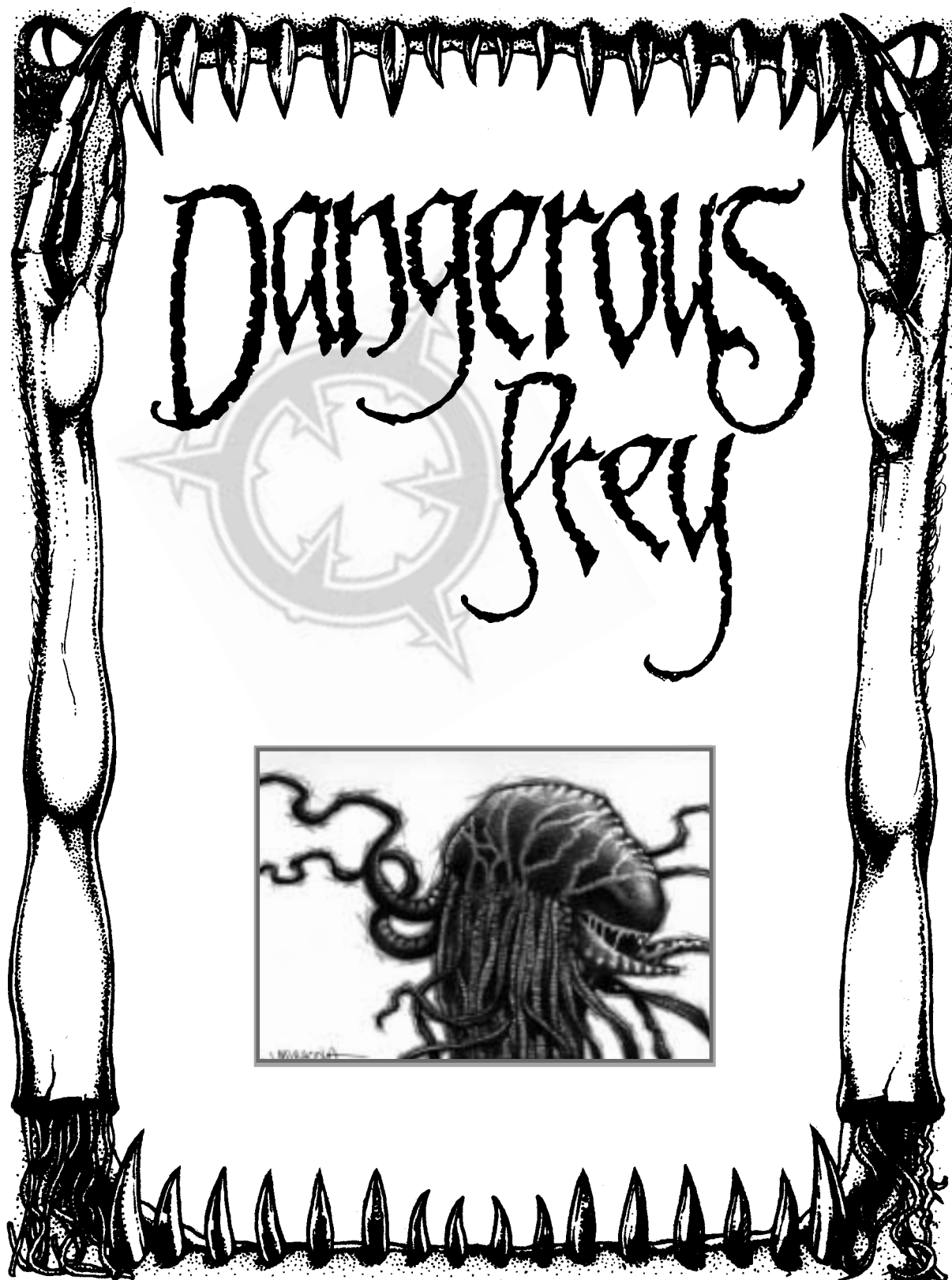




Dangerous Prey



FOR USE WITH THE WHISPERING VAULT™





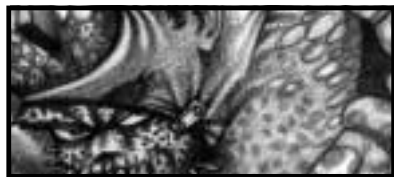
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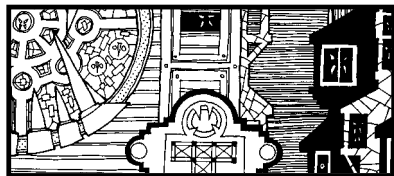
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Welcome Back

By now most of you have been on a few Hunts and are looking for a new challenge. We have tried to pack this sourcebook with material gamemasters can put to work right away. This approach has created a kind of a "mixed bag" of ideas. As always - take what you want and leave the rest.

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Shooting Script 91 - 110

Our first full-length Hunt (and a tough one at that)





Countless times across the Rift and countless renegades cast into the Vault. Of the fallen, only one was spared. Only one was allowed to dwell in the world she helped create. She was more than an enemy; she was a philosopher who had learned enough of our ways to whisper her ideas to me as we lay down together in the dark places where the others cannot find me. She was the one that warned me about the Visions and the frailty of the Dreaming. She was the one who showed me that mortal man need not suffer. I have fallen too, but at least, I am not alone. I wonder when they will come for us and if they will send my brothers...

DEVELOPING THE UNBIDDEN

This chapter looks at the three categories of Unbidden (Beasts, Strangers, Architects), discussing what makes each special and how you can make the most of them in your games. You should find plenty of ideas here on designing your own Unbidden villains and on incorporating them into your Hunts. Also included are six detailed Unbidden (two of each type), with enough detail for any one of them to become the focus of a Hunt.

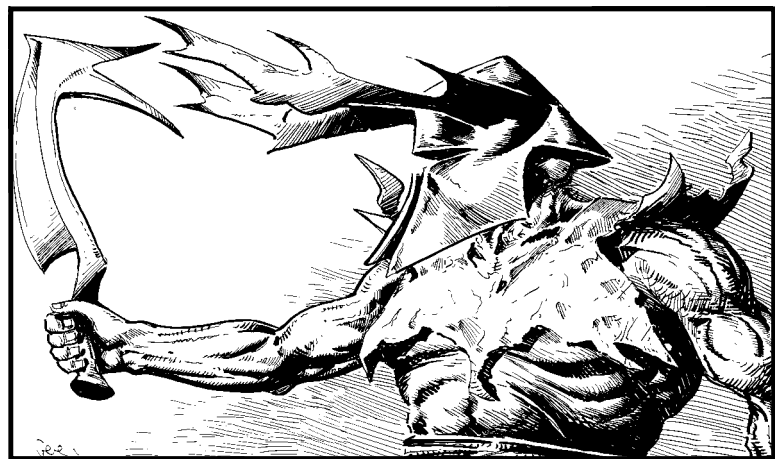
Regardless of what stage it has reached, the first step in creating an Unbidden is determining its motivations. Every Unbidden is an Aesthetic who has, for some reason, abandoned its post for the Realm of Flesh. The reasons for this betrayal are central to understanding the Unbidden.

Why give up vast power and immortality for the tenuous vulnerability of the Flesh?

Sadly, the simplest and most common answer is "lust."

Some Aesthetics become obsessed with some favorite aspect of their creation and long to sample some of its delights for themselves. Like a painter who refuses to sell his greatest canvas or a computer programmer who obsessively plays the games that he writes, they want to revel in their creation.

Most Aesthetics' Passions relate to some aspect of the Dream for which they were responsible, so that an Aesthetic who created tastes and flavors, foods and drinks, might be consumed by gluttony as an Unbidden.





There are also those who can no longer bear to cooperate with the other Dreamers. Aesthetics are compelled to work together in concert, cooperating to create a consistent Dream, but some develop their own idiosyncratic visions and can no longer bear to work to create a Dream which they consider flawed.

Finally, there are also rumored to be a few powerful Aesthetics who plotted against the Primal Powers and fled to hide in the Realm of Flesh when their plots were discovered. These beings have more than mere power; they have knowledge: knowledge about how the universe really works and how an Aesthetic might rise to overthrow its masters. This knowledge can be a powerful tool that can be used to subvert the will of the Primal Powers. The Stalkers who are sent to destroy such a creature might well be tempted to join him.

PERSONALITIES

One of the most difficult aspects of running a Hunt is understanding the thought processes of the Unbidden. The inhuman origins and vast power of these creatures can make it hard for the gamemaster to imagine or portray them convincingly.

The Stalkers' confrontation with the Unbidden is usually the climax of the Hunt, and a predictable, unconvincing opponent makes for a poor climax. An enemy with no personality may provide a tough fight, but ultimately, the encounter will be an unmemorable one.

The character of the Unbidden makes it unique and interesting. An original, chilling personality will capture the players' imaginations. Moreover, the personality of the Unbidden will largely determine the tone, mood, setting and content of the Hunt and relate to the nature of the Enigma.

WHERE TO BEGIN?

The Unbidden want something from the Realm of Flesh. Start with that wanting. Think up something that a human might desire: power, creative freedom, a refuge, ownership, love, respect, psychedelia, control. Now, twist it, caricature it, exaggerate it, make it an extreme craving, untempered by any sort of compassion or conscience.

Work out ways that it might manifest itself and Aversions and Idiosyncrasies which follow. Above all, make sure that the desire is extreme and powerful enough to be destructive, to pose a threat to humans and the Dream.

Now, consider that the renegade could potentially cross over anywhere and anywhen. Where would it most easily pursue its passion or conceal its activities? An Aesthetic with a penchant for decadent art might choose 1920s Berlin or 1940s New York, for example, but an Aesthetic fascinated by the "science" of destruction might manifest in a modern war zone.

Lastly, think about what the Unbidden wants to do; what its plans and goals might be. What Special Powers, Minions, and Mortal allies does it need to serve it? How do its plots affect the local

mortals? How do its activities lead to the Stalkers being Called? How do the prey's schemes provide clues which Stalkers can use to track it down; these schemes should also help to determine the Unbidden's local power and reputation (if any). A creature with aims and goals, allies and enemies, is far more interesting than one which merely sits waiting for the Stalkers to stumble upon it.

SYMBOLS AND METAPHORS

The Unbidden must be epic villains who provide the reason and climax for the Hunt. They should also be more than that. Each embodies an extreme craving considered perverse by most mortal societies. In a sense, they embody natural desires gone out of control and out of proportion.

Think about what the prey embodies, and then select incidental characters (mortals and Shadows), settings and plots which contrast with or mirror these issues.

For example, if the prey is a Beast, then it is a being who destroys in order to live. To reflect this, you could set the Hunt in a famine-plagued valley where bandit gangs scavenge for food, and every meal a mortal eats is stolen from another. Have the Calling occur in a missionary Church, where the faithful willingly starve themselves to give food to the priests.

Compare and contrast; try not to preach. (Your players aren't likely to appreciate it.) Have fun playing with ideas and images and exploring issues that interest you.





PORTRAYING THE BEAST

Two traits characterize the Beast: its obsessive feeding and the "Vampiric Touch." Both of these can actually be much more interesting than you might suppose. Rather than interpreting these in obvious ways (the cold-hearted serial killer, the bestial were-creature, the vampire who stalks the night), try something more original than bizarre.

Think of the hunger as an overwhelming desire. The Beast is single minded, ruthless, and utterly obsessive. It has only one desire - for Flesh. The way in which this obsession is manifested varies from one Unbidden to another. Some Beasts are slaving fiends. Some are more insidious. Warped logic is often just as creepy as cackles and roars.

For example:

- The Unbidden might develop a taste for pornography and build an impressive collection.

"Don't think I only want them for their bodies...I want them for their souls...."

Perhaps they take to stalking and killing men or women who resemble their "favorite" models. Finding the Beast's discarded porno magazines, perhaps with a page ripped from one or a model circled in blood, might give Stalkers a hint as to who the Beast's next victim will be.





- Another might adopt pets, lavishing what seems to be affection on them, but thereby draining them of Vitality through Vampiric Touch.

"Lovely little fluffy cat... why do you look at me like that? There, be calm. You know, the more I stroke animals the calmer they become. Some of my pets haven't moved for days."

If you want to shock your players with gore and violence, then, again, find an interesting way of doing it. Mad Beasts pulling humans limb from limb or drinking their blood has become cliché; the Unbidden deserve better.

- Emphasize the destruction that the Beast brings. A bloody death is nasty, but a slow, lingering wasting is nastier. Give the Stalkers a victim to console. Remind them of how humans suffer when the Unbidden violate the Dream. They might follow the Beast to a mortal's home, arriving only seconds after it leaves (perhaps their approach forced the enemy to flee before it had completely drained this victim). What they find is a human in young woman's clothes, in a home decorated in the latest, youthful style, but she looks over a hundred years old; she just sits staring at her wrinkled hands in disbelief, mumbling a slogan from a hand cream commercial over and over.

- **Try Overkill.** Keep the actual murders "off camera" (the Stalkers never witness them) but imply that lots of people have died. The Beast surrounds itself with blood; perhaps it takes over someone's apartment and puts blood everywhere (filling the bath, basin and toilet, fish-tank, vases and drinking vessels, spreading so much blood on the floor and walls that the Stalkers can hardly walk without slipping and so much on the ceiling that it constantly drips on them as they investigate the rooms). Perhaps, rather than draining Vitality in one quick bite, this specific Unbidden feeds by prolonged proximity to blood.

- Avoid blood entirely. Frighten the players with the absence of evidence of the Beast's crimes. The Stalkers might track a Beast to a mortal house; they are hot on its heels, but when they get inside, the place is tomb silent. At the dinner table, there is still warm food, and cutlery rests where the mortals laid it down between mouthfuls, but there is no sign of the diners - just the Beast standing by the table licking a single smear of blood from its finger. The bodies are never found.

All Beasts must have fairly simple personalities and equally simple goals. They are fascinated by or hunger for the Flesh and for nothing else. They rarely have any desire but to feed. The key to using Beasts as prey is to learn to exploit this. Don't feel that it is a limitation.

Play with all of the possibilities, making their fixation as chilling, grotesque or bizarre as your players can stomach.

More varied are the Beasts' allies. (Keep in mind, of course, that most Beasts are solitary predators; they don't think clearly enough to strike up alliances or to manipulate others.) Still, especially toward the end of this stage some might enlist mortal servants or even receive offers of aid from peculiar humans.

For example:

- A coven of deluded magicians discovers evidence of the Beast's presence. They don't know exactly what it is but imagine that it is a demon of some sort. They track it down and offer live sacrifices to it, hoping for supernatural rewards. The creature either accepts the food mutely or plays along, however imperfectly, with the charade.
- The creature is about to feed from a child when it hears the helpless parent plead with it, "I'll do anything - just leave my boy alone!" The Beast may be confused and irrational, but most would see a free meal in this.

"Yes, pretty morsel. Pretty morsel do anything. Bring food or boy-child will feed me. Bring many pretty morsels like you for me to feed, yes?"

Of course, the creature would probably kill the child and parent too, once they have brought it other food.





LOCUST

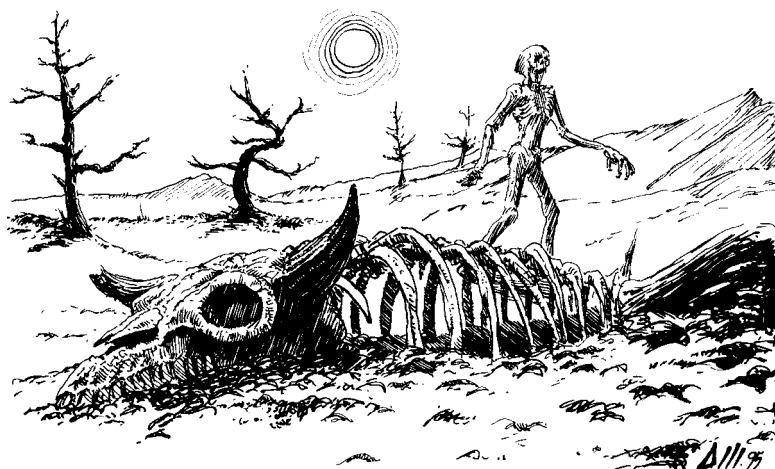
Fortitude	2	/	10
Vitality	5	/	26
Initiative	9	/	25
Defend	8	/	12
Perceive	8	/	20
Resolve	15	/	22

Locust has manifested in a remote area, filled with jungle and plains (South America or Africa any time up to the end of the nineteenth century). Its Vessel resembles a naked, starving man: each rib clearly visible, with a distended belly, sunken eyes and a skull-like face. It has a look of sullen desperation in its eyes and more strength than its thin limbs should.

Wherever it goes, plants wither, meat rots, and milk cows dry up. It eats ferociously, physically consuming anything that gets in its path. It can eat a herd of cattle, their owner, and his family within an hour and yet still weigh only sixty pounds. This voracious eater, with its desicated appearance, has destroyed whole villages, and those who escaped are now themselves starving refugees.

To these survivors, Locust seems a symbol of starvation, a dark god or demon, and they have spread stories of "him" through the surrounding villages. Across the region, priests and elders now offer sacrifices to The Spirit Who Eats, vainly hoping that this will save them from him.

Locust's Avatar is a huge swarm of giant insects - hundreds of locusts, each up to nine inches in length. They form a roughly spherical cloud, with so many at the centre that they clump together to form a virtually solid mass (its "body"), and others buzzing around up to three meters from the core. Anyone who steps into this cloud is automatically attacked. Locust doesn't think - can't think - it just eats.



COMBAT (Vessel)

Unarmed (Attack 11, 3D Damage)

COMBAT (Avatar)

Unarmed (Attack 24)

Locust attacks every creature in unarmed combat with it once per Round, Base Damage 6D, -1D for every opponent after the first to a minimum of 3 dice.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Locust can consume virtually anything (exceptions include rock, earth, metal, objects Imbued with Essence, and Conjured items).

AVERSIONS

Smoke and flames

FETISHES

Order, normality, predictability – conservative conventionality

IDIOSYNCRASIES

Can't speak. Occasionally, when the Vessel opens its mouth to eat, a locust or beetle flies out. The Vessel is always accompanied by a very quiet buzzing sound and leaves a trail of chewed vegetation and clean-picked bones behind it; Locust is easy to track...





THE MIDWIFE

Fortitude	4	/	8
Vitality	4	/	25
Initiative	6	/	12
Defend	8	/	16
Perceive	15	/	16
Resolve	18	/	24

This Unbidden has taken residence in the cellars and service shafts of a run-down city hospital (late 19th through 21st century). At the point when the facility becomes both nest and hunting ground for the Beast, the building is full of thread-bare

carpets and peeling paint, smelling of disinfectant and rotting wood and is scheduled to be closed down completely. Only the maternity ward still has a full staff. Upon her arrival, the creature inhabited the body of a "candy striper" named Gloria who was once a bubbly, vivacious woman now clearly scarred by the Withering. When the mortal was reported missing by her co-workers, the police made a token effort to track her down but gave up after a couple of weeks with no leads.

The Midwife has no real self-awareness. It walks and acts like a creature in a dream, sluggish and distracted, becoming lively only if threatened or attacked. It does not answer to a name as we understand it and barely understands human speech. Unable to form words, all it can manage is a wail - a sound like a newborn baby's howl but with a raw grating in its voice.

Its obsession with the flesh is less blatant or bloody than usual at this stage. Most of this Unbidden's time is spent in the hospital's operating theatres, watching the surgeons at work. While there, a Formless Gibbering Horde watches with her. From time to time the Horde makes efforts to communicate with The Midwife to no avail.

When the theatres are empty, The Midwife follows the doctors around the hospital mindlessly, sometimes pausing by the patients' beds to use her Vampiric Touch. A few of the nurses have noticed the steady increase in the number of sudden deaths, but they have not managed to part the Veil so they are still trying to explain it with science.

It spends all day with people invisibly watching, feeding, and listening without understanding, and in the evening it slinks off to the forgotten rooms beneath the hospital. There it keeps its cache of stolen medical textbooks and its own (remarkably accurate) drawings of the operations that it has watched.

This Unbidden's Avatar is comprised of hundreds of babies' faces, all squalling and shrieking with hunger, with membranes and fleshy chords lashed around it. It is roughly bipedal, a pudgy, short-limbed thing the shape of a newborn child and covered in blood. It usually attacks by biting with the mouths on the ends of its limbs or on its head.

COMBAT (Vessel)

Unarmed (Attack 11, 2D Damage) or with a scalpel (Attack 13, 3D Damage)

COMBAT (Avatar)

Unarmed (Attack 17, 7D Damage)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Chameleon

AVERSIONS

Corpses and rotting flesh

IDIOSYNCRASIES

Fascinated by blood, internal organs, etc. (happily stares at them for hours and hours); unable to speak





USING LOCUST

THE ENIGMA: The point at which Locust entered the Realm of Flesh (now the Focus of the Enigma) is a blackened, barren patch of earth several hundred yards in diameter. The jungle (or plains) for miles around is littered with animal carcasses which the vultures and hyenas seem unwilling to touch. No animal lives within the Enigma, which covers an area of thirty square miles, except for the droning clouds of flies which settle around the corpses. Mortals and mortal objects age at one hundred times their normal rate within the Enigma and plants will not grow here.

THE CALL: The invocations of a tribal elder or priest as he begs his gods or ancestors for protection from He Who Eats are most likely to Call the Stalkers.

THE HUNT: The Hunt could take place in any tribal society, but if you want to use the game to examine themes and issues, you could try setting it in nineteenth century Africa. The white colonists there dismiss the "superstitious" stories about the Beast and happily go on plundering the natives to satisfy their own greedy hunger; or if you want a less polemical game, contrast Locust with the white Imperialists, who at least give trinkets, basic health care or foreign luxuries in return for robbing the continent. Finding Locust shouldn't be difficult (just follow the destruction...), but a weak Circle could find this a deadly opponent.

USING THE MIDWIFE

THE ENIGMA: The Enigma may be centered around the hospital itself, with its Focus in The Midwife's labyrinth of cellars and service ducts. The Focus could be something as obvious as a cot perpetually stained with fresh blood or as esoteric as an identification bracelet for a stillborn child whose passing coincided with the intrusion of the Unbidden. At present the Enigma is relatively harmless; the Corruption twists the geography of the cellars and warps the personalities of some hospital staff, especially the maintenance staff who occasionally venture into the cellars.

THE CALL: The Call might come from a doctor, patient or relation of someone working at the hospital (praying, asking their god, "Why did her child die?" "Why is her husband, the janitor, acting so strangely?" etc.).

THE HUNT: In many ways the Midwife embodies the forces of life and death. The dissimilarity between her Vessel and her nature is reflected in the dying hospital in which she lives. Explore this contrast during the Hunt, using images which play up the peculiar juxtaposition. Normally, the Beast is a solitary creature, but the unusually social nature of the enemy will make it difficult for the Stalkers to bring their full power to bear. There are too many innocents around.





PORTRAYING THE STRANGER

When the Unbidden progress from Beast to Stranger, they gain enough self-control to pursue their Passions.

Each Unbidden invades the Realm of Flesh for its own reasons. Many are attracted to something of the Flesh and feel that their former existence as pure Essence was somehow insufficient or simply unfulfilling. They want to explore or experiment with some specific aspect of the Flesh. Many want to possess, to manipulate; others want independence to create or recreate as they wish without the restrictions imposed by the Primal Powers or the Dream they once served.

When using a Stranger as the prey, your Hunt should center primarily on the creature's Passions. A Beast has yet to overcome its basic hunger, while an Architect has plots, plans and alliances to complicate Hunts; the Stranger is focused on its Passions, and so to make your games more interesting, you will have to put more thought into this aspect of the Unbidden.

Of course, themes which will upset your players are off limits, but otherwise let your imagination run riot. There are some Strangers with whom the players may even sympathize. However, the creatures are inhuman and quite merciless, and the Stalkers should rarely consider leaving a Stranger free in the Realm of Flesh.

For example:



- As an Aesthetic, the creature envied mortals for their feelings and their relationships. As an Unbidden, it seeks love in all its forms, but the search is pointless. It cannot empathize with or feel any warmth for human beings even though it expects to create love in others with the same autocratic ease with which it formerly created the fabric of the Dream. It demands love from others ("If you do not adore me this instant, I will pull off another of your fingers, you stupid, selfish mortal....") and holds them responsible for its own inability to feel anything for them. It also steals babies to be its children but has no idea how to care for them. Then it kidnaps older mortals to be surrogate parents. In its anger and jealousy, it also persecutes mortals who seem to have happy relationships. The Enigma caused by this creature might reflect its hopeless search, warping nearby people to constantly chase after impossible dreams and to always feel dissatisfied by their relationships.
- Aesthetics have great creative powers, weaving the Dream as they wish, but what is the point? Does anyone thank them; does anyone applaud? So, a dissatisfied Aesthetic might abandon the Realm of Essence to find fame, recognition and respect. Unfortunately, its outlook is so alien that it cannot understand what mortals would appreciate, and its creative efforts are ignored, mocked, or reviled. It might paint pictures which slowly drive the viewers insane by revealing eternity to them; it might sculpt statues of the Aesthetics from the bodies of murdered mortals. These might be artistic masterpieces from the Unbidden's point of view, but they are unlikely to win mortal adulation. When it realizes this, the Unbidden might make Vessels of prominent artists to bask in their glory; or it might kidnap an artist and force him to create works which it can sell or exhibit as its own; or it might simply become a fawning sycophant, collecting vast amounts of memorabilia and lavishing unwelcome attention on its mortal idols.





Other goals, fetishes and quirks can arise from the Unbiddens' unfamiliarity with the physical laws that govern the Realm of Flesh. As beings unexperienced with such concepts as time, cause-and-effect or gravity, they can become fascinated with simple things mortals take for granted.

This can lead to Strangers who compulsively collect clocks and time-keeping devices, simple mechanical toys, barometers, and other instruments for measuring interesting natural phenomena.

For example, a renegade might be astounded that all clocks tell the same time or that heavy things always fall and might constantly keep checking these simple facts. This, of course, may cause mortals to question them, leaving clues for pursuing Stalkers.

"Why is that woman wearing eight watches?"

"Why has that man spent the last hour dropping pebbles into the pond?"

Some Aesthetics might even desert the Realm of Essence precisely because they are sick of knowing and seeing everything that has or will ever happen as an unchanging "now" and might revel in ignorance or anarchy.

Others, deserting their duties for other, more arcane reasons, might become terrified by their own weaknesses in the Realm of Flesh. These creatures will become obsessed with imposing order on the world around them.

Another aspect of the Stranger worth considering is its lack of familiarity with mortal society. The creatures simply cannot handle the complexities of mortal social interactions, and yet most must interact with humans in order to pursue their passions. Their behavior, therefore, should be bizarre, and it is this that may lead the Stalkers to them.

For example:

- The Stranger might find it hard to differentiate between humans or between mortal creatures in general. At the very least it would muddle up people's names or mistake similar animals; more extremely it might just call all humans by the same name or think that all animals are the same.

"Why don't you get down off your rat? Bob will lead it to the stable while Bob shows you to your rooms."

- To interact better with human beings, the Stranger might use simplistic classifications.

"You're a bus driver...? Ah, I see — a bus driver! Public servant, low status. You aren't important, then?"

In order to make these classifications, it might ask bizarre or blunt questions of people.

"Delighted to meet you. Tell me, are you powerful...? Rich...? Male or female...? Thank you very much."

- Most Strangers are completely lost in societies where social distinctions and good manners are demanded. These creatures are either amused or annoyed by the obscurely polite conversations of 19th century high society, the social hierarchies of feudal Japan, and the bureaucracies of modern government.

- Aware that it can't interpret human interactions, the creature might avoid all contact with mortal society (living wild in the woods or hiding in the sewers), or it might feign stupidity or disability to avoid having to interact (appearing as a village idiot or lunatic, for example).

- There are plenty of customs which Strangers may not immediately understand.

"Why are you pointing that gun at me...? Yes I know it's midnight...Yes I know the door was locked. I came through the window. I wanted to talk to you."

Be careful when using this bit because it is easy to go too far with it. Try to keep it as subtle as possible, or it will go from creepy to stupid before you know what hit you. Having the Unbidden cut the palm of a hand outstretched in friendship is true to the genre, but the B-movie "What is car?" approach is right out.





AVERAGE JOE

Fortitude	4 / 8	The Aesthetic Arcescil became bored
Vitality	15 / 18	and exhausted with constantly creating
Initiative	10 / 15	and recreating the Dream and yearned
Defend	12 / 15	for a simple existence, a life where it did
Perceive	15 / 16	not have to think or to create. It fled to
Resolve	18 / 21	the Realm of Flesh for the freedom of
		servitude and the joy of tedium.

It chose a time and place where free expression was condemned and when conformity was easy (Stalin's Russia or Hitler's Germany, early 20th century Japan, America in the McCarthy era, Victorian England, etc.). The Vessels that it chooses are all nondescript men with conventional families and uninspiring jobs (filing clerk, unskilled factory worker, petty accountant, etc.).

Arcescil takes the names of its Vessels and tries very hard to take over their lives. It adopts their friends and their families. Usually a nationalist, racist and homophobe, it becomes a victim of advertising, a slave to mainstream fashion, and an ardent supporter of whatever political creeds are dominant, opposing any sort of social change or deviation from the norm. Its unfamiliarity with humanity and mortal complexities make it seem extremely naive; however, and it is prone to making crass over generalizations.

Arcescil's obsession with convention and order make it a petty tyrant of the first magnitude. The Vessels it chooses are usually family men (with a wife, a dog and two-point-five children), and it uses any degree of physical or mental torture to ensure that its adopted family will behave as it wishes. It dictates what they wear and what they eat, who their friends are, what they say and what they believe. Everything must be done just so — from the geometry of the cutlery on the breakfast table to the children's last words as it tucks them into bed at night. A smile out of turn can lead to a beating, and after 1-6 weeks the adoptive family inevitably proves inadequate, and Arcescil "cleanses" the world of them before moving on to find a new Vessel.

The creature has learned to love its "little lives" and has become quite comfortable in mortal guise. If it is forced to expose its true nature, Arcescil will be disoriented for a few moments. When it realizes what has happened, its first priority will be destroying those who have seen the incarnation of its Essence as quickly as possible so it can find a new Host without being persued. Its Avatar resembles a classical statue carved from flesh, pierced and wrapped in chains, leather belts and iron buckles.

COMBAT (Vessel)

Unarmed (Attack 12, 3D Damage)

COMBAT (Avatar)

Unarmed (Attack 15, 6D Damage)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Shapeshifter;
Synchronicity (Any clocks within a hundred yards will slow down or speed up until they match his pocketwatch.)

AVERSIONS

Mess, disorganization and abnormality
(He is the man on the train who fidgets and grumbles when the train is a minute late leaving the station and then spends the journey scowling at the guy opposite with a strangely colored shirt.)

FETISHES

Order, normality, predictability – conservative conventionality

IDIOSYNCRASIES

Always knows exactly what the time is.
Speaks with perfect grammar.





THE SENSUALIST

Fortitude	4	/	6	The Sensualist is fascinated by the ability of Fleshy creatures to feel comfort and discomfort, pain, irritation, ecstasy, etc. (It may be found in almost any city, at any point in history.) This Unbidden considers itself quite a connoisseur
Vitality	11	/	22	
Initiative	10	/	15	
Defend	13	/	14	
Perceive	15	/	18	
Resolve	16	/	19	

of physical sensation, and as it matures, it turns its obsession into an almost scientific study. It has established a huge collection of mortal instruments designed to stimulate the senses, from torture implements to sex aids to anaesthetic drugs.

Its latest experiments have involved ritually extracting physical sensations from mortals and distilling their experiences into potions that it sips like wine. The Sensualist learned this process from the Hate Merchants and developed it to include any feeling, not just hate. Most mortal subjects have died during the distillation process, but some have survived and been cast back into the world, devoid of certain senses (e.g. unable to feel cold or pain or physical pleasure).

The Sensualist has begun to establish a permanent haven for itself and to gather allies. It has returned to its own associated Enigma, establishing a low ceilinged hide out in the attic of an opium den. The den itself has become so Corrupted by the Enigma – and by The Sensualist's presence – that it has become Temporally Isolated. Mortals find that all drugs taken in the den have unusual effects, giving vivid physical sensations rather than having psychological effects. Their effects are random and can be either unbearably exquisite or fatally painful (several patrons have died of heart attacks or shock), giving the den a small but devoted clientele.

The Sensualist's chief retainer is a Thritch Kalvarr (Pain Mother), who runs the den and maintains a suite of rooms in the back for her own purposes. She gathers gossip from the mortal patrons and sometimes provides clients with rarer services or commodities if they perform missions for her in the outside world. Two Zelun Vhori (Ogyrs) also skulk in side attics, adjoining The Sensualist's lair, ready to come to its aid if it is attacked or to leave and perform any tasks it might set them. All three of these Shadows are Bound. The Sensualist has also made contact with a nearby Hate Merchant with whom it occasionally trades.

COMBAT (Vessel)

Unarmed (Attack 12, 3D Damage)

COMBAT (Avatar)

Unarmed (Attack 16, 5D Damage) Any Stalker struck by the Avatar who fails a Willpower Challenge against a Difficulty equal to the Damage roll is overcome with agony and ecstasy, effectively incapacitating them. The victim may roll again every round and will only recover when the Willpower roll exceeds the Damage roll or The Sensualist is Bound or Destroyed.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Healer, Parasite

AVERSIONS

Morbid fear of sensory deprivation

FETISHES

Always eager to "experiment" with a new sensation or device (*"I didn't think he would scream that loud. How wonderful."*)

IDIOSYNCRASIES

Always fidgeting (gently stabbing itself with a needle, tickling its palm, etc...)





USING AVERAGE JOE

THE ENIGMA: The area of the mortal world for which Arcescil was responsible (a mainly residential urban area) has become warped. At its heart is the office of a large, reactionary publishing firm that produces books on etiquette, grammar, fashion, militaria and mathematics. Its board-room table acts as the Focus of the Enigma. Anyone who moves into the area rapidly becomes increasingly conventional so that all of the men wear the same grey suits and all the women absorb the same magazines' lies. In the alleys around the publishing firm's buildings, racist and reactionary posters plaster the walls, and at night gangs of knife-wielding office workers prowl the streets, looking for misfits to "reconstruct" in their own image.

THE CALL: The Stalkers could easily be Called by one of the renegade's victims. This could be a dying woman in an alley by the publishing office, a victim of impromptu plastic surgery ("Is she not ugly? Let us fix that hideous face of hers...."), or the sole survivor of one of its "unsatisfactory" adopted families.

THE HUNT: The Circle's search for Arcescil gives you an opportunity to examine themes of deviance and social control, fashion, convention, etc. Because it has no Shadows as Minions, the Hunt shouldn't be particularly dangerous, but the Stranger may have developed ties with the locals that could prove inconvenient.

USING THE SENSUALIST

THE ENIGMA: Focused on a grotesque perched on an abandoned building in a run-down area of town, the Enigma intensifies physical sensations (hot things are hotter than usual, mild pain becomes unbearable and so forth.) A disproportionate number of brothels, massage parlors and religious groups have settled around the edges of this area. Toward the core of the Corruption sensations become confused (fires sometimes burn cold, pain killers induce agony.) This unsettling area is largely deserted.

THE CALL: A mortal magician might Call the Stalkers. For example, he might have had an enchanted torture device stolen, and fearing a Shadow or Unbidden is behind the plot, he offers to tell the Stalkers what he knows of the thief, thus helping them Mend a breach in the Dream, if they agree to return the stolen object to him. He overestimates the strength of his bargaining position.

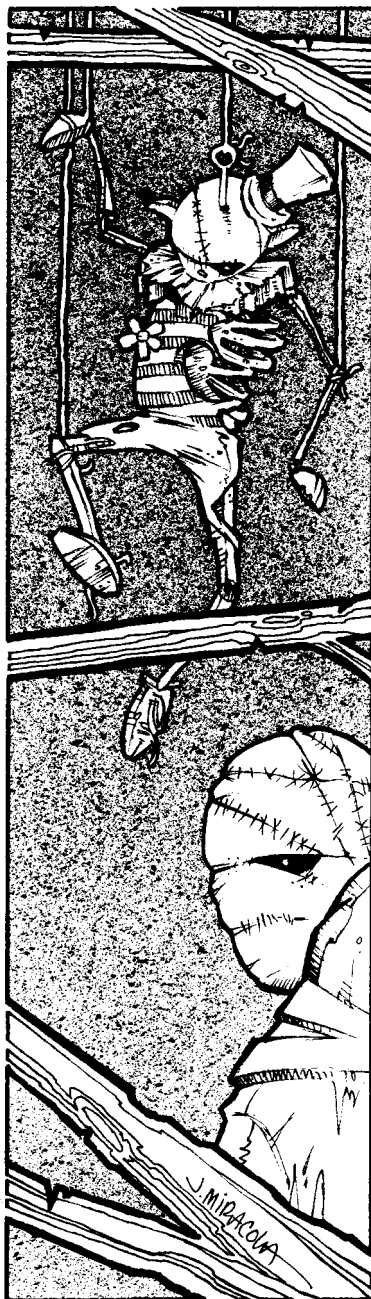
THE HUNT: A typical Hunt might go something like this: the Stalkers ask after the thief, perhaps investigating the Enigma and asking questions in near-by drug dens; the Sensualist hears of their inquiries and sends the Ogyrs to destroy them; they eventually track it down to its den and defeat it and the Pain Mother. You might want to emphasize the seedier aspects of the city, develop sub-plots concerning The Sensualist's bizarre collection, or introduce complications like the thief having already been arrested on another charge.





The show was better than we expected. The renegade had chosen a Vessel with dexterous hands and a pleasant voice this time. Blind to the insidious subtext, the children watched and laughed but most did not learn.

Only one seemed to realize that there was something more to the story than slapstick, a serious boy with dark hair and thick glasses who sat by himself nibbling a precious morsel of chocolate. After the first act, we made our way backstage, using a touch of Essence to put the stage manager to sleep for a few hours. The puppetmaster was waiting for us, fondling a marionette that looked a lot like the little boy out front...



PORTRAYING THE ARCHITECT

The Architect is the most twisted and inexplicable of the Unbidden, and it is in creating these that you have the most latitude.

These beings have survived in the Realm of Flesh for decades or centuries. They have learned to keep their heads down and to get what they want without attracting undue attention. They have usually identified and learned to manipulate the Enigma spawned by their desertion. They are able to build up networks or armies of mortal followers and may Bind any number of Shadows. Finally, they will likely have a powerful lair in which they are nearly unassailable.

Don't be afraid to experiment with giving Architects new powers. They have been in the Flesh for longer than other Unbidden and are most likely to have developed their own unique talents.

Check out pages 97-99 of The Whispering Vault and pages 41 - 46 of this book for ideas on the Unbidden's Special Powers, but ultimately you can give your Architects any power which (1) adds to the story, improving the mood or plot; (2) reflects the Architect's goals and personality, making it a more vivid character; and (3) doesn't unbalance the game.

Architects require more setup than the other stages, but the unique challenge they present will make the effort worthwhile.





ARCHITECT ARCHETYPES

- “The Cult Leader.” This Unbidden has set itself up as the leader of a religious cult, a coven of magicians, or a group of shamans. It has chosen a well-populated area (like a modern city) where it can pick and choose suitable mortal recruits and has also gathered Minions as its personal servants. The whole operation exists to allow it to indulge its Passions and provide it with devoted mortal servants - especially potent ones if they are, in fact, Enlightened magicians.
 - “The Eminence Guise.” This creature has sought to hide behind its allies and dupes, building up a web of contacts and agents throughout the mortal world. It has founded a large mortal institution (a merchant company in the 18th century through to a multinational in the 20th/21st century) which collects objects, money or victims for it, depending on its passions. It also has contacts with a number of Shadows across the world, acting as spies and assassins. It moves around the world in secret, carefully manipulating its pawns, hiding its powers from any but its closest retainers, and it actively disassociates itself from its Enigma. However careful it is, the Enigma will eventually lead to Stalkers being Called, and it doesn’t intend to be anywhere nearby when they arrive.
 - “The Greatest Warrior.” Delighted by fighting, bloodshed, or torture, this Architect has made itself a warlord on the mortal world. It may be a Mongol General with tens of thousands of mortal soldiers at its command, or it may be an urban gangster with a gang of Bound Minions in mortal Husks. In either case, it thrives on violence and is far too powerful and has far too many allies for a Circle of Stalkers to defeat it in a straight confrontation. Some of these Unbidden might keep themselves and their armies in Temporally Isolated realities, fighting eternal battles against an unending string of opponents or might prefer “real” conflicts within the Dream.
 - “The Hermit.” This Architect retreats from the mortal world. What it wants cannot be had close to mortal settlements. (It might want peace and quiet to torture victims or to engage in Dream-warping experiments, for example.) The few locals may be in the creature’s power either magically enthralled or just too scared to betray it. The Architect’s secluded Lair should also be well protected, both from mundane assault and creatures of Essence. Inaccessible locations are common (e.g. high in rocky crags), and magical defences have usually been raised by the creature or its mortal thrall.
- “Foolish little hunter - speak your words of binding! You will find that you left your powers at the door. You should have asked permission before you entered....”*
- “The God-King.” This Unbidden has settled at the heart of its Enigma and has built a great palace for itself. Wrapped in a mortal Vessel, it rules the region as absolute monarch, demanding respect and worship from its mortal subjects. All of the local tribes bow down before the Architect, sending rich tributes and providing soldiers, slaves and magicians to defend and serve it. The worship of this supernatural monarch is central to the area’s religion. Because of its link with the Enigma, the Architect actually has a direct influence over the Corrupted area: when it is angered, thunder plagues the area; if it is wounded the crops fail and animals sicken; etc. (This idea of a divine monarch was particularly common, for example, in pre-Colonial Africa.)





GENERALISIMO BENITO WASHINGTON

Fortitude	5	/	8	As an Aesthetic, this creature felt
Vitality	14	/	14	unfulfilled. It felt, simply, that it had no
Initiative	13	/	17	purpose. As a Beast, it had goals like
Defend	14	/	14	feeding, running, and hiding, but still
Perceive	13	/	13	no real meaning to its existence. So it
Resolve	20	/	18	adopted mortal purposes. Wandering

the world as the Stranger, it joined one hundred one crusades and vendettas, ranging from huge international wars to petty local squabbles. Whatever the local mortals' aims were, it adopted them as its own, fighting alongside them in mortal guise.

In the late twentieth century it has begun to build an army of its own, gathering lost and aimless mortals and melding them into its burgeoning family of disparate fanatics. As the Architect, it has tapped into its own Enigma: an inexplicable fanaticism that spreads through mortals like a disease. Using the Enigma and its own powers, Benito has taken disillusioned Zionists and Palestinians, white racists and black supremacists, Islamic militants and evangelical Christians, forging them into a single force dedicated to bringing "peace and unity" to the world.

Most of its mortal followers have no understanding of their master's plan, nor do they care. They know that they fight to bring peace, harmony and brotherhood to the planet, falling back on stock answers or responding with violence if challenged. The issues that they fight for are not actually as important to them as their camaraderie, their sense of belonging and shared identity; it is more important for them that they fight than that they know what to fight for. They are sure, in any case, that their leader knows what he is doing.

Actually, the creature hasn't a clue what it is doing. Its true Passion is the unending quest for purpose. In its current phase, that quest involves an ever-expanding circle of followers driven by a leader with no attainable goals. Its speeches sound impressive but consist entirely of plagiarisms lifted from the books and speeches of past leaders. ("Father, I cannot tell a lie. I did not undertake this war for private ends, but in the cause of national liberty, and now the die is cast. We will either be a world power, or we will not be at all.")

It describes itself as "a leader, a visionary, a patriot." The Minions who act as its permanent bodyguard call it "the parrot," which it mistakenly assumes to be an endearing mispronunciation.

The creature's current Vessel is that of a rugged army Colonel (broad shoulders, square jaw, close-cropped hair). Its Avatar is a metallic humanoid, comprised entirely of knives, revolvers, bayonets and similar weapons with a heart of ice set in the center of its chest.

COMBAT (Vessel)

Unarmed (Attack 20, 4D Damage)

COMBAT (Avatar)

Two attacks per round in melee, with any part of its body (Attack 25, 5D Damage) or may make one ranged attack per round (throwing a knife, firing a gun, etc.) for 3D with -1 Die Cap versus beings of Essence

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Dreamwalk, Majesty, Puppetmaster, Shapeshifter, Summoner

AVERSIONS

Stubbornness, Apathy (which inspire it to a furious rage) and Religious Ceremony (which revolts it)

FETISHES

Collects the banners and insignia of enemies that it has overcome.

IDIOSYNCRASIES

This Unbidden believes that it has no eyes and always wears reflective sunglasses to hide this. It also refuses to ask questions, but speaks entirely in commands (e.g. "Tell me what you want." rather than "What would you like?").





ANNA CHIE

Fortitude	5 / 6	Fleeing the Realm of Essence to be free
Vitality	14 / 20	of the Powers, Anna settled in a
Initiative	12 / 18	European Roman town in the midst of
Defend	14 / 16	the barbarian invasions. Now, as the
Perceive	19 / 15	invasions come to a close, it works to
Resolve	20 / 17	perpetuate the disorder which it has
		grown to adore.

The town's leaders have been slaughtered, and its treasures stolen. The ravaged landscape cannot support the city, and thousands have already fled from the starvation and looting, hoping to find food and work in the surrounding countryside. Roving gangs are the only law in the city, while outside the walls barbarian warlords squabble over how to divide the conquered lands.

Anna has dedicated itself to maintaining this state of chaos. Whenever one of the city's prominent citizens seems set to restore order, it has him killed. If a warlord makes an agreement with his peers, he too mysteriously disappears. It is through this combination of exerting power and creating disorder that Anna achieves fulfillment in the Realm of the Flesh. It revels in pulling people's strings to see what happens.

To aid in its endeavors, Anna has enlisted a Ghann Galowey (Hangman) to work as an assassin and has Bound several Bakaracai as bodyguards. It has also made a deal with one of the barbarian leaders and a powerful city merchant, allowing them certain privileges in return for reliable information and other services.

Ironically, in its quest for perfect disorder, Anna has created a hierarchy of sorts, with itself at the top and its retainers as its lieutenants. This hierarchy allows Anna's mortal spies to increase their own influence in the area (making the Architect dependent upon them, as it needs their information and muscle) and creates a kind of stability: rather than enforced chaos, the Unbidden has imposed a disordered tyranny, where it acts as the area's powerbroker.

Anna's Vessel is that of the ex-Governor's wife, a tall, haughty woman, who lives in the Governor's old official residence by the town's central square. Here it maintains a library of unfinished books, paying tone-deaf musicians, ignorant philosophers and inept poets to entertain it.

Its Avatar is roughly human in form but betrays a mass of contradictions. The right side is female and the left male. Much of its skin is as smooth as a baby's, while other patches are wrinkled and grey. One eye is sky blue and the other dark brown, while its complexion ranges from albino to midnight-black. The Avatar smells of rotting wood; the dust of crumbled masonry falls from its hair; rust flecks its skin; and its fingernails are of broken glass.

COMBAT (Vessel)

Unarmed (Attack 14, 4D Damage)

COMBAT (Avatar)

Attack 19, 4D Damage(2 attacks, one with each hand) Anyone struck by both hands in a single round must lose either their Significant or Insignificant Action each round for the next 1-6 rounds or until she hits them again. Stalkers may resist this effect with a successful Insight Challenge against a Difficulty of 14.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Chameleon, Infect, Summoner, Weaver

AVERSIONS

Mathematics, science — anything strictly logical or orderly

FETISHES

Collects books that contain no truth or insight and delights in pointless discourse with those who believe themselves to be important

IDIOSYNCRASIES

Refuses to talk in complete sentences - ("You come? Why again I ask again. This is the third asking. Say why!")





USING BENITO

THE ENIGMA: Although weak when this Unbidden arrived, the corresponding Enigma has become more severe since it took up residence here and now threatens to be rejected by the Dream. Hundreds of mortals have become infected with total fanaticism; their goals and ideals have been thrown into blinding focus. Benito has used this condition to his advantage, forging many of these confused and agitated mortals into a frighteningly effective army.

THE CALL: The Call could be made by the prayers of a relative of a person recruited by the Architect, seeking divine aid to free him from Benito's "cult." Another possible Supplicant is a member of one of the Enlightened Organizations that has been gripped by the Enigma. With his passions raging out of control, he called out to the Stalkers reflexively as madness overtook his mind. The Circle will face a difficult situation when they arrive in the Flesh, as the Supplicant will be far from cooperative and possibly accompanied by a squad from Benito's army of followers.

THE HUNT: Themes of loyalty and belonging, order and purpose can be explored in a Hunt for this Architect. Defeating the Unbidden should be a challenge since it is surrounded by an army of Driven mortals. Give the creature as many Minions and mortal followers as it takes to make a direct assault suicidal. Stealth and guile are required.

USING ANNA

THE ENIGMA: The administrative center of the city is Corrupted by the Enigma, Focused on the old Governor's throne. The throne is now a twisted mass of marble but will straighten out again if the Dream is Mended. The narrow streets around the heart of the city are extremely confusing, and the only way to walk through the area is by deliberately heading away from where one actually wants to go. The city's people have become increasingly irascible and contrary, and some living nearest the center have begun to speak in gibberish and frequently change their names and personalities.

THE CALL: One of the invaders' pagan priests might Call the Stalkers, thinking that he is calling on the aid of his gods, bringing the Stalkers into the court of a barbarian lord. He has heard of the city's strangeness from travellers and is concerned by the recent disappearances of local warlords.

THE HUNT: The priest and his warlord are willing to help the Stalkers' investigations (the priest going as a guide, the warlord sending a guard, etc.), but they are basically politicians with their own goals. The Hunt itself provides an opportunity for you to play with ideas about freedom, dictatorship, and power (if you wish) and to combine investigative work and combat.







*Before I was lifted up
I valued solitude,
spending long hours
in the library
contemplating the
truth behind the
maze of words in
some ancient tome.
One of the first
things you learn as a
Stalker is to live and
breathe as one with
those who share your
calling. When the
creature who called
itself the Black
Abbott touched me, I
was hurled into an
empty place filled
with harsh light and
the howling of the
wind. I despaired for
time unknowable and
may have given up
hope and taken my
own life had the
others not come for
me. When you have
seen eternity, it is
hard to be alone...*

MASTERING SPECIAL ABILITIES

The following section provides 15 more Special Abilities for your Unbidden to use. Unlike those presented in the core rulebook, these have basic and Master levels like the Stalkers' Disciplines. This approach is intended to give the gamemaster an even clearer picture of what the enemy is capable of.

Renegades who are new to the Flesh will not have had the chance to Master any Special Abilities they may have. By the time they reach the Stranger stage, they will usually have attained Mastery of at least one Ability, and Architects will eventually Master them all.





The boy had seen Redmund before, but he couldn't tell us where so the Grey Man touched his mind and went hunting. After all, where the Beast has been there are always tracks if you know where to look.

For almost an hour, nothing, then a burst of light, and he whispers that the enemy has been building something in Jason's dreams.

All of the sudden the child's eyes start glowing, and a keyhole appears in his chest.

Pausing just long enough to master my anger, I thrust Compassion into his heart, opened him up and went inside.

Strangest Touchstone I ever saw...

INFECT Infect allows an Unbidden to create and spread an infectious disease of its own devising. Details of the disease are up to the gamemaster, but the effects are usually gruesome. The diseases usually involve the gradual reduction of Attributes and end in death. The Unbidden can infect an area of 1 mile for each 5 points of Vitality spent. New symptoms may be added at the Unbidden's whim for an additional cost of 3 Vitality.

A Master can use the disease as an attack form at a cost of 1 Vitality per attack. If it successfully touches an opponent, it can infect an area of the target's body with an advanced form of the disease which inflicts 4D and lowers the Fortitude of mortal victims by 1.

DREAMWALK An Unbidden with this Power can appear in the dreams of mortals and Stalkers currently in the Realm of the Flesh. The Unbidden has no power over the victim but can deliver messages and have conversations with the dreamer. Many Unbidden recruit human thralls using this Power. It also allows communication over long distances since distance is not a factor. The Unbidden must have seen the victim at least once. Knowing someone's name is not enough.

A Master cannot only enter dreams but can manipulate them. Loyal followers can be rewarded with dreams that approach reality in their sensuality. Enemies can be made to experience nightmares so horrid that sleeping becomes dangerous.

ANIMATE This Power allows the enemy to animate up to three small objects like knives, candlesticks, or flashlights. They can be used to make 2D attacks and may attack different targets. Unless the Animated objects are fragile, attacks will not have much affect on them. A successful attack will knock the object away for one round. Since the Animated objects are small and move quickly, they have an Initiative of 16, an Attack of 15 and a Defend of 17. Animate costs 1 Vitality for every 2 rounds of activity.

A Master can animate either five small objects or one very large object. Suitable large objects include statues, small trees, or boulders. Large objects have an Initiative of 10, an Attack of 12 and a Defend of 11, but they do 5 dice of damage.





MAJESTY Those with this power are surrounded by an aura of power and authority. Mortals with a Resolve Attribute of 11 or less will immediately comply with any reasonable request made by the Unbidden. A show of force will convince any mortal with a Resolve of 9 or less to obey any order without question. Those who are Driven or Inspired are immune to these effects. It is impossible for an Unbidden with Majestic Presence to hide in a crowd unless it has reached the Architect stage.

A Master is powerful enough to affect Shadows and Stalkers but only with seemingly reasonable requests. A Stalker must make a Willpower Challenge of 12 or do as the Unbidden asks. Ridiculous suggestions (i.e. kill your friends) will fail.

FETTER Mortals who serve the Unbidden often do so out of fear, and fear does not breed real loyalty. The Unbidden have found a way around this problem. An Unbidden with this Power may tie a mortal to itself with a blood ritual. In this ritual, which takes one hour and costs 2 Vitality, the Unbidden and the mortal are both cut open, and their blood mingles. If the Unbidden should ever be Bound, the mortal will die. It is thus in the mortal's best interest to keep the Unbidden alive and unbound.

A Master can reward faithful servants by gifting them with powers. These gifts are usually lesser versions of the special abilities of the Unbidden in question. The cost varies from 1 to 5 Vitality depending on the power and duration of the effect.

SHRIEK An Unbidden with this power can unleash a bloodcurdling scream powerful enough to stun opponents. Anyone in the immediate area must pass an Average Fortitude Challenge or be stunned for one round. Characters wearing helmets or other protective gear may be awarded a bonus on this roll by the gamemaster. Under the right circumstances, this scream has spectacular side-effects. A high pitched scream would shatter glass and cause dogs to run amok, for instance.

A Master's scream is so potent it can cause delicate organs to burst. In addition to the stunning effect, the scream does 2D of damage to anyone who fails the Fortitude Challenge. Any mortal victim who loses Vitality from this attack is permanently deafened.





It lived in the basement where it slept in a nest of bones. Despite our brazen intrusion into its den, the creature did not stir. So, Anna plucked a weapon from Talon's sash and strode forward to dispatch the thing with a short sharp thrust through the eye and into the brain. That's when I realized that the hairy thing was a mere Minion and that the enemy had somehow managed to transfer its consciousness into the marrow of the bones. As she pulled the knife out of the Minion's skull it rose up and drew back with serpentine fluidity, striking her down with a single blow ...

SHRED

This Power allows an Unbidden to shoot a stream of small sharp objects at an opponent at a cost of 1 Vitality. The blast can be made up of whatever wicked objects take the renegade's fancy (ice, nails, glass, etc...). The attack is quite painful and inflicts 4D Damage. Mortal victims who lose 2 or more Vitality to this attack will have dangerous shrapnel imbedded in their flesh which will effectively incapacitate them. Stalkers who lose 3 or more Vitality must lower their Fortitude by 1 against the next 3 physical attacks.

A Master can create a slow moving whirlwind of shards. The effect is the same, but it affects multiple targets. The area is limited to about ten yards across, but the effect can be maintained for two additional rounds for every additional point of Vitality spent.

FLASHBACK

An Unbidden with this Power can force any mortal with a Resolve of 12 or less to relive a traumatic experience by touching him on the hand or the head and spending a point of Vitality. While under the effect of this Power, the victim slips into a delusional trance. After 1-6 rounds, the victim regains consciousness but is disoriented for an additional 1-6 rounds. This experience is profoundly upsetting to most mortals and can shatter fragile psyches.

A Master can use this Power against a Stalker if it can manage to touch one. The intended victim can resist if he makes a Willpower Challenge against a Difficulty of 15. This powerful reminder of the Stalker's human origins should be role-played for maximum effect.

EXTRACTION

Unbidden often find themselves lacking the knowledge and skills they need to adapt to the mortal world. This Power allows the renegade to steal specific knowledge or memories from a mortal victim. The transfer requires physical contact, complete concentration and takes a number of hours equal to the victim's Resolve. (Driven Sensitives take twice as long.) This power gives the Unbidden most of the data it needs, but understanding takes much longer and is usually incomplete.

A Master can perform the ritual in half the normal time and gains deeper understanding. If it has 2-12 days, it can extract enough information from a single subject to mimic his behavior and thought processes almost flawlessly.





QUICKENING

Unbidden usually find themselves outnumbered by Stalkers, so it is vitally important that they react quickly and effectively. This Power lets an Unbidden burn some of its own life force to act with blinding speed. An Unbidden who spends one Vitality adds its Fortitude to its Initiative and can move twice as fast or make an extra physical attack that round. This Power is so taxing that it costs an additional point of Vitality if it is used two or more rounds in a row without a break.

A Master can use this power as often as it likes at a cost of 1 Vitality for every 2 rounds. Instead of double movement or an extra physical attack, it can make an additional action of any kind, and it adds twice its Fortitude to its Initiative.

PYROKINETIC

Some of the Unbidden have a natural affinity for fire. They are so attuned to fire that flammable objects in their proximity sometimes spontaneously combust. When concentrating, these Unbidden can ignite anything in line of sight by "burning" 1 Vitality. Combustibles go up in a matter of seconds, while fire retardant items may take a minute or more. Flame can even be made to dance on things like stone and steel, although the effect is merely cosmetic.

A Master can instantaneously ignite anything in line of sight. If it spends Vitality, it can cause explosive combustion that can be used as an attack that inflicts 6D of Damage to anyone caught in the blast radius, which can be as large as a small building.

DISMISS

With this potent Power, the Unbidden can banish mortals to a Shadowland. Usually, this requires a special connection with a Touchstone that lets it send others through. How it makes this link is unknown, but it can only be done near a large body of water. To banish a mortal, it has to touch them and spend 1-6 points of Vitality. Some mortal magicians have wards to keep them anchored in the Flesh, but most unprotected mortals are transported to a Shadowland from which they never return.

A Master can try to banish Stalkers to their Shadowland. The intended victim can resist the Dismissal with a successful Willpower Challenge against a Difficulty of 15. Successful Dismissal is an excellent set-up for a solo adventure.





Another Minion staggered out of the shadows, but Talon was there, deftly hacking off its head with his axe as he moved closer to the well. As he approached, the enemy rose from the depths, hundreds of swollen leeches clinging to its fetid hide. Talon struck it four times, and four globs of flesh fell back into the shaft. Grinning toothlessly at us, it raised its arms, and the parasites flew from its body, covering Talon in a tide of living slime. The writhing mass drew blood and Essence from him in equal measure, forcing the warrior to his knees...

TENTACLES

The Unbidden who learn this strange Power can grow greyish tentacles at a cost of 1 Vitality apiece. Each tentacle allows the creature to make an additional unarmed attack each round with an Attack Attribute equal to its Resolve minus 2 for each tentacle after the first and Strength equal to half its Fortitude (round up). These tentacles will disappear after 1-6 rounds unless an additional 1 Vitality is spent to maintain them for another 1-6 rounds.

A Master is not limited to tentacles. The additional limbs may take any form it desires (hands, claws, etc.). The strength of these limbs is equal to its Fortitude, they last 2-12 rounds, and Masters only suffer half the Attack penalty for having more than 1.

GEMINI

This rare but coveted Ability allows an Unbidden who has emerged from the Beast Stage to transfer its Essence into two Vessels instead of one. This requires two suitable (living) subjects and 3 days of uninterrupted concentration at which time the old Vessel withers away. One of the new Vessels become dormant and the other operates normally, but with a -2 Resolve and only half its normal Vitality. If the dominant Vessel is destroyed the creature's consciousness revives the dormant Vessel no matter where it is.

A Master can complete the Gemini transfer in 2-12 hours, and both Vessels will have their full Vitality. A Master can also shift his consciousness at will from one Vessel to the other by spending 1-6 points of Vitality from one of the bodies (determine randomly).

CHRONOMANCY

This ability allows the Unbidden to move across the Chronosphere. It requires a week's worth of preparations which include investing vast amounts of Essence in a mortal artifact at least 1000 years old via the sacrifice of Shadows and a deep trance. If the renegade can avoid rousing the Forbiddance, it is catapulted up to 100 years backward in time. It arrives with only one point of Vitality and must feed as soon as possible or revert to the Beast stage.

A Master must use the same ritual, but it only takes three days, does not require as much Essence, and it can travel as far back as it likes. Also, a Master arrives with half its Vitality remaining so it does not need to feed for a few days.





*When the desire of
the Unbidden warps
the Dreaming,
physical laws give
way to strange new
rules, turning each
Lair into a puzzle
that must be solved if
the Circle hopes to
reach the renegade
that lurks within.
The Barren Spire was
worse than most, its
labyrinthine
passages invisible to
the naked eye.
We travelled slowly
upward trying not to
let the hollow
enormity of the outer
shell disorient us.
Strangest of all was
the fact that we
could see the enemy
from where we stood
through the
invisible floors so
we knew that he had
nearly completed the
Gemini ritual.*

THE ARCHITECT'S LAIR

When an Aesthetic falls from his lofty office and enters into the Dream, he immediately faces countless unexpected dangers: starvation, an alien world, Enlightened mortals trying to hinder or capture him, and—worst of all—Stalkers.

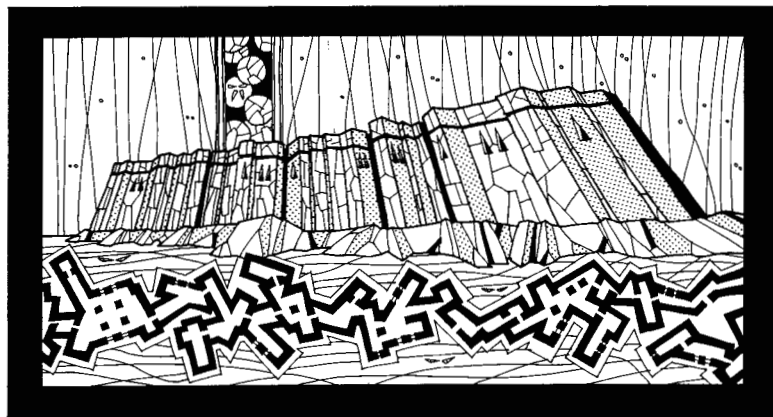
An Unbidden clever and strong enough to survive these threats will eventually become an Architect. If the Architect's time as Beast and Stranger teaches him anything, it is that the key to survival in the Flesh is strength, and there is no better path to strength than to build a defensive position.

Architects build Lairs for two reasons: to hide their location and identity from casual observation and to keep themselves safe when discovered. To facilitate these goals, their Lairs are usually fairly unassuming from the exterior but are filled with dangerous obstacles on the interior. In addition, Architects often live within the Corruption of

the Enigmas created by their passage. Because the Unbidden may form links with the Corruption, this allows them to use the Corruption's power to make the Lair yet more dangerous to intruders.

Once the Lair is constructed, a process which takes years of the Unbidden's undivided attention, the Architect will generally stay within its protective walls sending out his Minions to perform tasks in the mortal world. After all, what good is a redoubt if one is caught outside?

Minions have a peculiar function within the Lair. Some Architects choose never to allow their Minions within their Lair. They believe the presence of Minions will violate the sanctity of the Lair and take away its power. These Architects are in the minority, however, as most keep a "retinue" of Minions within the Lair to serve a variety of functions, from butler to errand runner. In truth, Minions are kept much like a lord





would keep a staff within a mansion.

Because the Unbidden are so powerful within their Lairs, it is imperative that all Stalkers be wary of the threat posed by an Architect in his Lair. A Circle entering an Architect's Lair unawares is most assuredly doomed.

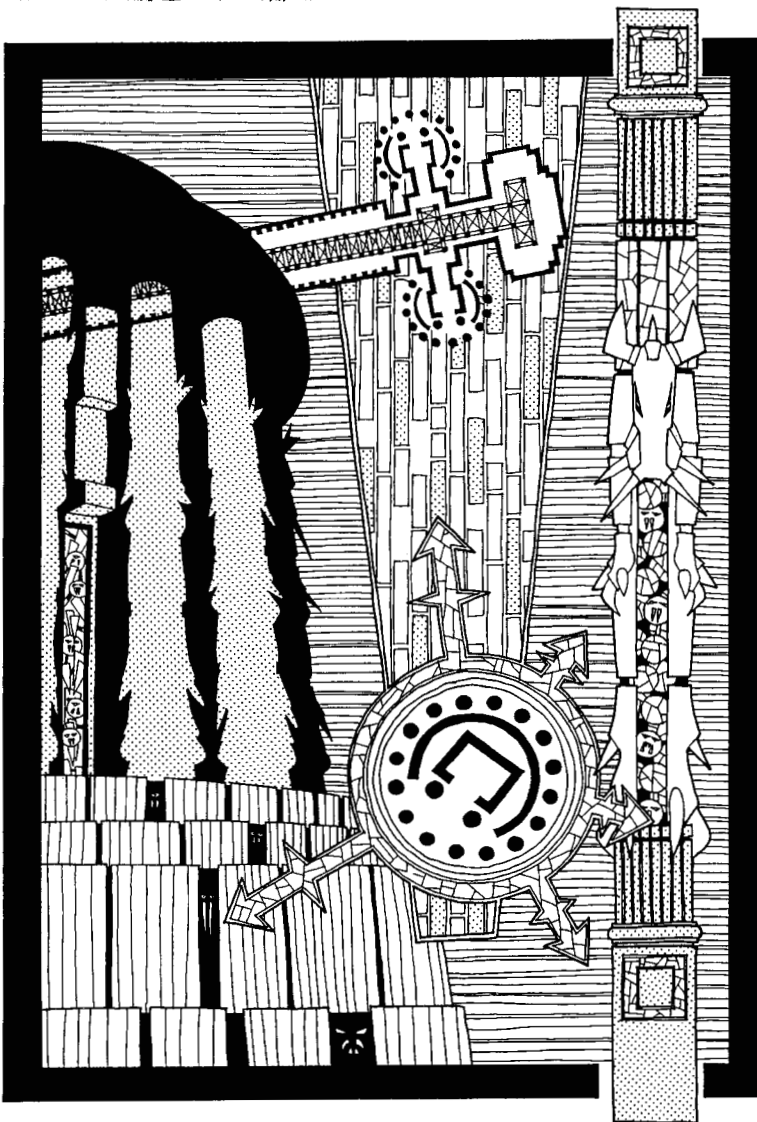
LAIR'S APPEARANCE

On the outside, a Lair appears normal. If the Lair is within a building, the building is most often an accepted part of the landscape. It is rare for an Architect to erect an entirely new structure. If the Lair is outdoors, it is most often in a secluded area. Regardless of their external appearance, all Lairs bear the "taint" of the Unseen.

This taint can take many forms: cold spots, disembodied whispers or sounds, unnatural darkness, dancing shadows, and unexplainable mists and fogs that cling to the surrounding area for weeks at a time.

These phenomenon are enough to keep most mortals clear of the Lair, propagating tales that it is haunted. In fact, even if the Lair has only been around for a few years, the residents of the surrounding area become convinced that the Lair has always been haunted.

When one enters the Lair, be it a building or a forest clearing, its very nature changes. The interior of a Lair is rarely a physical reflection of its exterior. Huge pillars of light and long chains of human limbs may be found in the causeway of what appears to be a small shack. The layout of the Lair is determined by its Architect's madness.



THE OBSERVATORY AT AVERLAINE: *The Architect who lived here was obsessed with light and ordered the construction of massive vaulted ceilings and fabulous skylights throughout the building. Stained glass windows on every wall depict strange and disturbing scenes.*





SPECIAL ABILITIES

After an Architect has resided within its Lair for several years, it becomes Linked to it much like it is Linked to the Enigma. Within their Lairs, these Architects possess powers undreamed of by their peers. Below (see side bar) is a list of powers that are conferred upon all Unbidden Linked to their Lairs.

The gamemaster should select two or three special abilities conferred upon the Architect by its Lair, in addition to the abilities below. These abilities should be unique to the specific Architect and should suit its personality.

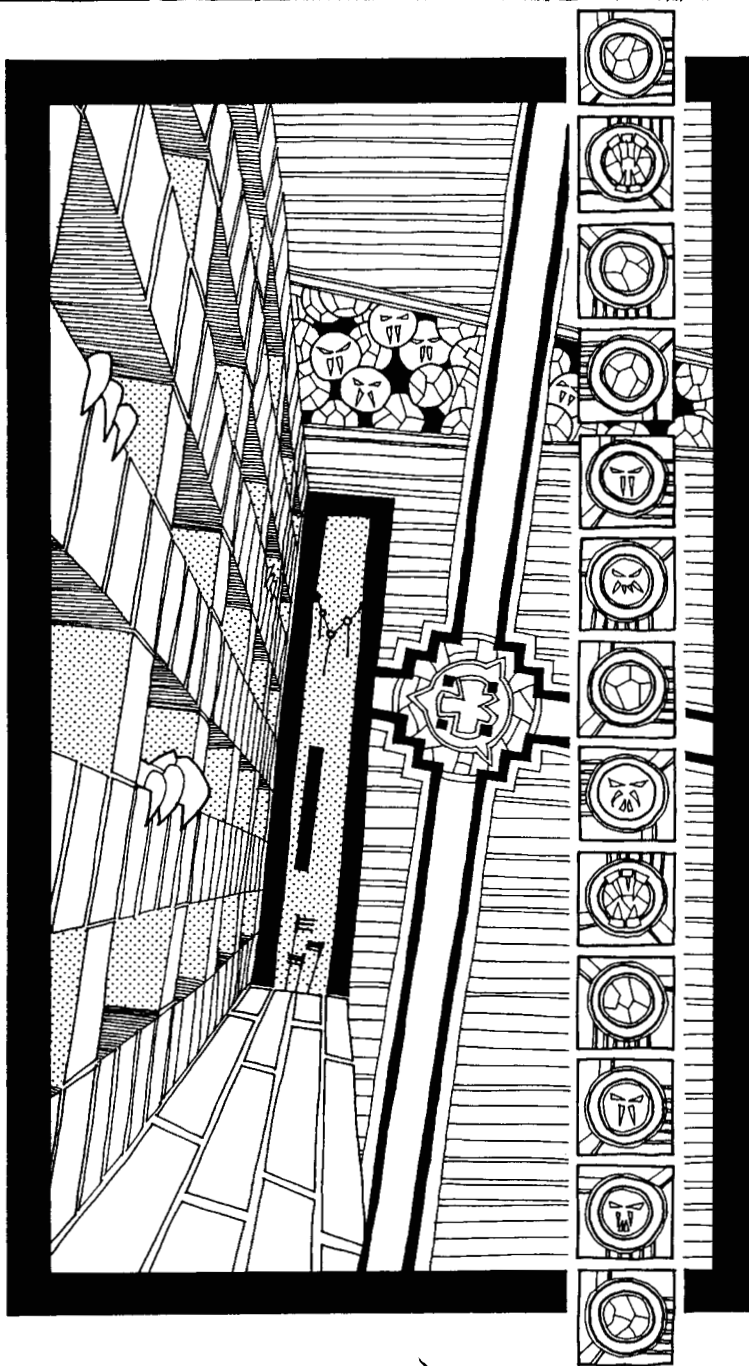
Some examples include:

- Unlimited Translocation within the Lair
- Increased Attributes, especially Perceive and Resolve
- Additional Attacks or maximum Damage for existing attacks
- Ability to lure suitable prey to the Lair with Whispered enticements
- Ability to Dominate any mortal with a Resolve of 12 or less who enters the Lair

The options are limitless, but in general, the Special Abilities conferred by a Lair should be extraordinarily powerful. Architects challenged in their Lairs are the most dangerous prey of all.

- The Unbidden require less Essence while in their Lairs. The forging of a Life Link with the Enigma enables them to draw power from the adjoining Corruption. Thus, an Architect may thrive within his Lair with little need to prey upon the surrounding mortal population.
- The Lair is an extension of the Unbidden, much like a Stalker's Domain. Any utterance of the Architect's name in the area surrounding the Lair will draw his attention. Once alerted, the Unbidden will either investigate personally or send Minions in search of intruders.
- An Unbidden can sense impending danger to his Lair, such as the arrival of a Circle. This gives the Unbidden the opportunity to prepare before the security of the Lair has even been breached.
- By expending one or more points of Vitality, the Architect can manipulate the physical form of the Lair at will, reshaping it to make him more comfortable or to create barriers to block the advance of unwanted visitors.
- The Unbidden can control the elements in the region surrounding the Lair, raising or lowering the temperature and changing the weather to suit its needs. These changes can be maintained indefinitely.
- Minions that have been damaged may return to the Lair and regenerate, as if they were the Unbidden, by drawing on the power of the physical Link. The Unbidden must divert its complete attention to the healing process and any break in that concentration will cease the regeneration of the Minion.
- The physical laws within the Lair are subject to the will of the Unbidden, and mortal tools can be rendered useless. The Unbidden can cause gunpowder to become harmless, electricity to cease to function, and so forth.
- While residing within its lair the Unbidden may send telepathic messages to any mortal thrall or Minion currently under its control. This communication is one way only, allowing the Unbidden to direct its forces but not receive any information.
- The Unbidden is able to slightly alter its Vessel while within one hundred yards of its Lair. This change of shape does not affect Disciplines with regard to physical attributes or abilities, only the outward appearance of the Unbidden. In effect, the Vessel may appear to have aged, grown a beard, even look to be a close relative of the Vessel. This allows the Architect to interact with the outside world for years on end.





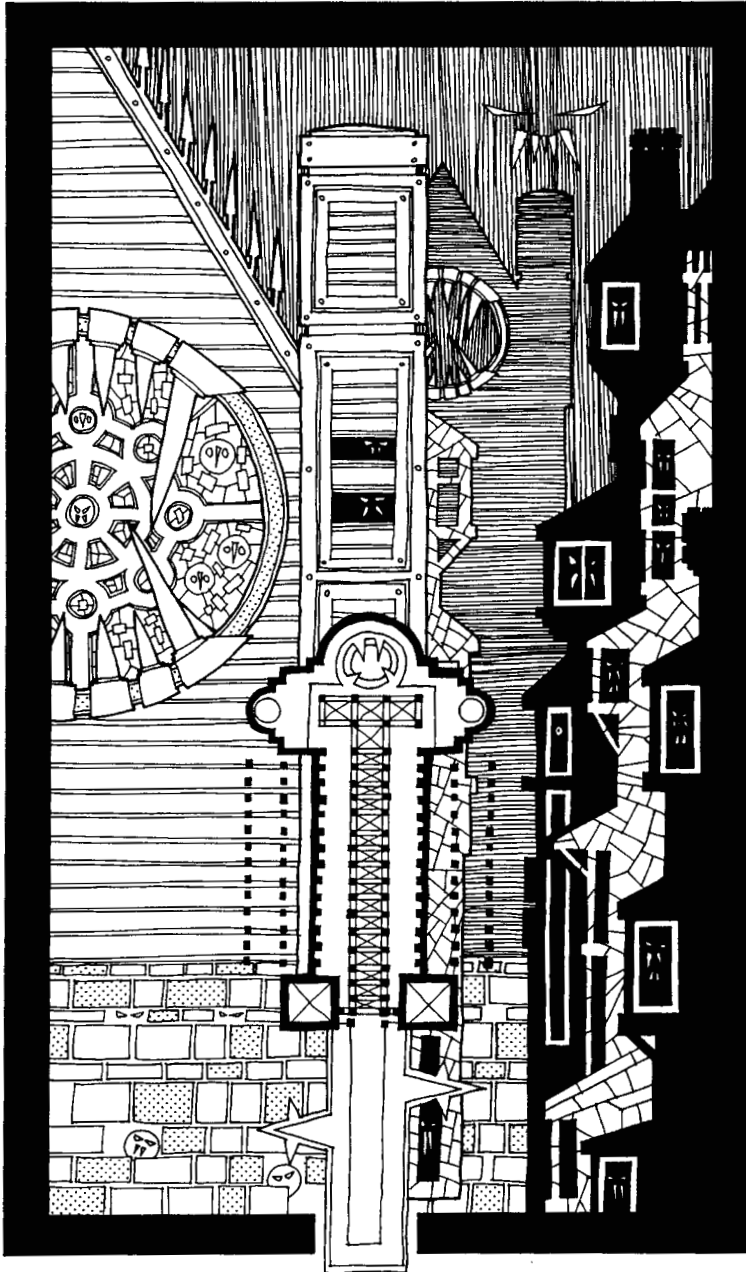
Deep in the Worchester Municipal Asylum, nestled between the wards for hysterical women and cretinous children, sleeps the creature who calls itself the Vagabond.

The Vagabond was once a fallen Aesthetic, captured and locked in the Vault. He was released by the Asylum's Director, a misguided magician who picked the 863rd lock and laid his patients before the Architect in offering. Thus far, the Director's life has been spared and he is the Vagabond's chief agent within the Flesh.

The Vagabond has wired what is left of the minds of his 260 "guests" into a living computer. Thick bundles of cable are bolted to their skulls and draped from cell to cell. He has been able to use pleasure and pain to program his creation, giving him unusual insights into the human mind.

The Asylum itself is a labyrinth of hallways and cells, most empty, weaving a circuitous route to nowhere. It is not uncommon to find a stairway leading to nothing or a door opening upon another door. There are, in fact, only 300 occupied chambers within the Asylum, while the structure contains some 1,100 rooms.





FINDING THE LAIR

Under normal circumstances, uncovering a Lair is not especially difficult. A Circle seeking the Unbidden need only follow the legends of haunted prisons, deadly glades, and the like.

Some Architects have the power to Shroud their Lair. Shrouding is a laborious process that allows the Unbidden to hide the entire structure or outdoor area where the Lair is located. Anyone approaching will become hopelessly lost as the area is consumed by a mist or as the trees of the forest twist to form an unnavigable maze. The nature of the Shroud, like most elements of the Lair, depends upon the Unbidden. Only a creature of Essence has any hope of finding a Shrouded Lair, and even then it may take hours of wandering before it is found.

When describing a Circle's descent into a Shrouded Lair, the gamemaster must take care to evoke the proper mood. Such an encounter should be eerie with physical laws warped to the pleasure of the Unbidden relative to its abilities.

For example: a group of Stalkers on the Hunt for an Unbidden Architect have walked through a macabre, gray mist for some time, often passing over the same territory several times. As they continue their search, they find themselves standing before the huge doors of an ancient castle that was not there when they last tread this ground. The castle seems to shift, waning in substance right before their eyes. The Stalkers know they must enter now, as they may not get another chance.





• BUILDING A LAIR

The construction of a Lair is a laborious process which requires a large infusion of Essence. The Forbiddance is the greatest enemy of a Lair, continually eating away at its fringes attempting to destroy that which does not belong. The Lair requires continuous maintenance so that it does not return from whence it came. It is common for Architects to bind "Seneschals," Minions which upkeep the Lairs so their masters may devote their energies elsewhere.

The Lair will gradually expand as the years pass. If the Lair grows too large it will become a Shadowland. Such Lairs are the homes of terrible and powerful Unbidden who are generally avoided by Circles. Within Shadowlands, there is little harm they can do to the Chronosphere.

The time period and location of the Lair often give an indication of its appearance. Though the Unbidden use mortal superstition and fashion to hide their Lairs, Sensitive mortals will, on occasion, accidentally discover the Lairs, like castles appearing from the mist where no building ever stood or forbidding alien structures hidden within the depths of a forest.

Although the physical laws within the Lair are subject to the whims of its creator, there is one binding rule that all Lairs follow. Every Lair will eventually become intricately tied to the perverse logic of its creator. The Lair will begin to resemble the domain of the Unbidden but without the infinite power that the Realm of Essence can provide.

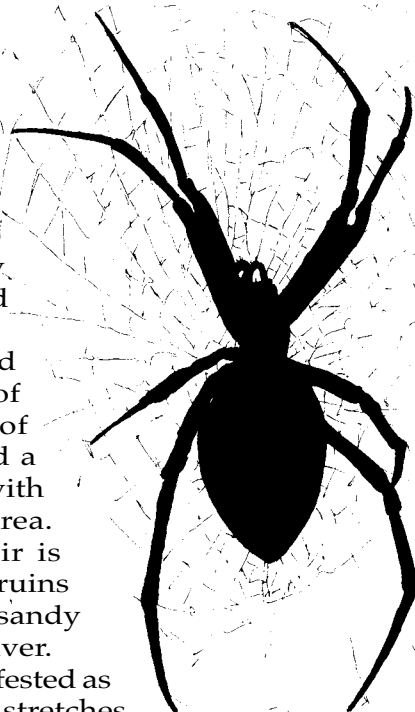
GRARNTAPHLIM

One of the strangest Architects ever to cross the Rift was Solgante, a powerful renegade who had the misfortune to inhabit a black widow spider when she arrived in the Flesh.

Grarntaphlim is located in the vast wastelands of the Iraqi desert south of Baghdad and has earned a formidable reputation with the inhabitants of the area. The entrance to the Lair is located within the great ruins of an ancient city on the sandy shores of an exhausted river.

Solgante's power manifested as a fine, silken web which stretches a half a mile in all directions. Suspended in the web are the dessicated corpses of those who ventured into the area and were caught up in its strands. At first her diet consisted of animals but gradually she developed a taste for human flesh which is evidenced by her collection of bleached skulls. At the heart of this tangled hell is Solgante.

Solgante is unusual because she has maintained one vessel for centuries. Her tiny body is swollen with Essence. (At night she is the size of a small truck.) She has the ability to Translocate to any place in her web at will as well as the ability to keep her Vessel fresh and vital as per the Weave Discipline. She is also an adept Parasite as per the Unbidden Special Ability. Stalkers must take care not to become caught in her web or she will take great pleasure in devouring them slowly.





THE THIRD WHEEL

The Third Wheel is home to Gorish, an Aesthetic whose contemplation once helped to shape certain physical laws regarding heat retention in copper-based alloys. Drawn to the flesh by his forbidden passion for complicated thermodynamic relationships no mortal could perceive let alone understand, the renegade has survived as a denizen of the Flesh for over sixty years.

The creature's fascination with the workings of heat and cold has somewhat faded. Once he overcame the hunger, he conducted seemingly endless experimentation upon any mortals he encountered; he exposed them to flame and submerged them in frozen waters.

During this experimentation, his preoccupation with thermodynamics was diverted by a newfound interest in sound. His experimentation rarely yielded interesting results except for the particularly pleasing sounds released by his subjects. Nearly always high-pitched and generally prolonged enunciations of a single word, such as "please," or "stop," these emissions were of primary interest because they were universal; every subject made such a noise during experimentation.

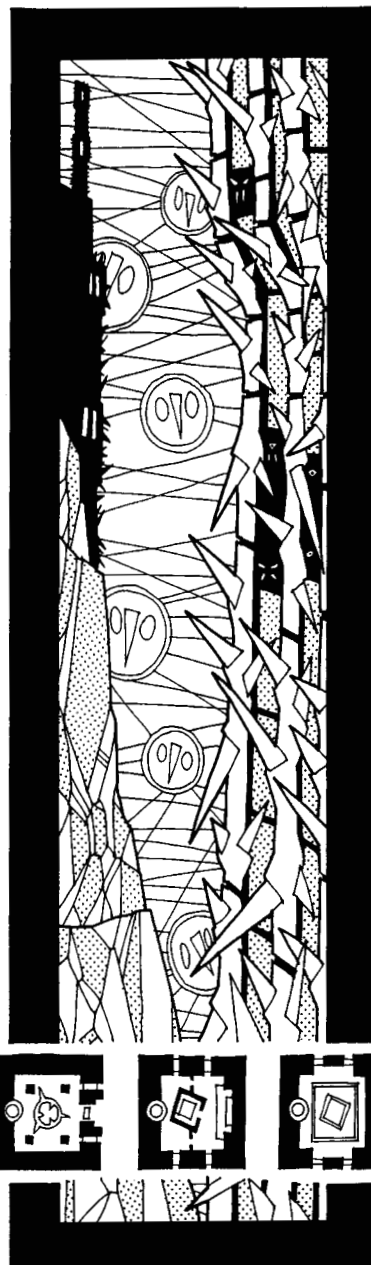
Gorish built the Third Wheel within the confines of an

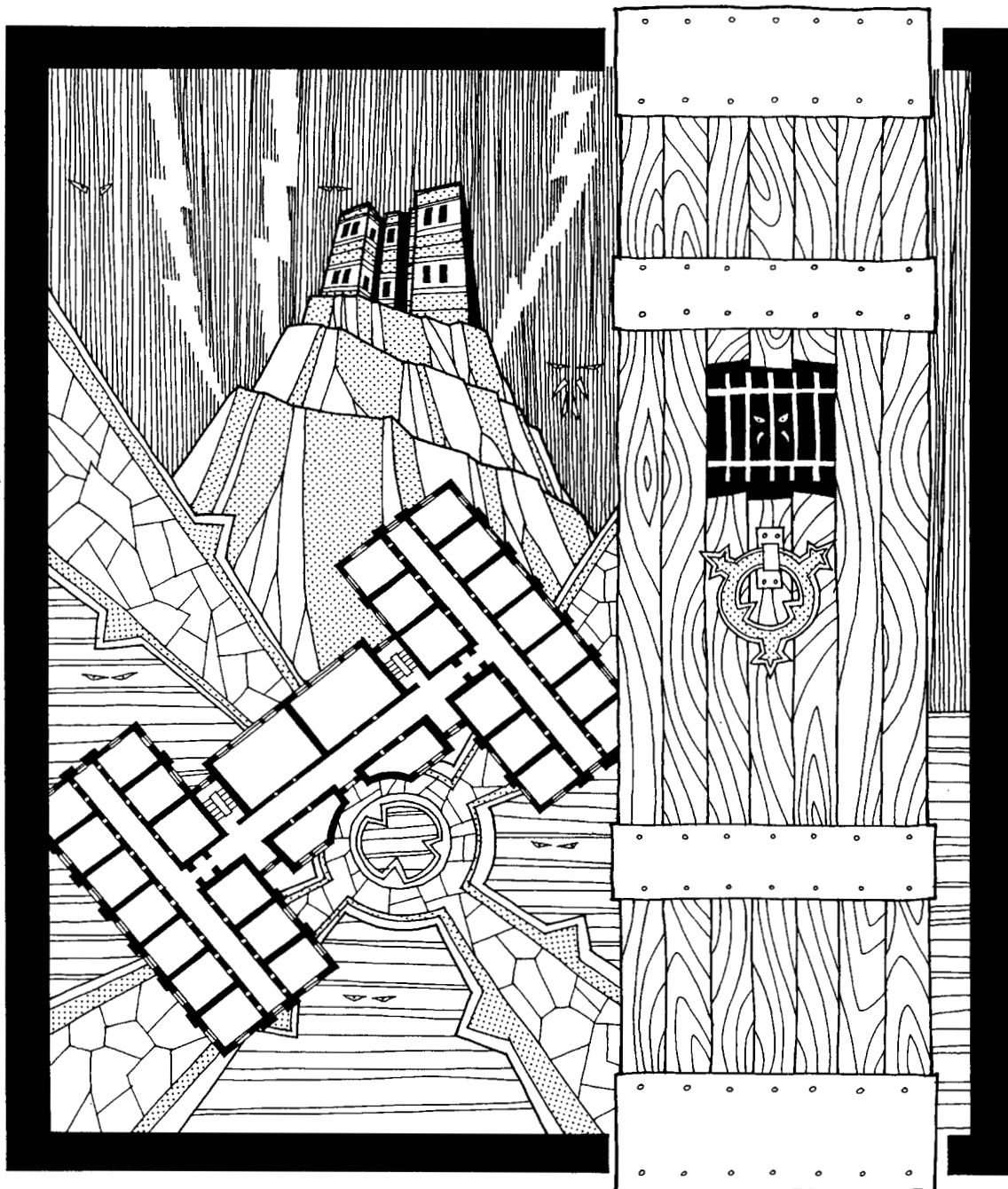
abandoned factory. Within is his laboratory which he designed exclusively for his perverse high fidelity experiments.

To further his research, he has constructed devices of all sorts: a chair that slowly separates, rending the subject and producing a fantastic recitation; a casket which thrusts needles into the subject, injecting molten metals into the blood stream—interestingly, reactions do not vary according to the metal injected. The lab is filled with such constructs. Gorish has also learned of recording technologies, and his Lair is filled with microphones, recording devices, and racks of his recorded results.

Gorish not only hears and records every sound within his Lair, but he is also able to alter the environment by making any area as hot as a bonfire or as cold as an Arctic winter.

The Architect designed his Lair so that anyone entering must first pass through 2,567 chambers before reaching the central laboratory. Any exiting from the laboratory need only pass 1,083 chambers to reach the outside. Each chamber is identical to the previous one, except that each has a speaker playing a different record of Gorish's findings. Gorish himself may translocate to any point within his Lair at will.







Another slip and the soldering iron dug into his thumb, searing meat and flesh before he could yank it free. His fingers were slippery with blood and burst blisters, forcing him to tape the tool to his shaking hand. The device was spread out before him like a patient on an operating table. Slowly, almost reverently, he placed the last capacitor and closed it up. Perfect. There would be no mistakes this time. He would find out what the damned thing was supposed to do, and the voices would leave him alone. Trembling, he pushed the big red button and something dark slipped out of the Vault and into his body...

BEYOND THE VAULT

When an Aesthetic is consigned to the Vault, he is robbed of everything he holds dear. Some learn to survive in the world beyond the Black Abbott's gate, but most would do anything to return to the Realm of Flesh. Those that manage to slip their bonds are very dangerous creatures who will not allow themselves to be recaptured.

Escaping from the Vault is very difficult and always requires the cooperation of a mortal Sensitive.

• THE WHISPERING VAULT

Though the walls of the Vault are unassailable, it is possible for a renegade who has spent a human lifetime in the Realm of Flesh to reach across the Rift with his desire, calling out to those with the ability to feel his desperation.

This technique can only be used by Aesthetics who reached the Stranger stage before they were cast down. Those captured in the Beast stage never escape, and most of those who do escape are Architects.

The Condemned will not be able to see across the Rift so will have no control over where or when he will call or who might hear him.

The voice of the Condemned is a plaintive whisper that can only be heard by Sensitive mortals. Contact is usually achieved in darkness when the subject is alone and indoors. Light and life will dilute the creature's power, making it impossible to distinguish words.

Few Sensitives are aware of their gifts and fewer still have achieved Enlightenment. Once he has made contact, the prisoner will do whatever it takes to convince the subject to set him free.

If the Condemned happens upon a Sensitive with a Resolve of 8 or less or one whose Resolve has been temporarily lowered by illness, bereavement or the persistence of the Unbidden, the subject can be Dominated and controlled like a puppet from the other side.

Many renegades have managed to exploit mortal superstitions by posing as demons and promising various rewards in exchange for the acts that would result in their freedom. Believing that their pacts will protect them, the foolish mortals readily agree. Their only reward is a quick death.





PICKING THE LOCK

The easiest way to free an Aesthetic from the Vault is to use a Stalker's key, but these artifacts are very hard to come by. Any of these keys will fit the locks on the Black Abbott's Gate. The only problem is reaching across the Rift, a feat which can be achieved symbolically by burning certain herbs at the foot of any door with an inset lock that has been marked with the Sanguine Seal.

When no key is available, it is much harder to free the Aesthetic from the Vault. The only way is to find a way to pick one of the locks.

Picking these locks is like solving a puzzle. Each lock has a different solution, but all are so complex that it requires profound insight and a lifetime of obsession to operate. This task can be simplified if the mortal can locate the records or diaries of someone who has tried it before.

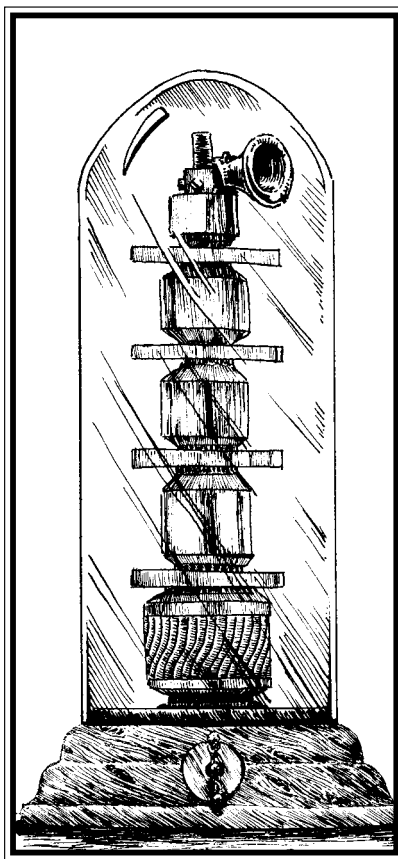
Because "picking the lock" is a symbolic act of what mortal magicians would call sympathetic magic, there are countless ways to do it, but all of them require uncommon cunning and total devotion.

Picking the lock would be difficult for a Stalker and is nearly impossible for mortals. It can only be attempted by Enlightened Sensitives with a Resolve of 15 or better who are Driven to achieve it. The effort is incredibly Strenuous and can kill those who falter. Unfortunately, even success usually results in the operator's death.

The following is an example of a metaphorical "lock" that could be used to open the Gate from the Flesh.

THE CLOCKWORK GRAMMAPHONE

This device was found in 1890 by a Portuguese fisherman who claimed it had become fouled in his nets. Two generations later, it was sold to a French art collector named Andre Dupre, who made the ridiculous claim that it had Mayan origins. In 1932 an Enlightened magician named Arthur Stedman saw it as part of a travelling exhibition sponsored by Dupre and had it stolen. He tried to use it but couldn't figure out what it was supposed to do. It remained with Stedman until his death in 1963. Two years later it was pawned by his nephew, Mark, in exchange for a saxophone.



The Gramophone is a large cylinder of brass and wood that resembles a complex kaliedescope. There are dozens of mysterious mechanisms inside the main body which are controlled by rotating various segments of the barrel.

The device is activated by turning the small key built into the base of the thing. If it is operated correctly, a series of springs are wound by the action of turning the cylinder segments which unwind to play several Gramophone tubes that are lined up on the inside of the device. Each of these tubes has a sound fragment. If the proper sounds are played in unison, it will serve as a key to one of the locks on the Black Abbott's gate. To use this device correctly, the operator needs to have a Perceive Attribute of 15 or better and perfect pitch.





NOTORIOUS EXPLORERS

Many mortals have achieved limited insight into the nature of the Vault, but there are three individuals who achieved notoriety among the Enlightened for their blasphemous experiments. Their legacy is feared by those who understand what they accomplished because each of them learned how to pick the lock on the Black Abbott's Gate. In 1983 the Order made a concerted effort to wipe away all traces of their influence. They had modest success, but a few copies were still in circulation in the modern age. By 1996 these remaining materials cause so much trouble that a powerful Circle is assigned the task of finding and destroying them.

Peiros the Elder

Born in Ancient Greece during an enlightened age, this talented mathematician explored the nature of the Flesh with some of the greatest minds of his time. While trying to define the physical universe through mathematics, he discovered more than he bargained for. Among his most useful insights are the Essential Formulae, a series of equations which can be used to prove the existence of the Realm of Essence and to map the location of the Black Abbott's Gate. The Veil shrouds these truths with such complexity that they were useless until computers could be used to help decipher them. Those gifted few who are able to grasp the Formulae can open the Postern Gate, a "back door" that is not as closely watched as the Door with a Thousand Locks.



Lord Vincent Hull

Wealth and station gave Vincent the opportunity to pursue any interest that took his fancy. For a while his fleeting obsessions drove him to forgivable flirtations with drugs, rough sex and politics. He would eventually discover that he was only interested in going where other men would not go and doing what others would not do. At first he indulged his appetite for the forbidden with rather mundane excursions into the occult but quickly tired of muttering invocations to imaginary gods and practicing traditions born of ignorance. A chance encounter with an Awakened Shadow led him to the Lair of an Architect who had been to the Vault and back. Their conversations were carefully chronicled in Vincent's diaries, which are known to Stalkers as "The Confession."



Lainna Grace

As a young woman, Lainna suffered from a chemical imbalance that drove her to commit violent acts that she could not control or remember. After killing her cousin at a wedding, she was committed to an asylum for extended care. She was released three days after her 34th birthday, cured by experimental drug therapy that also awakened her latent gifts. After her release, she wrote twenty-eight novels under the pen name of "Adra Pierpont." This popular series chronicled the decline of a wealthy Boston family at the turn of the century. The entire series had occult overtones, but the first printing of the fourth, ninth and twenty-first installments also contained many Enlightened insights including a series of dream sequences which accurately describe the journey from Flesh to Essence.





When the Primal Powers created the Vault, their desire spawned a race of creatures who call themselves the Wardens. It is the Wardens' duty to maintain the Vault and punish the Condemned when necessary. They possess frightening power, but they lack insight into the Aesthetics and their crimes so they are forced to rely on the Trustees to advise them.

Close cousins to the Stalkers, the Trustees are Chosen from the Aesthetics imprisoned in the Vault. It is the best the Unbidden can hope for, an honor only conferred on the truly repentant. For this reason some Stalkers call Trustees "the forgiven" and refer to their choosing as "the pardon."

When they sense an escape, the Wardens transform one of the Trustees into a creature called a Lesser Fury which has the abilities required to follow the renegade across the Rift and cast him back into the Vault. In many ways, the Furies combine the power and authority of the Guardians, the Navigators and the Stalkers.

The Condemned have devised several methods to keep the Furies from pursuing them. First and best, a few of the Unbidden have learned that the Wardens are not alerted to the escape if a Stalker's key is used to open the Gate. This is difficult to manage but is infallible.

Common alternatives to the Key involve Binding the Fury when it appears, using Misdirection to send it away and various traps designed to destroy the Fury or render it powerless. Most of these techniques require the cooperation of an Enlightened mortal magician.

LESSER FURIES

Fortitude	8	(6)
Vitality	20	(20)
Initiative	15	(15)
Defend	15	(12)
Perceive	18	(18)
Resolve	20	(12)

COMBAT

Verdant Lash (Attack 18 (10), 3D Damage) Every successful hit against a Condemned Aesthetic who has escaped from the Vault lowers their Resolve by 1-6 points for 1-6 days. If the victim's Resolve is reduced to 8 or less by this attack, he must submit to the Fury and return to the Vault to face the Wardens' justice.

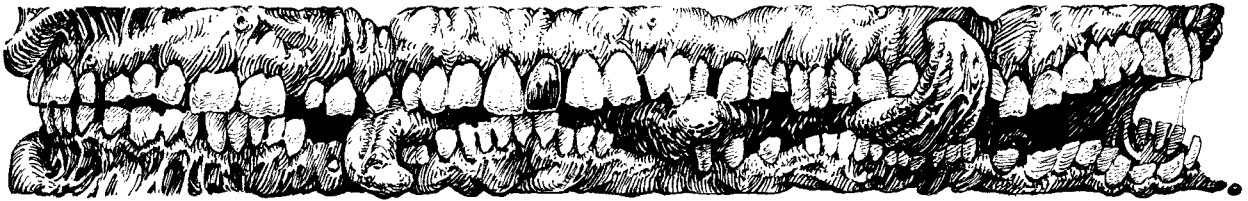
SPECIAL ABILITIES

Flight; Insubstantial (can pass through physical objects with no reduction of speed); Track unerringly (unless an area has been cleansed by Negators)

VULNERABILITIES

Confused by the use of the Frenzy Discipline (their Defend is only 9 against these attacks); Vitality can never be recovered; must use Parenthetical Attributes when fighting Stalkers.





So far as we could tell it had lived under that bridge for centuries. When the Turells had the structure dis-assembled brick by brick and shipped to their estate in North Hampton, the creature was badly wounded. Wyrnwood thinks it must have searched for the bridge for twelve years before resuming its post beneath the aged oak. The Shadow had never recovered from its old wounds and lay beneath that oak, missing much of its left mandible and at least five tentacles. We would have left the pathetic creature there, but the oak was the Focus we sought. When we moved in to destroy the thing, we never expected that terrible screaming...

POWER OF SHADOWS

Nearly every race of Shadow has unique special powers and limitations, adding variety and mystery to these dangerous opponents. The special abilities provided in this section are not meant to be a comprehensive listing, only examples of what can be done. The horror genre falters when exposed to the harsh light of familiarity. After all, what can be more disheartening than to hear one of your players say "Oh yeah, this is the Shadow that shoots out its barbed tongue and swallows you whole into its burning ichor."

It is important to remember when creating Shadows to balance their abilities with their limitations and statistics. Special abilities can be quite powerful, and without counterbalancing them with negative limitations or lower statistics, you may well be creating a Shadow that will destroy your entire Circle.

Also included in this Chapter is information on weaving Husks for Minions and 32 new Shadows for use in Hunts as well as for reference when creating your own. There are endless possibilities when designing the denizens of the Rift — don't let yourself get caught in set patterns. When creating a Shadow, first determine what it does within the Rift and what might Awaken it. Its abilities and limitations should naturally follow.

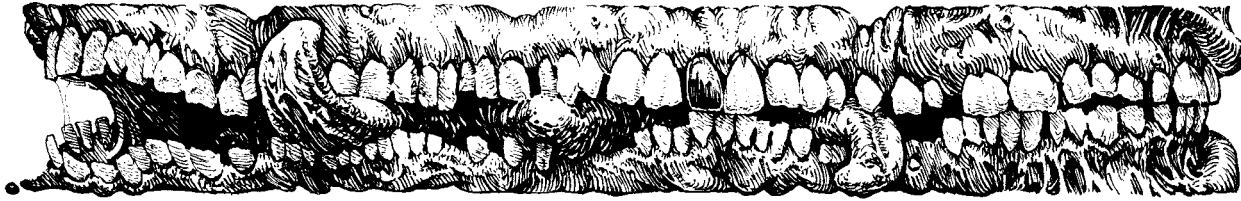
ILLUSIONS

Shadows with this ability can create powerful illusions which affect any or all of the five senses. The effects of these illusions vary. Strange noises and screams can be very distracting and plunging an area into darkness will make movement difficult. Illusions of monsters will terrify and possibly paralyze mortals. Usually, a mortal will need a Resolve of 11 or better to escape these effects. Stalkers are seldom affected but even the most potent illusions can be ignored if they make a Willpower challenge.

FORM OF...

Shadows with this power are able to assume one or many different forms. These forms can be anything from animals to rocks to water. Each form will have inherent advantages and limitations. For instance, a Shadow that turns into a roaring fire could deliver awful burns to opponents in melee combat but would take extra damage from water or sand. These types of abilities usually cost Vitality as well. One point per round of activity is average, although this should increase if the form is exceptionally powerful.





IMMOBILIZE

Shadows are not always interested in killing their opponents. They use this power when they wish to take someone alive or incapacitate them for later use. This ability can represent flying chains that wrap around an opponent, vines that entangle a foe, or bands of mystic force that are invisible to the naked eye. If a Shadow successfully hits, the target can break free on a Strength Challenge roll. The Difficulty depends on the bonds. Vines would be an Average challenge while chains would be Very Hard.

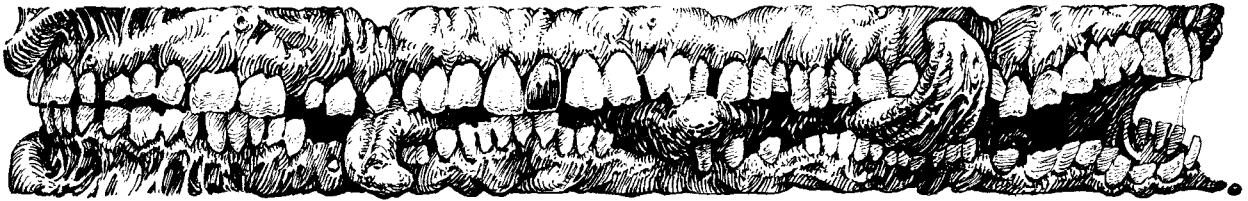
DAUNT

This ability allows a Shadow to emit a noxious smell, a piercing shriek, etc., making the area near it difficult or unpleasant to approach. Outside its area of affect, an opponent may attack from a range. However, Daunt makes it difficult to engage the Shadow directly by reducing opponents' Attack attributes, imposing Die Caps, or simply making it impossible to enter the area. If the ability makes it impossible to engage the Shadow, it requires a Complex Action to maintain.

It smashed through the barricade with ease, shrugging off a storm of bullets as it advanced on the young woman and her otherworldly companion.

We waited for the police to fall back, doing our best to protect as many of them as we could without revealing ourselves. We could not afford to lose the protection of the Veil with so many witnesses about. Fortunately the authorities thought they were dealing with a drug addict in a bulletproof vest, but the Husk showed signs of bursting so Anna called up an explosion in the alley to divert the mortals while we finished the job.





HIDE

Shadows come in a variety of sizes. Despite the efforts of controlling Unbidden to weave flesh for their Minions, many Shadows simply need not be disguised in this way. These Shadows have become adept at not being seen. The type and parameters of this ability vary widely. Some Shadows can become completely invisible while others merely blend in with the surroundings. Some remain completely visible but look so average that no one gives them a second glance. Others can disguise themselves as objects of similar dimensions.

INSUBSTANTIAL

As creatures of both Essence and Flesh, Shadows can often ignore the physical laws of the Flesh. Shadows with this power can remain insubstantial in the realm of the Flesh. Sometimes this ability is permanent, in which case the Shadow cannot directly affect the physical world unless it possesses another special power that allows it to do so (like the Athkar's illusion ability, for instance). Some Shadows, however, can only become insubstantial for short periods of time. This allows them to pass through a barrier or avoid a blow but little else.

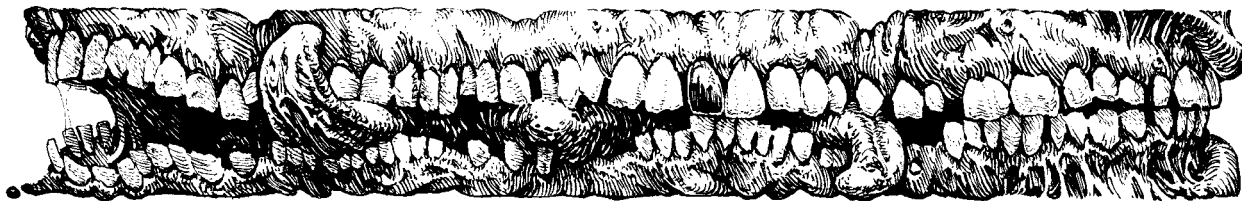
MIMICRY

Most Awakened Shadows spend eons observing mortals from Neitherspace. Although their memories for detail are not good, they can sometimes learn to mimic actions that they have seen repeatedly. Mimics are better at passing themselves off as human than other Shadows, but their Mimicry is purely mechanical. This lack of intuitive understanding can be a significant limitation. For example, a Mimic might be able to figure out how to drive a car, but if the car breaks down, it will have no idea what to do.

PRESTIDIGITATION

Shadows with this power have the ability to make small things disappear. No one really knows where the items go, although many believe they are somehow transported into the Rift. Wherever the items go, they can come back if the Shadow so chooses. Usually, these disappearances are merely a nuisance, and the missing items turn up in a day or two. However, more than one mortal has found his gun suddenly empty of bullets. The Shadow usually needs to touch the object, but rare Shadows can use this power at a range.





MOVEMENT POWERS

Most Awakened Shadows can move with preternatural swiftness. Unlike the Stalker's Translocation power, these abilities tend to be more limited and usually cost Vitality.

The limitations inherent in movement powers are determined by the nature of the ability. For example, a Shadow that can travel through electrical wires can only go where the wires lead it.

More straightforward abilities like teleportation and flying should have shorter ranges and/or increased Vitality cost. Challenge rolls may also be required.

Following are several different ways for Shadows to get from place to place.

BURROWING

Creatures of the Flesh move over solid surfaces, but some creatures of Essence can move through them as easily as mortals can swim. The rate and method of travel depend on the creature in question. In general, a Shadow can Burrow as quickly as a mortal can walk. To Burrow more quickly or to burrow through large or dense objects should cost 1 Vitality per minute of travel. The aftermath of a Burrower varies as well. If the Shadow simply passes through earth, it leaves no trace. However, some Shadows leave a tunnel behind them.

HOUNDING

This ability allows the Minion to keep up with any creature of the Flesh, regardless of how fast it moves or what tools it is using. A Hounding Minion can pursue a running man just as easily as someone in a speeding car or even in a plane (though it would have to wait for the plane to land unless it could fly). There is always a condition such as exposure to direct sunlight or crossing running water that will force it to give up the chase. Certain powers of the Unseen such as Translocation can also be used to evade a Hound.

FLOATING / FLYING

In the Neitherworld where they are spawned, Shadows float weightlessly through the mists of formlessness. It is not surprising, then, that many Awakened Shadows manifest some trace of the ability to fly. Clumsy Flyers have to take a Complex Action to fly so they cannot fight or use most of their other abilities while airborne. Balanced Flyers can only stay airborne for short periods of time which is reflected by a cost of 1 Vitality point for every round they remain airborne after the first.

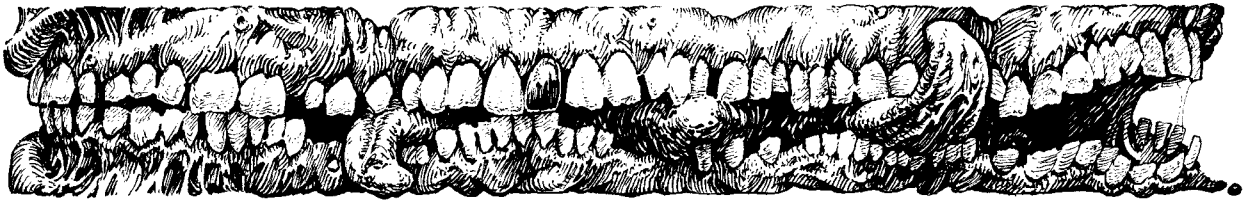
SHIMMERSHIFTING

A few creatures of Essence maintain some measure of temporal freedom when they are Awakened or Bound. This dangerously unpredictable ability allows them to move more quickly by skipping across the surface of the Chronosphere. Each attempt requires a Complex Action and costs 1-6 points of Vitality. At the end of the round, the creature vanishes into the timestream. It reappears 1-6 rounds later, having moved at 1-6 times its normal speed during that time in any direction it desires.

SPRINTING

Some Shadows can temporarily straddle Dream and Rift. This allows them to move at many times their normal speed for short periods of time. Of course, this power has its limitations. While between worlds, the Shadow is less than formless and cannot attack or even affect beings in either domain. Some Shadows are quite gifted at Sprinting, able to remain formless for miles, while others are only able to use their ability for short bursts of speed—often to flee an opponent. The degree to which Sprinting accelerates movement varies.





SPECIAL DEFENSES

The monstrous forms of many Shadows give them special defenses. This can be actual armor, a chitinous shell, or a leathery hide. Unlike invulnerabilities, this protection is good against all physical attacks.

A gamemaster has a lot of latitude when designing the effect. The most common special defense is increased Fortitude. Shadows can also be given points of defense. These points are subtracted from the damage roll of an attack before it is compared to Fortitude. Die caps are another possibility. Some of these defenses, especially armor, may decrease in effectiveness after absorbing large amounts of damage.

REGENERATION

This ability gives a Minion the power to mend its Vessel. Some will simply recover Vitality, but Regeneration usually requires the intake of Essence. The consumption of human blood or flesh is a common way for Shadows to heal themselves. Some have more esoteric requirements such as the extreme display of emotions like fear and hate. No more than five Vitality should be regained from each use of this ability. If the power may be used in combat, only 1 or 2 points should be Regenerated.

INVULNERABILITY

Shadows with this ability can ignore attacks that would leave a mortal crippled. Their supernatural origin gives them immunity to certain types of attacks. Some choices include bullets, swords, Rend attacks, and claws. The invulnerability can be represented in a number of ways. The Shadow may have increased defenses against the attack in question or modified Die Caps can be used. Alternately, a Shadow may be completely immune. In this case, no game mechanic is needed as its resistance is total.

ARMOR

Armor gives extra defense against all attacks. There are two levels of Armor. Basic Armor subtracts points from the opponent's Damage roll before dividing by Fortitude and should be rated between 5 and 15 points. Powerful Armor subtracts points after the roll has been divided, and should never be more than 5 points (and then only for the toughest Shadows). Armor may always be present or may cost Vitality to use. It is also possible for a Shadow to have some Armor that can be made more stalwart through the expenditure of Vitality.

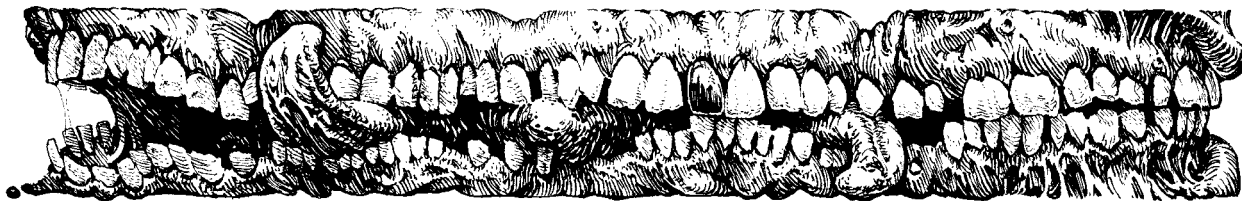
REDUNDANCY

Shadows with this ability have redundant body parts and organs. As the Shadow takes Damage, parts of its body are hacked away, leaving bloody stumps and gaping sores, but the Shadow remains undaunted. This ability can be simulated by giving the Shadow additional Vitality that cannot be used to feed other abilities. In a more powerful manifestation, every time the Shadow is damaged, there is a chance (1 in 6, 1 in 2, etc.) that the damage is done to a redundant part. The part is hewn away, but the Shadow loses no Vitality.

PHASING

The Shadow is able to vibrate in and out of existence. Its opponents are confounded by this, as sometimes their blows affect it and sometimes they do not. This can be simulated by raising the Shadow's Defend attribute, or every time the Shadow is hit, there is a chance (as Redundancy) that the Shadow is not present for the blow. In a lesser version, the Shadow is hit, but with a Die Cap (usually -1, but sometimes as high as -3). Phasing costs one or more Vitality per round of use, depending upon its strength.





COMBAT ABILITIES

Shadows are sometimes very difficult to reason with, and some desire nothing more than the destruction of all they see. Shadows often have abilities that make them particularly dangerous in combat. These are the Shadows most often Bound by the Unbidden.

Combat abilities vary between those that grant extra dice of damage or extra points of Attack in specific circumstances, and those that the Shadow must forfeit its other attacks to use. It is rare for combat abilities to cost Vitality, but those that do are quite powerful indeed.

Following are several suggestions for effective combat abilities.

COMBINATION

The Shadow has one or more primary attack forms and a special attack that may only be used if the prerequisite primary attack or attacks hit. For example, a creature that fights with five tentacles and a vicious bite may only attempt to bite if it hits with three of its five tentacle attacks. The Combined attack usually does more Damage than the base attacks. In some cases, if the Shadow has hit with the prerequisite attack or attacks it automatically inflicts additional damage.

CONCENTRATE

Shadows with this ability and multiple low-damage attacks may forgo their multiple attacks to make a single powerful blow which is usually made with a reduced Attack score, but with enhanced Damage. Depending upon the force of the blow, the Attack may take a round of preparation and may also knock opponents senseless, blow them back, or even force opponents to make a Fortitude Challenge or be liquified, incinerated, or otherwise destroyed. The most powerful of these attacks should cost Vitality.

ASSAULT

Some Shadows can directly attack the minds of their victims. Mental Assaults do damage like any other attack, but mortal victims defend with their Resolve instead of their Defend Attribute, and Stalkers defend with their Willpower Attribute. Most Shadows who have this power have to see their victims to Assault them, but some can project the attack over great distances if they have tasted the blood of their victim first. Projected Assaults always cost several points of Vitality.

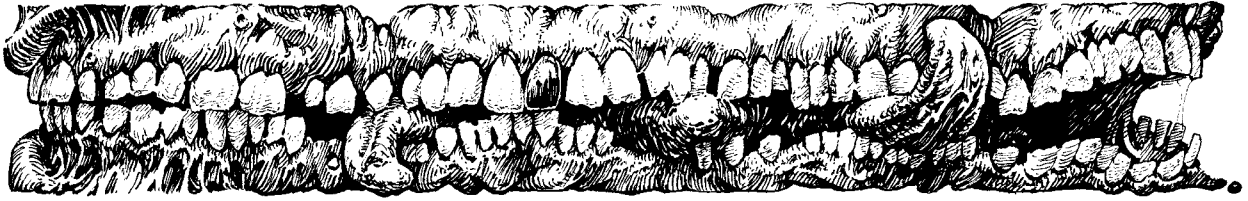
BELEAGUER

Shadows with this power have one or more attack forms that inflict damage for more than one round. For instance, an acid spray could cause 4D Damage when it hits and an additional 2D Damage each round for the following 3 rounds. These attacks almost always cost a point of Vitality to use. Lingering attacks that cause more than a couple of dice of residual damage are exceptionally dangerous and opponents should be given an opportunity to avoid the after-effects with a Fortitude or Willpower Challenge roll.

BLAST

The Shadow may attack at a Range by shooting quills from its body, hurling objects from the surrounding area, etc. Of course, the Shadow is affected by the Law of Proximity and suffers a -1 Die Cap against creatures of Essence. The Blast may be more or less powerful than the Shadow's base physical attack, and it is possible for a creature with this ability to have more than one Blast attack. Multiple attacks should be made with low Damage and reduced Attack according to the number of attacks used.





Confounded by the insidious power of the Veil, Doctor Campbell had misdiagnosed the young lawyer's affliction, attributing his ill health to a lifelong nicotine addiction. The enemy watched and waited, arranging for his unwitting pawn to gain power and influence. Had we not interfered, Blake would have made it to Congress. When we confronted him, the candidate collapsed, coughing up dark clots of foul blood. Something slipped wetly out of his distended mouth and slithered across the carpet like a snake. It had been living in his chest cavity for months and was all too eager to be free...

SECOND SKIN - WEAVING THE HUSK

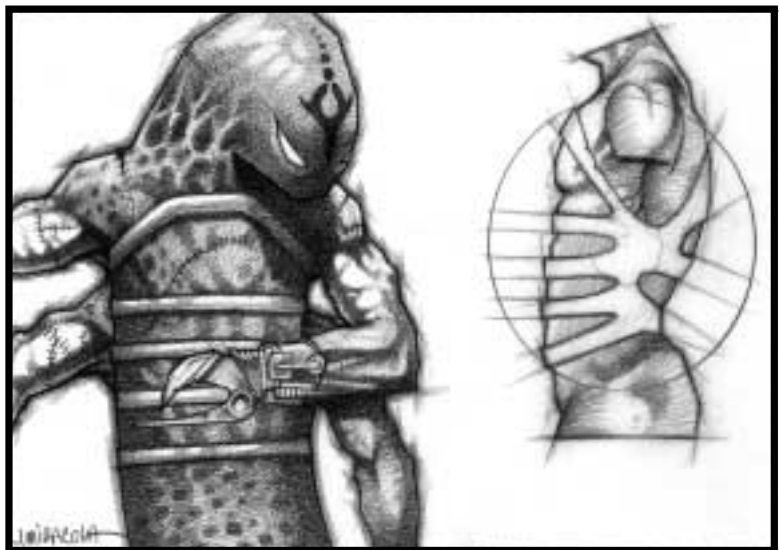
Minions are the most powerful servants of the Unbidden, but their monstrous appearance makes them useless for tasks that require interaction with the mortal world. The solution is the creation of Husks, shells that disguise the creatures as humans or mundane animals. The disguise need not be perfect so long as the Minion can be made to approximate another form, the power of the Veil will do the rest.

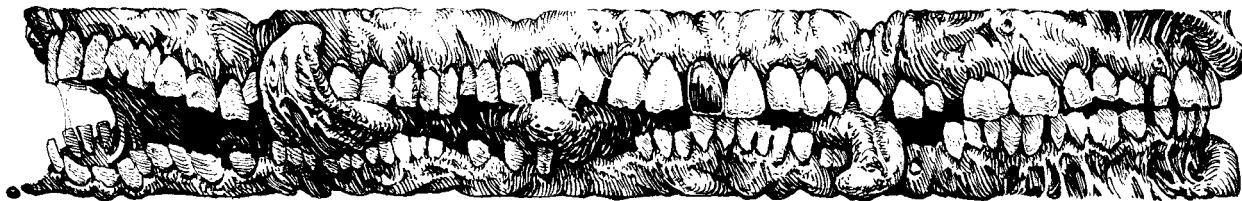
Husks can be made out of anything; wood and leather have been used with some success, but they are most convincing when constructed from the remains of the creature the Unbidden hopes to imitate.

The remains of the chosen creature are usually hollowed out to create a cavity for the Minion. Unless the Unbidden is very powerful indeed, the Husk will

have to be arranged in such a manner that the Minion's sensory organs can peer out.

Turning a corpse into a Husk can leave the body too fragile to be of much use, but it is a simple matter to strengthen the shell. In the modern world duct tape or ace bandages will do the trick. More durable reinforcement can be offered by commercially available splints and therapeutic braces.





The process of reinforcement can be taken to the extreme where the Unbidden bolts armor plating to its servants. This can increase their Fortitude or add points of Armor that are subtracted from the damage of all attacks, but they make the Husk less useful as a disguise.

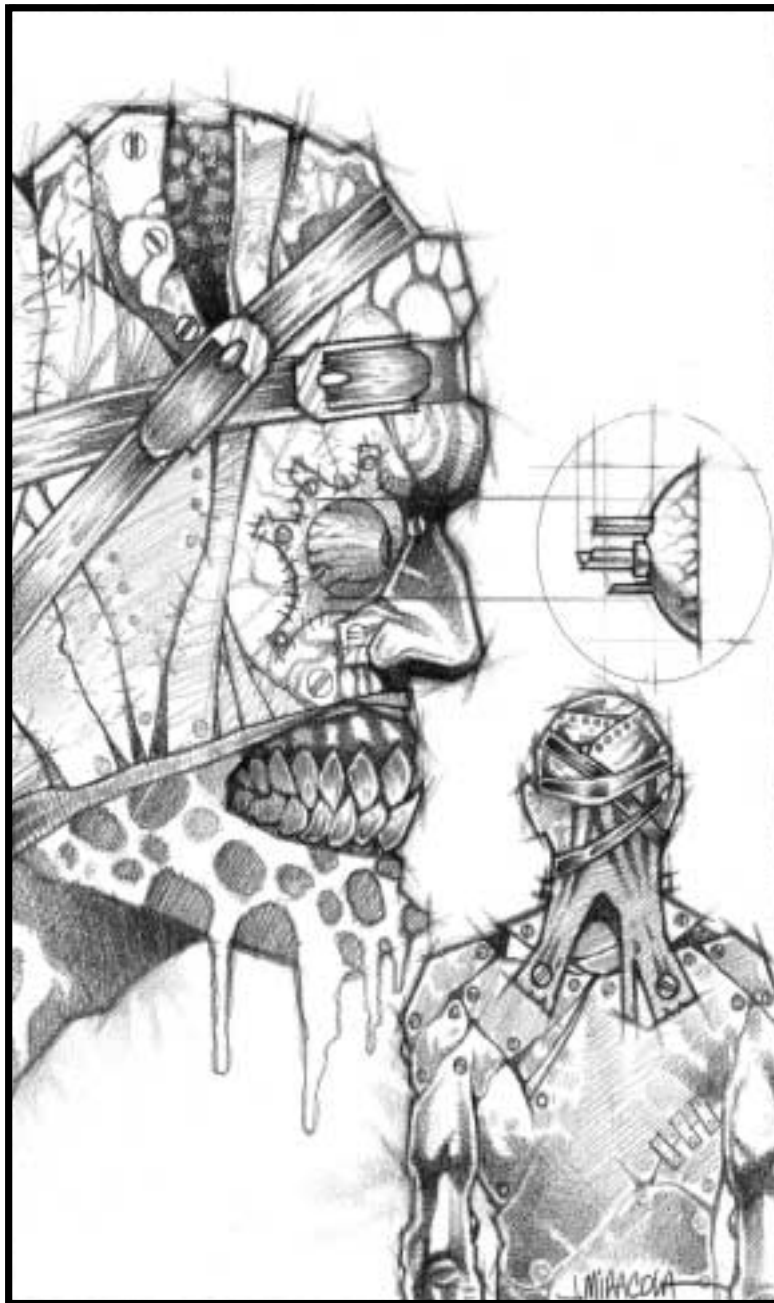
If the Minion will fit easily into the Husk, it is simply placed in the cavity and sewn, strapped, or bolted in. Unfortunately, the fit is seldom this good; weaving Husks is usually a messy business.

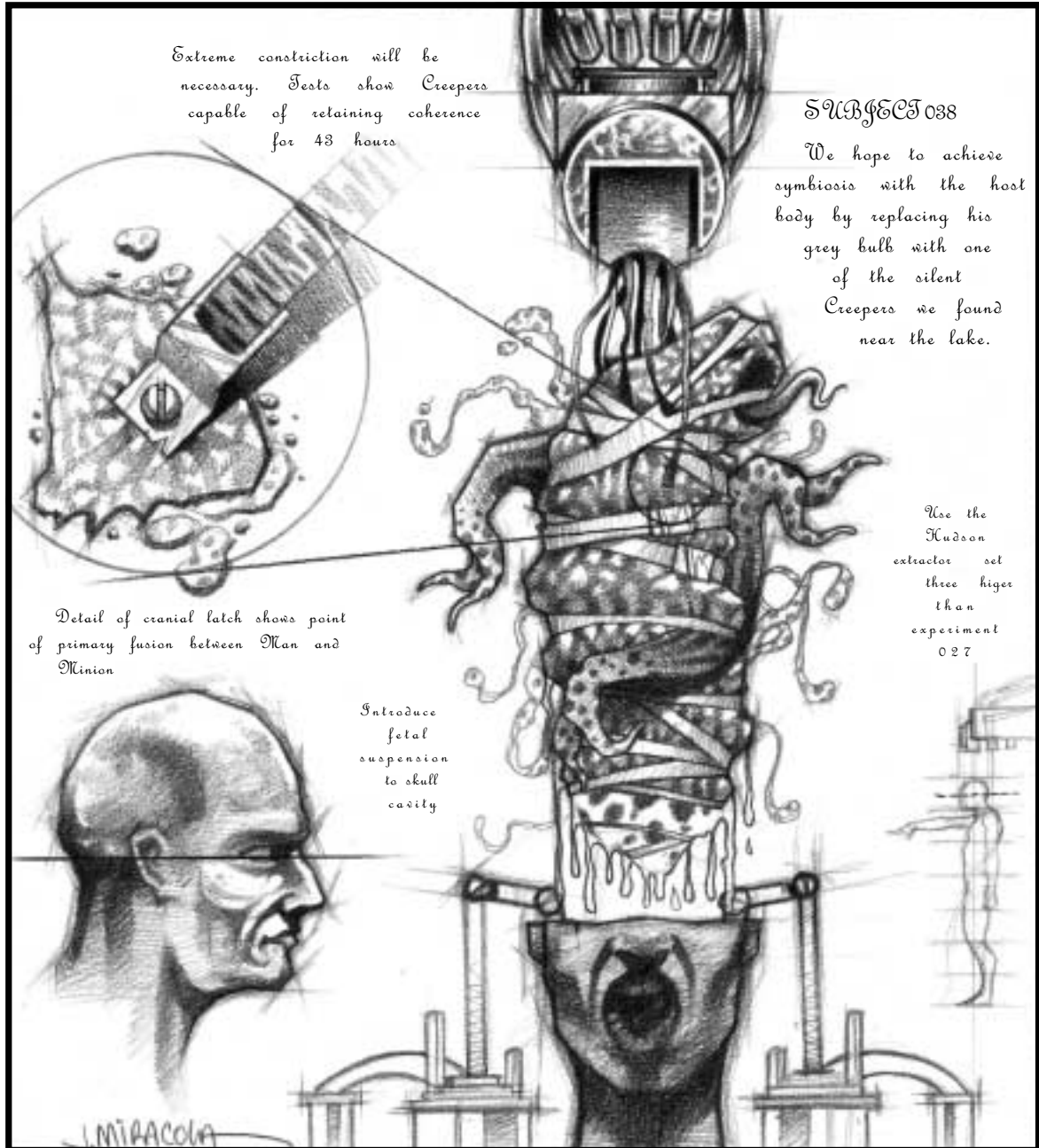
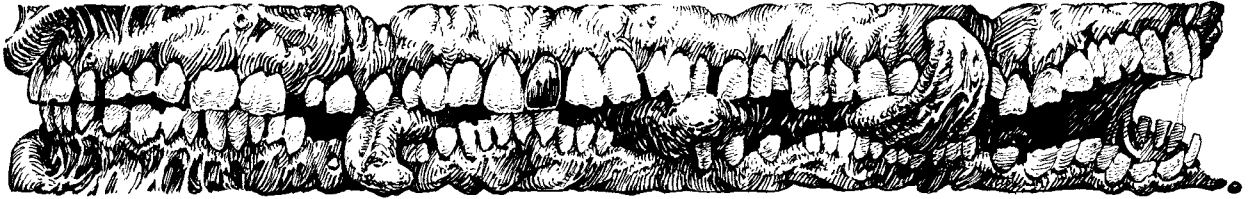
When the Unbidden are faced with the creation of Husks for many Minions, they will sometimes construct elaborate machines to deal with "installing" the creatures into their mundane shells.

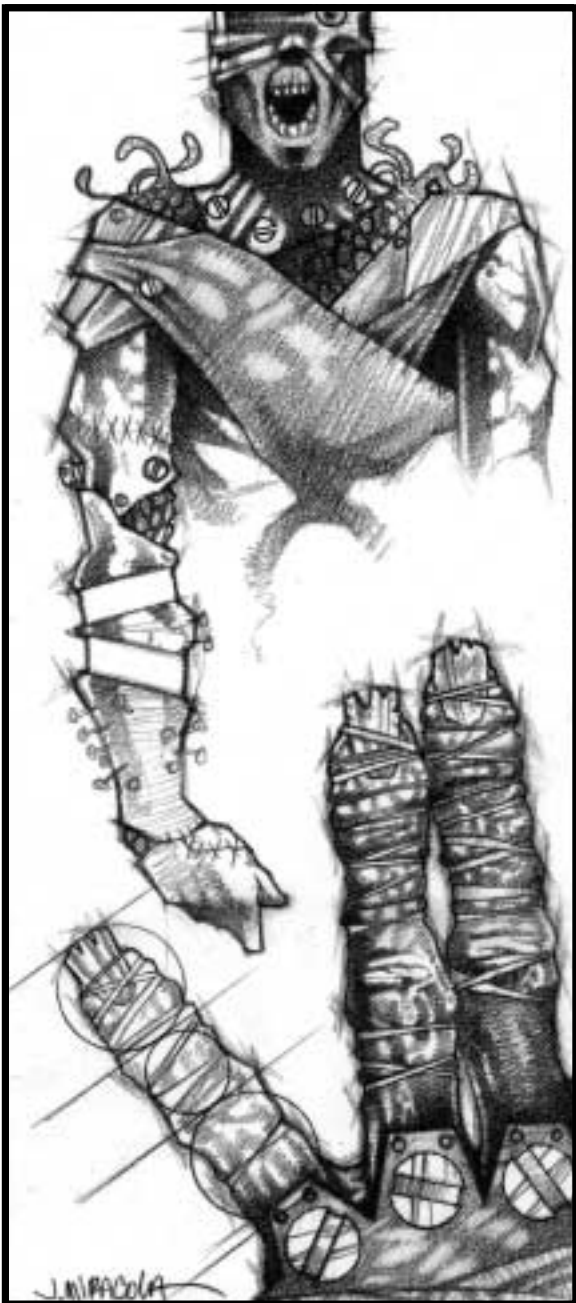
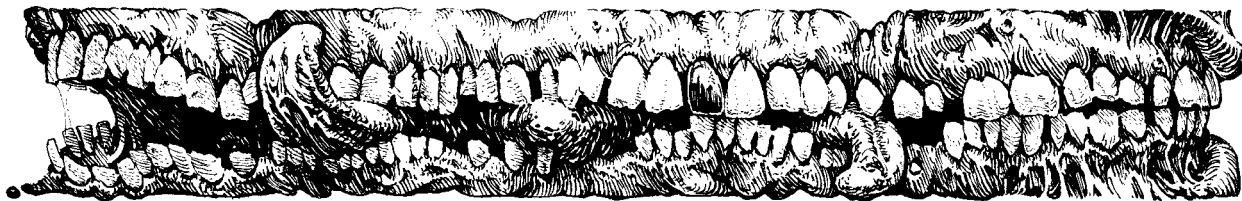
In its most basic form, the Husk does nothing but disguise the Minion. It does not grant sensory input or any physical capabilities. In effect, the Husk is like a costume the creature wears. The shell moves when the creature inside moves and limbs that are not attached to the horror within will dangle lifelessly.

• VULGAR HUSKS

Not all Husks are created with deception in mind. Since Minions often serve as the soldiers of the Unbidden their master may be more concerned with making them than disguising them. Vulgar Husks usually resemble bizarre suits of primitive armor made of unlikely materials. They give the Minion extra Fortitude or Vitality at the cost of lowered Initiative and Defend Attributes. Some even give the creature extra attacks or attack forms.







RESHAPING THE VESSEL

Minions come in all shapes and sizes, but those that are the most useful to the Unbidden tend to have monstrous proportions. Constructing a Husk for these massive creatures requires surgical brutality which is quite painful for them, but some success is possible.

• CONSTRICTION

As the name implies, Constriction is a technique that involves tightly binding the Vessel to make it conform to the Husk. Anything sturdy will do the job. Leather straps are most common. They are tightened like belts, rivited together and anchored to the creature with nails and screws.

Constriction is not a permanent affliction, but so long as it is confined, it will be in nearly unbearable pain. This will reduce its Attributes by 1 to 3 points each depending on the extent of the Constriction and how long it has been subjected to this cruel bondage.

One potential danger of using this technique is the long-term effects on the Minion's sanity. The unrelenting agony caused by severe Constriction is maddening and will eventually turn all but the most strong willed creatures into raving beasts.

• MUTILATION

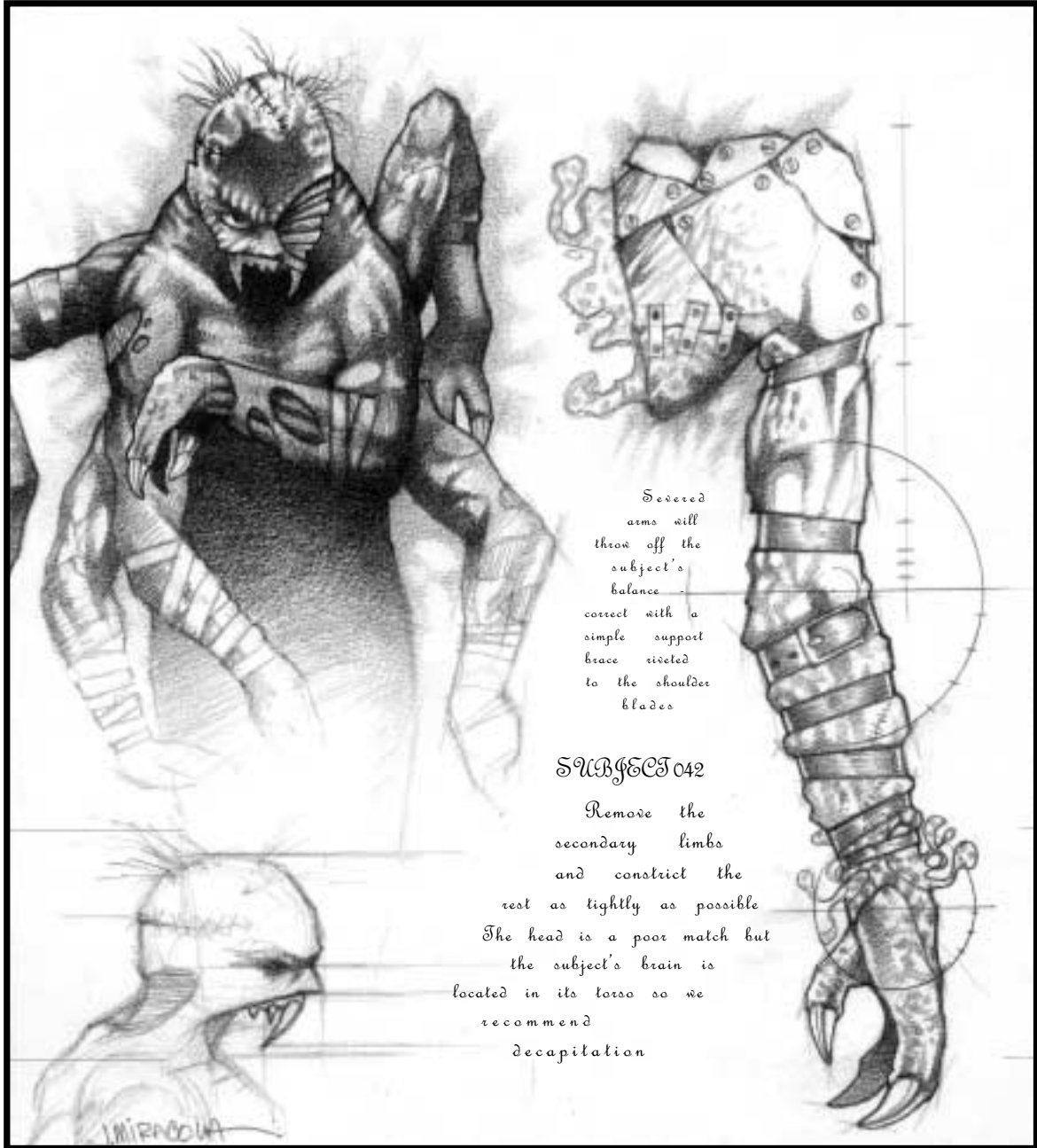
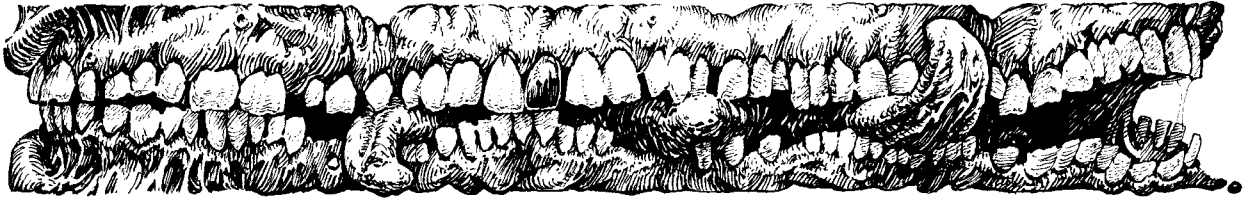
Many Minions have Vessels so bizzare or enormous that they cannot be Constricted enough to fit into a useful Husk. One option is Mutilation, which requires the removal of unwanted limbs and redundant organs.

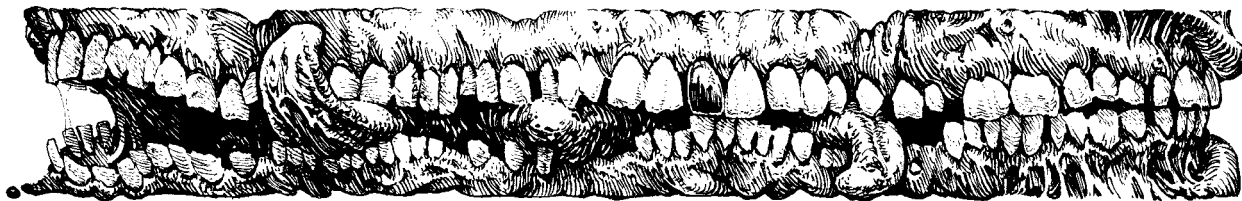
Mutilation will permanently reduce the Minion's Vitality by whatever proportion best reflects the extent of the operation. If the changes are minor, the creature will only lose a couple of points, but extensive surgery could reduce its Vitality to as low as half its initial value.

This technique is an efficient solution but will often reduce the effectiveness of the Minion. For example, if the Unbidden removes limbs to make a creature fit in a human shell, it cannot use them to attack when it emerges.

More extreme procedures are possible but will result in Minions with limited usefulness. For example, a flying Minion with a good Perceive could be stripped of its wings so it could fit into a dog. Effectively parapalegic, it could not fight properly, but it is still a useful spy.







VITAL HUSKS

Not all Husks are inert. Some Architects learn techniques that allow them to create a living Husk for their Minions. Because they require extraordinary Essence, these are Strenuous actions which take several days to complete and cost at least 1 point of Vitality that cannot be recovered for a week or more.

• PARASITIC VIOLATION

If you want something to look like a human being, the best way to do it is to put it inside a living human body. This procedure is difficult because humans are incredibly complex organisms whose vital systems are hard to maintain in the face of such profound infestation.

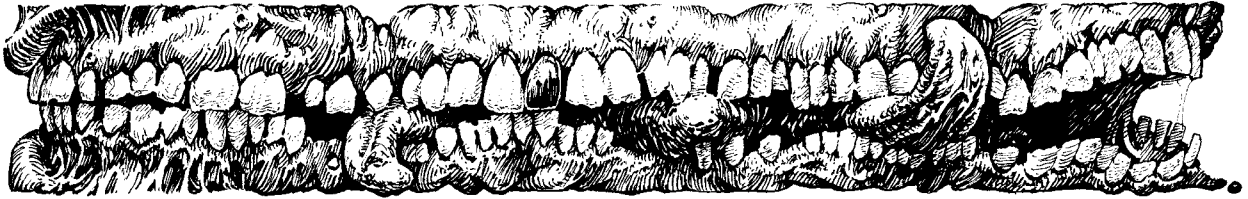
It is possible for an Architect of exceptional skill only to implant a Minion in a living host without them knowing it. This is exceedingly rare but has many possible uses.

In most cases, the Minion simply "rides" its host until something causes it to emerge, usually a prearranged trigger of some sort. It is also possible to create more advanced symbiotic states where the Minion can use the host's sensory apparatus or even parts of its brain.

• CONSTRUCTS

Vital Husks can also be crafted by renegade Aesthetics who have learned how to bestow inert constructs with Essence, giving them a semblance of life. This technique opens the door to some terrifying possibilities such as steel Husks, living weapons, and "Russian Doll" monsters.





TERITH KHALL (FIEND)

Fortitude	6
Vitality	18
Initiative	15
Defend	15
Perceive	20
Resolve	20

The Terith Khall long to live in the Realm of Flesh but understand many of the dangers inherent in leaving the Rift. By watching the misadventures of other Awakened Shadows, they have learned about the Veil and the Forbiddance so they will only cross over when they

have figured out how to use these Axioms to their advantage. What they do not understand is the true nature of the Dream so they resent what they believe to be profound freedoms mortal man takes for granted.

Drawn to large communities with vulnerable or accessible governments, the Fiend observes quietly for years at a time. When it has figured out the power structure of the society it is observing, the creature simply wills itself to Awaken. Disguised by its mastery, the interloper will try to assume a vital but relatively ubiquitous role in the community. The Fiend must be very careful, or the Forbiddance will destroy it before it can work itself into the fabric of the Dream. As it gains power, the Fiend will become more strident, abusing its authority to sate its lust for the things of the Flesh. Corruption incarnate, the Terith Khell will slowly undermine the system it is exploiting. The Fiend's influence has caused the collapse of a church, several kingdoms and at least one Empire.

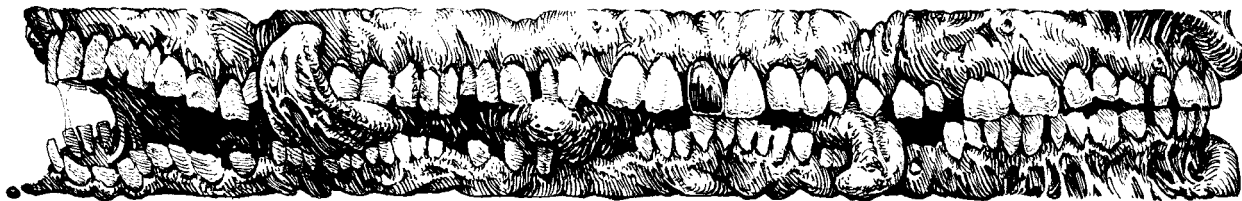
Over the course of centuries these Terith Khall learn how to manipulate the Veil, an ability which allows them to appear human without the benefit of a Husk. Fiends who have been Awakened for a decade or more can shape the Mask, determining how they will be perceived. Behind the Mask, the Fiend is a wild-eyed creature with a serpent's mouth and clawed hands.

The Unbidden rarely seek out Fiends to serve as Minions. The Terith Khall are exceptionally strong willed and forcing them into servitude is too difficult to be worth the effort. However, the Terith Khall make excellent allies. If there is an Awakened Fiend near the Lair of the Unbidden, the two will almost certainly come to some sort of "arrangement."

COMBAT: Fiends will try to hide behind an "Honor Guard" of Inspired Mortal Thralls equipped with swords or long knives. If the creature must fight, it can strike twice each round with its Claws (Attack 13, 4D Damage).

SPECIAL ABILITIES : By manipulating mortal societies, the Fiend forces the Forbiddance to protect it. When this happens, the creature can only be destroyed if its influence is subverted.





MAZZLER (UNDINE)

Fortitude	* 3 / 5	A Shadow only seen by man when
Vitality	* 6 / 10	he settles the oceans of the Earth, the
Initiative	* 10 / 12	Mazzler wanders the waters of the
Defend	* 8 / 14	world, observing the aquatic life. An
Perceive	* 15 / 8	Undine sometimes crosses into the
Resolve	* 18 / 14	Flesh when a mortal dies by

drowning. The thrashing of the victim attracts its attention, luring it so close that it is breathed in and Awaken in the lungs of the corpse.

Once the human host has suffocated and expired, the Undine inhabits its vital fluids, giving the Shadow control of the host and the human a new sort of life. In this state, they are almost impossible to detect, even by Sensitive Mortals, although any basic medical examination will prove that the body is, in fact, dead.

Unfortunately for the Shadow, its host will eventually decompose, forcing it to mingle the host's fluids with another living mortal so that it may take a new body. When speaking, Undines sound as if they are congested with a bad cold, and when pressure is exerted on the skin, water will ooze from its pores.

Unbidden who find themselves near a large body of water often recruit Undines as Minions. When this happens, the creature will either be left in its water form for use as a guardian, or the Unbidden will place it inside a mortal host of its choosing. Within a host Vessel, these Shadows are used to observe mortal enemies and recruit new Thralls.

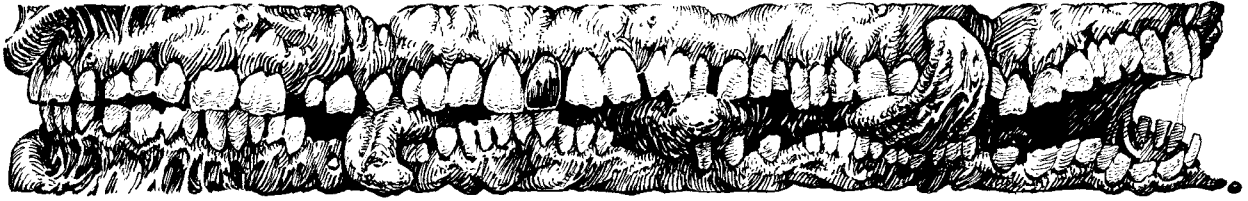
COMBAT: Drown (Attack 18, 7D Damage, only when Undine is in water and outside of a host, only versus opponents unable to breathe underwater) Punch (Attack 10, 2D Damage, only when Undine is in a host).

SPECIAL ABILITIES : Perfect Husk (Undines wear the skins of mortals they consume.) Breathe Underwater (both in water form and when within a host)

VULNERABILITIES : If host is destroyed, the Undine will drain out of the body and flow back into the Rift unless it is underwater at the time. For this reason, Undines will seek out water when forced to fight.

* First set of Attribute values is for Undine within a host. Second set is for Undines in water form.





REKIR NOCH (WILL-O-THE-WISP)

Fortitude	2
Vitality	10
Initiative	20
Defend	18
Perceive	20
Resolve	8

At home in neither Rift nor Dream, the Will-O-The-Wisp is a reclusive Shadow that seeks refuge in the heavy woods and murky swamps of the Flesh where it may contemplate its lonely existence. When a creature of the Flesh happens upon its hiding

place, the Wisp gives off a bright light to warn the creature to leave it alone as it flies away. All too often, the intruder becomes intrigued by the spectral luminescence and pursues. This continues until the panic stricken Shadow is cornered. It then Awakens, turns on the creature, and kills it. This done, the Wisp is overcome with grief at its own ferocity, abandons the Flesh, and goes even deeper into seclusion.

In the post-industrial age, these creatures are periodically Awakened because their woodland homes are being destroyed. When this happens, they lose their melancholy disposition and become quite ferocious. There are several Enlightened Orders devoted to preserving the wilder lands to quiet the Shadows who dwell there. One of these orders inspired the 17th century neo-Druidical sect known as the "Green Daughters."

An Awakened Wisp is more insect than animal. Thick hairs and bands of black chitin sheathe its snakelike body. With more legs than can be counted at a glance; thin, gauzy wings; and humanoid eyes, the Flesh forms of these creatures provide a stark contrast to the ephemeral beauty of their natural state.

Because Will-O-The-Wisps are so reclusive, it is rare that an Unbidden will be able to find one to Bind. When they are available, they can be quite useful. Their small size and keen sight make them excellent spies and sentries. Fitting a Wisp to a Husk is a simple matter as they fit easily into the skull of a small bird, concealing everything but the strange intensity of the eyes.

COMBAT

Mandible (Attack 18, 2D Damage) If Mandible hits, victim must make a Fortitude Challenge of 10, or he is Poisoned by its ichor for an additional 6D Damage (-1 Die Cap to Stalkers and other creatures of Essence).

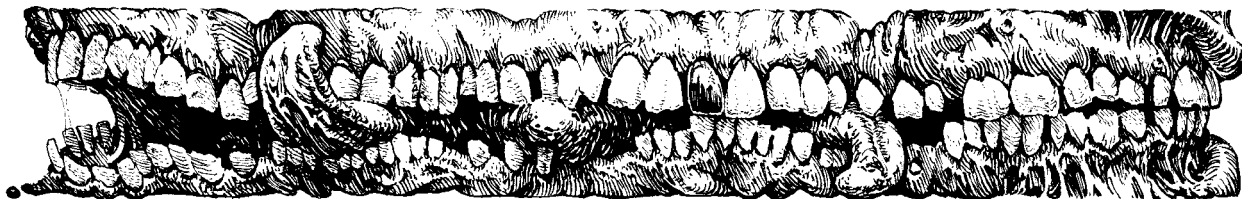
SPECIAL ABILITIES

Will-O-The-Wisps can Fly.

VULNERABILITIES

Wisps will not fight unless cornered or bound to serve as a Minion, its Unbidden master is within sight, and has given it a direct order.





MITKEL ET ABREAN (SLOTH)

Fortitude	14	Abberations of the modern world,
Vitality	20	these creatures can usually be found
Initiative	2	watching the advanced research
Defend	10	laboratories and computer facilities
Perceive	18	mortal man has constructed in a vain
Resolve	16	effort to define his world. Fascinated

by the science of lies, the Abrean are brilliant Shadows that are nearly insubstantial while their Essence still resides in the Rift, giving them the appearance of a thin, greenish liquid.

Occasionally, an Abrean will become so fascinated by one of the experiments it witnesses that it will Awaken in an effort to lend a hand. Upon entering the Flesh, the creature's fluid form acquires a muddy viscosity, turning it into a thick puddle that moves with terrible deliberation. This substance emits strange vapors that cling to exposed skin and are hardened by Essence and intense emotions (such as fear) encasing any mortals in the area in a dark resin that is as tough as stone.

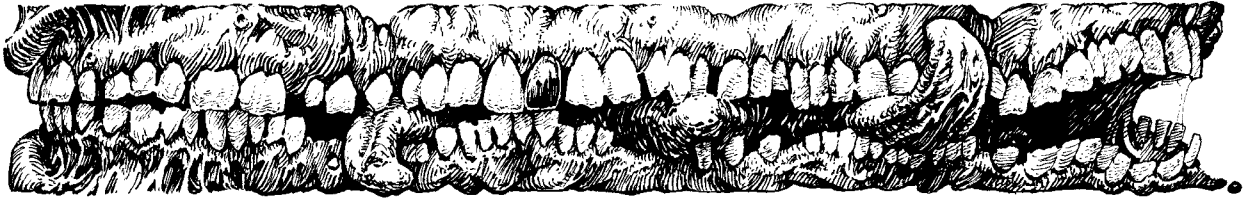
Once trapped in the Flesh, Sloths become bitter and angry Shadows indeed. They bemoan their foolishness at having crossed the Rift and consider their nearly immobile form punishment for their folly.

The Unbidden seek out these Shadows and take them as Minions whenever possible. Since they rarely move, Sloths may be placed inside inanimate objects such as statues or pillars or even in walls. With sufficient ventilation, they can exude their otherworldly poisons, allowing them to act as guardians without exposing themselves. Sloths who are bound as Minions bear a deep-seated hatred toward their Unbidden masters for imprisoning them, but they hate immobility even more so will never return from the Rift to exact vengeance.

COMBAT: Petrifying Vapors (Encase any mortal or creature of Essence bound to a Vessel who fails a Strength Challenge against a Difficulty of 10 in stony resin making it impossible to move or take any Significant Action. The resin takes 1-6 minutes to remove and inflicts 6 D Damage on the victim no matter how it is done.) Petrifying Touch (Any creature vulnerable to the Vapors who makes a melee attack against the Sloth has to make a Strength Challenge against a 12 to resist being encased.)

VULNERABILITIES : Sloths move only when necessary, and when they do, they move so slowly they can only travel a few feet every hour.





U'GLANN (DREADWOLF)

Fortitude	7	The Dreadwolf has been called many things but most call it Werewolf, thinking it is a man who becomes a wolf. However, there is no man in the Shadow called the Dreadwolf. When a mortal desires revenge for some wrong committed against him so
Vitality	22	
Initiative	14	
Defend	15	
Perceive	10	
Resolve	18	acutely that he performs the Ritual of Vengeance in the full of the moon, he will likely Awaken a Dreadwolf. Dreadwolves cannot be reasoned with and strike no bargains. They lust only for mayhem and blood.

The Dreadwolf looks like a creature of legend -- a humanoid wolf that runs on its hind legs. However, the Dreadwolf has three arms, each ending in razor-sharp talons with which it may tear free tasty organs and pry open ribcages to access the delicious hearts of its prey. Unlike legends, a Dreadwolf is not especially harmed by silver, belladonna or wolfsbane and will not turn into a man when killed. In fact, Dreadwolves are impossible to kill with mortal implements and can only be destroyed by other creatures of the Essence.

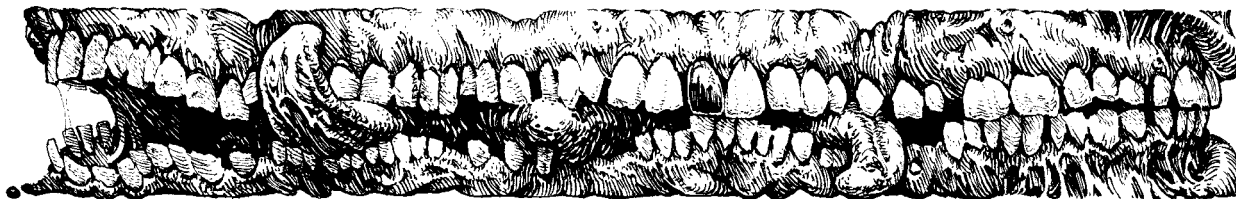
Unbidden find it difficult to Bind Dreadwolves but will often make the effort to obtain a warrior of such power. The only problem is the creature's bestial nature makes it unsuitable for complicated tasks. A Dreadwolf fits best in a human Husk, but when it has to fight, it will tear off its Husk and leap into combat, a process which resembles a man transforming into a wolf.

COMBAT: 3 Claw Attacks (Attack 14, 4D Damage each), 1 Bite Attack (Attack 12, 5D Damage)

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Invulnerability (Dreadwolves are completely immune to attacks from mortal weapons of any kind. Only creatures of Essence and weapons Imbued with Essence can harm a Dreadwolf), Poison (Any mortal not killed outright by a Dreadwolf's bite will die in 1D hours from the Dreadwolf's poison. Creatures of the Essence take 2D Damage every hour for 1D hours from the poison.)

VULNERABILITIES: Dreadwolves cannot think clearly due to their constant hunger. They are easy to fool. Glamours confuse Dreadwolves, reducing their Defend attribute to 10.





SKERIK TURCH (Mock)

Fortitude	2	Skerik Turch don't much like
Vitality	5	mortals. They believe mortals to be
Initiative	8	weak, stupid, and a waste of Essence.
Defend	8	In fact, they have a deep resentment
Perceive	15	of Stalkers and their efforts to defend
Resolve	6	the Dream which should, according
		to the Mock, be wiped out.

Fortunately for the Flesh, Mock are not powerful creatures. They are weaker than the average Human and certainly pose no threat to Stalkers. The Mock are aware of this, and it fills them with bile. Mock are Awakened whenever they see a chance from the Rift to do a Human harm. If a mortal comes too close to an open window and a Mock is watching, it will Awaken to give him a push. When it has done its murderous mischief, the Mock will flee and hide as best it can, fearful of possible retribution. It is this cautious malevolence that makes these creatures so dangerous. An Awakened Mock can lie in wait for years in hopes of killing or maiming a single mortal.

Awakened Mock walk on four legs, snouts dripping mucus and mouths filled with small, sharp teeth. Their eyes are large and faceted, like those of a fly.

Mock are a dangerous nuisance. Many Stalkers have sent out Trackers to find some sign of the Unbidden or his Minions, only to discover a cowering Mock shouting curses at the Servitors for exposing it. Of course, when uncovered, a Mock will grovel and try to give the Stalkers useful information in the hope that they will not cast them back to the Rift.

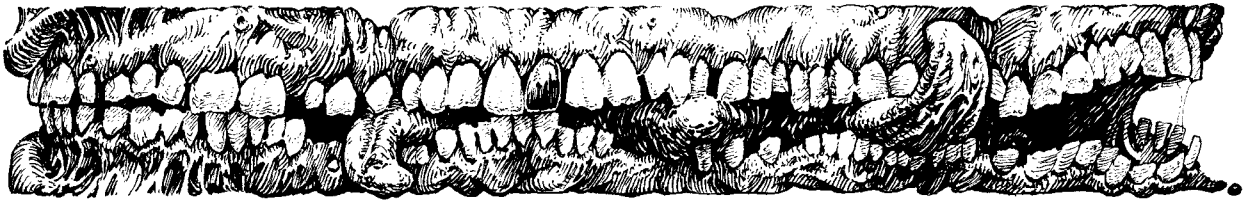
The Unbidden do not bother to take Mock as Minions. However, Strangers often allow the Mock to work for them without Binding, as these Unbidden find it difficult to take too many Minions. If an Unbidden ever bothers to place a Mock within a Husk, that of a dog is most often chosen, although the eyes will appear too large.

COMBAT: Bite (Attack 10, 1D Damage)

SPECIAL ABILITIES : Hide (Mock are very good at concealing themselves – Perception of 15 to spot them)

VULNERABILITIES : Mock are terrible cowards and will either flee from danger or plead not to be cast back to the Rift. They only participate in a stand-up fight if they are given no other choice.





BAKRACAI (DAEMON'S CURSE)

Fortitude	9
Vitality	15
Initiative	9
Defend	15
Perceive	14
Resolve	15

The Daemon's Curse is only roused in times of massive bloodletting but can take generations to die out. Countless Bakracai gorged themselves during the American Civil War, and those in Japan during the Second World War were immediately

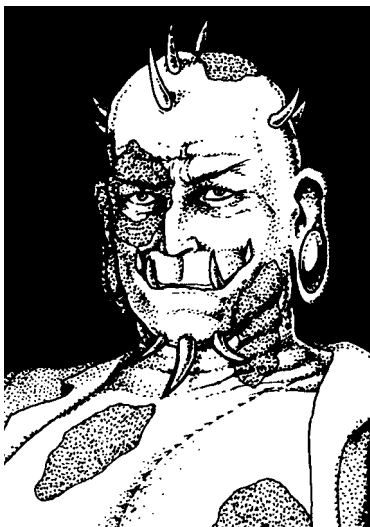
Awakened by the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. By the first half of the Twenty-First Century, these creatures can be found in most major cities, particularly in Ireland and the Middle East.

Awakened Bakracai must feed on emanations of Ambient Essence which has been tainted by violence or their physical form will fade away, and they will slip back into the Rift. The simplest way to ensure a steady supply of these vital energies is to commit acts of inhuman brutality on unsuspecting mortals, but this kind of slaughter is inefficient and risks the wrath of the Forbiddance. The spawn of the Curse find the energy generated by the violence mortals do to one another more fulfilling so will do their best to instigate conflict and will gladly serve those whose policies will lead to bloodshed.

In the Flesh, these creatures manifest as huge beasts with one pair of powerfully muscled arms and two pairs of smaller arms that end in razor sharp talons. Once their larger arms have restrained their prey, they use

their smaller arms to eviscerate the helpless victim. Their powerful legs are too short for their bodies which gives them a peculiar stumbling gait.

The Bakracai are drawn to the Unbidden during the Beast stage and will often serve the renegade until it loses interest in murder. Bound in a human Husk or that of a tiger or bear, the creature will have obvious bulges where its extra arms have been concealed and will reek of fresh blood unless great care is taken to seal the second skin. The first time a Bakracai makes an attack, its Husk will be shredded by its sharp talons and rippling muscles.



COMBAT

Two Primary Arms (Attack 13, 3D Damage each). If a single target is struck by both arms and fails a Dexterity Challenge against a Difficulty of 12, he is held fast, allowing the creature to inflict 6D Damage a round by tearing with its smaller arms. The victim can free himself with a Complex Action and a successful Strength Challenge against a Difficulty of 12.

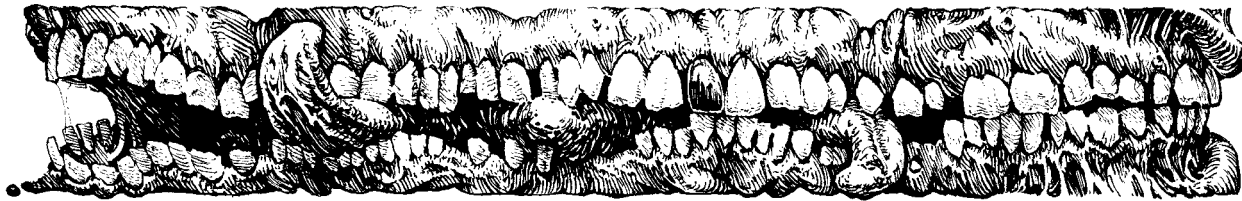
SPECIAL ABILITIES

Its musk entices mortals to commit acts of violence. The presence of one or more Bakracai will make mortals twice as likely to indulge their violent passions. Exposure for more than 3 days can cause insanity in mortals with a Resolve of 9 or less. The touch of these foul creatures will cause any mortal with a violent temperament or Resolve of 11 or less to go into a blind rage and attack the nearest target for 1-6 rounds; Regenerates 1 Vitality for every 3 points of Vitality lost by any mortals within 100 yards.

VULNERABILITIES

It moves more slowly than most mortals can run; Repulsed by children.





CASHTIN (GREYMANTLES)

Fortitude	9	These creatures are fascinated by the process of transformation and are drawn to mortals who shape physical objects without the tools of Essence.
Vitality	9	
Initiative	6	
Defend	13	
Perceive	24	
Resolve	14	They are most impressed with those who transform substances such as iron and stone which seem immutable.

Many Greymantles live in the workshops of sculptors and blacksmiths where they study the craft of their host in silent awe. Cashtin are sometimes Awakened when they witness what they believe to be an actual act of creation. The accomplishment so inspires them that they cross the Rift to try their hand as amateur Aesthetics in the world of men.

As broad as they are tall, Cashtin vary in size but not mass. Most are smaller than man sized and solidly built, but there are specimens as big as a house. Their bodies appear to be hewn from granite, shot with veins of blood like living marble. They are blind to light and color but have an astonishing tactile sensitivity that is ten times more revealing.

Left to their own devices, most Awakened Cashtin begin their time in our world as craftsmen or artists who will happily indulge their creative urges in solitude. They will quickly discover however, that their preferred medium is Essence and using their own life force could destroy them so they will be forced to gather raw materials. Mortals will do, but each life has only a spark of Essence so it would take dozens to shape a single ring. Using Shadows is far more efficient.

Because of their skill at manipulating Essence, Binding a Greymantle is dangerous – only Architects with a Resolve of 20 or better can manage it; the rest have to barter for service. The Unbidden value the tools these creatures can create and will often become their patrons, providing them with all the Essence they could ever want in exchange for weapons. Depending on their size, Cashtin of the right proportions may be placed in human Husks, but they have persistent features that will dissolve and, reappear in a matter of hours making them nearly impossible to disguise.

COMBAT: Hammer or other tool (Attack 13, 4D Damage)

SPECIAL ABILITIES : Imbue with Essence

VULNERABILITIES : Cashtin have difficulty "seeing" flying targets because there is no direct connection to the vibrations they make, effectively reducing its Perceive Attribute by 10 and its Attack and Defend by 5.

CRAFTING ESSENCE

It takes most Cashtin less than a week to figure out that the crude substance of the Flesh is a poor substitute for raw Essence - the uncommon clay used by the Aesthetics to craft the Dream.

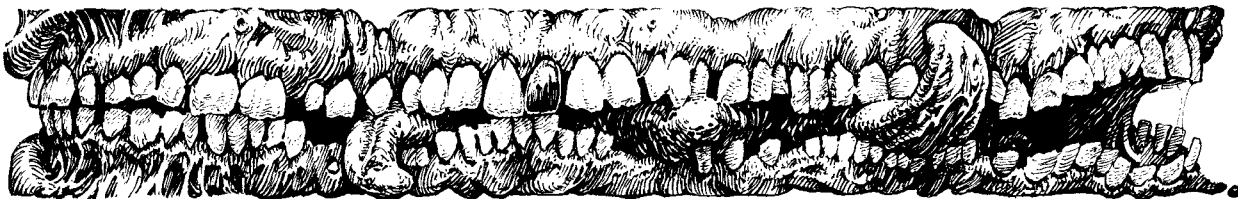
Cashtin can draw the Essence out of dying creatures and give it physical form. The objects it creates with this technique have an otherworldly beauty that can only be appreciated by Sensitives.

With practice, they can learn to breathe life into their creations, imbuing them with strange abilities. These artifacts are always warm to the touch and will tarnish quickly but can be cleaned with blood.

The Unbidden can teach Cashtin to create weapons that are deadly when used against creatures of Essence such as Awakened Shadows and Stalkers.

Cashtin Blades: 4D Damage, +1 Die Cap





YOKU (KEEPER)

Fortitude	5
Vitality	15
Initiative	10
Defend	12
Perceive	16
Resolve	15

The first Yoku appeared shortly after the scribing of Hammurabi's laws. Plentiful during the Golden Age of Athens, Yoku can be found everywhere in the Information Age. They wander the Dream absorbing the accumulated learning of human-

ity. These Shadows value information, no matter how inane or trivial, but as they are unable to remember any detail for long, they seek out books and other repositories of information. When Keepers happen upon a fact of particular interest, they scratch the information into their bodies with their claws.

Yoku are Awakened when something they are studying is destroyed. So many Keepers were Awakened by the burning of the library of Alexandria that the Forbiddance immediately cast them back to the Rift. When Awakened, Yoku continue their travels as before but become more self-aware. Upon their arrival in the Flesh, they choose a name for themselves from the lost material that Awakened them. A few prominent Yoku call themselves Apocrypha, Comedies, and Nixon Tapes. Awakened Yoku also become fiercely protective of the knowledge they pursue, refusing to allow information to be lost or destroyed.

Awakened Keepers have bodies formed from the physical substance of records. A Yoku which has wandered the Flesh for several mortal generations may consist of Clay Tablets, Papyrus Scrolls and CD ROMs. Because Yoku only know what they have read, most do not realize they are Shadows which makes them act strangely for their kind.

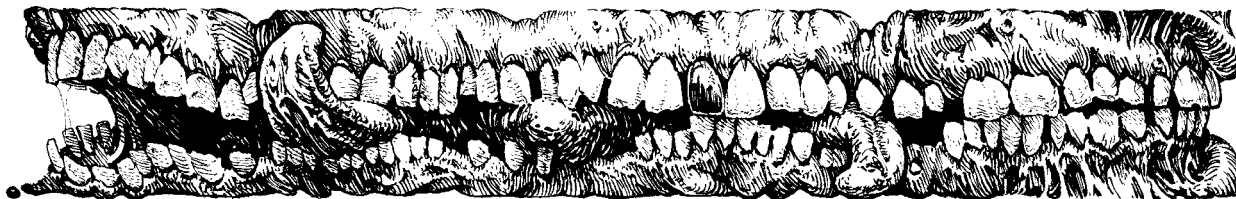
Keepers can only communicate by quoting the information they have gathered. Yoku encountered before the age of radio are unable to speak but can communicate by writing on their bodies. It can be difficult to follow their train of thought, but the Unbidden and Stalkers alike find these Shadows extremely useful in accustoming themselves to a particular era. There are few reasons for a Keeper to be taken as Minion. As the Keepers do not understand their own nature, they are poor Minions at best.

COMBAT: 2 claws (Attack 8, 2D Damage)

SPECIAL ABILITIES : Exceptional knowledge of the mortal world for creatures of Essence

VULNERABILITIES : Become catatonic when confronted with the truth of the Dream.





ELITH TURIKAN (SHADOWMAN)

Fortitude	4	Man has always been afraid of the dark
Vitality	16	for fear of what may lurk in the shadows,
Initiative	15	but man is not alone in his fear of the night.
Defend	11	Shadows have bogey men of their own.
Perceive	10	The Elith Turikan wander through the Rift
Resolve	18	and over the Shadowlands, hunting other
		Shadows for their Essence.

Occasionally, a Shadowman will travel to the Realm of Flesh to hunt for Awakened Shadows. They are Awakened by the discovery of vulnerable prey or if they witness the Awakening of a creature they were hunting. Awakened Turikan draw no sustenance from true creatures of Essence and could be convinced to work with a Circle against the Unbidden in return for the right to feast upon its Minions.

Shadowmen who cross the Rift gain only the merest wisps of substance during the transition and are little more than patches of living darkness. They flow like shadows over the ground and lash out with claws or stingers or snapping mouths from the shadows, dragging their victims into the darkness to be consumed.

The Unbidden consider the Shadowmen menaces because they will feed upon the renegade's Minions if they are not kept at bay. In the rare case that an Unbidden Binds a Shadowman as Minion, the creature will be kept far away from any other Minions and used as assassin or spy. Because of their insubstantial nature, Shadowmen cannot be placed into Husks of any kind.



COMBAT

Lash 3 times against a single target every round (Attack 13, 2D Damage)

If at least 2 Lash attacks hit, victim is Consumed by the darkness. Stalkers may resist if they make a Willpower Challenge against a Difficulty of 13. Those who have been Consumed may not take any action and lose a point of Vitality at the end of every round. Anyone Consumed by the Turikan takes half of any damage it sustains from the use of the Frenzy, Savage or Rend Disciplines. When the creature is Banished or Destroyed anyone trapped within it who is still alive is freed, but those who were killed cannot be recovered by any means.

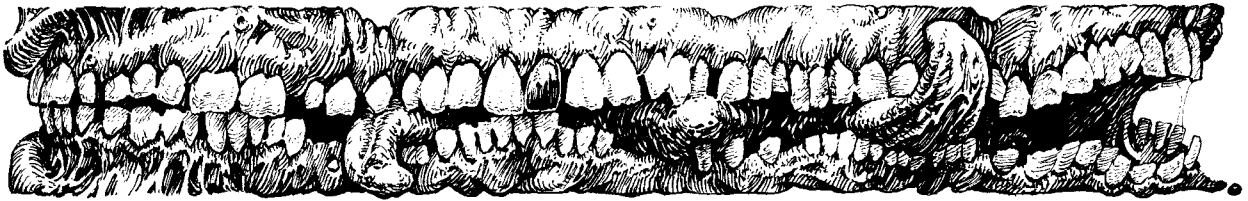
SPECIAL ABILITIES

Insubstantial; can move through solid objects so long as there is a tiny hole to draw its substance through. Nearly Invisible in darkness or shadow (Perception Challenge of 15 or surprised).

VULNERABILITIES

Exposure to bright light inflicts 2D Damage every round. If caught in an area with no shadows, the Turikan is cast back to the Rift.





FERIK (HATE MERCHANTS)

Fortitude	4
Vitality	15
Initiative	12
Defend	12
Percieve	15
Resolve	15

These Shadows are found only after the twelfth century AD. Ferik feed on hate but are unable to instill hatred or to feed off of it directly. Because of this limitation, Ferik cannot simply surround themselves with humans experiencing the nourishing emotion.

Having observed the trading and selling of market economies, the Hate Merchants have mimicked mortal methods to satisfy their desires. Ferik have a network across the Chronosphere of Awakened Hate Merchants, called "Agents." These Agents spend their lives capturing mortals and taking them to their secluded lairs. There they perform an arcane ritual known only to the Ferik which robs the human of his hate, distilling it into a thick, black fluid which the Agents store in jars of bone. Particularly successful Agents collect far more hatred than they alone can possibly consume. Due to this, the Hate Merchants trade the liquid amongst themselves and across to the Rift. The Agents sell the liquid for goods (such as the Keys of a Stalker or weapons Imbued with Essence), the service of other Ferik, and enslaved Shadows. It is possible for an active Agent to become fabulously "wealthy," his lair filled with Essence Imbued items, a retinue of captured Shadows, and numerous Ferik servants.

Although Hate Merchants have the rare ability to cross into the Dream from the Rift at will, they have a strict hierarchy that regulates the number of Agents allowed to operate within the Realm of Flesh.

Ferik who wish to become Agents enter into bidding wars with only the highest bidders finding a new location to set up shop. Of course, any Ferik could surreptitiously cross from the Rift, but if located by an Agent, he will be cast back into the Rift and destroyed for eternity by his vengeful brethren.

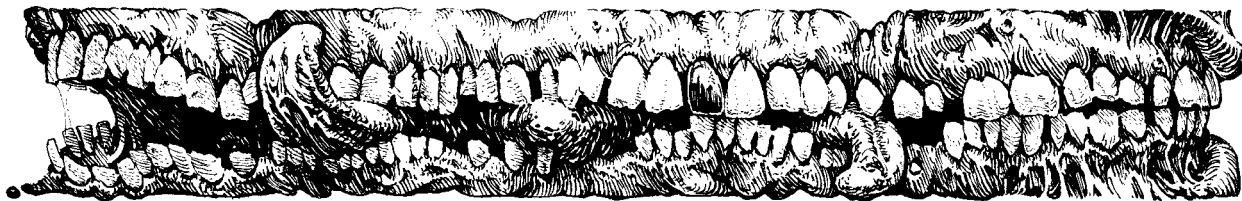
Awakened Ferik wear heavy robes which conceal their features. Beneath the robes, they have long, spindly limbs and large heads with ovular, black eyes. Humans who have been taken by Hate Merchants often remember only the face of their captors, which haunts their dreams.

COMBAT: Punch (Attack 8, 2D Damage) or by Weapon (Wealthy Ferik will not only have powerful Essence Imbued weaponry but also Shadow slaves)

SPECIAL ABILITIES : May Cross between the Rift and the Dream at will; Distill Hate (May perform ritual making any target capable of hatred placid for 1-6 months)

VULNERABILITIES : Will always try to bargain their way out of any situation, even if they are in a strong position.





DARRIENN (GREMLIN)

Fortitude	2
Vitality	8
Initiative	18
Defend	14
Perceive	14
Resolve	10

Gremlins are Shadows of childlike intelligence with a powerful curiosity. Found throughout the world in the post-industrial age, they wander cities and factories looking in unopened boxes and joining with crowds of onlookers, hoping to see something interesting.

So powerful are the fleeting obsessions of the Darrienn that they can be Awakened by just about anything that catches their fancy and cross the Rift several times a day. Unfortunately, they are usually hurled straight back when they get caught up in the gears of some machine or get run over on a highway while staring at the oncoming lights. There are techniques known to a few Enlightened magicians that can prevent the unwanted intrusion of these otherworldly pests. Most involve rune marks painted with a mixture of blood and pitch on the underside of machines they hope to protect.

Gremlins are small, green creatures that scamper about on six legs. Constantly salivating, the Shadows are covered in short greasy fur which is usually matted with remnants of meals past. Sensitives can easily identify them by the telltale reek of animal fat.

Though limited by their size and intelligence, the Unbidden sometimes bind large groups of Gremlins at a time, using them like humans would use a pack of dogs. Darrienn fit easily into any small four-legged Husk, such as a cat or ferret.

Their teeth will always look too long, but other than this, the Husk is flawless. The advantage to using Gremlins as Minions is that they are easy to find and even more easily Bound. (Four Gremlins count as one Minion when calculating the side-effects of maintaining Bound Minions on the Unbidden.)

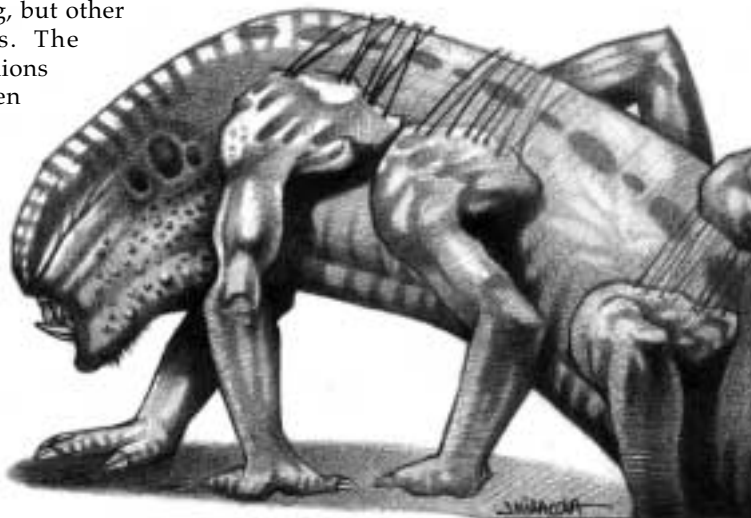
Although relatively weak and easily defeated by Stalkers when found alone, Gremlins can pose a threat to a Circle when found in great numbers. In groups, they are pack animals who use their incredible speed and agility to swarm over their victim and ravage them with their fangs.

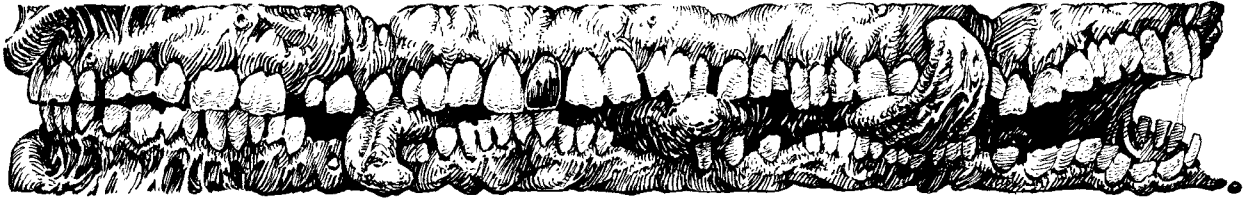
COMBAT

Fangs (Attack 10, 2D Damage) Multiple Gremlins may perform a Swarm attack instead of making individual bite attacks. When Swarming, add 1 to the Attack Value for every Gremlin involved against a single target and 1D Damage for every 2 Gremlins after the first. (5 Gremlins would Attack 14 and do 4D Damage.) Defend as a Strength Challenge (with the Defend Skill bonus added) as the target knocks and throws the Gremlins off.

VULNERABILITIES

A single Banishment will send 1-6 Gremlins back across the Rift.





ZALTI (BLOODWYRM)

Fortitude	5
Vitality	9
Initiative	14
Defend	16
Perceive	8
Resolve	14

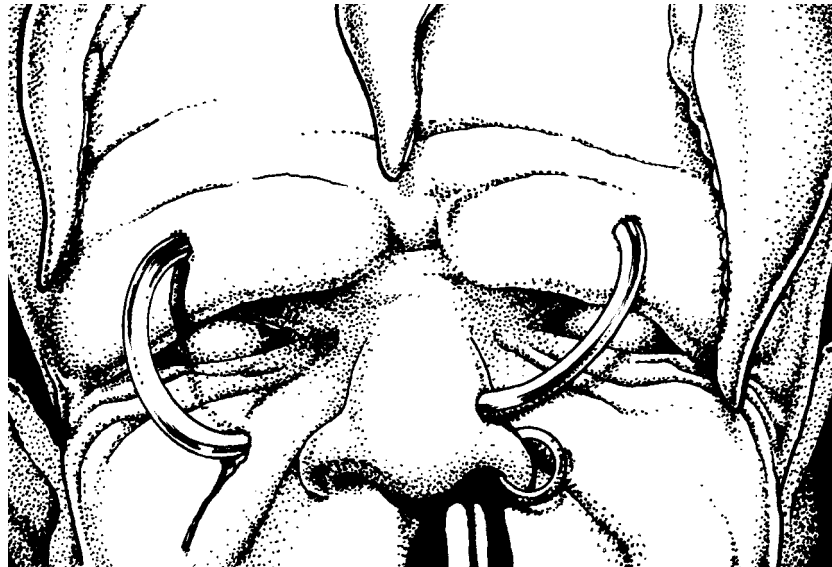
Zalti are fascinated by human suffering. As formless Shadows, they crawl into the orifices of unsuspecting humans, examining their internal organs and absorbing the pain of their inner illnesses, such as smoker's lung and clogged arteries. A man stricken

by lymphatic cancer might have dozens of Zalti, darting in and out of the damaged organs, feeding on his suffering. An illness or lesion infested with these creatures will not heal quickly and rarely completely as the Zalti prefer a long drawn out meal to a quick one.

When the human host dies under particularly painful circumstances (such as a gunshot to the gut or death by burning), the Shadow is Awakened by the desire to feed on more of this excruciating agony. Awakened Zalti bore into the bodies of any mortals they encounter, nibbling at their internal organs and feasting upon their sweet screams. Awakened Bloodwyrms appear to be leathery worms covered in writhing tendrils. At each end of their body is a sharp hook they use to tear the flesh of their host.

Particularly sadistic Unbidden seek out these foul beasts, Binding them into service as pets. When a Bloodwurm becomes a Minion, it shares its sensations with its master, allowing the renegade to feel the pain it inflicts. Those Unbidden who crossed the Rift to savor the exquisite agony of the Flesh prize these sensations and sometimes wear several Zalti as living adornments, such as a writhing necklace or crown.

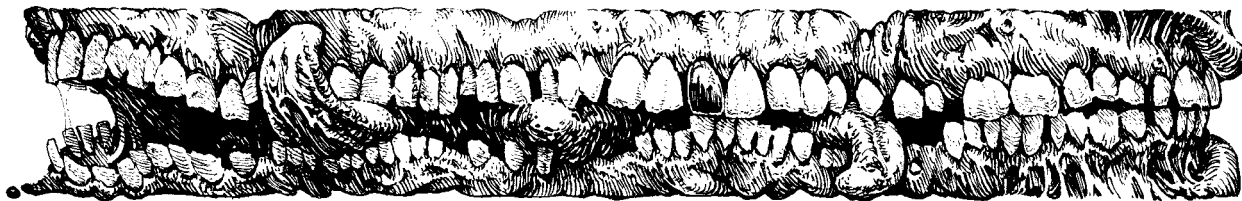
Bloodwyrms may be bound into the Husks of small snakes, though careful examination may reveal ridges that betray the ringed worm-like segments within. They also smell strangely sweet and recoil from bright light.



COMBAT

Attack by leaping at opponents and Boring into their bodies (Attack 12, 4D Damage but no more than 2 points of Vitality). Once the Bore attack causes a victim to lose Vitality, it latches on and begins to feed off his pain which causes 2D Damage at the end of every round. Victims with a Resolve of less than 13 reduce their Attack and Defend attributes by 2 until Zalti is destroyed. Any Stalker with at least three keys who loses Vitality to the Bore attack has to make a Fortitude Challenge against a Difficulty of 12 or lose a die of Dexterity until they return to the Realm of Essence.





G'GURR (GOBLYNS)

Fortitude	4	These unusually social Shadows can be
Vitality	14	found in towns throughout medieval
Initiative	12	Europe playing games with Mortals.
Defend	13	Not with dice or cards, they play at fear.
Perceive	12	The fiercely competitive G'Gurr
Resolve	12	entertain themselves by challenging one

another to what they call "the Cracking Game," a bizarre contest that seems to involve terrifying humans without revealing themselves. Typically, their efforts are limited to inexplicable giggling from dark alleys and scratches on windows late at night but bold players with the inventive cruelty it takes to win can be much more dangerous. The rules of the game are a mystery, but children seem to be worth a lot of points and "holy ground" seems to be off limits.

Unfortunately for their mortal victims, G'Gurr seem to be Awakened when their efforts are thwarted by mortals with high enough Resolve to resist them. When this happens, the Goblyn has lost face with its fellows and Awakens with a desire to make the brave human suffer. This happens so often, it may well be that "fleshing" is some sort of punishment inflicted on the loser.

Awakened G'Gurr typically lurk in the darkness carrying stolen kitchen knives or heavy clubs. They are squat creatures with enormous lower jaws and odd metallic protrusions at the shoulders, elbows and along the spine that serve as sensory organs. Their scaly hide changes color making them disconcerting targets.

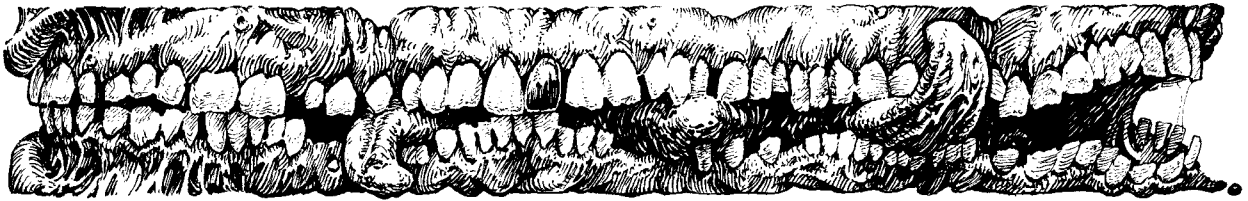
Unbidden who appear in the proper time and place favor G'Gurr as they are both competent and plentiful. Weaving a plausible Husk for a Goblyn is tricky but not impossible. They can be Constricted enough to fit into the bodies of dwarves or children but it is a tight fit that leaves the skin pulled so taut that it becomes translucent. After a few days their talons will usually rip through the fleshy shell, forcing them to wear gloves until a new disguise can be obtained.

COMBAT: Claw (Attack 12, 3D Damage) or Weapon (Attack 14, 3D Damage)

SPECIAL ABILITIES : Mimic (G'gurr are able to imitate almost any sound, terrifying mortal opponents with Resolve less than 12.)

VULNERABILITIES : Goblyns presume their appearance will terrify all who gaze upon them. Any Opponent who does not flee from them immediately automatically wins Initiative in the first Round of Combat.





LIRIK WYCH (GLUTTONS)

Fortitude	9	There are few sights more disgusting to the Sensitive than the Lirik Wych. These slaving beasts watch the Dream over the shoulders of diners in restaurants and families sitting down to eat. As the mortals dine, the Shadow is filled with remorse,
Vitality	14	
Initiative	4	
Defend	6	
Perceive	8	
Resolve	12	Shadow is filled with remorse,

despondant that it cannot partake in the feasts of the Flesh.

When food is wasted and a Glutton watches, there is a chance the Shadow may Awaken, infuriated that the offending mortal has not licked his plate clean. A child who sneaks scraps to his dog under the table may find himself a meal to an Awakened Glutton later that night.

Once in the Flesh, the Glutton appears to be a swollen arachnid with several stubby arms and legs and mandibles that drip slimy spittle. Upon its arrival the creature will descend upon restaurants or grocery stores and eat everything in sight. All the while it makes strange rasping noises by rubbing its hind legs together.

If a Glutton goes more than a few hours without devouring huge quantities of high protein food, it becomes insatiably hungry and will eat the nearest living thing. It prefers children over any other meal, as their muscle-meat is particularly tasty, and the marrow is easily sucked from their bones. If it eats enough to become sated, it will fall into a trance state for several minutes during which its mind will wander across the Chronosphere, giving it fleeting glimpses of the near future.

When the Unbidden bind these disgusting creatures, they usually use them as house-slaves, seers or bodyguards. There are many possible Husks for Gluttons because their extra limbs can be hacked off to accommodate whatever cavity the renegade desires. Unfortunately, it will continue to eat and to grow, and the Husk will swell around the hands and feet. Worse yet, if the Minion goes hungry, it may resort to devouring its own Husk.

COMBAT

Mandibles (14 Attack, 5D Damage)

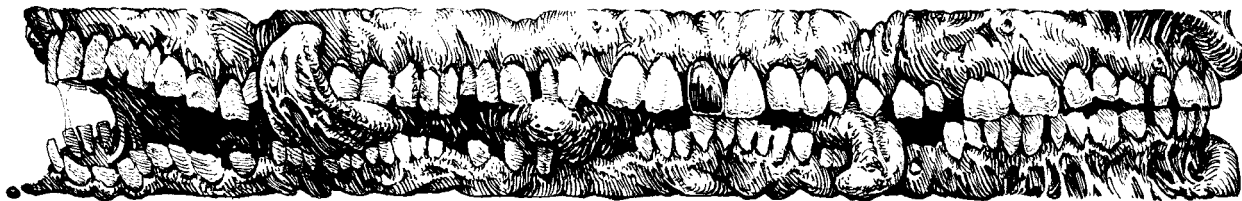
SPECIAL ABILITIES

Vomit (Once a day each Glutton may defend itself by spewing partially digested food and half chewed bone, hitting anyone standing directly in front of it. Victims must Defend against an Attack 15 or be temporarily Blinded and take 3D Damage. It takes two Significant Actions to clear one's eyes of the vomit.)

VULNERABILITIES

Must eat every few hours or loses 1 Fortitude every 10 minutes until it wastes away to nothing.





VASH KIRO (SYCOPHANTS)

Fortitude	6	Most prevalent during the French
Vitality	12	Renaissance, these dullwitted
Initiative	6	Shadows mimic the behavior of the
Defend	8	Dream. Drawn to the opulence of
Perceive	12	Marseilles and other palaces, they
Resolve	12	most frequently observe the goings
		on of petty nobles and hangers-on.

Walking the halls of these palaces, the Sycophants bow to lords and gossip amongst themselves, unseen by the actual nobility.

Occasionally, a Sycophant will become so convinced that it is somehow involved in the political squabbles of the palace, that it will Awaken. The exact impetus for the Awakening is nearly impossible to pin point, but these Shadows continue their playacting, even though they are no longer unseen. The Awakened Shadows are clearly inhuman, and their sudden appearance usually creates a panic among the palace's residents. Usually, the Awakened Shadow will become enraged that its "fellow nobles" are fleeing from it and will hunt them down, demanding to know why. If the mortals cannot put the Shadows at ease, there will be a massacre.

Sycophants are squat, headless blobs with several tentacles covered in eyes whipping about them. They creep along like slugs, leaving a slimy trail which smells of fetid rot. Over the course of years, they will gradually assume more humanoid forms which will make it easier for them to interact with the mortals they so admire.

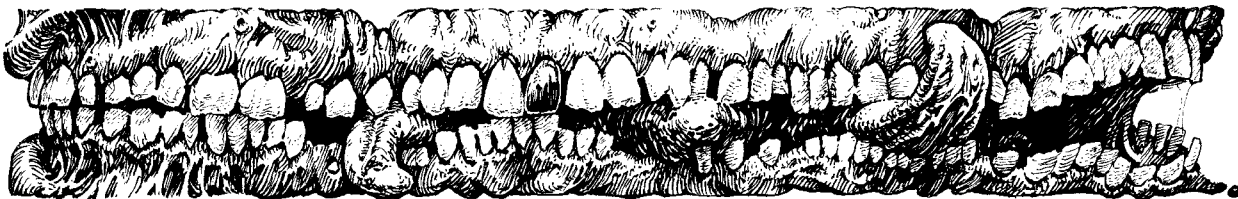
When the Unbidden encounter Sycophants, they need not take them as Minions. With the powers at their command they can easily convince the Shadows to accept him as their master. The Unbidden will place his "subjects" within the Husks of humans and dress them as the courtiers they want to be. The only clue that there is something amiss is a strange odor they will try to mask with strong perfumes.

COMBAT: 2 Tentacles (Attack 14, 3D Damage) If both hit they do +1D Damage each

SPECIAL ABILITIES : Because the Shadow's eyes are on retractable tentacles, it is able to peer around corners and under doors without endangering itself. When in a Husk, the tentacles will emerge from the mouth.

VULNERABILITIES : Sycophants are easily duped by those who behave as they expect.





HYDRAESC (STRANGLER)

Fortitude	5
Vitality	*
Initiative	15
Defend	12
Perceive	13
Resolve	20

These creatures are enormous parasites which feed off the power of Enigmas. Having only limited intelligence, Hydraesc wander the Rift seeking out Shadowlands and peering into the Flesh looking for flaws in the Dream. When a Hydraesc

finds the Focus of an Enigma, it Awakens and begins to syphon off the Enigma's power, inadvertently slowing the spread of Corruption. As the creature suckles from an Enigma, it begins to grow, gradually sprouting new tentacles and gaining Vitality. Any effort to interfere with an Enigma touched by a Hydraesc, even an effort made by the Unbidden that caused it, will be met with an immediate and relentless attack.

An Awakened Hydraesc appears as an enormous rubbery mass covered with blow holes and fleshy stems that spew rank fluids. From the midst of this fleshy hulk flail long black tentacles covered in barbs.

The Unbidden Bind these creatures to guard the Focus of their Enigma. Once Bound, the Hydraesc no longer feeds but maintains a ferocious protectiveness of the Enigma. There are few Husks that can hold the Shadow's copious form, but because it is so rubbery, it may be tightly Constricted to fit into a rhinoceros or other large animal. When it attacks, the Strangler's tentacles spout from the animal's mouth.



COMBAT

Each Tentacle can fight independently (Attack 13, 3D Damage) and has a Vitality of 6.

The number of tentacles possessed by any given Strangler is determined by the gamemaster according to how long it has been feeding off the Enigma, ranging from 2 if the Shadow recently arrived to 25 if it has fed for hundreds of years. Hydraesc always have at least 2 tentacles.

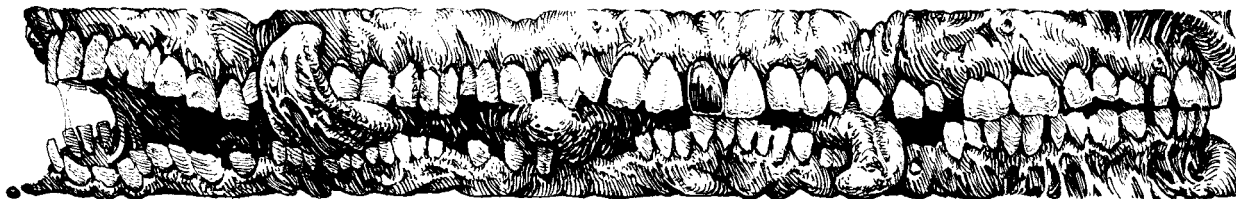
SPECIAL ABILITIES

Cannot be Banished - opponents must either mend the Enigma while fending off the tentacles or destroy all of the tentacles so that it may no longer attack. If the Enigma is Mended while the Hydraesc is still feeding, the resulting backlash consumes it in a ball of flame that causes 5D Damage to anything within 10 yards. If all of the tentacles are destroyed, the helpless Hydraesc can be Banished easily (no Challenge required).

VULNERABILITIES

If the Unbidden creates a Life Link with an Enigma, any Stranglers feeding from it are Bound.





Orratt (HERDERS)

Fortitude	7
Vitality	20
Initiative	14
Defend	14
Perceive	14
Resolve	18

People who live in wilder lands have many tales of hunters killed by strange beasts driven to avenge the deaths of their "woodland friends." The cowboys tell stories of friends killed by stampedes caused by the mournful howling of the "black

dogs" sent by the Indians to protect the herds. These acts are the Orratt's doing. The Orratt are Shadows with uncommon empathy for the struggles of the wild: animals fighting to survive with only instinct and natural abilities. They abhor the concrete and steel blemishes with which man marks the world as well as his arrogance and thoughtlessness toward the creatures of the world.

Herrders are Awakened when they witness gross cruelty to the creatures they love, exacting the vengeance the powerless animals could not.

In their Awakened form, Orratt look like wild dogs the size of buffalo whose twisted bodies are dominated by fanged mouths of monstrous proportions. When the Herders find a mortal guilty of harming animals, they rip the victim apart with savage brutality, devouring its flesh and organs, leaving little to mark its passing save a bloody mound of bones and a few loose hunks of flesh.

Herrders are not usually found in the service of the Unbidden, unless a renegade Aesthetic lairs in the wild. Although these Shadows make useful Minions, they are almost impossible to control near large settlements as they have a tendency to attack hot dog vendors, butchers and anyone else they encounter who traffics in the flesh of animals. For some reason Herders Constrict easily and can be made to fit into nearly any Husk their master could desire, but the mouth will always appear a bit too large.



COMBAT

2 Claws (Attack 17, 3D Damage) and 1 Bite (Attack 12, 5D Damage) against a single target

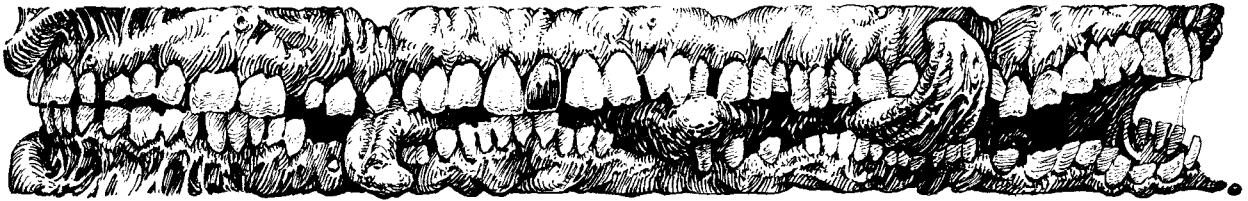
SPECIAL ABILITIES

Herrders can communicate with and control animals within its line of sight. Unless bound by an Unbidden, the Orratt will never lead animals to their death but might use them to harass its enemies.

VULNERABILITIES

Will not attack animals or those it believes to be animals.





EKIR RALEKAR (CHANGELINGS)

Fortitude	5	Found throughout Europe during
Vitality	18	the Dark Ages, these peculiar
Initiative	16	Shadows have a deep love for the
Defend	10	Flesh. They observe its people and
Perceive	12	creatures with an almost proprietary
Resolve	16	interest. It is their belief that the Rift

and its Shadows exist to guide and inspire those of the mortal world who are, in a sense, their subjects. Formless Ekir wander the Dream, helping any Sensitives they happen upon. Though their demeanor is condescending, their advice is often helpful to those who can hear.

Favorite among Ekir are mortal children. As children are often Sensitive, they can speak to the Ekir and receive guidance and companionship. When, for whatever reason, the child no longer wishes to be with his parents, his Changeling guide Awakens and steals him away. Unfortunately for the child, the Ekir believe the ultimate honor for mortals is to be consumed by their Shadow masters. Once stolen, a child usually ends up swallowed whole by the Changeling.

Changelings are able to change their form at will. An Awakened Ekir is able to assume the shape of those it has swallowed. In a sense, the swallowed mortals live on in the Changeling. However, when an Ekir swallows too many, it begins to change uncontrollably, sprouting extra arms and faces on its chest and back. Such Ekir are consumed with a madness the Changelings call "form frenzy." Some Ekir in form frenzy make an effort to control themselves by containing their bodies in leather straps. Most lose control of themselves and begin to rampage, consuming any mortals they happen upon. Unfortunately for the Ekir, every Changeling has a different limit to how many forms it may consume before entering the frenzy. Some succumb after only two consumptions, others take twenty or thirty.

The Unbidden find Changelings to be helpful additions to their Minion retinues. The ability to change form renders Husks pointless, and the Shadows' knowledge of mortal society is important. Also, in difficult times, an Unbidden can force feed mortals to a Changeling Minion in order to induce the form frenzy. In the frenzy, Ekir can be dangerous opponents. Unbidden only bother with Husks for Changelings in form frenzy. These Ekir must be covered in leather straps, containing their chaotic changing. Once contained, a Changeling may easily be placed in a human husk. However, the skin of the Husk will always ripple as the frenzied Changeling struggles beneath the straps to grow new limbs.

COMBAT

Punch (Attack 12, 2D Damage) In Form Frenzy, 4 Punch Attacks (Attack 12, 2D Damage) and 1 Bite (Attack 10, 3D Damage)

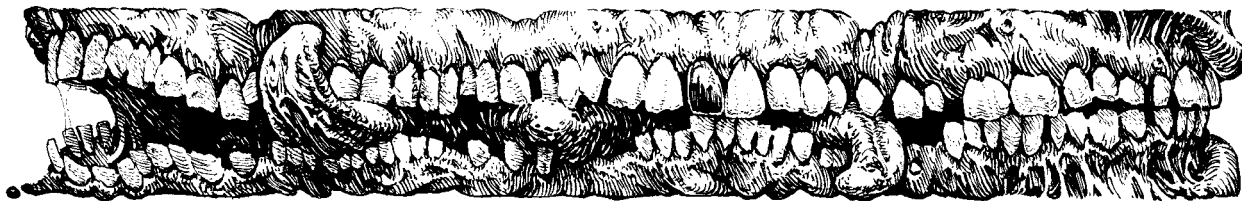
SPECIAL ABILITIES

Limited Shape Shift (The Shadow may change into a flawless version of any mortal or animal it consumes whole.) Insight (Changelings have an in-depth understanding of mortal society.)

VULNERABILITIES

Incapable of accepting that a mortal could threaten them in any way; Once a Changeling succumbs to form frenzy, they are wild beasts who can only recover if the bodies within them are somehow removed.





TRAL THOLZ (BANSHEE)

Fortitude	6	These gentle creatures are attracted to
Vitality	16	certain powerful emotions, especially
Initiative	12	what mortals call love when it bears the
Defend	14	taint of obsession or desperation. They
Perceive	12	are attracted to those who exhibit these
Resolve	18	emotions, drawing sustenance from

them and, in turn, intensifying these feelings. When they find a particularly devoted subject, a Banshee will become attuned to him and will be unable to feed from other mortals.

When the symbiotic flow of energy from the mortal host is cut off, the emotional feedback torments the poor creature, leaving it disoriented and vulnerable. This usually happens when unrequited love turns suddenly to bitterness or anger. If the host takes his own life before the Banshee can pull away, the Shadow Awakens. Twisted by the madness of their fallen host, the Banshee is driven to destroy those who seem to be in love.

An Awakened Banshee resembles its deceased host, but it has translucent skin which glows because of a bright light that shines from its black heart. The only way it can communicate is by uttering a piercing scream that inspires despair in all who hear. The wail of the Tral Tholz will darken the dreams of Sensitives, giving them horrible nightmares about the violent deaths of loved ones that they will remember vividly when they wake up.

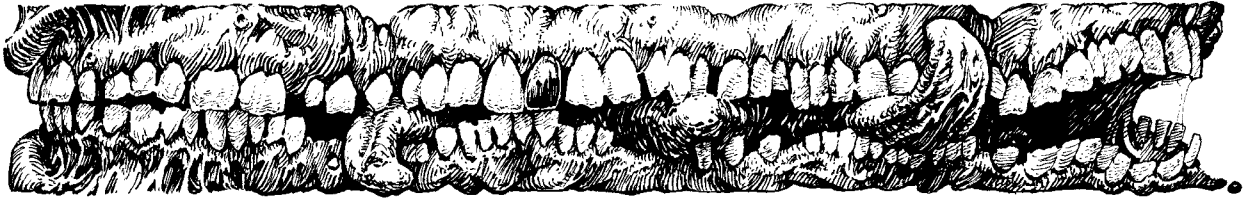
The Unbidden usually don't bother binding the Tral Tholz. As Minions, Banshees fall silent, their terrible voices robbed of anger and remorse. A Banshee's Husk is usually human, with a wild mane of wiry fibers that resemble hair from a distance. Only close examination by a Sensitive will reveal the creature's otherworldly origins.

COMBAT: 2 Claw Attacks (Attack 14, 3D Damage)

SPECIAL ABILITIES : Can utter a keening wail every third round that will paralyze any mortal or Shadow with a Resolve of 12 or less who hears it for 1-6 rounds. Any Stalkers which hear the cry and fail a Willpower Challenge against a Difficulty of 12 lose their next two Significant Actions unless they choose to lower their Willpower by a point instead.

VULNERABILITIES : Voidoids can be used to negate the power of the keening wail.





J'KRIT TAQ (GEYSER BEAST)

Fortitude	4
Vitality	16
Initiative	16
Defend	22
Perceive	8
Resolve	12

The Geyser Beast is rarely seen in the Realm of the Flesh, even by Sensitives. This is because it does not observe the mortals and the beasts of the flesh. Rather, it maintains a gaseous state, watching the relations of the gasses that comprise the air

mortals breathe. Of course, observing nitrogen and oxygen can become tedious at best, so many Geyser Beasts take to surrounding the smoke stacks of factories and the exhaust pipes of vehicles. They are fascinated by the foreign elements these structures introduce into the air.

When these Shadows are Awakened, they tend to maintain their invisible, gaseous form, never to be seen. Geyser Beasts do not normally move of their own volition but allow the air to carry them. However, as Minions, they may appear temporarily in physical form and latch on to a nearby surface, anchoring themselves. The body is elongated, with a large maw at one end and long, sticky strands at the other. It uses these strands to latch on to surfaces. Mounted on the body are four arms with two fingers at each end.

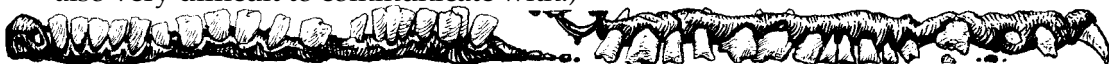
Once the Beast is latched onto a surface, it may move only minimally, dragging itself along with its arms. It only retains its physical form for about six hours, as its body begins to dissolve back into gas. However, this is often long enough for the Unbidden to Bind Geyser Beasts to be used to block off passages.

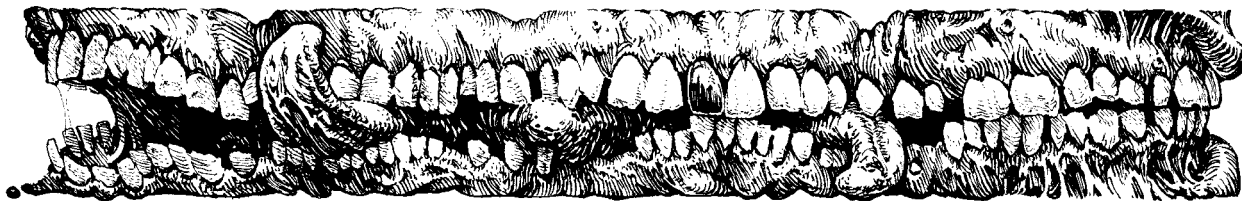
There is no need for the Unbidden to weave Husks for Geyser Beasts. They can be kept until needed in airtight jars or may be used while in their gaseous form as spies or sentries.

COMBAT: 4 Claws (Attack 10, 1D Damage each) or Steam Blast (Attack 18, 8D Damage with -1 Die Cap vs. all creatures within 10 yards of the Beast) Steam Blast may only be used once every other round.

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Gaseous Form (Detectable only by Sensitives with a Difficulty of 20. Can only be harmed by a creature of Essence with a -1 Die Cap. Cannot make Claw attack while in Gaseous Form) Physical Form (May become solid for 1D hours)

VULNERABILITIES: Confusion (Geyser Beasts have absolutely no knowledge of the physical world and are easily confused by shiny or fast moving objects. They are also very difficult to communicate with.)





OKLANNA 'THAR (SERPENTIS)

Fortitude	5	Enlightened scholars have deduced
Vitality	30	that the Shadows known as Serpentis
Initiative	8	may be the inspiration for countless
Defend	12	legends throughout the ages, includ-
Perceive	10	ing Dragons, Wyverns, and Cocka-
Resolve	15	trices. A particularly large Shadow, the

Serpentis floats through the inky void of the Rift like a whale, eating whatever flies into its mouth.

Occasionally, the Serpentis will fly into something which does not want to be consumed. In these instances, it will struggle with its prospective prey, usually defeating and consuming it. There are times, however, that the Serpentis does not subdue its quarry. In these cases, the Serpentis flees by Shimmersifting, skimming across the Chronosphere. However, this involves crossing over into the Flesh, which Awakens the beast.

Awakened, the Serpentis is an enormous creature that simply floats through the air. Its mouth contains a long, sharp tongue and numerous wicked teeth capable of rending steel. The beast's head is covered in quills and on its back is a powerful spike which it may extend in attack.

When an Unbidden Binds a Serpentis it is particularly dangerous. The Serpentis are fairly docile beasts, dangerous only to those unfortunate enough to fly into their mouths. When they are Minions, however, their will is supplanted by that of their Unbidden master. In this case, they can be devastating foes, destroying entire Circles for their master.

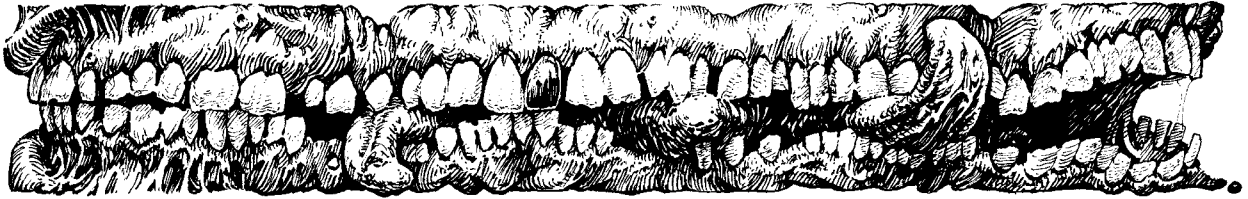
Bound Serpentis may be Mutilated and Constricted to fit within an elephant or other large beast, but even then the creature looks bloated and unnatural. Any examination at all will part the Veil, revealing the Shadow hidden within.

COMBAT: Tongue Lash (Attack 14, 2D Damage, Strength Challenge of 15 or opponent is grabbed and automatically hit by Bite attack), Bite (Attack 12, 6D Damage), Back Spike Lash (Attack 16, 7D Damage, may be used on opponent up to 10 yards away with no Die Cap)

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Invulnerability (Totally immune to all Mortal Weapons, -1 Die Cap to Attacks using Savage or Frenzy), Clumsy Flyer, Shimmersift

LIMITATIONS: The Serpentis prefers Shadows for its meals and will attempt to eat any Shadow approaching it. This includes other Minions.





MIRAGI (MASQUES)

Fortitude	4
Vitality	15
Initiative	20
Defend	20
Perceive	18
Resolve	18

The Miragi have the ability to look at mortals when they are looking at themselves, usually in mirrors, though there are a few who have been drawn to closed circuit camera displays in shopping malls. They cannot see themselves, but they imagine that they

are creatures of exceptional beauty. A Miragi is Awakened when a Sensitive mortal makes contact with it by peering across the Rift through a mirror and welcoming it aloud. The arrival of the Shadow will be heralded by an electrical storm and will destroy the mortal who Awakened it, breaking down his body to provide the raw materials for its Vessel.

An Awakened Masque first manifests a spawling mass of protean flesh that it finds uncomfortable and humiliating. Within a few hours it will generate crude sensory organs and two manipulatory tentacles that it can use to bind the rest of its body into a vaguely humanoid form with whatever materials are at hand. It will do whatever it can to satisfy its peculiar vanity. Most wear clothes that cover every inch of their hideous bodies and masks that cover the writhing mass that serves as a face.

Left to their own devices, the Miragi will pursue physical perfection, and when they believe they have achieved it, they will stare at themselves in a mirror until their Vessel withers away to nothing. If they are ever forcibly unmasked, they will fly into a rage, killing anyone in their path.

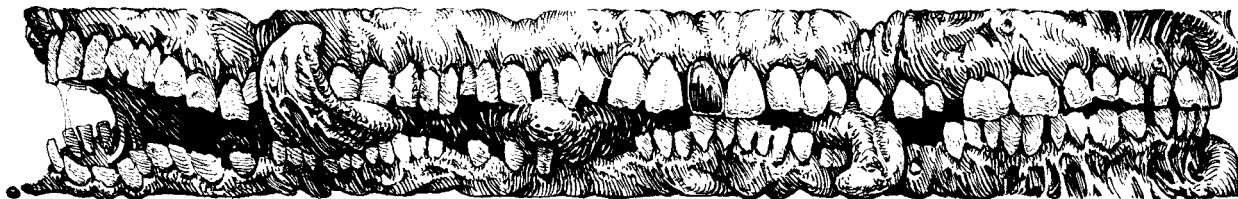
Few Unbidden are aware of the existence of the Miragi because of their limited and rather specific interaction with the Flesh, but those who have encountered them will readily exploit the narcissistic Shadows. Bound Masques can make excellent spies because they are adept at assuming human guise. They have an unsettling habit of staring at people's faces, and they smell a bit like dead fish. Otherwise, they can be physically perfect.

COMBAT: Acidic Touch (Attack 12, 3D Damage every round for 3 consecutive rounds)

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Any mortal with a Resolve of less than 13 who looks upon the Mask of an Awakened Miragi is so distracted that all of their Attributes are reduced by 2 points. They do not possess this ability if they are Bound by the Unbidden.

LIMITATIONS: If the Miragi is shown its own Mask in a mirror it is distracted, reducing its Attributes by 3 each.





KICHELL KROSH (GIBBERING HORDE)

Fortitude	4	Found wherever the sick are at-
Vitality	40	tended to, Kichell Krosh find mortal
Initiative	10	illness not merely entertaining, they
Defend	12	find the cutting open of diseased
Perceive	8	skin, the vomit and sweat of the dy-
Resolve	15	ing, and the expulsion of final
		breaths hilarious.

Gibbering Hordes are found most often in the bleak hospitals and asylums of the Victorian age, where limited medical knowledge lead to rampant infection and suffering. They are also common throughout the late twentieth century. The advanced techniques practiced in the "modern" era keep patients alive long after they would have died in earlier times, providing months of enjoyment for the Kichell Krosh.

The Awakening of a Gibbering Horde is a terrible thing, for they will make every effort to emulate the surgeries they have witnessed. However, since they have a form without hands or digits, they must rely on their numerous festering mouths. Fortunately, Kichell Krosh are only Awakened if they overhear an ill mortal pray for a swift death. Happy to oblige, the Shadow crosses into the Flesh, kills its new "patient," and begins to perform gruesome surgeries on the Dream's sick.

Once in the Flesh, Kichell Krosh take the form of a fleshy and shapeless hulk. They possess no eyes or limbs, only countless mouths incessantly laughing and chanting "Cut the patient, rip, tear, chew." They will only bite into those they consider "patients" by virtue of illness. Unfortunately, Stalkers' Vessels appear to be ill to a Horde's strange senses because they are not truly alive.

The Unbidden can take a Gibbering Horde as a Minion, but this is quite rare. Kichell Krosh are excellent killers, but their strange codes of behavior limit their usefulness. Placing a Gibbering Horde into a Husk is impossible. Though one may be created, the Horde will chew it apart within minutes.

Note: The gamemaster should never have a Circle encounter more than one Gibbering Horde unless he wants several of the Circle to perish.

COMBAT

10 Bites (Attack 18, 2D Damage each. Attack in any direction), Smother (Attack 12, 0D Damage. If Smother hits, Gibbering Horde has surrounded opponent; all bite attacks automatically hit.)

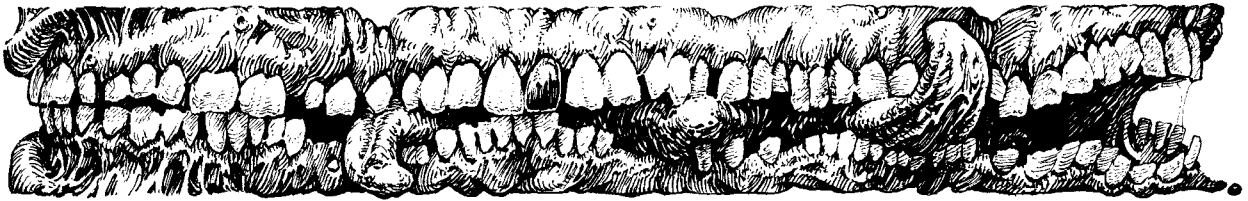
SPECIAL ABILITIES

Sense Essence (A Horde "sees" by sensing the Essence around it, including the spark that is human life. It is this sense that tells it if a human is ill or healthy.)

VULNERABILITIES

Though covered in mouths, only 10 are usable for attacking. For every 4 Vitality lost, the Horde loses an attack.





ZSA RALAS (SPRITELEINGS)

Fortitude	2
Vitality	8
Initiative	14
Defend	12
Perceive	21
Resolve	12

Zsa Ralas are common in all ages. Much like the Darrienn, they are inquisitive Shadows, attracted to anything unusual or striking. Unlike the Darrienn, they are content in observing and do not desire to interact with the Flesh. Hundreds of the

creatures thrive in all major cities and are captivated by the sights, sounds, and smells they find there. Movie theaters are often filled to capacity with Zsa Ralas, driving Sensitive mortals from the building. Parades are frequently accompanied by hundreds of Sprites, frantically trying to take in all the garish sights. There is no known natural reason for Zsa Ralas to Awaken, but they are often pulled over by the Unbidden to serve as Minions.

When in the Flesh, Sprites appear to be one abnormally large eye imbedded in a mass of pulpy grey putrescence. The eye of this Shadow is similar to a huge human eye, save that where the iris would normally be, there is a mouth filled with razor-sharp teeth. Sensitives frequently see these Shadows and recognize that, despite their fearsome appearance, they are quite harmless unless provoked.

When Zsa Ralas wish to move they sprout slime drenched wings.

If a Sprite is attacked and unable to flee, all Zsa Ralas in the area will attack the threat. For the most part, Sprites are docile, but when scared or pursued, their razor-sharp teeth can pose a formidable threat.

Sprites are valued Minions because their masters are able to share the sensations of the Shadow once bound. This makes them ideal as early warning systems. What the Shadow sees, the prey will simultaneously see. Husks woven for Sprites commonly take the form of flies the size of a man's hand or misshapen cats. The eyes of any Husk will be immense and seem to be in constant motion, as if the surface of the eye were rippling, like a pool in a breeze.

COMBAT

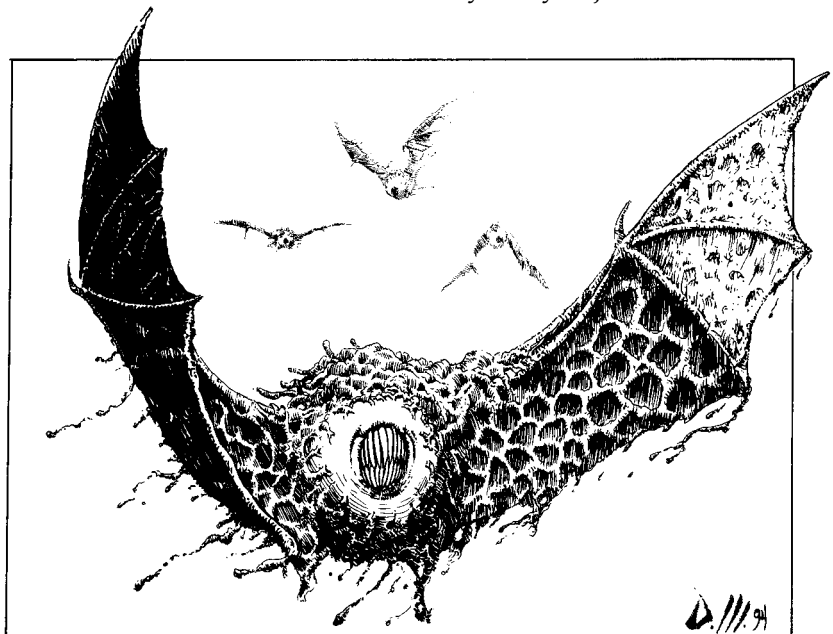
Swarm (Attack 15. Sprites attack one target together and inflict 1D Damage per Zsa Ralas in the swarm.)

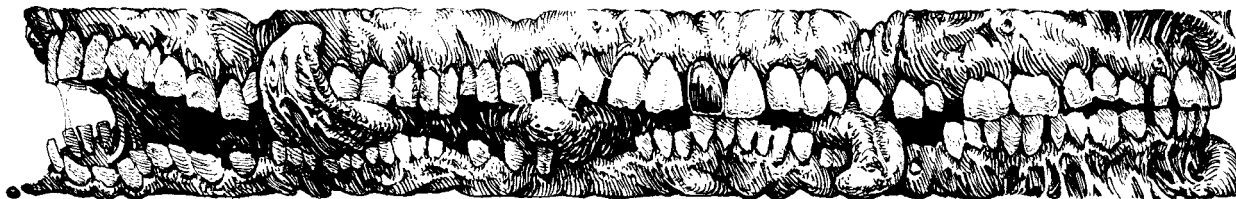
SPECIAL ABILITIES

Flight; Shared Perception (When Bound, their Unbidden master may see through a Sprite's eye unless there is a radio or television antenna near master or servant.)

VULNERABILITIES

Delve allows a Stalker to tap into the mind of whom-ever shares the Sprite's perceptions. Easily distracted by shiny objects.





SAQUIN ADRETT (BREEDERS)

Fortitude	2+
Vitality	6+
Initiative	11
Defend	13-
Perceive	15
Resolve	18

Mortals are born screaming into the world of Flesh, their arrival heralded by blood and pain. Parents delude themselves into thinking this nightmare is something beautiful, calling it a "miracle" and taping the grotesque spectacle so they can savor the experience over and over again.

They are not alone. There are many creatures who are drawn to the intensity of birth trauma and envy the ability to reproduce. Of these, only the Adrett have learned how to duplicate the feat.

When they figure out the trick of it, these horrors can assume physical form by stealing stillborn flesh. They will usually devour their "mother" and any witnesses before crawling into the darkness to start a family of their own.

Once they make the transition to Flesh, Breeders will begin spawning in a matter of weeks. The process is asexual but requires the consumption of copious amounts of blood. The Adrett's offspring have been called Squiggles and resemble human infants with strange skin that glistens like the carapace of a roach.

Every time the Adrett gives birth, the process increases its Fortitude by 1 and its Vitality by 3 but reduces its Defend by 1. The Squiggles have the base Attributes of a barren Breeder and can stike twice a round with their tiny claws (Attack 12, 2D Damage).

Weaving a Husk for the massive Breeder is very difficult, but their offspring are considerably easier. Squiggles can be passed off as anything from children to small animals such as dogs and cats.

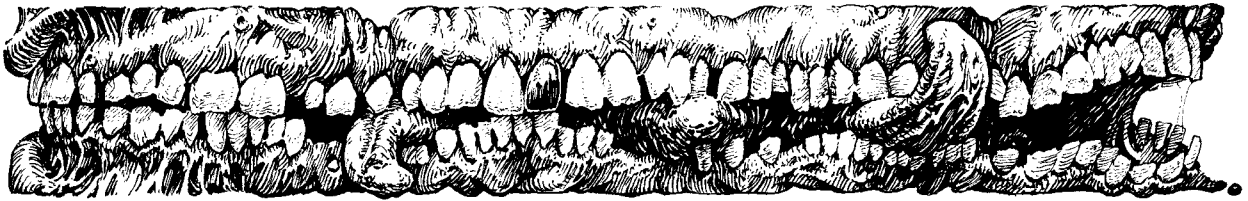
COMBAT

Sharp Tongue (Attack 15, 3D Damage)

VULNERABILITIES

Loses 1-6 points of Vitality every time one of its "children" is killed





ZALDURAK (HECTOR'S GEAR)

Fortitude	9
Vitality	6
Initiative	12
Defend	12
Perceive	9
Resolve	15

Man has created many machines to make his life easier. The process of designing and constructing these contrivances is the only act of creation many mortals will know. The most inspired of these engineers unintentionally lend some of their Essence to their work, giving the

finished product a faint glimmer of life force. Certain Shadows are attuned to these luminous devices and will seek them out. The presence of these Shadows will manifest as strange vibrations that will mute or amplify the sounds generated by the device they inhabit, creating peculiar rhythms that unsettle those with the technical expertise to recognize that something is amiss. Only Sensitives will realize that the disturbance is a manifestation of the Unseen.

These Shadows seem to be Awakened by accident. No two have been Awakened in the same way. All they seem to have in common is that they are only Awakened in total darkness so it is possible to protect machines against infestation by keeping a bright light on them at all times.

Once Awakened, the Zaldurak will invest the physical substance of the machine with its Essence, slowly twisting the metallic mass into a vaguely humanoid body. Like the Unbidden Beast, the creature will be hungry at first, driven to hunt for the proper parts to complete its Vessel. A couple of cars will do the trick, but they usually prefer something heavier like forklifts, tractors or construction equipment.

Free-willed Zaldurek are compulsive artisans who gravitate toward a source of raw materials like junkyards where they create strange sculpture.

Unbidden who find themselves in the industrial age prize these creatures. They make excellent shock troops, and it is possible to create mechanical Husks for them that use the Minion as a living engine. Many Stalkers have been layed low by improvised war machines driven by captive Gears. There are even stories of Architects who have powered their Lairs by using dozens of these creatures to drive banks of modified generators.

COMBAT

Pincer (Attack 12, rolls Damage Dice equal to current Vitality; Attack 18 against any opponent it hit on the previous round)
Armored (subtract 10 from damage before comparing to Fortitude)

VULNERABILITIES

Fortitude 6 against mortal females





DETCARRON (METAMORPHS)

Fortitude	6
Vitality	3+
Initiative	14
Defend	12
Perceive	16
Resolve	20

These formless creatures are drawn to Awakened Shadows, watching jealously from the cocoons of Neitherspace in which they are born. They are Awakened if they witness the Awakening of another Shadow which is rare since they usually watch Shadows that are already Awakened.

Mortal magicians have learned several ways to Awaken them which involve using an Awakened Shadow as bait. The predator's predator they hunt creatures of Essence who have crossed over to the Flesh.

Awakened Metamorphs need to feed on the Essence of other Shadows on a regular basis or their Vessel begins to deteriorate, losing a point of Vitality every 2-12 hours. When the Stalkers encounter a Metamorph the Gamemaster can roll 3D6 to determine its current Vitality or choose the value that best suits the situation.

When a Metamorph consumes the Essence of another Shadow, its Vessel will mutate, incorporating elements of all of the creatures it has devoured. It will also gain one of the Combat or Special Abilities of each victim, but when it does, there is a 2 in 6 chance it will acquire one of its Limitations as well. Its personality will also change which makes the Detcarron extremely unpredictable.

Architects sometimes use these creatures to keep their Lairs free of unwanted Shadows, but they do not work well with other Minions. Weaving a Husk for a Metamorph is relatively pointless because the next time they feed, they will change shape and destroy it.

COMBAT

Random (Various limbs allow 1-6 attacks a round, each with an Attack of 3-18, doing 1-6 D of Damage)

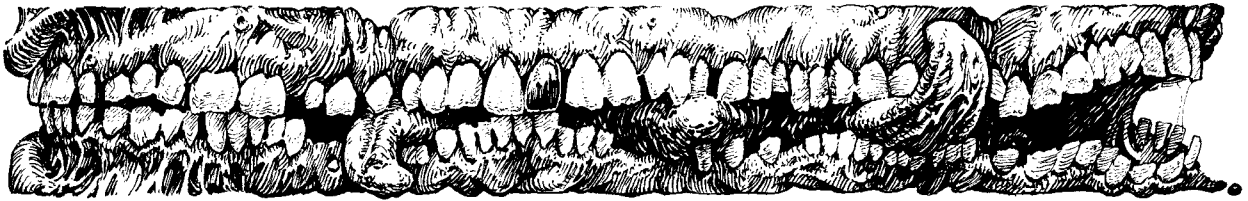
SPECIAL ABILITIES

Varies wildly

VULNERABILITIES

Must feed regularly or their Vessel will deteriorate





BOLI (TECHNICIANS)

Fortitude	5
Vitality	*
Initiative	15
Defend	12
Perceive	13
Resolve	20

Sensitives at the end of the 20th century sometimes speak of the Ghost in the Machine. While machines do not contain Essence, a number of them do house Boli. The Boli are Shadows fascinated by the technical devices and machinery of the Dream. In fact, the

Boli tend to think of electrical implements as kindred spirits and tend to speak to them as other Shadows would humans.

When a workman comes to depend upon his tools more than his own talent, a Boli may be Awakened. Reliance upon an instrument acts as an invitation to the Boli to cross over from the Rift. Once in the Flesh, the Boli is able to control all sorts of mechanical devices by an act of will, although the outside observer will see the Boli speaking to the device, cajoling it to perform the desired act. These mechanical devices, once Animated, will perform whatever actions the Boli desires, including violent attacks.

When in the Flesh, Boli appear to be a humanoid mass of circuitry, gears, tools, solder, and other electronic and mechanical parts. When hurt, it bleeds oil, and when it speaks, its voice sounds artificial. Boli wield simple tools such as hammers, screwdrivers, and saws as weapons.

Unbidden entering the Dream after the industrial revolution often seek out Boli for their unique power over machinery and their innate understanding of complicated devices. Boli are vaguely humanoid and fit best in human Husks. However, such a Husk will bulge at every surface, hardly able to contain the metal tools that make up the Technician.

COMBAT

Tool (Attack 12, 2D Damage) Animate Machine (Attack 13, 3D to 7D Damage depending upon the size of the animated machine)

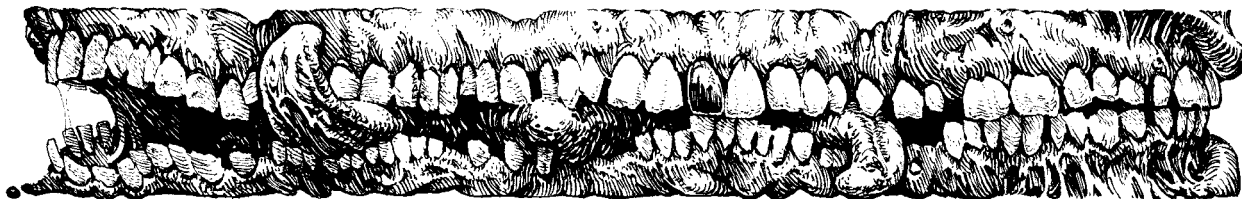
SPECIAL ABILITIES

Repair (Technicians intimately understand the workings of any mechanical or electronic device and can perform repairs but they cannot create new devices.)

VULNERABILITIES

Gremlin Servitors do 3D Damage per round to Boli. When confronted with Gremlins, the Shadow's Resolve is reduced to 4 as it is consumed with terror.





K'THAL (HUNTER BANES)

Fortitude	5	These creatures are drawn to Stalkers and will follow them from the other side, watching and waiting for an opportunity to join them in the Realm of Flesh. If they witness a Stalker's death, 1-6 K'thal will be Awakened, travelling across the Rift
Vitality	5	
Initiative	15	
Defend	16	
Perceive	14	
Resolve	15	to feed on the Essence of the deceased. Because all creatures of Essence are Sensitive, the Stalkers will automatically know that they are being watched, but they don't mind because Awakened Banes always feel a debt to the fallen Stalker and will aid the rest of his Circle until they return to the Realm of Essence, laying down their lives if necessary.

Awakened Banes seem to be part cockroach and part serpent with glowing eyes and steel fangs. They can use the translucent tendrils that cover their lower bodies to crawl through the air, floating gracefully as though unaffected by gravity. They are actually grasping objects in Neitherspace so they have to go out of their way when there are no objects available where they want to go.

Six days after their Awakening, the K'thal are stricken with a ravenous hunger and must feed on bones until they are sated. They then weave cocoons around themselves and hibernate for three weeks at the end of which only one will Reawaken. This survivor will have a Fortitude and Vitality of 7 and a Resolve of 20. It will resemble the Stalker whose death Awakened it save for glowing eyes, fangs and a dark sheen to the skin. It will usually take his name or some bastardization of his name and devote itself to the destruction of the Unbidden. Obviously, these rare creatures make useful allies.

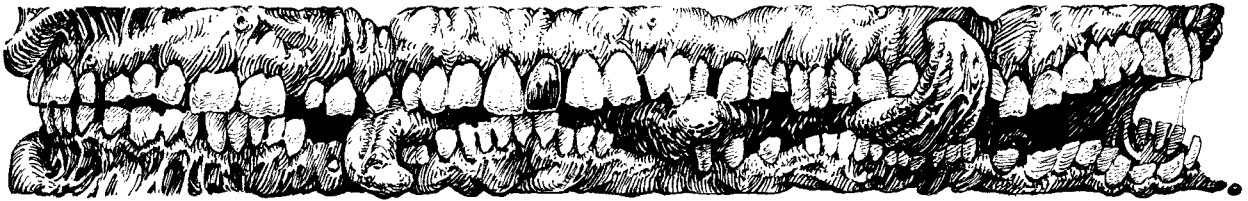
If the Unbidden can locate and Bind a Bane, it will not attack a Stalker unless its master is present and commands it to do so. If a Bane kills a Stalker, it becomes swollen with Essence and corrupted by it. These creatures have a Fortitude and Vitality of 9 and usually develop a taste for the Essence of Stalkers.

COMBAT: Bite (Attack 12, 3D Damage) If a Bite hits, it may attempt to Bite the same victim again and so on until they have bitten five times or the victim is slain.

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Flight; Track any Stalker without error unless Translocate is used.

LIMITATIONS: Can be driven away by Negators whose power makes them violently ill for several hours.





VERDULAK (NIGHTMARES)

Fortitude	8
Vitality	13
Initiative	11
Defend	11
Perceive	15
Resolve	23

Many Shadows are little more than stray bundles of life force which cling to wisps of Neitherspace – mindless, drifting entities waiting to be given shape and purpose by things they sense in the Realm of Flesh. These creatures draw on the fears of the

collective subconscious, becoming the embodiment of unspoken dread. Over the course of centuries mortals have sensed the presence of the Verdulak, and their fears have surrendered some of their Essence to it, feeding it. Eventually, the most powerful Nightmares gain the ability to enter the dreams of weak-willed mortals. From these dreams, mortals learn their names, which become part of their folklore and mythology. Every time the mention of their name inspires fear they become even more powerful until they have accumulated so much Essence they can Awaken themselves and cross the Rift under their own power.

Awakened Verdulak take many forms, which are usually dictated by the stories that gave them life. Those whose forms were not specified are manlike, with vicious claws, grey skin and eyes that glow with emerald fire. They wear robes woven of living fibers that writhe as the Nightmare moves and bizarre armor carved from human bones. No matter what form they take, Verdulak can always be recognized by unsettling effect they have on animals and the strange, childlike shadows they cast.

Once they cross over, Nightmares will do whatever is expected of them. The fears of mortal man provide them with unintentional inspiration to perform deeds of profound wickedness. Of all the myriad Shadows these may be the closest to what mankind calls "evil."

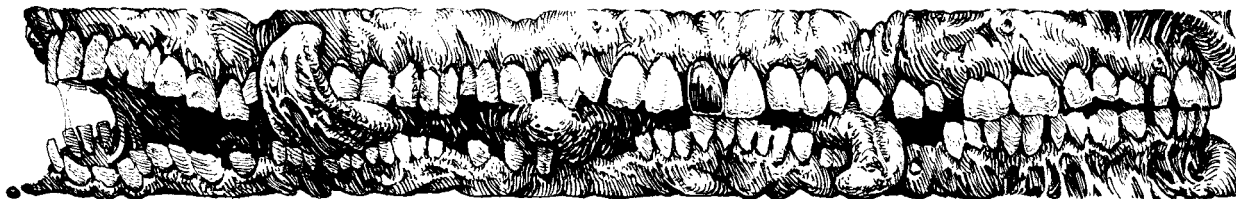
The Unbidden are fascinated by these creatures but have great difficulty Binding them so must barter with them if they hope to count them as allies. In the rare instances where they are Bound, they can only wear human Husks and may be able to free themselves in 2-12 days at which time they will turn against their former master.

COMBAT: 2 Claws each round (Attack 15, 4D Damage)

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Vary somewhat by individual but most Regenerate a point of Vitality every round and may Translocate up to a mile in darkness by expending 1-6 points of Vitality.

LIMITATIONS: Most Nightmares cannot attack children.





RHAVTOR (NEMESIS)

Fortitude	6	When the Vessel of an Awakened
Vitality	9	Shadow is destroyed, their Essence
Initiative	16	is freed to slide back into the Rift. The
Defend	14	experience of being "killed" is a
Perceive	13	trauma that many Shadows cannot
Resolve	13	survive. Most of these lose their will
		to exist and simply waste away to

nothing, but some are transfigured and are reborn as a different kind of Shadow completely. Some of these become Rhavtors, which are defined by their desire to revenge themselves on whoever "killed" them. They will search Neitherspace for a weak place where they can force their way across the Rift or Whisper to Sensitive mortals who may be able to use their awareness of the Unseen to pull them across.

The Rhavtor's Vessel is a massive construct that appears at first to be hewn from a block of obsidian. They have no eyes and poor tactile sensitivity, but their hearing is so good that it compensates for these apparent weaknesses. When they approach their prey, the Rhavtor will begin to glow, manifesting a blue-green aura that shimmers like flame.

Once in the Flesh, the Nemesis will start searching for its prey. They are creatures of intense focus who will search day and night until they find their intended victim. They will ally with anyone who can convince them that they have the same enemy. When they find their "murderer," the creature bursts into flame and will utter a piercing shriek that can only be heard by Sensitive. If they succeed in killing their prey they lose their focus and their Vessel will turn to dark stone infused with Essence that is highly valued by those mortal magicians who realize what it is.

Because they are rare and Driven to leave Neitherspace as soon as they arrive, the Unbidden have limited opportunities to Bind them. The enemy of the Rhavtor cannot Bind it; the creature's desire for revenge will greatly bolster its Resolve. If Bound they can only wear the Husk of a large mammal such as a ape, bear or walrus.

COMBAT

2 Claws (15 Attack, 4D Damage) If both claws hit the same opponent in a single round, it may also attempt to Bite (13 Attack, 5D Damage). Regenerate any Vitality their victim loses to its Bite

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Track victim without error unless "blinded" by loud music; Fiery Aura manifests in the presence of its victim that raises its Fortitude Attribute by 3 points.

VULNERABILITIES

Music partially "blinds" these creatures, reducing their Perceive to 8 and their Attack and Defend Attributes to 10 each.





Shattered and I spent several mortal lifetimes at the Cloisters discussing our insights. Other than the members of my Circle, he is the only Stalker I consider a friend. He seemed dissatisfied with having to wait for the Call and seemed to resent the involvement of the Supplicant in the Hunt. He spoke often of his desire to seek out "wickedness" and protect mortals from themselves. When I came to the Cloisters looking for him and Mrak told me he had vanished, I knew that he had found a willing Navigator and a way to Call himself. He is out there somewhere, fighting his hopeless crusade...

ADVENTURE HOOKS

At first the structure of the Hunt may seem restrictive. It usually takes the gamemaster several Hunts to realize the potential inherent in the setting.

This section is intended to give new gamemasters a better idea of the kind of adventures that can be run in the world of the Whispering Vault.

- **Subplot:** The Circle must capture two Unbidden. The first is drawn to the Flesh by his unspeakable desires, the second has no faith in Stalkers and has abandoned his post to pursue the first.
- **Subplot:** The Circle is not challenged by the Guardian as they begin a Hunt. Several Hunts later, they discover the Guardian in the Flesh, a renegade. They must determine what to do with it.
- **Subplot:** As the Circle's Navigator grows older and more powerful, it becomes obsessed with one of the Stalkers. Whenever the Circle enters into the Navigator, it only pays attention to or communicates with this Stalker. The Navigator begins to possess human vessels in order to walk with the Stalker in the Dream. The Navigator has developed a strange bond to the Stalker, believing her or him to be its match, its mate. This can be a recurring device used over several Hunts, culminating in a confrontation between Stalker and Navigator.
- **Recurring Character:** A French member of The Order named Louis Bertrand dedicates his energy to becoming a Stalker. In his first appearance, he is a young man, new to The Order, and wearing Rose Colored Glasses. He sees the Stalkers and becomes a man obsessed. He will aid them in the Hunt if possible, but he is not the Supplicant, nor does he have any special information. In his second appearance, he is still young but has touches of grey. He has searched the world for signs of the Unbidden, and upon locating one, immediately summons the Circle and aids them once more. Years later, he is present at another summoning of the Circle by a congregation of The Order attempting to put down a dangerously powerful arm of The Secret Masters. At last, he summons the Circle when he is an old man and asks to be a Stalker, telling them how he has dedicated himself. Be aware, these events need not be placed in Chronological order, but his request to become a Stalker should be the final episode.





- Some of the most effective stories involve recurring plot elements. For example, the Circle is summoned in the late 19th century by a mortal magician who has discovered an Unbidden Stranger and seeks the aid of Stalkers to banish him.

Years later, the magician's 10 year old grandson discovers the magician's summoning book — which names all of the Circle's members — in his attic and gathers his friends. Together, they summon the Circle, hoping for help with a local bully. The Stalkers will likely refuse to help and will probably take the book away. If they talk to the boy, they discover that he hears a "strange voice" whispering to him that his father has told him to ignore.

Many years later the magician's great-grandson, an elderly occultist, finally gives in to the whispering which has been his family's legacy since the 19th century and releases the same Unbidden Stranger from the Vault. The occultist's son (the original magician's great-great-grandson), having heard the tales of his grandfather's summoning at the age of 10, calls the Circle to help his father, who has been possessed by the freed renegade.

The Circle defeats the Stranger who has been freed from the Vault. However, when the Stranger's Vessel is destroyed, he does not appear in his Essential form. Rather, his Vessel dies, and he appears to be destroyed. In truth, the Stranger had mastered the Gemini discipline, hiding his second Vessel hundreds of miles away. When his vessel was destroyed, his Essence

transferred to this second Vessel. The Circle, unable to find the second Vessel will return to the Essence. The Gamemaster may now use this Unbidden as a recurring villain. The Stalkers are repeatedly Called to foil his plots, only to lose him when his Vessel is destroyed. He will eventually become a powerful Architect and even more difficult to destroy. The Circle must eventually devise a way to trap the Unbidden in one Vessel or to Bind him while still in his Vessel (a multiple Karma Inspiration with the Bind Skill, for instance).

• THE FANGED GOD

The Stalkers appear just inside the edge of a jungle on the outskirts of town. The glazed terra-cotta facing on the walls of the town and the buildings have begun to deteriorate. In some places, the facing has totally fallen away to reveal the rough adobe bricks beneath. A steep sided pyramid rises from the center of the town. Large, smoking braziers stand at the four corners of an altar which rests atop the pyramid.

A procession of brightly garbed people wearing elaborate green headdresses are leading ten bound captives up the steps of the pyramid. (The plaintive cries of one of these captives acted as the call). It appears that the entire population of the town has gathered to watch the proceedings. As the procession reaches the altar, one of those leading the captives, head adorned by a gold, feathered headdress, steps forward and addresses the gath-

ered throng at the base of the pyramid. The people begin a cacophonous chant as the high priest begins his speech.

The high priest finishes and turns toward the altar, where one of the captives has been laid out, naked and bound. A shimmer fills the air behind the altar and the head of an immense snake appears. The apparition lunges forward and sinks its fangs into the chest of the struggling captive. He twitches as the eyes of the serpent begin to glow then begins to age rapidly. This is repeated until all ten of the captives have been fed upon and are nothing but desiccated husks.

The high priest is an Unbidden Architect, using powers of illusion to create the serpent image and feed off of the captives' Essence before the very eyes of the people. The Minions of the Unbidden take the forms of priests and guards as their Husks. He desires absolute rule over all of the lands that will one day be Mexico.

The people of the town are Toltecs, a people who were, according to history, wiped out one hundred years ago. The Unbidden's sacrificial dagger, made of obsidian, is the Enigma's Focus and, unlike most Focus manifestations, must be physically destroyed before the Corruption can be mended. The Corruption makes all mortals within its range unnaturally hale and fit. Some Toltecs have lived 160 summers and, though obviously elderly, seem in fine health.





• JACKAL DREAMS

The Stalkers appear in an open desert under a star-filled, clear night sky. They have been Called by the dying breath of an Egyptian slave, crushed by a falling stone while working nearby. The light of the full moon reflects in a silver spray from the limestone facings of the pyramids that lay to the south. The silence of the evening is broken by the howling of a dog; once, twice, then a third and final time. Myth relates that the three howls pronounce the imminent death of those that hear.

As the Stalkers approach the first of the monoliths, the signs that yet another is undergoing construction can be seen. A vast tent city is sprawled about its base, and the forgotten odor of massed humanity assaults the senses of the Stalkers. The new edifice is still years away from completion. Obelisks proclaiming the divinity of Anubis-Amon, Pharaoh of Egypt, line the many roads that lead to the pyramid. Upon investigation, they may find the supplicant, his body being carried off, broken and battered.

Mixed among the sun blackened bodies which labor to build the tomb are the sun-burned fair skins of people from the regions of what will one day be Europe. Races that should not be encountered by the inhabitants of the Nile for another thousand years.

Anubis-Amon is the Unbidden, utilizing his immortal powers to disrupt the natural progression of the Chronosphere and indulge himself in the lust for power. Anubis-Amon

had appeared one day, "... as if rising from the soul of Egypt itself," and placed the Dynastic Pharaoh into the bonds of slavery, twisting the will of the court to match his own.

Those that stand against Anubis-Amon are brutally executed by the malformed "Chosen Ones," the Minions of the Unbidden, or find themselves haunted by fevered dreams of packs of jackals hunting them and rending their flesh. Those executed outright are the lucky few, for those that suffer the dreams are slowly driven insane, deprived of restful slumber.

The people tire of the rule of Anubis-Amon and pray for his downfall. If the enslaved Pharaoh could be freed, the court and the people would follow him. Once the rightful Pharaoh is restored to power, the conquests to the North would cease and Egypt would return to its original path of development, the Veil causing all to forget anything was ever amiss.

The pyramid itself is the Focus of the Enigma. Any Stalker who observes its building will note that no matter how long the workers toil, the Pyramid does not seem to increase in size. In order to aid the Chronosphere in mending the results of Anubis-Amon's meddling, the Circle must free the true Pharaoh from a tower in Cairo. In the confusion of the riots that will occur when the Pharaoh is released, the Stalkers will be able to confront the Unbidden without fear of invoking the Forbiddance.





• FORGOTTEN SONS

The Circle appears on the outskirts of a small town, just off to one side of the two lane, blacktop road that runs through its center. The loud blare of an airhorn splits the quiet day, causing the Stalkers to jump back into the woods to their rear as a tractor trailer speeds by. The direction from which the truck appeared is hidden beneath a thick fog and a light rain falls from the overcast sky. A green road sign states the name and population of the town.

Investigation of the town will reveal the conspicuous absence of children below the age of sixteen. The children that haven't disappeared yet have been sent to stay with distant relatives or hidden. Once or twice a week, a home is broken into and a hidden child is kidnapped. No motive is known and the local authorities are still investigating the circumstances of the disappearances.

Footprints have been discovered leading into the surrounding forest, but search parties that have gone more than a mile into the woods have never returned. Residents are beginning to move away or take extended vacations. Day by day, the population of the little town decreases.

Families that have lost their children at first appeared worried and distraught, but after a period ranging from one day to a week, seem to lapse into total apathy. This total lack of emotion progresses, in every case, to a state of catatonia.

The town and the surrounding forest is host to an Unbidden entity which feeds upon the emotions of those who have lost their children. The Unbidden prefers to take male children between five and eleven years of age, but the supply is rapidly being depleted. The renegade Aesthetic will soon be forced to move on to another small town. The children themselves are not harmed, although the search parties have been destroyed by the Minions of the Unbidden, which are contained within the Husks of dangerous wildlife.

Unfortunately for the Unbidden, the Enigma is slowly incapacitating the townfolks' capacity to emote, leading to the eventual catatonia. Its Focus is a small dollhouse, found in the basement of the Jones household. The dollhouse has been a favorite toy for three generations of Joneses.

Anytime the Stalkers decide to enter the forest, the local authorities will insist upon accompanying them unless they can be persuaded otherwise.



• A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE

The Stalkers appear on a stretch of deserted beach with the saltwater lapping at their ankles. A child of perhaps 18 months sits in the sand at the feet of her dead parents, their faces frozen in expressions of shock and terror. The child has scratched arcane symbols into the sand as well as the names of each Stalker present. Too young to speak, she cannot explain how she knows the Ritual of Summoning at her tender age.

A quick investigation will show that this is not all that is amiss. Further down the beach several teenagers play volleyball. When they see the circle, they bow reverently and explain that it is an honor to have Stalkers among them. The teenagers are not Minions but ordinary mortals. However, they are fully aware that, for some reason, the Veil has been torn down around them.

The Circle will find other mortals, some adults, most children, who know them for what they are. Most are awed, a few frightened, and very few belligerent. There are also formless Shadows along the beach interacting with these mortals.

As it turns out, the Unbidden was one of the Aesthetics who tended the Veil itself. With his departure from the Essence, the Enigma here parts the Veil for all within its power. The Unbidden, though powerful in the Essence, has only just arrived and is a voracious Unbidden Beast. He can be found in the water in the Vessel of a Shark, swimming near the coral reef which is the Enigma's Focus. It will be impossible to Mend the Enigma without fighting the Unbidden.





• BOUDICCA'S REBELLION

The Stalkers appear near an oak grove in First Century Britain, called by a man's dying prayer. From within the grove come the war cries of a large group of savage warriors. As the frenzied warriors burst from the trees, the characters notice that the axe and spear-wielding Celts have long hair standing in lime-coated spikes and are covered with tattoos. The Celts have just killed the supplicant who was a Roman.

As the incensed mob journey to rally with the other factions of their clan, the characters learn that these are members of the army of Boudicca, Queen of the Iceni. After the rape and beating of Boudicca and her daughters, the tribe is bent on the destruction of the Roman settlements of Colchester and London.

An Unbidden Stranger has taken the form of one of Boudicca's chieftains as its Vessel and is collecting the heads of enemies and placing them within a hidden grove. As each head is placed in a widening circumference surrounding the single monolith in the center, they become animated and begin to shout, laugh, cry, and threaten any who approach the grove.

The standing stone in the grove is the Focus of Enigma. It causes any dead flesh which is within range of the widening Corruption to animate.

• DOOMWATCH MASSACRE

The Circle appears along the coast of a small Caribbean island, called by the nearby prayers of several townfolk. The sound of drums in the distance lead the Stalkers to a large group of ragged peasants surrounding a raised wooden podium. A brightly colored tent shades the podium and several men carrying semi-automatic pistols in shoulder holsters.

The tempo of the drums rises to a crescendo and then stops as a man steps up to the microphone on the podium. He announces that the "Shepherd" will return that afternoon to explain the rash of stillborn children and refertilize his flock.

An Architect has assumed the role of the charismatic leader of an isolated religious commune. The followers are fanatically loyal, almost crazed. The Unbidden is using these followers for their Essence and binding Shadows through rituals that reform the dead children into Vile Husks.

The children's physical bodies are being processed by a machine which is the Focus of the Enigma. The machine, affected by the Corruption, allows flesh to be stretched, twisted, and perverted into any form.

The machine (and the bodies) are kept in a secure barn at the edge of the commune. It will be difficult to destroy the Unbidden, for he has many followers who will obey his command to the death, and, worse, numerous bound Shadows.

• BURNING STEEL

The Circle is called by a Sephardic Jew living in Spain. His family has been taken away by the Catholic Church, never to be seen again. He prays to God that the Spanish Inquisition will stop and they are his answer.

What started as an organized crusade to identify and eliminate heretics has turned into wholesale murder of innocents and political or religious opponents. Rumors have surfaced relating a number of hideous rituals and experiments performed on the prisoners of the Inquisition.

The Inquisitor of the local church is an Unbidden Architect. Having established himself over the years, he has risen to a position of considerable political power within the Church, and seeks to solidify his personal control within the region. The Inquisitor has gathered a large number of allies among the Unseen, and is attempting to gain permanent dominance of the area by removing all who oppose him.

The water of a nearby river flows with blood. Its source is an underground spring that is fed from a pool deep beneath the dungeons where the prisoners are held and interrogated. These mazelike lower caverns serve as the Lair of the Unbidden. The underground pool is the Focus of the Enigma, causing the corrupted sanguine river.





• STALKING THE STALKER

The Stalkers appear in a run down section of a large city. Not far away, a group of homeless men stand around a fire as they try in vain to warm themselves. There is a state of nervous tension in the group, and they speak in hushed tones about the most recent disappearance.

To the side sits a mute, homeless child, writing a letter in broken English, begging for help. The child is the Supplicant and the letter, addressed to no one, is the Call. The boy's mother has disappeared, leaving him to fend for himself.

Several months ago, a rash of unexplained disappearances began to plague the homeless population. While their ranks thinned with the coming of each nightfall, the authorities were less than helpful.

The token investigation uncovered little, and the homeless people were certain nothing would be done. However, less than a week ago, the targets of the disappearances expanded to include not only the homeless but other established members of the community — and even the detectives performing the investigation into the matter.

The Unbidden Beast has taken the body of a quiet volunteer at a homeless shelter as its Vessel. Though initially it roamed the streets by night to find its vulnerable prey, it has begun to

expand its taste in victims to include other types.

An old abandoned warehouse houses the Enigma's focus and has become the central repository of the Unbidden's collection — the bloodless, surgically dismembered corpses of the being's victims. Sensitives will recoil from an otherworldly stench that has settled in here.

The Focus is the warehouse's old, broken furnace, and the corruption, which has not yet expanded outside the furnace, causes the furnace to burn with an impossible heat. The flame will consume anything placed inside, including beings of Essence.

The component parts of each body are separated and stored individually in large crates within the warehouse. Select body parts have been reassembled by the Unbidden into collections of grossly distorted mannequin-like statues perched on a wooden scaffolding near the back of the building.

• THE DEVIL'S HORDE

Appearing on the edge of a medieval village, the Stalkers are greeted by the stench of burning corpses from a large open pit. They have been Called by the mournful prayers of a woman recently widowed, the Circle find the Supplicant staring into the pit.

Wailing, ragged peasants moan over their dead loved ones as sad-eyed men throw more diseased bodies into the flames. As carts laden with the dead are

brought to the pit, the Stalkers notice that some of the corpses are little more than charred skeletons.

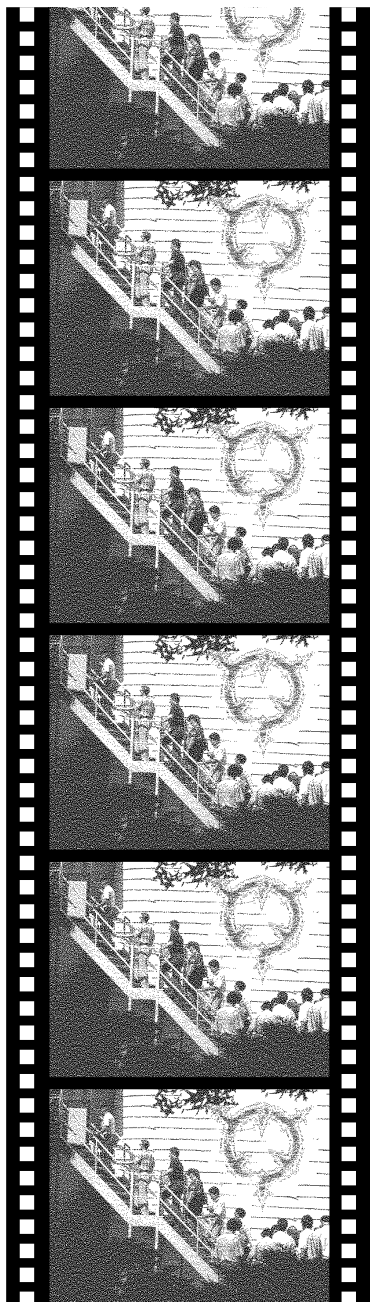
A bone at the bottom of the pit is the Enigma's Focus. The Corruption causes the corpses placed within to reform and animate. These mindless, shambling dead rise nightly and roam the land, wandering through the streets of the village and to the fields beyond in search of living victims. The villagers have learned to lock and bar their doors against the corpses which they must collect and return to the pit daily. As the number of corpses within the pit grows, the range they may travel increases.

The Unbidden Stranger which caused the Enigma has occupied many Vessels within the village and has currently placed its Essence in the local priest. He has convinced the villagers that the walking dead among them are a warning from God and urges them to persevere against the Minions of the Devil who seek to drive them from their homes.

To Mend the Enigma, the Stalkers must remove the bodies from the pit and dig up the bone at the bottom, covered in the ash of burnt bone and flesh.

Naturally, the Unbidden will marshall the villagers to come to his defense as soon as the Stalkers are detected. These new strangers are, he says, the servants of the devil and have come to keep him from protecting his flock.





SHOOTING SCRIPT

When the truth finally drifted through the alcoholic fog draped over John Rattin's mind like a shroud, he recoiled in terror, pressing himself deeper into his uncomfortable seat.

This can't be happening.

Through bloodshot eyes he stared in dread fascination at the movie screen as the credits rolled. It was just like the night before and the night before that. Things like this just don't happen (not in Oregon anyway).

His hand was shaking as he reached for the bottle of courage he kept wrapped in a brown paper bag in the right pocket of his overcoat. As the Red Devil burned its way down to the empty pit of his stomach, he muttered a prayer, his first in over thirty years of despair.

Please god, not again...



Shooting Script is a Hunt intended for a Circle of experienced Stalkers. Much of Shooting Script revolves around an investigation, requiring interaction with mortals and social engineering. Players whose approach is to shoot first and question the corpses probably won't be able to solve the central mystery that will lead them to the Focus of the Enigma and in turn to the Unbidden.





He'd seen the movie for the first time two nights ago, on a Monday. The marquee promised a World Premiere, the first in Gold Beach and probably the first in all of Oregon.

Tomorrow was the latest release from Ergo Productions, one of the new independent studios that were springing up in Hollywood like weeds. It was a strangely enigmatic title that seemed to suggest epic tragedy. Not the best choice for an audience used to escapist musicals like *Gold Diggers* and *42nd Street*.

The only thing to recommend the picture was Marie Denver in her first starring role. John had always liked the comedienne and when she stopped doing movies, he never stopped hoping for a comeback. This artsy stuff was a real departure for Denver, but there were lots of other comic actors attempting the stretch to drama so he decided to give it a shot.

Despite his misgivings, John was the first one through the door on opening night. He'd been seeing a lot of movies lately. After all, it was warmer inside the theatre than in his fleabag apartment, and he had an understanding with Rob the usher.

He had been ready to ignore the movie like he did most nights but there was something about the movie that commanded his attention. The peculiar visuals and Marie's performance drew him in, and he got caught up in the story even though it didn't make much sense to him. Maybe if he was stone sober he would understand, but his instincts told him he didn't want to.

It was the reaction of the rest of the audience that disturbed him the most. He could feel it happening again, just the way he had last night and the night before.

Gold Beach was a small town, which meant that everyone here knew just about everyone else. On their way in, the theatre patrons had been chatting among themselves with affable familiarity, and when the film had begun, they surrendered to the shared experience.

They were a community.

As they watched the movie, the people around John Rattin ceased to be an audience. They watched with rapt attention, each lost in their own little world. It was like they had fallen into some kind of trance. Everyone but John.

When the movie ended, they filed out of the theatre in silence. There was none of the idle conversation about what they'd just seen that usually followed the opening of a new movie. No smiling, no joking, none of the camaraderie that was so much a part of small-town life. The theatre was comfortable when they came in, but by the time they left, it seemed stiflingly small.

Each night it happened again, and each night there were more people in the theatre. He could feel it around him, from friends and neighbors he had known for years. He watched as they filed out of the theatre, changed by what they had seen. Then, with a sigh, he drained his bottle of Red Devil.

Something's happening, he told himself, staring at the darkened screen. Something's coming...





• BACKSTORY

The year is 1933. Several years ago, the Unbidden Aesthetic who calls himself Fallen Graith forced his way into our Realm in the southern California desert. During his time as a Beast, he indulged a taste for post menopausal women that led to a nearly disastrous attack on a retirement village.

Eventually Graith overcame the hunger and learned how to transfer his Essence from one mortal Vessel to another. When the Stranger figured out what he wanted from the Flesh, he assumed the identity of Steve Hayward, an independent movie producer.

The creature used its power and insight to achieve the influence in the burgeoning Hollywood community it needed to get a new movie studio off the ground. Exploiting the backing offered by several wealthy Thralls, the renegade founded Ergo Productions.

Under the guise of Hayward Graith produced a number of small films which made quite a stir. These films were unlike any of the other movies being made at the time in the United States – dark, depressing and ultimately alienating stories that struck at the very heart of the industry's buoyant enthusiasm. While critics roundly praised the angst-ridden oeuvres, few people outside the art-film crowd ever saw them. Of those who did, many were changed forever by the bleak, nihilistic emotional landscape of

TIME AND PLACE: AMERICA 1933

By 1933, the United States was in its fourth year of economic depression. The stock market crash of 1929 had cast the industrial world into a deep fiscal crisis that showed no sign of relenting. Twenty-five percent of the nation's populace was unemployed in 1933, and the value of the dollar plummeted, precipitated by a drop in prices: a gallon of milk sold for \$.41, a loaf of bread \$.07, a gallon of gas \$.10, and a new car \$550.

It was in March of 1933 that the nation's twenty-seventh president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, was inaugurated. Having defeated the incumbent, Herbert C. Hoover, by the second largest margin in history, Roosevelt was elected on a platform of aggressive reform in the face of the Depression. He called his plan a "New Deal," and at his inauguration spoke of a war against the economic crisis. He referred to the American people as an army and referred to marshaling his troops; he told his constituents that in the face of the Depression "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

Roosevelt immediately went about instituting numerous changes which altered the face of the country. He saw to the ratification of the 21st Amendment to the Constitution which revoked the 18th Amendment's prohibition against alcohol. The amendment received only mild opposition as it had become clear that prohibition was too expensive and difficult to enforce. In addition, with liquor illegal, a large portion of the nation's income was funneling into an untraceable and untaxable economy. With liquor once more legal, its sales would contribute to the country's gross national product and bolster tax revenues.

By June, Roosevelt had taken the dollar off of the gold standard in hopes of inflating the dollar value and founded several progressive programs: the National Recovery Administration (NRA), the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), the Public Works Administration (PWA), and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). In order, these programs were responsible for the following: standardization of work hours and wages; the rebuilding of the impoverished Tennessee valley; the hiring of the unemployed to execute some three billion dollars in construction of roads, bridges, public buildings and other public works; guaranteeing bank deposits up to \$2,500 in an effort to curtail runs on banks (which had been one of the Depression's earliest epidemics).

Roosevelt held weekly "fireside chats" on the radio in an effort to change the American people's attitude from that of terror in the face of calamity to one of courage in the face of adversity. With his programs in place and the hopes of the people running high, the United States seemed by mid-year a nation preparing to shuffle off the Depression and emerge prosperous once more.





the creatures work.

Hayward quickly garnered a small, but intensely loyal, cult following, particularly among the young who hadn't quite bought into the climate of optimism that gripped the United States at the time. Since this was before the era of computers and statisticians, nobody seemed to notice that the incidence of suicide and mysterious disappearances among Hayward's cult audience was well above the national average and steadily growing.

These films were Graith's first experiments at psychologically manipulating his audiences. The enemy had a profound understanding of many facets of the Dream, particularly the lamentable frailty of the human psyche, but it took him several years to translate this understanding into the ability to exploit those weaknesses.

By 1933, Hayward was ready to extend his influence beyond his limited cult following. To help him reach a wider audience, the Unbidden employed a well-known actress of the time named Marie Denver. Ms. Denver was a Canadian-born comedienne who received an Academy Award nomination for Best Supporting Actress in recognition of her role as "Ms. Abrogast" in the 1931 classic *Mary and Bill*.

Initially, the retired actress had been attracted by Hayward's reputation as an up-and-coming producer and by offers of incredible sums of money. When she realized just what kind of movies Hayward wanted her to star in, however, she defaulted on her contract.

Unfortunately for Denver, saying

no to the Unbidden is a poor way to stage a comeback. Graith devoured her and used her flesh to craft a convincing Husk for one of his Minions, ordering it to replace her.

Putting his contract negotiations behind him, Graith filmed *Tomorrow*, Ergo Productions' first big-budget feature and the first move in the renegade's broader plan. The film is a disturbing psychodrama in which Ms. Denver plays a part diametrically opposite to the light-hearted roles that were once her trademark.

The Unbidden is content with the success he has achieved so far but wonders whether *Tomorrow's* bleak, nihilistic symbolism will play with an audience less angst-ridden than the typical art-film crowd. Graith has decided the only way to be sure is to do a little test marketing.

The test audience was decided by the vacation plans of Roger McHale, the owner/operator of the Coast Cinema in Gold Beach, Oregon. An obsessive film buff, McHale was vacationing in Los Angeles during early 1933 and took the time to visit all of the studios that made the movies he so loved.

Although he hadn't seen any of Hayward's earlier films, he had heard a lot about them, and so he added Ergo Productions to his itinerary. Hayward himself met with McHale and convinced him to take a print of *Tomorrow* back to Gold Beach with him for its World Premiere.

Three days into the test run the movie has begun to weave its spell over the citizens of Gold Beach and only one man seems to notice...





ANSWERING THE CALL

The Supplicant is John Rattin, an alcoholic writer who (almost) made a name for himself in Hollywood in the 1920s, before his weakness for the bottle put his career on the skids. He has seen *Tomorrow* three times and has a vague sense of the effect it has on its audiences. (The fact that he was always half-cut when he watched the film partially protected him from its effects.)

Frightened by the changes he has seen in his friends and neighbors, he is trying to figure out what he can do about it. After much alcohol-hazed thought, he has decided there is nothing he really can do. In his despair, he has offered up a prayer for help. Unbeknownst to him, his Call has been heard... but not quite in the way he might have expected.

The Circle receives the Call, summons the Navigator, and walks the Winding Path as usual. Since Rattin isn't Enlightened, the Stalkers don't appear in his presence but nearby in a narrow and dark alley behind the Coast Cinema in the tiny town of Gold Beach at about ten in the morning.

The cinema is dark, its doors locked. Despite the fact that it is the middle of a warm and sunny Thursday morning, the single main drag of Gold Beach is deserted. The only living creature in the area is John Rattin, slumped asleep in the shelter of a doorway; his empty bottle of Red Devil clutched in his hand.





QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The Stalkers will presumably realize that the drunken bum in the alley is the Suppliant who Called them into the Realm of Flesh.

If they wake him, he will be slow to rouse; the empty bottle and the reek of his breath should adequately explain why. Rattin is hideously hung-over from the night before and pretty surly until he actually looks at the people who are disturbing him. Although he isn't skilled or focused enough to see through the Mortal Mask the Stalkers wear, he can tell that there is something different about them. Throughout his interaction with them, the Stalkers will catch him "looking them over" when he doesn't think they are watching.

Rattin is so disturbed by the effects the movie has had on the townsfolk that he will gladly explain his concerns to the strangers. He can't remember the exact details of the movie or of its symbolism. (His addled mind isn't quite up to the task.) He does his best though to convey the bleakness and nihilism he sensed.

He explains to the Circle that only a dozen or so people saw the movie when it opened on Monday. That same dozen, plus maybe fifteen more, came to the Tuesday night show, and on Wednesday night, more than half of the cinema's 250 seats were filled; 30 of them by people who had already seen the movie once or twice before. He fears to see how many people will show up tonight...

He explains as well as he can

JOHN RATTIN

Fortitude	3
Vitality	4
Initiative	5
Defend	10
Perceive	12
Resolve	7

John Rattin once cut a dashing figure but alcohol and years of despair have taken their toll. Clothes that were stylish in their day are now old and worn, hanging loosely on his gangly frame. He was once a talented writer with a brilliant imagination, but he didn't have the confidence or the strength of will to survive in a business that chews up and spits out all but the most resilient. He hit the bottle hard and quickly slumped into obscurity and poverty. In 1930 he moved to Gold Beach to live near his childhood friend, Roger McHale.

Rattin is always at least mildly drunk and often goes on major binges. He can control the grosser physical symptoms of drunkenness (he rarely staggers or falls), but his thought processes are always a little foggy. John is also a Sensitive but doesn't realize it. His gift was one of the things that made him such a good writer before his fall. It is this Sensitivity that allows him to sense the effects *Tomorrow* is having on his friends and neighbors.

about the feelings of isolation and repressed hostility that he sensed from the audiences on all three nights. He goes on to say that this feeling seems to be spreading through the town. As proof, he points to the main street, "Thursday," he says, "middle of the business day, and the place is quiet as a tomb."

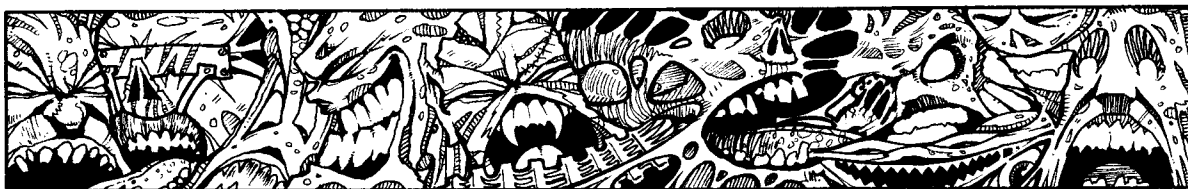
During his ramblings, Rattin will stress that the more he thinks about it, the more surprising it was to see Marie Denver, the comedienne, in something like *Tomorrow*. (If the Stalkers aren't quite getting the hint, he might even say in puzzled tones, "I can't guess what would possess her to do a movie like that...")

The Stalkers might think to ask Rattin who was responsible for

bringing *Tomorrow* to town. (They'll probably suspect that this person might be the Unbidden). Rattin gladly tells them that the cinema is owned and operated by an old friend of his, one Roger McHale. In fact, he goes on to say that he has tried to speak to McHale about the movie and its strange effects, but his old childhood chum won't discuss the matter with him. He won't even give him the time of day.

If asked, John gives the Stalkers McHale's address--a small house on the outskirts of town which overlooks the ocean--but also tells them that Roger can often be found in his theater during the day, screening movies for himself.





TOURING THE TOWN

Either before or after speaking with Rattin, the Stalkers will probably want to take their own look at the town.

Gold Beach is a tiny little town with a single five-block main street. Total population is on the order of 700. Right on the Pacific Coast at the mouth of the Rogue River, the town's sole claim to fame is as the terminus for the US Mail boats that cruise regularly up-river to deliver the mail to people living further inland.

When the Stalkers arrive, the town appears to be deserted. No businesses are open along the main street; no people are abroad.

Across the street from the cinema is a small coffee shop closed which is like everything else with an upper floor that appears to be an apartment, presumably belonging to the owner.

As the Stalkers emerge onto the street for the first time, an Easy Perception Challenge allows them to notice that a curtain over a window in the upper floor is moving, as though someone was watching from the window and has let the curtain swing closed.

If the Stalkers decide to wander through the town, they have the chance to notice other similar events. It should quickly become apparent that many inhabitants of the town are watching cautiously from their windows (for what, the Stalkers can only guess) but don't want their observation to be noted.

Gamemaster's Note: Ideally, the nebulous sense of "being watched" experienced by the Stalkers in town should unsettle them and keep the players off-balance. Since one of the themes of the adventure is paranoia, it is important to give the player characters a taste of what Graith's plan is doing to the people of Gold Beach.

• A CLOSE CALL (HIT AND RUN)

At some time when the Stalkers are on the street, they hear approaching the rumble of an automobile engine. Within seconds, the car has turned the corner and is bearing down on them.

Any Stalker who makes an Easy Perception Challenge can see the face of the man at the wheel... and see his sudden snarl of anger (or is it fear?) as he floors the gas pedal and aims his car directly at them.

Whether or not the driver actually hits any of the Stalkers, he loses control of his vehicle and slams it into the side of a building, disabling the vehicle and injuring himself in the process (a loss of 3 points of Vitality).

The man is dazed from the impact and won't take any physical action unless he has to defend himself. If the Stalkers interrogate him, rather than slaughtering him on the spot, he will have difficulty explaining his homicidal actions.

He will explain in a surly voice that they are obviously strangers here, and they don't belong though he can't explain how he knows that or what he means. Once he realized they don't belong, he was overcome by a kind of blind rage. In his rage, he tried to run them over.

If the Stalkers ask, he will admit that he went to see *Tomorrow* last night and that he has been doing a lot of thinking since then about his neighbors. He has realized that they all see the world differently from him and that they are wrong to do so. Late at night, he has started to wonder whether they are actually people at all. They are all strangers, he will conclude at last, all of them...

GARETH MACGREGOR

Fortitude	2
Vitality	4
Initiative	8
Defend	10
Perceive	10
Resolve	8
Attack	8
Strength	1

Because of the vehicle's speed, the driver gets a +5 to his Initiative and Attack Attributes, but he only gets a single pass with the car. A Stalker struck by the speeding car suffers 11 dice of damage with a Base Die Cap of 4- because of the impersonal nature of the attack.





• DEAD MAN'S SCRUTINY

Beyond the town's main drag are short dead-end streets lined with houses. Most of these are dark with all windows and doors shut and all curtains drawn. (There are continued signs of cautious observation, of course.)

One exception is a small, run-down house on one of these side-streets. It is different from the others in that all its interior lights are burning despite the fact that it is a sunny day, and the curtains are all drawn back.

With a Routine Perception Challenge, the Stalkers will notice an old man sitting, motionless, at the open window, staring out into the street...directly at them.

If they decide to investigate, they find that the front door is open. Upstairs, they find the figure they saw from the street.

He is sitting in a wooden rocker, staring with wide, unseeing eyes out the window... and he is quite dead. He has slit his wrists with a straight razor and simply bled to death in his chair. All evidence points to the fact that this was a suicide and that he has been dead for almost 12 hours.

If the Stalkers decide to investigate other houses throughout the town, perhaps through the use of Disciplines or Servitors, they will find three more suicides: a veteran dressed in his uniform who blew his brains out with his service pistol; an old woman who hanged herself from a shower-head using a silk

stocking; and a middle-aged woman who put her head in the oven and turned on the gas. All are true suicides, without even the slightest hint of foul play.

A Stalker who has Mastered the Delve Discipline can learn that all the suicides have seen *Tomorrow* at least once, and it was the movie that convinced them of the emptiness and futility of their lives.

• LETHAL FORCE

At the gamemaster's discretion, the Stalkers may eventually find the body of someone who definitely wasn't a suicide. In the back garden of a small house, they will find the corpse of a man killed by a shotgun blast to the chest. In his dead hand, he still holds a pair of gardening clippers; apparently, he was pruning a rose bush near the fence between his and his neighbor's house when he was killed.

With an Easy Perception Challenge, the Stalkers will realize that the shotgun blast had to come from a window of the neighbor's house. (A Master at the Delve Discipline can confirm this by questioning the corpse.) If they look, they will see signs of stealthy observation from that house.

The Stalkers will probably decide to investigate... a dangerous move. The neighbor, a widow in her late 50s, is watching out for trespassers armed with her husband's trusty double-barrel shotgun (10D Damage). If anyone sets foot on her property (or even looks like they might be consider-

ing it) she will open a window and cut loose with the shotgun without any warning.

If the Stalkers keep the woman alive long enough to question her, she will tell them much the same tale as the driver in the car (see *Close Call* above). She has seen *Tomorrow* twice, and since then, she has come to realize just how little she can trust her neighbors... or anyone else, for that matter. They are all out to take advantage of her, she has concluded, if she lets them. She doesn't know why people might want to harm her, but she knows they do; she can see it in their eyes. Take her neighbor, for example; he was just pretending to prune his roses, while he was actually planning to sneak into her house and do her harm. Obviously, the woman is extremely paranoid, a danger to herself but particularly to others.

LORA VENTERS

Fortitude	2
Vitality	3
Initiative	8
Defend	9
Perceive	10
Resolve	7
Attack	8
Strength	1





- **WORD ON THE STREET**

If the Stalkers haven't already got the picture, they can get a clue as to the town's collective delusions by interrogating any one of the townsfolk who they have seen surreptitiously watching them from behind curtains. All of these people are paranoid to one degree or another, fearing that their old friends and colleagues are actually out to do them harm and somehow innately different from them. The exact manifestation of these delusions will vary as will the level of violence the locals are likely to offer the Stalkers. The Stalkers should quickly come to realize that every resident of Gold Beach apart from Rattin and, as it will be seen later, McHale is certifiably sociopathic or hiding out from those who are.

RODGER McHALE

If the Stalkers have spoken with Rattin, they will probably decide eventually to track down Roger McHale, the owner of the Coast Cinema.

- **NOBODY HOME**

McHale's house, on the outskirts of town overlooking the Pacific, is easy to find, but McHale isn't home. If the Stalkers decide to check the place out anyway, they can eventually find documentation hinting that he has recently taken a trip to Los Angeles (hotel receipts, a towel stolen from the Beverly Hills Hotel, and similar items) and hints that he is planning a return trip in the near future (a letter

confirming his reservation at the Beverly Hills Hotel for two weeks from now). They can also find a listing of the studios he visited while in the LA area, including Ergo Productions. (Finding these clues would normally require an Average Perception Challenge, and some time. If the Stalkers have missed all other opportunities to find out what is going on in Gold Beach, however, the Perception Challenge can be made easier, or even automatic.)

- **THE THEATRE**

During the day on this Thursday, the Coast Cinema is closed for business. As he often does, however, Roger McHale is present, screening a movie (not *Tomorrow*) for his personal enjoyment. If the Stalkers decide to penetrate the locked cinema (not a difficult task), they will hear the music and dialog of a movie as soon as they enter the building.

The Coast Cinema is an old, dilapidated building, dark and dusty with creaky floors and stairs.

Gamemaster's Note:

You should play up the potentially creepy experience of exploring a deserted theatre with a movie playing: disembodied voices from the screen, constantly-shifting shadows, the film itself playing over the *Masks of the Stalkers* and so forth.

Upstairs, the projection room is empty, except for the operating projector. McHale himself is downstairs in the theatre, watching the movie from his favorite seat in the middle of the back row. (The cinema's print of *Tomorrow* is not in the projection room, however; it is safely locked away in a cabinet in McHale's office, also upstairs.)

- **QUESTIONING RODGER**

Roger McHale is almost as paranoid as the other townsfolk... but then, he could well have cause to be. That is what he suspects, at least. Since his trip to LA, he has been having strange nightmares, the details of which he can't remember on waking. Only a lingering sense of fear, and of corruption, remains in the morning light.

He has taken to avoiding people even personal friends like John Rattin and to carrying a light pistol (6D Damage) in his pocket. If he thinks the Stalkers are just trespassers, his response will be to try to scare them away with his weapon only shooting if he thinks he is in physical danger. If the Stalkers do anything to make him suspect that they might know about what is going on, however, he will talk with them willingly.

If asked, McHale will describe his trip to LA, and his visits to the different studios including, of course, Ergo Productions. He can't remember any details of those visits, however; that's one of the things that has been bothering him; usually he has a good memory. He knows he did make the visits, and





he knows he brought a print of *Tomorrow* back with him from the Ergo studios. He also has a reservation for a return trip to L.A. and an appointment to meet with the head of Ergo Productions in two weeks. He doesn't quite know why he has to go back to L.A. but knows it is vital that he do so.

In fact, of course, McHale has been Dominated by the Unbidden, instructed to screen the film *Tomorrow*, then to report back to Hayward and describe the film's effects. McHale's Resolve is not strong enough to resist or to throw off the Domination, but it is strong enough to give him subconscious hints that something is not right--the dreams.

A Stalker who Delves into McHale's mind will find strong evidence of this Domination--a mental block that acts as a traumatic memory. Attempting to penetrate this block causes McHale immense pain; the Stalker must make a Hard Willpower Challenge or lose 1 point of Vitality from the effort. Successfully penetrating the block and reading the concealed memory requires a Very Hard Insight Challenge. If the Stalker can penetrate this block, both he and McHale will remember the fact that Steve Hayward performed some hideous, arcane ritual on the poor man (the Unbidden's version of the Dominate Discipline) which almost shattered his sanity. The Domination took the form of a desire, bordering on an obsession, to show the movie *Tomorrow* repeatedly, then to return to Ergo Productions to report the results.

This conversation should give the Stalkers everything they need to

track down Hayward in Hollywood. If they killed McHale without questioning him, however, they can still learn the source of the movie and a little about its dark power simply by examining it.

• THE FILM

McHale's print of *Tomorrow* is upstairs, locked in a cabinet in his office. (Normally, he leaves films on racks in the projection room. As a consequence of his Domination, however, he felt compelled to protect this print from accidental damage.) The metal containers that hold the reels of film all have labels identifying them as products of Ergo Productions. (The credits of the film provide the same information, along with the name of the producer, Steve Hayward.)

Any Stalker who physically touches the film will sense some kind of taint to it. On an Average Sensitivity Challenge, the Stalkers can determine that the film is a carrier of the Enigma that is afflicting the town--a kind of mini-Focus. Mending the Enigma represented by this Focus (as described on p.70 of the *Whispering Vault* rulebook) will free Gold Beach from the taint that has been afflicting it. (In this sense, the mini-Focus is extraordinary in that the Unbidden doesn't have to be Bound before Mending can take place--even though the Unbidden is Life Linked to the Enigma. This is a consequence of the film being a carrier.)

Over the next few days after the film is destroyed, the townsfolk will return to normal...and possibly be crippled with guilt if they commit-

ted any crimes while under the Enigma's influence.

The Stalkers should realize that there is more to this Hunt than just Mending this local Enigma, however. The Unbidden that caused it is still at large and is probably surrounded by an even larger, more pervasive Enigma. It shouldn't take long for the Circle to realize that the next step is to travel to California and pay Steve Hayward a visit at Ergo Productions.

If the Stalkers happen to look at the film, which will probably involve mounting the reels on the projector and running it, they will quickly notice that in every scene, the actress Marie Denver is wearing wrap-around sunglasses that totally conceal her eyes from view. On an Average Insight Challenge, the Stalkers will realize that the design of the sunglasses is definitely anachronistic; they are much more like 1980s-vintage Gargoyles than 1930s-vintage models. This realization may give the Circle a hint of what they will be facing on the Ergo Productions lot.

ROGER MCHALE

Fortitude	3
Vitality	7
Initiative	10
Defend	11
Perceive	11
Resolve	11
Attack	10
Strength	2





MARIE DENVER

It is conceivable, although unlikely, that the Stalkers will miss all the clues pointing them in the direction of Ergo Productions. (They kill McHale, destroy the film without looking at it, and don't bother searching his house, for example.)

If this happens there is still one more trail for the Circle to follow: Rattin's conviction that Marie Denver's involvement in *Tomorrow* is significant in some way. (The gamemaster might have to remind a particularly forgetful Circle about Rattin's conviction.) If the Stalkers follow this clue, refer to the following section, Tracking Marie Denver.

• TRACKING MARIE

After her performance in *Mary and Bill*, Marie Denver is well-known in the Hollywood community. Anyone who is even slightly plugged into the grapevine knows that the comedienne lives with her husband in a small but very comfortable house in the Hollywood Hills.

Industry insiders also know that she has recently signed an exclusive contract with an independent outfit known as Ergo Productions and has recently finished a movie called *Tomorrow* ... although they haven't seen so much as a single rush from the movie. With a little asking around, the Stalkers should have little difficulty in digging up this preliminary information.

If they dig a little deeper, however, they will learn more; there was a major conflict between Denver and the head of Ergo Productions soon after Marie signed her





contract. There was talk of her defaulting on her contractual obligations and just walking off the set of *Tomorrow*. However, she seemed to change her mind quite quickly, convincing cynical observers that the whole thing had to be a bargaining ploy on her part to extract more money from Ergo Productions.

If they dig still deeper, they will hear rumors that all is not well between Marie and her husband, Sam. Apparently, Sam has been keeping to himself of late, a real change from his regular party loving persona, and Marie hasn't been home in weeks. Obviously, the rumor-mongers believe, Marie Denver has taken up with someone else (quite possibly her producer at Ergo Productions), and Sam is taking it very hard.

Its up to the gamemaster to handle the role-playing of this investigation. The Stalkers can ask around, read industry papers, eavesdrop on conversations... or sweat the information out of unwilling informants, depending on how they pursue the Hunt.

• VISITING SAM DENVER

At some point, its quite likely that the Stalkers will think to pay a visit to Marie Denver's husband. The Denver house is in the Hollywood Hills, on about an acre of land. At the far end of the back garden is a brush-choked ravine; the Denvers have put up a fence along the lip of the ravine, largely to avoid lawsuits from visitors who take a header into the dry canyon.

• DOWN THE RAVINE

If the Stalkers think of checking the ravine behind the house, a Routine Perception Challenge lets them find the body of Marie Denver, hidden among the brush. The wounds on the corpse imply that Marie was killed by blows from a sword or other large blade. She has been dead for several weeks.

SAM DENVER

Fortitude	3
Vitality	6
Initiative	10
Defend	10
Perceive	12
Resolve	12
Attack	10
Strength	1

Sam Denver is a handsome, vigorous man in his mid-50s. He is not in the film industry himself, but through his wife he knows most of the movers and shakers and enjoys partying with them. He loves his wife, and if he finds that she is dead, he will try to convince the Stalkers to allow him to accompany them when they track down her murderer.

If the Circle allows him to tag along, Sam Denver represents a vulnerability that Hayward and Marie Denver will attempt to exploit. As well as watching their own backs, the Stalkers may well find themselves protecting the innocent Sam from the Unbidden.

If the Stalkers question Sam Denver, he will quite willingly admit that he is worried about his wife Marie. Soon after she signed the contract with Ergo Productions, she came home exceptionally troubled, telling Sam that she was seriously thinking about defaulting on her contract.

She never explained exactly why, but Sam concluded that she was deeply disturbed about some element of the film she was shooting--the film called *Tomorrow*. A day or two later, she went in to work to discuss the matter with her producer, Steve Hayward, face to face... and that was the last he saw of her.

He received a phone call from Marie later that day telling him that for her own reasons she wouldn't be coming home until her work for Ergo Productions was done. Her tone was strange, Sam remembers, distracted; he was sure she was lying to him and was convinced that against all reason she was having an affair with Hayward.

Over the next couple of weeks, he repeatedly tried to call his wife, but his calls were never put through. He even attempted to visit her on the Ergo Productions lot, but studio security personnel tossed him off the property before he could track Marie down.





• QUIET ON THE SET

The interior of Sound Stage 7 is dressed as a complex set depicting the interior of a medieval castle: stone walls and floors, narrow corridors, constricting spiral staircases, heavy wooden doors, etc.

Gamemaster's Note:

The layout of the castle is entirely up to you. Unlike a real set, this one is designed without any apparent thought for the requirements of shooting a film so the corridors are too narrow for a camera dolly to traverse; rooms have four walls, rather than three and an invisible wall; etc.

Brilliant klieg lights are everywhere. Two entire camera crews are set up at different points: mechanical movie cameras tended by a dozen focus-pullers, cameramen (mortal ones...), grips, gaffers, and the rest. The twenty-fifth person in the film crew is the second unit director not Steve Hayward.

Obviously, Ergo Productions is filming a horror movie. On the set are six extras (use the Minor Character template) costumed as medieval warriors, armed with short spears (Heavy Melee Weapons; 4D Damage). When the Stalkers arrive, a shot is underway; the warriors are locked in mortal combat with two monsters. From the reactions of the film crew, the Stalkers might assume that the monsters are other actors in elaborate costumes and that the fight to the death is cho-

reographed.

Quite the opposite, in fact. The monsters are Bound Zelun Vhori (p. 111), concealed by Husks that make them look like stereotypical B-movie monsters, and the fight to the death is just that; the Ogyrs quickly dismember the warriors.

As soon as the last warrior is down, the director yells, "Cut!" As the Husk-encased Ogyrs stand around, confused, the film crew sets up for the next scene. Grips hurry out and clean up what is left of the warriors, innocently discussing among themselves how impressive the special effects are in this movie. Although they are obviously collecting the shredded bodies of real people, they don't seem to notice it, and neither does anyone else.

If the Stalkers hang back and just watch, much the same thing happens again; more extras are brought out and are efficiently dismembered by the Ogyrs while the cameras roll.

The film crew cannot be convinced that the special effects and the monsters are real. If the Stalkers try to reason with them, the crew members will be tolerantly amused, "You guys must have come in from a real small town, huh? This is the movies!" They will willingly explain about movie magic and the wonder of modern special effects.

Should the Stalkers think to ask about Steve Hayward, any of the crewmembers will gladly say that the boss is in his office and point toward the heart of the castle set.





ERGO PRODUCTIONS

Ergo Productions is a sprawling studio complex located in North Hollywood, near the site of the modern Universal City. Like the contemporary Universal Studios, the Ergo Productions facility includes cavernous sound stages and administration/service buildings, and an expansive back lot.

The design of the back lot is up to individual gamemasters. Its a constantly-changing area of movie unreality, so the Stalkers themselves shouldn't know the layout or just what they are going to find.

There will certainly be a few semi-permanent areas: a dusty main street in a western town; a Gothic castle suitable for a remake of *Frankenstein*; a block that could have been transplanted from Victorian London (complete with gaslights); the narrow streets of turn-of-the-century New York; and any other locales that strike the gamemaster's fancy.

There are seven sound stages each of which can have just about any set constructed inside: a western saloon; the interior of a carriage on the *Orient Express*; the ballroom aboard the *Titanic*; or just almost anything else. Only the smallest of the sound stages, Sound Stage 7, the one in the very heart of the facility, is different, and is discussed later.

During the day, the high fences surrounding the studio facility are well-guarded by hired security personnel carrying Heavy Pistols (7D). For the purposes of *Die Caps*, consider these guards to be *Driven* individuals. (They have been specifically recruited and indoctrinated by the *Unbidden*.) There are enough guards on duty during the day to make surreptitious entry into the studio very difficult. (Certainly, the *Stalkers* could tear their way in but the security guards are innocents, after all, and hardly worthy of such ignominious deaths.)

After dark, the number of guards decreases, but those who are on duty carry shotguns (10D). It is certainly easier for the *Circle* to penetrate the studio unseen at night.





TIME AND PLACE: HOLLYWOOD 1933

Hollywood, California was home to one of the only industries not to collapse under the weight of the Depression. On the contrary, Hollywood's movie industry increased on its success in the twenties and did so by supplying the viewer with pure escapism. Musicals and romances were the bread and butter of the studios, and the town was ruled by the big studio bosses, men like Jack Warner and Sam Goldwyn.

Hollywood became the center of the movie industry in the early twenties, and by 1933, it had a set system. The studios kept stars, directors, cameramen and everyone else involved in production on yearly contracts. The bigger the star, the more movies the studio had them make a year — and with the Depression sending everyone out to the theater for a dose of escapist fun, the studios couldn't produce enough!

Unquestionably, the queen of the bijou in 1933 was Greta Garbo. A beautiful actress from Sweden, every movie she touched turned to gold. In '33 she starred in "Queen Christina," the story of the Swedish Queen who posed as a man. However, while Garbo was the queen of the drama, it had many kings and one great new star. Appearing as King Henry VIII in 1933 was Charles Laughton, who would later win an Oscar for his performance. Leslie Howard appeared in "Berkeley Square," a dramatic retelling of Mark Twain's Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, and Spencer Tracey presided over two matinee weepies, "20,000 Years in Sing Sing" and "The Power and the Glory." Without a doubt, though, the promising new star of the day was young Katherine Hepburn, who appeared in both "Little Women" as the incorrigible Jo and "Morning Glory" for which she would go on to win an Oscar.

If the romantic dramas of 1933 were producing the great stars of the decade, Hollywood's ubiquitous musical comedies had ten times as many: Mae West, who in 1933 starred in two

pictures "I'm No Angel" and "She Done Him Wrong" (which was nominated for best picture); Mae West's handsome young straight-man in both pictures was up-and-coming star Carry Grant; Jackie Cooper, Mickey Rooney, and Judy Garland who seemed to appear in every film requiring a teenaged role. Fred Astaire and Ginger Rodgers danced together spectacularly in the Musical "Flying Down To Rio," and the stars of Vaudeville found a new home in Hollywood — stars like the Marx Brothers (who produced "Duck Soup," the year's screwball hit), W.C. Fields, and Jimmy Durante. The biggest musicals of the year were epic galas of glitz and dancing with huge musical numbers and enormous casts. The hit parade included: "42nd Street," "The Bowery," "Footlight Parade" (with a young star by the name of James Cagney), "Gold Diggers of 1933," "Hallelujah, I'm a Bum" (starring Al Jolson, the man who sang the very first words heard on film), "State Fair" (which starred Will Rogers and was nominated for Best Picture), "Roman Scandals," and the year's Oscar winner for both Best Picture and Best Director "Cavalcade."

With so many musicals and dramas, there would seem little room for difference in glamor-ville, but 1933 also saw its share of Matinee creepies. What better way to escape from the terrors of the real world than to watch a fifty foot ape assault the Empire State Building? The year saw the release of "King Kong," "The Invisible Man" (with Claude Rains in the title role, though often in voice only), "Island of Lost Souls" (with Charles Laughton and Bela Lugosi), and "Mystery of the Wax Museum," which is notable mostly because it was filmed entirely in Technicolor.

Indeed, 1933 was a smashing success for Hi-town. While the bread lines were stretching around the block, the lines for movie tickets stood just as long. Depression was a word that never crossed Hollywood's lips.





• SHIFTED REALITIES

By day, Ergo Productions is a bustling studio not unlike any of its competition. By night, however, it is disturbingly different.

In any studio, when night shoots are going on, the California sky is lit by the brilliant klieg lights required for the camera. Elsewhere on the back lot, however, away from the actual work, no lights burn. Not so at Ergo Productions; even when no night work is going on, lights can be seen in different parts of the back lot. Gaslights flicker on the street of Victorian London; burning firebrands move in the shadows of the castle; and so on. Sounds can be heard, too, in the depths of night: gunshots, perhaps the screeching of tires, yells of anger or agony, or the clash of steel on steel.

The truth of the matter is that the back lot is occupied at night by extras, workers and other innocents who have fallen victim to the Enigma generated by the Unbidden. These innocent victims have come to believe that the various locales on the back lot whether external or within sound stages are real. Further, they are convinced that they are the contemporary locals who inhabit these areas.

With access to the studios extensive collection of props and costumes, they dress the part and carry the appropriate gear... and weapons! Thus, in the western town, a man who used to be a janitor might be found swaggering

down main street wearing western boots, a hat and spurs, packing six-shooters that might or might not be real and truly believing that he's the Marshall sent to clean up the town!

These victims of the Enigma truly believe the locales they inhabit are real and that they belong there. The Enigma makes it impossible for them to remember their previous lives, to see the anomalies that prove the true nature of their homes (the fact that New York constitutes only a single block, for example) or to conceive that they might be mistaken.

Anything they see or experience will be colored by the filter of their unshakable beliefs. If the Stalkers threaten the Marshall, he will treat them as he would dangerous outlaws; meanwhile, Sherlock Holmes from nearby London might take a more psychological approach to determine how the escapees from the asylum have come to believe the year is 1933 rather than 1895...

The gamemaster should use the Minor Character template on p. 118 for these innocent victims of the Enigma. They may be armed with weapons appropriate to the milieu, but these weapons may or may not be functional.

Because of the Enigma, the environment within many of these locales will be appropriate. A dry wind might stir the dust in the western town, while a thick fog cloaks Baker Street.

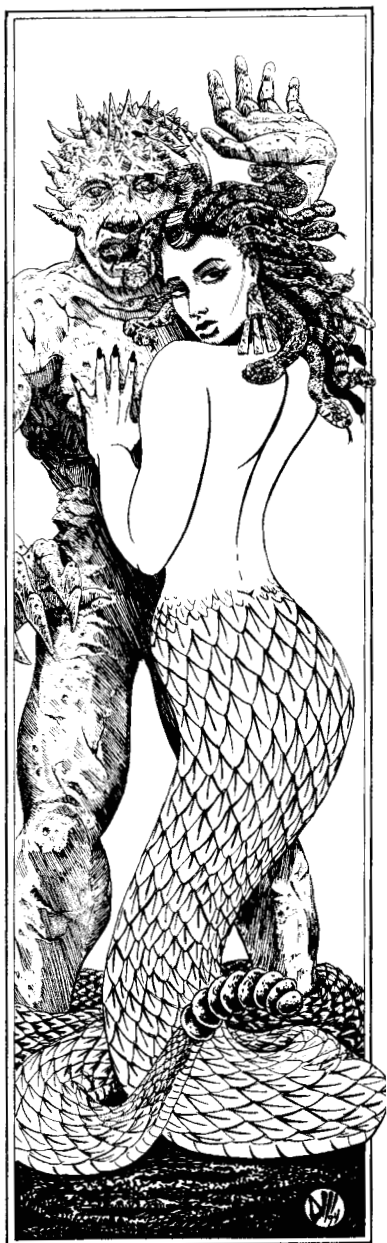
Gamemaster's Note:

This part of the adventure will work better if the Stalkers penetrate the studio at night. Consider using whatever underhanded manipulation is necessary to get your players to reach this decision. Perhaps the Stalkers hear that Steve Hayward is doing a night-shoot for his latest big-budget feature again starring Marie Denver and is only on the set from midnight onward.

Gamemaster's Note:

The back lot and sound stages give you an immense amount of freedom. As the Stalkers wander around the studio, you should hit them with an endless parade of phantasmagoric images. There should be danger in many places, but not always from the obvious sources. For example, the Marshall's gun might be a harmless prop, but the firebrand-carrying peasant might attack the "monsters" on sight.





• BACK LOT SHADOWS

Some of the Enigma-ridden victims aren't what they seem. For its own alien reasons, the Unbidden has Woven human Husks for a number of Minions and sent them out into the back lot to interact with the inhabitants. As with the innocents, these flesh-encased Shadows dress and equip themselves appropriately for the locale.

Unlike the mortals, however, many of them don't fully understand the genre of the roles they are supposed to play. They might make mistakes with costuming (a World War I German helmet instead of a Stetson) or accidentally slip anachronisms and other errors into their speech.

These Shadows are Awakened, and they have been Bound by the Unbidden. They are not guards or sentries however, not intentionally at least. Their task is to interact with the mortals and just play their roles. They will definitely fight to defend themselves if the Stalkers attack them, but the only time they will initiate violence themselves is if they think it is an appropriate act for the role they are playing.

In the entire studio complex, there are maybe a dozen Shadows playing their roles (with various degrees of success). All have Husks that make them look almost perfectly human. (Sensitives can sense their true nature, of course.) Most of these Shadows are Bazreth or Zelun Vhori (pp. 106 and 111 of the Whispering Vault rulebook, respectively).

There are also roughly twice that number of a breed of Rethrett (p. 107) who dwell on the back lot. These Cameramen are slightly different from those described in the basic rules in that their structure is mechanical rather than electronic; in place of tubes and wires, they are often composed of spring-wound clockwork mechanisms and optical, rather than electronic, image-gathering hardware.

Also unlike standard Rethrett, these Shadows live inside movie screens rather than televisions and are obsessed with plot-lines and dialog from films. The Cameramen are not under the control of the Unbidden. However, they Awoke as an indirect result of the Enigma; when the innocent victims described earlier blurred the distinction between reality and movie-land fantasy, the Rethrett entered the Realm of Flesh.

Despite the fact that they aren't under his direct control, the Rethrett are quite useful to the Unbidden. On their own initiative, some of the Rethrett track Steve Hayward down and report to him everything they have seen on the streets of the back lot. They will usually go out of their way to report anything particularly unusual. If the Stalkers reveal their true nature within sight of a Cameraman, the Rethrett will almost certainly scurry off to describe the fascinating event to the Unbidden.





MEETING MARIE

At some point, as the Circle approaches Sound Stage 7, the Stalkers should encounter Marie Denver. (If the Stalkers try to track the Unbidden by Evoking some Trackers, the Essence Hounds will encounter Marie and her companions before they reach Hayward, summoning the Circle to the encounter.)

A vibrant, attractive woman in her early 40s, Marie Denver is the seemingly unwilling star of a scene from a horror movie. She appears to be strapped spread-eagled to a table, a broad strip of cloth bound around her eyes. Four torturers are arranging a nasty looking array of implements on a nearby table, preparatory to beginning work. The set is well-lit by klieg lights... but there is no camera, no director, no crew. The only spectators are a couple of Rethretts, who will flee in terror the instant anything extraordinary happens.

If the Circle has not discovered that the real Marie Denver is dead, they will probably hurry to the rescue to save the damsel in distress. In fact, of course, the Marie Denver secured to the table is a Pain Mother (p. 109) having an evening of fun. This Minion has been fully Bound by the Unbidden, to serve as a warrior and defender. As soon as the Stalkers appear on the scene, Denver leaps from the table (the restraints around her wrists and ankles were never secured) and attacks them with her Fetid Blade. The torturers are inno-



cent mortals (use the Minor Characters template) and will want nothing more than to make themselves scarce the moment things get nasty. They will defend themselves, however, using their torture implements (Light Melee Weapons 3D Damage) as weapons, if attacked.

The Circle's encounter with Marie Denver will warn the Unbidden of their arrival (if the Cameramen haven't already done so). Using his Puppetmaster ability, Hayward has been piggybacking on the Pain Mother to enjoy the sensations of torture along with her. Since he has tapped into her senses, he perceives the Stalkers the instant she does and immediately breaks his connection with the Thritch Kalvarr. (The Unbidden knows that a Pain Mother won't be able to stand against an entire Circle and does not want to take vicarious losses to its Vitality.)

HEART OF THE CORRUPTION

The center of the Enigma is Sound Stage 7, at the very heart of the Ergo Productions property. The sound stage is a large, cavernous building like a warehouse. The girders supporting the roof are 60 feet above the concrete floor.

At one end of the building is a large sliding door 40 feet high and 45 feet wide, through which set walls can be moved. Beside the sliding door is a single, human-sized door. Both are usually locked. When shooting is occurring inside, a red light burns over the door. (When the Stalkers arrive on the scene, this light is on.)

The Temporal Isolation at the heart of the Corruption is bounded by the walls of Sound Stage 7. Elsewhere on the studio property, mortals believe that the unreal is real (witness the Marshall on the street of western town). Within this building, in contrast, mortals believe that the real is unreal.





CONFRONTING GRAITH

Eventually, the Stalkers will presumably decide to head for the center of the set to track down Hayward. When they do, they will have to face a couple of obstacles.

First, the Ogyrs will immediately attack any creature of Essence who tries to enter the set. The crew won't realize that the combat is real, and the cameramen move in closer to catch all the details of the action.

Second, the Stalkers will find that the walls of the castle are not paste-board and papier mache as they might expect. They are, in fact, real stone. Breaking through a door or wall requires a Strength Challenge against the Strength of the material. A stone wall has an effective Strength of 16, while a door has an effective Strength of 11.

The Unbidden's Lair is a chamber in the middle of the set—a well-equipped torture chamber where a Bound Thrith Kalvarr is "entertaining" two innocent victims. He is sitting in a comfortable chair, watching the scene with great interest when the Circle arrives.

The Unbidden has a great degree of control over the set. It can move walls around only as long as they're not observed by a creature of Essence which means it can turn the elaborate set into a complex maze.

Like many Architects, Steve Hayward has become a coward. If it looks as though the Stalkers will defeat his Minions and his other defenses, he will use his special abilities to flee if he can.

FALLEN GRAITH

Fortitude	5	/	6
Vitality	15	/	18
Initiative	12	/	14
Defend	15	/	15
Perceive	14	/	14
Resolve	20	/	18

Graith adapted to the Realm of Flesh faster than many Unbidden and quickly became an Architect. His central motivation (as much as anyone else can understand it) seems to be to explore the differences between reality and fantasy, how the dividing line between the two can be blurred, and what the consequences of such blurring might be. While the tactics he has followed to investigate this philosophical issue make perfect sense to him, they seem vague at best to everyone else.

• FINDING THE FOCUS

The Focus of the Enigma is the shooting script for Hayward's next movie, *Four Horsemen*. The script lies on a small table beside his chair in the torture chamber set. The Unbidden has a Life Link to the Enigma; he enjoys the extended benefits only if he is within 100 yards of the shooting script.

Mending the Enigma releases all the inhabitants of the studio from their delusions. The Veil almost immediately asserts itself, forcing them to come up with logical rationalizations for their experiences. (Thus, the Marshall will believe that he actually was given a job as a bit player in a Western, etc.)

COMBAT (Vessel)

Unarmed (Attack 12, 4D Damage)

COMBAT (Avatar)

Two pincers each round (Attack 16, 3D Damage)
If both pincers hit they inflict an additional 3D.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Puppetmaster,
Shapeshifter, Summoner,
Weaver, Dominate
(as Stalker Discipline,
but automatic).

AVERSIONS

Graith despises mirrors because they reflect reality with total accuracy.

FETISHES

Curiosity (He likes to know everything that is going on around him. He relishes the reports he receives from the Cameramen that dwell around the studio and will fly into a rage if an important development is kept from him.)

IDIOSYNCRASIES

He has little experience outside the incestuous world of his chosen guise so he tends to speak and think in industry-related clichés. Since the mortals he surrounds himself with act the same way, it is seldom a disadvantage.

