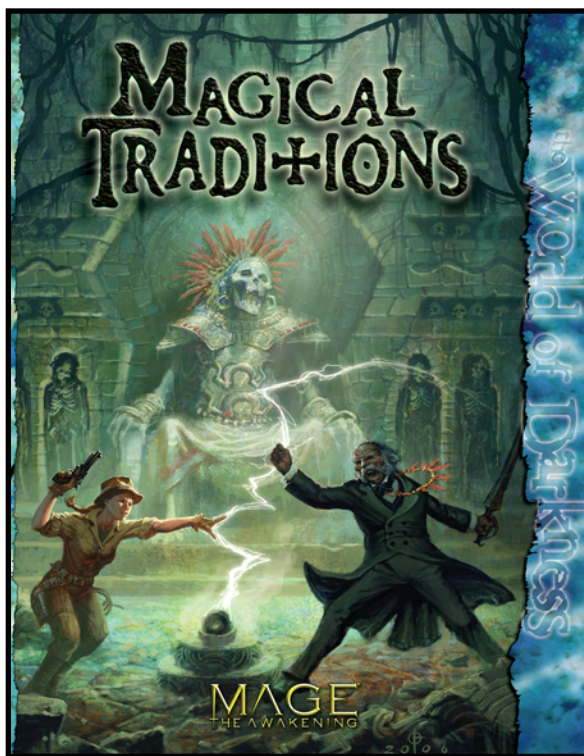
All mages know there is a nigh-impermeable barrier between the Fallen and Supernal Worlds and that, short of a rare Awakening (and spells, of course), things just don't cross that barrier. This metaphysical condition illustrates the tragic circumstances of modern man and the predicament of mages — but it's not *exactly* true. There are always exceptions. While no one can *bodily* cross the Abyss into the Supernal World (and vice versa — Exarchs and Oracles cannot bodily come down to the Fallen World), and no one can project one's mind or soul there — the Fallen World is conceived by mages as a cage, after all — it is possible for Supernal *phenomena* to drift down into the Fallen World. "Possible" here means that it occurs more often than even mages usually suspect. In other words, even though the shattering of the Celestial Ladder occurred long ago, not all fragments of the Supernal come from ancient times.

The Atlantean orders teach that any fragment of Supernal truth that a Sleeper occult tradition might hold is a legacy from pre-diluvial times. It is a kernel of Atlantean wisdom carried down through time. And this is often true — but not the whole truth. Not all Supernal truths are from days of yore — new truths can enter the world at any time, and become the basis of a new occult tradition.

One way to phrase the distinction: Atlantean wisdom holds the most complete *understanding* of the Supernal, but the actual *phenomena* (and *experience*) of the Supernal can be contemporary or from any historical era. Mages who recognize this distinction seek Atlantean wisdom as a means of *making sense* of Supernal fragments, but it's not the only key to *discovering* them. Further, Atlantean praxis might not hold all the answers. It can shine a light on many truths, but some might best be illuminated by the light of a magical tradition — indeed, a Sleeper magical tradition might

actually hold more wisdom about a particular Supernal phenomenon than all the libraries of Atlantis. This is why certain iconoclastic mages value magical traditions — and why the more orthodox abhor them.

Supernal phenomena — entities, objects, thoughts, words, deeds, etc. — that occurs in the Supernal World can, for mysterious reasons, create an "echo" that travels to the Fallen World. But here's the key: they almost never appear in the Fallen World as what they really are. They're masked. They become metaphors for themselves. Their forms, contents and even meanings appear different, distorted — but they remain charged with some sense of their original Supernal essence.





For example: An angelic choir in the Aether sings. The sound echoes down through the Abyss and into the Fallen World. (Why? No one, except perhaps a rare archmaster, knows why this one sound makes it through and countless others don't.) But it no longer appears as a sound. It might instead appear as the seemingly random and momentary manner in which a ray of light breaks through a cloud, illuminating the morning dew in such a way that a mortal viewer "hears" music in his soul. Then it's gone. Anyone who didn't see it *at that moment* will never be graced with it. However, an artist who witnessed it might try to convey it by painting a picture or composing a poem. How well this secondary chronicle of the Supernal-inspired moment works to convey the mystical experience depends on the skill of the artist and some readiness within his audience; but it's a pale imitation at best. Such Supernal moments aren't always uplifting — they can be sublime, in the sense of overwhelming awe, or in the Lovecraftian sense, especially if a bit of the Abyss comes with them.

Some Supernal phenomena, however, can come in the form of *symbols* or *ideas*. Symbols are inexhaustible and can't be reduced to a single particular meaning within a given cultural matrix — they always mean something greater.

But what? It's this slipperiness, this evasiveness and inexhaustibility, that is a hallmark of the Supernal: the *signifier* points to a *signified* that exists in a higher world, a larger frame of reference than an un-Awakened mortal mind can conceive.

This is why occult magical traditions are important — they provide useful clues for mages that allow them to grasp these stray Supernal ideas. It's not that the occult necessarily has more Supernal fragments than other areas of human life, but it does have more transparency, allowing those with a trained eye to look past the masks and veils that cloak the true Supernal phenomena. Further, mortal occultists do seem more attuned to recognizing these things, and so they tend to enshrine them in such a way that they aren't lost over time.

### CLIMBING THE TREE

(MIND •••• + ANY ARCANUM ••••)

A great part of the teaching of Kabbalah involves the mage's efforts to understand and achieve union with the Tree of Life. Kabbalists see this as a form of metaphysical "climbing" of the Tree to reach the higher *sephiroth* and greater understanding. Traditionally this is accomplished

by intense meditation and prayer; this spell allows the Kabbalist to make the journey more literal.

**Practice:** Weaving

**Action:** Extended

**Duration:** Prolonged (one scene)

**Aspect:** Covert

**Cost:** None

This spell must be cast in conjunction with an astral journey (see *Mage: the Awakening* p. 283). Upon casting this spell, the mage shapes the Astral Plane around him into a representation of one of the *sephiroth* he has gained an understanding of (that associated with the conjunctive Arcanum of the spell). He can interact with the angels and spirits of that *sephira* and gain wisdom and understanding of its principles. The exact effects of this wisdom varies; in general, if the mage overcomes the challenges and seals that guard the *sephira's* mysteries, he should earn 1-3 Arcane experience points depending on the difficulty of the challenge. According to Kabbalist doctrine, the key to Ascension is to use this spell to journey completely up the Tree of Life, from Malkhut all the way to Keter, navigating each *sephira* in turn. This obviously requires considerable mystical power, and there are few if any reliable cases of a mage achieving this goal.

**Tradition Rote:** The Serpent's Path

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult + Mind

Just as energy travels down the Tree of Life in the Lightning Flash, so too does it ascend once more in the Serpent's Path. The mage who climbs that treacherous road and passes all the wrathful guardian angels set over it will achieve unity with God, or so they say. This rote is one of the more subdued Kabbalistic rituals: the mage dons a purple robe (even if Yesod is not his ultimate destination, it is the traditional "beginning" of the road). Surrounded by foci that represent his goal, the mage meditates until he slips into the Astral Plane, then continues meditating on the names of God and the archangels of the *sephiroth*. When the spell is complete, the mage enters the "realm" of the *sephira*, and can interact with its inhabitants. If he overcomes their challenges and riddles, he may gain enlightenment. If he fails, the result could be messy to say the least.



# MY SUMMER VACATION ON THE SCARLET THRONE

By Ken Cliffe

So, Rich Thomas of White Wolf's IPDD department comes to me with a request for a new game.

"We want to make a board game for **Exalted**. It should have lots of little pieces and be resource-management specific, and focus on warfare."

"Okay," I say. There's lots of very cool material in **Exalted** from which to draw. "There's a board game in there somewhere."

"Oh, and it better be #\*&\$ing cool," he adds.

Well, crap! Now the pressure is really on.

No big deal. I can do it. I've worked on more WW titles than I can count, and have recently come off co-designing **Vampire: Dark Influences**, which is a neat little game.

The question is what should an **Exalted** board game be about? There's the Solar rebellion against the Terrestrial Exalted. There's the feuding, chaotic life out in the Threshold. There's the clash of a number of bizarre and unearthly powers such as the Wyld, the Abyssals and the Yozis. Hell, there's any number of great concepts from which to start.

But what's iconic to the setting? What's at the game's core, the source of its drama, and in this case the potential cause for sweeping warfare "with lots of little pieces and resource management"?

A brainstorming meeting with **Exalted** Developer John Chambers hit the nail on the head: The long foretold collapse of the Realm into bloody civil war, with champions emerging who each stake a



claim to the Scarlet Throne. Whoa! That is ultimately the crux of the game! The Scarlet Empress disappeared seven years ago. Her underlings among the Dragon-Blooded have propped up the empire in her absence, maintaining order as best they can, but with ever-faltering results. Now coincide that time of weakness with the gradual re-emergence of the Solar Exalted and you have the pinions of **Exalted**.

The Storytelling game has long alluded to the Realm's complete collapse. Problem is, it's a cat in a bag. Once you pull it out, there's no getting it back in. So what better venue in which to explore the possibilities of that plot point than in a board game? Players get to participate firsthand in the battle to claim the throne, and in a way that a normal game of **Exalted** might not allow. In this case, players assume the roles of prominent Terrestrial Exalted who amass forces, build navies, horde wealth and gather sorcery to make a bid for control of the Empire. Plus, ongoing **Exalted** supplements get to continue coverage of the world as readers know it, without turning everything on its ear.

Okay, so where is such a civil war set? Creation is vast, much bigger than our own world. Does that mean the struggle takes place somewhere in the Threshold, where the Empire's influence has eroded? Does it occur in some far-off land or another dimension, where home is left safe for he or she who emerges triumphant? Screw all that!



The war needs to be fought on the Blessed Isle itself; devastating the heart of the Realm and creating complete chaos.

Well then, the rest is easy. If the war is fought among the Terrestrial Exalted, players can portray champions of each aspect: Air, Earth, Fire, Water and Wood. That makes for a two-to-five player game. And each aspect is already affiliated with a color, perfect for player identification. The result is color-coded armies and navies composed of legion and ship pieces.

Add to that other important trappings of the Storytelling game, such as building or claiming manse as sources of power. Or gathering jade coin to fund your bid for power. Or magic through either a Sorcery trait or through Charm Cards drawn and played all game long. And Event Cards for all the fantastic, over-the-top feats that you know would occur in unbridled warfare between the Dragon-Blooded. I mean, who doesn't want to awaken a Rampaging Behemoth



and set it loose among a rival's forces? Or go into battle with a First Age war machine in his arsenal?

And so, that leaves deciding how someone actually wins and sits on the Scarlet Throne. Well, there are three ways: Form an army and conquer the Blessed Isle. Form a navy and claim the seas surrounding the Isle, choking the life out of your foes. Or gathering enough magic and therefore wisdom to crack the Imperial Manse and take all of the Isle's magic for your own, just as the Scarlet Empress did centuries ago!

Easy, right? Okay, go make all that into a board game.

No matter how challenging it was to create **Exalted: War of the Throne**, you get to enjoy playing the end result. The game demands strategy, resource management, legion building, armada building, sorcery, impeccable timing and heartless viciousness. If you can pull off most of those, maybe you're next in line to be Emperor or Empress!





# THE MANY FACES OF THE FICKLE LADY'S CHILDREN

*Excerpts from **Manual of Exalted Power: The Lunars***

Every type of Exalted is unique. The Solars are bringers of justice and glory. The Dragon Blooded emphasize elemental power and teamwork. Sidereals manipulate fate and pull the strings of the world from behind the veil of the Mask. Abysals command the dead and master the forces of entropy and decay. Lunars adapt. We explore the up coming **Manual of Exalted Power: The Lunars** by highlighting the quintessential expression of the Lunar's knack for adaptation. By changing their shape, a lunar can adapt to changing environments, infiltrate any culture, hide from any pursuer, or anything else their imagination can utilize a stolen form for.

## SHAPESHIFTING

As Luna shows many faces to Creation, so too do her Chosen, changing their shapes with skill and cleverness. Changing from any form to any other takes a single miscellaneous action. Other than the time required, changing shape requires no concentration and only a little Essence. No dice roll is needed. Essence spent on changing form is not committed, and changing does not count as Charm use. As with other miscellaneous actions, the shapechange is effectively instantaneous—its Speed determines only when the character next gets to act.

During the change, observers see the character's features shift. Hair grows or scales form on his skin, the face acquires a beak or loses the porcine snout, and hands become hooves or talons turn to feet as he changes to or from an animal form. When in a given form, the Lunar is really that creature. His skin is its skin, his voice the animal's voice, his blood its blood. It does not register as a magical disguise to Essence sight. Only the character's mind and the core of his Essence remain his own.

Anything the character carries or wears disappears with the transformation. These tools usually fade into Elsewhere as the Lunar takes on a new form. When the new shape can use the equipment, it carries over instead. A character's clothing and knife go away when she changes from her human true







form to her Spirit Shape, but remain when she changes into another person. Clothing and other fitted materials shift somewhat to make sure they fit.

No known physical or magical force can prevent one of Luna's Children from shifting shape. If a Steward chooses to wear a different form and it lies within her power, she can take the action to change, even when magic constrains her from taking any action at all. Only some force that prevents her from choosing to change shape, such as unnatural (or perhaps natural) mental influence or being unconscious. Some Charms may eliminate even that danger.

Although shapeshifting is not a Charm-based power, shapeshifting qualifies for the Obvious keyword. When observers see a Lunar transform, they know the character did something magical—no Essence display needed. On death, the Lunar always returns to the last worn of his true forms. Any Lunar's first true form is the shape he wore when he Exalted. The second is his spirit shape.

## WAR FORM

Some of the Lunar Exalted also have a third true form, called the war form or the Deadly Beastman Transformation. In this form, the Lunar becomes a hybrid of man and beast, usually monstrous and several feet taller than the largest human and with great strength and resilience. Most Lunars prefer to enter combat using the war form, knowing that it affords them a tremendous advantage.

Changing into the Deadly Beastman Transformation sends most mortal armors away into Elsewhere, and many weapons become too small to effectively use. Most artifact tools and weapons remain useable in this form, but only moonsilver armor is flexible enough to change with the Lunar into the war form. Moonsilver armor actually adopts a different shape ideal to the bestial man-beast form. Some characters have smaller war forms, closer to a human size, in which they can use normal armors.

A Lunar can spend as much time as he wants in his war form, but wearing it makes an open statement to other Lunars (and other entities who can recognize it) that the Steward is ready for battle to break out at any moment—perhaps even eager for it. Few Lunar Exalted would visit the territory of a Lunar or god in the war form, knowing that they are likely to be met with force rather than warm greetings. On the other hand, the war form can be a calculated insult, suggesting that the offended entity cannot keep its territories safe to visitors or lacks the power to force the Lunar into a more socially acceptable shape.

Despite the frequency of war forms that are terrifyingly huge and intended to tear through enemies in battle, some war forms are simply person-sized or even of slighter builds. Not all warriors, after all, focus on sheer might.

## OTHER SHAPES: THE SACRED HUNT

Were Lunars limited to a spirit shape and a war form, they would never have received the renown for their versatility and mastery of disguise they touted in the First Age. Lunar Exalted can wear the shape of anything and anyone living. But a Lunar must first earn the right.

To earn a new shape, the Lunar must hunt and dedicate the pursuit and kill to Luna. The Exalt must find a superlative example of the animal he wishes to hunt, chase the animal to the ground and slay it at the climax of the hunt. The Silver Pact calls this the sacred hunt, or the blood hunt.

Once the desired animal lies at his feet, bleeding its last, the Lunar tastes its heart's blood and gains mastery of the creature's form. The Steward becomes a perfect facsimile, including any scars or distinguishing marks. A Lunar is not limited to just one example of an animal. He may have two or more, with different colorations to confuse pursuers or for different purposes. Each additional form requires another day and another hunt. Just because the Lunar must find an ideal animal to hunt does not mean that he must always hunt the largest, strongest and fastest. If he wishes to find a small, skulking bear instead of a massive, mountain-shaking grizzly, he must simply find the most perfect example of an atypical animal. It is effectively the same process.

Not all creatures are valid victims of the sacred hunt. Beasts that have been tainted by the Wyld are too unnatural for the Stewards to master their shapes without the Luna's Hidden Face Knack. Also, some creatures are too small or large to hunt with the basic ritual: Any beast smaller than a housecat or larger than a moose is considered an invalid target without Humble Mouse Shape or Towering Beast Form, respectively. Attempts to hunt invalid targets with the blood hunt result in a rejection from Luna.

There is a sacred hunt for human victims. Not all Lunar

Exalted know it, unlike the rite for animals. Some Stewards consider it distasteful to take human forms. Most consider it too useful to quibble over the morality of it, however. With Prey's Skin Disguise, the Lunar learns to take on the shape of other humans (and humanoid creatures) and knows the ritual for claiming one. Just as for animals, the character takes on all the qualities of the human whose shape he takes—appearance, scent, voice. Other Shifting Knacks allow Lunars to master other forms.

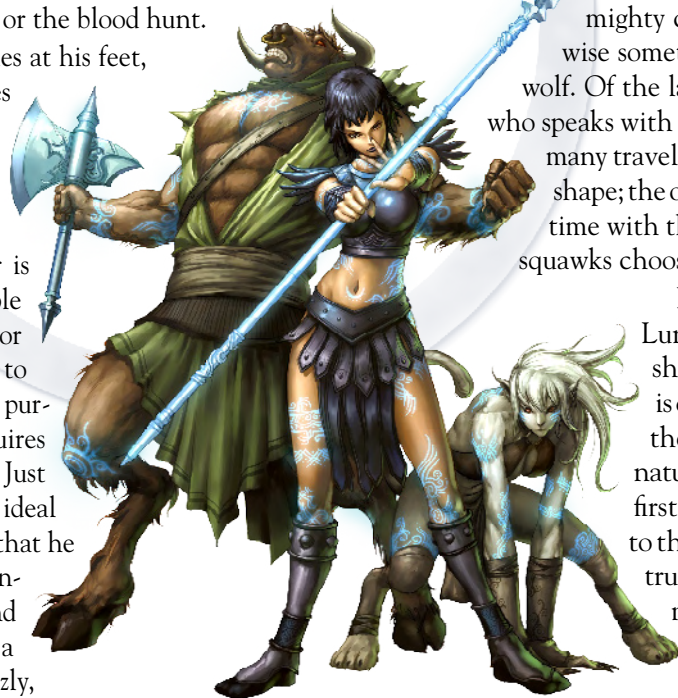
## SPIRIT SHAPE

At the moment of Exaltation, a Lunar gains her first animal shape. This is the character's spirit shape, reflecting the character's nature and temperament. Exalted who are sly might discover the snake or raccoon, the mighty could find bulls or bears, the wise sometimes see raitons or the lone wolf. Of the last, for example, a character who speaks with wise deliberation found over many travels might take the wolf as spirit shape; the one who prefers to spend more time with the dead and speak in cryptic squawks chooses raiton.

From that moment on, the Lunar Exalt can take on the shape of her spirit animal. This is one of the Lunar's true forms, the first she receives after her natural human shape, and Luna's first gift to the Lunar. Changing to this true form or to the Lunar's true human form costs only one mote, no matter what shape the Lunar wears at the moment. As a true form, the Strength, Stamina and Appearance of the spirit shape are considered natural.

In her spirit shape, a Lunar displays her permanent moonsilver tattoos, which arrange themselves artfully along the natural contours of her animal body. Likewise, scars, losses of limb and other permanent damage suffered by one true form become visible in the other. Such markings benefit from the same magic as the Tell, becoming difficult to notice. It is the same for the war form.

Players may only choose creatures that are valid targets for the sacred hunt as a character's spirit shape. In order to create a character with a mouse or yeddin totem, the character must take the appropriate Knacks.





## "Dripping with Detail"

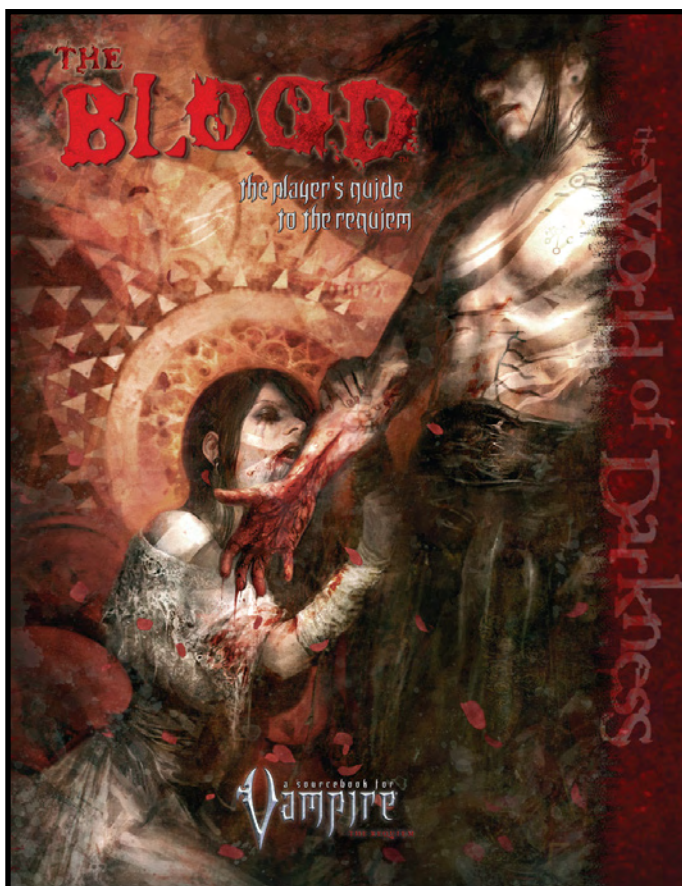
Excerpts from **The Blood**, the player's guide for **Vampire: The Requiem**

I've played Vampire for over eight years now and I am beginning find myself in a rut for designing new vampire character concepts. This happens to many experienced role-players who, having played so many games, often find it difficult to come up with a unique character concept each time they play.

On the reverse, I have often seen new players who, overwhelmed with the rules and setting, are unable to develop an inventive character personality while absorbing everything that it means to be one of the Kindred.

**The Blood** is a new book for **Vampire: The Requiem** that contains a wealth of suggestions and new additions for Vampire fans both new and old. **The Blood** expands on every aspect of character creation from the meanings behind the dots on the character sheet to an in-depth investigation of the Psychology of a Kindred as she moves through her Requiem.

Included below are two excerpts for **The Blood** that will surely catch your interest the way they did mine when I first saw this informative new supplement for **Vampire: The Requiem**.



### *Recipes*

This process of putting dots on the page and examining their greater meaning works like a kind of alchemical magic, transmuting lead (the dull action of scribbling in dots) into gold (a fully-imagined character with a compelling story). Or, perhaps it's like changing normal mundane blood into the puissant claret found clinging to a vampire's withered arteries?

Whatever the case, you can make use of what we're going to term "recipes" when concocting characters. Essentially, a recipe helps you marry concept to stats. Each recipe assumes a small but specific spread of dots intrinsic to that character model. The dots aren't ex-

haustive, and don't paint the entire picture, but instead provide a jumping-off point. The recipes presented below have only three stats that comprise them: one stat at four dots, one at three, one at two. In this simple and small formula, the hints of a character concept arise. Moreover, they can be easily tweaked and serve more as guidelines than as anything concrete. The recipes are versatile, more seeds to spur thought than hard and fast delineations. Do other stats than these apply?





Certainly; they need to, because these recipes cannot total the number of dots necessary to create a starting character.

Consider the following several recipes, then make up your own:

- **Elysium Raconteur:** Wits 4, Socialize 3, Brawl 2
- **False Oracle:** Subterfuge 4, Empathy 3, Expression 2
- **Gang Lieutenant:** Presence 4, Streetwise 3, Firearms 2
- **Haunter of Sewers:** Stealth 4, Investigation 3, Animal Ken 2
- **Mad Scholar:** Occult 4, Wits 3, Stealth 2
- **Paranoid Hacker:** Computer 4, Politics 3, Larceny 2
- **Political Firebrand:** Expression 4, Brawl 3, Politics 2
- **Prince's Fist:** Brawl 4, Streetwise 3, Investigation 2
- **Public Face of Covenant:** Socialize 4, Composure 3, Politics 2
- **Regarded Courier:** Athletics 4, Resolve 3, Empathy 2
- **Religious Zealot:** Manipulation 4, Persuasion 3, Academics 2
- **Tempting Harpy:** Presence 4, Persuasion 3, Socialize 2
- **Wheel Man:** Drive 4, Wits 3, Firearms 2

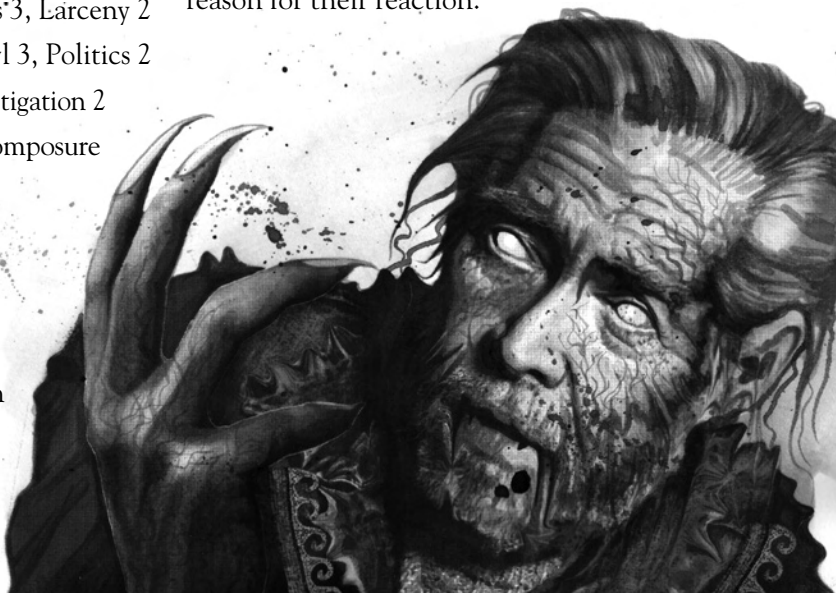
## Derangements

It almost seems normal for Kindred to go mad. The crushing dissonance of coexistence with the urges with the Beast is difficult enough on a night-to-night basis, and when it explodes into trauma it's hardly surprising that many vampires go mad. Add in the many ordeals of the Requiem and the potential for serious mental damage arising from prolonged torpor, and it's not surprising that insanity is almost as prevalent in vampires as any other mental or physical feature. Presented here are five new derangements for play in Vampire: The Requiem, adding to the list of possible choices for Kindred who do go mad.

(Sorry, I could only fit three of the five. You'll have to check out *The Blood* for the final two)

### Diogenes Syndrome (severe; follows Inferiority Complex)

In Kindred, this derangement often follows a traumatic loss of Humanity. The vampire begins to see himself as something less than human, and either makes a conscious decision to stop grooming himself normally, or simply forgets to bother, satisfying the subconscious urge to chastise the self. She stops changing her clothes, makes no attempt to bathe or comb her hair, and doesn't bother cleaning spilled blood from her face after feeding. She makes no attempt to clean up her Haven, and will readily sleep in filth. She ignores vermin that infest her clothes or hair, and, even though she may be shamed by the disgust of onlookers, she rarely acknowledges the real reason for their reaction.





# Vampire

## THE REQUIEM

Worse, vampires suffering from this derangement often fail to heal wounds in their waking hours, bearing them as if unawares and waiting for them to heal in the day's sleep.

**Effect:** The character suffers a -3 penalty on all Social Ability rolls (except Intimidation and Disciplines) because of her filthy, disheveled state. A Willpower point must be expended if the character attempts to clean herself in any way or pay attention to her injuries. Even crippling pain will fail to compel her to heal herself unless she makes this expenditure. She will, however, expend Vitae to heal her wounds while she sleeps.

### Withdrawal (severe; extreme; follows Irrationality)

Some Kindred, overwhelmed by the demands of vampire society and unable to keep up with the complexities of Status, intrigue, and predatory warfare sometimes suffer an overwhelming urge to withdraw completely from the world around them. Severe trauma can lead to the dissolution of rational bounds on this urge, resulting in an absolute abandonment of social interaction and obligation; regardless of the detrimental effect on the vampire's own existence.

Vampires suffering from Withdrawal avoid leaving their Havens and interacting with others as much as possible. They do not attend any Elysium events, and they allow all friendships and alliances to wither, never bothering to initiate communication. The Requiem of a vampire in Withdrawal is one of solitary nights spent in silent retreat. Some turn to scholarly pursuits, losing themselves in dusty tomes and occult research, but most just take on idle hobbies, accomplishing little of value and waiting until hunger demands that they strike out in search of blood.

Withdrawal is not a derangement for characters in play. It should be restricted to Storyteller characters only, because it isolates the vampire and threatens to destroy

all of the work they've done to establish themselves in Kindred society. A Player may wish to add Withdrawal to his character's history, as a cured derangement (or one that awaits him if he drops again to a formerly low Humanity rating) to explain a long absence from Kindred society, but should be aware of its implications if she does so.

**Effect:** The character must succeed on a Resolve + Composure roll to leave his Haven each night. He suffers a -3 penalty on all Social Ability rolls (except for resistance on contested ones) because of his extreme unwillingness to speak to others, and his obvious attempts to get away from public dealings as quickly as possible.

### Erythema (mild)

This derangement emerges because of a vampire's subconscious wish to deny the truth of her undead state. Without willing it, she spends Vitae to bring warmth and color to her skin whenever in the company of others, draining herself in an effort to maintain the façade of life. Even conscious attempts to prevent the expenditure fail; there is a part of the

vampire that is simply broken, forcing her to present the illusion whether she likes it or not.

Vampires suffering from Erythema are often subjected to the derision of their contemporaries, either because they seem to be desperate to pretend that they are still alive or because they are unable to control their own expenditures of Vitae. They also suffer an increased need to feed, since they spend so much blood fueling their pitiful masquerade.

**Effect:** The vampire automatically spends a point of Vitae to counterfeit life (see p. XX) whenever she is in the company of others. Attempts to prevent this expenditure requires a successful Resolve + Composure roll. This roll carries a -2 penalty if the encounter with others is unexpected, and an additional -1 if there are more than three people present at the encounter (besides the vampire).







# Monte Cook's World of Darkness

*An article by Monte Cook*

Monte Cook? What's that D&D guy doing with the **World of Darkness**? What does he know about this? Isn't he going to ruin everything?

Yeah, it seemed strange to me at first, too. Although I've worked with the cool folks at White Wolf for years as publishing partners for my own Malhavoc Press, I was still a little flabbergasted when Rich Thomas and Stewart Wieck approached me with the offer to take the **World of Darkness** and do what I wanted with it. Now, I had already decided that my time in the

game industry was winding down, but who turns down an offer like that? When someone says, "How would you like to play in one of the coolest sandboxes in gaming, and do whatever you want," you say, "yes." It's far too cool to say no.

So I did say yes. I mean, I'd got **Vampire** when it first came out and it blew me away. I followed the **World of Darkness** as it expanded, grew, and changed over time. I've always been a fan of vampires, werewolves, mages, and the creatures of the shadows. I may be best known for fantasy gaming, but my love for modern day horror still managed to make itself known with products like **Dark Matter** and **Call of Cthulhu d20**, and my novel, **Of Aged Angels**.

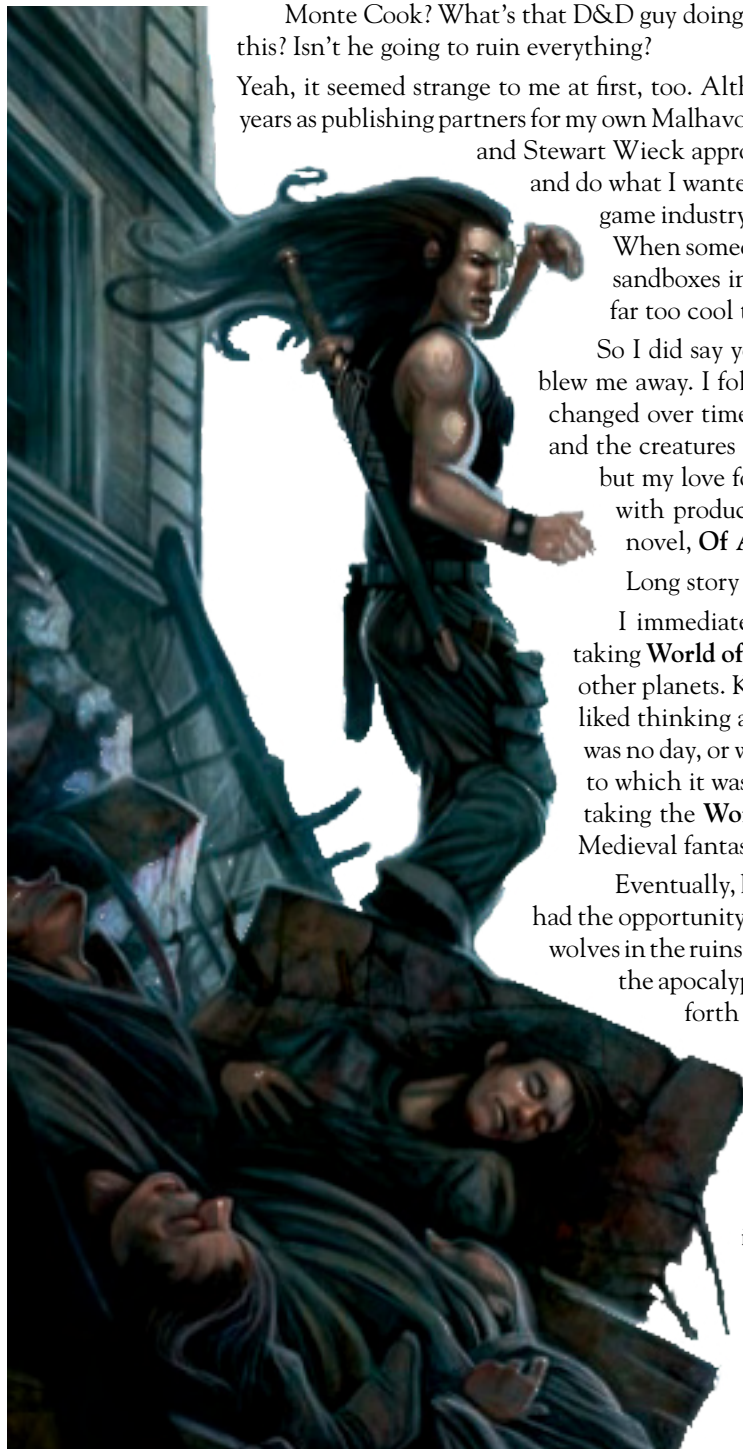
Long story short: I love this stuff. I was thrilled with the opportunity.

I immediately began brainstorming ideas. At first, I thought about taking **World of Darkness** into the future, with faster than light ships and other planets. Kind of like "Aliens," but with vampires and werewolves. I liked thinking about what vampires would be like in a place where there was no day, or what would happen to a werewolf separated from the world to which it was so closely tied. Then I thought about the distant past or taking the **World of Darkness** concepts and applying them to a quasi-Medieval fantasy world that wasn't Earth at all.

Eventually, however, I settled upon a genre that I adore but have never had the opportunity to work with much: post-apocalypse. Vampires and werewolves in the ruins of society. I loved it. But better yet, what if whatever caused the apocalypse is the very thing that brought vampires, demons, and so forth into the world? I loved that it would be a counterpoint to

the long and detailed history of vampires, werewolves, and demons in the original **World of Darkness**. Here, they would be brand-new additions to the world, still getting used to their place in things. And with this apocalypse came more than just these monsters in our midst. It changed the way the world worked, turning nightmares into reality in the dark corners of our planet.

But, I reasoned, some people aren't going to want to confine their gaming to a ruined world, so I made it only a "partial apocalypse." Now while that term seems a bit oxymoronic it applies to this setting quite nicely. It's usually easier to juxtapose horror against a more realistic and







understandable world, so I knew that at least part of the world should seem normal. Though with heavy emphasis on “seem.”

To make this book happen, I was fortunate enough to get the assistance of two really great designers, Luke Johnson and Sean Reynolds. This book would not be nearly as cool as it is without their expertise, ideas, and hard work.

### The Intrusion

In this game, it's the setting, the characters, and the story that are important, not the rules. And the thing that shapes all of those things is called the Intrusion. One year ago, eldritch horrors of cosmic malevolence called the Iconnu, or sometimes the Unbidden, attempted to consume our reality, reshaping it for some unknowable purpose. This attempt—this Intrusion—should have spelled the end of the world.

But it didn't. Humankind was stronger than the Iconnu understood—not in force of arms or physical strength or even wisdom, but in spirit. Key individuals called the Awakened around the globe unconsciously hold it all together. In other words, they kept—and keep—the Iconnu from bringing about the apocalypse.

Still, the Intrusion decimated the central United States in a terrible conflagration, casting even some surviving cities, like Minneapolis, Minnesota, into ruin. Further, the Intrusion sent a ripple through existence that altered the rest of the world. This ripple, called the Nightmare Wave, left its mark in many ways. In some locales, particularly those close to the Intrusion Site, it wrought terrible physical destruction. In others the changes it brought were subtler and more insidious. Imagine: People in one small town suddenly gain the taste — the need — for human flesh. A broken, unplugged jukebox in a condemned diner plays songs that give clues to events that haven't yet happened. Cockroaches in an old warehouse communicate and think with a single mind, and combined themselves physically into one monstrous creature.

Lastly, the Iconnu sent agents into the world to deal with the problem (in the same way that one might take penicillin to get rid of a bacterial infection). They sent resurrected spirits of the dead into the bodies of living humans that changed them physically. These creatures were a fusion of two spirits—and often those spirits are in conflict—but with bodies possessed of great power. But they had weaknesses as well. They could not abide the daylight, and they craved the blood of the living. These are vampires, of course, but vampires like you haven't seen (or played) before. Each vampire is two spirits in one body, trying to direct its actions.

And there are werewolves. Like vampires, they are the product of Iconnu meddling—this time otherworldly creatures of rage completely consuming a human host. The opposite of vampires, they are creatures of multiple forms but one spirit bent on destruction.

Demons are also children of the Intrusion, but they are utterly without a human component. They thrive on deception and corruption.

Mages are humans who have discovered how to shape and mold the energies loosed by the Intrusion for their own ends. Just as it changed reality, so do they, albeit on a smaller scale.

Lastly, there are the Awakened, humanity's last best hope. Their role in the game is for those who don't want to play a supernatural character, although they gain many unique abilities for coping and dealing with the strange foes and situations they must face, which stem from their very humanity.

Although most of these character types owe their existence to the Iconnu and the Intrusion, each decides his own path. Do they hasten the world's end, do they fight to prevent it, or do they ignore it altogether to serve their own ends? It's up to each to decide.

### The Rules

I based the rules of this new game on OGL mechanics, but this is different than what you've seen before. The rules offer certain streamlining features to make character creation a smooth process and lots of new features that properly capture the mood of the game.

One of the biggest challenges was in making the rules fit the world. In similar games, characters start out very weak and grow powerful, but vampires, werewolves, mages, and demons are powerful to begin with. And that's how it should be. Plus, werewolves don't spend their time chasing down a +1 weapon, and modern mages don't need a wand of whatever to be versatile and powerful. In other words, these characters' abilities come from what they are, not what they own.

And speaking of mages, they need a whole new system of magic that allows them to cast the spells that they can imagine on the fly without any memorization and long lists of pre-made spells. These mages are more flexible than that, so the magic system needs to be too.

You'll also find rules for all the things that you need to play the game, from car chases to machine guns, bizarre “Nightmare Sites” to werewolf rites, and from spellcasting talismans to vampire clans. Plus, there's a heavy emphasis on roleplaying advice, Gamemaster advice, scenario ideas, and two different locales to set your campaign.

This is a complete game unto itself, and a distinct setting. You don't have to know anything about the original **World of Darkness** or the rules from any other books to play. However, the setting could be used with the original **World of Darkness** rules, or the rules could be used with the original **World of Darkness** setting. Ultimately, this is a game for those looking for a different take on a world shrouded in darkness, or those looking to try a different kind of roleplaying with rules that are familiar to those they already know.



# SCION

## DEMIGOD

### LIVE THE MYTH!

"Before the gates of excellence the gods have placed sweat;  
long is the road thereto and rough and steep at first;  
but when the heights are reached, then there is reward,  
though grievously hard in the winning." – Hesiod

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# DEVELOPER SPOTLIGHT

## PÉTUR ÖRN ÞÓRARINSSON

### I STILL THINK IT'S COLDER IN ICELAND

Interview by Robert Fulkerson

Since the merger with CCP, White Wolf has had an influx of new faces in the office. The newest of which is Petur, the Icelander who currently resides in the cubicle behind intern alley. In light of the slow build of Icelanders in the office I, Intern Rob, took it upon myself to interview the first permanent resident from Iceland to Atlanta.

**Hello Petur, Could you give your name and Job title for the Fans out therE?**

My name is Petur O. Thorarinsson (aka Brokkur Helfari), and I am the lead designer of EVE: The Second Genesis CCG.

**How long have you worked for CCP/Whitewolf?**

I was hired in late December 2004 and started officially in January 2005.

**You are from Iceland, right? So, What's Iceland like? Is it Cold? Is it all Ice?**

Haha... Yes. It's usually both cold and windy. One might expect that it would have made me tougher, but truth be told, the winter cold and humidity here in Atlanta almost killed me.

**What do you think of Atlanta? How do plan on surviving the summer?**

I'm loving it here. I'm buying an icemaker line this weekend and I plan to use it, a lot.

**What do you think of the Office? The People?**

I did anticipate my new colleagues here in Atlanta to be the experts they really are, since I had always been an admirer of their work, but the quality of their character and the level of hospitality they've showed me are higher than I could've ever hoped for.

**What's it like moving to America?**

It sure is different from Iceland, but I always like trying out new things.

**What was your biggest culture shock moment since you've lived in America?**

I have had a lot of these moments, both good and bad. For instance: (Good) Everybody I've met here in Atlanta have been incredibly kind and helpful, more so



than anywhere else I've been to; (Bad) I have yet to find coffee that hasn't been artificially flavored; (Good) The gas and the beer are practically free; (Bad) Nothing is ever within walking distance.

**I've been wondering, is Icelandic a language? Or do Icelanders speak another language?**

Yes, Icelandic is my mother language.

Já, íslenska er mitt móðurmál.

**I always heard Europeans spoke a lot of Languages, how many do you speak?**

Apart from Icelandic and English I speak, understand or get by in Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, German and a tiny bit in French (please don't try me though).

**What is your favorite White Wolf product?**

WoD

**What Video Games have you played recently?**

I haven't had the time to play computers games for a long while now and I haven't tried out new games at all for the past six months or so, before that I had been revisiting some old games.

**How's the EVE CCG going?**

We are continuously getting new players into the game and the community is growing slowly but surely. We just launched a new flash tutorial on our website and the new expansion is currently in play testing. I'm personally very optimistic that the new expansion will be very successful.



**What's your favorite EVE Card and what does it do?**

**Veteran's Premature Retirement.** One of the simplest cards in the game. It returns a ship to its owner's hand for 4 ISK. I've also always loved the artwork and the flavor text.

**Any cool hints or pointers for EVE CCG Players?**

The best hint I can give to new players is to visit our website and be a part of the community behind the game. They should also check out our brand new tutorial on the website;)

**I've noticed that you and Zack, the other EVE CCG guy around here, have been playing some EVE CCG games, who's been winning those?**

There is no good answer to that. Zack is a strong man.

**What's your favorite Card Game Race and why?**

Thankfully I don't have any preferences when it comes to the races. They are all equally interesting to me.

**I've seen some of the pictures used for the card art, are those mostly computer generated pictures or did you guys really just take those pictures ingame?**

If the card art reads "Screenshot from EVE Online", it is a 100% 'un-doctored' screenshot from the game. If we fiddle with it afterwards, it will have an artist name.

**Do you play EVE Online? And how long have you been playing?**

Yes. I can't tell you my character name though ;)

I've been playing on and off since a few weeks before launch.

**What race and Ship do you fly?**

My main character is Caldari. I mostly just run courier missions these days, so I'm flying an Iteron Mark V.

**Any Strange Talents?**

If I start singing everybody starts crying (and running away in terror).

**So where are you staying right now? Have you moved into a house, apartment, condo, ect., yet?**

I just closed on a house yesterday, so the fine people at White Wolf will be stuck with me for at least three years (I recommend sending them flowers).

**So your in a band? What's the name and what kind of music do you play?**

I sing with RÖXÖR, the CCP Dev band once every year. We practice for a couple of weeks before every FanFest in Iceland. I guess I'll just have to fly to Iceland in advance to rehearse ☺





## Evaluating Speed: the Constant in the World of Darkness

By: N. R. Kelley

### Abstract

Speed is the system used in *The World of Darkness* to determine how far a character can move during a given round of combat or other time of intense stress. While working on a project involving Pandorans with the transmutation Scurry, I became interested in discovering just how fast Speed would allow a character to move. The goal of this experiment is to determine the validity of the human speed constant in the *World of Darkness*.

### Theory

Speed determines the distance a character can move during a three second combat round. A character's Speed is the sum of her Strength + Dexterity + a constant, which varies based on age, species, and any special factors the Storyteller feels is appropriate for a character. For the average human, this constant is five. A character may move her full speed in yards in a round and still take an action at no penalty, or she may move twice that distance and forfeit any action she wishes to take. For the sake of simplicity, I will refer to the option of moving and taking an action as "Walking" for the purposes of this experiment, and the option of moving twice as far at the cost of one's action as "Running".

Since the Scurrying Pandorans are covering long distance in the text that first prompted this question, I first approached this by asking the question "At what speed rating would a character need to run a four-minute mile?" One mile is one thousand, seven hundred and sixty yards (1760), four minutes is 240 seconds, or 80 rounds.  $1760 \text{ yards} / 80 \text{ rounds} = 22 \text{ Speed}$ . Since the character is running, they only need half of that, or speed 11. If we assume a human character with speed constant 5, then that character's Strength + Dexterity is a mere 6. This means that any character who places his primary attribute category as physical can easily run a four minute mile, a professional to Olympic level feat of running.



Realizing such average characters could run at the Olympic level in long distance, I looked decided to see how they would compete in a sprinting event. The 100 M dash is the standard for sprinting. 100 M = 110 yds. This time I assumed the character in question was Strength + Dexterity = 10, thus his speed would be 15, 30 while "running".  $110 \text{ yds} / (30 \text{ yds} / \text{round}) = 3.67 \text{ rounds}$  or 11 seconds. The current Olympic record is 10.8 seconds.

This seemed more realistic to me: a character with Olympic-level attributes preformed at an Olympic level. However, another thing seemed odd to me: this Olympic athlete requires no dots in the skill Athletics.

Having thought about it at the maximum, I looked at the minimum. A character with Strength 1 Dexterity 1, a character with little coordination and almost no muscle mass, can still move 7 yards in three seconds and act as if he stood still (he incurs no die penalties), and, in a full sprint, can get 14 yards in three seconds. Extrapolated over one mile, this character comes in at 6 minutes 17 seconds, a respectable time for beginning high school runners.

Thus, I devised an experiment to evaluate the realism of the Speed Constant in the *World of Darkness*.

# the World of Darkness®



## Experimental Setup

In the White Wolf warehouse, I measured off twenty yards in a relatively clear aisle and labeled the east end “Start” and the west end “Finish”. I asked everyone in the office that day to come to the back of the warehouse and be a test subject. Fifteen staff members complied.

Each subject was first given the instruction to walk the twenty yards “As if you want to perform an action”. I left this interpretation to each person, as I wanted them to walk as fast as they could without straining themselves. Using a stop watch, I timed each of their trials and recorded the result.

Then, those members whose foot-ware, medical status, and disposition allowed them to run returned to the start line and sprinted as fast as they could the twenty yards. The same stop watch was used to record their times, and subsequently recorded them.

All walks and runs were performed from a standing position. The subjects were not required to stop right on the finish line, allowing them to run through and increase their average run times. This goes somewhat against the rules as presented, as a character may run in one round, and take no movement at all in the next.



## Data

Distance (D) = 20 yards

Round (R) = 3 Seconds

World of Darkness Speed Constant ( $S_{\text{Const}}$ ) = 5 yards / round

### Walk Times ( $T_w$ ) for Distance (D)

Subject	$T_w$	$T_{w2}$	$T_{w3}$
A	13.78	13.16	12.51
B	6.54	7.16	6.98
C	9.66	8.66	8.23
D	10.12	8.91	8.73
E	12.50	12.03	11.48
F	10.91	11.29	11.66
G	10.98	10.63	10.85
H	11.63	12.10	11.94
I	11.17	11.13	11.85
J	7.41	7.41	7.73
K	10.79	11.16	10.73
L	9.69	8.97	9.00
M	13.75	13.10	13.16
N	13.13	13.91	13.68
O	11.23	11.93	11.88

All times are in seconds.

### Run Times ( $T_R$ ) for Distance (D)

Subject	$T_{R1}$	$T_{R2}$	$T_{R3}$
A	4.18	4.10	3.98
B	3.82	3.93	3.93
D	4.73	4.91	5.04
E	3.60	3.62	3.62
H	4.55	4.26	4.35
I	3.73	3.67	3.67
J	3.85	3.73	3.85
K	3.66	3.48	3.48
L	4.35	4.43	4.36
M	3.63	3.55	3.60
N	5.29	5.29	5.50
O	4.05	4.23	4.29

All times are in seconds



## Calculations

$$\text{Average Time } (T_{\text{Ave}}) = (T_1 + T_2 + \dots T_n) / n$$

$$\text{Number of Data points } (n) = 3$$

### Average Time Calculation

Subject	$T_{\text{WAve}}$	$T_{\text{RAve}}$
A	13.15	4.09
B	6.89	3.89
C	8.85	No Data
D	9.25	4.89
E	12.00	3.61
F	11.29	No Data
G	10.82	No Data
H	11.89	4.39
I	11.38	3.69
J	7.52	3.81
K	10.89	3.54
L	9.22	4.38
M	13.34	3.59
N	13.57	5.36
O	11.68	4.19

All times are in seconds

$$\text{Strength + Dexterity } (P) = S_{\text{Ave}} - S_{\text{Const}}$$

### Physical Attributes of Subjects

Subject	Strength + Dexterity (P)
A	1
B	3
C	2
D	1
E	2
F	0
G	1
H	1
I	2
J	3
K	2
L	2
M	1
N	0
O	1

$$\text{World of Darkness Speed } (S) = D/R = D/(T/3) = (D \times 3) / T$$

$$\text{Average Speed } (S_{\text{Ave}}) = (S_{\text{W}} + S_{\text{R}}) / n$$

### Average Speed Calculation

Subject	$S_{\text{W}}$	$S_{\text{R}}$	$S_{\text{Ave}}$
A	5	7	6
B	9	8	8
C	7	No Data	7
D	6	6	6
E	5	8	7
F	5	No Data	5
G	6	No Data	6
H	5	7	6
I	5	8	7
J	8	8	8
K	6	8	7
L	7	7	7
M	4	8	6
N	4	6	5
O	5	7	6



# the World of Darkness®

## Modified Physical Attributes

Subject	Athletics	P
A	2	4
B	2	6
C	0	7
D	1	5
E	2	5
F	1	4
G	1	5
H	1	5
I	2	5
J	2	6
K	3	4
L	2	5
M	2	4
N	0	5
O	1	5



## Conclusions

Based on their times, if this is the **World of Darkness**, the people that work for White Wolf have abysmal physical statistics. Eight of employees have less Strength + Dexterity than the minimum one of each, while only two have even a single dot above the minimum allocated.

If the **World of Darkness** is intended to be a horror game, then things should be more difficult in game than they are in real life. However, the data clearly indicates that people move faster in game than in reality.

To rectify this issue, I considered one of the original paradoxes that lead to the experiment: a character can move at Olympic levels with no athletic training what-so-ever. I asked each member of the experiment to rate themselves with an Athletics score by the rules given in the **World of Darkness** core. I then substituted the speed constant with their Athletic score.

By substituting Athletics for the speed constant, the staff members' physical attributes increased dramatically, up to the range exhibited by normal characters at character creation.

The data suggests that the speed constant might be flawed, but not completely without purpose. As an optional rule, for those who want to slow character movement down to more realistic levels based on natural talent (attributes) as well as training (Athletics Skill), then substituting Athletics for the speed constant in humans would be appropriate. Caution should be taken, by using this optional rule, you will probably have to convert the speed constants given for non-human cast members such as animals and supernatural creatures. Things based on humans, such as Werewolves, Vampires, and Pandorans to name a few, can probably use the optional rule as presented. For things completely inhuman, such as cheetahs and horses, first determine the creature's Athletics, then research the average and top speed of the animal. You can then use the methodology presented here to adjust their relative speeds. For those Storytellers who lack the time, or are intimidated by the math, a "quick fix" rule of thumb is to subtract 5 from the printed speed, and replace with the creatures athletics.

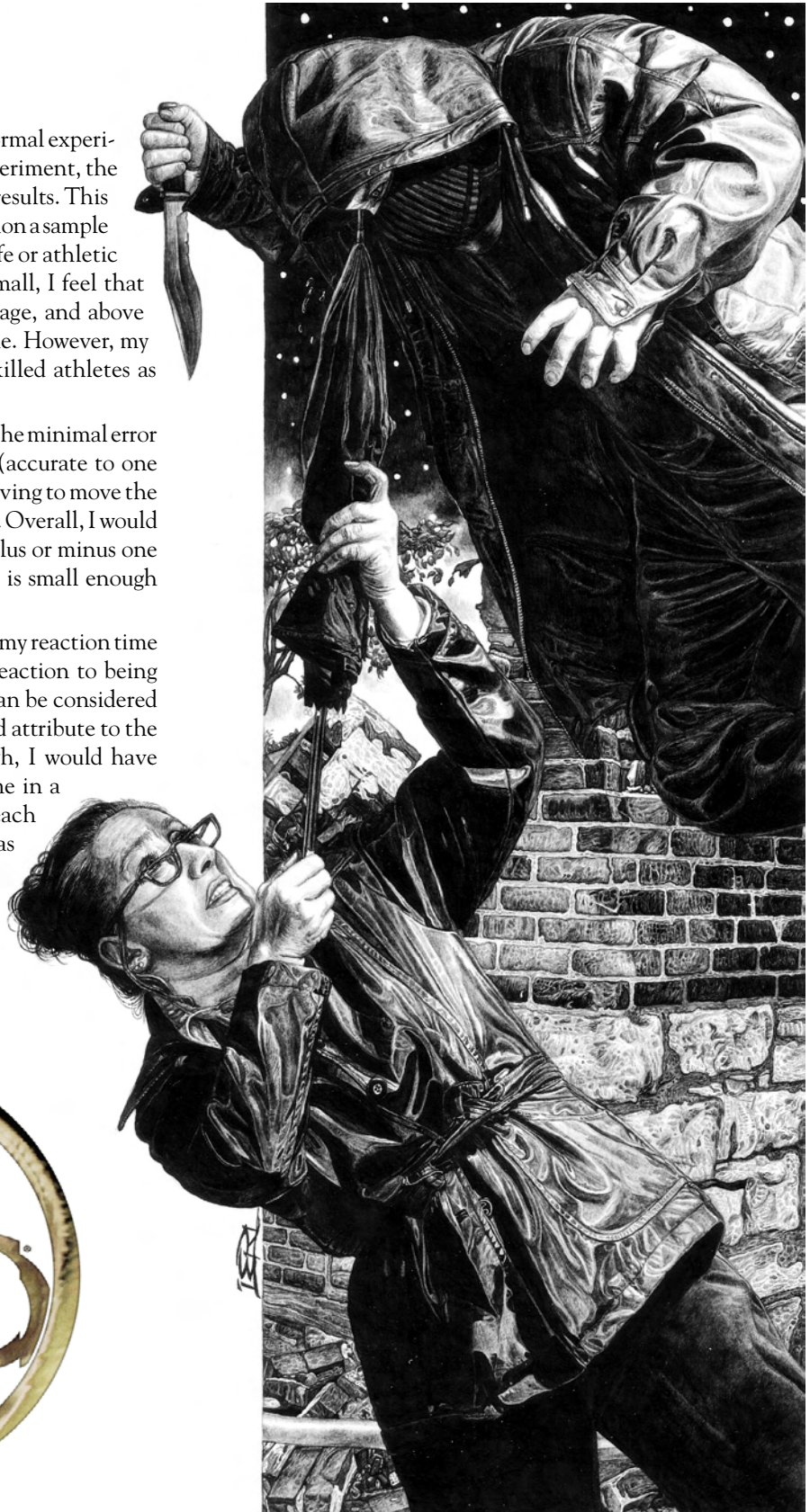


## Error

The primary source of error in this informal experiment is the size of the sample. Like any experiment, the larger the sample: the more averaged your results. This removes statistical anomalies, such as selection a sample population that exhibits only one way of life or athletic level. Thankfully, while my sample was small, I feel that I had an even mix of below average, average, and above average athleticism displayed in my sample. However, my sample was lacking both professionally skilled athletes as well as the completely un-athletic.

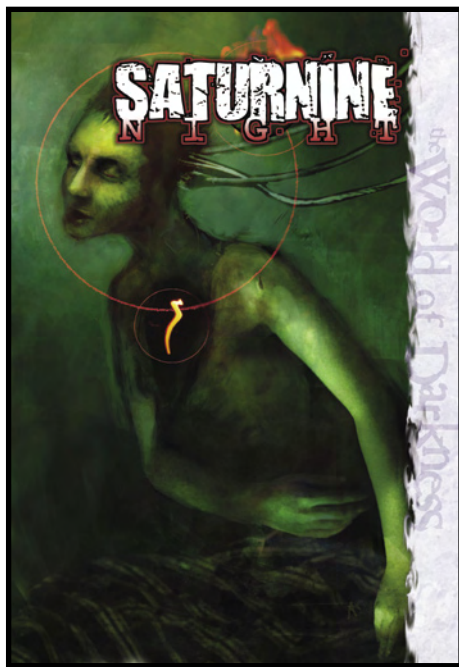
Error in measurement are restricted to the minimal error in the manufacture of the tape measurer (accurate to one sixty-fourth of an inch) compounded by having to move the measuring tape to measure the full 20 yards. Overall, I would estimate the distance ran to be 20 yards, plus or minus one inch, or .14% error in measurement. This is small enough as to be overlooked.

The time measurement had error from my reaction time as they crossed the finish line and their reaction to being told to "go". The subject's reaction time can be considered a function of Wits, and thus is an unrelated attribute to the run. To remove this reaction time though, I would have to have tested each subject's reaction time in a standardized test, then subtracted it from each of their times. Given that each person was sacrificing work time for one experiment, and that reaction time is usually less than one tenth of a second, I felt this to be small enough that it didn't warrant using more of each subject's time.





## Can't Leave Well Enough Alone....



### Excerpts from *Saturnine Nights*

Some people can't leave well enough alone. Some humans can't accept death, or foolishly believe they have the right to meddle in the affairs of the Divine. When a person takes on that mindset, he becomes a demiurge. Frankenstein did it with electricity, the ground breaking science of his day, but since that stormy night science has jumped forward through whole shifts of paradigm, and new men have played God in each one. **Saturnine Nights** explores these children of modern demiurges. Look now at the most terrifying of these lost children in the modern age, Prometheans brought to life by the radioactive aftermath of a nuclear blast.

## Zeka: Children of the Bomb

They are few, fewer even than their nearest brothers and sisters. The other Prometheans were never supposed to exist. The Zeky, the children of that first, nameless Zeka, are misbegotten even by Promethean standards, a perversion of a perversion.

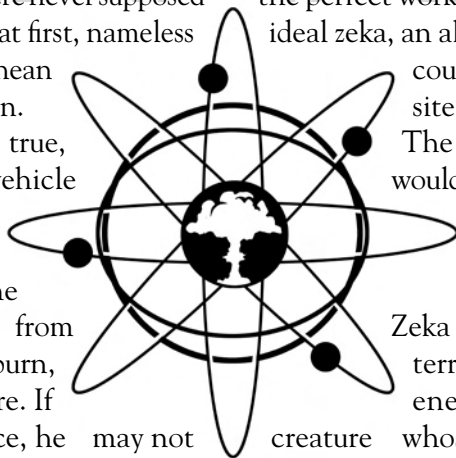
Whatever version of the story is true, the bomb began the Lineage. The vehicle for the Pyros was the explosion of a nuclear device. Born in violence and the moment of annihilation, the Pyros burned itself into the Zeky from the outside in and continues to burn, cooking them from a radioactive core. If the Progenitor has made others since, he may not have used a bomb, but radiation is central.

The name of the Lineage comes from the best known story: the first creature was, they say, made from sewn-together fragments of dead zeky, the unfortunate inmates of a Soviet nuclear gulag, recreated into a new, nameless being, wiped clean of memory, no more than a zeka, become in truth what the inmates of the gulags were

in writing. The creature's demiurge intended him to be the perfect worker. The demiurge wanted to make an ideal zeka, an already institutionalized prisoner who could work in the mines and staff the test site without succumbing to the radiation. The demiurge wanted a born slave who would have no preconceptions or prejudices against obeying orders.

It didn't work out that way.

If anything, that first Promethean Zeka reflected the unpredictability and terrible destructive power of the atomic energy that created him. He was a creature whose very presence filled his creator with unreasoning fear. His actions made no sense. He seemed to exist outside of the context of any other being. He behaved like some kind of crazed out-of-context pagan deity, a force of nature with no natural phenomenon to connect with. He was intelligent, and reasonable, and quite mad, and when he escaped, leaving death in his wake, his creator felt more relief





# PROMETHEAN™

## THE CREATED

than anything, even as he died of radiation poisoning from being in contact with the creature.

There are too few Zeky to make any definitive statements about what they might be like, or about what they want. One Child of the Bomb existed for barely a year before placing himself at ground zero of another nuclear test, desiring to be reduced to his component particles rather than continue in his existence. Another Zeka of quite low power has laired in the mildly radioactive area around Sellafield for 30 years now, only wishing to be left alone.

The central reality of the Zeky's existence is that it hurts. The Frankensteins, the Zeky's closest siblings, are tormented by the knowledge of their separation from humanity. But the Zeky feel actual physical discomfort in their existence. The recently made Zeka sometimes called "the Skin Girl" suffers from constant headaches. Windscale's bleeding skin is a constant source of pain. Another Zeka goes through life with a constant, dull nausea. Another feels aches in his joints. This physical discomfort doesn't impair the Zeky's ability to act, but it does stay with them, and it contributes to the way they experience Torment. There's no

specific method in which a Zeka makes another. The

only thing they all have in common is that the body or bodies that provide the raw material for a new Zeka must have died from radiation poi-

soning. Their Russian

Progenitor was made

by a scientist who

had a copy of Victor

Frankenstein's notes,

and so made his Zeka

from irradiated penal

laborers. But this Pro-

genitor made the first

of his Lineage from a

single body. The Skin

Girl was murdered and

remade, in part, with

metal to replace and

augment the flesh that

had atrophied and died

from the radiation that had

killed her, a small lump of

plutonium replacing part of

her brain. Although the few

Zeky creators have each used

a different method to build

their progeny, every one

has used radiation as

the means by which they

have awakened their new

creation's Azoth. The first

Zeka was born in the fire

of a nuclear explosion,

but there are other

sources of radiation.

Windscale's creator

brought her to wak-

ing by wrecking a

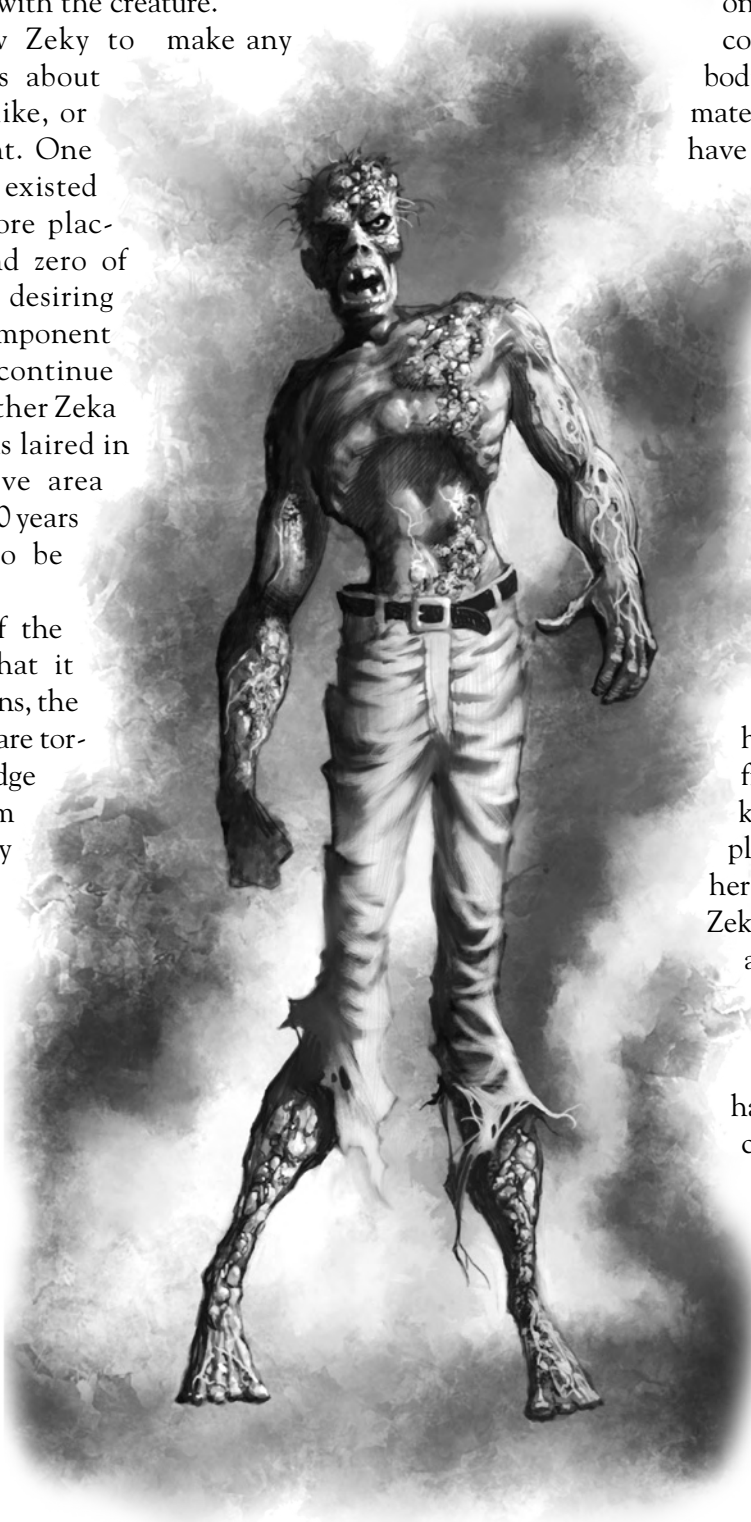
small reactor in a ci-

vilian power station

and taking her into the

fire, leaving the body hor-

ribly burnt, but imbued with Azoth. Another buried



# PROMETHEAN™

## THE CREATED

the body of one of the first fatalities of the Chernobyl accident under the nearby earth, and returned to the area once every year or so for a decade, exhuming the body to see if it had awakened yet. When the new Zeka did awaken, she lay there entombed in the irradiated earth for six months until her creator came and dug her up, mad and mute. The Skin Girl's creator, on the other hand, simply brought one of the terminals on her skull into contact with another piece of plutonium, bringing it and the plutonium in her head to criticality. The Skin Girl's body absorbed the energy; the Azoth granted to her by her creator gave her life.

The Zeky's numbers are increasing, as gradually they create more of their own. Unlike the first few, these new Zeky haven't confined themselves to the areas of accidents, spilled waste and bomb tests. As much as any Promethean, a newly made Zeka stays on the move, as his radioactive Azoth ravages any area he rests in.

Each Zeka supposedly has, within himself, the key to Redemption, but not one of them has so far achieved it. Even if a Zeka can reach the end of the Pilgrimage, would the deadly nature of his own body allow him to achieve Mortality? What if it turns out that Mortality is closed to these creatures? If the Pilgrimage is a path they cannot take, what might the alternative be?

## Bestowment

### Re-Animator

Rumors persist that the flesh-eating radioactive zombies of the movies may in fact be real. The legends of the Nuclear Prometheans have been linked with these stories. The very few Prometheans who have met a Zeka (and their acquaintances and their acquaintances-of-acquaintances) tell of corpses rising, shambling to the creature's side and obeying his commands.

The stories are, in some cases, true. A Zeka with this Bestowment can give a sort of revolting half-life to the cadaver of someone killed by radiation, by a radioactive weapon, or by a Zeka's Transmutations.

**Cost:** 4 Pyros

**Action:** Instant

**Transmutation Cost:** Azoth x 7

Then the Zeka uses this power, he attempts to raise a single corpse as a zombie. The person must have

died at least partly as the result of a radioactive source, which may or may not have been one of the Zeka's own powers.

The first time a character with a Humanity of 5 or higher uses this Bestowment in a scene, the player must make a degeneration roll (three dice).

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The Zeka fails to raise the corpse. Furthermore, if the Zeka has any other zombies that are still active, the Pyros animating them sputters and dies. They all stop moving, and cannot be animated again. The Pyros spent on the corpse is wasted.

**Failure:** Nothing happens. The corpse cannot be reanimated. If the Promethean wants to make a zombie, the Promethean must find another body. The Pyros spent on the corpse is still wasted.

**Success:** The body rises as a slightly radioactive zombie. It obeys simple commands. The Promethean can add any successes rolled to the zombie's traits, dividing them among Power, Finesse and Resistance (see below). The zombie is not intelligent. It can follow simple commands to stay, leave, fetch, carry, attack or stop attacking, but that's it. In order to make a zombie obey a simple command, the Promethean's player must roll Presence + Composure.

**Exceptional Success:** The Promethean creates a hungry, infectious zombie whose bite has the potential to cause other humans to rise as similarly infectious zombies. This might not necessarily be a good thing. A zombie plague can quickly get out of hand. Other Prometheans can buy this Bestowment as a Transmutation, but a Promethean character must have had some sort of exposure to dangerous radiation before his player can purchase it.

Prometheans who take on this power gain a slightly radioactive quality to their flesh. A Galateid's skin might begin to glow in the dark slightly, while a Tam-muz could find that the earth on his skin has, in places, been burnt into tiny crystals of black glass. An Osiran's corpse-like visage could become even drier. The darkness that leaks through an Ulgan's rents becomes more tangible and covers more of her body. A Frankenstein could discover that some of his fleshy components seem to have developed sore, hard lumps and tumors.



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## MIND'S EYE THEATER: THE AWAKENING

My name is Eddy Webb, and I've been asked to rewrite the laws of magic.

Well, more specifically, I've been asked to take the highly successful **Mage: The Awakening** game and develop it for **Mind's Eye Theatre**. At first I was really nervous about taking this project on. Not only was this my first manuscript for White Wolf, but it was also slated to be the first core rulebook that will be released primarily as an electronic book. It's a huge set of expectations to live up to, but my excitement outweighed my reservations as I started to dig into the world of **Mage**.

And damn, it's such a cool world to play with. Characters in other **World of Darkness** games are only partially human – undead vampires, primal werewolves, reanimated Prometheans, or what awaits changelings – but mages are different. They're people like us, people with day jobs and family problems and mortgage payments, but they have the ability to change the world with an act of will. I think it's that human element that makes **The Awakening** such an intriguing live-action game.

One thing people do is spend time around those like themselves. While we all remember stories of hermitic old wizards sequestered in crumbling towers or ancient witches living in huts deep in dark woods, most of the Awakened form cabals of peers for social comfort. But what happens when dozens of wizards live in the same area? As each mage struggles with maintaining their wisdom in their individual quests – whether it's to uncover the ancient origins of magic, the Awakening of all humanity, or just the accumulation of more magical power – she also has to balance the needs of her cabal with the desires of her Path (her mystical predilections) and the goals of her order (the secret society that educated her). This complex drama unfolds within the Consilium, the local Awakened government, as the threat of magical mutually-assured destruction looms over everything. The textured political stage in a game of **The Awakening** isn't quite like any other live-action experience, and I was thrilled to have a chance to mold and savor that experience.

Of course, what's a game about mages if it doesn't have magic? I made every effort to create a flavorful ad-

aptation of the magic rules from **Mage: The Awakening**, while providing Storytellers with a variety of mechanical options to customize their games as they choose. Troupes that don't want to get bogged down in rules can decide to stay with the hundreds of spells provided, while those who want more variety can use any or all of the optional rules to add flavor and diversity to the chronicle's mystical landscape. Players familiar with **Mage** will find some mechanical changes in **The Awakening** that better reflect the realities of live-action roleplay, but much of the core of the magic system remains, to better allow most of the existing **Mage** books to be used with little or no conversion.

Overall, **The Awakening** is a little different. It's a different take on **Mage**, a different style of **Mind's Eye Theatre** chronicle and a different way of bringing White Wolf products to you. If you're in the mood for something different, give it a try. Power may corrupt, but it can be a hell of a ride.





## LIBERATORS OF THE FUTURE

Excerpts from *Mage: Free Council*.

Lies. They spread like a virus throughout the world, infecting everything and everyone they touch. It seems harmless at first, but eventually can build up to cause catastrophic results. One example of this is displayed in the Exarchs and the world that humanity lives in now. Mages stand against these beings because they perpetuate lies to the world. Unfortunately, most Mages are likewise infected by the lies of the Exarchs and they don't even realize it; using old and outdated methods that didn't work in the past. The Free Council are not these Mages. They seek a balance between past and present in order to bring a bright new Atlantis, a realistic goal and dream for all of Awakened society and Humanity.

### CREATING A GLIMPSE OF TRUTH: THE WRIGHTS

While Libertines, in general, believe that humanity is magical, the Wrights further refine this tenet. The magic of humanity, they believe, is inherently tied to humankind's ability — need, even — to create. Only when a human is creating something new (be it physical or speculative) is he truly exerting his full potential, and this creativity may hold the key to facilitating Awakening. In general theory, this philosophy seems almost inherent to the Free Council, but the Wrights take it beyond the simple encouraging or mentoring of artists or scientists, to a level that few outside of the faction would agree with.

Perhaps the breaking point comes from the Wrights' exceedingly critical definition of the term "create." While many Libertines would have no problem with the idea of fostering a poet or theoretical technologist in their work, the Wrights believe that the Lie has blinded humanity to the extent that the vast majority of output produced is chaff, meaningless variations on already created themes. The Lie lulls humanity into a comfort-



able sense of creative-hibernation, and even the most productive writer, artist or scientist is hard-pressed to produce a single work of true creation in her career. However, the Wrights believe that a Sleeper can be stirred from that complacency through exposure to various extreme situations. Necessity is truly the mother of invention, and the Wrights believe that the safety of a writer's nook or laboratory inherently hampers the true spark of creativity that can only be achieved in the most intense situations. Whether they subject their victims to physical peril or emotional tortures, the Wrights believe that the ends not only justifies the means but are truly the only course by which the Libertines can observe humankind at its most magical.

### CREATION

True creations, according to the Wrights, are those that are produced when humanity strips away the Lie perpetuated upon them by Exarchs. The ability to see through the Lie, however, is a rare event. The vast majority of humans will never gain the slightest glimpse of what Truth lies just beyond their comprehension. Certain situations, however, seem to encourage that insight. Although humanity, in its Lie-induced stupor, may not recognize it (the Lie's complacency dampens discernment as well as creativity), those who have Awakened generally identify that the majority of the non-derivative pieces of art, literature and poetry, as well as the truly creative scientific theories and technological inventions have been produced by humanity during periods of extreme emotion or need.

### WRIGHT MAKING

Similar to many Libertine factions, the Wrights rarely think of themselves as belonging to any particular subsection of the order, and few would call themselves Wrights. The term is believed to have been coined by Zenos in his missive to the Northeastern Assembly titled "When Truth Serves The Lie."



In it, he detailed four “theoretical” Wrights whose procedures ranged from casual observation to outright kidnapping and torture. While Zenos insisted the examples were not based on any particular individuals, the mirror his missive held up apparently reflected certain individuals sufficiently clearly as to make him the target of at least three assassination attempts in the year after the missive was penned. Because of the severity of Zenos’ allegations, the term Wright is most often used as a negative epitaph by those who warn against the dangers of allowing the ends to justify the means, and is thus identified most often with the more extreme actions taken by holders of this philosophy.

Many Libertines, however, are willing to accept that challenging circumstances are likely to bring out hitherto untapped potential in humanity, even if they do not believe that these circumstances are the sole key to understanding humanity’s link to magic. What sets the stage for a Wright to become a Wright is, many times, a growing disillusionment with humanity as a whole. If humanity is magical, the mage comes to ask himself, why is it that the vast majority of humankind never realizes even the slightest manifestation of that magic? While Libertines extend the definition of magic well beyond just those powers and abilities granted by connection to the Supernal Realms, even the most open-minded and liberal mage might have difficulty seeing magic in the mundane, destructive and self-centered existences that the vast majority of humanity slog themselves through on a daily basis. The more jaded a Libertine becomes, the less likely he is to be able to perceive anything magical about humanity, until he may even question whether this basic tenet of the order’s philosophy is more than an naïve mantra coined by starry-eyed idealists. Many Wrights find their path while contemplating abandoning the Free Council for another order, one with more “realistic” views of humanity’s potential or lack thereof.

But then, something happens. Most often, it is something cataclysmic, something horrendous, something that, by all rights, should leave its victim utterly destroyed, emotionally or physically.

But it doesn’t.

Somehow, some way, the victim draws upon humanity’s innate connection to the Truth, and “creates” an solution. Perhaps it is a stroke of insight that shows the key to a desperate situation. Perhaps the emotional torment gives forth a flurry of muse-inspired creation that, although it cannot “solve” the problem, translates it to others in a way that is wholly unique and innovative. Or perhaps the “creation” is a manifestation of heretofore untold strength,

intellect, cunning, dexterity or stamina, giving the person some small insight and access to the true potential he possesses. Humanity all too often discounts such happenings as flukes. Deviations from the norm make people uncomfortable, and as a group, humankind is quick to look for simple explanations. What it cannot explain away as a burst of adrenaline, a momentary flash of insight or a “lucky guess,” they tend to ignore completely, burying the true “creation” under a mountain of more comfortable pap, layered with discrediting rumors, half-truths and lies.

But to the mage, this “creation” is proof that humanity truly is magical. In one brief flash, the jaded Wright realizes that this credo is not inane jargon, but inherent truth, and just as a child who strikes match after match, heedless of the danger, the Wright becomes obsessed with the idea of witnessing it again.

**STEAL BODY (DEATH ••••• + LIFE •••)**

The mage rips soul from body and possesses the target’s now-vacant form, leaving the victim and the mage’s former body dead. The spell is a means of prolonging life and also of obtaining a newer, younger, fitter body. Some mages also see it as an opportunity to experiment: obtaining a body of a different sex, race or the like in order to see how “the other half” lives (and dies, for that matter).

**Practice:** Unmaking

**Action:** Extended and Contested; target rolls Resolve reflexively.

**Duration:** Lasting

**Aspect:** Vulgar

**Cost:** 2 Mana

The mage can cast this spell on a given target only once. If the spell fails, that target is forever immune to any further casting by that mage (although not by others). The mage obtains the subject’s Strength, Dexterity and Stamina, and any physical Merits or Flaws, retaining all other traits. The subject’s spirit is destroyed although, at the Storyteller’s discretion, the spirit may survive as a ghost (and likely a vengeful one at that).

**Free Council Rote:** Life-Transfer

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Science + Death vs. Resolve

The body is just a vehicle for the mind and spirit, and techné allow the unseating of an existing “occupant” so a new life-force can inhabit a body. For the Nameless rebels, this techné held the added benefit of erasing their former lives: appearance, flesh and bone, and allowing them to start anew away from the pursuit of their enemies.



## "The Moans and Shutterings of Unspeakable Beings..."

Intern Robert Fulkerson's interview with **Bloodlines: The Chosen** developer Ray Fawkes

From the depths of Canada emerges former White Wolf writer and now freelance developer, Mr. Ray Fawkes. After months of hiking through the frozen North, battling yetis and other minions of cold who thirsted for may warm Southerner blood; I reached the den of Mr. Fawkes. Being of the Noctuku bloodline I happily made a snack of the vampiric guardians of his lair and made my way into his presence. I attempted to convince Mr. Fawkes to participate in this interview through my Ventru-eek charms and supernatural graces. And when that failed, I begged like a starving kid at fat camp. Acquiescing to my request we began:

**So, Let's begin this grueling interview by getting your name and official job title for White Wolf?**

My name is Ray Fawkes. I'm a freelance writer and developer for White Wolf, working primarily on the **Vampire: The Requiem** line.

**Where do you live?**

I live in a ghost-ridden neighborhood in downtown Toronto, Canada. The moans and chitterings of unspeakable beings echo up and down the streets at night, so nobody needs television to stay entertained.

**Single? Married? Kid(s)?**

I'm married, and have one child.

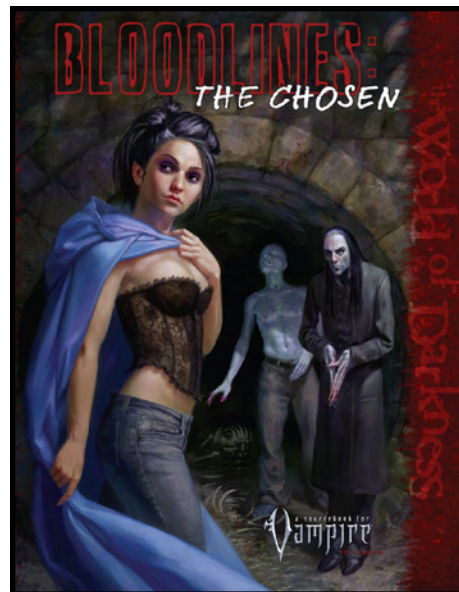
**Any Interesting Talents (Twitching Ears, Psychic powers, ect.)?**

Many of my interesting talents are on public display, either in the pages of my work or at various conventions and speaking engagements. Perhaps the most well-known is my staggering ability to invoke an exciting sense of malaise and defiance while paralyzing myself with unnamed fears. Come see me on a panel at a gaming show for a live demonstration.

I am also a graphic novel writer, and have created works for DC/Vertigo, Oni Press, and Top Shelf Comics.

**Pet(s)?**

I have a stuffed crow, but it's not something I put on wanton display. It makes people uncomfortable.



**Favorite Book?**

My favorite book is Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable. I refer to it all the time, even when I have no good reason. I'm a maniac for reference texts—mythology, hagiography, cryptography, geography, etymology, history, philosophy, parapsychology, metaphysics, pataphysics— you name it.

**Favorite Movie?**

My current favorite film is a World War I drama called "Cashiered". I saw it with a couple of friends years ago, and it put a permanent stamp on my mind. It's extremely difficult to find (although it's still in print, I hear), but I can't recommend it highly enough.

**What got you into playing/making Pen-and-Paper RPG's?**

I got into escapism, like almost everyone else in these times, at such an early age that it runs as a thread throughout the whole of my recall. Since I'm a very literary type, my favorite flavor of fantasy always involved reading and writing, so pen-and-paper RPGs were a perfect fit. I remember playing my first organized game of Dungeons and Dragons (as opposed to all the disorganized, playground-style games) at age nine.

## *What's your favorite White Wolf game? Why?*

My favorite White Wolf game is, and, since 1991 has been, their Vampire line – in all its incarnations. It seized my interest from day one, and has stayed with me since.

## *Any interesting gaming related stories?*

Oh, of course, I have dozens. However, telling stories about one's games is an activity much akin to relating one's dreams: if you weren't there, they just don't resonate the same way, and I risk gabbling enthusiastically about something so personal that nobody else can possibly relate – one of the hazards of the outspoken gamer. No, I've trained myself to refrain, and would much rather hear what players have to say about their games instead.

## *How long have you been writing for White Wolf?*

A little over two years, now. My first contribution was printed in **Ghouls** for **Vampire: The Requiem**.

## *What are some of your favorite books you've written for?*

My favorite book thus far was **Invictus** for **Vampire: The Requiem**. The fiction prologue was a pleasure to write, and seems to have struck a chord with many players, and much of the content I contributed was a pure joy to create. Most of the work I'm proudest of in **Carthians** and **Circle of the Crone** actually grew out of the research for and statements I made in **Invictus** as well.

## *Any Interesting Stories related to your Writings?*

Last year I attended the International Camarilla Convention and watched as one of the Merits I created for **Ghouls** was auctioned off for sanctioned play in the Vampire LARP, bringing in over a thousand dollars for charity. That was exhilarating, and it set me to thinking I'd better design something even more attractive and unbalancing for future players to bid over. Watch the pages of **Bloodlines: The Chosen** for Merits and Disciplines that will lead to a frenzied breakdown of reason and propriety at the next bidding event. My intent is to start the gaming community's first charity riot.

## *What's it like being the developer for Bloodlines: The Chosen?*

An experience unlike any other in my life. I find myself responsible for bringing the creations of ten eager young writers to the world at large – a daunting task for even the most seasoned developer, never mind a raw one. The terror is, of course, balanced by the amazing

enthusiasm of the contestants and their entries, some of which are spectacularly bizarre. Buy me a drink at a gaming show, and I'll tell you the story of the bloodline submission that made me crawl under my desk and hug the wall for a while.

## *So why did you become a Freelance developer?*

Will Hindmarch, the disarmingly bespectacled malevolent force behind the **Vampire: The Requiem** line, called me up and asked if I was willing to sacrifice my sanity for the good of the company. When I hesitated, he offered me a paltry bribe which, I'm ashamed to say, I readily accepted. Now I stand before you, forever altered.

## *What is your favorite bloodline in the book? Why?*

That's a question I can't easily answer because I'm so close to all ten lines. It might be better broken down into parts. What's my favorite bloodline for scaring the crap out of myself and my fellow gamers? The Noctuku. What's my favorite bloodline for exploring the irreparable emotional implications of vampirism while behaving very, very badly? The Xiao – both versions. What's my favorite bloodline for tying a Coterie together and charming the hell out of everyone involved? The Taifa. What's my favorite bloodline for stunning degradation and taboo-shattering, soul-scarring, libido-blasting misconduct? The Sangiovanni. I could go on and on. Each of the ten lines brings something unique, surprising, and powerfully thematic to the game.

## *Any upcoming projects for White Wolf you want to give some teasers for?*

I just finished work on **The Blood: Players Guide to the Requiem**, and I believe the book is going to blow minds. A section on the psychological effects of the common Disciplines and the way they can alter play is one of the best pieces I've ever written for White Wolf, and will definitely provoke a reaction from every player who reads it. Each power is examined for its hidden implications and influence on the mind of the vampire who possesses it. Consider, for example, that Celerity consumes the equivalent of a healthy human's full blood supply in less than thirty seconds of sustained use. How can anyone pay that price for power and not be intensely altered, as a person, by the result? The piece turns a spotlight on one of the aspects of vampirism that is most often taken for granted in games, casting it as a profoundly damaging influence and demonstrating that every dot on a character's sheet contains the seed for a whole story.



# Vampire

THE REQUIEM

*The Submissions are in,  
the votes have been tallied,  
and our winners are....?*

Excerpts from **Bloodlines: The Chosen**

Bloodlines: The Chosen, the newest addition to **Vampire: The Requiem**, is the product of a contest that allowed fans to create and submit their take on some exciting new bloodlines. The basic ideas for these bloodlines were laid out in the **Vampire: The Requiem** book, but these mysterious bloodlines were only mentioned in the tiniest of details. For the next release in the **Bloodlines** series of books White Wolf decided to give their loyal fans the opportunity to create these bloodlines themselves. In 2006 White Wolf made the press release to announce the contest and begin the madness of the mass fan submissions. After a lengthy process of review and editing, ten submissions were chosen. And with no further ado here is one of **The Chosen**, the terrifying Noctuku.

## *Noctuku*

By Randy Ulch

In every culture and region in the world there are stories of cannibalism. Horror stories of survival on the edge of starvation and monsters that hunt and eat the flesh of men. The Kindred have cannibal tales of their own: whispered rumors of the dread Noctuku, Nosferatu who take pleasure in hunting their Kindred cousins and eating the dead flesh that hangs from their bones.

These stories are passed along with the same excitement and fear as an urban legend or a ghost story; tales told of Noctuku dwelling on the edges of a city, waiting for Kindred to stray too far from the shelter of the Prince's law. Kindred in larger domains scoff at mentions of the Noctuku; taking them to be rumors fueled by fearful neonates or worse, a competitor's attempts to hide her crimes behind an old ghost story. Those that reside closer to the hidden haven of a Noctuku live in fear of the dark, for the Noctuku are very real.



Myth and rumor surround the Noctuku. It is believed that they may have existed long before the advent of the covenants, and that they may not be a bloodline at all; tales are told of Nosferatu that have spontaneously exhibited the hunger of the Noctuku following the diablerie of another. What is known is that many Nosferatu fear that they too will feel the pull of the Noctuku within their veins. Whether there is truth in these words, or merely more fairy tales told to scare young Nosferatu away from violating the third Tradition is unknown. However, there have never been any reliable records of the founder of this bloodline and the stories of the Noctuku are remembered by elders that have existed for centuries. Indeed Kindred on many continents share tales of the cannibalistic Noctuku bogeymen that stalk the night; however no single domain claims that they hold the origins of this strange and barbaric bloodline.

Any vampire who identifies as Noctuku is sure to face severe difficulties in Kindred society. The act of consuming the flesh of vampires is seen as tantamount to that of diablerie - the temptation to consume the soul along with the body too great a risk. Cannibalism is just as much a Taboo among vampires as mortal society, and predators do not like the feeling of being hunted any more than mortals do. Most kindred react violently when presented with the reality of the Noctuku.

The Noctuku themselves are perfectly comfortable with violent response. In their eyes, they are the apex predator - the elite among a killing race, capable of hunting

# Vampire

## THE REQUIEM

and destroying hapless mortals and experienced vampires alike. In fact, the more powerful their Kindred opponent, the more likely that Noctuku will engage in the hunt with enthusiasm, savoring the challenge of the kill. Some encroach upon established vampire domains, knowing full well that they will draw conflict from their own kind. They chew a hole through reputable Kindred courts, clashing with the agents of Princes with gleeful abandon.

Younger Noctuku – those who have yet to lose themselves to the cannibalistic hunger of the line – argue that all Kindred hunt their own when they consume the blood of mortals. They believe that the Noctuku represent the pinnacle of all predators, feeding from Kindred just as ordinary Kindred hunt mortals – for survival, for power, and for sport.

**Parent Clan:** Nosferatu

**Nickname:** Bogeymen

**Bloodline Disciplines:** Nightmare, Obfuscate, Phagia, Vigor

**Weakness:** In addition to the normal Nosferatu weakness, the Noctuku develop a dark hunger for the flesh of their prey. Nosferatu that join the Noctuku bloodline soon find that the taste of blood alone does not sate their hunger, that until they consume the raw flesh of their prey, the Beast inside them does not subside. If they do not indulge the hunger for the raw, unspoiled flesh of their victims at least once a week, they are -1 on all mental and social die rolls and require an additional success on hunger frenzies. For each week that passes thereafter without satisfying this hunger, these penalties increase by 1. If they fall to hunger frenzy while suffering this effect, they will attack and consume the flesh of the nearest victim, preferring Kindred to mortal flesh and human flesh to that of animals.

Note that Noctuku are no more capable of digesting meat than any other vampire. When they eat flesh, they will regurgitate it almost immediately. It is the simple act of consumption that satisfies their ghastly urge.

**Quote:** “You should not have come here, little vampire. Here, you are prey.”

### Phagia

The greatest secret that the Noctuku harbor with their semi-solitary requiem is that of Phagia, a unique discipline that Noctuku have developed, expressing their true nature as apex predators in the world of Kindred.

Noctuku scholars believe that Phagia was born of the dark hunger that all of the bloodline struggle with on a nightly basis, while others hypothesize that Phagia was simply born of necessity great power attending the hunger of the bloodline, strengthening the Bogeymen even as it encourages them to greater and greater depravity. It is a dark art that is drawn from deep within the Noctuku's predatory soul, both empowering and entrapping them for all time.

### Gnashing Maw

The vicious potential of the Noctuku shows itself in the very first expression of Phagia, allowing the vampire to draw sustenance from flesh even as they rend it with their fangs. When most Kindred latch onto a victim with their teeth, they may choose whether to drink blood or do lethal damage by gnawing further. The Noctuku can do both at once, tearing through his victim and feeding at the same time.

The Gnashing Maw can be used to take blood from the corpse of a recently deceased mortal or animal, assuming there is any left in the system, drawing it from the torn vessels in the flesh itself. The blood will only be useful if the creature has died within the last hour or so – after that, it begins to break down.

This power does not involve any physical transformation on the part of the Noctuku. He or she is simply a more efficient predator than most, pulling the blood from their victims even as they tear them apart.

**Cost:** --

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Survival + Phagia

**Action:** Reflexive

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The Noctuku fails to use the power, accidentally disengaging from the victim without doing damage or draining blood, wasting his action for the turn.

**Failure:** The Noctuku fails to use the power, and must choose either to drink blood or to deal damage as normal.

**Success:** The Noctuku both drains one point of blood and deals lethal bite damage to his victim, chewing through their flesh even as he drinks. If the wound is inflicted upon a mortal, it will be mangled and may disfigure them permanently.

**Exceptional Success:** The bite of the Noctuku does an extra level of lethal damage while draining a point of blood.





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# Rochambeau With Loki

By Justin Achilli

It's not always evident to the casual gamer, but games oftentimes "percolate" behind the scenes for a long time before potential players even hear about them, let alone hold them in their hands. You won't be surprised (since you're reading this article) to find that **Scion** is among those games. It's been in the hopper for years. Developers have been messing with the concepts, managers have been outlining supplement schedules, graphic designers have been tinkering with logos, and writers have been scribbling ceaselessly. For me, as a writer and as a former developer, that journey is part of the fun, seeing the idea through from genesis to publication.

Fun is a key word here, because if the people working on the game aren't having fun with it, that fact really comes through in the final book. That's what makes me so enthusiastic about **Scion** — it was the most fun I've had writing for a game in years.

This isn't dry, impersonal history or a just-the-facts accounting of mythology. It's modern, but it has shades of the archaic (naturally). It's an epic, but it isn't a strictly sober recasting of the old legends into coldly logical contemporary outcomes. Look at some of those character stories and pantheon synopses. You can tell from those that it's all about having a good time, having a laugh, and fooling around a bit with what, exactly, the gods have wrought in a world that's perhaps a little more absurd than some of the original, dire pantheons expressed.

That's where the fun comes in. That's where I get to poke at mythology with a post-modern stick.

One of the concepts that really caught my attention was the fact that all of this heroic melodrama was happening outside the consciousness of the world at large. It's a familiar White Wolf convention, but it was a little different this time — the gods and their children were taking advantage of it. It's a fascinating irony that the returned agents of the gods are quietly building themselves up to be the stuff of Legend (how do you do that, exactly?) while the world around them is more concerned about whether or not Britney shaves her junk or watching some movie about old men limping their Harleys through states consisting solely of suburbs. The fate of the world hangs in

the balance, but many of the people in it care only about where Anna Nicole Smith's baby is going to end up. That's where the blending and blurring occurs. These Scions of forgotten Gods wage their own invisible epic war alongside vulgar deities of cultural consciousness whose every meaningless movement is recorded across all manner of media.

It's no surprise, then, that the almost preposterous nature of what much of our culture considers news colors the sorts of trials and tribulations the heroes face in the line of duty to their divine parents. There's a scene in which the characters, under the charge of protecting a secret meeting of the Gods, are hounded incessantly by... a hotel hospitality agent. Of course, it's not worth their effort to thrash the hospitality agent, since she's just a mortal, and she actually has a clue for them as the story plays out if they treat her with some amount of dignity. Another scene occurs in which characters fistfight a roller coaster. And there's another that involves a Scion barfing up the food of the Gods.

On the one hand, you have the source myth. On the other hand, you have controlled self-reference. Add to the mix the potential for writers, developers, and artists to joke around a bit. And, of course, it's all constructed with the end goal of letting a group of gamers make their own marks, from pop-culture reference to mythological allusion. Can you be a Scion of the Flying Spaghetti Monster? *Yes, you can.* Can you also bring down the hammer of vengeance as decreed by Odin? *Hells, yes.*

From that capsule, you can probably glean that **Scion** doesn't always take itself entirely seriously. Sure, you can play a "straight" game of the modern hero's journey, if you wish, but the game definitely lends itself to a bit of leaning back, kidding around, and tall-tale telling that the epic orators of ancient civilizations certainly indulged.

That's the intent, at least from where I sit. If Homer were here with me, he'd agree, and we'd crack open a couple of Miller High Lites, laugh at the script for *Ghost Rider*, and discuss the potential for tragedy and comedy in Circe's life. Why don't you come join us?





# Hercules isn't so tough

Excerpts from **Scion: Hero**



Wrestle a snake that could dwarf the Empire State Building, Easy. Take a running leap that puts the Incredible Hulk to shame, no effort required. Dodge a bullet fired inches from your face, you'd have to catch me first. In **Scion: Hero** legendary feats like these are all possible and more because as a child of the ancient gods you are truly capable of Legend.

From six mythic pantheons, with a seventh mentioned in the book, you can build your modern hero to battle the awakening broods of the Titanspawn. Each pantheon, from the mighty Aesir to the mysterious Voodoo, has over 50 mythic gods and goddesses you can choose from to create your character's divine lineage.

In **Scion: Hero** each deity has various powers and magics to offer their mortal scion in the battle against the awakened Titans, these gifts are commonly known as Boons. Below are included some examples of possible boons your character may have access to as a Heroic Scion.



## Death

The Gods don't share mortals' instinctive dread of death, but they know its power well. Likewise, as a Scion's mastery of this Purview grows, his fear of death diminishes.

**Associated With:** Anubis, Baron Samedi, Hades, Hel, Huitzilopochtli, Izanami, Miclāntecuhli, Odin, Osiris, Xipe Totec

### Death Senses (Death •)

**Dice Pool:** None

**Cost:** None

The Scion can see ghosts even when those ghosts don't choose to manifest. To her, ghosts are livid, physical presences, sensible to feeling as to sight (as well as smell and hearing). She still can't harm the fragile ectoplasmic shell of a ghost who hasn't manifested, however. The sense of touch this Boon grants is illusory. If the Scion tries to exert enough pressure to cause damage or restrain the ghost, her hand passes through it.

The Scion can also look at a dead body and know what killed it, if that cause isn't already obvious. The answer she gets is somewhat generic (the reading would tell her a person had been poisoned, for instance, but not by what poison), but it's conclusive despite the presence of falsified or misleading evidence. Generic causes of death include suffocation, drowning, poison, burns, internal trauma, bleeding, hunger, thirst, exposure, illness, heart attack and old age.

### Euthanasia (Death ••)

**Dice Pool:** Perception + Empathy (to gauge willingness)

**Cost:** 1 Legend

When a living being is at the Incapacitated health level with lethal or aggravated damage due to wounds or a terminal illness, the Scion can end that being's suffering. The Scion must touch the being for one action (Speed 6) and spend one

# SCION

Legend point. If the Scion wants to know whether the victim is truly willing to die, her player can roll (Perception + Empathy) while the Scion touches the victim. Animals usually answer in the affirmative and Titanspawn usually do the opposite, but human beings and Scions are unpredictable.

Regardless, the subject's willingness is ultimately immaterial unless the subject is another Scion. The power doesn't work on a Scion unless that Scion is actually willing to die. (Even then, however, Fate or the Scion's divine parent might intervene to keep the Scion alive a little longer.)

## Unquiet Corpse (Death • • •)

**Dice Pool:** Charisma + Command

**Cost:** 1 Willpower + 1 Legend

By touching a corpse or its grave with her hand or her Birthright, a Scion can raise that corpse as a mindless zombie (or its pantheon-appropriate equivalent) under her control. Only those limbs that are present and firmly affixed to the zombie's torso (if only by leather straps and wood staples) function when the zombie rises. The zombie remains animated until either it is destroyed or the Scion who created it dies.

## Tsukumo Gami

It's a fundamental Shinto understanding that every physical object has a spirit. Those spirits, known as kami, vary as widely in grace and power as the objects they represent vary in size and importance. A Scion who's inherited this Purview is not only aware of these spirits, but she's able to coax them out of hiding and bargain with them for information and favors.

## The Wakeful Spirit (Tsukumo Gami •)

**Dice Pool:** Charisma + Presence

**Cost:** None

With a little persistence, a Scion can capture the attention of the spirit of an inanimate object and speak to it for a few

minutes. When she does so, the object takes on anthropomorphic features—the grains in a wooden door, for instance, might flow into the shape of a face—and speaks in a way befitting the size and importance of the object. Unremarkable, unimportant objects have dim-witted, semi-conscious spirits, whereas unique objects to which people form emotional attachments are eloquent, knowledgeable and charming.

In speaking to a spirit, a character can find out information the spirit has directly experienced. A car's spirit can talk about where it's been or who's been in it. A lamp's spirit can talk about the last time the master of the house used its light.

A wishing well's spirit can talk about how many people have wasted their pittances on false hopes. The older and more interesting the object is, the farther back and more clearly its spirit can remember key information. Spirits don't differentiate easily between non-spirit beings, though, and they consider it rude to talk about the goings-on of other spirits if the spirits in question are doing their jobs properly. Also, most don't pay too much attention to their surroundings unless something truly unusual happens.

## The Watchful Spirit (Tsukumo Gami • •)

**Dice Pool:** Charisma + Presence

**Cost:** 1 Legend

The Scion can not only coax information from a kami, but also set it to some passive task on her behalf. She can, for example, have the kami watch out for a specific person, observe any Titanspawn who approach, or remember and repeat anything another Scion says to it. This period of duty lasts for a number of days equal to the number of successes the character amassed on the activation roll.

## The Helpful Spirit (Tsukumo Gami • • •)

**Dice Pool:** Charisma + Occult

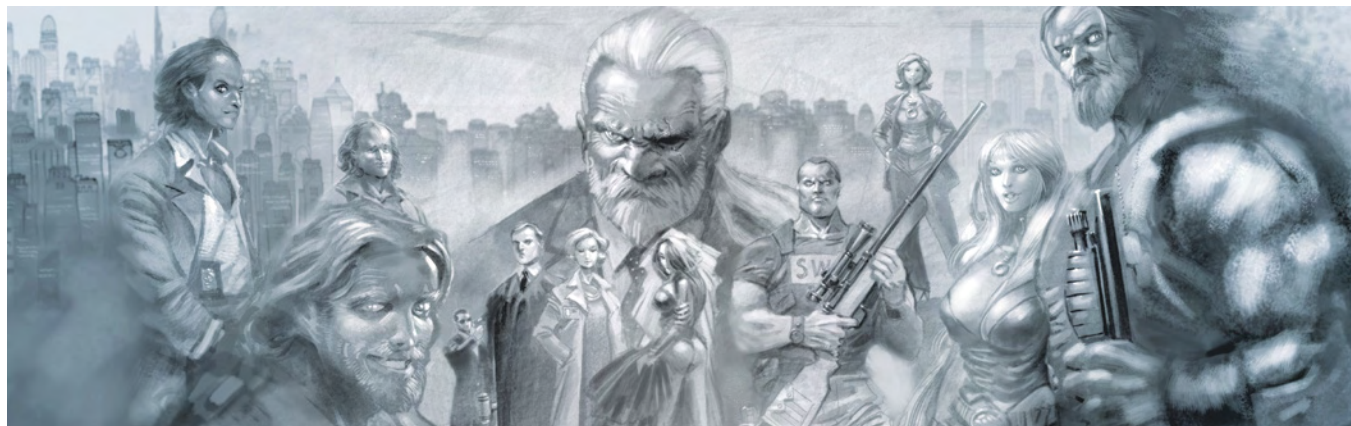
**Cost:** 1 Legend per die of improvement

With the proper shows of respect and decorum, a Scion can convince the kami within an object to enhance the mun-





# SCION



dane function of that object. In so doing, she gains a dice bonus equal to the number of Legend points she spends on the effect, which lasts for a number of days equal to number of successes on the activation roll. Be it anything from a weapon to a baby grand piano, the item must be one that requires a dice roll to use with skill. If the character uses this Boon on one of her Birthright items, she can enhance only its mundane function.

## Mystery

The Purview of Mystery represents an understanding of the interconnection of bizarre, seemingly random events—an understanding mortal minds are unequipped to achieve. Gods and Scions with this Purview not only recognize this interconnection, but they can read significant clues from it.

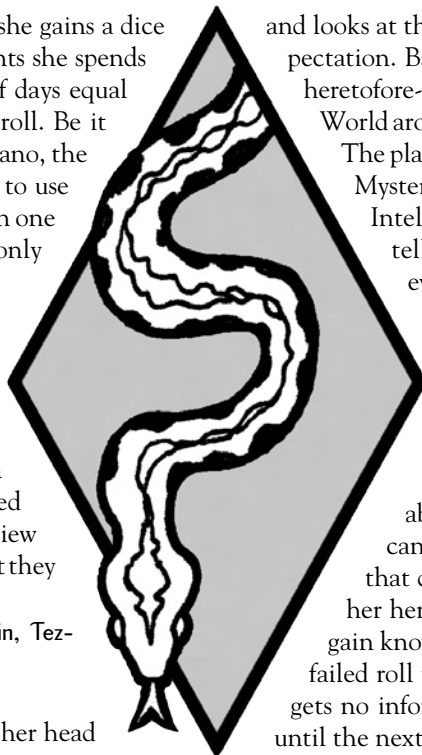
**Associated With:** Damballa, Dionysus, Isis, Odin, Tezcatlipoca

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Mystery

To use this Purview, the Scion clears her head

and looks at the World around her without analysis or expectation. Based on what she sees, the character makes heretofore-denied intuitive leaps of logic as objects in the World around her spark off subconscious connections. The player then rolls her character's (Intelligence + Mystery), without adding bonus successes from Epic Intelligence. The player may then ask her Storyteller pointed, specific questions about various events that have occurred in game—one question per success on the roll. The Storyteller need not expound upon his answers (they can be quite terse and to the point, in fact), but he must answer them as honestly and directly as he can.

Using this Purview cannot reveal facts about things that will happen in the future, nor can a character use it to gain insight into events that don't concern either her or the members of her heroic Band. The player can use this effect to gain knowledge only once per story. She can reroll a failed roll until she gets a success, but on a botch she gets no information and she cannot use Mystery again until the next story.





# CHANGELING

## INTO THE MIND OF A MADMAN

*Intern Dave Bockenkamp's interview with Ethan Skemp, developer of Changeling*

**C**hangeling is the “fifth book” in White Wolf Game Studio’s **World of Darkness** Storytelling RPG system. It takes the old stories of the Brother’s Grimm, as well as other stories that were passed down from one generation to the next in many cultures, and brings back the darker aspects of the light-hearted tales of the past. The resurrection of these old myths and legends was conducted by developer Ethan Skemp, who brought to light the things of faerie tales cast in shadow.

### What is Changeling?

The infamous “fifth game” of the World of Darkness. Its subjects are changelings, people unfortunate enough to be taken to Faerie but fortunate enough to win their way free... albeit changed.

**What are some of the challenging design aspects you had to overcome with the game?**

Making sure there was a niche for the changelings. You don’t want them to feel too like any of the other supernaturals: their social arrangement shouldn’t be too reminiscent of vampires, their origins shouldn’t be too much like werewolves, their magic system shouldn’t be too **Mage**, and so on.

**Was there anything you were hesitant about going into the project?**

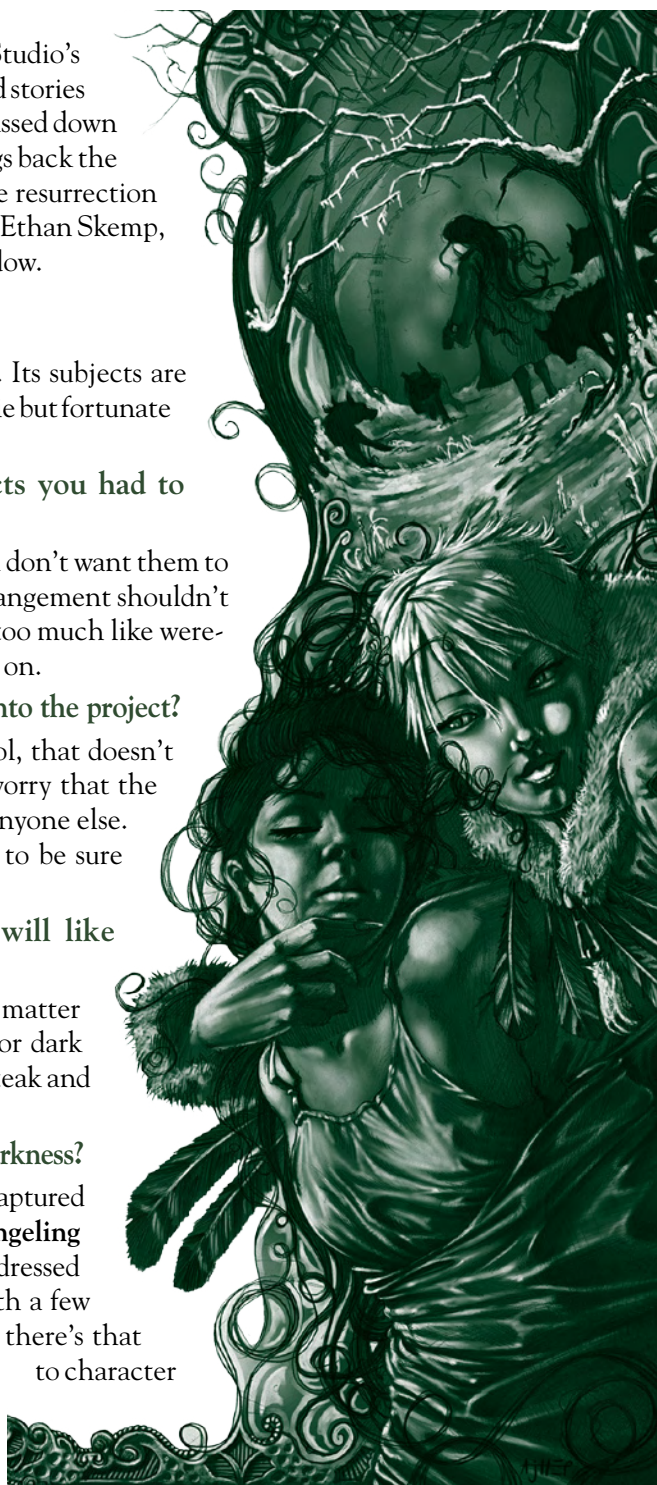
Only that just because I think something is really cool, that doesn’t mean everyone else will agree. There’s always a bit of a worry that the ideas in your head won’t turn out to be that attractive to anyone else. I was certain a **Changeling** could be great; I just wanted to be sure my **Changeling** would be.

**What do you think World of Darkness fans will like about Changeling?**

The mood, the style, the possibilities that the subject matter evokes. Fae legends blend very well with modern horror or dark romance sensibilities; it’s dark chocolate and raspberries, steak and blue cheese, fish and chips. Alchemy.

**What do you think Changeling adds to the World of Darkness?**

There’s something about the fae that just isn’t properly captured by anything less than a fae-focused setting or game. **Changeling** is an opportunity to use some very bittersweet themes, dressed in a rich color palette of visuals. It also mucks around with a few of the basic assumptions common to the other games, so there’s that experimental air of “okay, what if we add this substep to character creation? And if we have more than five archetypes, can we keep them?”





# CHANGELING

**How do you think players are going to be surprised by Changeling?**

I hope that it's always in the good way: that they come across a power structure or antagonist or archetype and say "Ah, I hadn't predicted that, but it makes perfect sense." So... mostly surprised, but never totally surprised in the way that implies we've put stuff in there that just doesn't seem right.

**The theme of trust is present throughout the book. What challenges do you think players will enjoy when dealing with it?**

Playing trust off deceit. Fae legends are all about trickery and illusion, but the romantic themes of the game deal with bonds between friends, family and lovers that demand honesty and truth to really work. Finding out where your character falls between the two, how human or fae she really is — that's going to be a hell of a journey.

**How did you come to imagine the True Fae and what makes them such a feared antagonist?**

The Others are essentially inspired by their folklore equivalents. Specifically, a recurring theme of something very close to solipsism. Faeries are often depicted with a very different value system than ours, and they tend to show up in commanding roles where they pick what's "good for" the human protagonist. Recent literature has also mirrored this approach, with the idea that faeries are cruel not because they take pleasure in it, but because they have no understanding of other people's worth. Love blurs with ownership, kindness with cruelty, and the faerie never questions that it could be any other way.

**Did you have other antagonists in mind or other visions for the True Fae?**

Heck yes. There's got to be interesting and viable ways to have changeling-versus-changeling conflict, of course, and some of that has to be the kind of frightening conflict that comes from facing changelings that have become practically alien to you in motive or manner. There's a very personal conflict that's intrinsic to the game. And then there's all those strange things that can be found in the Thorns; many of those are no kinds of friend at all.

**What sort of storytelling excitement can be generated by Changeling?**

Something rich and strange. There's a lot of room for creativity here, as changelings and the other things of Faerie have the opportunity to be very diverse in ap-

pearance and motif. Groups can indulge in truly singular design while still maintaining a consistent world.

**What did you visualize for the protagonists?**

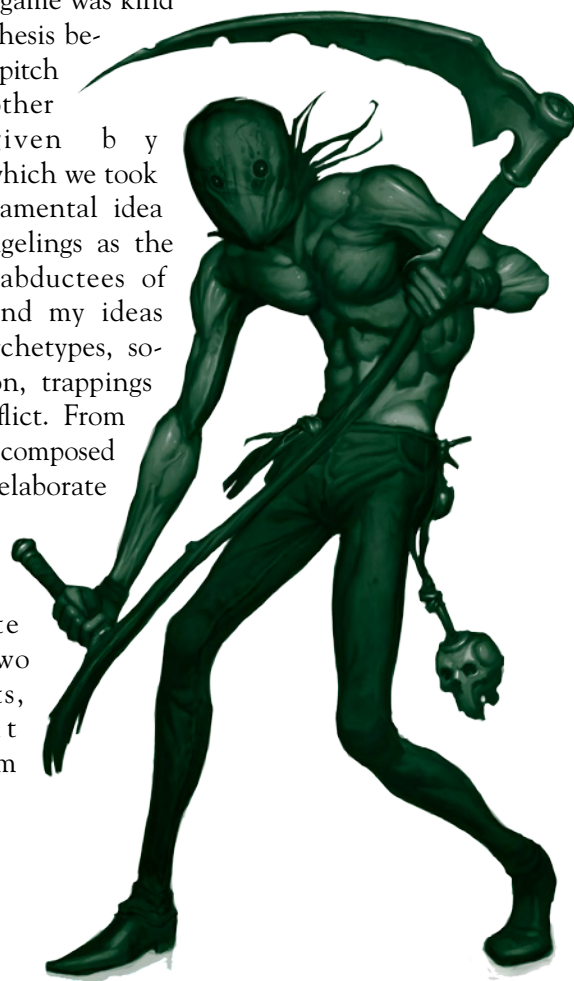
I wanted people who were clearly part fae but very much human at their core; a fusion of the familiar faces and archetypes from legend with real, living people that you might pass on the street. That fusion led to some great visual ideas, and when the authors' drafts began trickling in, it was wonderful to see how they worked on the same inspiration.

**Was there any sort of revisions you had to go through for Changeling?**

Only the usual batch of company reviews and such, but it's strange just how much of the initial brainstorming survived to the final product. We apparently hit on something that made everyone excited.

**Was there any previous ideas in mind for Changeling?**

The game was kind of a synthesis between my pitch and another pitch given by Bill, in which we took his fundamental idea for changelings as the altered abductees of Faerie and my ideas about archetypes, socialization, trappings and conflict. From there, I composed a more elaborate pitch about how to integrate these two concepts, and it ran from there.



# CHANGELING

What books, movies, and other inspirational sources influenced the creation of Changeling?

There's a tremendous list, particularly as the subject matter's something that has inspired people for a long time. There's more fae folklore than almost any other kind of "monster" folklore out there. If anything, **Changeling** was inspired by a desire to do a game that reflected that

folklore a bit more closely — while still boasting our own distinct World of Darkness take, of course.

What is the biggest thing that makes this Changeling different from the Old World of Darkness Changeling?

The definition of "changeling." This has effects on everything from "What do changelings do?" to "What are the threats facing changelings?" and "What sort of character concepts are possible?"

What caused Changeling to be the fifth game to be created for the New World of Darkness?

Pretty much everyone was pitching a variation on **Changeling**. We wanted to do **Promethean** first because it was a brand new concept for the World of Darkness, but every developer had **Changeling** on the brain for a while.

Was there any opposition to the creation of Changeling?

Not really. It was the kind of concept that made people a little nervous, because we had to balance making it dark enough to be a proper World of Darkness game, beautiful and romantic enough to do the subject matter justice, and original enough that it wouldn't look like a rehash. It was the take on the subject matter that was important; the subject matter wasn't questioned.

Is it possible to give us a taste of the powers in Changeling for the article?

Sure. The Contract of Eternal Autumn has powers titled like so:

- Last Breath Isaac
- Withering Glare
- Brother to the Ague
- Riding the Falling Leaves
- Tears of Autumn

Is there anything else you'd like to share about Changeling or yourself in regards to the development of Changeling?

This game has had its stresses, but it's been so much fun to work on. The enthusiasm and energy level of all my co-workers and authors has been tremendous. We've all been doing our best to come up with a game that we would want to play, that we would enjoy messing around with, that we would enjoy just coming up with characters for.





# CHANGELING

## MADNESS AND BEAUTY

Excerpts from *Changeling: The Lost*

Imagine if you were chosen out of the millions of people in the world to see a place of beauty unspeakable. You were taken because you had something special to you that made you shine above all others, and rewarded for having that special talent by being brought to this place that no others could see without invitation. This reward has its prices, however. You were taken without choice and likely replaced by something else. You were dragged through a terrible Hedge that ripped pieces of your very soul from you. You were held captive in the arms of a being that has no moral values or codes that a human could understand, and warped by them just because they could or because they needed you to be the way you are now.

And if you escape from their clutches, you are forever changed. Years may have gone by since you've been in that prison, or it might have been mere moments. Your appearance is changed, though no one but you can tell what you *really* look like now. Your family and friends will never recognize you and you have little to no knowledge of how society in your world now functions, as you were too young, gone too long, or warped terribly by your Keepers. Your only hope rests in others who are just like you now; changed by beings that have no care for mercy or values. Welcome to the life of being a Changeling.

### THE ABDUCTION

From the Russian Babay to the Mexican El Cucuy, the bogeyman lives under the proverbial beds and in the metaphorical closets of almost every hu-

man society. Throughout history and almost without exception, each culture has had at least one version of monstrous beings that haunt the shadows of their moonless nights, waiting for the opportunity to snatch misbehaving children or lure unsuspecting travelers to their deaths — or worse. Modern scholars profess that these “kidnapper” legends all have a

common root: humanity's need for cautionary tales, that each of these creatures was invented by parents or society elders to proscribe harmful behaviors through the use of a menacing and mysterious enforcer. Children who misbehave may be threatened with the *homem do saco* (“Bag Man”) in Portugal, or *le croquet-mitaine* (“the mitten-biter”) in France, but the sentiment is the same:

“If you don't behave as we want you to, we won't be able to protect you and something will come and get you.” Likewise, young girls who stray from their parent's watchful supervision or young men prone to sneaking out for adventure pose an inherent threat to the social hierarchy

of their individual cultures. Creatures such as Nanny Rutt, an English well-dweller who disappears with those who venture too near her home, or the Peruvian Ecandato who take the form of dolphins and lure travelers into their river-world, serve as external reinforcements of the safety of home and the importance of remaining there. While the details of each legendary creature may be very different, at their core they are the same. Since the desire to encourage conformation to acceptable



# CHANGELING

behavior standards is universal, it is understandable that each society developed mythological figures that punish those who behave inappropriately. Similarly, since certain human experiences (death, slavery, separation from one's friends and family) are almost unequivocally seen as the most severe retributions possible, it is not surprising that the creators of these myths used them as the punishments inflicted by the kidnappers for misbehavior. By foisting the responsibility for punishment off on some mysterious outside force, those in control both circumvented rebellion against their own authority, and removed themselves from the position of enforcer. The identity of the "kidnapper" might vary, but the message remains the same: Conform and be safe, deviate and be removed from the game by something beyond our control.

But the tales don't stop with the "bad ones" being taken. Innocent children are taken from the safety of their beds, hard-working farmers are swallowed up in their fields, and pious clergy are stolen from sacred ground. In this case, to Occam's credit, the simplest explanation is the correct one.

For centuries, perhaps since the dawn of human existence, the Fae have preyed upon humanity. Every year, in every corner of the world, thousands of individuals go missing without explanation. Stolen from their homes, taken while traveling or snatched from their cradles, countless men, women and children simply disappear without a trace. For some, mundane explanations exist. Runaways return, murder victims are discovered, fugitives are apprehended. For others, the explanations are much less clear.

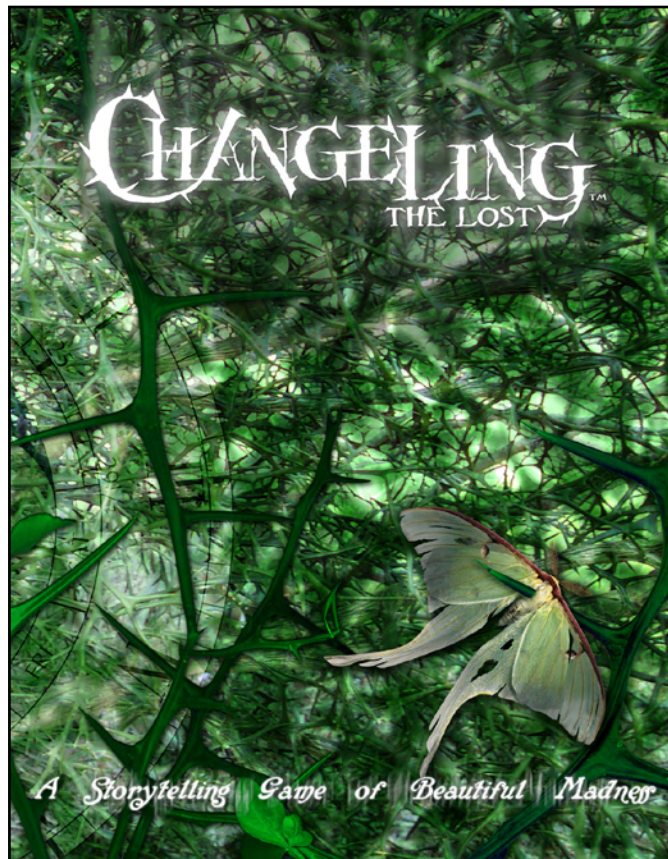
In some cases, the lost person is never found again, and no clue ever leads to their whereabouts. No body is discovered, and they never again raise so much as a blip on the radar of human society. Investigation leads to a dead end, leaving their families and friends befuddled as to their fate. It is as if they had completely disappeared from the Earth, leaving no trace behind. And many who vanish are never missed at all, not until it's far too late.

In other cases, the disappearance is not permanent. The missing individual may not remember anything about the time they were gone, even if they were missing for years. Other times, they may claim to remember, but their tales are befuddled, at best. They may claim to have been taken by ghosts, spirits, aliens or fairies, mysterious individuals of impossible descriptions, and spent hours, or days, or decades in a world not our own.

Some allege to have been held prisoner in the lands of the dead, be it Heaven or Hell. Yet others claim to have been imprisoned in a nightmare realm, where the rules of the mortal world do not apply. Their tales are muddled, as full of gaps as they are contradictions. Many cannot remember how they came to return. Perhaps they earned their freedom, or escaped through stealth or guile. Some even claim to have slain their captor, although it is often the least lucid who make these claims.

In both permanent disappearances and those where the victim eventually returns, the simplest explanations are again the correct ones. Their stories, if they live to tell them, are rooted in truth, no matter how fantastic they may seem.

Of course, not all who vanish are stolen by the Fae. However, not all who are stolen by the Fae vanish. The majority of changelings are never missed at all, their lives replaced by an impostor created by their captors. They fight their way back only to discover that they were never missed, and that they have no lives to return to. Unable to live as they once did, the Lost must find a new road to walk.







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# THE DRAGON'S CLAWS: FOUR NEW TERRESTRIAL SPELLS FOR EXALTED

by Julian Kuleck  
Kent, OH, USA

In the First Age, five spells were used by the Terrestrial Exalted to combine the might of both sorcery and martial arts: one for each of the elements. In the time of the Second Age, knowledge of these spells became more obscure with the decline of sorcery. The spell known as Wood Dragon's Claw is most commonly found due to its adaptability and power. The Heptagram retains knowledge of these spells, though they are not commonly taught due to their relatively blunt nature, being considered simply apings of the Immaculate Order's more refined arts. Of course, some magical societies still preserve one or two of the spells, even if their members may not actually prove capable of casting them. Additionally, a number of mystical tomes contain them, most notably the Precise Manual of Sorcerous Pugilism.

Penned under the name of "Five Stars Falling" in the time just following the Usurpation, the Precise Manual of Sorcerous Pugilism is an impeccably-authored work detailing the Five-Dragon Style and the five Dragon's Claw spells. Intended for Dragon-Blooded, it details both the martial arts and spells finely enough that an Exalt could learn with the tome alone. However, such a student still requires some form of sorcerous initiation to decipher the spells.

The tome had a troubled history. Its author included subtle references in the lessons designed to undermine the Immaculate Philosophy that eventually got it labeled as a heretical text several centuries ago. Though there has been some desire to produce a more palatable version by some members of the Bronze Faction, bureaucratic snags and difficulty in disentangling propaganda from instruction has prevented such a version from being completed until only several years ago. Buried in red tape, it has yet to see distribution in the Realm itself.


Because these five spells are all derived from the same basic formulae, they can be learned more

## Editor's Foreward

Welcome to the Summer Quarterly's Fan Submissions Section. This Quarterly showcases fan fiction from the realms of Promethean, Vampire, and Exalted. As editor, I would like to thank everyone who responded to our call for your writing and congratulations to all those who made it into the Quarterly. It wasn't easy to select the final pieces, so if you didn't make it this time, don't give up. There are still Quarterly opportunities in the future. We look forward to seeing what you send us for the next Quarterly, so don't let your keyboard or pencil go untouched!

quickly if the user already knows one or more of the Dragon's Claw spells. After learning the first Dragon's Claw spell, a sorcerer may learn additional Dragon's Claw spells at half their normal experience cost and training time. Two of these spells can be active at the same time, one for each hand, and the caster may make any combination of attacks with each claw as a part of a flurry. However, only one of the spells' effects can apply to a single attack.

Four of the five Dragon's Claw Spells can be found below. The Wood Dragon's Claw spell can be found on p. 254 of **Exalted**.



**Air Dragon's Claw**  
**Cost: 10m**  
**Target: Caster**

The caster's hands become wreathed in quick currents of air, shaped by the Essence that gathers them into transparent, swirling claws. They remain whistling about the character's hands until the character decides to terminate this spell. Though they are but mere echoes of the greater elemental dragons of Air, they are still quite deadly. When the spell is completed, the caster receives 12 15 points to allocate between the claw's Accuracy, Defense, Damage, and Rate. None of these ratings may exceed (the caster's Essence + Occult). These claws inflict lethal damage. These ratings may not be changed unless the spell is terminated and cast again.

Attacks made with these claws are considered barehanded unarmed Martial Arts punches with Speed 4, using the claws' attack ratings rather than that of an unarmed punch. At the cost of single mote per attack, the character can also extend the claws like



bladed whips to perform ranged attacks at a range of (the caster's Essence + Martial ArtsOccult) yards, but such attacks do not add Strength to their base damage.

## Fire Dragon's Claw

Cost: 10m  
Target: Caster

Flames curl over the user's hands in the form of fearsome talons, becoming lesser replica claws of the greater elemental dragons of Fire. This is the most dangerous of the dragon's claw spells to both user and caster, as the flames are quite capable of burning the caster if he is not careful. When the spell is completed, the caster receives 1515 points to allocate between the claw's Accuracy, Defense, Damage, and Rate. None of these ratings may exceed (the caster's Essence + Occult). These claws inflict lethal damage. These ratings may not be changed unless the spell is terminated and cast again.

Attacks made with these claws are considered barehanded unarmed Martial Arts punches with Speed 5, using the claws' attack ratings rather than that of an unarmed punch. Attacks with these claws add the caster's Essence to their damage rating, even if this puts them beyond the normal (the caster's Essence + Occult) limitation. However, any botch on an attack roll with these claws causes the caster to suffer their base damage, including the Essence bonus but without his Strength factored in. This damage may be soaked normally, but the normal penalties of a botch still apply. When the character performs a successful parry against an unarmed attack with these claws, the attacker suffers the caster's Essence in damage. These claws may also be used to ignite flammable inanimate objects with a touch.

## Earth Dragon's Claw

Cost: 10m  
Target: Caster

Changing into claws, the caster's hands become heavy yet sharp masses of dust and stone. Harkening back to the greater Elemental Dragons of Earth,

they move with the grace of the caster despite their clumsy appearance. When the spell is completed, the caster receives 15 points to allocate between the claw's Accuracy, Defense, Damage, and Rate. None of these ratings may exceed (the caster's Essence + Occult). These claws inflict lethal damage. These ratings may not be changed unless the spell is terminated and cast again.

Attacks made with these claws are considered barehanded unarmed Martial Arts punches with Speed 6, using the claws' attack ratings rather than that of an unarmed punch. In addition, these claws add the user's Essence to the difficulty to resist being knocked down or stunned by any attacks performed with them. The character can use these claws to parry mundane armed and unarmed attacks without needing a stunt.

## Water Dragon's Claw

Cost: 10m  
Target: Caster

Currents of water manifest and wash over the caster's hands, cresting into claws sharpened by Essence. With the power of the greater Elemental Dragons of Water, these claws can flow through the tiniest crack in a foe's armor. When the spell is completed, the caster receives 152 points to allocate between the claw's Accuracy, Defense, Damage, and Rate. None of these ratings may exceed (the caster's Essence + Occult). These claws inflict lethal damage. These ratings may not be changed unless the spell is terminated and cast again.

Attacks made with these claws are considered barehanded unarmed Martial Arts punches with Speed 5, using the claws' attack ratings rather than that of an unarmed punch. In addition, these claws negate an amount of the target's armor soak and Hardness equal to the caster's Essence, though they do not reduce the target's natural soak or any soak bonuses gained from the use of a Charm.



## Promises, Promises

*Written by Monica Valentinelli*

Stone gargoyles perch directly above the entrance to St. Michael's cathedral, the church where I was baptized over a century ago in Brooklyn, New York. I don't have to see their beady eyes to know they are watching me; I swear on my rosary their marble talons will scrape the building edifice as I walk past them into the church for Midnight Mass. In my time I have seen priests—even archbishops—come and go, but the gargoyles seem to sit, unwavering, in front of God's gates to ward off evil. Funny, isn't it? They have never tried to stop me—even when I was young in this life and unable to control my Azoth—yet I'm not so sure they aren't real.

*Am I evil? Do I need to be forgiven?*

I let the questions roll around in my mind, gathering speed as they repeat themselves over and over again throughout the opening hymn. A younger priest, Father Salvatore, conducts the opening rites to mass. Those unchanging words might as well be chiseled on the gilded statues behind him or—better yet—etched into the saint's bones that lie buried within the stone altar. The outdated passages mean very little to me now, for that is not the reason why I came here tonight.

"Will they steal it, Miss Gabriella?" a young, male voice whispers in my ear. Of course, every voice that speaks to me is young. By his standards, John was about twenty or thirty years old. When you've been around as long as I have, a decade doesn't really make much of a difference.

"Yes, Giovanni. They will." I pause and mimic a heavy sigh as best I can, for dramatic effect. We all have our parts to play and I can't deny it...my flesh wants to feel John's touch, his warm fingers tracing paths on my cool skin. He's dangerous, exciting, alive. Instead, I pull my widow's veil over my haunted eyes and wonder if he likes black lace.

Shutting the unnatural thought out of my mind, I admit my only real worry. "I still don't understand why

we have to lie to them, Giovanni."

John turns his silvery rings; he always plays with them when he's nervous. "They may be your friends, but if you're right that gold chalice is worth millions. You know this is the only way to get what you want. We'll go over the plan again once your friends meet up with us at the bar."

Something pointy and sharp hits my chest. Is it guilt? After all of these years, watching him grow from babe to man, can I still feel the complexity of my own conscious?

"How do you know what I want?"

No, it can't be guilt. I won't let that emotion infect the purity of my face.

Giovanni teases me, whispering in my ear while the priest invites us to stand and reaffirm our faith. "Aren't you glad we're in the back of the church?"

I fight it. Him. Me. I won't allow this thing to happen. Instead, I ask him how much time we have left before our rendez-vous with Saul, Freya, and Samuel. The Contemporary Museum of Art had a lot more security than I thought it would; I hope John's services are well worth the money I paid for them.

Breathing in the scent of my damp hair, he makes a face. "I know it's wrong. Hell, I feel we're wrong but there is something about you that is familiar." He looks at me with questions in his muddy brown eyes. Too bad I can't answer them.

"You're lying to me, too, Gabriella. There's something else going on here, and I think I know what it is. You don't need to worry—with the money we'll make from stealing that artifact we could go on living--"

An ugly frown covers my face; my red-painted lipstick cracks from the effort. He is in love with me, I'm sure of it. Or else he thinks he's in love. Pretty things attract Giovanni's attention; they have all of his life.

"You are like her, Gabriella." He points to a statue of the virgin. "Perfect."



# PROMETHEAN

## THE CREATED

We kneel together, trembling, listening to the words of a priest filled with faith. If only I could show Giovanni what I saw within those stained-glass walls.

Bread into body. Wine into blood. Oh, how I miss the Latin mass with its ancient alchemical rituals and hidden meanings.

"In many ways, I am." My body lurches forward, it tries to succumb to its worldly urges, but I hold it back. I, too, am in love. But not with him. Never, with *him*.

The cathedral bell sounds once. Twelve-thirty. I look around to see if anyone is affected by my presence, but all I can see is an old woman hunched over her pew a few rows in front of us.

"Time for us to go, Giovanni. We have to take our places."

The two of us sneak out of the back of the church, right before the good Father invites his flock to communion. We swiftly walk to a small bar just a few blocks away. I hope the others will already be there. I hope they can't see how I feel. They say our kind can't love, that death robs us of it. I know it will be different for me; I've known John a long time. Giovanni, for all of his quirks and his shadiness, still believes in that antiquated notion of flowery, red, romantic love as much as his human heart will allow. He will do anything for me. I know he will.

The others are different. They know what I am because they are what I am, in a way. We have socialized together on a few occasions, but for the most part the other three simply prefer the company of others like themselves. Living, breathing mortals are at the heart of who I am. The closer I am to them—the closer I am to becoming like them. I inspect my mirror every day, waiting for my body to move without Pyros. It will happen.

Freya is the youngest one of us all and we're not too sure how long she'll last. She'll be here for the gold. Samuel? Well Samuel just likes to smash things and doesn't care if there's any money in it for him or not. Sometimes I think he's angry that he can't even pass for human because he reeks of clay, but other times it is almost as if he enjoys the potter's mold his Pyros thrives in.

Saul is...well...just Saul. He's already sitting at a table by the time we show up, his telltale scars mar his olive skin but John doesn't seem to notice them.

His eyes arrest me.

"—I am sorry, G. The others are out back. Freya had a little bit too much to drink." Saul was too tall for his own good; his height never went unnoticed whenever we traveled in public. Not to mention he's a lousy liar and should just stick to his plants. I scan him quickly and sit back in my chair with my mouth hanging open in a very unladylike manner.

"So are you saying the others couldn't make it?" Lucky for John he had no idea who he was speaking to. Of course the others would be here. Our bonds are a lot stronger than a promise made to a criminal.

Saul ignores him and pulls something out of his trenchcoat. "These are for you." I take the badly wrapped package; my fingers tremble with anticipation. I feel the satin curve of (what I think are) my old shoes; their frayed ribbons betray their age. "I'll be waiting outside, we don't have much time." This time Saul turns to me. "If we do this, Miss G. You will owe a debt to each and every one in our group. Even Freya."

I try to change the subject. "Do you think she'll come around one day?"

Another emotion, fear, bubbles up from the depths of my belly. How could they have known I was a dancer? John didn't even know what I was really after—I never told him my last name.

"Anything wrong?" John asks me.

"No, everything is all right. Everything is just...very right."

He winks at me, almost as if he keeps his share of secrets, too. "Then we've got nothing left to worry about. We're all here, so I guess it's time to go."

It's my turn to play innocent. I always was a good actress. "Go where, Giovanni?" I know he likes it when I use the Italian version of his name. At the very least, I can still give him that pleasure.

John turns and looks out the window, the tavern's neon lights cast an eerie green glow on his profile, bathing him with the same color as Azoth's light. He makes a gesture, and motions for me to follow him. We pick up our things and weave through the drunks to the back of the car. A long, black limo idles there; Saul opens the door and invites me in.

"Even men like me recognize the need to dream."

I laugh, an echo from the naïve catholic schoolgirl I once pretended to be. Like most women, I fit into

# PROMETHEAN

## THE CREATED

many roles: actress, widow, mother, prostitute.

Friend. Enemy. Sinner.

John circles me and grabs me by the shoulders, forcing me to look at him.

“Don’t you know how much I love you?” His words are sharper than my guilt.

I stare into the human side of him, envious that he has years left to live a life I so desperately try to remember. A memory floats in front of my eyes, one I should have buried long ago.

“You’re too much like your grandfather, Giovanni. He was a good man, and so are you.”

He rubs his head and pulls a cigarette from his pocket. I’m fairly certain I’m responsible for making his head hurt. Maybe he does know what I am. Maybe he refuses to see it. He turns away from me and punches his fist into a wall.

Why can’t I let him see that I’m dead? Are their rules we need to follow? One day I will feel warm blood pouring through my veins, not this accursed Pyros that gives me the power I need to survive.

Sneaking a glance over his shoulder, John shakes his head, and lights up his cigarette. The smoke hangs heavy on the night air; he tries to take another drag but his mouth takes over, uttering a string of profanities that should never be spoken in polite company.

I know my secret will open a gaping hole between us, but I speak the words anyway. “I love you, too.”

Confusion mars his pretty face; it’s as if he’s trying to convince himself I really am something more than just a boyhood crush. I want him to run—from all that I am—but I won’t let go.

Saul leans into the car whispering to Freya and Samuel, shuts the passenger door, and pulls John aside. The two of them talk like men always seem to do; Saul hands something to John who looks at it briefly and hands it back to him. The others roll down their window, but I find no comfort in their faces. Only lingering sadness as they wave goodbye.

I’ve done something, haven’t I? Something terrible and...

...John ignores me and hands Saul a plastic card. Saul lingers in the alleyway just long enough to show me that he’s leaving, too.

“You know, the gargoyles were easier.” My voice

betrays my preserved beauty; a horrible sadness fills my dead lungs. I’m too frail to handle another rejection.

“Why the long face?” John asks, taking my hands into his.

I feel my head shake. Something bright and shiny and naked hurts my eyes.

Hope.

“Why do you deny me, Gabriella? I think about you every day. Every minute...every second...”

John leans in to kiss me. I turn towards him, praying that my cold body won’t betray me. Our lips touch for only a moment and I feel his human warmth trying to enter me. He jerks away, a fearful shadow crosses his face.

“Wh-what are you?”





## *The Daeva's Doll*

Melissa Snyder  
Farmland, Indiana, USA

She inspected her hair before making her way downstairs. He was awake and would want her. She smoothed the gentle blue tartan of her skirt and touched the matching garter at her throat. He liked it when she wore his colors.

Jeremiah MacLeod. Her master.

He had been lord of his own lands in the 18th century and somehow still expected to live the life of a lord in the 21st. And who was she to argue? No one.

"Meredith!" he bellowed.

The girl appeared almost instantly at his study door, bowing. "You called, my lord?"

Jeremiah looked at the girl, at his petite "doll" as he called her. She was a pretty thing, around twenty-one years, luxurious red-brown curls, abundant in their gloss, and woodbine skin like that of a China doll. Her cat-green eyes were flecked with gold and often hidden beneath dark lashes and smoky lids. She was thin and petite, yet graceful in every movement of her limbs. A perfect little highland nymph. And she served him.

"Meredith, take a letter down for me," he ordered brusquely, seating himself in his favorite chair as she made her way to the reticule and took out pen, paper, and inkwell. He did so like the old ways best.

"Address it to the Countess," Jeremiah instructed and then seemed to gather his thoughts. His black hair was cropped short and becomingly, and he was clad in a royal blue button-down shirt and black dress pants, the jacket to the suit hanging on a nearby coat rack. Jeremiah always wanted to look his best, and he did. He listened to the scratch of the pen as Meredith began to write.

My Dear Milady Marquet...

"I would like to extend my most cordial invitation to a light supper on Friday evening. Midnight. I do so hope you will be able to attend, as I am sure we have much to discuss amongst ourselves. Please feel free to bring whatever staff you deem necessary. Sincerely...

Lord Jeremiah MacLeod.

Meredith finished off the letter with a flourish similar to her master's and tucked it into a parchment envelope, sealing it with wax and the MacLeod insignia. She then pulled a cord near the reticule and a butler came into the room, to whom she delivered the letter and shut the doors after his exit.

"Come here, child," Jeremiah beckoned her from his place before the fire.

Meredith came quickly and silently, kneeling on the floor beside his chair, her eyes on the lush carpet of the floor.

Jeremiah was silent for a long while but soon his hand moved to her hair, feeling the softness of her curls as though she were a cat. Cupping the back of her head, he raised her face to look at him. "Come here."

Meredith rose and moved closer to the chair, until Jeremiah pulled her into his lap, her tartan skirts spilling over the arms of the chair as she straddled his thighs.

"Kiss me, my doll," he said, and she did not hesitate. Her master's word was law.

Like any of the Damned, Jeremiah's lips were icy cold with death but Meredith had almost come to crave their coldness. Suddenly she squeaked as



# Vampire

THE REQUIEM

Jeremiah pierced her bottom lip with his fangs and began to drink of her. One hand braced behind her head and the other on her back, he held the girl to him with a strength that could never hope to be broken as he drank.

Jeremiah knew Meredith's body as well as the back of his hand and stopped as she became woozy, running his tongue over her lip to seal the little fountains he had created.

"My poor pet, you must be thirsty..." he purred, pinching her hip slightly. The Daeva lord then bit his smooth wrist gently and held it to the girl, who drank deep and full. Jeremiah just watched her with a feral smile. Oh, she was a beautiful doll! He had chosen well when he had taken her from that whorehouse they called a women's college. They taught those girls nothing but how to use their brains to better their beds; lucrative, yes, but not at all becoming. Meredith, however, he had seen as different. She paid her mind to her books and strove for excellence. She was also, as was mentioned before, a comely creature, given to moonlight walks in the campus gardens. He had bedded her on a blanket of peonies the first night, silenced her impassioned screams with his kiss, and drunk of her wine deeply, and she was his forever. She served without question, loved without end.

Such a perfect doll indeed.

"I want you to deliver the letter yourself, Meredith," Jeremiah snarled, pulling her away from his wrist by her hair. His blood still stained her lips as she gave a surprised cry. He smiled then. "The Countess does so love to see you." With that, he threw her unceremoniously to the floor. "Go! Now!"

He had to give her credit. Meredith collected herself with grace and yet hurried to do his bidding without a word of question.

Yes, a perfect doll.

