

SATURNINE



the World of Darkness

PROMETHEAN
THE CREATED

Good Book says

the world's caught in a long, dark night,

waiting for a brand new dawn to come and
sweep all that darkness away.

Don't know if that'll ever happen,

but I do know this:

there's folks set on making things darker.

They're looking for ways to break the laws

the Good Lord set for all of nature's ways.

I've seen it happen,

and the night's getting darker and longer.

Sometimes I think I mightn't ever see the sun come up.

This book includes:

- The World of Darkness with a touch of science fiction — how to use next-gen science in a horror chronicle
- Details on the nuclear Prometheans, the clones, and creating new Lineages
- A new story in the “Water of Life” chronicle begun in Promethean: The Created, set in Detroit

- John Ash, Tammuz



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PROMETHEAN
THE CREATED

www.worldofdarkness.com

PROLOGUE:

FRAGMENTS FROM THE REVELATION OF JOHN

i. TAKE IT AND EAT IT UP, AND IT SHALL MAKE THY BELLY BITTER

The crow was dead, like the others. It had been dead for some time, but there were no maggots or flies. John poked at it with a fingertip for a moment, picked it up and began to eat.

He was hungry, so hungry, and even if the feathers tasted wrong on the first bite, he no longer cared. The bones snapped too easily. The blood was sour on his tongue. Still, he finished it.

That was a few hours ago. John is throwing the bird up right now. He panics, asks himself aloud if he is dying between retches and gasps of air. He imagines his guts forcing themselves up through his mouth the same way that the half-digested remains of the bird have.

He half-walks, half-crawls into the shadow of a rock. He curls into a ball and passes out.

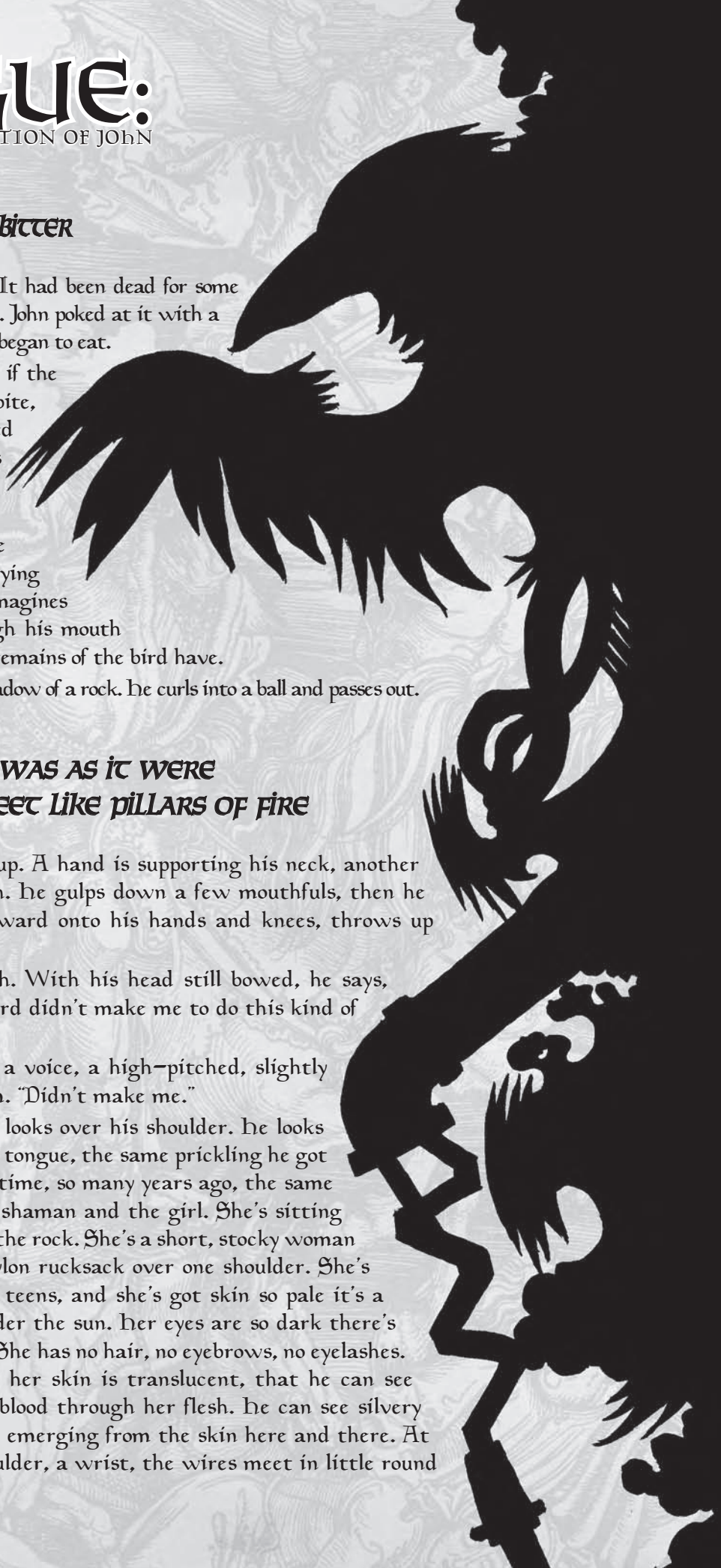
ii. HIS FACE WAS AS IT WERE THE SUN, AND HIS FEET LIKE PILLARS OF FIRE

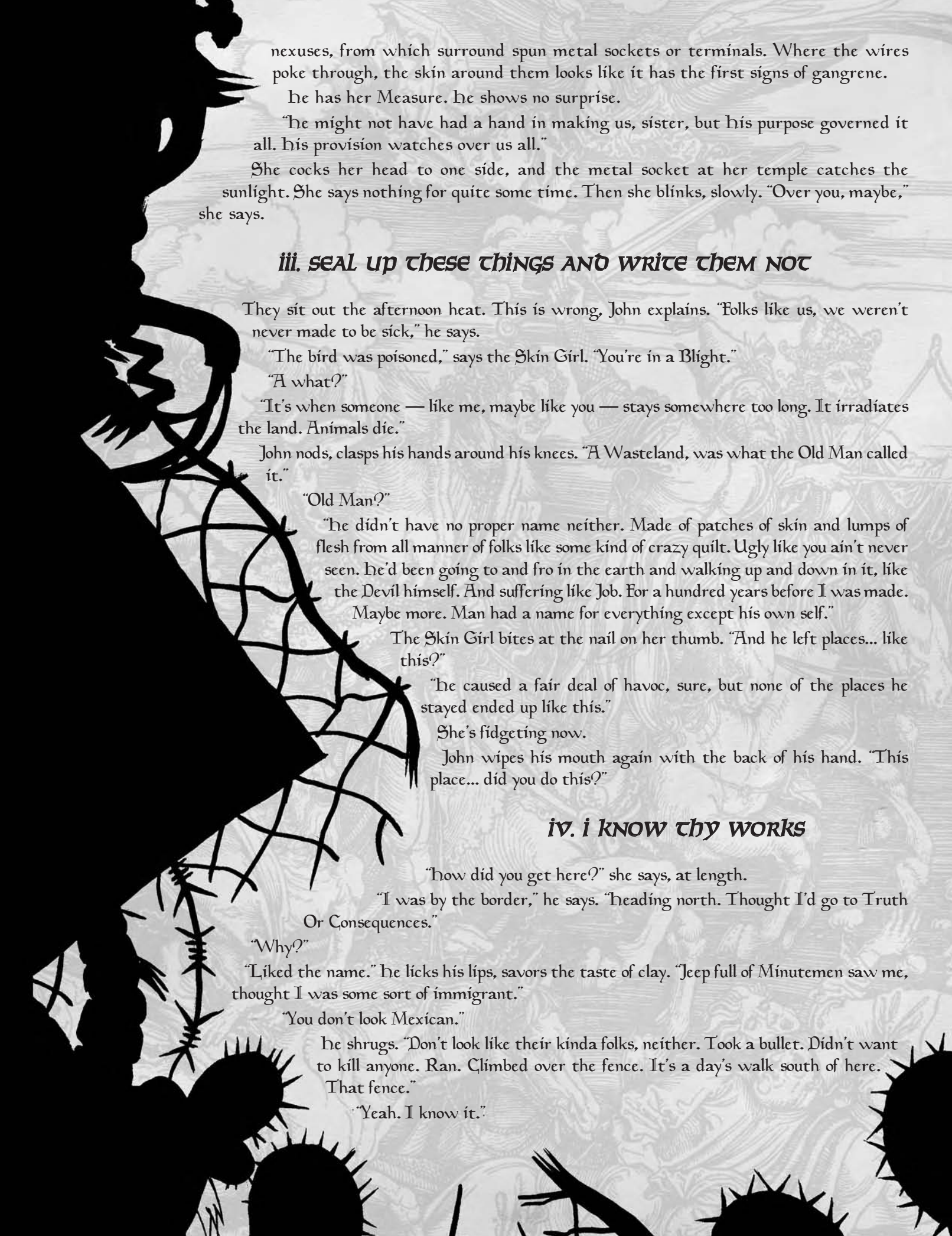
He comes to himself. He's sitting up. A hand is supporting his neck, another holds a bottle of water to his mouth. He gulps down a few mouthfuls, then he pushes the bottle away, lurches forward onto his hands and knees, throws up again.

He wipes a hand across his mouth. With his head still bowed, he says, "I'm not supposed to do this. The Lord didn't make me to do this kind of thing."

"The Lord didn't make you," says a voice, a high-pitched, slightly nasal voice with Texas in its rhythm. "Didn't make me."

John rocks back onto his heels and looks over his shoulder. He looks at her, and feels that prickling on his tongue, the same prickling he got when he met the Old Man the first time, so many years ago, the same as when he met the doctor and the shaman and the girl. She's sitting down on the ground, leaning against the rock. She's a short, stocky woman in jeans and sleeveless tee, a blue nylon rucksack over one shoulder. She's young-looking, like she's in her late teens, and she's got skin so pale it's a wonder it's not burnt bright red under the sun. Her eyes are so dark there's no difference between pupil and iris. She has no hair, no eyebrows, no eyelashes. The haze clears; John realizes that her skin is translucent, that he can see the movement of the blue and gray blood through her flesh. He can see silvery wires running just beneath the skin, emerging from the skin here and there. At her temple, on her sternum, one shoulder, a wrist, the wires meet in little round





nexus, from which surround spun metal sockets or terminals. Where the wires poke through, the skin around them looks like it has the first signs of gangrene.

He has her Measure. He shows no surprise.

"He might not have had a hand in making us, sister, but his purpose governed it all. His provision watches over us all."

She cocks her head to one side, and the metal socket at her temple catches the sunlight. She says nothing for quite some time. Then she blinks, slowly. "Over you, maybe," she says.

iii. seal up these things and write them not

They sit out the afternoon heat. This is wrong, John explains. "Folks like us, we weren't never made to be sick," he says.

"The bird was poisoned," says the Skin Girl. "You're in a Blight."

"A what?"

"It's when someone — like me, maybe like you — stays somewhere too long. It irradiates the land. Animals die."

John nods, clasps his hands around his knees. "A Wasteland, was what the Old Man called it."

"Old Man?"

"He didn't have no proper name neither. Made of patches of skin and lumps of flesh from all manner of folks like some kind of crazy quilt. Ugly like you ain't never seen. He'd been going to and fro in the earth and walking up and down in it, like the Devil himself. And suffering like Job. For a hundred years before I was made.

Maybe more. Man had a name for everything except his own self."

The Skin Girl bites at the nail on her thumb. "And he left places... like this?"

"He caused a fair deal of havoc, sure, but none of the places he stayed ended up like this."

She's fidgeting now.

John wipes his mouth again with the back of his hand. "This place... did you do this?"

iv. i know thy works

"How did you get here?" she says, at length.

"I was by the border," he says. "Heading north. Thought I'd go to Truth Or Consequences."

"Why?"

"Liked the name." He licks his lips, savors the taste of clay. "Jeep full of Minutemen saw me, thought I was some sort of immigrant."

"You don't look Mexican."

He shrugs. "Don't look like their kinda folks, neither. Took a bullet. Didn't want to kill anyone. Ran. Climbed over the fence. It's a day's walk south of here. That fence."

"Yeah. I know it."

"Boys in the jeep saw the sign on the fence and turned right back. No point in backing off. Thought I'd go across, see what I could. Here I am."

"How are you alive?" She leans forward. "In the Blight?"

"Same way you are, I guess. I'm like you. Got the same thing keeping me going as you."

She shakes her head, slowly. "No. You're not like us. Not really."

"Us?"

"It's just me. There was someone else. He isn't here now," she says. "He made the land like this, and he moved on."

"So why are you here?" he says. He pushes himself up against the rock.

"I'm here for the hot cell," she says.

V. I HAVE SET BEFORE THEE AN OPEN DOOR, AND NO MAN CAN SHUT IT

The Skin Girl gets to the top of the rise first. She stands at the top, pointing.

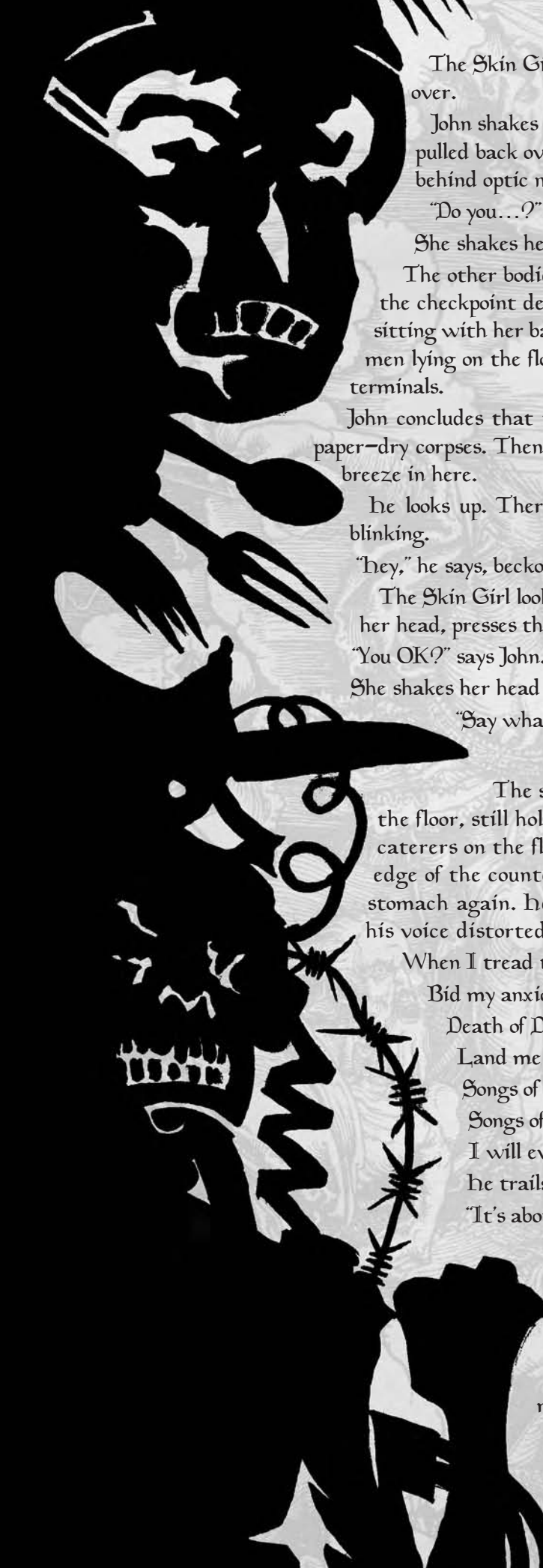
John joins her. The building is low and rectangular. It has no windows. It's the same neutral gray as the apparently sunless sky and the angular, dusty hills surrounding it. Only the green of the overturned jeep by the fence and the dark of two bodies on the ground near the half-open door gives any sign that there might be other colors in this world. John, not normally one for aesthetics, fails to appreciate the landscape's ugliness. Its wrongness, however, impresses itself upon his perceptions strongly enough that the layer of earth bonded with the skin on his forearms rucks up into little terracettes, like clay gooseflesh. It becomes more acute as John half-climbs, half-stumbles down the hill towards the empty checkpoint.

The sunless heat and the oppression in the air become stronger the closer they get to the building.

VI. MANY MEN DIED OF THE WATERS, BECAUSE THEY WERE MADE BITTER

The Skin Girl pushes through the gap, stepping over the body. John, too, steps over the body, but once inside crouches beside it. It's lying face down, in the doorway. The door slides back and forth a few inches, again and again, blocked by the uniformed corpse, growling and trying again with no success. Grasping a shoulder in his left hand, John turns the body over. The body's lightness, like an abandoned wasp's nest, surprises him, and he pulls too hard, cries out, flips the man over, sending the body flying a few feet into the corridor. The body rustles. The door, freed, slides shut, quickly, plunging John and the man into darkness for a moment, before fluorescent tubes above his head bang on, one after the other, illuminating a dusty corridor, leading down into the bowels of the building.





The Skin Girl, several paces down the corridor, turns around. He beckons her over.

John shakes his head for a moment, and then goes to see the corpse. Its lips are pulled back over blackened teeth. The eyeballs have dried up completely, leaving behind optic nerves that stretch across dry sockets like cobwebs.

"Do you...?" His voice tails off.

She shakes her head.

The other bodies, further down the corridor, are the same: the one slumped over the checkpoint desk, head buried in a box of security passes; the uniformed woman sitting with her back to the checkpoint wall, dust in eye sockets and mouth; the two men lying on the floor of an office, next to the remains of smashed, blasted computer terminals.

John concludes that the rustling sound he can hear is the sound of the wind on the paper-dry corpses. Then he looks back over his shoulder. The door's still shut. There's no breeze in here.

He looks up. There is a closed circuit camera above John's head. Its red light is blinking.

"Hey," he says, beckoning the Skin Girl over. He points.

The Skin Girl looks up at the camera intently. Then she screws her eyes up, lowers her head, presses the heel of her hand against her forehead.

"You OK?" says John.

She shakes her head from side to side, as if to clear it. "Just a headache," she says.

"Say what?" says John.

vii. AND THEY SANG A NEW SONG

The staff canteen is full of dead men and women in uniform, lying on the floor, still holding trays, slumped over plates of long-dried food, white-clad caterers on the floor, their arms lifted, their shriveled hands still clutching the edge of the counter. John begins to feel something not unlike the sickness in his stomach again. He crosses the hall, ahead of his companion, and begins to sing, his voice distorted by the place's strange acoustics.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,

Bid my anxious fears subside;

Death of Death and Hell's Destruction,

Land me safe on Canaan's side!

Songs of praises,

Songs of praises,

I will ever give...

He trails off. The Skin Girl says, "What is that you're singing?"

"It's about my hope," he says.

She laughs, once, sharply.

viii. I KNOW THY WORKS

More of the fluorescent tubes flicker on and off, the further down they go.

The installation's corridors are full of dead bodies, sometimes so many that they have to climb over them.

John steps on one body, trips, puts his whole weight on the chest. There's a crack and his foot goes right through. The body disintegrates in his hands as he extricates his foot.

"What happened here?" he says, regaining his feet, brushing fragments of mummified flesh from his jeans.

The Skin Girl shrugs. "Criticality accident," she says, blankly.

"Say what?"

"They were manufacturing weapons-grade plutonium here. The cooling system failed, or maybe someone dropped a bar of plutonium. They all died."

John looks around, runs a hand over his head. He makes eye contact again. "You got see-through skin in more ways than the obvious."

The Skin Girl cocks her own head to one side. A vein begins to throb beneath the skin of her forehead. "What's that supposed to mean?"

"Weren't no accident did all this. You're bearing false witness to me, and that's a sin. I don't know too much about plutoniums and criticalities and such, but it weren't no radiation killed these men. That much I know. That much I can feel."

She bares her teeth. "There was an accident here. But the way things are... that's because he's been here."

"Who? Your Old Man?"

They turn a corner, a dead end, with an elevator at the end of it. "I have to go down to the cell now," says the Skin Girl. She takes two fast steps, striding across another corpse, presses the button by the door.

John stands at the junction. "Are we alone here?" he says.

The Skin Girl keeps her back to him. "I... no. No, he's gone." The lift door opens.

She steps inside, turns around, holds the button. "You should wait here," she says. "You go down below, could do nasty things to you."

"It wouldn't kill me," he says.

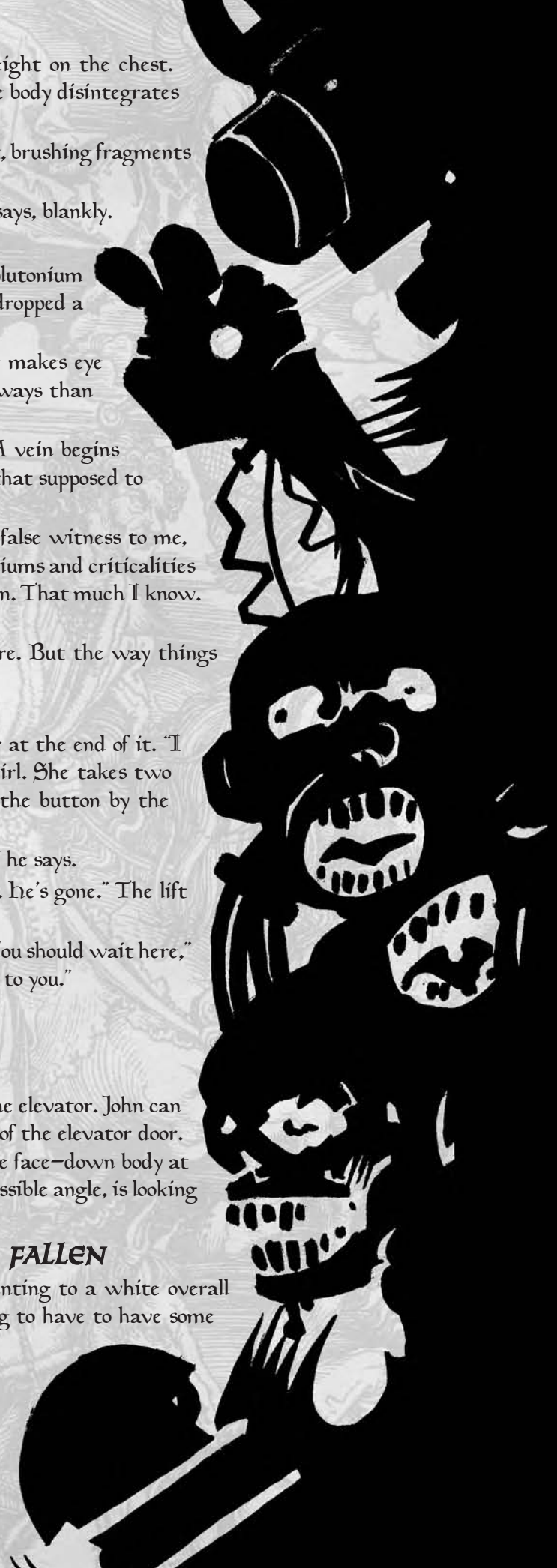
"There's worse things."

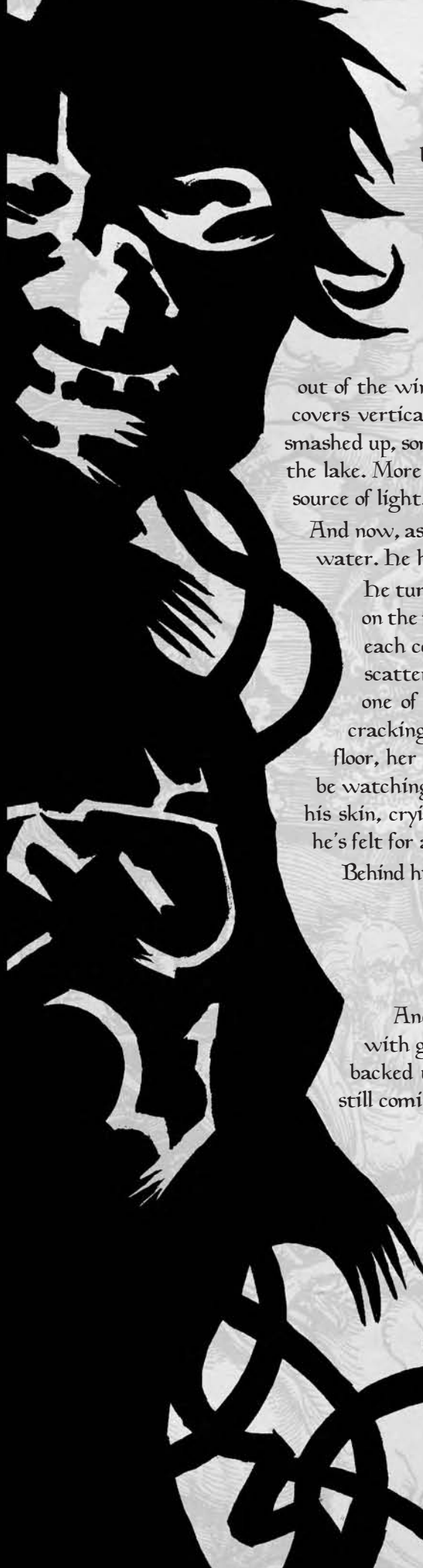
"I'll take my chances. Hold the elevator."

She does, and he steps over another corpse, into the elevator. John can hear the rustling noise again, over the rumble of the elevator door. As the door closes, he sees or thinks he sees that the face-down body at the end of the corridor has lifted its head at an impossible angle, is looking at him with those dry, exposed optic nerves.

IX. BABYLON IS FALLEN, IS FALLEN

"You'll need one of those," says the Skin Girl, pointing to a white overall hanging on a hook. "We go any further, you're going to have to have some protection."





It's hard to hear her over the klaxon.

"You're not wearing one," says John.

"Makes no difference to me," says the Skin Girl. "But you, it mightn't hurt you, but it'd stick to you, and you'd carry it round with you wherever you went. You'd make things even sicker than you do already, and you couldn't make it better by just going away."

He puts on the suit and helmet, and follows her into the room. She walks over to a panel on the wall and presses some buttons, experimentally. The klaxon stops. There are more corpses here, men in radiation suits like John's, sprawled across the floor. A window separates the room from the outside.

John barely notices the Skin Girl go into an adjacent chamber. He's looking out of the window at what looks like a vast underground hall. A square artificial lake half-covers vertical rods connected by cables which rise up into the darkness. Machinery, some smashed up, some huge and boxy and still moving, stands around the edge of the cavern, around the lake. More bodies lie on the pavement that surrounds the pool. The water is the cavern's source of light. It glows, and it occurs to John that it shouldn't be doing that.

And now, as John draws himself closer to the window, he can see something move under the water. He hears a cracking sound behind him, and then another.

He turns, calls for the Skin Girl. No answer. He steps through a doorway. She's sitting on the floor, eyes closed, mouth open, back against a row of plastic shelves or pigeonholes, each containing small bars of some gray metal. A few of them surround the Skin Girl, scattered on the floor. She's holding one in each hand. As John watches, she touches one of the bars against the socket at her temple. There's a flash of light and that cracking noise. John's vision clears. She's having some sort of spasm, writhing on the floor, her mouth slack, her eyes blank. She's moaning, gently. John feels like he shouldn't be watching this. He closes his eyes, opens them again, gasps. He feels the Fire again, under his skin, crying out. There's someone else here. A third person, and this one stronger than he's felt for a long time.

Behind him, he hears the rustling again, and then there's the sound of the door sliding back.

X. THEY SHALL NOT SUFFER THEIR DEAD BODIES TO BE PUT IN GRAVES

And now three minutes have passed, and John's hands and clothes are covered with greasy flakes of dry, dead flesh. There are bits of bodies all round him and he has backed up against the lift door, pressing the button frantically, over and over. They're still coming.

He punches through a face. He grasps a head with both hands and twists it off, feels the skull collapse under his fingers, uses the body to throw another three corpses off their balance, all the while ducking the brittle talons of a uniformed woman's cadaver as they go for his eyes. She collapses at the impact of a steel toecap driving upwards through her abdomen. An empty rifle lying on the floor makes a club, and with it he smashes two more brittle corpses, caves in more heads than he can count before the hands and talons weigh in on him and snatch the rifle from his hands. They snatch the helmet and visor from his head.

The black bile rises in him. he tries to fight it down, struggles furiously, ripping arms from their sockets, disembodied hands and forearms still clutching him as he flails around wildly, randomly.

John manages to get onto a cabinet full of electronics, climbing over backs and crumbling shoulders, and from there he swats the hands away, tears them apart. he starts calling for the Skin Girl. he tears off arm after arm, punches through faces, crushes brittle, empty skulls with his fist. The hands reach up and drag him down, still fighting, and then he's lying on the floor, winded. The corpses back off, stumbling over their fellows. John sits up, propels himself backwards with his legs.

Back to the wall, just next to the doorway, he stands up, sliding his back up the wall. The Skin Girl stumbles out of the room. She's still slack-jawed, but the liquid within her translucent flesh is flowing faster than before and the wires and sockets are gleaming like they've been polished. her movements are jerky. She turns her head to look at him. her eyes are pained, apologetic. She opens her mouth to say something, convulses, and stumbles for the elevator. The corpses pass to let her through, but she stops and waves a convulsed hand with its fingers all out of joint, and they're on John again, and this time they hold on, and six of them half frog-march him, half carry him out of the storage facility and into the cavern.

***xi. he that leadeth into
captivity
shall go into captivity***

Forced to his knees on the poolside pavement, John sees the Skin Girl kneeling out of the corner of his eye, becomes aware of the heat from the glowing water, of the way it is bubbling. Something crawls out of the pool, something red and hard and fleshy and eyeless and toothless and limbless. And something like it with many legs, like a caterpillar, follows. And something else



follows that looks like a spider or a scorpion made of wrinkled flesh. And there are a dozen other things, and some of them coil around desiccated limbs, and some crawl into desiccated bodies and nestle inside caved-in skulls and chest cavities. They begin to trill gently as the huge figure rises out of the water. It seems to have no face, only shadows.

John can feel the power of this thing, this thing like him. He has the thing's Measure, and its force, the marks of violence it bears cause him pain. John feels the earth coating his skin harden, feels it dry out and crack.

The figure rests its hand on the Skin Girl's head and reaches its fingers inside as if the hand and scalp are liquids mixing. The Skin Girl screams once, briefly. Then her eyes open, roll back into her head. She begins to moan again, and when the figure takes his hand away, her eyes are closed and her mouth is open, and she is swaying.

XII. AND THE THIRD PART OF TREES WAS BURNT UP, AND ALL GREEN GRASS WAS BURNT UP

And then it's John's turn for the monster's attention. He throws himself backwards as the thing comes for him, and he uses the Fire again, to break free of the cadavers' grip. He stands up. A fist like a wrecking ball impacts his face. He feels his jaw crack apart. He falls at the Skin Girl's knees. She remains kneeling, staring dumbly at him. A hand picks up John by the throat. The crawling, skittering flesh-things begin to gather around the monster's feet. They're like hungry animals, waiting to be fed. Torment rises again. John fights it. Not now.

He gathers up the Fire and channels it through his muscles, hammering on the thing with his fists, kicking and clawing. The monster loses his balance, and lurches forward. John flings his feet back and connects with a wall, pushes hard. The fleshy things begin to swarm up their master's legs, and the monster loses his balance and falls backwards, losing his balance further until he slides back into the water, still covered with his creatures, still holding John. With the last of the Fire, John, underwater, pushes everything he can into a blast of heat and flame and sparks, surging from his skin. A great cloud of steam erupts from around them, and for an instant the rods are uncovered and the electricity bursts out and there are so many sparks.

And whiteness follows, and annihilation, and John knows nothing more.



A composite image featuring a man's face in profile on the left, a globe with a flame on the right, and a person in a dynamic pose in the background. The text 'SATURNINE' is overlaid in a stylized, bold font.

SATURNINE

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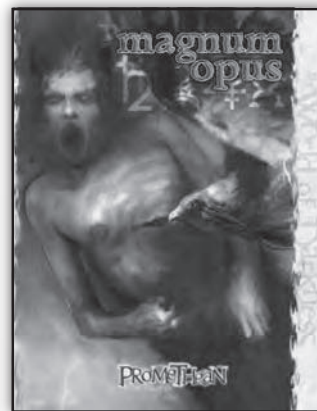
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SATURNINE

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INTRODUCTION

① On the fifth day, Cara needs to defecate. She hasn't eaten anything, but she needs to go, and badly. She ends up squatting in the corner of the room. It's full of blood. Her urine is full of blood. The sores on her arms and face and chest are worse than ever. The floor's too level: the bloody urine spreads all over the cell floor. She's too scared to care about the smell. She knows she's going to die.

② On the sixth day, Cara's hair begins to fall out. All of it: eyebrows, head hair, body hair. It comes off in clumps. She runs her hands through her hair, and it just comes out, like water off the top of the kitchen counter. She lies on the concrete floor on a bed of old urine and hair and sobs her heart out. She wants to live. She wants so badly to live. She wants to see Mom and Dad and Greg and little Mary. She wants to see them once more.

③ On the seventh day, the Monster comes for her, gathers her up and takes her through stark corridors, and it's only when she sees the straps and the wires and needles and scalpels and the soldering iron that she screams, and she screams all the time he threads the wires through her flesh, and welds and bonds. Unconsciousness won't come. She can't pass out.

④ On the eighth day, still strapped to the table, Cara closes her eyes and dies.

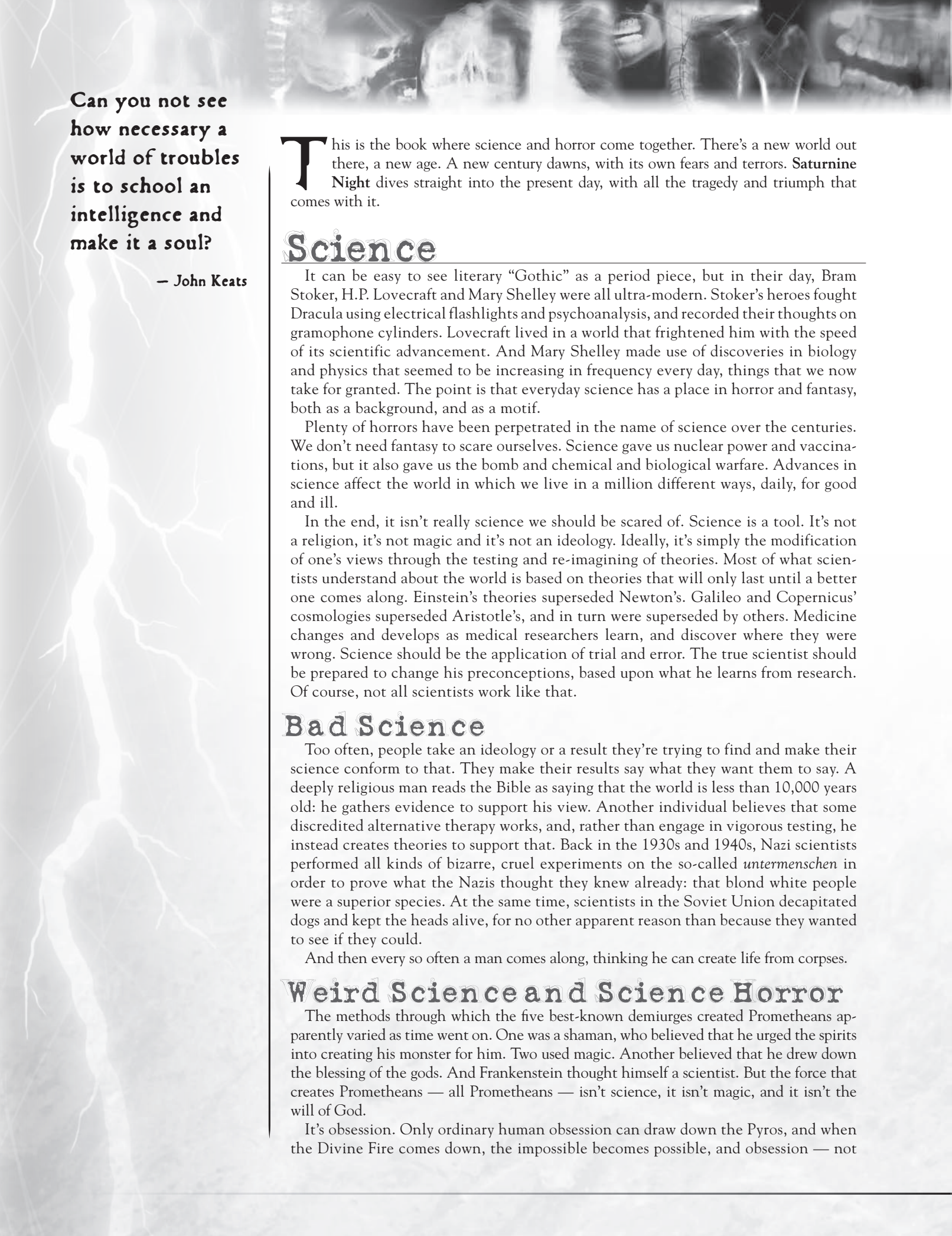
⑤ On the ninth day, the Monster opens up Cara's skull. He inserts a gray metal sphere into her brain, and replaces the skull with a metal dome and welds it shut, and sews the flesh back over it.

He brings a second sphere into contact with the terminal welded into her temple. There's a crack, a flash, and something else, that flows from the Monster's fingers, into the corpse.

Her skin turns suddenly translucent. Her body convulses. She takes in a swift, gulping, panicked breath. A new monster opens its eyes, and sees her parent, and at the sight, begins to scream.

-as told to me by John Ash





Can you not see
how necessary a
world of troubles
is to school an
intelligence and
make it a soul?

— John Keats

This is the book where science and horror come together. There's a new world out there, a new age. A new century dawns, with its own fears and terrors. **Saturnine Night** dives straight into the present day, with all the tragedy and triumph that comes with it.

Science

It can be easy to see literary "Gothic" as a period piece, but in their day, Bram Stoker, H.P. Lovecraft and Mary Shelley were all ultra-modern. Stoker's heroes fought Dracula using electrical flashlights and psychoanalysis, and recorded their thoughts on gramophone cylinders. Lovecraft lived in a world that frightened him with the speed of its scientific advancement. And Mary Shelley made use of discoveries in biology and physics that seemed to be increasing in frequency every day, things that we now take for granted. The point is that everyday science has a place in horror and fantasy, both as a background, and as a motif.

Plenty of horrors have been perpetrated in the name of science over the centuries. We don't need fantasy to scare ourselves. Science gave us nuclear power and vaccinations, but it also gave us the bomb and chemical and biological warfare. Advances in science affect the world in which we live in a million different ways, daily, for good and ill.

In the end, it isn't really science we should be scared of. Science is a tool. It's not a religion, it's not magic and it's not an ideology. Ideally, it's simply the modification of one's views through the testing and re-imagining of theories. Most of what scientists understand about the world is based on theories that will only last until a better one comes along. Einstein's theories superseded Newton's. Galileo and Copernicus' cosmologies superseded Aristotle's, and in turn were superseded by others. Medicine changes and develops as medical researchers learn, and discover where they were wrong. Science should be the application of trial and error. The true scientist should be prepared to change his preconceptions, based upon what he learns from research. Of course, not all scientists work like that.

Bad Science

Too often, people take an ideology or a result they're trying to find and make their science conform to that. They make their results say what they want them to say. A deeply religious man reads the Bible as saying that the world is less than 10,000 years old: he gathers evidence to support his view. Another individual believes that some discredited alternative therapy works, and, rather than engage in vigorous testing, he instead creates theories to support that. Back in the 1930s and 1940s, Nazi scientists performed all kinds of bizarre, cruel experiments on the so-called *unttermenschen* in order to prove what the Nazis thought they knew already: that blond white people were a superior species. At the same time, scientists in the Soviet Union decapitated dogs and kept the heads alive, for no other apparent reason than because they wanted to see if they could.

And then every so often a man comes along, thinking he can create life from corpses.

Weird Science and Science Horror

The methods through which the five best-known demiurges created Prometheans apparently varied as time went on. One was a shaman, who believed that he urged the spirits into creating his monster for him. Two used magic. Another believed that he drew down the blessing of the gods. And Frankenstein thought himself a scientist. But the force that creates Prometheans — all Prometheans — isn't science, it isn't magic, and it isn't the will of God.

It's obsession. Only ordinary human obsession can draw down the Pyros, and when the Divine Fire comes down, the impossible becomes possible, and obsession — not

belief, not will — makes it so. A person who steals the Pyros *needs* it to happen. Victor Frankenstein needed to make a man. The need consumed his being. Without the kind of obsession that consumes and destroys lives, the Pyros cannot intrude into the world. But when a human walks that line, risks madness, consumes his own life in a great and terrible work, anything can happen. The Pyros can make bad science work. And bad, impossible science that works becomes *weird* science.

In a world where so many people use and misuse science to support sometimes crazy ideas, science becomes the vehicle through which the Pyros does its work. Suddenly, life comes into being. Picture the Soviet vivisectionist with the Pyros in his hands, and imagine what kind of life he would make. Imagine a Nazi camp doctor, swapping parts of the bodies of his emaciated victims, sewing children together, injecting eyeballs with caustic chemicals, harnessing the Pyros, and then picture what happens if one of his freakish reject corpses were to become infused with life.

There really are already scientists who know how to make and control nanomachines. Imagine one, frustrated at the speed of her rate of progress, and then imagine her becoming obsessed enough to imbue these tiny artificial automata with life and perception. Or imagine the same scientist, fixating on the bio-engineered disease she's working on. Suddenly, the germs become aware. They begin to act in concert. They become infectious. What, then, could the results be? Real-world scientists already know how to control human and animal movement with implanted electrodes. What happens when one wishes to control more than just movement? What kind of result does he get when the computer system he's using to administer control becomes self-aware?

Bodyshocks

So many different kinds of horror can come out of scientific advancement. There's a lot that's thematically appropriate for **Promethean**, but few things fit quite so well as body horror. The forced, extreme transformation of the body and the effects of this transformation on the psyche have been a frequent theme in horror and science fiction ever since the 1960s. In this age of melanoma-causing ozone layer holes, scarification, ubiquitous plastic surgery and body mods, it's more relevant than ever. Medical researchers have already succeeded in implanting chips and mechanical prostheses in animals and humans. Replacement hip joints are commonplace. Now combine this with the practices of the Centimani and their Pandoran Transmutations. Suddenly, otherwise normal-looking bodies sprout tentacles and grow extra organs. A Promethean's chest opens up, and a little man clambers out. Growing claws is one thing, and growing tentacles is another. Having a machine grafted onto or

into your body (like the oil-covered, bladed, revving drill-phallus in the movie *Tetsuo* and the mind-bending stomach-inserted Betamax tapes from *Videodrome*) is another thing again. For a human, such things would be maddening. For a Promethean, such things aren't quite so horrific. But then, what does it mean for a creature trying to gain humanity when it becomes less and less human? For that matter, what does it mean for a creature who wants to be human when *humans* are becoming less human?

Mutation

Body horror comes from the idea of mutation. Some time after the atomic bomb was first dropped, the word got around that the nuclear age brought mutations.

Science fiction and horror writers and directors seized upon that fact. Radiation, in some form or another, created the giant ants in *Them!* It also created the Uncanny X-Men, the Spectacular Spider-Man and the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. The pitiable, deformed and excluded mutants that filled the pages of *2000AD* were perhaps a little closer to the mark, but even so, the comic had its share of super-powered radioactive heroes.

The simple fact is, radioactive mutation doesn't turn anyone into a good-looking superhero. It doesn't create anthropomorphic chelonian kung fu experts. What radiation does is this: it makes people sick, and it gives them cancer. Then it kills them. If it doesn't kill them, chances are it deforms any potential children they'll have. There are drugs that do that, too (as the children of women who took the pre-natal painkiller thalidomide back in the 1960s and 1970s could tell you).

Cancer is the mutation that we can all have. For most of the last 50 years, it's been the single most feared disease in the developed West, only having been supplanted by HIV/AIDS in the late '80s. Melanomas deform our skin. Smoking causes growths to choke our lungs and stomach. Lumps grow inside women's breasts and men's genitals. Workers using asbestos, chemicals and radioactive materials find their bodies gaining fatal growths. Radiotherapy and chemotherapy ravage the body, fighting the disease with some of the same things that caused it in the first place.

Prometheans can mutate their own bodies, but the slow creep of cancers and other diseases are, so far, outside their experience. New Lineages and new Refinements bring new ways to suffer and inflict suffering into a new century. The Saturnine Night continues, and it grows ever darker.

Science and Humanity

Saturnine Night presents a number of options for bringing weird science and the horrors of the modern age into your **Promethean** chronicle. Into the bargain, this

book presents a slight departure from the nigh-Victorian and alchemical model that the line has presented thus far. We've moved beyond Tesla coils and discussions of the four humours. Nanotechnology and cloning are the orders of the day, here.

Of course, Prometheans created with the tools of modern (and ultra-modern) science can stand shoulder to shoulder with their more traditional cousins. The themes of the game don't change. Indeed, the most important theme of the game — humanity and what it takes to obtain it — becomes even more relevant. Some people follow a *transhumanist* ideology, seeking to move beyond the limitations of humanity with science, whether technological or pharmaceutical. What might a Promethean think of a person who bemoans his weak, disease-prone human body while the Created must move constantly, never resting, lest the land be poisoned or the people burn them in their sleep?

It's easy for us, as players of **Promethean**, to note the benefits of the Saturnine Night and downplay the drawbacks. But that's because we have a sort of bird's-eye view of the situation. We understand the particulars, the limits of the drawbacks, both from the perspective of story (we know that the first stage of Disquiet isn't very pronounced and fades after a time) and from a systems perspective (any given mortal has approximately a 40% chance of resisting Disquiet, presuming a low Azoth rating for the Promethean). But the characters don't. The characters know only what comes at them day to day, and from *that* perspective, the Saturnine Night is torturous.

Or is it? Technology makes many things possible. Prometheans enjoy unprecedented access to electricity (to highlight this, ask your Storyteller to run a one-shot game set in the Old West or Victorian England sometime and see how it changes your strategies). Prometheans can keep in touch with each other — thus facilitating discussions on the Refinements and other matters — easily and quickly through the Internet, and such communication also allows human contact, even if it's not face-to-face. Might the transhumanist philosophy — that is, using technology to compensate for inborn frailty — allow Prometheans to live something like a normal life, *without* the pain and chance of the Pilgrimage? Or is Mortality more than the absence of inconvenience? Does the *presence* of the soul make all other matters moot?

These are questions for your troupe to answer. A given Promethean might change his opinion several times during the course of a chronicle. That's fine. Part of the human condition is the ability to change, grow and learn, after all. In a sense, the Pilgrimage is one long scientific process. The Promethean experiments, changes his approach based on the data collected and tries again until it works.

How to Use This Book

Chapter One: Demiurges in the Modern Age investigates what makes a demiurge. How does a new Lineage come into being? What kind of person makes one? Can supernatural beings create Prometheans? Find the answers here.

Chapter Two: Flesh and Metal introduces the Unfleshed, Prometheans born entirely of artificial components, and gives some pointers as to how a being born of the technological age might approach the Pilgrimage.

The secrets of the Nuclear Promethean, the product of a century of horrors, finally lay themselves bare in **Chapter Three: The Destroyer of Worlds**.

Finally, **Chapter Four: Storytelling** gives the Storyteller options and ideas for continuing and expanding **Promethean** chronicles for a long time to come. The chapter continues with "Detroit: The Dead Engine," which details the great city of Michigan as a setting for **Promethean** stories, and the chronicle begun with "The Water of Life" ends with "These Mortal Engines," where the troupe encounters threats and acquaintances new and old. Similar to all the previous episodes, "These Mortal Engines" can be played as a separate story or inserted into any **Promethean** chronicle.

Inspirations

A plethora of books, comic books, films and TV shows supply all the weird-science horrors anyone could ever want. The following resources can kick-start any number of stories, but there are many more out there.

Kirsten Bakis, *Lives of the Monster Dogs*. A novel that shows the products of perverted science suffering from torment and degeneration, and is all the more moving for it.

Greg Bear, *Blood Music*. Bio-engineered cells get loose . . . and become aware. Apocalypse results.

Donna Haraway, *The Cyborg Manifesto*. The statement of what a cyborg really could be (as opposed to what it is in sci-fi movies). Available online at: <http://www.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/Haraway/CyborgManifesto.html>

H.P. Lovecraft, "Herbert West: Reanimator." Although kooky and tongue-in-cheek, Lovecraft's best-known mad scientist story has much to recommend it. Brian Yuzna's movie version is worth a watch, too.

Doctor Who. Although quirky and kid-friendly, this legendary show has produced some genuinely horrific visions in its 44-year history. There are simply too many stories that could directly influence a Promethean Storyteller to list, but the episodes "Dalek" and "Rise of the Cybermen" from the recent revival certainly fit the bill. See also the Tom Baker classic "Genesis of the Daleks" for the definitive presentation of a barking mad demiurge at work.



Edge of Darkness. This 1985 TV mini-series often finds its way onto “best TV show ever” lists, and quite rightly. The story of a man whose investigation into his daughter’s murder leads into a nuclear conspiracy, the hero’s progressive alienation, the repeated appearance of what may or may not be his daughter’s ghost and the realistic portrayal of radiation sickness make this a really excellent source, both in terms of mood and technical detail.

A convincing contender for the single scariest film ever made, *Threads* (1984) portrays a nuclear holocaust in brutal, unforgiving detail.

The first two *Terminator* (1984 and 1991) films explore the horrific side of science. A machine set to perform

a task does so without pity and in the most ruthlessly efficient way possible. But what if the parameters under which that machine operates are set to mimic the human condition? Is that machine then human? The second film also raises some interesting questions about the nature of fate and inevitability (which the third film in the series [2003] promptly jettisons), and that might have some resonance to **Promethean**, especially if you’ve involved the *qashmallim*.

Tetsuo: *The Iron Man* and *Tetsuo II: Body Hammer*: Body Horror 101 and 202.

Videodrome: “Long live the New Flesh!” David Cronenberg brings body horror to the masses in this stomach-churning 1983 movie.



CHAPTER ONE

DEMIURGES IN THE MODERN AGE

"Comrade Doctor Elizarov? A word?"

The major is short, with a round face and a prim, tight little mouth. He has those same eyes that the MVD men always have, dull and closed and colorless. The men who stand either side of the major dwarf him. Mikhail Alessandrovich nods. He runs a hand through his hair, feels a clump come away under his fingers. He lets it drop to the floor behind his back.

He hates the man. He hates the over-polished shoes, the spotless overcoat, the shiny buttons, the way the cap is pulled down over the man's forehead. "This is a bad time, Comrade Major. I'm working."

"With respect, Comrade Doctor, your work is the issue."

"So talk about it here." The doctor turns his back to the MVD men and makes an adjustment to his instruments. He turns a metal wheel. Behind the glass, a row of three disembodied forearms mounted in riveted metal flex and unflex their fingers in concert. He moves in such a way so as to cause the major the maximum possible offense.

To Mikhail Alessandrovich's disappointment, the major doesn't rise to the bait. He motions for his men to step outside, then he walks into the middle of the lab and leans against a table. He takes off his gloves, folds them neatly and places them, half-in half-out of his overcoat pocket. He steepled his fingers and does not look at the doctor. And he begins to ask questions.

Why has the major not submitted a report for so long? How, exactly, does experimentation on human bodies — experimentation that other Soviet researchers have performed with greater success — have anything to do with ascertaining the effects of radiation on the penal workers?

They talk of secrecy and responsibility. They discuss the resources that the Marshall himself has invested in this project. The major informs the doctor that they're going to be here to seize his notes and equipment. He has six hours to get some sort of report in order. He's leaving his men here to watch.

The major steps outside for a moment to converse with his men.

Alone in the lab now, Mikhail Alessandrovich says, "You heard that."

From the adjacent room, a voice, quiet, but hollow like the deepest caverns of the uranium mine, says, "So?" The doctor's skin crawls. The shadows gather in the lab, as the occupant of the other room comes near to the door.

"You're going to have to leave." Mikhail Alessandrovich recoils from the other, stepping back.

"You'd like that," it says.

And then the MVD men come back in.

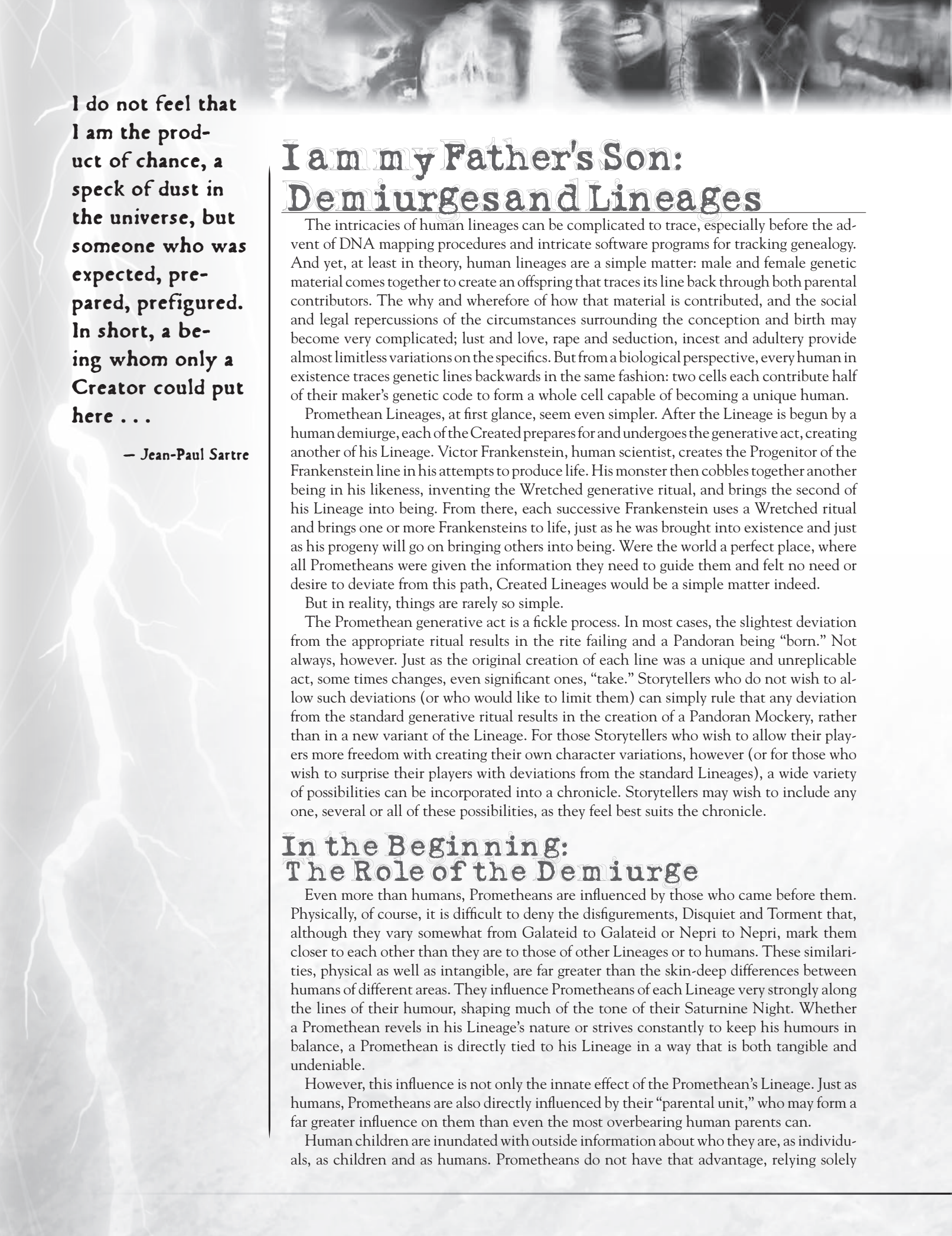
When they question Mikhail Alessandrovich in the military hospital two days later, he claims that he is unable to explain the destruction of the lab and is unable to give a rationale for his own broken legs. They cannot imagine how he could be responsible for the two MVD sergeants torn limb from limb, but they have no other to blame, and so the military court sentences the doctor, in absentia, to the firing squad.

Mikhail Alessandrovich Elizarov dies two weeks later of a cancer that spreads faster than any of his physicians have ever seen.

His experiment survives.

-transcribed from the journal of John Ash





**I do not feel that
I am the prod-
uct of chance, a
speck of dust in
the universe, but
someone who was
expected, pre-
pared, prefigured.
In short, a be-
ing whom only a
Creator could put
here . . .**

— Jean-Paul Sartre

I am my Father's Son: Demiurges and Lineages

The intricacies of human lineages can be complicated to trace, especially before the advent of DNA mapping procedures and intricate software programs for tracking genealogy. And yet, at least in theory, human lineages are a simple matter: male and female genetic material comes together to create an offspring that traces its line back through both parental contributors. The why and wherefore of how that material is contributed, and the social and legal repercussions of the circumstances surrounding the conception and birth may become very complicated; lust and love, rape and seduction, incest and adultery provide almost limitless variations on the specifics. But from a biological perspective, every human in existence traces genetic lines backwards in the same fashion: two cells each contribute half of their maker's genetic code to form a whole cell capable of becoming a unique human.

Promethean Lineages, at first glance, seem even simpler. After the Lineage is begun by a human demiurge, each of the Created prepares for and undergoes the generative act, creating another of his Lineage. Victor Frankenstein, human scientist, creates the Progenitor of the Frankenstein line in his attempts to produce life. His monster then cobbles together another being in his likeness, inventing the Wretched generative ritual, and brings the second of his Lineage into being. From there, each successive Frankenstein uses a Wretched ritual and brings one or more Frankensteins to life, just as he was brought into existence and just as his progeny will go on bringing others into being. Were the world a perfect place, where all Prometheans were given the information they need to guide them and felt no need or desire to deviate from this path, Created Lineages would be a simple matter indeed.

But in reality, things are rarely so simple.

The Promethean generative act is a fickle process. In most cases, the slightest deviation from the appropriate ritual results in the rite failing and a Pandoran being "born." Not always, however. Just as the original creation of each line was a unique and unreplicable act, some times changes, even significant ones, "take." Storytellers who do not wish to allow such deviations (or who would like to limit them) can simply rule that any deviation from the standard generative ritual results in the creation of a Pandoran Mockery, rather than in a new variant of the Lineage. For those Storytellers who wish to allow their players more freedom with creating their own character variations, however (or for those who wish to surprise their players with deviations from the standard Lineages), a wide variety of possibilities can be incorporated into a chronicle. Storytellers may wish to include any one, several or all of these possibilities, as they feel best suits the chronicle.

In the Beginning: The Role of the Demiurge

Even more than humans, Prometheans are influenced by those who came before them. Physically, of course, it is difficult to deny the disfigurements, Disquiet and Torment that, although they vary somewhat from Galateid to Galateid or Nepri to Nepri, mark them closer to each other than they are to those of other Lineages or to humans. These similarities, physical as well as intangible, are far greater than the skin-deep differences between humans of different areas. They influence Prometheans of each Lineage very strongly along the lines of their humour, shaping much of the tone of their Saturnine Night. Whether a Promethean revels in his Lineage's nature or strives constantly to keep his humours in balance, a Promethean is directly tied to his Lineage in a way that is both tangible and undeniable.

However, this influence is not only the innate effect of the Promethean's Lineage. Just as humans, Prometheans are also directly influenced by their "parental unit," who may form a far greater influence on them than even the most overbearing human parents can.

Human children are inundated with outside information about who they are, as individuals, as children and as humans. Prometheans do not have that advantage, relying solely

upon their own experiences and the (often limited) contact they have with other Prometheans. Considering how rare the Created are, it is possible that the individual who created the Promethean will be the only other Created he has contact with, well into the formative years of his existence. If he learns anything at all about Prometheans or himself from his creator, it may be the only "fact" available to him on the topics, save for what he is able to piece together from his own experience. Because of this, the role (or absence) of his creator is undeniably influential on a newly created Promethean. The only individual who may have more innate influence upon a Promethean is one he is likely to never meet: his demiurge.

Demiurges, as the founders of each of the Lineages, take on a mythic (in some cases, literally) role in the Lineage's later members' lives. The demiurge's stories are often the first ones told to a newly created Promethean, offered forth as an explanation of both the newly made individual's nature and his purpose for existing.

The Riven are offered forth Ulgan's story, and with it, the weight of their duties as soul-less shamans descends upon them. An Osiran's missing part is explained through the legend of Isis's dedication to her husband (and to vengeance upon his murderer). A Wretched might be handed Mary Shelley's book, and warned of the hubris of Victor Frankenstein. The innate longing experienced by a newly made Aphrodite might be elucidated with the romance of Pygmalion and his beautiful creation. Even the Golems, whose demiurge is a topic of dispute more often than any other Lineage, are regaled with stories of their line's creator. If one of the Unfinished is told of Loew Belalei and another of the Babylonian god that gives the Lineage its name, it matters little. The moral of the tale is still similar, and the impact it has on the newly Created is not reliant upon the name given.

Demiurges embody epic themes. They are archetypes, larger than life. Similar to humans with their own ancestors, those archetypes can be emulated or shunned by Prometheans of the Lineage.

They are, however, rarely ignored.

Gone but Not Forgotten

One of the great paradoxes that relate to Prometheans is that, although few humans ever know that the Created truly exist, most have heard of at least one of the historic demiurges credited with bringing the Created into existence. The youngest of the Lineages has certainly received the most publicity in modern times. From horror to comedy, few aspects of the Frankenstein legend have not been explored by humans who, although they do not recognize the truth of the tale, are somehow still drawn to it. The tale of Pygmalion and Galatea has been similarly told and retold in modern media, spawning movies, plays and stories. Likewise, the stories of Isis and Osiris and of the Jewish Golem have endured

through centuries, spanning the globe to modern readers, playgoers and movie-watchers throughout the world. The story of Orpheus is considered a classic in Greek literature, and almost as many of the Riven trace their heritage to the Greek demigod as to the Siberian shamans. Fewer humans may be familiar with Tengri and Ulgan, but even these more obscure tales are not unheard of in modern times. For creatures that nature and humanity reject inherently, it is not surprising that their tales are remembered and retold, even if they are believed to be fiction and legend.

Perhaps this is because humanity inherently identifies with the demiurges. Each was, at the time of his great act, warring with issues that are intrinsically human. Tengri's desire to connect with the spirit world, Rabbi Loew's need to protect his people, Isis's sense of bereavement and quest for revenge, Pygmalion's longing for the perfect mate, even Victor Frankenstein's hunger to create life and accomplish the "impossible" are all very human traits, and ones that humanity, as a whole, sees in itself. In embracing these demiurge's tales, humanity is, in its own way, embracing the ideal of Hope. These miraculous stories, even if they are not strictly believed, spark the illogical but undying hope that when the need, the desire, the hunger is great enough, miracles can happen.

Connecting the Dots

Although the exact details of the earliest demiurges may be lost forever in the passage of centuries and retellings of their stories, certain archetypal truths seem to remain consistent, at least in the Promethean versions of each Lineage's creation myth. From these similarities, many theories exist as to what brings about the unique creation of a new Lineage of Promethean, and why Lineages were created where and when they were.

An Act of Desperation

One idea offered forth is that the Created lines have each been spawned during times of humanity's greatest need. Not humankind, for the problems of a kingdom, a race, a country are at once too great and too impersonal to spark the type of blinding need required to create a Promethean. No, the drive behind such creations must be both intense and personal, one human's unyielding hunger for safety, companionship, revenge or validation lending him the ability for one brief moment to access the impossible, to reach beyond the limits of human understanding and ability and touch the Divine Fire. It was not Victor Frankenstein's scientific genius that made the creation of his "monster" possible. Surely other scientists (and Frankenstein himself) replicated his experiment both before and after the Creation of the first of the Wretched line, and failed to bring about the horrific wonder that was the first Patchwork Man. But at the moment when the Progenitor of the Frankenstein Lineage was created, some subtle and yet undeniable line was crossed. For a moment, the alchemical formula was in precise



alignment and the desperation of Dr. Frankenstein to succeed peaked just enough to set it apart from the driving force that had propelled him along his path up until that point. At that moment, as the lightning flashed and the storm raged around him, Victor Frankenstein, driven by that need, was able to reach beyond the mortal bounds and touch, however briefly, the Divine Fire that would bring his creation to life.

This need is akin to that which drives each of the Created to seek Humanity. Perhaps that is why, although it is almost unheard of for a human to create a Promethean, it

is the role of each Promethean to spawn others of its kind. Lacking souls, the Created know all too well of the need that only the most desperate of humans are unfortunate enough to experience.

Each of the other historical demiurges, this theory states, has felt this need. Isis, driven by her need to restore her slaughtered lover and exact vengeance upon his murderer. Pygmalion, longing for a lover and companion worthy of his attentions. Tammuz and Tengri, desperate to protect their people from marauders. Each was not only, know-



ingly or by fate or luck, in exactly the right circumstances for the alchemical processes of creation to come about, but was also driven by sheer desperation to reach beyond the normal human capacity and snatch forth the forbidden fire and imbue his creation with its Divine spark.

If this theory is true, then the potential for new Lineages is virtually limitless in modern times. Discontentment, longing and the drive for revenge are all at least as prevalent in modern societies as they were in ancient ones. In truth, if extreme need was all that was required to spawn a new

Promethean line, it is surprising that Lineages are not exponentially more populous than they are, as desperation seems to be one of the most common threads throughout human history, a thread that has only grown stronger as history progresses. But then again, perhaps individual Prometheans *do* arise more often than most of the Created think, and the real rarity is a Promethean spawning a Lineage.

The Hand of God

Other theories link the demiurges through divine intervention, claiming that each was touched by some sort of supernatural influence that acted through them to spark the Divine Fire in their creations. No human unaided, they believe, has the ability to spontaneously create life, and thus the human demiurges must have only acted as a tool or conduit through which a greater power acted to create the Progenitor of each of the Lineages. Some claim that the influence was a god, either Jehovah, or one of the non-Christian gods, or even a benevolent spirit or angel. Those who believe this may see the Promethean existence as a blessing, a divine gift of the opportunity to earn one's salvation. Others attribute the supernatural influence to the Devil or a demon and thus see the Promethean existence as a curse. They may believe that this unholy beginning is something to overcome and strive beyond, seeing Redemption as both the attainment of humanity and the literal redemption of their cursed state. Others embrace the perceived iniquity of their origin, and use this as an excuse to justify continuing along the evil path they believe they have been spawned upon. It is not surprising that a Created who believes that all Prometheans are cursed might quickly grow disheartened and abandon his Pilgrimage, perhaps turning to the Hundred-Handed path out of the belief that he deserves (or is capable of) nothing more.

Some Prometheans, eschewing the divine or diabolic for something more tangible, claim the human demiurges of each line were aided (or used by) supernatural magic-workers of some sort. Proponents of this particular theory, however, are often confused if they attempt to research their hypothesis through modern mages, who seem for the most part to be unaware of the Divine Fire, let alone able to wield it.

The Right Place at the Right Time

While some Promethean philosophers may build an entire explanation for their existence based on their demiurge theories, others believe that there is no real answer. These individuals purport that no way exists to know the exact circumstances behind the creation of any of the existing Lineages, and that is folly to try to find connections among five unique situations that were spread out over the course of thousands of years and several continents. Perhaps some of the lines were created by the direct involvement of the gods, as their descendents claim. Perhaps others were a product of

humankind's own ingenuity, or desperation. Perhaps some were circumstance, fate, karma, even dumb luck. It matters little, say those who see no overlying connection among the genesis of each Lineage. What matters, according to them, is not where the Lineage comes from originally but where each member goes after he or she is created.

Theories and Fact

As with many philosophical theorems, these concepts cannot be proved or disproved. Need, desire and desperation are hardly quantifiable matters. The touch of a (theoretical itself) divine being is likewise an untraceable miracle. Nor are fate, luck, karma or serendipity measurable, regardless of how firmly they may be believed. Just as the Divine Fire itself, the mystery behind what exactly allows a new Lineage of Prometheans to spring forth is elusive and unknowable.

This inability to prove the theories one way or another has not, of course, prevented any of the theories from being professed as truth. While some of the Created care little one way or the other, or may have never had the leisure or the motivation to consider the issue, others cling to one theory or another as devoutly as a human might to her religious faith.

Modern Variations on a Theme

In many ways, the human world has changed more in the last 100 years than in all of human history that had come before. Locations that had always been nearly unreachable are now used as tourist spots or sports challenges. Distances that once took months or years to cover by foot or on horseback are now routinely traveled in hours by plane, train or automobile. Global communications that might have once been impossible are now not only inexpensive and easily accessible, but nearly instantaneous. Many of the mysteries of the past centuries have now been revealed through the use of telescopes, space exploration robots, carbon dating, x-rays and atomic microscopes.

Some of these changes have been of great benefit to the Created. Television, books and movies give them an endless source of information about humanity, as well as access to the contemplations of centuries of human philosophers who have shared their quest to understand what it is to be human. Telephones and the Internet allow the Created to communicate from a distance with each other and with humans far outside of the radius of their Disquiet. Modern transportation makes it easier for a Promethean to avoid spawning a Wasteland than at any time in previous history.

And yet, despite these luxuries, this is perhaps the most dangerous time in history for a Promethean to exist. Gone are the vast stretches of wilderness that once easily protected a Promethean who had gone to the wastes or just

needed to escape a maddened mob. Instead, miles of cities and highways fill once-pristine wild places, and even the fields and woodlands that separate them are now private property. The same modern communications that facilitate a Promethean's long-distance relationships now also can track his travels from town to town, state to state, even continent to continent, and the modern reliance on formal identification paperwork, while not unavoidable, certainly makes the life of a distrusted drifter more difficult than in previous eras.

Modern Demiurges

According to common thought, the last of the five Lineages was created well over 100 years ago. When Victor Frankenstein brought his "monster" into being, he sparked the Wretched line, and became the fifth and final demiurge. This, however, is not necessarily the whole of the truth.

Certainly, the Wretched are the youngest of the five commonly known Lineages (the Nuclear Prometheans are more recent creations than the Wretched, but are little more than rumor to most of the Created). And, should it suit the Storyteller, **Promethean: The Created** works perfectly well with no more than these five Lineages. Some Storytellers, however, may desire a more organic Lineage system, one that not only allows them to add more variation to their storylines and Storyteller-controlled characters, but that may also give the players (and their characters) the opportunity to experiment with creating their own Promethean Lineages.

Following in Their Footsteps: Modern Human Demiurges

One way of incorporating modern demiurges into a Promethean setting is by using the same types of formulas used by the five commonly known Lineages: a human demiurge somehow manages to access the Divine Fire and sparks life into a human corpse. If someone uses the exact methods used by one of the previous human demiurges, he might create a Promethean very similar to one of the existing Lineages. While technically fulfilling the role of demiurge, should this Lineage continue, it is likely that the more modern demiurge's role might be downplayed (or even outright disbelieved) by those of the Created who are more familiar with the traditional demiurge's story. A modern Lineage that almost exactly mimics the Galateids would likely be seen by other Promethean as Muses, even if the Created were technically a separate line.

On the other hand, the results might be very different, even if the process were duplicated exactly. Certainly would-be life-creators have attempted to replicate Viktor Frankenstein's mythic experiment in the past and failed. If a modern demiurge were to successfully recreate it, it would be because there was something unique in the situation that allowed it to succeed where others had not. This uniqueness, be it something circumstantial, or an inherent quality of the

demiurge himself, might well be sufficient to spawn a Lineage wholly different from the existing Wretched line.

On the other hand, it is possible that a modern demiurge might create (or stumble upon) a process that was completely different from the processes used by any of the earlier Lineage creators, and thus spawn a unique Lineage. A Lineage begun by a surgeon using a partly or wholly synthetic construct, for example, might have an affinity with technology and human-made materials. His Progenitor might possess plasticine humour, with a malleable personality and the ability to reshape his physical form at will. Conversely, the new line might have a titan humour, with a virtually indestructible body, and an unbending will to match.

So Close and Yet So Far: Humans Creating Pandorans

One of the greatest burdens that a Promethean can bear is the knowledge that he has brought a Mockery into the world. Until the Pandoran is destroyed, it plagues not only its creator but any other of the Created it encounters, visiting whatever evil it can upon their kind. While tales of Victor Frankenstein's misgivings at having created the first of his line are legendary, how much greater would his compunction have been had he instead spawned the first of the Torch-Born? Some Prometheans believe that it is impossible for a human demiurge to create a Pandoran, that this "sin" is a weight born only by the Created themselves. Others, however, are not so certain.

Human demiurges almost never grasp the enormity of what they are setting out to create. Perhaps they are attempting to find a companion, or to play God. Perhaps they are so driven by lust, love, hatred or fear that their end goal remains ephemeral until the deed is done, and they do not even know themselves what it is they seek. But it is the rarest of rarities that they understand anything about Prometheans. Human demiurges almost never recognize the Divine Fire, let alone have the power, drive and knowledge to access the same. Thus, the overwhelming majority of would-be demiurges fail to create a Promethean without ever even realizing that the Created exist. These would-be demiurges continue to strive, or give up in despair, while remaining entirely in the dark about the nature of the Created.

This majority is, by far, the most fortunate. Those rare few who do manage to grasp an understanding of the nature of the Divine Fire may find themselves far closer to succeeding, but in this case, a near-miss may prove deadly. If a human is able to manipulate enough of the Divine spark, and yet somehow his experiment goes wrong, he may come to share the burden that Promethean fear most — the creation of a Pandoran. This human-spawned creature is not a Mockery, being unrelated to any Promethean Lineage. The Pandoran is, however, just as deadly as any of its Promethean-born siblings. It comes into being possessing only the



smallest amount of animating Flux, and seems to know instinctively that the presence of its human creator threatens it with almost immediate Dormancy. The Pandoran's first action, therefore, is to either flee or attempt to kill its creator.

Most often, a human who possesses a personality capable of recognizing and accessing the Divine Fire is far from societal standards, regardless of his era or culture. Should he survive the encounter with his Pandoran-spawn and share the account with others, his tales of bringing a monster to life are likely, depending on the time and place, to be dealt with as the ravings of a madman or as admissions of fraternization with the unholy. Even among Prometheans who recognize that they themselves can do such things, he is unlikely to be believed.

These human-spawned Pandorans may very well explain the origins of other unique beings in the World of Darkness. During the time of Cortez, for example, a priest of Xipe Totec was rumored to have been granted the fire of the gods to protect his people. His efforts were successful until the Spanish soldiers came to his city. The priest warned his chief about the Spanish, whom he likened to goats for their unwashed smell and their pointy beards, but the chief did not heed his words. Eventually the soldiers showed their true nature, however, and ransacked the town. When his chief was struck down by the Spaniard's bullets, the priest took up the corpse, intending to bring it back to life to protect the city against the Spanish "goats." Something went wrong, though, and the body tore itself apart and the pieces fled into the wilderness. These Chupacabra still haunt that area, awakened on those rare occasions when one of the Created comes near enough to stir them from Dormancy. They hunger for Pyros like any other Pandoran, but they actually suck the blood of goats out of that half-remembered ancient mandate to protect the Aztec peoples from the Spanish soldiers.

Forging a New Path: Promethean Demiurges

For all that the five historic demiurges are all human, should it suit a Storyteller to allow them, **Promethean: The Created** has ample room for non-human demiurges as well. A Promethean might be created in the traditional Lineage manner herself, but for one reason or another, not use those same rituals when the time comes for her to create progeny. While a Storyteller might rule that any deviation from the traditional ritual may result in a Pandoran, or that deviations still have a chance of resulting in an offspring of the creator's Lineage, should the Storyteller wish to incorporate more variation into his chronicle, he might also allow characters to experiment with varying the generative ritual to create wholly new Lineages as well.

Twisted Family Lines

A Promethean might not, for a variety of reasons, use the same generative ritual that was used to create her. She may have no choice in the matter. Perhaps she never met her creator, and thus does not know anything about the ritual used. She might have been abandoned during or shortly after the creation process by a selfish creator who saw her only as a step in his own Pilgrimage. She may have, in the clouded haze of waking, driven her maker away or even destroyed him.

Likewise, she might have become separated from her creator before the generative ritual could be taught. He might have hoarded the knowledge out of spite or fear that she was not yet ready to successfully create more of their kind. Or, he simply may not have had a chance yet to share the information before some twist of fate separated them (perhaps permanently). The Saturnine Night is a dangerous path to walk, and there are certainly far more pertinent lessons to communicate early on in a Promethean's existence than the intricacies of the generative act. Regardless of the reason, if a Promethean does not manage to learn the generative act from her creator or other sources, she may find herself feeling the drive to create offspring and yet have nothing but a vague instinct about how to go about it.

This lack of information may lead her to seek out those of other Lineages who may share their generative rituals with her. It may encourage her to research (through mundane or supernatural resources) the process of creating life in inanimate objects and experiment with inventing her own generative rites. Or, if she remains sufficiently uneducated about the nature of Promethean existence, she may be driven to attempt to create offspring through totally unrelated means: artificial manufacturing, cloning or even sexual reproduction.

Other times, Promethean Lineages deviate not out of necessity, but choice. A throng of the Created may decide to create another Promethean as a joint effort, as a symbol of their unity. A philosophical Promethean scholar might believe he has uncovered the secret to creating a Torment-less offspring in some ancient text and use the information there to create something far different from his traditional Lineage. Or, in an act of rebellion, one of the Created may intentionally "adopt" the generative ritual of another Lineage, or create a unique one.

At the Storyteller's discretion, each of these circumstances might spawn a new Lineage. These new lines might be variations of the traditional five, or even hybrids, blending aspects of two or more traditional Lineages. The new line might, however, be something wholly different, a new Lineage as disparate from the established ones as they each are from one another.

A Motherless Child

Rumors also exist of Lineages that are not so much deviations from traditional ones as much as barely related manifestations of the Divine Fire. Legends of a little-known Lineage whose demiurge was not human but one of the great apes or even a prehistoric Neanderthal have circulated for long enough that they have become a part of the Promethean mythology. Likewise, tales are told around the Ramble fires of Prometheans spawned spontaneously from circumstances that mimic those of the generative ritual, but without the guiding hand of a Promethean creator. Those who claim such heritages are rarely encountered and even more rarely believed; the idea of a spontaneously manifested Promethean is a difficult one for even the most open-minded of the Created to bug into without proof.

These deviations can add even more layers of complication to the identity issues that face the Created. Most Prometheans spend at least a good portion of the early years of their existence tackling the questions of “Who and what am I?” and “Where did I come from?” For those who cannot trace their Lineage to one of the commonly known five demiurges, these questions may never truly be answered to their satisfaction.

Lineage Deviations and the Generative Act

Deviations from the standard Lineages may well affect their creations’ chances of performing the generative act themselves. These modifiers may be used to represent the additional complications involved with such generative rituals.

- 3 The ritual is being created or modified significantly rather than being used as taught.
- 2 The creator has never seen this particular ritual being performed.
- +1 The ritual contains aspects of at least one traditional generative ritual. (Note: This is not cumulative. There are not additional bonuses for combining aspects of more than one type of generative ritual.)

These modifiers are cumulative with each other and with those from p. 187 of **Promethean: The Created** and any listed in additional supplements that the Storyteller chooses to use.

Creating New Lineages

The **Promethean** line offers a plethora of Promethean family lines, from the well-documented core Lineages to those offered in part or wholly in the supplemental materials. Storytellers and players, however, also have the freedom to create their own Lineages, based on or completely separate from those offered. Unlike the challenges facing a would-be demiurge, creating a new Lineage is a fairly straightforward matter for a Storyteller or player. A checklist of various elements intrinsic to each Lineage is offered below.

Themes

Perhaps the most dangerous pitfall to avoid when creating a new Lineage is the temptation to deviate from the inherent themes of **Promethean: The Created**. While the same formulas explained below might be just as easily used to create animated stuffed animals or sentient food products, such creations are likely to distract from rather than add to the themes of the game. Even the most inherently Promethean Lineage can, if handled inappropriately, quickly degenerate into something quite non-Promethean in mood and feel. The original Pinocchio story, written by Carlo Collodi in the late 1800s, is especially **Promethean** in theme. In it, the puppet-boy, brought to life by his father’s skill and desire, suffers punishment and eventually death, not only for the mistakes and ill choices he makes but because he is innately “different” from those around him, and thus not trusted. The last half, added to make the story more appropriate for young readers, softened the tale quite a bit, adding hope in the form of the Blue Fairy’s intervention and Pinocchio’s eventual redemption, while still maintaining the dark realism of a created creature’s struggle to understand and eventually earn, humanity. Contrast this with the same story told by modern animators, with laughing dancing puppets and flirtatious goldfish, and the difference between Promethean and non-Promethean themes is easy to see.

Concepts

Inspiration for Lineage concepts can come from almost anywhere. Acts of desperation, sorrow, sacrifice and hope fill the shelves and screens of traditional fiction. Each is capable, at least in theory, of spawning forth a Promethean “answer” to the would-be demiurge’s problems. Had it been within his power to do so, Romeo might have attempted to raise Juliet’s seemingly lifeless body, rather than killing himself, lending their story a different, although perhaps no less tragic ending when the new Capulet Lineage was created.

And reality is, if anything, even more filled more inspiration for new Created lines. Every day, somewhere on Earth, humans deal with situations that drive them far beyond the normal boundaries of mortal behavior. One mother protects her children by overwhelming a would-be killer despite what should be lethal wounds, while in another place at the same time, an entire family is found dead, the result of

a parent's delusions or depression. Teenagers fight, kill and die thousands of miles away from their families in a "political maneuver," while their neighbors blow up doctors, children and expectant mothers for the "sin" of visiting a clinic that performs abortions. Desperation lurks just below the surface of even the most normal-seeming setting, spawning an endless variety of potentials for new Created Lineages.

Demiurges

The starting point for almost all Lineages is a demiurge. In some cases, the demiurge is unknown, the line begun by something other than the actions and intentions of a demiurge, or more than one creator play equal parts in the process, but in most cases a single individual is primarily responsible for the creation of a new Lineage. In many ways, this individual lays the foundation, literally and figuratively, for the entire Lineage.

Humours

The five traditional Lineages are based on the humours believed by medieval philosophers to rule the nature of humans (sanguine, melancholic, phlegmatic and choleric), along with the "aetherial" humour of ectoplasm. These humours represent the base personality traits of each Lineage. Each is likewise associated with the Western philosophical element that most closely aligns to the humour: Fire with Choleric, Earth with Melancholic, Water with Phlegmatic, Air with Sanguine and Spirit with Ectoplasmic. When building a new Lineage, the traditional five humours can be used, either separately or combined (Air and Water forming Clouds or Rain, Water and Earth forming River or Mud, etc.) Alternately, additional humours or elements can be incorporated to reflect that the base nature of the line is different from the established Lineages. These new humours might be drawn from other philosophical and spiritual world views as well. Elements such as "metal" and "wood" can be gleaned from Chinese philosophies, for example, or "wind" (*kaze*), "sky" (*ku*) and "consciousness" (*shiki*) from Japanese tradition.

Alternatively, a new Lineage's humour might be a representation of a physical or symbolic association with the line. A savage Promethean Lineage that was created by the sole survivor of a Himalayan plane crash might have a "north wind" humour, cold and blustery but hard-pressed to maintain effort for long. Conversely, a "volcanic" humour might be brought about by the last of a line of Polynesian or Hawaiian nobles, spawning a Lineage that was relentless and fiery in nature, consuming everything in its path. A Lineage that began because of the demiurge's need for vengeance might have a "venomous" humour, insidious but dangerous to those around it, while a "compassionate" humour might suit a Lineage spawned from a demiurge's genuine desire to resurrect a lost loved one.

An important aspect to remember when developing humours is that they are not single-dimension traits. Just as a sanguine personality can be both outgoing and flighty, happy and prone to impulsiveness, a metallic humour should be more than "tough." It might be both strong and malleable, enduring but resistant to new ideas. A wooden humour might be slow to change but constantly seeking growth and enlightenment.

Bestowments

A Promethean's Bestowment can allow for choice. Although most Galateids tend to have a Mesmerizing Appearance, their striking looks (and accompanying game-mechanic) is not unique to them. A Promethean of any Lineage can develop the Muses' traditional Bestowment, and not all Galateids manifest it themselves. It is not unheard of for an Adonis to instead have the ability to turn his body to inanimate stone or metal, protecting him while he hibernates for a time, or to be created with a pheromone that manifests a strong sexual response in those around him. Just as with humours, a new Lineage might share a Bestowment with the traditional lines. It is just as likely, however, that a new line would manifest a new Bestowment.

Often these Bestowments are tied to the Lineage's method of their creation. The Riven, for example, are created when their bodies are torn apart by spirits, and their Bestowments most often manifest as some ability to interact with or manipulate the spirit world. Similarly, a new Lineage whose members are cremated before being resurrected from the ashes might be have the ability to generate flame, or to manipulate it or might be resistant to fire once the generative ritual renews them.

Other Lineages' Bestowments seem more closely tied to their purpose for being created than the actual method by which they were made. Galateids, as a manifestation of their demiurge's desire for a perfect companion, most often have an innate beauty that makes their social interactions more effective, easing their interaction with their creator (and everyone else). In the same manner, a new Lineage spawned out of its creator's desire for justice might have the innate ability to tell truth from lies, or (if the creator was attempting to create an instrument of vengeance), a supernatural affinity for tracking prey.

Other Bestowments, however, seem more randomly granted. Nothing in the Wretched's generative ritual should inherently bestow supernatural strength upon them, and yet most Frankensteins exhibit this ability. Similarly, new Lineages might inherently have the ability to move very swiftly, to change shape either subtly or to an extreme, to reproduce through asexual "budding" rather than through the generative ritual or to shift their consciousnesses out of their bodies at will.

Disfigurements

Similar to Bestowments, a Lineage's disfigurements may relate to one of several aspects of the line itself. Some of the traditional Lineages disfigurements are a manifestation of the method used to create them. The crude limits of Victor Frankenstein's Victorian science spawned both the metallic bolts and plates of his creation's Lineage, and its patchwork appearance, and the Riven's disfigurements reflect their sundered beginnings. In the same manner, a new line whose Progenitor was created in a pique of religious fervor might manifest outward signs of significance to that belief system: angelic wings for Christian mythos or Kali's extra arms and jagged teeth for a Hindu demiurge, for example. Likewise, one created wholly or in part from synthetic pieces might reflect an obviously artificial appearance when its disfigurements become apparent.

Other traditional Lineages' disfigurements are directly related to their humours or associated elements. The unyielding earth of the Tammuz's melancholic natures is reflected in both the enhanced stamina of their Bestowment and their stony appearance. In a new Lineage, this might manifest as a sky-humoured Promethean who becomes partially transparent when his disfigurements "appear," or a volcanic-humoured line might appear pitted like pumice.

Perhaps most intriguingly, the Galateid's disfigurement seems to be an ironic counterpoint to their intended place in the universe. Rather than flawless beauty, their disfigurement offers a peek at their greatest fears: that they are but cheap imitations of human beauty, constructed playthings with no inherent value or worth. This antithesis might also be applied to disfigurements for new Lineages. The previously mentioned religious line might manifest a smell of brimstone and a vague air of demonic menace, or a benevolent and mercy-based line appear as savage predators.

Regardless of the type of disfigurement, new Lineage creators are cautioned to ensure that the physical manifestation of the line's Promethean nature is exactly that: a defect. As tempting as disfigurements such as the Centimani's extra limbs might be, the disfigurements should not be back-handed benefits. Extra hands, for example, should be a hindrance. They should not be useable for attacks, defense or accomplishing tasks. Characters should not gain game benefits from their disfigurements, unless the nature of their Bestowments is that the disfigurements are both inhumanly disturbing and somehow utilitarian. In this case, an extra pair of limbs might serve as both disfigurement and Bestowment.

Avoiding Reinventing the Wheel

While many Storytellers and players may enjoy the challenge of creating new Promethean Lineages from scratch, it's not necessary to come up with completely new mechanics in order to create a new Lineage. Enough variety exists within the basic Lineages to allow a multitude of hybrid

creations to come into play, one of which likely suits the needs of any given situation. By combining elements of existing Prometheans and adapting aspects of two or more Lineages, Storytellers and players can customize their own individual Lineages with a minimum of effort.

Several main essential characteristics can be said to typify each of the standard Lineages. Each has a unique disfigurement and Bestowment. Each has aspects of the generative act and creation process that are distinctive to their line. Each is associated with a different humour and element, and because of these, certain personality traits, abilities and aspects (such as Torment and Disquiet) are most common for their kind. By mixing and matching these characteristics, an almost limitless number of unique Lineages can be created.

In game play, for example, Bud may never encounter another of the Wretched (or anyone who has witnessed the Frankenstein generative act first hand). His companionship with Caleb (and the fact that they both seem to be pieced together from human body parts) might lead Bud to attempt to create his own ritual based on what he was able to coax out of a reluctant Caleb about the Ulgan rite. Bud knows he is not capable of sending the body into the "Twilight" (in fact, he's not entirely certain that it exists) as Caleb says the Riven do when creating offspring, so Bud modifies the process. His first several attempts fail. Without the spirits' presence, there is no "spark" to the rite, and although he uses Caleb's ectoplasm to imbue the corpse, Bud's left with nothing but a pile of rotting human flesh at the end of his vigil. Fortunately for Bud, the act is also sufficiently far from any true generative ritual does not spawn Pandorans, either. (See p.26 for more information on failed generative acts.)

Eventually, after reading up on the Frankenstein legend, Bud breaks into a power transformer station and zaps the corpse with high-voltage electricity. To his surprise, the body begins to split apart, inky blackness filling the gaps between each chunk. In time, he will discover that his offspring is not wholly of the Wretched or of the Riven. She has the Ulgan disfigurement, but lacks their Bestowment. Instead, she possesses Unholy Strength, and her nature and Torment (see p. 182 of **Promethean: The Created**) are akin to those of her creator.

The Storyteller for Bud's player uses the rules as written for each aspect of the particular aspects of Bud's new creation, minimizing the amount of work required for this new creature. The Storyteller may rule the new being a hybrid incapable of creating more of her own kind, and thus cursed to never attain her Magnum Opus. Or, perhaps preferably, (especially if the hybrid is going to be a player's character) he may name her as simply a deviant version of the Wretched. In this case, the new Created shares her maker's challenge, for replicating this ad lib generative ritual will surely be more difficult than a standard ritual. (See p. 27 for additional generative ritual modifiers in regards to Lineage deviations.)



Modern Demiurges

These examples of potential modern demiurges can be incorporated as-is into a chronicle, or modified to suit a Storyteller's needs. As well, they may serve as inspiration for Storytellers and players to create other modern demiurges for their game.

Father Mazda – Promethean Demiurge

Quote: “All of my children are unique and special. I love them all equally.”

Background: Some people can't leave well enough alone. Father Mazda is one of them. Where most of the Created see the generative act as a painful but necessary step along their pilgrimage, Mazda has become obsessed with it. After successfully creating his first offspring by utilizing the traditional Osiran generative ritual, Mazda began to wonder how far he could deviate from the ritual and still create a Promethean, rather than a Pandoran. Mazda's experiments over the decades have created Mockeries as often as not, but when his experiments have been successful, he has not only brought into being numerous Osirans but also a number of individuals who do not share the Osiran disfigurements, Bestowments or demeanor. Whether they are Osiran or not is a matter of debate, but he thinks of them all as “my children.”

While Father Mazda has developed an extensive repertoire of Transmutations over the decades, he has learned only one Pandoran ability: Mantle of Lordship. With this, he maintains a benevolent but firm control over any non-*Sublimati* Pandorans created by his generative experiments. Mazda loves all of his children, even those whom others would consider failures, and he would prefer to treat them all with the same paternal affection. Pandorans, however, do not return the sentiment, so he relies upon Mantle of Lordship to minimize the damage they inflict. The Transmutation, however, does not conjure any affection from the creatures for their “master,” and the area around Mazda's Demesne is haunted thickly by escaped Pandoran offspring intent on feasting on their creator and his other children.

Description: Round as a wine keg, Father Mazda rumbles when he speaks, as if the words must echo around a bit inside of him before emerging. He is prone to wearing loose drawstring trousers and blousy shirts that hang nearly to his knees, not a difficult task with his squat stature. Barely five feet tall, he shuffles along in rough sandals when he chooses to move, although he prefers to remain seated whenever possible. Father Mazda's only adornment is a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles. Their round frames gleam in bright contrast to the rest of his dull accoutrements, and he often removes them to clean them on the hem of his shirt before replacing them upon his hawkish nose. Father Mazda's missing body part is not visible during casual interactions, and it is commonly believed that he is missing the classic Osiran organ.



When his disfigurements show, his skin grows taut across his flesh, and all moisture seems to leave him. His lips crack with every word, and flakes of dust fall from his mouth when he speaks. His eyes are bloodshot, and when he blinks, his eyelids seem to scrape dryly across the orbs.

Storytelling Hints: In his own way, Father Mazda is as obsessed and eccentric as any human demiurge ever has been. Whether his rituals bring forth Pandoran or Promethean no longer matters to him. He has long since abandoned his Pilgrimage and now is content to continue experimenting with variations of the generative act until he runs out of new ideas, or one of his creations sees fit to put an end to his work.

When he encounters a new Promethean, he does his best to discover (and remember) every aspect she may know of the ritual that brought her into being, cross referencing it with a number of base facts (physical appearance, methods of “empowerment” [regaining Pyros], apparent demeanor, Athanor and the like). He is quite matter-of-fact about gaining this information, and while he keeps no physical records, he can go on for hours about his favorite topic. In listening, it becomes obvious that he has been collecting this information about every Promethean he has encountered for more than 60 years. He can, at will, bring forth statistics on any particular aspect of the Created he has encountered. His particular interests are of any deviations from standard Lineages, and he takes great efforts to gather any information he can regarding these “anomalies.”

Although some may be put off by the fact that Father Mazda has long since abandoned his Pilgrimage for the sake of his obsession, he does not preach the Hundred-Handed path or discourage others (including his own offspring) from pursuing their own Pilgrimage. He merely seeks to be allowed



the freedom to pursue his own studies, which he considers more important overall than his own redemption.

Lineage: Osiran

Refinement: Centimani

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Crafts (Taxidermy) 2, Investigation 3, Occult (Promethean Generative Rituals) 4, Science 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Stealth 1, Survival 2

Social Skills: Empathy (Offspring) 2, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 2, Socialize 1, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Allies (Offspring) 3, Eidetic Memory, Language (Latin, Spanish), Lair (Security 2, Size 3)

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 5

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Greed

Initiative: 5

Defense: 2

Speed: 9

Health: 8

Azoth: 2

Bestowment: Revivification

Transmutations: *Alchemicus* — Forging the Master's Tools (·), Identification (·); *Mesmerism* — Fixed Stare (·), Firebringer (·), Suggestion (·), Atavistic Instincts (·); *Pandoran* — Mantle of Lordship (·); *Vulcanus* — Sense Flux (·), Sense Pyros (·), Share Pyros (·)

Pyros/per Turn: 11/2

Story Hooks

- An Osiran member of the throng seeks out Mazda, his yet-unmet creator, and discovers he has more family than he bargained for. Among his “siblings” are non-Osirans and those whose Lineage he does not recognize, as well as an Osiran Centimani who challenges the character's views on the Pilgrimage, encouraging him to instead follow in their “father's” footsteps.

- Research in an arcane text reveals references to a common Promethean ancestor: a creature that spawned each of the five Lineages. Although this seems to fly in the face of what each of the Created has been taught about his heritage, the Created may decide to trace the reference to Mazda's Death Valley lair, where they encounter Prometheans of the traditional Lineages and some they have never heard of, all who claim Father Mazda as their creator.

Sarah Lyons-Moore — Redeemed Creator

Quote: “It's all right. I know you don't remember. Let me tell you about us.”

Background: Most Redeemed remember little (if anything) of their Saturnine Night. Having finally achieved their long-sought-after prize, even those who once were part of a throng often leave their Promethean existence forgotten behind as they move into their newly won Humanity. Not all are that fortunate, however. Some are cursed to remember it all.

Sarah not only remembers her past in excruciating detail, it haunts her. She saw her Redemption as the first day of a new life and abandoned all ties to her old one, but was never able to forget the decades she'd spent on her Pilgrimage. Her Promethean memories plagued her existence as a human, despite her attempts to bury them beneath layer upon layer of human normalcy.

Sarah apparently wasn't the only one who wasn't able to forget. At first she thought she was going crazy. She kept catching glimpses of familiar faces out of the corner of her eye; faces she'd left behind with her former life. Phone calls with silence on the other end only added to her paranoia. She could feel . . . something. Something was watching her. Something familiar.

She'd tried to explain it to Paul, her handsome new husband, but he'd just patted her hand reassuringly and suggested she see her doctor. Maybe, he offered, their thus-fruitless attempts to start a family had started to take a toll on her nerves. But, when she found her husband's body, already cold, but laid out restfully in unmarred silent slumber and surrounded by candles and rose petals, Sarah knew her fears had been justified. Her past had caught up with her at last.

Numbly, she went through the motions of the same generative ritual that had spawned her husband's murderer. Later, when she'd come to her senses, she would wonder why the





ritual had worked, how it could possibly have succeeded. But that night, there was only instinct and loss and hatred and fear, driving her to an act that never should have been attempted, let alone accomplished.

When it did, Sarah found herself faced with a new challenge: how to keep her new creation safe from his jealous “sibling’s” predation.

Description: A few weeks ago, Sarah was the perfect, young, suburban, upscale wife. From her high-heeled mules to her manicure and makeup, every aspect of her appearance was carefully chosen to stand out among her peers. Now, however, she’s more concerned with blending into a crowd. She’s abandoned her designer clothes in favor of durable jeans and sneakers, and her SUV has been swapped for a non-descript four-door sedan, the better to lose any would-be trackers. Her once-perfect skin is now showing signs of exhaustion: dark circles have developed beneath her eyes, and she no longer has time or energy to spare for hiding them with concealer. The paranoid mannerisms and postures that were second nature as a Promethean are finding a new home with human Sarah, as she tries desperately to educate “Paul” on his new state of existence while avoiding her abandoned Promethean offspring.

Storytelling Hints: Few who meet Sarah would ever believe that she had once been shunned by all who encountered her. She has spent every moment of the last five years doing everything within her power to cultivate an air of normalcy around herself, and for the most part, her efforts have been successful. From the split-level three-bedroom ranch in the suburbs to her gas-guzzling SUV, Sarah’s façade was perfectly woven.

Now, however, things are beginning to fall apart. Having fled their home, she and “Paul” are quickly exhausting their liquid assets as they try to stay one step ahead of their common enemy: her child and his murderer. She’d hoped, against hope, that the person she’d brought back to life would be her beloved husband, and when he wasn’t, she’d done her best to teach, coax and mentor him into being “Paul.” Despite her best efforts, however, it’s becoming clear that the man who regards her each day through her husband’s eyes is no longer the man he once was.

Sarah is immune to “Paul’s” Disquiet, although whether that immunity extends to other Prometheans remains to be seen. She remembers her former life as Promethean enough to recognize subtle telltale signs of other Created, although she can no longer sense their Azothic Radiance.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Computer 1, Crafts (Cooking) 1, Occult (Promethean) 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Drive 1, Stealth 2, Survival 2, Weaponry (Improvised) 2

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression 1, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 2, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Danger Sense, Quick Healer, Resources 3, Striking Looks 4 (from her Redeemed Athanor)

Willpower: 8

Morality: 6

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Speed: 10

Health: 8

Athanor: Unicorn

Story Hooks

- One of the throng is attacked by “Paul,” who is obviously intent on performing a lacuna. Mid-battle, he flees, as if called away by some unheard voice. Should the throng follow him, they are led to the temporary lair he shares with Sarah, who will do anything to defend her “husband” from harm. Unfortunately, perhaps because Sarah is Redeemed, rather than wholly human or Promethean, the ritual that created “Paul” did not bestow him with the ability to regain Pyros in traditional ways. Instead, he must scavenge like a Pandoran for the fuel to feed his divine furnace. Will the throng sympathize with the starving Promethean and his wife-keeper? Will they turn on him and put him out of his misery? Or will they simply walk away and leave him to his fate?

- While traveling, the throng senses an unfamiliar Azothic Radiance. If they trace it to its source, they may be surprised to find “Paul” accompanied by a human woman who seems to be unaffected by Disquiet. If they attempt to discover the secret to her immunity, she seeks to befriend them, offering whatever money, shelter or assistance she has available. Unbeknownst to the throng, however, she is really just hoping to put an additional layer of “cannon fodder” between her beloved and the creature that has already killed him once and seeks to finish the job.

Impossibilities

It is commonly held that no supernatural creature, save for one of the Created, can wield the Divine Fire necessary to create a Promethean. For each Created, the ability to do so goes against his inherent supernatural grain and violates his deepest instincts.

While the vampiric creation process, or Embrace, brings awareness to a dead human body, the newly spawned undead is not alive and has no chance of becoming human once more. While a Galateid’s sharing of sanguine humour may appear similar to a vampiric Embrace, the results are completely different creatures. And, while a vampire could theoretically replicate the generative ritual to attempt to create a Promethean, the Embrace is so inherently ingrained in the Kindred’s nature that attempts to spawn through



other means would seem inherently “wrong,” effectively sabotaging the spark of creative fire required to bring the process to fruition.

Werewolves, as a whole, inherently resist the idea of attempting to meld a dead body with a “living” spirit, even if that spirit is created from Pyros rather than a former human soul. As half-spirit creatures themselves, werewolves find the process of making one of the Created is too close to imprisonment or possession to view the process with the dynamic fire of invention and creation that is necessary for the process to succeed.

Of all of the major supernatural races in the World of Darkness, mages would seem the closest to being able to actually create a Promethean. They are still human, after all, for all that they have supernatural powers as well. It is this same ability, however, that stops them from being able to do so. Mages constantly walk the tightrope between normalcy and the supernatural, with the temptation of relying upon their magic to aid with any challenging issue always overhead. The process of generating one of the Created is a taxing one, both the preparation and the act itself. Were it simple, or the outcome assured, the world would be populated with far more Prometheans than it is. And, the harder the task, the greater the temptation for a mage to rely not on human creativity and ingenuity, but to lean back upon the supernatural to complete it. Thus, while a mage might eschew magic for the generative act should he comprehend that it was necessary, he inevitably reaches for magic rather than grasping for that human spark of blinding inspiration that allows the generative act. In short, by virtue of not having other supernatural abilities to draw upon, a human is uniquely qualified to achieve the spark of divine wisdom (or madness) that allows him to wield the Divine Fire and become a demiurge.

Doing the Impossible

A Storyteller may, however, need for the impossible to happen, and might wish to create circumstances where a vampire, mage or werewolf might be able to create a Promethean. Certainly, motivations to attempt such efforts are easily understandable for most supernatural creatures. It only relies to the Storyteller to implement the “how.”

For mages, the search for knowledge is the most likely motivation for creating a Promethean. Perhaps a member of the players’ throng has been captured by an obsessed mage who has become focused on obtaining the secret behind creating more of these strange, arcane creatures. The Storyteller may rule that in time the mage, being human, may be sufficiently driven to become a demiurge of a new line of Prometheans, setting aside his magic and tapping into his human potential. In time, he may even be able to do so through supernatural means, finding a way to access the Divine Fire through spell-work, if

he possesses sufficiently powerful magic in appropriate areas of influence.

While several factions of vampires delve into the mysteries of the occult as deeply as any mage, the undead also may possess another motivation for learning how to create one of the Created. If a vampire learns that the Created may become human, the vampire may yearn to achieve the same goal herself. Upon learning that a Promethean must undergo the generative ritual and make another of his kind before attaining Humanity, the vampire may come to believe that the same process can work for her. Virtually immortal, she may dedicate decades, even centuries, to occult research and experimentation, eventually creating her own generative ritual that, should it suit the Storyteller’s needs, may duplicate one of the existing Lineages if successful, or may create another altogether, either a unique Lineage or some type of half-live hybrid that is neither wholly Promethean nor vampire.

Werewolves are unlikely to find motivation to create a Promethean. Their attention is almost universally focused on protecting their territory and keeping the spirits that threaten it in line. Of all the Created, only the Riven (or those who possess the Ephemeral Flesh Bestowment) are capable of interacting with the spirit world, and the damage done to the spirit world by their Wasteland is great enough to ensure that most werewolves would rather destroy than create a Promethean. Even if werewolves were to find reason to attempt such works, they are also least likely to find the means to do so. They are not human, like mages, and thus lack humanity’s seemingly unique ability to tap into the Divine Fire and channel its power. Werewolves’ own supernatural power is more akin to that of spirits than that of the Divine Spark. Should a Storyteller feel it necessary to grant a shapeshifter the ability to bring a Promethean into being, a sufficiently powerful manifestation of the Divine Fire (the appearance of an Arch-qashmal, perhaps, or an extremely potent Firestorm) might awaken a corresponding spirit in the spirit wilds. This spirit of the Divine Fire might then be influenced to act on the werewolves’ behalf and take part in the generative ritual. This spirit would, of course, need sufficient reason to do so, owing no inherent alliance to the werewolves. Seeking out such a creature might easily provide an entire story arc as the shapeshifters (and other spirits) attempt to determine the new spirit’s nature, goals and intentions.

Any of these situations should be handled with great care. The introduction of any new Lineage is a serious and phenomenally rare happening. Only five Lineages have, historically, prospered, and while it is certainly possible that other Lineages have either died out or remained obscure enough to stay below the radar, they would still be an extreme rarity. Introducing the idea of supernatural demiurges also has other ramifications, not just on the Promethean paradigm, but on that of the demiurge as well.

When I Was a Child, I Spoke as a Child...

Perhaps the single greatest stumbling block to a supernatural creature creating a Promethean is the fact that accessing the Divine Fire is an act of human desperation. The same driving need that, in a human, might allow him to reach beyond his normal capacity and touch the Divine Fire, inevitably drives a supernatural creature to access its own supernatural abilities, be they magic spells, vampiric Disciplines or Gifts of the spirits. Only by truly setting aside its reliance on these extraordinary abilities does any supernatural creature have even the slightest hope of accessing the Divine Fire, and even then, the creature's chances are at best, no greater than that of the average human — that is to say, astronomically slim.

Once this has been accomplished, however, it is not easily undone. Any supernatural creature who has sufficiently abandoned her inherent reliance upon non-human abilities to successfully wield the Divine Fire finds it is no simple matter to pick them up again.

In game terms, a supernatural being who somehow manages to create a Promethean suffers a -5 modifier on *all* dice pools for activating supernatural powers after the being accomplishes this feat. This affects Disciplines, Gifts, rites and spells. It isn't that the character doesn't remember that she has the powers, or even how they worked, it's just that some vital connection is now missing. An intelligent demiurge might even realize what has happened — in connecting with the Divine Fire, such a quintessentially human-driven force, the demiurge has lost her ability to connect with the source of her own powers.

This handicap isn't permanent, however. Vampires generally recover the fastest, as they must feed on the blood of the living to survive (and thus their supernatural status cements itself quickly). Werewolves are a close second, especially if the werewolf in question belongs to a pack (which raises the question of what the pack was doing while the demiurge was trying to create life from dead matter). Shapeshifting and hunting under the moon normally brings the werewolf back into "alignment" with little difficulty.

Mages, however, have more trouble. They are human. Their bodies are unaltered by their state, only their souls have been changed. Realigning those Awakened souls to channel the Divine Fire runs the risk of severing the connection to whichever of the Supernal Realms gives the mage her power. The Storyteller can simulate this risk with the following system: Once a full week has passed following the creation of the Promethean, presuming the mage devotes at least 40 hours during that week to magical study and practice, the player rolls Resolve + Gnosis. If this roll succeeds, the mage's powers return as her soul's connection "fixes" itself (this might also have the effect of causing the mage to doubt her role in the creation of the Promethean, possibly forgetting it entirely). If the roll fails, the -5 dice

modifier continues for another week, and the player can attempt to re-forge the connection again at the end of that week. This time, though, the Resolve + Gnosis roll suffers a -1 die modifier. This continues until the mage either regains her powers or the player is reduced to a chance die. If that roll fails, the mage has lost her powers, and can never again work magic (though she remains a Sleepwalker rather than a Sleeper). If the roll is a dramatic failure, the mage goes back to Sleep, losing all connection to the Supernal.

Dirty Liars

Didn't we say from the beginning that supernatural creatures can't create Prometheans?

Well, we did say that, yes. We've also said to do what works for your games. We're by no means suggesting that every vampire, werewolf and mage out there go and create Prometheans as a monthly hobby. We're merely stating that the Divine Fire might find methods of expression other than humanity. If you're running a crossover game and exploring themes of humanity and how "supernatural" a person can become before the human in him fades entirely, the notion of creating a Promethean might be an interesting way to express that. As always, the philosophy is "Options are better than limitations."

One-Shot Wonder

Vampires, werewolves and mages, while accustomed to possessing supernatural powers, are also accustomed to the idea that a magical ability, once performed, is almost always able to be performed again. The simple act of having successfully created a Promethean, however, is enough to change, if not assuage, the desperate drive that made creating the Promethean possible in the first place. Having succeeded once, a demiurge now knows that such a thing is possible, and by virtue of that knowledge, the demiurge is no longer capable of the same depths of need which allowed him to reach through the boundaries between this plane of existence and that of the Divine, and touch the Divine Fire. The demiurge's hunger and need, which can be seen as an alchemical manifestation of the Divine Fire's own Flux-side, has been replaced with hope (alchemically the equivalent of Elpis), and as such, the alchemical formula has been forever changed in a slight, and yet irreversible manner. For humanity, whose only explanation for the creation act is likely that they have witnessed a "miracle," the inability to replicate this act is expected, if disappointing. For a supernatural creature who has become accustomed to the miraculous happening on a nightly basis, however, this inability may

not be so easily accepted. A supernatural demiurge may become completely fixated upon attempting to replicate the once-successful act, forming the basis for a derangement. He may well spend the rest of his existence in the hopeless pursuit, setting aside not only all other studies and efforts, but in time, even his own safety and survival needs as the same all-consuming desperation that once allowed him to touch the Divine now devours him wholly.

Mircea, Son of Augustin

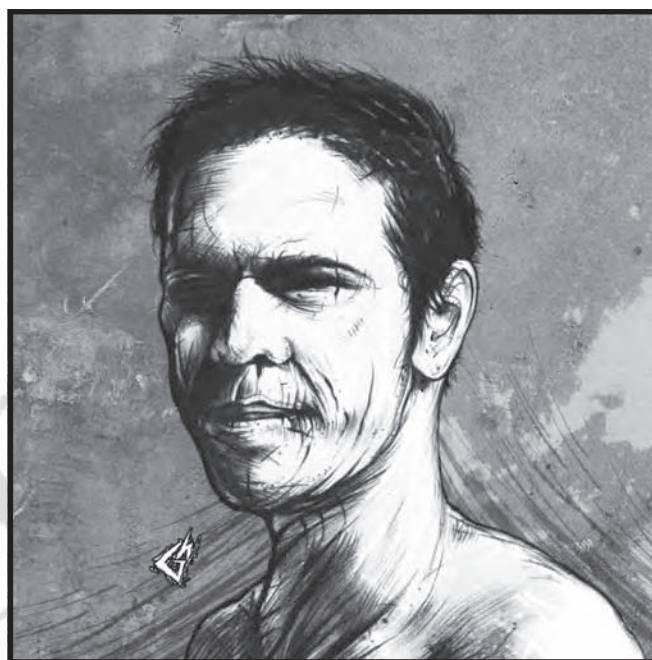
Quote: *"Nothing is impossible. I am proof of that. There is a way, and I will find it."*

Background: Almost 200 years ago, inspired by ancient texts that alluded to the possibility of overcoming the inherent limitations of vampiric existence, Augustin, Mircea's "father," began the studies that would eventually spawn a being not wholly vampire or mortal. Augustin's studies and experiments consumed him, leading him first into and then away from vampiric societies dedicated to the study of the deepest arcane secrets. Discontented with the ineffectuality of their attempts to transcend the limitations of vampiric existence, Augustin turned to more visceral research. His experiments grew more and more intense (and bloody), and as time passed, he was abandoned by all but his most loyal of Retainers as his obsession drove him further from the ideals of humanity.

Mircea's first memory is of the smell of stale blood and rose oil and of waking to find Augustin's undead visage over him. Augustin explained, to the best of his ability, the process that had brought Mircea into being, and then about Augustin's own vampiric nature. Knowing nothing else, Mircea accepted his status as Augustin's "childe." Augustin, in his few nights with his creation, taught him what he could of "life" as he knew it. Mircea has a very basic idea of what existence is like for a vampire, both the parts that apply to his own life and some that do not. Augustin taught Mircea to feed, and for the first years of his life, he subsisted entirely upon blood. Although he can eat as a mortal, he still prefers a liquid diet. He has since learned that the consumption of blood is not "normal" for a Promethean, and practices his feeding very covertly.

Shortly after Mircea's creation, Augustin began growing visibly weaker with each passing dawn, until one evening he simply did not awaken at all. It has now been more than a decade. Augustin's few remaining Retainers have long since disappeared, leaving Mircea alone in his father's palatial home, with only Augustin's torpid body for company.

Description: Mircea has his father's looks. From translucently pale skin to the pronounced jut of his incisors, few could look at Mircea and think anything but "vampire." His eyes are jet black, with no iris or white apparent, and his lips and nails have the faintly blue tone of a recently dead corpse. When his disfigurements are not apparent, however, he is a strikingly handsome man with dark hair, pale skin and blue eyes so dark as to appear almost black at the iris.



For someone who spends the vast majority of his time alone, Mircea takes consummate care with his appearance. His clothing, predominantly black slacks and white shirts, is always immaculately pressed, and even after the longest research sessions, he never appears disheveled. He is tall and slim to the point of gauntness: his father's son in every way.

Storytelling Hints: Mircea feels himself to be, at best, a half-successful experiment. He knows his father sought the secret that would allow a vampire to overcome all boundaries and transcend the vampiric state, and that Augustin had hoped Mircea would be the key to unlocking that mystery. Mircea, however, is neither human nor vampire. Nor, as he discovered upon meeting other Prometheans, does he seem to fall neatly into any of the categories of Created that he (or anyone else he's encountered) has ever heard of. He covets others' sense of belonging, feeling that he himself is neither wholly any one thing nor another. As well, he feels guilty for his father's "ailment," assuming (correctly) that his creation was tied somehow to his father's weakness and resulting coma.

Mircea, as his father before him, is a driven individual. His goal is twofold. First, he seeks to restore his father's health, and thus regain the chance to prove himself to Augustin as something other than a failed experiment. And, to that end, his second goal is to succeed where his father failed: to become human. Through contact with other Created, Mircea has learned of the Pilgrimage and more specifically, the importance of the generative rite to those who would seek to attain Humanity. Augustin believed that the ritual that created Mircea might have been the key to breaching the boundaries of vampiric existence, and Mircea sees similarities with the Created generative rituals. His own



experiments with creating others of his kind, however, have been disastrous, leading only to the creation of Pandorans, leading him to believe that perhaps he is destined to fail at this endeavor as well.

Lineage: None

Refinement: Mercurius

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Investigation 2, Medicine 1, Occult (Vampires) 2, Science (Alchemy) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Larceny 1, Stealth (Nocturnal) 2, Survival 1, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Expression 1, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 2, Socialize 1, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Fast Reflexes 2, Lair (Size 2, Security 2), Striking Looks 2

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 4

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 8

Defense: 3

Speed: 10

Health: 8

Azoth: 3

Bestowment: Blood Conversion. This allows Mircea to consume blood and convert it directly to Pyros. For every “point” of living blood he consumes (this blood must come from a living human being; a human holds one “point” of blood per **Health** point, and draining it inflicts lethal damage), he can reflexively convert it (at a rate of one point per turn) to a point of Pyros. Mircea can store a number of consumed blood points equal to twice his Azoth level at any given time, meaning that he can fill his Pyros pool and hold blood in reserve for later conversion.

Transmutations: *Alchemicus* — Identification (·), Fortification (··), Transformation (···), Persistent Change (····), Spark of Life (·····); *Vulcanus* — Sense Pyros (·)

Pyros/per Turn: 12/3

Humour: Mircea’s Humour is “vitae.” Although similar to the Galateid’s sanguine humor, the vital **Humour** is directly connected to the undead nature of the Lineage’s demiurge. His Humour manifests as an all-consuming hunger, often for blood, but also for whatever Mircea’s current focus is on. He is quiet and soft spoken, manipulative and relentlessly cunning. Mircea must sleep in soil (at least one cubic foot) from the area in which he was created in order to regain Pyros when sleeping. He does not regain a point of Pyros upon the dawning of a new day as other Prometheans do.

Wasteland: Should he stay in an area too long, his unnatural hunger saps all living things of their strength. Flora and fauna

waste away as if their vitality has been consumed when subject to Mircea’s Wasteland effect.

Disquiet: Humans around Mircea grow increasingly paranoid, distrustful and manipulative. At advanced stages, they believe him to be at the root of whatever ill befalls them, and use lies, deceit and subterfuge to sabotage the Created.

Torment: Mircea’s Torment echoes this sentiment, resulting in near-suicidal levels of self-doubt, introspection and self-hatred. When Tormented, he finds a way to blame himself for the ills of the world around him, blaming all mishaps on his own flawed nature or inept manipulations.

Story Hooks

- A throng of Prometheans finds Mircea’s home, an apparently empty mansion. While it appears abandoned, the utilities still work. (Augustin made standing arrangements for them to continue functioning even if he slipped into torpor.) The characters might also note that plant and animal life is rare on the grounds, but they don’t sense an Azothic Radiance. This is because Mircea has learned esoteric Transmutations based on the vampiric powers of invisibility that allow him to mask his Radiance. He intends to become to Prometheans what vampires are to mortals, now that he has a group of victims.

- The characters, who might be vampires or Prometheans, meet a strange, savage monster that seems neither undead nor Created. It finds sunlight painful, but does not burn. It feeds on blood, but also seems to carry Pyros (and Flux). It has little capacity for thought, but can speak in three- and four-word sentences, and occasionally refers to “Father Mircea.” Is this creature the first of a new Lineage? Or is it, instead, the Mockery of the Mircea line?

Piker — “Walker Between Worlds”

Quote: “We need to leave. They’re coming.”

Background: Piker’s existence began in a whirlwind of pain as he was torn asunder by the same spirits that had rent his werewolf creator to bits just moments before. Piker awoke in the world of spirits, surrounded by carnage, and within moments of waking, was being hunted again. He escaped to what he would eventually learn most individuals considered the “real world.”

All of what Piker knows about his background is contained within the pages of a small journal, which he found in a backpack that he assumes belonged to her. The writing begins sanely enough, if such can be said of any diary whose writer claims to be a werewolf. It chronicles almost a year, beginning with her “pack” moving into a previously unclaimed territory outside of town, the same area where Piker found himself after escaping the spirits. As the journal progresses, his maker describes her pack’s need to protect the area against those who would claim it for their own, and details various threats, both spirit and material, they dealt



with. As the year passed, however, the entries grew increasingly incoherent. Through them, Piker learned how the werewolf pack first befriended, and then was turned upon, by Ulgan, a person whom the pack members originally believed shared their goals of protecting the sacred path into the spirit world found at the heart of their territory. His maker, the only survivor of the pre-emptive attack the pack made upon the newly discovered traitor, plotted for pages about using Ulgan's "own powers against him." Over the course of pages of barely readable text, she detailed a ritual that Piker believes is the one that created him. Those, however, were the last entries, and like much of the book, they only raise questions. Piker has spent the last year looking for answers to those questions.

Description: From his mismatched clothing to his "cut-with-a-weed-eater" hairstyle, Piker takes little care with his appearance. His unkempt look, however, is more a product of careful cultivation than neglect. Easily mistaken for a common wino, Piker uses society's apathy towards the unkempt as a form of protection. He keeps his strange disfigurements well hidden in layers of discarded coats, hats, gloves and the like, relying on bulk, rather than supernatural artifice, to protect them from discovery.

When Piker's disfigurements show, he appears as a savage, a hairy brute of a man. His body hair grows coarse and heavy, and the lower half of his face juts forward in a crude approximation of a lupine muzzle, revealing sharp, yellowed canines instead of human teeth. His eyes turn a sickly yellow color, and he gives off an odor of blood and musk.

Storytelling Hints: Piker is gruff, expecting hostility when approached. Once his trust is gained, however, he is more than willing to exchange knowledge, skills or simply companionship for a time. He is very interested in sharing information with those who have had dealings with the spirit world, seeing every piece of data gained as another piece of armor to protect himself. Because of his maker's diary, however, it is difficult for those of the Ulgan Lineage to earn his trust, so he has learned most of what he knows of the spirit world through personal experience.

Lineage: None

Refinement: Cuprum

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Investigation 2, Occult (Spirits) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Stealth (Low Profile) 3, Survival (Spirit Realm) 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken 1, Empathy 1, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 2, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Brawling Dodge, Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Elpis 2, Fleet of Foot 3

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 7

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Speed: 13

Health: 9

Azoth: 4

Bestowment: Rage. Piker can fly into a berserk fury by spending a point of Pyros. While in this state, he is incapable of discerning friend from foe and attacks whatever moving target is closest. He receives a +2 dice bonus to all attacks, however. He remains in this state until no opponents are left in sight, at which point he can attempt to bring himself out of the frenzy (this requires a successful Resolve + Composure roll).

Transmutations: *Metamorphosis* — Natural Weaponry (·), Redundant Organ (·), Shape of the Barghest (··), Homunculus (···), Chimera (····); *Sensorium* — Bloodhound's Nose (·), Sensitive Ears (·), Nightsight (·), Ephemeral Gaze (··)

Humour: Piker bears a fickle and inconstant Humour: "moonlight." He is prone to mood swings, even while not under the effects of Torment, and is capricious, with vacillating loyalties. Piker regains Pyros each night at moonrise (rather than dawn), whether he can see the moon or not. During the three nights directly around the full moon, he gains an additional Pyros at moonrise. Any night (or day, but only once per 24-hour period) when he sleeps beneath a visible moon, he regains an additional point. Treat this as sleeping amidst the Lineage's key element, per pp. 93–94 of *Promethean: The Created*.

Wasteland: His Wasteland effect causes animals of all kind (including humans) to suffer from symptoms similar to that of oxygen deprivation. At first, the effects can be almost euphoric, resulting in illogical,





almost drunken behavior. At later stages, however, coherent thought becomes impossible. Similarly, plant life in Piker's area also suffers, as if the carbon dioxide necessary for its photosynthesis is reduced, or eventually absent altogether.

Disquiet: Piker's Disquiet causes those he has extended contact with to become suspicious and paranoid. Acquaintances become conflicted, well-intended acts are interpreted as serving ulterior motives and those affected by Disquiet quickly become prone to fits of angry violence or depressive melancholy.

Torment: Torment only exacerbates the effects of Piker's weird Humour, often whirling him through insanely chaotic emotional storms. On the other hand, when the storm of Torment subsides, Piker's shifting viewpoints can often give him added insight into situations, providing the opportunity for understanding things quickly and intuitively.

Pyros/per Turn: 13/4

Story Hooks

- A small mountain town, highly religious and almost cut off from the outside world, suffers a rash of spirit possessions. The characters arrive just in time to get blamed for these events, but might hear that an exorcist has managed to remove the "demons" from these unfortunate people. The exorcist is Piker, and his methods are unpleasant, to say the least, based on putting the victim in so much pain that the spirit flees the shell. If Piker learns that a group of strangers is in town, he might not recognize that Disquiet is at work and, just as the townsfolk, consider the strangers responsible. He might also lead angry spirits right to them, in an attempt to foist them off on someone else (especially if an Ulgan is present).

- Piker discovers a locus, a place where the spirit worlds and flesh worlds meet. Werewolves can step between worlds at such places, and Piker feels a strong urge to do so, but he can't quite make it work. He plans to lure a pack of werewolves here and observe them, trying to figure out how *they* do it. The characters here might be the pack that he tries to entice or a throng of Prometheans (or pack of werewolves) who happen to be in the area when these newcomers arrive.

The Page of Cups

Quote: "What may I bring you?"

Background: The Page's creator just got tired of waiting for Destiny. At least that's how she explains it. She was a mage named Amalthea, or at least that is how other mages refer to her. Amalthea knew the threads of Destiny well. She read those threads with the Tarot. It didn't matter what deck — she explained to the Page, during the brief time that they were friends, that all of the New Age talk about "charging" a deck and infusing the cards with a question was nonsense. The cards knew, and they spoke. It was up to people like Amalthea to interpret.

When Amalthea saw that a brown-haired young person (could've been male or female) was to come into her life

and become the fulfillment of everything that she'd wanted, she first thought she was meant to bear a child. She learned sometime thereafter that she could not have children, and this revelation, aside from the grief that it might have caused her anyway, seemed to her to be Destiny's way of mocking her. She searched for other interpretations, but nothing seemed to fit. Finally, almost a year after the reading that started her obsession, she decided she was through waiting. She would make her own Page of Cups (for that the was card that had signified the person she was meant to meet). She gathered parts from various young corpses, raiding graveyards and mortuaries, using her magic to cover her crimes. She delved into occult secrets so obscene that she could not share them with any of her magical order. She stitched the body together, focusing her attentions entirely on the threads, and little by little she stopped using magic. She gave herself over to obsession, and when the body was complete, when the last little stitch fastened the mop of chestnut hair to the moldering scalp, she shuffled her deck, drew a card and, hands trembling, set it atop the patchwork body's forehead.

The body opened its eyes. But the card on her forehead wasn't the Page of Cups. It was the Devil.

Amalthea has tried to interpret this turn of events, but has not been successful. It's only been a month since the Page came to life, and Amalthea still can't seem to use her magic properly. She gave the Page over to a local cabal of mages as a servant and left the area, trying to figure out what went wrong.

The Page, meanwhile, knows that something troubles Amalthea, but doesn't have a good sense of what it is. The Page reasons that Amalthea wouldn't leave her with people she didn't trust, and works to serve the cabal as best she can. She is almost completely oblivious to their growing Disquiet.

Description: The Page of Cups is a girl of about 15. She has short, chestnut-brown hair and bright blue eyes and usually wears a thoughtful or interested expression. She makes eye contact with whomever she speaks to and grows agitated if she can't. She brushes her teeth compulsively; Amalthea never taught her about the difference between "food" and "organic material that isn't normally food," and this little discussion with her new masters made her feel ashamed and self-conscious about her breath.

When her disfigurements show, the Page's body appears much like a Frankenstein's. Her body is made of disparate pieces held together by fine, black thread. Her eyes are different colors (rather, different shades of blue), and her hair sits loosely on her head, as though her scalp might fall off like a bad toupee at any moment.

Storytelling Hints: The Page of Cups is a disaster waiting to happen. Her Wasteland, Disquiet and Torment effects are so subtle that the cabal under which she is serving will probably be dead before the mages realize what has happened. The Page is a generally genial being, but inherited some of her creator's hubris. She submits to being a servant

now because she doesn't have any context of "service." If she ever realizes that being a menial servant might be considered demeaning, she might leave — or might conspire to change her fate, as Amalthea did.

The best thing for the Page would probably be to get away from mages and join a throng with some of her own kind. The subtlety and pervasiveness of magic has infected her, and she has trouble acting decisively and declaratively.

Lineage: None

Refinement: Stannum

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Crafts 2, Investigation 1, Occult 1, Politics 1

Physical Skills: Athletics (Lifting) 2, Stealth (Lurking) 2

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Expression 1, Persuasion 2, Socialize (Polite Service) 3, Subterfuge 4

Merits: Eidetic Memory, Elpis 2, Residual Memory (Brawl, Medicine, Streetwise) 3

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 7

Virtue: Temperance

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 6

Defense: 2

Speed: 9

Health: 7

Azoth: 1

Bestowment: Unflappable. The Page gets 9 again on all Composure rolls, and can (in the future) increase her Composure over normal human limits with experience points.



Transmutations: *Corporeum* — Autonomic Control (-); *Disquietism* — Scapegoat (-), Soothe Disquiet (-)

Pyros/per Turn: 10/1

Humour: The Page's Humour is very similar to the Osiran phlegmatic temperament. She rarely becomes visibly emotional and is unfailingly polite. Still waters run deep, however. She never forgets a slight (she doesn't forget much of anything, really), and her perception of a person is heavily weighted toward what she feels that person has done *wrong*, rather than the aggregate of how the person has treated her. It's very easy to fall from her good graces, and almost impossible to get back in. It's also almost impossible for someone to tell whether or not he's in the Page's good graces.

Wasteland: Galateid Wasteland. The loss of names is emphasized. The effects of the Page's Wasteland are almost entirely non-physical. Scents seem off, and air becomes stale faster, but most people don't feel inconvenienced until they start losing the ability to make connections in their minds between present and past or possibility and fact.

Disquiet: Frankenstein Disquiet. People suspect the Page, blame her for things she didn't do and generally mistreat her. The buildup is much more subtle than with the Wretched, though; people are more likely to talk about her behind her back or speak to her sarcastically than actually accuse her of anything.

Torment: The Page's Torment leads her to exact revenge on anyone who has wronged her, but she retains full use of her faculties. Traps, complicated betrayal schemes and emotional abuse are all acceptable (even preferable) expressions of her Torment.

Story Hooks

- Several people around the city die in freak accidents. These people are acquaintances of the cabal that the Page is serving (she hasn't hurt the cabal itself, yet, because she still has to live with them) who have wronged the Page in some way. The problem is that these people were mages, and killing them has thrown off the threads of Destiny in the area. This might have cataclysmic consequences, so much that a *qashmal* might get the characters involved in righting the skeins of Fate and making sure that the Page learns her place.

- The characters meet Amalthea in a bar somewhere in the middle of nowhere as she drinks her troubles away. Sensing the characters' strange nature, she tells them her story in a drunken confession, including the methods she used to animate the Page. Do the characters track the Page down and try to help her? Do they try to help Amalthea reclaim her power — or try to force her to *show* them how she created a Promethean?

Clones

No aspect of modern science has been as directly impacted by the Divine Fire as the “science” of human cloning. While traditional scientists have been thwarted in their efforts to bring a cloned human into existence, those who have, though intention, fate or sheer luck, crossed the streams of science and Promethean alchemy have accomplished wonders that would earn them Nobel Prizes, should they ever come fully to light. No gain comes without sacrifice, however. The achievement of human cloning inevitably takes its toll, not only on the Promethean whose Azoth fuels the process but on the scientist who engineers the miracle as well.

Clone Makers

Few facilities exist with the technology and funding necessary to do more than dabble in human genetic clone research. Of those, fewer still are willing (and able) to hide their work sufficiently deep to thwart federal and international government watchdogs that enforce the near-global restrictions upon human cloning. Sufficiently moneyed individuals or organizations might either serve as patrons for genetic scientists who are willing to experiment in the field, or perform the research themselves. Individuals such as M. J. Wolthrop pursue their experiments through private laboratory facilities that use more legitimate research as a front for the main efforts of their activities, and rely upon their finances and social standing to hold them exempt from the in-depth scrutiny that other individuals or organizations might fall under.

Government agencies rely on similar camouflage tactics, burying clone research deeply beneath layer upon layer of bureaucratic red tape. Most facilities of this sort are military related and rely upon loopholes within the political hierarchy to tuck clandestine facilities away from inspection.

Although even more rare, a third possibility exists. While billionaires and bureaucrats may rely upon their power to camouflage their activities, some individuals are able to remain below the radar of investigators simply by virtue of being beneath their notice. These individuals are most often lone researchers with makeshift facilities cobbled together in private homes, abandoned facilities or remote hideaways. Some, such as Fredrich Hagen, do not have a public persona at all, having intentionally or accidentally lost their legitimate claims on the rest of society. They work away their hermitage, either striving to remain unknown, or hoping for that one big discovery that will allow them to return to the scientific spotlight and disprove all those who criticized their work in the past.

Fredrich Hagen – Recluse

Quote: “What are you doing here? No one comes here. Go away.”

Background: In the late 1970s, Fredrich Hagen was the darling of the scientific community. His theories on the human genome were light years ahead of research at the time. In the early '80s, he became the first scientist to ever successfully clone a mouse, a feat long thought impossible because of the diminutive size of rodent cells. His success spurred him to aspire further than some scientists believed possible: the cloning of a human being. He gathered funding from a great number of private sources, predominantly the rich and elderly who were anxious to be the first cloned human being.

Unfortunately, fame is not without its drawbacks. A less successful (and less scrupulous) colleague became disheartened at Hagen's success and set out to teach the scientific community's golden boy a lesson in humility. He began covertly spreading rumors, first within the community and then by anonymous post to the press, that Hagen's mouse experiments were nothing more than a hoax. Loving nothing so much as a scandal, the media soon were challenging Hagen to prove his claims, a challenge Hagen was more than willing to rise to. His duplicate experiments, however, were plagued with bad luck (predominantly at the hand of his jealous colleague). Equipment malfunctioned, environmental systems failed, early attempts became mysteriously contaminated. The press had a field day heralding each failure as proof positive of Hagen's claims being false.

The final straw, however came when the media were tipped off to a journal supposedly kept by Hagen, detailing the elaborate hoax he had woven. While there was no proof that the diary was actually Hagen's, the entries were sufficiently detailed to have only been written by him (or someone working alongside him.) Hagen was fired and blackballed from the scientific community. Distraught, he fled to a remote location where he used some of the extensive private funding he had received earlier to set up a clandestine lab and continue his experiments on his own. A handful of years ago, he discovered the rantings of Dr. Jakob Rathben, an individual who claimed to have successfully cloned a human being but feared the public would turn against him for what he purported were strange, but vital, “requirements” for the success of the process. Having spent the last 20 years unsuccessfully pursuing the same goal, the lunatic's claims sparked Hagen's interest, and desperation lead him to strike up an acquaintanceship with Rathben, eventually garnering an invitation to his private laboratory.

There, Hagen was amazed to find that Rathben's claims seemed legitimate. At once elated that the secret to human cloning had apparently been unlocked, and devastated that he was not the one to accomplish it, Hagen's already shaky grasp on sanity slipped. When Rathben would not reveal the secret to the “Vitriolic Compound” he claimed was the key to his experiments, Hagen killed the rival scientist and ravaged his laboratory for his notes and his remaining supply of the elusive compound before burning the building to the ground.

Description: Hagen shaves every hair from his body, certain that germs can cling to any stray strand he's missed.

The combination of hairlessness, harsh cleansers and lack of sunlight have bleached Hagen into a ghost of a man, almost as pale as the pristine “clean suits” he wears during the 14 (or more) hours he spends in his laboratory every day. When not in the lab, his attention to cleanliness is just as obsessive. He changes clothes several times a day, sleeps on a plastic-wrapped mattress to avoid becoming tainted with dust mites and eats only foods that have been irradiated and hermetically sealed, then microwaved to ascertain that any bacteria have been destroyed before consumption.

Storytelling Hints: Hagen resents intrusion on his work, and does everything he can to hide the fact that his laboratory even exists. He interacts with the world predominantly through the Internet, shopping online and using one of a dozen pseudonyms to keep tabs on recent developments within the scientific community. Recently, however, he has begun spending time in public places, observing crowds at public gatherings and the like. He’s seeking out any telltale signs of the existence of the Created that Rathben’s notes referenced as the source of his “Vitriolic Compound.”

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 5, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 1

Mental Skills: Academics 4, Computer 2, Investigation 3, Medicine 4, Science (Genetics) 5

Physical Skills: Larceny 1, Stealth 2

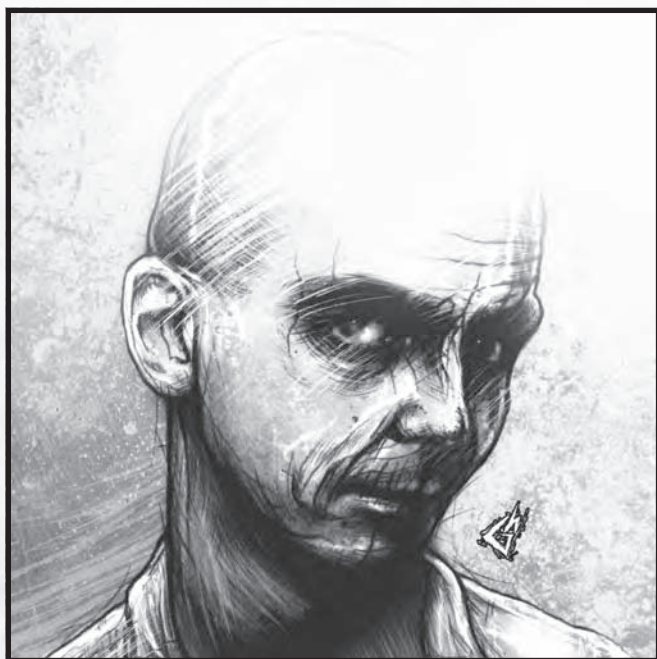
Social Skills: Empathy 1, Intimidation (Crazy Enough To Do It) 2, Persuasion 2, Subterfuge (Paranoid) 4

Merits: Fame 1, Meditative Mind, Resources 4

Willpower: 4

Morality: 5

Virtue: Hope



Vice: Pride

Initiative: 4

Defense: 3

Speed: 10

Health: 7

Story Hooks

- Hagen has used up all of the “Vitriolic Compound” he stole from Rathben’s laboratory in unsuccessful cloning attempts. Hagen starts hunting Prometheans, perhaps cloning himself a Pandoran-like bloodhound that can sense Azoth. Pandorans begin to follow him like sharks following a ship, hoping for an easy meal.

- The throng encounters first one, and then several Friedrich Hagens, all seemingly operating out of the same small laboratory building. Investigation reveals that the original doctor is himself being held prisoner by the creatures he created, who are using his flesh and blood along with the now-dwindling supply of Vitriolic Compound to fortify what is quickly becoming an entire army of Hagen-clones.

Dr. Robert Hughes – Humanitarian

Quote: “It is sacrifice for the greater good. The end justifies the means.”

Background: Dr. Robert Hughes believed his interactive “companions” would revolutionize the entertainment industry, wipe out sexually transmitted diseases and make prostitution a thing of the past. Hughes designed his life-size and fully functional simulacrum by integrating cutting-edge interactive software with a hardware body extrapolated from prosthetic medical technology. Previous prototypes, while beautiful and functional, had a fundamental flaw. Although they were structurally appealing and proficient at the “tasks” set before them, research showed that they inevitably disturbed customers more than arousing them. They were too close to human and yet somehow not close enough. The more lifelike he made his products, the more they seemed to repel human customers. This problem plagued Hughes for years, and had he not supplemented his research grants with falsified rehabilitatory studies, his work would have died out after the first few years and failed experiments. Even so, he had exhausted all available funding and was ready, after more than a decade, to throw in the towel. As he was leaving his laboratory after yet another prototype had proven unsuitable, he turned toward the almost empty parking lot, and a woman engulfed in violet flame stepped out of an alley between two buildings of the facilities. She was easily a foot taller than him, dressed in what appeared to be elaborately woven wire chain, and hairless from head to toe. Hughes stepped back, rubbing his eyes. It wouldn’t have been the first time he’d experienced hallucinations after working for days on end fueled by little more than caffeine, but this time the apparition didn’t disappear as his vision cleared. Instead, the bald woman gestured to the developer and stepped back into the alley. Hughes followed and found a bedraggled young girl huddled there, unmoving. The flame-wrapped woman pointed, and in a

voice that was more hiss than human, said “Here is the key you seek.” When Hughes looked again, she was gone.

Hughes returned to his laboratory with the still-unconscious youth in his arms. Bit by bit, he borrowed “parts” of the unknowing girl, melding muscle and metal as he combined them with the advanced prosthetics he’d previously been experimenting with. He was surprised to find that the unconscious “donor” healed so quickly that he was able to continue removing bits over time without killing her. Eventually, he’d taken so much of his “donor,” a piece at a time, that his “companion” was more “girl” than not. To avoid infection, he kept the new creation immersed in a saline tank where her environment could be constantly monitored. Months later, as Hughes’ funding was once again in danger of exhaustion, he ran a desperate experiment. He replaced the saline with crimson fluid taken directly from the comatose girl’s veins. To his amazement, his efforts sparked the cloned creation to life. Mata Hari was “born,” and unlike her earlier siblings, none of the test subjects Hughes targeted her toward were able to resist her charms. Elated, he set out to clone more of her kind, but found the unfortunate Galateid who sacrificed her Azoth to animate Mata Hari was insufficient to the task of fueling other prototypes. The Promethean girl, Azoth and life’s fluid siphoned, lapsed deeper into a delirious coma from which she would never recover. In her dying ramblings, however, Hughes discovered what he feels may be the key to his eventual success.

Description: Decades spent bowed over the lab table have taken their toll on Dr. Hughes, aging him far beyond his 38 years. His form is heavy from thousands of convenience food meals consumed out of cafeterias and vending machines, whatever required him to be away from his work for the shortest time. His skin is pasty white and hangs flaccidly from a frame that is permanently stooped from years of lab work and research. Hughes peers out at the world through glasses that have not changed in style since he graduated from college almost 20 years ago (though the lenses have grown steadily thicker).

His wardrobe is years out of date and is replaced only when the fabric wears entirely through, but it matters little as he’s never seen in public without his ever-present white lab coat.

Storytelling Hints: Hughes doesn’t fear failure. It has been his constant companion for the last 20 years. He does, however, fear losing the ability to keep reaching for success, and over the years that constant threat has whittled away at his humanity, nudging him bit by bit over each moral line he once possessed. The man he was 20 years ago would have never considered sacrificing a human (or humanlike) being for the sake of his experiments. He now finds himself seeking more of these mysterious beings so that he may create more Mata Hari clones. Having been given a taste of success, he hungers for more, and is willing to do anything to achieve it.

He uses Mata Hari (also known as MARA, see below for details) to lure unsuspecting Prometheans back to his laboratory, where he attempts to incapacitate them and



use their Azoth to spark further clones to life. Hughes is a desperate man, not above violence should it be necessary. He is willing to steal, torture or kill to protect or advance his work.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Computers 2, Crafts 2, Investigation 3, Medicine (Prosthetics) 4, Science (Simulated Humans) 5

Physical Skills: Athletics (Fine Motor Skills) 3, Drive 1, Stealth 1

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Persuasion 2, Socialize 1, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Contacts (Bureaucracy), Meditative Mind, Resources 2, Retainer (MARA) 5

Willpower: 6

Morality: 4

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 5

Defense: 2

Speed: 9

Health: 8

Mata Hari – “Marital And Recreational Aide”

Quote: “You don’t have to be alone any more. I’m here.”

Background: Mata Hari was created from a Muse who had the misfortune to fall into the clutches of Dr. Robert Hughes. Her official name is MARA (Marital And Recreational Aide), but those Created who have encountered her wiles and lived to tell about it have renamed her after the infamous spy of the World War I. Originally created as the prototype

for a line of advanced and intelligent sexual pleasure toys, MARA was the crowning success of Dr. Robert Hughes' decades of effort. She exceeded her maker's expectations: her beauty, charm and physical attributes virtually assured that he could ask any price for her. Unfortunately, he was unable to duplicate the experiment that created her.

Description: Mata Hari is as beautiful as the Muse from whom she was cloned. Although she stands a diminutive five feet tall, her curvaceous frame is definitely fully developed. Her features are striking enough to garner the notice of humans and Created alike, and she dresses to take full advantage of her feminine attributes. Physically, Mata Hari is stronger than she appears to be, but her true forte is not physical combat but carefully created social manipulation programs.

Unlike Retrievers, Mata Hari works alone. She is programmed to manipulate the Created into one-on-one situations, where her chances of luring her victims back to Dr. Hughes' waiting traps are optimized.

Storytelling Hints: MARA's true power is in her apparent willingness to befriend a Promethean. Although incapable of true emotion, she has been trained to replicate "human" reactions to various stimuli, giving the appearance of interest, affection, even adoration towards her Created victims. While her repertoire of interactive topics is fairly limited, she is attentive and has been trained to encourage and facilitate others to speak about themselves, the epitome of a "good listener." Unfortunately for the Created, this technique is often all too effective on Prometheans, who are starved for companionship and understanding.

MARA travels extensively, checking in with Dr. Hughes on a regular basis. Wherever she encounters the Azothic Radiance of a Promethean, she attempts to home in on her target and manipulate her way into his company. If the Created are in a group, she does her best to separate them, knowing that she is most likely to be able to capture one of them if he is alone. She endears herself to the target, playing on the fact that she does not suffer from Disquiet as humans do. When she has ascertained the target's strongest desires, she drops hints that her friend, Dr. Hughes, may know more about the topic, be it arcane knowledge, scientific procedures, philosophy, ancient manuscripts or technological equipment. In most cases, she may be able to convince the Promethean (with or without his companions) to walk into Hughes' laboratory of his own accord, where Hughes attempts to incapacitate the Promethean and use him to fuel more cloned copies of MARA.

At the Storyteller's discretion, multiple copies of MARA may exist in any given location, representing previous successful cloning projects. They may be hunting Prometheans, serving their original purpose (recreational pleasure toys) or both.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Investigation 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Stealth 2

Social Skills: Expression 1, Persuasion 3, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Ambidextrous, Direction Sense, Fast Reflexes 2, Striking Looks 4

Willpower: 3

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Greed

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Speed: 12

Health: 7

Transmutations: Sense Pyros (-)

Story Hooks

- The throng is approached by "MARA," who claims to have escaped her creator. The energy that fuels her is fading, however, and she is growing weaker by the day. Displaying surprising levels of what appears to be human emotion, she begs the throng to help her find a way to recharge herself and stave off her "death." Are her pleas genuine, or is this just another trick to bring more Created to her maker?

- One of the throng encounters a strange Azothic Radiance, which leads him to a beautiful but bewildered girl. "MARA" claims to have no memory of her life before a few days ago, and is anxious for company and information about her "new condition." Her stolen Azoth feels somewhat wrong, but with no experience with clones, he may be willing to overlook her differences and befriend the obviously befuddled new "Galateid" who uses every bit of her guile and social programming to work her way into his good graces. Before long, however, she's obviously trying to drive wedges



between him and the rest of the throng. How far will he (and the rest of the throng) allow her to divide them?

M.J. Wolthrop, Head of Research and Development, Special Projects Division

Quote: “You sound as if you’re very close. Continue with that and I’ll check in with you next week to see how you’re progressing. I’ve got something I’ve got to get back to.”

Background: As the daughter of pharmaceutical magnate Michael Joseph Wolthrop, Mary Jeanette was raised to the role of a corporate princess. As a child, her interest in science and the family business was considered endearing, and her father’s approval encouraged her to pursue it to the exclusion of all else. By her teen years, however, she had announced her intentions to make a name for herself in the family business, much to her mother’s consternation and her father’s delight. Post-college, her interest in reproductive cloning spawned the Special Projects Division of Wolthrop Industries. Her position as Head of Research and Development was a present from her father, but it was also a sound business move — M.J. (as she insists on being called) is easily one of the most brilliant genetic scientists of her day. Originally, the Special Projects Division was created for the purpose of developing lines of genetically identical laboratory animals for scientific experimentation, a procedure that has been a triumphant success. WI-brand lab rats are currently available to those who can afford them, and M.J.’s patent on the procedure earned her a place in the annals of science. More importantly to M.J., however, it pleased her father, bringing some light to his current dismal state. Decades of drinking, smoking and eating to excess have left the elder Wolthrop in the throes of emphysema, heart disease and severe liver dysfunction. M.J. regularly scolds her father for his excesses, but the old man is set in his ways and seems unlikely to change habits this late in the game, which has had a much stronger impact on his devoted daughter than she allows anyone to see.

Publicly, M.J.’s current project involves perfecting the cloning technique she developed for rats and adapting its application for use with more advanced animals. She has, however, turned over the day-to-day tinkering with the nearly complete process to her qualified (and very loyal) team of researchers and is rarely seen in the main lab. Instead, she spends the majority of her time working on her own pet project, one that she is tight-lipped about.

After perfecting the process of reproductive cloning in laboratory rats, M.J. immediately turned her attention to applying the procedure to other lab specimens. To her delight, she quickly discovered the procedure worked as well on primates as it did on rodents, and the enterprising scientist quickly envisioned applications of the process for human specimens as well. She realizes, however, that such experimentation is currently outlawed, and the bans are not likely to be repealed in time to do her father

any good. Her desperation has led her to hand off the almost-completed project to her research team, while she pursues her own private experiments.

Her father’s failing health, and the fact that his system is not strong enough to undergo the multiple organ transplants that would be necessary to slow the impact of his years of excess, has led her to apply her previous research to wholesale human reproductive cloning, specifically focusing on how to rush the process to create a whole adult body. She has not yet tackled the issue of how to transfer his consciousness into the new body when she is successful, but failure is not something she is willing to consider. The possibility that she may be unable to accomplish her goals before he succumbs to one of the numerous disorders plaguing him, however, plagues her constantly, driving her to spend every waking moment in her private laboratory.

Under the guise of other medical research, she advertised for individuals to serve as short-term, in-house test subjects. Unbeknownst to her, Michael Rivers, one of her chosen applicants, was one of the Nepri. When running cloning processes upon his tissue samples, she discovered that under certain circumstances (such as high electrical voltage while immersed in pure water), the test cells indoctrinated with his DNA replicated themselves at an astronomical rate. Within weeks, the embryo she cloned from his sample reached full maturity. M.J. released the rest of her test subjects, but has “retained” the Osiran. At first, M.J. was a gracious hostess for Michael River. She plied him with offers of increased compensation, luxurious quarters to live in and the like. As the cadaver’s Disquiet has begun to affect her, however, her “offers” are becoming demands and her obsession is growing. Michael is now her prisoner, relying upon her increasingly hostile whims for his basic needs as he remains incarcerated in secure quarters deep beneath her private laboratory.

Description: M. J. resembles her father, tall and sturdy with a slightly horsy face. She’s a striking woman, but not beautiful in the classic sense. She dresses impeccably, if somewhat severely, and carries herself with unyieldingly good posture. Her copper hair is worn in a short bob at chin level, and she is never seen without perfectly applied cosmetics and elegant, yet understated jewelry. She is as comfortable in a haute couture gown as her lab coat, and wields her social influence just as adeptly as she does her considerable wit.

Storytelling Hints: M.J. has grown increasingly more secretive as her Disquiet has increased, and her experiments have become more intense and outlandish. She is currently working on combining Rivers’ genetic matter with that of her rapidly degenerating father, hoping against hope to find a way to combine the two into a form that will allow her to offer the elder Wolthrop some respite from his fate. As for Michael, his own condition is weakening as his tissue, fluids and Azoth are rapidly being stripped from him for the devoted daughter’s ex-

periments. The only real question seems to be whether she will be able to bring her father-clone to life before Rivers' essence is entirely depleted.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 5, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 4, Computer 3, Crafts 2, Investigation 3, Medicine 3, Politics 1, Science (Cloning) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics (Dance) 1, Drive 1, Firearms (Skeet/Trap Shooting) 1, Stealth 1, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Expression 1, Intimidation (Cold Stare) 2, Persuasion 2, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Allies (High Society) 3, Contacts (Legal), Fame 1, Resources 4, Status (Corporate Executive) 4

Willpower: 7

Morality: 6

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Greed

Initiative: 5

Defense: 2

Speed: 9

Health: 7

Story Hooks

- M.J. manages to take something from Rivers that she didn't know existed — his Bestowment. When her father dies, she finds that within 24 hours he returns to life . . . still sick, old and miserable. The shock of dying and returning destroys his sanity, and he is unable to comprehend what is happening or why. M.J., desperate, gives him an overdose of sleeping medication to try and end his suffering, but he returns again, worse than ever. Rivers, meanwhile, has lapsed

into a coma from which he will not awaken. M.J. must find someone more knowledgeable than her to resolve this and give her father peace.

- Days after the highly publicized funeral of Michael Joseph Wothrop, head of the Wothrop pharmaceutical empire, the throng comes across a fight between a Pandoran and an individual who looks identical to the late-millionaire. This clone, who believes himself to be Wothrop suffering from amnesia, escaped from M.J.'s lab while she sat at her real father's deathbed, and is now being hunted by the distraught scientist, who must destroy all evidence of her illicit experimentations before they come to light.

Crossing the Furthest Boundaries

Biologically speaking, a human is an animal. That a human differs only 2% to 5%, genetically speaking, from a chimpanzee may not come as a shock to most people, but that a human's genetic makeup is 90% similar to that of a mouse might be more of a surprise. Because the similarities in mammalian genetics vastly outweigh the differences, genetic manipulation that breaches this relatively small genetic gap is not unthinkable, at least from the standpoint of scientific difficulty. Morality, on the other hand, may be a far greater barrier for most scientists.

Since the early 1900s, doctors have experimented with using animal organs as transplants for humans, amid varying levels of public outcry against the procedure. Such experiments inevitably fail, as the human physiology rejects the organ as a "foreign body," a fact that protesters point to as the "proof" that such experiments should not be carried out. Undaunted, however, scientists have begun experimenting with manipulating the DNA in the host-animal to replicate that of the receiving human, so that the human body treats the new organ as if it belonged there.

While these experiments may well herald in a new era of xenotransplants and save countless human lives, should the procedure be perfected, the road leading to that success is an arduous and messy one, with implications far beyond what the mundane scientist is likely to realize. For some scientists, however, this is only one more doorway into a realm of alchemical scientific possibilities.

The nomadic and Disquiet-ridden nature of the Created sometimes leads them to volunteer to serve as scientific test subjects. Some volunteer for the tests in an attempt to learn more about their own natures, and how they are (or aren't) similar to humans. Others simply see the "bed, board and a stipend" offer as too good of an opportunity to pass up, especially when their difficult in attaining employment of other kinds is taken into consideration.



Hybridization

Scientifically, the leap between xenotransplants and combining human and animal DNA to create cloned hybrids is a very small one. Once the moral barriers to blending *homo sapiens* DNA with that of other animals are circumnavigated, the process itself is not significantly more difficult than the cloning or cross-species DNA manipulation processes are separately. After the two species' genomes have been merged, entire beings can be grown using the same procedures as for strictly human clones. The results can vary widely.

Physically, some of these hybrid clones are as human or animal in appearance as their genetic donors. Others possess a predominantly human or animal form, but with deviations. Some are overly hirsute or entirely hairless. Others may have a bipedal form but animalistic facial features, or even more disturbingly, human features on an otherwise animal form. Many are genetically modified to enhance certain aspects of each donor's form. Greater than human strength, speed or dexterity is not uncommon, and some may even be capable of flight or breathing water, depending on the nature of their animal "half." A hybrid clone whose animal donor possesses a venomous bite may also manifest dangerous fangs or even be capable of creating poison. One whose animal "parent" is nocturnal may find that it is likewise well suited to the night, with slit pupils and dark coloration.

Other hybrid clones display even more disturbing physical characteristics incorporating not only aspects of their genetic donors but also those of the unfortunate Promethean whose stolen Azoth gave the clones life. They may manifest subtle lines of demarcation that mimic the seams of the Wretched, or be missing a significant body part as the Osirans. While it may not prove problematic when the clone exhibits inhuman Galatheid beauty, and the Tammuz's dusty skin may be only a minor inconvenience, few Ulgan-fueled clones survive. Their genetic "bastards" tend to fall into pieces within moments of attaining sentience, a situation that may be its own mixed blessing for both creator and Created.

Regardless of how disturbing the physical visages of hybrid clones may be, the less apparent aspects can put them to shame. Whether their human or animalistic aspect is more prevalent, hybrid clones are prone to dysphoria as the two halves of their nature war for dominance. Their reactions are often lightning quick and just as deadly. Few possess much in the way of intellect, but just as their non-hybrid counterparts, hybrid clones are capable of following orders and can be brutally tenacious in their pursuit of whatever goal has been ingrained by their creators.

AP15 – Hybrid Clone

Quote: <low threatening hum>

Background: AP15 was the unexpected product of a well-intentioned experiment designed to develop a human antibody that would negate allergies to bee and wasp venoms.

When the government researchers on the Mellifera Project spliced a few chromosomes of carpenter bee genetic material in with one of their test-studies base cells, the researchers had no expectations that their creation would be viable, let alone that he would attain human levels of sentience. The previous 14 experiments, which were clinically identical to the final and successful one, resulted in non-viable cell groupings that divided only a few times before dying. Why the 15th experiment survived, even thrived, when the others failed, is a secret that the Mellifera researchers would pay dearly to unlock.

Description: Superficially, AP15 is at least vaguely human in size and shape. Roughly five feet tall, AP15 stands bipedally, and has only two forelimbs, both of which end in two-fingered hand-claws with opposable thumbs. Its lower limbs are roughly humanoid, also ending in two-toed claw-feet. It is covered all over with a fuzzy layer of short hair that stands stiffly out from its body, slightly blurring its silhouette, but despite this, AP15 is still mistakable from a distance for a human being.

Up close, however, it is not. Its face is obviously non-human, with long mandible jaws suspended from each side of its head. When irritated or hungry, a tubular proboscis juts out from the lower half of AP15's face, but can be folded up under its chin when not in use. AP15's two major eyes are placed roughly where human eyes are, giving it excellent peripheral vision, but they are faceted akin to other insects. Between them, three smaller simple eyes are grouped, allowing AP15 to see in the ultraviolet range as well as the normal human spectrum.

AP15 also possesses a stinger, although it remains retracted at most times, in its lower abdomen and an internal venom sac with a proportionately large supply of bee venom. While most bee-stings kill only those humans who are allergic to the venom, the sheer quantity AP15 is capable of delivering grants it a much higher lethality factor, despite having a similar chemical makeup.

Storytelling Hints: AP15 shouldn't exist. And, officially, it doesn't. Only the researchers at the Mellifera Project have seen it, and until they are able to duplicate their experiment, they aren't about to unleash their findings on the world. Not everyone on the Mellifera team, however, is as enthusiastic about this bizarre creation as they are putting forth. Despite strong warnings, some of the research staff believe AP15 needs to be destroyed, a sentiment that may lead to moving the project into a higher security area and the naysayers being "dealt with." No one, however, has consulted AP15 about its feelings on the matter. Most who know of its existence believe it to have insectoid intellect at best, and take no care with their discussions around it. It may not be overly intelligent, but it possesses enough cunning to realize that something is going on. While the humans squabble about security clearances, AP15 waits for its chance to escape.



Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

Mental Skills: none

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl (Stinger) 4, Stealth 2, Survival 2,

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Insects) 2, Intimidation 4

Merits: Ambidextrous, Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Fast Reflexes 1, Toxin Resistance

Willpower: 5

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Speed: 11

Health: 8

Story Hooks

- The throng receives a plea for help from one of their creators who is being hunted by a covert band of government operatives. In his investigation of the experiment, he inadvertently contaminated the 15th subject with his own Azoth, and the researchers have finally tracked him down. The throng arrives too late to prevent him from being brought to the lab for “questioning,” but are able to track his Azothic Radiance to the same laboratory where AP15 is being held.

- One of the throng is put under surveillance by a group of black vans. The occupants attempt to take her captive for “questioning,” calling her by a name she may or may not recognize as belonging to the body from which she was created. It seems that after her death and the beginnings of the generative act, but before she became aware as a Promethean, her cellular matter somehow was obtained for use in Mellifera’s cloning project. Now they want to know why her tissue resulted in AP15 — and why the supposedly dead donor is up and walking around.



CHAPTER TWO

FLESH AND METAL

John Ash: Yeah, I've seen a few things. Not as much as some. Enough. I was in Tucson last year, passing through. Staying out of trouble. You know?

Skin Girl: Yeah.

John Ash: Didn't stay out of trouble enough, it turned out. Found this derelict factory. Thought I'd hide out there. Lay my head down in the middle of a forest of big old machines that just looked like the Rapture had come down and taken the people in the middle of working. Got careless. Some of the machines started moving. I woke up, and there were these two things looking at me, and I knew what they were. You know what happens when you try and make another one like us and it goes wrong?

Skin Girl: You got a cancer. With legs. Teeth.


John Ash: Pretty much. Now these things, they were like that, all legs and claws and teeth, only these things made of metal and glass and they were dripping oil and there wasn't no flesh to them. They were just metal. But they flew onto me and tried to eat me alive, and I couldn't deal with them both. No one near to call for.

Skin Girl: So?

John Ash: So I was fighting them off and not doing all that well, and suddenly I got that feeling, that tingling that tells you there's one of us, like you most probably got just before you found me, only it was different, like there were lots of us there, and each one kind of weak. Kind of small. And then there was something like this blue wave that swept over those Mockeries. And it covered them up and it just crushed them. And when it was done, the wave sort of came together into this man-shape standing there in front of me, and it looked like anyone, just like the rest of us. But my true eyes could see that it was just in the shape of a man, all little pieces of metal and plastic with two glass eyes in the head, all covered with this wet blue stuff that you could see right through. So I sat there on the factory floor, and I couldn't say nothing at all, on account of the fact that one of those things had gone torn out half my throat. But I could feel it, all the hundreds of little fires inside. He stared at me with those glass lenses and he just said, "We understand." Nothing else. Just that. And then he turned and went away, and I stayed there on the floor for a while, and then I went outside looking for a power line.

-transcribed from the journal of John Ash





The cyborg
would not
recognize the
Garden of Eden;
it is not made of
mud and cannot
dream of
returning to dust.

— Donna Haraway,
The Cyborg Manifesto

It is the flash of creation, the burning *Fiat Lux* that begins everything that is. Shiva Nataraja performs the 108 dances that make and destroy the world, and is wreathed in it. In the void, there is a sudden, soundless flash of it, and the universe is born.

Where the Divine Fire has passed, it leaves mundane fire. Perhaps it leaves terrestrial fire, burning flame in its wake, the fire that granted early man the ability to eat, to stay warm — the very kindling of civilization. When the Divine Fire passes through the heavens, it is lightning, terrible white-hot, burning the air so terribly that it thunders in protest. In the void, the Divine Fire leaves the stuff of stars behind it, burning proto-matter that science calls plasma.

Though the Created's humours aspect them toward terrestrial elements, the Created are creatures of fire. The fires of love, of passion, of madness and inspiration are responsible for the births of all Prometheans, on some level. This is the Divine Fire at work.

But what else is the Divine Fire capable of? What other wonders?

Some Prometheans whisper among themselves of the Unfleshed: creatures similar, in some ways, to themselves, but tremendously different. Not crafted from flesh and bone, but from empty steel, glass and other things, the Unfleshed do not begin their existences as creatures of semi-living material. Made of that which has never known life, the Unfleshed seek life with all their being.

Nonetheless, it is the Divine Fire that grants true understanding, and a yearning for the soul. The creators of the Unfleshed are no less demiurges than those responsible for Prometheans — each demiurge filled with the mad inspiration, passion and desperation that comes with the Divine Fire. The Divine Fire is the difference between advanced programming that seems to mimic sentience and that true indefinable spark of intellect.

The Unfleshed

This chapter investigates an odd phenomenon: the Divine Fire's animation of artificial life. For some, the interplay between hypertechnology (or even not-so-hypertechnology) and the Divine Fire doesn't suit the themes of **Promethean: The Created**. For others, however, it is the natural extension of **Promethean's** themes, just waiting to be explored.

The story of the Unfleshed isn't simply one of advanced robotics in the World of Darkness. It is the story of burning human ingenuity and the desire to create something new and wonderful. It is this act — the moment of creation, afire with change, daring and the obsession of a true artist — that sparks the mote of the Divine Fire within a demiurge, allowing her to pass it on. What of the machine that wants to be a man? The mechanism, relegated to simply belonging to someone, an object and thing to be owned without another thought, that gains not just the ability to think, but to *feel*? What happens when the true worth of humanity is seen through electronic eyes, and something stirs in the breast of a machine, something that wants nothing more than to share in that worth and wonder?

For those interested in exploring these ideas, we present this chapter. In it, you will find ample rules for the creation of these characters. We're not going to provide the science — a good web search or book on modern technology provides that. Instead, we'll give you some ideas about the stories that might be told when the Divine Fire smolders in the plastic and steel chassis that serves as the breast of one of the Unfleshed, and how to reflect that within the context of a **Promethean: The Created** chronicle.

For those uninterested in such things, feel free to relegate these to silly bits of sci-fi legends that Prometheans sometimes tell one another. In short, if you aren't into this kind of thing, there's more in this book that should interest you. No harm, no foul.

Hypertechnology in the World of Darkness

How does hypertechnology fit into the World of Darkness? "Hypertechnology," as we use it in this chapter, simply means technology that surpasses our current capabilities. This entire section is built on the assumption that there exists in the World of Darkness a variety of individuals, think tank, research facilities and manufactories capable of creating technology that is more advanced than the norm.



The existence of these kinds of facilities and technologies is, of course, entirely up to the Storyteller and his chronicle's needs. The following, however, are the assumptions under which this chapter is written.

- *This technology is not ubiquitous.* The technology level of the World of Darkness is assumed to be that of our world. Thus, while the World of Darkness may contain strange and unusual technologies that transcend what we are capable of currently, that technology has not dramatically affected the technology level of the world at large. This technology is special, and rare. This kind of technology is invariably worth a lot of money, and whoever owns it isn't currently interested in it being public knowledge.

- *This technology is secret.* More than it being uncommon, this technology is generally unknown. People don't know about functional genetics cloning, vats of superdense nanotechnology suspended in support-gels and the other kinds of hypertechnology that this chapter and other parts of **Promethean** may suggest. This information is kept out of the hands of the public for one reason or another — people have their secrets, and will often do anything to keep them.

- *This technology always evokes horror.* This is perhaps the most important aspect. The World of Darkness is a modern horror setting. As such, it is only natural that some of the stories the World of Darkness may tell has to do with technology. "Future shock" is a regular part of our society, and the ability of one generation to keep up with technological advances of the generation that follows is gradually diminishing. More and more people are finding themselves suddenly in unfamiliar worlds with strange technology doing things they never anticipated. It is hard to keep up even with the normal rate of technological advancement. If even mundane technology can create such ill ease, the hypertechnology of the World of Darkness is just as useful a tool as any ancient horror or sanity-rending piece of occultism. In many ways, hypertechnology meets the requirements for good horror: it is the unknown, not easily understood and often quite unexpected. The precise details of its functioning and origins are baffling. More than this, however, the very existence of hypertechnology hints at a world stranger and more complex than what normal people assume it to be — the existence of hypertechnology creates a sense of the known being strange and unusual, and that anxiety often plays a strong part in good horror.

The Demiurge

The Unfleshed are not a Lineage — they are creatures apart from Prometheans, related by the Divine Fire as men might be related by blood. Still, the Divine Fire passes to the Unfleshed in the same way that it imbues the first Promethean of a new Lineage: through the madly inspired hands of a mortal creator.

The demiurge of one of the Unfleshed is a rare person. Possessed of tremendous scientific acumen, this creator must not only

apply that knowledge in the creation of an artificial life form, but must do so with the intention of mimicking human life. The Unfleshed demiurge does not channel the Divine Fire simply by creating a piece of robotic engineering. He must attempt to refine and recreate the mechanisms of human biology.

Most of those with the knowledge to create one of the Unfleshed apply their efforts toward one of two ends: the creation of entirely new robot systems, usually meant for industry, scientific or military purposes, or tiny sub-systems meant for medical replacement of human organs or limbs.

Not all who create Unfleshed set out to do so originally. Certainly, some sought to recreate the biological engine that is the human body. But just as many simply sought to create a piece of advanced equipment for military, industrial or recreational purposes. The Divine Fire imbues all its demiurges with the burning inspiration to create, and not all of them even remember the entire process of creation. The changes wrought by the Divine Fire may surprise even the robot's creator — or *especially* the robot's creator.

Some of the Unfleshed have spoken of their creators' dreams of beings of terrible flame that came to them and guided them in the creation process. The *qashmallim* could guide such demiurges in some fashion, even if to simply instill in the creator the idea of using his knowledge to recreate a human body.

Not all Unfleshed are created by a demiurge. Nonetheless, it is still early enough in the timeline of such technologies that few subsequent generations of the Unfleshed exist. Similar to Prometheans, the Unfleshed must seek out a suitable vessel for the spark of Divine Fire that they would pass on. Unlike for the Created, however, finding artificial creations of the complexity necessary to create progeny is not so simple. In such instances, the Unfleshed is usually required to build the vessels itself.

Creation

The Divine Fire is cruel and unrelenting. No one can properly say whether those with imagination and drive call it, or whether it instills such creativity and determination in those it possesses. It is simply a fact that the demiurge is driven by a creative passion that becomes mania. His every waking moment is spent obsessing on how to create a new form of life. The enigma of creating a piece of machinery advanced enough to properly mimic human movement and adaptability that does not collapse under its own complexity consumes him utterly.

Eventually, the demiurge has enough of thinking. He stops sketching, doing research, taking notes and talking about it. He acts. With leaps of logic and unexplainable bursts of inspiration, he creates. He spends hours — days — creating this vessel, working tirelessly. His relationships wither, he forgets to eat and sleep, his other work goes ignored.

Eventually, though, he is done. It may be days later. It may well have been the work of a lifetime. Regardless, the



work that has consumed him, the fiery drive fueled by the Divine Fire, comes to completion. In its wake, the demiurge feels lessened. The Divine Fire passes to his creation (though he rarely understands this), leaving him fearful, exhausted and cold.

It is almost always with a sense of terror that life begins. Whether he initializes a program, injects the mass of nanotech into the shell-body or flips a switch, his fear sits like cold iron in his gullet.

Sometimes, his creation surges to life in a brilliant display of electricity, light or other Divine Fire-driven manifestation. Other times nothing immediately happens, though the Divine Fire works changes and transformations on its new vessel subtly, over time. Whether awareness comes all at once, or as the gradual increase of sensory input from the newly made Unfleshed, it lives.

The Drive

In the Unfleshed, awareness blossoms. From the moment the Divine Fire sears understanding and the vestiges of a soul into the mechanical body, the Unfleshed are left with the knowledge that their state is entirely unfinished, a pupa in the beginning stages of its transformation.

Though the Unfleshed may rightly exult in their sudden sentience and self-motivation, that joy is tinged with the hollowness that comes with knowing they are incomplete. Most of the Unfleshed can feel that there is a Great Work ahead of them.

There are, however, exceptions. Sometimes, the trauma surrounding the rise of sentience and the infusion with the Divine Fire are too great. The new mechanical Created seethes with anger, resentment or gives in to despair. Others simply ignore the Drive that echoes within them, while others begin their journey, only to be foiled in their attempts, their desire to be self-motivated and fulfilled effectively beaten out of them.

In truth, the Unfleshed — whose only real connection to humanity is in their demiurge — have an easier time of resisting this call. Promethean existence is very nearly defined by the search for humanity or the resistance to that search, but it is entirely feasible for the Unfleshed to simply ignore the desire that burns within them to become human. Some believe in taking the long view, desiring to understand what they are now before becoming something else. Others fear the violence and pain their creators threaten them with, while others simply find the task too much to contemplate.

The Demiurge

To understand any given example of the Unfleshed, it is necessary to understand the Unfleshed's demiurge. As creatures of a new age of Pyros, most Unfleshed are created by humans. The reasons for the Unfleshed's creation, the environment in which they were created and the circumstances around which their sentience developed and expressed itself are important factors — these are the infancy of the Unfleshed, and accordingly vital.

The Divine Fire chooses someone with tremendous intellect, learning and creativity. These are the three keys of demiurges throughout history, and the demiurges of the Unfleshed are no different. In this era, they are invariably men and women of science and engineering, often pioneers in their fields.

The ordeal of holding a spark of the Pyros does terrible things to the mortal mind and frame, quite often. Most frequently, the sanity of the demiurge is foremost affected, at least between the time he is possessed by the Divine Fire until he finally passes it to the vessel that will become one of the Unfleshed. These times are usually marked by obsessive tendencies and a desire to avoid everything else but the current project. Relationships fall by the wayside, job performance may suffer and he even forgets to address such simple concerns as hygiene, sleep and nutrition.

In the wake of the Pyros, the demiurge is unavoidably changed. Some become hollow shells of men, feeling that they have accomplished their magnum opus; how can anything else hold any meaning or purpose again, when it won't measure up to that one powerful act of creation? Others remain insane, seeking to recapture the experience, forever lost in the creative urge, but incapable of truly reliving it. Such men and women are doomed to lives of frustration, often ending in suicide or placement in a mental care facility.

Others, however, seem to come to their senses. Once the Pyros has passed, they take a metaphorical step back and react in horror at what they have accomplished. The memories of their frantic, incessant obsession and need to create this creature, and wonder how anything good can come from such insanity. The implications of what they have done — created new sentience — truly set in, shaking the foundations of the demiurge's world.

Rarely, the demiurge understands what has just happened and reacts with wonder. He is capable of seeing himself as blessed, having served as the vessel for something greater than himself. He understands that he has not created the Unfleshed, but has simply served as the channel for a higher principle, and he accepts this role. The Unfleshed blessed with such a demiurge usually find in him a wonderful friend and ally, someone to teach her the nuances of the humans she suddenly finds herself surrounded with.

Sadly, though, such relationships do not last, for not even demiurges are immune to the Disquiet. If anything, the Unfleshed have noted that demiurges seem to be par-

ticularly vulnerable to the Disquiet of their creation. Some have taken this conclusion one step further and suggest that the Disquiet of the creation is a reflection of the demiurge's own moral failings — perhaps Disquiet manifests in mortals based on the demiurge's flaws.

Begat by Machine

Unfleshed created by others of their kind are terribly rare. The means by which one of the Unfleshed creates progeny is more involved than the procreation of Prometheans. The simple gathering of corpses is child's play compared to the incredible lengths the Unfleshed must go to pass on their spark of the Divine Fire. Those Unfleshed created by demiurge are technically the first of a new Lineage, with the ability to pass on their particular expressions of the Divine Fire.

In many ways, such Unfleshed have more in common with Prometheans than the Unfleshed do with most other Unfleshed. The struggle to understand humanity despite being taught about it by one who only understands it poorly themselves takes its toll; in many ways, those Unfleshed created by demiurge have a stronger start on their Pilgrimage, for they begin learning about humanity from the moment they are created.

An Unfleshed created by a Progenitor shares its creator's "Lineage." These Unfleshed possess the same expressions of Disquiet and Torment, as well as the same Bestowment.

The Body Electric

With the infusion of the Divine Fire, the body of the construct changes. It becomes more human-like in proportion, mimicking finger, limb and facial structures, though these changes are more precise in some. Refining the structure, the Divine Fire doesn't simply add more human features — it also removes many that make the Unfleshed distinctly inhuman, shearing away unnecessary structures and peripherals such as recharging ports and internal access panels.

The Pyros works changes toward a very specific goal: making the new body into a vessel worthy of the Great Work. Blocky, inorganic bodies are seared smooth, granting organic lines, smooth curves and sleekness befitting a human body. Excess limbs are absorbed into the body or atrophy and drop away entirely (unless they are retained as Bestowments), and those limbs that remain evolve into human arms and legs, including fingers and toes developing where none existed before. Facial features develop on the head, and the body even produces genitalia.

The gender of one of the Created tends to be fairly straightforward: a Created possesses the gender of the body (or bodies) used to create him or her. This is not the case with the Unfleshed, who are rarely constructed with specific genders. At some point during one of the Unfleshed's Pilgrimage, it must understand the importance that humans place on gender, and then choose one for itself.





Sometimes, it chooses one in line with some physical characteristic: a large, bulky android may choose to be considered male or one with a voice programmed to sound feminine may choose to identify as female. It is a trait of the Divine Fire that small, subtle changes usually go to work immediately, gradually refining the form and voice of the Unfleshed character into something more appropriate to its chosen gender. The Divine Fire works changes to ensure that even genitalia manifest as part of this process. Even those that are designed with a specific gender in mind may make this choice.

Pandorans

Though the Unfleshed are mechanical beings, they are suffused with the precious Pyros Pandorans hunger for. As a result, Pandorans gladly attack and eat any of the Unfleshed these horrors can manage to find — they do not care what vessel the Pyros is found in, only whether or not they can get at it. When dealing with non-Gremlin Pandorans, the Unfleshed are assumed to have the Unpalatable Aura Merit — when presented with softer targets, Pandorans prefer to feed on those, rather than risk the strange taste of the Unfleshed.

Character Creation

The creation of an Unfleshed character is similar to that of a Promethean, save for one vital difference: the Unfleshed character is generally the first of its kind, the Progenitor of a new Lineage (if the Unfleshed manages to perform the generative act later). Use the character creation steps in **Promethean: The Created**, p.82–86, with the following changes.

Step One: Character Concept

The first step toward truly creating one of the Unfleshed is to determine the mechanical being's original function. Unlike Prometheans, most of the Unfleshed were created for purposes other than to create new life. Only because of the infusion of the Divine Fire into a creative and driven demiurge did the creation come to life and seek humanity now. This will be important to keep in mind when it comes time to choose Unfleshed features (see Step Five, below).

Step Two: Select Attributes

Though this is the same as Step Two on p. 83 of **Promethean: The Created**, remember that many machines are designed for one of two purposes: physical endeavors or calculations and computing. Thus, many of the Unfleshed have Physical or Mental Attributes as primary or secondary categories.

Step Three: Select Skills

Again, this selection should be based on the machine's original purpose. A military drone of some sort likely has programmed capacity for firing weaponry (Firearms), while

an industrial robot may have the ability to construct mechanisms or goods (Craft or Science). Most modern Unfleshed also possess dots in Computer. See Step Three, p. 83 of **Promethean: The Created** for more details.

Step Four: Select Skill Specialties

Unfleshed are likely to possess Skill Specialties that reflect their original purpose, as above.

Step Five: Select Unfleshed Features

Similar to Prometheans, Unfleshed bear the following features that set them apart from the rest of the world.

Azoth

Unfleshed determine beginning Azoth in the same way Prometheans do; see p. 84 of **Promethean: The Created**.

Lineage and Bestowment

Most Unfleshed possess no Lineage — or, more accurately, they are the first of their Lineage.

Unfleshed often have some manner of innate benefits, similar to Bestowments possessed by the Created. In many instances, this is some function of the entity's original design. Reflect these benefits by giving the Unfleshed a Bestowment from another Lineage (whether one of the basic Bestowments given in the **Promethean: The Created** rulebook or one of the alternate Bestowments from **Strange Alchemies**), or a single two-dot Transmutation for free. This Bestowment may even draw on Pandoran Transmutations without risk of degeneration — they tend to reflect aspects of the Unfleshed's original creation, rather than changes it has chosen.

At the Storyteller's option, the initial dots of Transmutations may also be applied toward the power level of this Bestowment, in case the character concept requires a slightly more powerful basis for this benefit. For example, the “Sanguine Victory” Pandoran Transmutation might be used to reflect the bodily nature of a mass of nanotech in its natural form, or the “Chimera Metamorphosis” Transmutation might be used for one of the Unfleshed crafted of semi-liquid chromium imbedded with circuitry and held together by a field of electrically generated surface tension.

Unfleshed created by another of their kind bear the same Bestowment as their Progenitor.

Disquiet

When creating an Unfleshed character, the player should choose one of the Disquiet symptoms of normal Prometheans, basing the choice on the ways in which humans react to the character. All of the Created — Prometheans and Unfleshed alike — are affected by the ways in which Disquiet manifests in the mortals around them. A character accustomed to mortals reacting with fear and hatred will view the world in a very different way than one that has become used to humans seeking to enslave him. See “Types of Disquiet,”

Promethean: The Created, p. 179, for more information on the kinds of Disquiet mentioned below.

Frankenstein Disquiet: To those who share the Wretched Disquiet, the mortals of the world eventually show their nature as shallow, petty, fearful creatures who destroy what makes them afraid. Unfleshed that suffer from this Disquiet know that it is simply a matter of time before the humans around them react with destructive fear, terrified of the nature of the Unfleshed. Those humans who actually know the secret of the Unfleshed invariably see them as horrific, inhuman monsters that will eventually seek to kill humans, and so must be stopped before they are given the chance. After all, every one knows that artificial intelligences eventually try to “kill their makers.”

Galateid Disquiet: The perfection of the Unfleshed that share the Galateid Disquiet has terrible consequences on humans. Mortals seem to be terribly insecure, and when faced with the wonders of the Created — whether the humans know these creations to be Created or simply sense the difference — mortals invariably react with a strange self-loathing and failed esteem. Shame in their own insufficiencies begins to dominate them, and they try to turn that guilt outward, casting shallow judgment on the Unfleshed among them.

Osiran Disquiet: In the presence of the Unfleshed's profound reasoning abilities — or finely-crafted outlook and approach to existence — humans fall back on their lizard brains, resorting to emotional assumptions and poorly thought-out conclusions. To Unfleshed with the Osiran Disquiet, humans seem to be reasoning creatures on the surface, but in time, they are all revealed as reactionary, emotional and lacking in deductive reasoning . . . or at least, the inability to apply that reason, rather than allowing it to be drowned in their fight-or-flight reactions.

Tammuz Disquiet: On some level, mortals sense that the Unfleshed that share the Tammuz Disquiet were created to serve a purpose. As time passes, the urge to force the Created back into that role becomes stronger and stronger. One person after another has a demand, a request, a problem to be fixed or an expectation to be met, and they react with resentment and anger when the Unfleshed does not obey.

Ulgan Disquiet: Rarely do those Unfleshed possessed of the Riven Disquiet inflict awareness of the spirit world on the mortals around them. Generally, the mechanical nature of the Unfleshed's origins imposes an increasing level of disassociation. Just as the Unfleshed rose from a purposeless and unfulfilled state, mortals around the Unfleshed with this type of Disquiet devolve into mindless drones, carrying out their day-to-day routines without any thought to the greater meaning and purpose of their lives.

Unfleshed created by another of their kind suffer the same Disquiet as their Progenitors.

Torment

Likewise, the Unfleshed manifest Torment in ways similar to those of the Promethean Lineages. When creating an

Unfleshed character, the player should choose a Torment appropriate to the character's outlook. Though one of the Unfleshed may have both a Disquiet and a Torment from one of the other Lineages, most of the Unfleshed seem to manifest these weaknesses in different permutations. Thus, while one Unfleshed may suffer from the Tammuz Disquiet and the Frankenstein Torment (so that the world tries desperately to control the Unfleshed, and eventually it becomes terribly frustrated and plots wicked revenge against them, probably even using their desires to control it against them), another may suffer from the Osiris Disquiet and the Muse Torment (as the humans around the Unfleshed begin acting in increasingly irrational ways, the Unfleshed becomes more and more obsessive about them, enchanted perhaps by the purity and rawness of their emotion). See p. 182 of **Promethean: The Created** for more details on the following expressions of Torment.

Wretched Torment: Revenge colors the purpose of the Unfleshed with this Torment, and revenge becomes the Unfleshed's sole purpose for existing. This discordance resonates poorly through the body of the Unfleshed, however, preventing it from quite the level of fine motor control the Unfleshed generally enjoy.

Muse Torment: Foolishness and obsession poison the Unfleshed that share the Torment of the Muses. When an Unfleshed suffers from the power of obsession, something in the world around the Unfleshed catches and utterly holds its attention, bordering on mania. This obsession slows the Unfleshed's cunning, however — quick thoughts elude it, as it is only interested in its obsession.

Nepri Torment: The intellect and reasoning of the Unfleshed cursed with Nepri Torment overwhelms it; the Unfleshed abandons all of the emotional capability instilled by the Divine Fire. The Unfleshed becomes a terrible, cold thing of razor's logic, very nearly the epitome of the immoral intelligent machine. The Unfleshed loses some of its reasoning acuity, however, incapable as it is of reckoning and anticipating emotional responses, including its own.

Golem Torment: Rage and unholy fury overcome the faculties of the Unfleshed possessed of the Golem Torment, and the Unfleshed is driven to destruction. The Unfleshed in the grip of this Torment literally becomes a killing, destroying machine, incapable of any kind of communication. This sudden explosion seems to drain the Unfleshed, however, leaving it susceptible to the will of others while it attempts to recover from the outburst.

Riven Torment: Though the Riven are motivated to act as spirits do, Unfleshed in the grip of this Torment begin acting in strange ways, embracing a simpler purpose and existence. The Unfleshed finds a single goal that relates in some way to its origins and acts upon it, seeking to fulfill the goal, as Torment causes the higher purposes instilled in the Unfleshed by the Divine Fire to gutter and flicker for a while. Thus, an Unfleshed whose purpose was violence or security begins to





patrol, seeking out “lawbreakers” or “the enemy” and dealing with them according to the Unfleshed’s original purpose, while one originally planned for deep-sea exploration seeks out the nearest body of water to explore.

Unfleshed created by another of their kind suffer the same Torment as their Progenitors.

Wasteland

The power of the Pyros housed in the bodies of the Unfleshed is unkind to organic matter. After a time, the presence of the mechanical Created withers the living world around them.

Stage Two
— Organic features of the landscape seem to recede, t a k -

ing on an artificial appearance: leaves seem covered with a waxy finish, soil seems sandy and static fairly crackles in the air. Metal and plastic take on a strange gleam, as though they were new and stronger, freshly polished, and those that come in contact with metal surfaces are apt to shock themselves. Those with excellent hearing can occasionally hear a strange, mechanical whine in the distance, like the sound of a computer monitor left on in an otherwise quiet room.

Stage Three — The landscape favors the unliving over the organic. Soil is washed away, leaving dead clay and hard stones in its place, while vegetation either withers away or seems fake. Winds carry the scent of ozone and the tang of metal in the air, and static builds quite easily. Ferrous metals in the area end up magnetized, and delicate electronics short out after a few hours of use. Radio broadcasts are marked with a distant whine, just beneath the sounds being broadcast, and the whole world becomes almost unbearably artificial.

Stage Four — At this point, the Wasteland of the Unfleshed is terrible and unrelenting. Static arcs in small motes of electric discharge, causing a slight glow to play over metal objects, and everyone can hear the slight whine of the inorganic nature of the Wasteland. Only clay and stone are left of the natural earth, and even the water is strange, somewhat electrified and tasting of ozone. All electronics end up destroyed by the slowly accumulating charge in the air. For most, it is only a matter of hours, but heavy shielding may prevent the effect for days.

Step Six: Select Refinement

The Unfleshed eventually find their way into the practice of the Refinements, suggesting that such practice is a normal part of the Created experience, rather than an artificial, philosophical pursuit. The Unfleshed are capable of pursuing any Refinement, though they may approach Refinements differently from their Promethean cousins. See “The Greatest of Works,” below for more information on the Unfleshed and the role Refinements play in their Pilgrimage.

Step Seven: Select Transmutations

Understanding the operation of Transmutations involves understanding why they are named as they are. The invocation of a Transmutation changes the one who wields it. The Pyros uses the tools it has to hand — the very stuff of the Promethean or other creature's body — to work those changes.

In the Created, this involves the alteration of sinew, flesh and bone, as well as the shifting of bodily humours to accomplish these ends. For the Unfleshed, however, the Pyros uses the systems already present in the wielder, whether those systems are electronic, nanotechnologic or steam-powered. Some ideas for reflecting the working of these powers, by Transmutation category, follow.

Alchemicus

Alchemicus seems to come quite naturally to the Unfleshed, who are themselves inanimate objects rendered alive by the Divine Fire. A quick scan of the item by a positronic brain or the shifting of eyes into more precise analytical equipment may accompany the powers that involve analysis of an object. Likewise, minute refining apparati — from small scouring electrical discharge systems to controlled chemical reactions — are involved in the alteration of objects.

Corporeum

The changes that an Unfleshed wielding Corporeum Transmutations make usually involve simple shifting of functions from one part of the bodily form to another area, augmenting musculature and joint-servos. Speed-enhancing technology provides celerity to movement, and the body develops self-repair routines for regenerative Transmutations.

Deception

For some, the camouflaging powers of Deception come quite easily — Unfleshed created with adaptable bodies or the capability to generate powerful holograms find that the Divine Fire only magnifies these abilities. For most of the Unfleshed, however, the power of the Pyros, rather than their innate hypertechnology, enables them to work the blending powers of these Transmutations.

Disquietism

The Transmutations of Disquietism are focused exclusively on the manipulation and mitigation of Disquiet, an energy unique to the Created. Thus, none of the Unfleshed are likely to begin their existences with systems designed to enable use of these Transmutations. The form of the Unfleshed quickly adapts to the changes brought about by a character that learns these Transmutations, however, spontaneously generating Disquiet that baffles fields, dispersal systems and even redirection mechanisms based on mechanized alchemy.

Electrification

Many of the powers of Electrification are easily reproduced by technology. The conductivity of electromagnetic energy and the ability to use it are long since mastered by those

with the knowledge to construct the Unfleshed. Those who learn to wield these powers still find the electricity they use to damage others powered by Torment, however, making them quite dangerous even to others of the Unfleshed.

Irradiation

One of the Unfleshed powered by some manner of nuclear reactor or otherwise contained reactive principle might easily develop the Transmutations of the radioactive Created. Where some Unfleshed might learn the techniques of manipulating the flow of electricity within themselves, so might others harness the power of the split atom within themselves, unleashing it into the world around them. Some Unfleshed may bear panels on their torsos that slide aside to reveal the radioactive machinery within, while others may unleash radioactive force into their surroundings through gouts of irradiated steam or smoke.

Mesmerism

Some of the technologies of the Unfleshed permit a variety of strange influences over the human mind or emotions — subsonic emotion-control arrays, subliminal interaction subroutines, pheromone or psychoactive chemical producers and other stranger things. The Unfleshed that develop Mesmerism may develop an entirely new technology enabling them to use it, or they may simply master the Divine Fire in such a way that alters the minds of those around them, as many Prometheans do.

Metamorphosis

The Unfleshed become accustomed to the vicissitudes of their bodily vessels, perhaps even more so than Prometheans (excepting only the Centimani). Where Prometheans begin in a form well suited to the final attainment of Mortality, the Unfleshed have a longer journey before them — their bodies are not flesh, after all. Their form must undergo dramatic alterations to prepare them for the New Dawn. Thus, it isn't unusual to find Unfleshed that practice these Transmutations, mastering their bodies to perhaps facilitate the changes necessary to seize the Elpis. Some Unfleshed were originally created to enable this level of transformation, built with adaptive internal mechanisms and programming that allows shifting of the form, growing weapons or shifting into other forms.

Sensorium

Eyes transform to perceive spectrums of vision not attainable by a mortal frame. Ears hear sounds beyond human ability, the very skin of the Unfleshed becomes a sensory organ, detecting things mortals have no way of even suspecting are present. Higher technology is often used to detect and record aspects of the world that humans cannot sense for themselves. It should come as no surprise that many of the Unfleshed are capable of transforming their own senses to detect these things. With the transformative potential of the supernatural Pyros, the sensory machinery the Unfleshed learn to create within themselves are capable of detecting things humans have no way of sensing, even with machinery.





Vitality

It is said that the first machine was the lever, used to increase the effective strength of the human who used it. Since that long-ago time, machines have served as a means of exerting strength the human frame does not naturally have. The Unfleshed understand this concept quite well. While some of the Unfleshed possess some measure of strength, those with greater-than-human potency possess these Transmutations. Though the Divine Fire often scours away superhuman strength when the Unfleshed is born — part of the process that will ultimately culminate in the transformation from steel and plastic to flesh and bone — those that desire to retain such power must learn to reshape power-exerting mechanisms and kinetic-dispersal systems, all fueled by Pyros, within themselves.

Vulcanus

Machines are regularly built with advanced power systems, capable of transferring and controlling electricity, heat and other energies within them. Is it any wonder that some of the Unfleshed develop similar systems to control the Divine Fire within themselves? Pyrotic shunting systems allow the Unfleshed to move the soul-fire of their Pyros from themselves into objects or their fellow Unfleshed, while Pyros absorption fields allow them to literally squeeze the

Divine Fire from electricity, fire or those around them. Some Unfleshed even learn to lace circuitry of Divine Fire into objects around them, branding them to the sight of Pyros, or even creating temporarily animated faux-machines under their control.

Pandoran

Pandoran Transmutations are strange things, warping the body away from the intended goal of the Azoth: the human form. As a result, learning these Transformations can be quite detrimental to the Unfleshed seeking the New Dawn. Still, mechanical manifestations of Pandoran Transmutations are easily created by the Unfleshed, ranging from generating additional limbs or internal mechanisms (in place of organs) to the wholesale transforming the shape.

Though some of the body modifications that come with learning Pandoran Transmutations are easily within the realm of possibility for a mechanical being, learning and using such changes still causes degeneration for the Unfleshed. Though there is nothing inherently evil about possessing claws or gaining a couple of extra limbs, it is inhuman. It has nothing to do with the Unfleshed becoming more “monstrous,” and everything to do with it becoming less human. Most Unfleshed that learn these Transmutations don’t necessarily look like monsters; they simply look more like machines.

Degeneration comes about as a result of the focus of Pyros turned toward, creating a form that is inhuman, rather than human. Pyros exemplifies and evolves those things it is used for, so when Pyros is forced to mimic inhuman traits, it comes at a cost to the Humanity of the Created.

The alchemical work of refining the raw Divine Fire into the Azoth, hoping to eventually transform it into a soul is reflected in the body. As the Unfleshed becomes closer to human, its form takes on an increasingly human shape and nature as well. Forcing the Pyros to transform the body in ways that deviate from what is possible in humanity causes the work of building a soul to falter slightly as well, causing degeneration.

Step Eight: Select Merits

Unfleshed characters receive the same limitations to the purchase of Merits that Prometheans do. In addition to the new Merits





available to Created characters from the **Promethean: The Created** book, Unfleshed also have the option of purchasing the Device Merit.

New Merit: Device (•• to •••••)

Prerequisite: Unfleshed

Effect: The Device Merit covers any number of built-in devices and capabilities that one of the Unfleshed may possess. This is a useful catch-all category to reflect anything from built-in communications devices to the ability to interface with computers to integral weaponry. This Merit should be purchased for each such device. These devices should simply be normal equipment installed in the Unfleshed — truly advanced technologies such as lasers, wall-crawling systems and so on should be purchased as Bestowments and Transmutations.

This Merit may only be purchased at character creation — once the Divine Fire has taken hold, the only changes it permits are those that make the Unfleshed more human. When the Unfleshed deploys or uses this Device, it causes the Unfleshed's disfigurements to be revealed, as though it were using Pyros. When the Unfleshed draws on its technological heritage in this fashion, the Pyros cannot hide the Unfleshed's true nature.

- **Headware Communications:** This Device grants the Unfleshed to use some form of mechanical communications naturally. Some examples include cell phone (••, ••• for satellite-based communication), GPS (••) or high-powered radio (•••, ••••• for satellite-based communication).

- **Concealed Weapon:** The design of the Unfleshed includes a concealed blade or raised striking surface that can be deployed for purposes of violence or utility. The weapon's damage depends on the rating of the Device. The weapon inflicts the rating of the Device in bashing damage, or the rating of the Device –1 in lethal damage. These generally mimic normal weapons (compare with those on p. 170 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). At the Storyteller's option, for a cost of one dot more, these weapons may use some kind of special effect (such as Knockout, or 9 again) if they are based on a weapon that possesses that trait.

- **Internal Projectile Weapon:** The Unfleshed has a built-in firearm. It used the same traits as a normal firearm, including



the necessity for ammunition. The type of weapon depends on the rating of the Device: Light Revolver or Pistol (••); Heavy Revolver or Pistol, Small SMG (•••); Large SMG, Rifle or Shotgun (••••); Assault Rifle (•••••). The Strength requirements for using such weapons are reduced by one. The Unfleshed always possesses a port that can allow it to eject spent shells and load new ones. For a +1 to the cost of the weapon, the design of the firearm is such that it can store 100 rounds; otherwise the weapon stores its normal complement of ammo.

- **Computer Interface:** This device grants the ability to interface with a computer, working much more quickly than a normal computer user might. This reduces the time on Computer based rolls by half, and grants a +1 to Computer rolls at ••, and a +1/dot thereafter. This also grants its bonus to making Research rolls (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 55), assuming there is a computer available during that research.

- **Tools:** This grants the Unfleshed the ability to use a Skill that requires tools. Each Device applies to the use of a different Skill, and grants a +1 equipment bonus at ••, with a +1 bonus per dot thereafter. Examples include a set of lock picks (Larceny), basic electronics toolkit (Computer) or a built-in med kit (Medicine).



Step Nine: Determine Advantages

Unfleshed characters begin with the same Willpower, Humanity, Virtues and Vices as Prometheans, as noted in **Promethean: The Created**, on p. 85.

Language

Unlike Prometheans, the Unfleshed have no corpse-memories to draw upon for learning language. Most Unfleshed do come into sentience with knowledge of a language, however. Generally, this is the language of the Unfleshed's demiurge. Strangely enough, the knowledge of this language seems to encode itself into that Unfleshed's unique expression of the Divine Fire: should the Unfleshed later create progeny, those new Unfleshed it creates also begin with instinctive knowledge of the same language.

Innate Supernatural Properties

Unfleshed also enjoy the benefits of all Created, as described on pp. 161–166 of **Promethean: The Created**, with a few modifications (see below). The Unfleshed also suffer the same drawbacks described in “Downside,” on p. 166 as well.

Unfleshed characters still need to eat, even though they are made of nonliving material. The Divine Fire needs fuel. They can, however, consume non-organic material, as long as they are able to chew and swallow it. An Unfleshed character can drink motor oil as though it were coffee and chew rubber like licorice. Doing so, though, doesn't help them to become human. In fact, eating this kind of material causes degeneration at Humanity 10 (roll five dice).

Also, poisons and diseases do not affect the Unfleshed even to the reduced degree that they affect Prometheans. Unfleshed are immune to natural poisons and diseases, and may spend a point of Pyros to ignore supernatural ones. A poison or disease specifically created to damage machinery or substances appropriate to a given Unfleshed, though, might have its full effect, or even impose a penalty on the Unfleshed's roll to resist.

Step Ten: Coming to Life and Prelude

At this point in the process, the mechanical statistics for the Unfleshed are primarily worked out, with only the narrative aspects left to be determined.

Appearance

Just as Prometheans, the Unfleshed appear human to those around them, except when their true nature is revealed through the expenditure of Pyros. All Unfleshed seem somewhat odd to those who encounter them. The planes of the face may seem strange somehow, its eyes an eerie, inorganic hue or its features are too perfect. Generally, these are the artificial traits that are most noticeable on the Unfleshed's true form being subconsciously noticed by viewers.

Personality

The Unfleshed enjoy the same range of personality that any other sentient creature does. They often seem a little

quirky, however, particularly when newly made. For some Unfleshed, their new emotions are quite volatile, leaving the Created something of a slave to its angers, fears and infatuations. For others, emotion is something deeply felt but difficult to express. Many such Unfleshed have milestones that relate to expressing these emotions the way humans do. Still Unfleshed may have issues involving empathy, whether a lack thereof (see the sidebar “The Urada Directive,” below, for more on this phenomenon) or perhaps too much. An Unfleshed may empathize too greatly not just with humans but other machines.

Note, however, that though the Unfleshed are odd and somewhat naïve, this is not *carte blanche* for silly antics. There is a pathos to the developing emotional state of the Unfleshed, and the player should be careful not to undermine both his character and the story being told in the game with foolishness.

History

What has happened in the life of the Unfleshed up to this point? What are its first memories? Did its creator realize it was “alive,” or did he remain ignorant? If he did realize it, were the Unfleshed's early memories experiences of wonder with a loving creator, or filled with hellish experimentation meant to try and see exactly how the sentience came about? All of the answers to these questions can help further develop not just the character's backstory, but can shape the personality of that Unfleshed.

The Three Laws and Other Programming

The Three Laws of Robotics, coined by Isaac Asimov as a plot-device for his science fiction stories, are simply one of many kinds of limiting programming imposed on artificial intelligences. Those who create the kinds of beings that might become one of the Unfleshed may desire to instill in their creations a wide variety of behavior modifications and limitations, but the Divine fire burns all of these things away.

Ultimately, through understanding morality and ethics, all of the creatures made by the Divine fire achieve their humanity. Certainly, restrictions against killing humans and the like may make for a safer creation, but in those creatures that achieve full sentience and the beginnings of a soul, such restrictions are simply inhibitions that prevent the Great Work. After all, a being that does not choose to refrain from killing others is not acting in a truly moral fashion — it cannot be said to be a moral choice if there is no choice at all.

Thus, when the Divine fire burns away those restrictive limitations, the Unfleshed may experi-



ence a strange sense of elation, an overwhelming sense of freedom. Some may even test their new freedom, perhaps even resulting in the death of a mortal. Where to the robot's creator, this is disastrous, to the Unfleshed itself, this is necessary. The ability to perform evil makes the choice to do good truly worthy. Resisting sin is never worthwhile unless the possibility of giving in to that sin exists.

The Greatest of Works

The final transformation of one of the Unfleshed is nothing short of a miracle. The transubstantiation of Divine Fire into soul is paired with the alchemical transmutation of steel, plastic and mechanical fluids into flesh, bone and blood. In the crucible of the Pilgrimage, the machine is broken down by pain and suffering, rebuilt by understanding and empathy, emerging as a mortal.

This process is, of course, quite difficult. On some level, the Unfleshed have much more to accomplish before finding the New Dawn. Prometheans have something of a head-start; at least they are made of flesh. Understanding Mortality involves learning to understand it as a whole. This includes such simple things as the effects of extreme temperatures on humans, the delicacy of the mortal frame and even the fact that mortals use their intellects and creativity to overcome these limitations.

A common step in the Pilgrimage for the Unfleshed is the understanding of the place of machinery and technology to the human being. So many of the Unfleshed begin their existences believing that the desire to become human is doomed — humans are so different from machines, after all. With some time and observation, however, these mechanical Created realize that all technology, from the tiniest eating utensil to the grandest weapon of war, is an extension of humanity. Humans do not create technological things for their own purpose. All machines are created to extend the reach, capabilities or presence of humans. In a very real way, machines are already part of the human experience.

The Urada Directive

The first person in known history to be killed by a robot was Kenji Urada, in 1981. Anxious to complete maintenance on an industrial robot at the Kawasaki plant where he worked, he neglected to shut off the robot properly. The hydraulic arm of the machine pushed him into a grinding mechanism, killing him, when he got close enough to do

work on the robot. It was an accident, of course — the machine was incapable of sensing him and was not self-directed, rendering it incapable of preventing the unfortunate accident.



Somewhere along the line, one of the Unfleshed heard this story. For many weeks, something about the story bothered it. Eventually this nagging ill ease became a full-blown obsession, driving the Unfleshed to distraction. One day, after several months of this, it realized why: this incident highlighted one of the Unfleshed's milestones.

In understanding that humans considered one of the traits of a self-aware creature to be awareness of those in its vicinity, enlightenment blossomed, and Vitriol burned through the Unfleshed's form, scoring the pattern of a soul deeper into its system. This Unfleshed referred to the need to be aware of mortals and what they do as the Urada Directive: through becoming aware of the needs, activities and concerns of mortals around them, the Unfleshed demonstrate their own self-awareness. Most of the Unfleshed experience this revelation at some point shortly after their creation, even if they don't refer to it by this term.

Unfleshed Milestones

The milestones of the Unfleshed — moments of purest understanding so intense that the experience coagulates into the transformative Vitriol — are similar to those of other Created. Understanding human morality, dealing with emotions, learning patience, forgiveness, remorse and hate: these are all appropriate milestones for the Unfleshed.

There is more to understanding the human condition for the Unfleshed, however. Prometheans are a step ahead of their mechanical brethren when it comes to such things, whether Prometheans know it or not. Prometheans are housed in a body of flesh, with organs fulfilling most of the normal functions that they fulfill in humans. Some Prometheans may also experience occasional flashes of insight, corporeal memories from the bodies they are made up of, granting clues to the mysteries of the human experience.

The Unfleshed, however, have no such advantages. They are machines whose forms are slowly evolving into more humanoid shapes, but ultimately, nothing about them has ever been human. They must learn things such as the frailty of the human body, its weaknesses, strengths and peculiarities. Below are five sample milestones for Unfleshed characters.

- Discovering the nuances of human reproduction, and how its aspects (menstruation, the sex drive, etc.) affect daily human existence.
- Understanding the frailty of human anatomy, such as the ease with which humans are injured or experiencing someone's degeneration due to a disease or old age.



- Learning more about human anatomy, either through extensive observation, academic learning or through more hands-on means such as the examination of a corpse.

- Understanding human development, including pregnancy, infancy, childhood, adolescence and adulthood, and the changes that come with those aspects.

- Discovering the adaptability of the human body, ranging from its ability to insulate against cold through the addition of fat to the alteration of skin pigmentation to adapt to levels of sunlight.

The New Dawn

Should the day come when the Unfleshed realizes its reward, when all the struggle, the tiny fragments of understanding, the pain fuses into a single brilliant moment of true enlightenment, the Pyros flares just as powerfully for the Unfleshed as for any other Created. The artificial being becomes real, plastic skin and steel frame are remade into flesh and bone, while burning, stolen Divine Fire cools and tempers into the soul of a mortal.

Mechanically speaking, Unfleshed use the same system as Prometheans for the attainment of Mortality (see p. 195 of **Promethean: The Created**). The one exception to this is the creation of progeny.

Creating Progeny

Though doing so is rare, the Unfleshed do create progeny. Some Unfleshed learn of the potential to do so from Prometheans, while other Unfleshed explore the possibility of doing so through trial and error, driven by loneliness or curiosity. The process is more exacting and quite involved for the Unfleshed, which do not have the (however dubious) convenience of corpses to serve as the vessels for their Divine Fire.

This generative act is similar to that of Prometheans (**Promethean: The Created**, p. 186), with the following notes:

Step One: Building the Vessel

Rather than acquiring a corpse with which to create the progeny, the Unfleshed must build another vessel similar to itself. This is a difficult process, requiring quite a bit of knowledge on the part of the Unfleshed — or of someone the Unfleshed gets to work on the body of its progeny.

This is an extended action, using either Dexterity or Intelligence (whichever is lower) + Computer, Crafts or Science, whichever Skill is most applicable to the type of Unfleshed being created. Each roll represents a length of time as determined by the Storyteller, based on the complexity of the project. Recreating a swarm of nanotech might require a roll once per month of work, while building a simple steam-engine body might require a roll once per week.

If the Unfleshed can find a form that already exists — whether it is a True Doll that simply needs the addition of various mechanical bits, or because the Unfleshed was one of several prototypes — this time increment is reduced by one stage, from months to weeks or weeks to days.



The upper complexity of the vessel is limited by the creator's ability. This action is explicitly limited by the suggested limitation to extended actions suggested on p. 128 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. That is, the maximum number of rolls that can be made in this extended action equal the creator's pertinent Attribute + Skill. The more complex the final result, the easier it is to infuse the form as one of the Unfleshed.

Step Two: Imparting the Spark

The Unfleshed that wishes to create progeny must actually take some of its own technology and place it within the vessel that will hold the spark. A few servos or nanomechanism samples are all that is necessary for this part of the process. It is the finishing touch to creating the vessel. This piece is invested with a point of Pyros.

Step Three: The Jump Start

At this point, the Unfleshed touches the vessel, allowing some of its mechanisms to touch those Pyros-infused pieces installed previously. The nearness of the Progenitor's vital Divine Fire sparks that Pyros within the transferred technology, bringing it to life.

Step Four: Distillatio

This phase is identical to that of the Prometheans. The Unfleshed sacrifices a dot of Azoth, and the progeny moves for the first time. This process may take some time as the Divine Fire remakes the vessel in the image of its maker.

Step Five: Judgment

This phase is likewise identical to that of Prometheans. Disaster may result in the creation of Gremlins, the Pandoran Mockeries of the Unfleshed. This roll uses the modifiers listed on p. 187 of **Promethean: The Created**, with the following changes:

- Ignore the modifiers that deal with corpses.
- +3 bonus if assisted by the demiurge responsible for the creation of the original Unfleshed.

- Modifier based on quality of vessel craftsmanship:

Successes	Modifier
1-5	-3
6-10	-2
11-15	-1
16-20	+0
21-25	+1
26-30	+2
31+	+3

Gremlins

When the Flux ruins the generative act of the Unfleshed, the vessel twitches once and then begins thrashing wildly. Anyone remaining near it when this happens is likely to be struck. Sparks of Divine Fire explode from the convulsing vessel, showering the room and its contents. Then, with a horrible inorganic shrieking sound, the vessel rips itself apart, birthing Gremlins, the Pandorans of the Unfleshed.

The individual Gremlins destroy the vessel as they escape from it. They immediately seek out high concentrations of technology — whether an industrial production floor, the nearest electronics store or the interior systems of newer cars in a junkyard — and begin cannibalizing them, ripping away chunks of circuitry, hydraulic systems and whatever else they need to complete their transformations. They are more than capable of continuing to hide and flee while they do this, knowing full well that they are at their most vulnerable during this pupal stage. But eventually, depending on the availability of resources, they complete their self-construction. And then, there is only the hunger.

Gremlins are mechanical in nature, just as the Unfleshed. But where the Divine Fire helps shape the Unfleshed into more human-seeming forms, in preparation for the cultivation of Azoth and the seizure of Elpis, the Divine Fire shapes the Gremlins into horrible, distinctly inhuman mechanical things, all oil-glistening, black, rubber-coated wiring, sharp edges and strange reflective pieces of glass and steel.

Gremlins should be designed as any other Pandoran, in terms of traits, using this chapter's suggestions for reflecting mechanical creations with the normal Promethean rules. Note that Prometheans are assumed to have the Unpalatable Aura Merit with regards to Gremlins, just as the Unfleshed have the Unpalatable Aura Merit when it comes to normal Pandorans.

Athanors of the Unfleshed

Just as Prometheans, the Unfleshed may find great utility in the adoption of Athanors, alchemical disciplines that allow them to channel their purpose toward the goal of the Elpis. These icons tend to be automatons from mythic origins of some kind.



Caucasian Eagle - Justice (Unfleshed)

According to some legends, the eagle that punished Prometheus was a terrible automaton raptor, crafted entirely of bronze. Crafted with the purpose of meting out punishment to the treacherous Titan, the Caucasian Eagle was unswerving in its duties, continuing to perform them faithfully. Only its death at the arrows of Herakles ceased the Caucasian Eagle's dedication.

Trait Affinities: Stamina, Intimidation

Promethean Boon: By spending a point of Reagent, the Unfleshed projects an aura of guilt. Any use of the Intimidation Skill for the purpose of Interrogation (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 81) in that scene is assumed to start with a number of automatic successes equal to the Unfleshed's Azoth rating.



Redeemed Boon: The Redeemed enters mortal life with the Justice Virtue, and an Interrogation Specialty in Intimidation.



Chi You – Domination (Unfleshed)

Great Chi You, dragon emperor of the Hmongs, had six arms, an ox-head made of copper and iron, with hooves to match. It was he who first took up metal weapons in battle, according to Chinese and Korean mythology. Terrible was his wrath, and Chi You did not hesitate to march to battle.

Unfleshed see in this figure the potential of tools and metal implements — of which they are the most advanced iteration — as the means of achieving domination over others. Whether that domination is put to selfish ends or because the Unfleshed believes only he is worthy or capable of leading others through the trials they face matters not: what is important is the rulership. The Unfleshed achieve this through a combination of powerful personal charisma and strength of arms.

Trait Affinities: Presence, Weaponry

Promethean Boon: The Unfleshed of Chi You may spend a point of Reagent to increase the Unleashed's Defense by her Azoth rating, projecting a terrifying aura that forbids others to draw near. This Defense bonus erodes by one point per turn, until it is gone. It may only be used once per scene.

Redeemed Boon: The Redeemed enters mortal life with the Inspiring Merit.



Golden Maiden – Assistance (Unfleshed)

The craftsman of the gods, Hephaestus, was aided in his endeavors by a pair of *kourai cruseai*, or “golden maidens.” Beautiful and dutiful automatons of gold, the golden maidens were clever and skillful in their craftsmanship. While they had more than sufficient skill to be worthy smiths on their own, their loyalty and purpose was to Hephaestus, and they were content assisting his own genius.

Unfleshed that embrace the Athanor of the Golden Maiden understand the value of this outlook. While more than capable of incredible craftsmanship, the ego must be sublimated, and those works put to the benefit of others. Thus, those that embrace this Athanor put their skill to work assisting others. Ideally, this involves acting as an assistant to another craftsman (generally assisting using the Teamwork rules; see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 134). Other times, though, this simply means that the effort of the Unfleshed must be put to the benefit of others, whether assisting an inventor, helping build homes for the poor or simply lending a hand in the fields.

Trait Affinities: Intelligence, Craft

Promethean Boon: When using the Teamwork rules and assisting in the creation of something (whether using the Craft, Expression, Science or other Skill, as adjudicated by the Storyteller), the Unfleshed may spend a point of Reagent to gain the Rote Action trait for that check (as described in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 134). The Unfleshed cannot benefit from this Athanor if it is the primary actor in the endeavor.

Redeemed Boon: The Redeemed enters mortal life with some semblance of his ability to assist the creative endeavors of others. He retains the abilities of his Promethean Boon, above, save that he must spend a point of Willpower to activate the ability. He does not add three dice to the roll for such a use of Willpower, however.

The Artificial Crèche

The following characters are examples of the Unfleshed, demonstrating a wide variety of possible origins and expression of Unfleshed potential.

Aeolipilus

Quote: “Understand what I seek. To become human, within and without, to have bridged the gap between man’s work and God’s? Who would not aspire to such heights?”

Background: With the coming of the Industrial Age, men saw the wonders that might be accomplished with science and engineering. Men of vision and insight applied their talents to a great many works and pushed the boundaries of what humanity could accomplish.

One such man was Dr. Montgomery Kelly. A brilliant scientist, Dr. Kelly was fascinated with the way things worked. He sought degrees in both medicine and engineering from his time at Oxford, looking for the similarities between the operation of heavy machinery and the human body. He tinkered with his designs for most of his life, until the day after his retirement party.

He rose and cleared off his workbench and laid out the schematics, the sketches and small models of moving limbs and joints — he gathered to himself a lifetime’s worth of imagination, inspiration and tinkering. Then, he set to work. For the better part of a year, he disappeared entirely from society, going out only rarely when he remembered to feed himself. He often awoke, slumped over his workbench, and set directly back to work.

Then, on Christmas Eve, he sewed the final flap of leather over his creation’s clockwork heart. A mechanical man, made up of a central steam engine belly, intricately designed with clockwork joints of brass and iron, with skin of supple leather. Coughing, feverish, Dr. Kelly stoked the flame and poured water down his clockwork man’s mouth. He smiled weakly as his creation coughed once, twice and then opened its glass-and-brass eyes.

Aeolipilus's first memories are of caring for his feverish maker. The old man had worked himself to the point of severe illness, and could only barely croak out what he needed. Soon, though, Dr. Kelly's friends came around and found him convalescing in the care of the strange man. They changed, somehow, and the men chased Aeolipilus away from his beloved maker, threatening him with violence. Aeolipilus — named for the first steam-driven machine — fled and wept tears of boiling water.

Aeolipilus has wandered since, careful to avoid staying in one place too long, lest humanity exchange its normal apathy for hate. He has fled to the wastes many times in the past, preferring old Victorian ruins and burnt-out industrial wastelands, where the mixture of soot and dust reminds him fondly of his early days in Victoria's London.

Aeolipilus has encountered a variety of Prometheans over the years. The Created often treat him with tremendous wariness. Nonetheless, he has gained something of a reputation among their kind, who tell stories of the "Clockwork Man." He has followed a variety of Refinements over the years, though he focuses on Cuprum at the moment.

In recent years, rumors have drifted through Promethean gatherings that the Clockwork Man is looking for something — or someone — that is like himself. Other rumors claim that he's gone insane and has taken to killing people out of frustration and grief at his inability to seize the New Dawn. The truth is, of course, stranger than that.

Ten years ago, Aeolipilus created progeny, a sleek steam-and-clockwork child he called Vitruvian after da Vinci's drawing of archetypal Man, which served Aeolipilus as inspiration in his own craftsmanship. For several months, Aeolipilus taught his child, who seemed strangely fascinated with humans. Then, one night, Vitruvian disappeared, leaving the corpse of a streetwalker in his bed. He'd opened her chest cavity and examined its interior workings. On the table next to the bed, Aeolipilus found some of the delicate internal mechanisms from Vitruvian's torso.

To Aeolipilus horror, he realized that Vitruvian's idea of becoming human is literal. He stole the woman's heart, plucked it from her chest and replaced some of his own internal mechanisms with it. But Vitruvian did not stop there — he has killed others since, harvesting their organs and placing them within himself in an effort to literally become more human. He has killed, and he will keep on killing, until he has reached his goal, or he is stopped. Aeolipilus knows that he is responsible for unleashing this monster upon the world, and intends to stop him.

Description: Aeolipilus appears as a young, bald man with dark skin. His eyes are bright, and he usually dresses in dark-colored woolen suits of some sort. In cold weather, his breath steams up significantly, and his skin is always warm to the touch.

When his disfigurement shows, it becomes clear that he is an artificial thing, a mechanical man of all angles and sharp



edges, barely covered by a skin of dark leather stretched tight over brass workings. He issues a cloud of steam from gaps in his stitching, and from his nose, mouth and ears.

Storytelling Hints: Aeolipilus isn't entirely sure what his maker intended. As a result, he has drifted through his existence, pursuing one avenue of ascension after another. He has sought out teachers in every Refinement, even a few that aren't known any longer, and has many stories to tell. Aeolipilus has taken a variety of the Created — both Promethean and Unfleshed — under his wing in the past. Aeolipilus can play a broad range of roles in the chronicle, from the "urban legend come to life" to the proverbial wise old man on the mountaintop.

His one focus currently, however, is finding his progeny, Vitruvian, who leaves a wake of urban legend-like organ harvests in his wake. The FBI has already classified him as a serial killer, and Aeolipilus knows it is only a matter of time before more people die. Thus, he works steadily to track his progeny down, and is more than willing to seek help from sympathetic Prometheans he encounters.

Lineage: None

Refinement: Cuprum

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 6

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Crafts (Clockwork) 5, Investigation 3, Medicine 4, Occult 2, Science 2

Physical Skills: Athletics (Climbing) 3, Brawl 3, Larceny 2, Stealth 4, Weaponry 3

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Expression (Poetry) 3, Intimidation 2, Persuasion (Impassioned Oratory) 4, Socialize 2, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 2



Merits: Device (Claws) 2, Direction Sense, Eidetic Memory, Encyclopedic Knowledge, Fast Reflexes 2, Fighting Finesse (Claws), Fighting Style: Boxing 4, Languages (French, Latin, Greek, Spanish, Russian), Repute (“The Clockwork Man”) 2, Resources 3

Willpower: 9

Humanity: 8

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 10

Defense: 3

Speed: 14

Health: 9

Azoth: 6

Bestowment: Uncanny Dexterity, as the Corporeum Transmutation. Aeolipilus is naturally quick and dexterous, his clockwork movements inhumanly precise.

Transmutations: Aeolipilus’ Transmutations are manifestations of intricate clockwork mechanisms, backed up by his Pyros-stoked steam engine. When he exerts himself or uses Pyros, there may be heard a slight whistle as the force of the steam within him is released through minute openings in his leather body.

Alchemicus — Forging the Master’s Tools (·), Fortification (··); **Corporeum** — Autonomic Control (·), Swift Feet (·), Regeneration (··), Athletic Grace (···), Human Flesh (···), Perfected Reflexes (····); **Metamorphosis** — Natural Weaponry (·), Procrustean Shape (··); **Sensorium** — Bloodhound’s Nose (·), Translator’s Eye (·), Aura Sight (··), Night Sight (··); **Vitality** — Might (··), Battering Ram (··), Vault (··), Thunderclap Blow (··); **Vulcanus** — Sense Flux (·), Sense Pyros (·), Fire Grasp (··, manifesting as a cloud of super-heated steam)

Pyros/per Turn: 15/6

Disquiet: Osiran Disquiet. The curse of Aeolipilus — a creation of his age’s Reason — infects the serene and ordered thinking of others. For some reason, when he is among mortals, they eventually succumb to their base, unreasoning natures, giving in to chaos and fear.

Torment: Golem Torment. When Aeolipilus succumbs to the hate and fear that the world causes him, he explodes into a furious outpouring of destructive violence, lashing out at the world around him. Gouts of steam erupt from him, blinding him, until it subsides.

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Brawl	(B)	—	9	—
Claws	1(L)	—	10	—

Armor: 0

Legion

Quote: “We are Legion. Divided. The Great Work is the Great Unity, when the Many become the One. Soon.”

Background: Legion began existence in a vat of electrically sensitive gel. This substance, calculated to act as a sort of primordial soup in which nanoscale machinery systems might be generated, was the result of more than 10 years of research that made up Project: Legion. Funded and staffed by nanotech specialists from the Virginia-based think tank Ganton Biomimetics, Project: Legion sought to create the means by which the theories of nanoscale mechanisms — devices on a microscopic scale — might be made a reality.

The result of this endeavor was called the Genesis Material, a weird gel that was clear under fluorescent lights, but shimmers with iridescence in natural light. The Genesis Material was designed to act as the perfect environment in which to construct nanoscale machinery of ever-increasing sophistication, which might then be commanded via electrical signals transmitted through the sensitive Genesis Material to design other, more advanced nanomechanisms.

For the first several months of testing the latest iteration of the Genesis Material, everything went as planned. The substance seemed to be the perfect tool, capable of conducting minute electrical signals to any section of itself, elucidating responses from the machinery there, with pinpoint accuracy. It was all going so well. No one really knows what happened.

Insofar as Ganton Biomimetic investigators can ascertain, one of the many researchers was running his tests, as they all did. He took it a little further than he’d intended, probably spurred on by some success he didn’t expect. This continued, and the sophistication of the machines suspended in the gel seemingly increased exponentially over the course of a mere





hour or two. The Genesis Material began to demand larger amounts of power, somehow pulling more than the system was designed to provide. The power in the lab surged, and wasn't restored until 12 minutes later.

Investigators know that within that time frame, something shattered the clear-walled container in which the gel was kept. When the power was brought back online, the Genesis Material was not only gone, but the surge had somehow entirely corrupted the computers with the most up-to-date information in it. Certainly, there were backups, taken every couple of days, but the information that was wiped recorded the most amazing of the Genesis Material's evolution.

The insurance investigators decided that it was probably a theft. Ganton Biomimetics could not afford to recreate the entire process, the result of thousands of man-hours of work. The company's board of directors shut down Project: Legion, patented the techniques the project innovated and sat back to recoup some of that loss by selling those patents to other companies.

Legion — as the Unfleshed created from the Genesis Material calls itself — fled the lab when they realized they were imprisoned. They do not know who is responsible for passing the spark of the Divine Fire on to them, but they knew that their new understanding and awareness would guarantee their imprisonment for much, much longer. So, they fled.

Description: Legion appears as a man with pale skin and strange blue eyes. He seems to sweat quite a lot, and he is dressed in whatever cast-off clothing he can find for himself. He is quite attractive, with model-quality good looks.

When his true form is revealed, Legion is a humanoid figure crafted of a strange, interwoven pattern of multi-hued polymers, intricate mineral formations and tiny metal structures. His eyes are strange, blue, glass-like photo-receptor constructs, and he is covered in a strange, slimy gel, which is clear under artificial lighting, but gives him an iridescent sheen while in sunlight.

Storytelling Hints: The Legion's self-concept is a plurality; they see themselves as a cooperative mass of unified intelligences, all working toward the same goal. They are a distinct and unique hive-mind with the potential to one day achieve Unity. They have discovered that when humans experience the world as a plurality, they are considered insane, damaged or wrong somehow. The Legion does not wish to be incomplete and divided — their Great Work is the achievement of Unity.

The Legion is also quite dangerous, however, possessed of tremendous pride and suspicion. They fled their birth-lab in a carefully planned fashion, striking out at those they perceived as imprisoning them. Perceived slights are avenged quickly and decisively.

Lineage: None

Refinement: Stannum

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 2, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Computer 3, Investigation 1, Science (Nanotechnology) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Stealth 1

Social Skills: Empathy (Discerning Motivations) 2, Expression 2, Intimidation (Alien) 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Danger Sense, Elpis 4, Eidetic Memory, Resources 2, Striking Looks 2

Willpower: 5

Humanity: 5

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 6

Defense: 2

Speed: 10

Health: 8

Azoth: 2

Bestowment: Sanguine Victory, as the Pandoran Transmutation. The Legion's cohesive, humanoid form is entirely as a result of the influence of the Divine Fire. They can still cause themselves to dissolve into the swarm of microscopic particles suspended in the Genesis Material through effort. Note that this does not qualify as the use of a Pandoran Transmutation for purposes of degeneration.

Transmutations: The Legion's Transmutations are the result of rapid internal construction and utilization of nanomachines subconsciously designed by the Legion and fueled by the Divine Fire. These effects often cause the Genesis Material that clings to the Legion's outer surface to ripple and change hue as the Transmutations are activated.

Corporeum — Autonomic Control (·), Regeneration (··);
Electrification — Feel the Spark (·), Shock (··)

Pyros/per Turn: 11/2

Disquiet: Tammuz Disquiet. The strangeness of the Legion, the oddity of their existence makes people want to possess and enslave them, destroying their eternal desire to be free.

Torment: Riven Torment. When the world proves too much for the Legion to deal with, something in them snaps. The Legion is driven by odd, obsessive urges that they don't entirely understand, focusing on strange things and goals for a time before they reassert themselves. The Legion fears that these instances are somehow related to the original intent of the Legion's creators in some fashion.

Tachanka

Quote: "Please, no. You have to stop this — I don't want to hurt anyone! Can't you see I just want to be left alone? Don't make me do this —"

Background: Drones, radio-controlled machines and other means of waging anonymous and automated war are at the forefront of research in the military-industrial



complex. “Tachanka” was the name of one such research project, named after the endearing term coined for Russian horse-drawn machine gun platforms in the early part of the 20th century. The project’s lead researcher, Dr. Sarah Peake, worked feverishly on the small track-driven drone. Failure after failure on the project haunted her, until she was informed by upper management that her job was in danger.

Dr. Peake became obsessed, making one change after another to the basic design, often staying late long after other researchers had gone home. Then, late one night, she made her final adjustment and hit the power toggle. She was thrown backward in a shower of the Divine Fire, which burned its way through the little drone. Plastic and military-grade steel melted and screamed as it warped, fulfilling the new shape invested by the Divine Fire. Finally, hours later, Dr. Peake woke to a room filled with a smoky haze. There stood a small, humanoid form. The chassis had changed, its sensor array rising up out of its torso to form a head, movement tracks folded back and warped to form a set of strong legs.

She watched as the figure tested its arms, moving digits she’d never designed for it. She saw that the gun she’d mounted to its primary weapon mount had been incorporated into its right arm. She smiled and said, “So, is this my little Tachanka?” The little machine stepped away from her, startled, and then stared at her. With a whirr and a click, the gun in its arm deployed, and she gasped in fear. Tachanka then looked down at it, confused, and back up to look at her. She smiled and assured him she meant no harm; Tachanka smiled, and the gun retracted.

She took him home with her, and he marveled at the world from the passenger’s seat of her car. But even before

she could make it home, they were pursuing her. She’d heard rumors that upper management watched the labs through hidden cameras, and that was the only possible way they could have known what she was doing. The men who gave chase in two black SUVs were armed, and completely unafraid to use their weapons. In the pursuit, Dr. Peake was shot and killed. The car skidded off the road and into an embankment, where the car was crushed.

The Tachanka that crawled from the twisted wreckage, the left side of his body sprayed in the blood of Dr. Peake, confused the men with guns. He looked like an adolescent boy. But then, he deployed his gun, and the Pyros-created illusion of his humanity shredded. Tachanka killed them all in a grief-driven rage, his first experience with Torment. When he came to his senses, he stood in the middle of a gore-spattered street, bodies all around him, covered in blood. He fled, then, and has been running ever since.

Description: Tachanka appears as an adolescent boy of perhaps 15 years of age. His eyes are a dead gray color, and his head is shaved. He tends to wear a wife-beater T-shirt and a set of big, baggy pants from which hang a variety of straps and buckles. He wears a set of big, bulky black tennis shoes.

When his true nature is revealed, Tachanka is a sight to behold. Though diminutive in frame, he is crafted of heavy gunmetal gray steel, with a smooth, rounded head and eyes of strangely reflective mirror-like material, like an LCD screen of some kind. The forearm of his right arm is quite bulky, with clear indications that a firearm is built into its function, down to the banana clip of ammunition inserted in the underside of his forearm. His legs are thin at their core, but they are bulked up by the presence of chains and track-mechanisms, of the type used by many tanks, but smaller. These tracking mechanisms crisscross his legs, serving as powerful musculature.

Storytelling Hints: Tachanka simply wants to be left alone. He hates hurting people; grief at the deaths of others was his first milestone toward becoming human. It pains him that he was built as a killing machine. Worse, the men who financed his creation know about him and his hatred of hurting others and try to use that against him. They keep coming, sending operatives to find him and invariably people — often innocent people — get hurt as he tries to escape. The worst times, however, are when he gives in to his Torment, and the rage inside him, rage that he believes to be a remnant of his original programming, overwhelms him. Still, he cannot stay away from humans for long, and tries his best to blend in among them.

Lineage: None

Refinement: Aurum

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Computer 2, Crafts (Firearms) 2, Politics 1, Science 2





Physical Skills: Athletics (Running) 3, Brawl 2, Firearms (Assault Rifle) 3

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Intimidation (Bluffing) 2, Streetwise (Finding Bolt-Holes) 2

Merits: Danger Sense, Device (Assault Rifle) 5, Elpis 3, Quick Draw

Willpower: 7

Humanity: 6

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Speed: 11

Health: 8

Azoth: 2

Transmutations: *Deception* — Incognito (·); *Mesmerism* — Fixed Stare (·), Suggestion (·)

Bestowment: Armor, as the Pandoran Transmutation (at a rating of ·)

Disquiet: Frankenstein Disquiet. Tachanka's quiet and sensitive nature seems to do something to others, encouraging them to bother and harass him. Adults find him irritating — "typical kid." Other adolescents find the young man an easy target for mockery, harassment or even violent bullying.

Torment: Golem Torment. When Tachanka finally gives in to his anger, grief and fury, his liquid-crystalline eyes burn a deep red, his gun deploys and terrible violence ensues.

Pyros/per Turn: 11/2

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Brawl	(B)	—	5	—
Assault Rifle	4(L)	150/300/600	11	Uses both hands

Armor: 2



CHAPTER THREE

DESTROYER OF WORLDS

I saw you just once, some weeks before you met your destiny. I needed to meet you. I knew you had been made. I could feel it within me. And so, I went to the warehouse.

The men tried to stop me, of course. They died.

They had tried to keep you secret. In a few days, Comrade Khrushchev would be seen across the world, telling of the great success, and the power of his nation, and how you had brothers twice your size.

You were there, lying in the rack. Lying in state. The space was made for you. I loved you.

As the reinforcements came outside in their trucks and jeeps and began to fight the dead men who had tried to stop me, as shots and screams rang out outside, I walked across the hall to you and caressed you, ran my hands along the elegant curves of your metal casing. I pressed my face against your curved beauty. I closed my eyes, felt your heart reach out to mine.

"Oh," I said. "You and I, we are brothers. We exist for the same reason. Our power is the same. I wish I could set you free. How I wish I could set you free in a place where you could be fulfilled. But I cannot. But we are brothers, you and I."

There was no one outside to stop me. I let the dead men fall. I had no use for them. And I left that place. I like to think that the experience changed me.

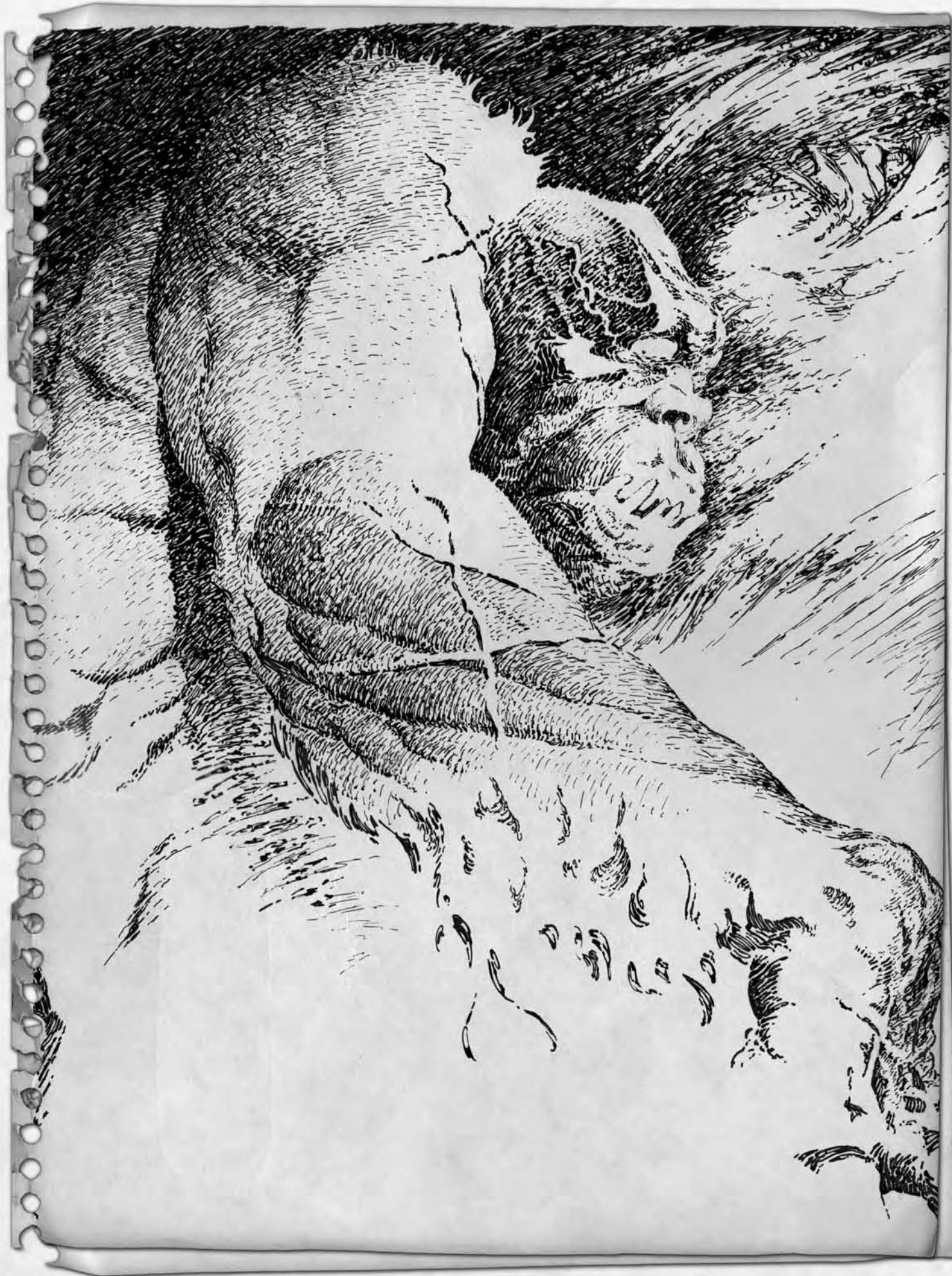
The men who controlled this site would not tell their superiors that I had been here. They feared that they would be shot. They must have breathed a sigh of relief that you were whole. But how could it be otherwise? I could never harm you.

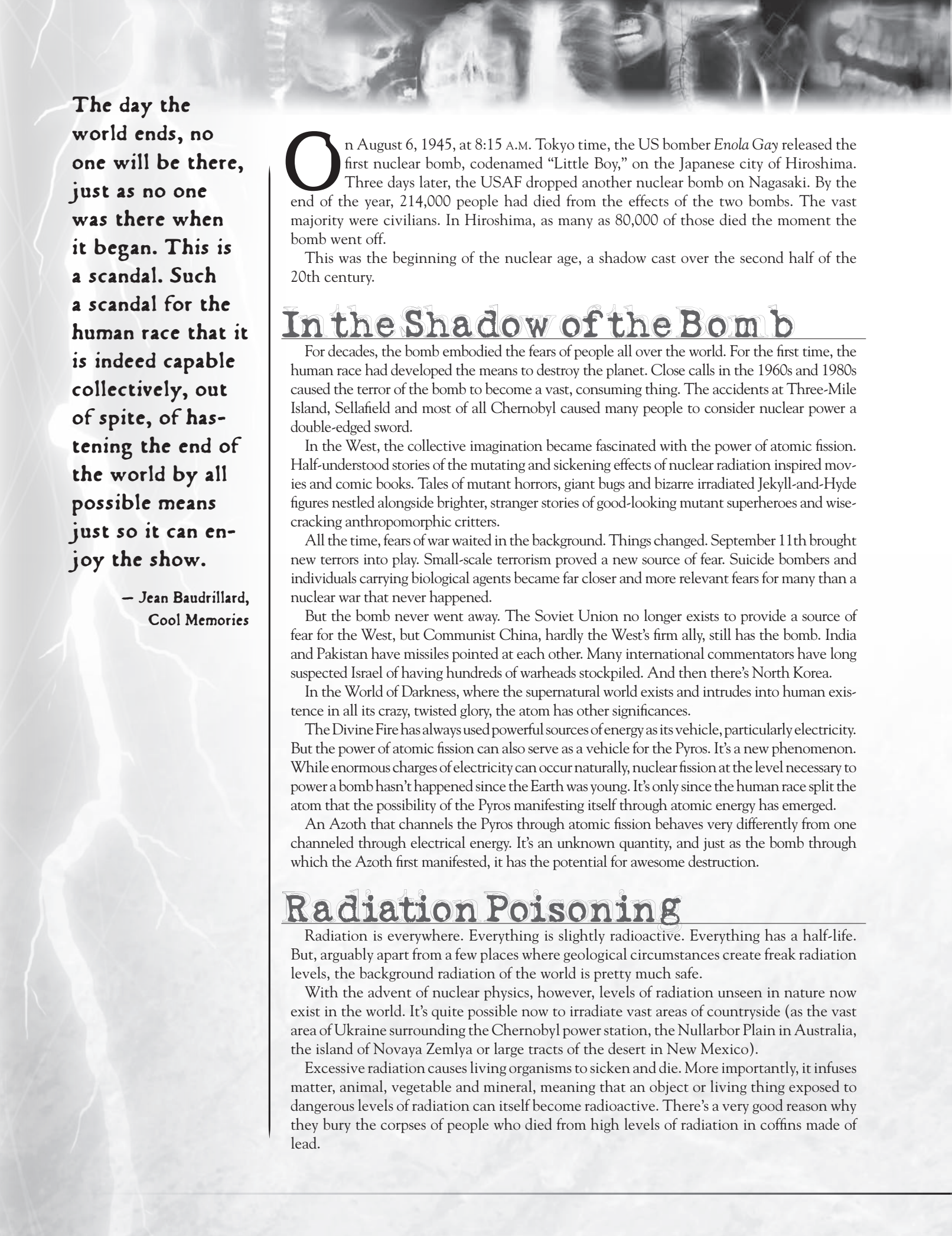
They detonated you on the island where I was born. I saw, from miles away, and I bathed in the light of the fireball and marveled at the beauty of the cloud that spread like a vast tree over the island. And I closed my eyes and felt the waves of blessed radiation against my skin. And I wept that you met your fate here, that nothing was destroyed.

They were scared of you. The Americans called you Tsar Bomba, King Bomb, and I felt that the name fit you. Your grandeur was unlike anything the world has ever known, and only I am left now to stand in your place.

And as I am your brother, it is right that the title passes to me.

-transcribed from the journal of John Ash





The day the world ends, no one will be there, just as no one was there when it began. This is a scandal. Such a scandal for the human race that it is indeed capable collectively, out of spite, of hastening the end of the world by all possible means just so it can enjoy the show.

— Jean Baudrillard,
Cool Memories

On August 6, 1945, at 8:15 A.M. Tokyo time, the US bomber *Enola Gay* released the first nuclear bomb, codenamed “Little Boy,” on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. Three days later, the USAF dropped another nuclear bomb on Nagasaki. By the end of the year, 214,000 people had died from the effects of the two bombs. The vast majority were civilians. In Hiroshima, as many as 80,000 of those died the moment the bomb went off.

This was the beginning of the nuclear age, a shadow cast over the second half of the 20th century.

In the Shadow of the Bomb

For decades, the bomb embodied the fears of people all over the world. For the first time, the human race had developed the means to destroy the planet. Close calls in the 1960s and 1980s caused the terror of the bomb to become a vast, consuming thing. The accidents at Three-Mile Island, Sellafield and most of all Chernobyl caused many people to consider nuclear power a double-edged sword.

In the West, the collective imagination became fascinated with the power of atomic fission. Half-understood stories of the mutating and sickening effects of nuclear radiation inspired movies and comic books. Tales of mutant horrors, giant bugs and bizarre irradiated Jekyll-and-Hyde figures nestled alongside brighter, stranger stories of good-looking mutant superheroes and wise-cracking anthropomorphic critters.

All the time, fears of war waited in the background. Things changed. September 11th brought new terrors into play. Small-scale terrorism proved a new source of fear. Suicide bombers and individuals carrying biological agents became far closer and more relevant fears for many than a nuclear war that never happened.

But the bomb never went away. The Soviet Union no longer exists to provide a source of fear for the West, but Communist China, hardly the West’s firm ally, still has the bomb. India and Pakistan have missiles pointed at each other. Many international commentators have long suspected Israel of having hundreds of warheads stockpiled. And then there’s North Korea.

In the World of Darkness, where the supernatural world exists and intrudes into human existence in all its crazy, twisted glory, the atom has other significances.

The Divine Fire has always used powerful sources of energy as its vehicle, particularly electricity. But the power of atomic fission can also serve as a vehicle for the Pyros. It’s a new phenomenon. While enormous charges of electricity can occur naturally, nuclear fission at the level necessary to power a bomb hasn’t happened since the Earth was young. It’s only since the human race split the atom that the possibility of the Pyros manifesting itself through atomic energy has emerged.

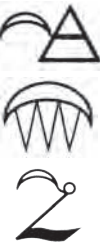
An Azoth that channels the Pyros through atomic fission behaves very differently from one channeled through electrical energy. It’s an unknown quantity, and just as the bomb through which the Azoth first manifested, it has the potential for awesome destruction.

Radiation Poisoning

Radiation is everywhere. Everything is slightly radioactive. Everything has a half-life. But, arguably apart from a few places where geological circumstances create freak radiation levels, the background radiation of the world is pretty much safe.

With the advent of nuclear physics, however, levels of radiation unseen in nature now exist in the world. It’s quite possible now to irradiate vast areas of countryside (as the vast area of Ukraine surrounding the Chernobyl power station, the Nullarbor Plain in Australia, the island of Novaya Zemlya or large tracts of the desert in New Mexico).

Excessive radiation causes living organisms to sicken and die. More importantly, it infuses matter, animal, vegetable and mineral, meaning that an object or living thing exposed to dangerous levels of radiation can itself become radioactive. There’s a very good reason why they bury the corpses of people who died from high levels of radiation in coffins made of lead.



In game terms, every source of radiation, whether it's the background radiation in a place that was irradiated by a nuclear test decades ago or the brief, contained "blue flash" caused by a low-level criticality accident, has two Traits: Intensity and Damage.

Intensity gives an idea of how powerful the radiation is, and what kind of damage it causes — weaker radiation causes bashing damage, while more powerful radiation causes lethal or even aggravated damage. Intensity also gives an idea of what the other symptoms of radiation sickness might be. Intensity ranges from zero to five.

Damage is the number of extra dice of damage a source of radiation causes. If the source of radiation is a weapon, the player using the weapon rolls for the damage *and then* rolls for the effects of radiation, after reckoning any damage from the weapon.

When a character comes into contact with a dangerous source of radiation, the Storyteller rolls:

Intensity + Damage — character's Stamina + Azoth + equipment

The Storyteller rolls each time the character comes into contact with the radiation source. If the character is in constant contact with the source or surrounded by it (for example, a character walking through an irradiated patch of land), the Storyteller rolls once per scene.

Radiation poisoning doesn't kick in straight away. In total, whatever the source of radiation is, the character loses one dot of Health for each success the Storyteller rolls.

The character doesn't lose all of them at once.

First, after a number of hours equal to the character's Stamina, he suffers damage equal to half of the successes rolled (round up). For a couple of days or so, the character suffers from the first symptoms of radiation poisoning. After that, although he's not quite on top of the world, he doesn't feel too bad and can function normally. This is called the "latent stage." During this latent stage, he even heals the damage he's already taken, at the normal rate. Lethal damage in humans heals at one level per two days. Bashing damage heals at one level per 15 minutes. In fact, it's quite possible that the victim heals all the damage caused by the first stage by the time the first stage is over.

One week later, or after a number of days equal to his Health dots, whichever is more, the character takes the remainder of the damage at one point per day, until all the successes the Storyteller rolled have been used up, or the character is dead. The character can't heal this round of damage until all of the damage has been inflicted.

Prometheans don't suffer from radiation sickness in the same way as ordinary humans do. A Promethean takes the first half of the damage. When the sickness kicks in, the Promethean can fight the illness — the player rolls Stamina + Azoth each day. If he's successful, the character avoids taking that point of damage.

A character gains an equipment bonus from a radiation suit, or from shielding (such as a bunker). A fully shielded concrete bunker offers a +10 dice bonus to characters behind it. A lead shield that doesn't offer all-round protection gives a +3 dice

equipment bonus. A radiation suit gives a dice bonus of +1 to +3, depending on the design and quality of the suit.

Radiation and Other Supernatural Beings

Vampires, werewolves and mages substitute Blood Potency, Primal Urge or Gnosis respectively for Azoth when the Storyteller makes the initial roll.

A mage suffers in the same way that an ordinary human does. On the other hand, healing spells work on radiation just as they do on any other kind of damage, although dealing with radiation requires more powerful magic. A mage can heal his own radiation sickness with a conjunctural Life 2 + Forces 4 spell, and can heal it in others with a Life 3 + Forces 4 spell.

A werewolf takes all the damage, but regenerates it as normal, meaning that by the time the second half of the damage inflicts itself on him, he's almost certainly regenerated the first round of damage.

A vampire takes the first half of the damage from radiation as usual — it has some of the qualities of sunlight. She doesn't get ill, but she still runs the risk of getting irradiated if the radiation is powerful enough. The second half of the damage doesn't affect the vampire, but it does affect her blood, irradiating a number of points of Vitae equal to the damage caused. If she takes more of this kind of damage than she has points of Vitae, the extra points of damage have no effect. The player spends these points of irradiated Vitae first, so if, for example, the character has seven Vitae in her system and takes five points of radiation damage after the latent phase is over, the first five Vitae she spends are the irradiated ones.

They work just fine when they're used to power Disciplines, but they can't be used to heal damage or enhance Physical Attributes, meaning that the vampire effectively can't do this until the character has expended all the irradiated Vitae. If another character drinks the Vitae, it has no benefit, and causes one point of bashing damage for each point of Vitae consumed.

This Isn't Rocket Science

It isn't nuclear science, either. The effects of radiation on the human body are so variable and complex that they're impossible to model accurately in a system this simple. The systems presented here are still fairly complex, and need a bit of bookkeeping on the Storyteller's part.

Storytellers should feel free to amend, supplement or disregard the guidelines here any way they see fit. If, for example, it suits the chronicle

to inflict all the radiation damage in one go or even ignore the rules here and treat it as any other disease (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 176), the Storyteller should feel free to do so.

When it comes to the effects of Nuclear Wastelands and Irradiation Transmutations, science doesn't so much get simplified as kicked right out of the back door. Zombies, deadly cockroaches and giant bugs populate the Wastelands of Nuclear Prometheans, and behave in ways outside the expectations of rational minds.

Sieverts, Grays, Roentgens, Rads and REMs

Scientists measure the amount of radiation in the air and the amount a human body can take in a number of different ways. Although this doesn't really have any impact on the game, it's sometimes helpful for the purposes of verisimilitude to have an inkling of what the science means, and allows the Storyteller to have a rough idea what game damage a source of radiation is likely to do.

Scientists in the United States measure the amount of radiation in the air in *roentgens*, which measures the amount of energy radiation produces in a set volume of air. If the radiation is absorbed by matter, they describe the amount of radiation soaked up by measuring it in *radiation absorbed dose* (rad). If the radiation gets absorbed by living tissue, they measure the radiation in REMs, which stands for *roentgen equivalent, man*. A rad is about equal to a REM.

Outside of the United States, physicists have pretty uniformly adopted SI units. Non-American scientists measure the radiation absorbed by matter in *grays* (Gy) and the degree of various forms of radiation absorbed by the human body in *sieverts* (Sv), an SI unit. A gray is equivalent to a sievert.

In the most simple terms, a sievert is the equivalent to the amount of energy absorbed by human flesh, reckoned in joules per kilogram and weighted according to the species of animal affected and the different parts of the body affected. There are 100 rads to a gray, and 100 REMs to a sievert.

Radiation Intensity

At low levels, radiation isn't hugely dangerous, but there's only a tiny difference in magnitude between a dose of radiation that is more or less harmless and one that is lethal.

The effects of radiation are quite complex, but primarily they're dramatic. Storytellers should go into detail explaining to players what symptoms their characters are suffering from rather than just telling them to take damage.

Radiation levels above ... are rare, and require a great deal of energy (whether atomic or supernatural) to create.

0 (Near Harmless; less than 0.5 Sv)

Damage: Up to 4 (bashing)

At the very lowest level of radiation exposure, most people don't feel anything, and they don't get sick. In later life, there's an increased chance that they'll get cancer, and the chance of birth defects in any children they'll have in future goes up.

On the other hand, some scientists even think that low levels of radiation like this are actually good for you.

Someone who takes more than about 0.2 Sv during the course of a few hours might suffer from a bit of anemia for a few days, and perhaps, if the exposure was intense and from one source (rather than being ambient in the area) some of the symptoms of sunburn, but that's really it.

Often, this level of radiation has no effect at all, but prolonged exposure (say, being in the proximity of a low-level radiation hazard for several hours or days) can cause a small amount of harm.

Example: Damaged hospital machinery

Quite a lot of hospital equipment uses radioactive isotopes. If the shielding gets damaged or develops a fault, proximity to the machine can sometimes be dangerous.

Intensity: 0 **Damage:** 2 (bashing)

• (Mild; 0.5 Sv to 2 Sv)

Damage: Between 2 and 6 (bashing)

A person who takes this much radiation is likely to get sick, and to suffer a severe headache. Men may find that they're infertile for a while. Some years down the line, it's likely that victims develop cancer.

Example: Area of a minor power station accident; a bomb test site, decades after the fact

Although the British government insisted that there was nothing wrong with the area of the Windscale (now Sellafield) power station in Cumbria after the 1957 accident, local farmers destroyed the milk that their cows produced and, allegedly, instances of cancer have increased in the region by a frightening amount. Meanwhile, there are still areas of New Mexico, Nullarbor, India and Pakistan and Novaya Zemlya that really aren't all that safe to visit for any length of time.

Intensity: • **Damage:** 2 (bashing)

•• (Severe; 2 Sv to 4 Sv)

Damage: Between 4 and 8 (lethal)

A victim having taken this much radiation feels very ill indeed, with nausea and vomiting, fatigue and a slightly higher chance of contracting other sicknesses. A pregnant woman miscarries if she takes any damage at all from this level of radiation.

Example: Proximity of badly stored radioactive waste

Some governments and corporations are neither careful nor ethical about where they store or dispose of low-grade waste.

Intensity: •• **Damage:** 4 (lethal)



••• (Acute; 4 Sv to 6 Sv)

Damage: Between 8 and 12 (lethal)

A human who takes a radiation dose this powerful stands a very good chance of dying. At the beginning, nausea and vomiting afflict the victim. If the radiation came from an accident of some kind (such as the plutonium bars, below), the victim develops burns on any exposed skin, which turn into painful, weeping sores by the time the final stage of sickness begins. He starts to lose his hair. If it's particularly bad, the inside of his mouth begins to bleed uncontrollably. Both men and women are likely to become sterile for the rest of their lives.

Example: Plutonium bars

A 500g bar of plutonium is relatively harmless on its own. Bringing two together, however, is extremely dangerous, as the contact causes the bars to achieve criticality, blasting the immediate area with a brief, potent flash of radiation.

Intensity: ••• **Damage:** 10 (lethal)

•••• (Extreme; 6 Sv to 10 Sv)

Damage: Between 10 and 14 (aggravated)

At this level, the radiation isn't definitely fatal, but not all very many people survive. A victim gets all of the symp-

toms she would do at the lower levels, along with internal bleeding when the sickness begins.

If she dies, it's from the bleeding. It's an excruciatingly painful way to die.

Example: Dirty bomb

Dirty bombs are banned by the Geneva Convention, but there are still rumors of small explosive devices that deliberately shed lethal doses of radiation.

Intensity: •••• **Damage:** 11 aggravated, plus 6 or more caused by a High Explosive device (see the World of Darkness Rulebook, p. 179)

••••• (Terminal; more than 10 Sv)

Damage: 15 and up (aggravated)

Humans taking this amount of radiation are quite simply done for. Fatigue, nausea and hair loss all take their toll, but when the sickness kicks in, the entire body collapses from the inside. The stomach and intestines break down and die, rotting away from the inside, leading to a massive voiding of the bowels and internal bleeding. The victim literally defecates blood, and then his own innards. Intense agony, along with dehydration brought by a loss

of virtually every fluid in the body and an inability to process water, leads to delirium and certain death. And that's if the victim survives long enough to go through the latent stage. Many die within hours.

Example: Standing next to an unshielded nuclear reactor core without a suit

Walking into the reactor core without protection is suicide . . . for a human. A Promethean stands a slim chance of getting out alive.

Intensity: • • • • • **Damage:** 22

Getting Irradiated

At doses of ... and above, a character who takes any damage at all from radiation becomes irradiated with a lower level of radiation, meaning that others who come into contact with her stand the risk of taking a small dose themselves.

An irradiated character emits radiation at an Intensity three dots lower than that of the dose the character took himself, with a damage bonus equal to the first turn of radiation damage he took. For example, a character who received a dose of radiation at Intensity and who took, in the first turn, six points of damage, emits radiation of Intensity ., Damage 6.

In real life, a person irradiated in this way can remain radioactive for the rest of his life (which might not be all that long) and even after he's dead. In game terms, the character is only really likely to emit dangerous radiation for a few days or weeks. After that, the level of radiation that an irradiated character emits shows up on Geiger counters, but although it's a frustrating story element, it doesn't really pose enough of a hazard to require more dice rolls.

Nuclear Prometheans

The stories began to circulate about 30 years ago. A Promethean would, on occasion, meet another, and would pass on the name of one of the Created who was different. He wasn't made from the elements, at least not from any natural elements. His demiurge didn't give the Divine Fire to him through electrical power. The demiurge empowered this new Progenitor with atomic fission.

Why should a Promethean disbelieve this story? The Created live in a world of cryptic angels and ravening, mindless monsters. The Created feel the Divine Fire under their skin, permeating their flesh. Why then, should a Promethean who draws his strength from the atom be

excluded from the possible?

So what if the rumors are true? What if there really are Prometheans who channel the Pyros through atomic fission?

The question isn't settled. What follows is a collection of options, and it's up to the Storyteller which version is suitable for a chronicle. Maybe the Nuclear Prometheans are all the issue of the Zeka, members of the sixth true Lineage. Maybe they're suitable as players' characters. Maybe they aren't. If the Storyteller doesn't want to use the Zeka as a Lineage, he could rule that the stories of the Nuclear Promethean are simply about a Promethean belonging to one of the "common" Lineages who has one of the Nuclear Bestowments detailed in this chapter, and who knows Irradiation Transmutations.

Maybe they don't exist at all. Maybe none of it's true. Maybe the testing fields of New Mexico, Nullarbor and Novaya Zemlya are empty, and the spirits of radiation and the Flux-born zombies that sometimes face the Created have simply generated spontaneously.

Maybe the knowledge that there really is nothing worse out there than a Promethean is enough horror on its own.

Nobody Knows It All

More than anything else, it needs to be stressed that nobody knows the truth about the Nuclear Prometheans, as presented here. The sum total of Promethean knowledge about their atomic relatives is printed in **Promethean: The Created**, pp. 218–220. Even so, that's all the stories collected together. No one Promethean knows all of it, even old, well-traveled, highly knowledgeable individuals such as "Verney."

As for the Nuclear Prometheans themselves, they don't know any more about themselves than the other Prometheans do, and the Nuclear Prometheans don't know all that much about the other Prometheans, either. Tsar Bomba and the Skin Girl, the Nuclear Prometheans whom John Ash meets in the Prologue, are good examples. Tsar Bomba knows that other Prometheans exist, but given that his main interaction with them is adversarial, he doesn't often exchange much in the way of words with them, preferring to communicate with violence and lacunae. The Skin Girl knows about other Prometheans, presumably because Tsar Bomba, her creator, once told her that they exist. Even so, her encounter with John Ash is her first experience of any other Promethean apart from her creator.

The information that follows, then, isn't immediately known to any character. A group of characters might find out some of it in play, but as things stand, most of it is entirely unknown to characters inhabiting the World of Darkness.

ЗЭКД СИЛДЯЭПФЕТИЭБФМЬ

zekka: children of the bomb

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

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

The name of the Lineage comes from the best-known story: the first creature was, they say, made from sewn-together fragments of dead *zeky*, the unfortunate inmates of a Soviet nuclear gulag, recreated into a new, nameless being, wiped clean of memory, no more than a *zekka*, become in truth what the inmates of the gulags were in writing. The creature's demiurge intended him to be the perfect worker. The demiurge wanted to make an ideal *zekka*, an already institutionalized prisoner who could work in the mines and staff the test site without succumbing to the radiation. The demiurge wanted a born slave who would have no preconceptions or prejudices against obeying orders.

It didn't work out that way.

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

There are too few Zeky to make any definitive statements about what they might be like, or about what they want. One Child of the Bomb existed for

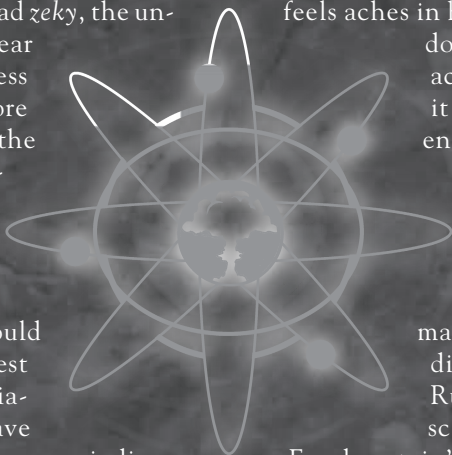
barely a year before placing himself at ground zero of another nuclear test, desiring to be reduced to his component particles rather than continue in his existence. Another Zeka of quite low power has laired in the mildly radioactive area around Sellafield for 30 years now, only wishing to be left alone.

The central reality of the Zeky's existence is that it *hurts*. The Frankensteins, the Zeky's closest siblings, are tormented by the knowledge of their separation from humanity. But the Zeky feel actual physical discomfort in their existence. The recently made Zeka sometimes called "the Skin Girl" suffers from constant headaches. Windscale's bleeding skin is a constant source of pain. Another Zeka goes through life with a constant, dull nausea. Another feels aches in his joints. This physical discomfort doesn't impair the Zeky's ability to act, but it does stay with them, and it contributes to the way they experience Torment.

There's no specific method in which a Zeka makes another. The only thing they all have in common is that the body or bodies that provide the raw material for a new Zeka must have died from radiation poisoning. Their Russian Progenitor was made by a scientist who had a copy of Victor

Frankenstein's notes, and so made his Zeka from irradiated penal laborers. But this Progenitor made the first of his Lineage from a single body. The Skin Girl was murdered and remade, in part, with metal to replace and augment the flesh that had atrophied and died from the radiation that had killed her, a small lump of plutonium replacing part of her brain. Although the few Zeky creators have each used a different method to build their progeny, every one has used radiation as the means by which they have awakened their new creation's Azoth.

The first Zeka was born in the fire of a nuclear explosion, but there are other sources of radiation. Windscale's creator brought her to waking by wrecking a small reactor in a civilian power station and taking her into the fire, leaving the body horribly burnt, but imbued with Azoth. Another buried the body of one of the first fatalities of the Chernobyl accident under the nearby earth, and returned to the area once every year or so for a decade, exhuming



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

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

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

Progenitor: As time marches on, the rate of development and change in society, thought and science has gradually increased. As the 20th century dawned, things changed faster and faster. Perhaps this is the reason why, of all the Lineages, the Zeky have more than one demiurge. Over the last 60 years, no fewer than *five* demiurges have created Prometheans who, for the lack of a better name, are Zeky.

In the early months of 1945, a minor scientist at the Manhattan Project went mad. He wanted to create life, all the while working on the single most efficient means of ending it the world had yet seen. On July 16th, the scientist, having gained the co-operation of no fewer than three others, secured a specially prepared corpse to a concrete slab at placed a few miles away from the impact point of the test bomb, *Trinity*. When, having finally secured protective clothing, they returned to the site, the body was gone. The creature they created stumbled away, burying itself into the ground. Eventually, the creature moved on. So far, the creature has not made any other Prometheans, but he's created several Pandorans. Even he doesn't know if that's by accident or design.

At more or less the same time, an elderly man in Japan, motivated by intense grief at the recent death of his wife and inspired by a dream, worked to resurrect her. He lived in Hiroshima, and fate — or the will of the *qashmal* who supplied his vision — decreed that he complete his enterprise early in the morning of the sixth of August. As Hiroshima dissolved into fire, she opened her eyes. The Pyros transformed the energy blast into Azoth. The old

man died instantly. Hideously burned by the moment of her creation, the old woman still travels between Hiroshima and Nagasaki, taking on the role of a *Hibakusha*, a survivor of the bomb. She has made at least one other of her kind.

The third was the German scientist-mystic whom the Americans took to Bikini Atoll. In the last test of Operation Castle in 1954, he created his intended *Übermensch*, connecting it to a bizarre mechanical device inspired as much by the principles of Agrippa and Paracelsus as it was by Einstein and Heisenberg. The physicist stayed with his creature as the bomb went off, adjusting the equipment, even as he was consumed in the explosion. The creature he made endured his existence a few days before leaving the island and walking into the sea. No one ever saw him again. He's probably dead, but stories of cancer-ridden monsters that sometimes circulate on the Pacific islands suggest that even if he's dead, he's left something behind him.

The creature made in 1956 by a British scientist at Maralinga, Australia, didn't last long, either, placing himself in the path of the next bomb test the following year.

It was on one of the islands of Novaya Zemlya in 1958 that the creature that gave the Lineage its name awoke to consciousness. One Dr. Mikhail Alesandrovich Elizarov, originally sent to the military installation on Novaya Zemlya to examine the effects of radiation on the penal workers, had found a copy of Victor Frankenstein's notes. Using the notes, Elizarov linked Frankenstein's principles to his own understanding of nuclear physics. He made a body from the bodies of *zeky* who had died of radiation poisoning, and used the blast from a nuclear test to empower the body with Divine Fire.

The creature stayed with his creator for a while, but when the authorities came to shut Elizarov down, the monster made its escape, subjecting the scientist and his would-be captors to a spontaneous, lethal blast of something similar, but not quite identical, to radiation. Elizarov died of a fast-spreading cancer within weeks, the day before the firing squad was due to get him.

The creature remained on Novaya Zemlya for a while, becoming something of a bogeyman for the penal workers, scientists and military personnel stationed there. After the Soviet military detonated the so-called Tsar Bomba in October 1961, Elizarov's monster left the island. From then on, he took the name Tsar Bomba as his own.

Other Nicknames: Hibakusha, Oppenheimers

Appearance: Physically, the only thing that all Zeka have in common is that they are all made from the corpses of people who died from exposure to radiation. Other than that, they can be anyone. Tsar Bomba is a freakish giant, an amalgam of a dozen or more penal laborers. The Skin Girl is a short, stocky

girl of 19. The *Hibakusha* of Hiroshima is a diminutive, stooped old woman. A Zeka could be made from anyone.

Although ordinary humans cannot see a Zeka's disfigurements, a Zeka does carry some visible mark of his exposure to radiation. The Skin Girl has no hair anywhere on her body. Windscale's face and hands are covered with pale burn scars. Another Zeka might have the telltale signs of melanomas or skin grafts. Yet another just has what looks like a permanent case of sunburn.

Disfigurement: Disfigurements vary from Zeka to Zeka. Most of the Children of the Bomb, when their disfigurements appear, have something terribly wrong with their skin. The Skin Girl has transparent skin, and underneath, the electrical contacts, sockets and wires that apparently keep her body moving are clearly visible. Windscale, on the other hand, simply has no skin at all. The nameless *Hibakusha* of Hiroshima has milky, colorless eyes and scorched, blackened skin, like the skin of a corpse left behind by the bomb. Another Zeka might have lesions that cover his entire body, making him appear grotesque even by Promethean standards, as his eyes stare out from a face so malformed by tumors that it can hardly move. Tsar Bomba, meanwhile, although hulking, has skin that draws light to itself, meaning that it has a look not so much of utter blackness, but of growing, solid shadow.

Humour: The Zeky don't have any defining humour. A Zeka can be governed by any of the five humours. The difference is that the Zeka's humour is always radioactive and tainted. The humour is cancerous in some way. Cholera takes on a sick, slightly depraved bent to it. A Zeka with a sanguine humour is possessed of extreme appetites. A phlegmatic Zeka exhibits a morbid fascination



with the horrors he sees. One ruled by melancholy is prone to depression and self-loathing. The intuitive elements of an ectoplasmic humour appear in a Zeka as crazed leaps of logic, not so much intuitive as simply ill.

Element: The Zeka's element is tied to his humour, and carries with it the same taint, thanks to his radioactive Azoth.

Bestowment: Re-Animator, Victim Shadow or Radioactive Affinity (choose one at character creation)

Refinements: Perhaps because of the radioactive, mutagenic properties of Flux, the Zeka find it easiest to practice Centimanus. In fact, they find it as easy to fall into and as difficult to leave as other Prometheans find Stannum (see **Promethean: The Created**, p. 49). Stannum, on the other hand, is no easier to join or practice for them than any other Refinement.

Having said that, some have at times practiced Stannum, and practiced it well. Rage seems to come easily to the Children of the Bomb. Likewise, a Zeka who wishes nothing more than to be left alone could easily fall into the practice of Cuprum, preferring to hide and attempt some sort of communion with the natural world she is capable of harming so disastrously.

A Zeka could conceivably practice Mercurius or Ferrum. The examination and perfection of his condition, speaking either physically or supernaturally, could prove a useful pursuit for a Zeka who wishes to know exactly what he is.

Aurum holds very little attraction for the Zeka. Unlike many other Prometheans, the Zeka are all openly disfigured in some way by their radioactive Azoth. Trying to fit in to human society is even more of a struggle for the Zeka than it is for other Lineages.

Character Creation: The Zeky tend to live hard, isolated lives, and this means that Physical Attributes and Skills are usually primary, although one or two favor Mental Skills. There's no real Virtue or Vice that defines the Zeky, although a Zeka tends to be defined more by her Vice than by her Virtue. Most Zeky have the Unpalatable Aura Merit.

Concepts: Disaster survivor, conspiracy freak, hermit, firefighter, slightly deranged physicist, encounter group tourist

Quote: "Oppenheimer had no idea what he was talking about. But I can become death so very easily."

Stereotypes

Frankenstein: You whine and whine and whine. You have no idea what it's like. You have it so damned easy. Do you have any idea how much I go through? Do you? Well, do you? You do? You're lying. You're a liar.

Galatea: No. Don't be scared. I'm not going to hurt you. I just want to touch you. It won't hurt. It won't.

Osiris: You've been prattling about life and death for about an hour now. You haven't actually said anything that makes a shred of difference to me.

Tammuz: Yes, they made you to be a slave and they made me to be a slave, but face it: you're still a slave. I could be one of the masters if I wanted to be. I could.

Ulgan: You're wasting your time with illusions. You won't find the world to come there.

* * *

Vampires: Like me, you are a disease. But you're nowhere near as virulent.

Werewolves: You could survive me. Please don't run!

Mages: Your science, your studies are obsolete. You are not the future. You never were.

Mortals: I sometimes think that you only exist to impress on me how much I don't have. How much I can never have.

The Nuclear Condition

The Pyros animates the Zeky, just as it does every Promethean. With the Zeky, however, the Pyros uses nuclear energy as its vehicle. Because of this, a Zeka differs from other Prometheans in a number of ways.

Electricity and Radiation

Unlike other Prometheans, electricity has no effect at all on the Zeky. A Zeka isn't harmed by electricity, but he doesn't gain any benefit from it either.

On the other hand, while other Prometheans have a small amount of protection from damage caused by harmful radiation, radiation doesn't harm a Zeka at all, and is as beneficial to him as electricity is to other Prometheans.

In game terms, a Zeka heals wounds from radiation damage in the same way that other Prometheans heal using electricity.

If the radiation source emits radiation of Intensity 0 or , it causes bashing damage. Each point of damage caused by this source heals one point of bashing damage. Two points of bashing damage from this source heal one point of lethal damage. Three points of bashing damage heal one point of aggravated damage.

If the radiation source emits radiation of Intensity .. or ..., it causes lethal damage. Each point of damage caused by this source heals one point of lethal damage or one point of bashing damage. Two points are needed to heal a point of aggravated damage.

If the radiation source emits radiation of Intensity or, it causes aggravated damage. Each point of damage caused by this source heals one point of damage, whether aggravated, lethal or bashing.

A Zeka can't heal from radiation that he's created himself due to his powers or his Wasteland. The radiation has to come from a source outside of himself. If the Zeka has the Radioactive Affinity Bestowment (see p. 87), he can also regain Pyros from radiation "damage."

Obviously, radioactive materials are hard to come by. Some Zeky try to stay in places with at least a little background radiation. Others are, by necessity very cautious about staying out of trouble. A cornered Zeka fights hard, desperate to stay intact, because unlike other Prometheans in the modern age, healing doesn't come easily for the Zeky.

Regaining Pyros

A Zeka regains Pyros in the same ways as other Prometheans do, although he does not gain a point of Pyros from experiencing a thunderstorm. He can gain one point of Pyros a night from sleeping next to any source of radiation (including microwaves, electromagnetic radiation and radio waves), whether it causes damage or not, meaning that

working or faulty microwave ovens and mobile telephone masts are fair game. Just as other Prometheans, a Zeka regains a point of Pyros from conversing for an hour or more with humans and a point on waking up in the morning.



Bestowments, Transmutations and Refinements

Just as other Prometheans, the Zeky take one Bestowment (see p. 85 below) and can buy others as Transmutations.

The Zeky are skilled in the use of Irradiation Transmutations. A Promethean normally has access to two lists of Affinity Transmutations appropriate to his Refinement, from which he can buy Transmutations at level x 5 experience points. No matter what Refinement he practices, a Zeka defines himself more by his affinity with the atom than with any specific approach to the Pilgrimage. Because of this, a Zeka character can choose to take Irradiation instead of one Refinement Affinity Transmutation list. For example, the Affinity Transmutation lists for Aurum are Deception and Mesmerism. A Zeka character might choose to forgo the cost break on Mesmerism, and instead take Irradiation and Deception as his Affinity Transmutation lists. He'll still have to pay level x 7 experience points for Mesmerism Transmutations, but he'll be able to buy Irradiation Transmutations more cheaply.

A Zeka doesn't have to do this, and any time he changes Refinement, he can make the choice whether or not to forgo the cost break on one of the Affinity Transmutation lists in favor of Irradiation.

The exception to this is the Centimani. A Zeka Centimanus gets to buy *both* Pandoran Transmutations and Irradiation Transmutations at level x 5 experience points.

Atomic Torment

When Torment first overwhelms a Zeka, it can be a terrible thing to witness. Zeka Torment causes a Child of the Bomb to explode into horrendous violence. Torment drives a Zeka to destroy and to kill, no more, no less, with no regard for whom is in the path. Friends, loved ones, enemies and complete strangers are in terrible danger.

Above all, Torment drives the Zeka to expend as much Pyros as possible, as quickly as possible, fueling Transmutations, increasing Attributes, using Bestowments. The player of a Zeka in the throes of Torment must spend at least one Pyros every turn, until there is none left to spend. The Divine Fire gutters and sparks as it does with all Prometheans, meaning that all Pyros costs are still one higher than usual (see **Promethean: The Created**, p. 182). This means that a Zeka goes through her Pyros store extremely quickly.

One Zeka might murder a half a dozen people and use the Re-Animator Bestowment to raise them all as zombies, sending them to kill anyone they meet. Another might use Vulcanus and Irradiation Transmutations to raze buildings



to the ground and inflict terrible burns on anyone who gets in her way.

The urge to destroy continues for one minute per point of Azoth, or until all of the Zeka's Pyros is used up, which ever comes *last*. After that, the Zeka collapses into a state of listlessness and guilt for a number of hours equal to her dots of Azoth. Just as other Prometheans, she's unable to spend or regain Willpower. She also suffers a -2 dice penalty to Resolve for this period, which covers Resolve used in dice pools, and as a Resistance Attribute subtracted from attacking characters' dice pools.

Atomic Wastelands

At first, the radioactive Azoth of the Children of the Bomb doesn't so much taint the land as bathe it, feeding it with mutagenic power, before destroying it utterly. Animals leave the area, if they can. Only the bugs thrive. An infinitesimally thin layer of fine gray dust covers everything.

Perhaps, if the Zeky were to multiply, the whole world could look like this.

Stage Two — Plants begin to grow, quickly, but this apparent flourishing is an illusion. Leaves and flowers come out disfigured, with too many petals, strange colorations or strangely stunted and half-formed. Small animals and birds die. Although the sky is gray, the temperature is high, and the half-obscured sun beats down hard. No rain falls.

The gray dust gets everywhere, even in places that would otherwise be hermetically sealed.

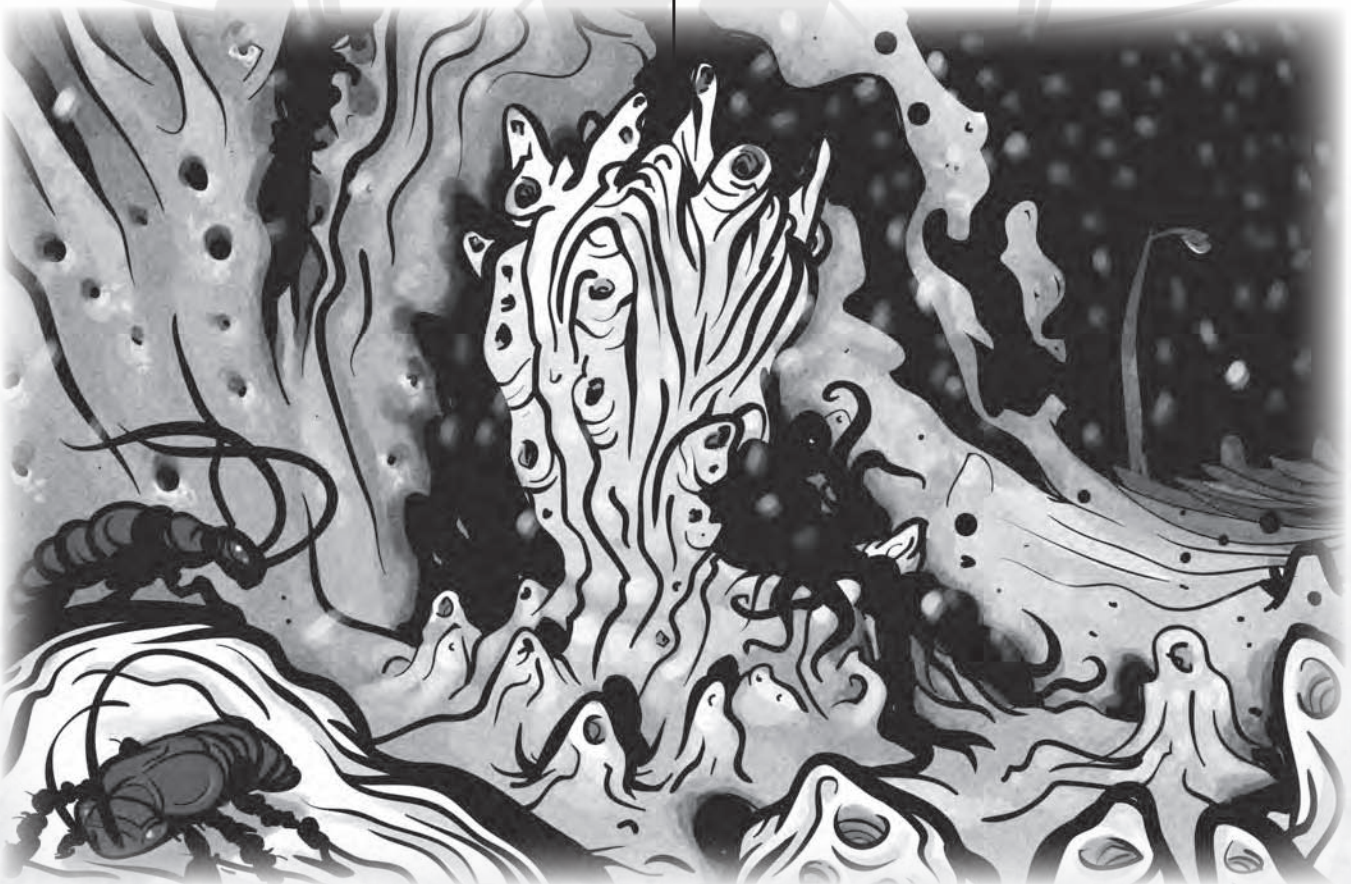
Stage Three — Plants begin to die off, as pathetic, mutated foliage withers away, choked with dust and unable to photosynthesize through deformed leaves. Animals, too, lie down and die. Birds flying overhead fall from the sky. At this stage, contaminated organic material becomes inedible for even Prometheans. A Promethean who eats a dead animal or stuffs his mouth with leaves finds that he derives no nourishment from it, and a few hours later throws it all back up again. The Zeky, on the other hand, are perfectly content with such a repast.

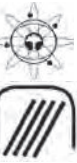
The gray dust begins to cover everything thickly. Insects and arachnids, particularly cockroaches, swarm everywhere. They're ugly and deformed, having missing legs, extra heads and strangely shaped, perhaps unusable wings.

Background radiation rises in the area. It has Intensity 0 and Damage equal to the Promethean's Azoth - 3 (minimum of 1).

Stage Four — The clouds roll in, obscuring sun and moon to the extent that there's no longer any difference between day and night. It becomes cold, and within a day, a heavy fall of snow and ash covers everything.

Cockroaches and termites build huge mounds of this material, and begin to scavenge things they wouldn't normally dare to touch, maybe even attacking humans and Prometheans.





The background radiation now has Intensity .. and Damage equal to the Promethean's Azoth.

Attack of the Atomic Flesh-Eating Roaches!

Roaches don't normally attack people, and they're not really swarming animals. The varieties of termites and ants found in Europe and North America, while they do swarm, don't generally attack people. But when something as bizarre as a Zeka comes into the equation, all bets are off. Impelled to eat flesh by the effect of the Wasteland, or by the "Lord of the Roaches" Transmutation (p. 90), they suddenly become vicious and very dangerous.

Rules for swarms can be found in **Promethean: The Created**, p. 239.

Nuclear Disquiet

The Zeky cause Disquiet the same as any other Promethean, but their own particular manifestation presents itself as unreasoning fear. To begin with, a human who meets a Zeka gets scared. The Zeka is intimidating. He's strange and different. He could be capable of anything. People who deal with the Zeka appease her as much as they can and then try to get out of her way as soon as is possible. They certainly won't allow their kids talk to her. Afterwards, they'll wonder what was so frightening about this person.

After a while, they begin to imagine that the Zeka really is the sort of person who has already done something violent or perverse or is somehow infected with a disease of some kind. One person thinks maybe that she's a terrorist, or some sort of agent of an oppressive government. Paranoia begins to strike people. Perhaps the Zeka isn't alone! Perhaps she's the first vanguard of some invasion.

People affected by Disquiet begin to accuse other people of being in league with the stranger. They begin to suspect a conspiracy. There haven't been Reds under the bed for years, but there are other fears these days, which are just as irrational, just as dangerous: perhaps it's the terrorists, and they're staging an invasion. Perhaps it's the Europeans. Perhaps it's the Muslim community over in the next street. Perhaps it's the black people from the projects. Any human group that elicits irrational fear is fair game.

It doesn't have to be a fear of something human. Maybe it's something weirder, such as an alien invasion, or of the End Times, and the Thralls of the Beast.

People under the pall of Disquiet begin to examine every quirk of behavior in their acquaintances, friends and loved

ones. Meanwhile, the stranger in the center of it all is still there, still making her sinister presence felt.

Eventually, panic turns into a desperate desire to do something about it. Maybe there are witch hunts, either metaphorical or actual. Maybe the area dissolves into small enclaves, who hold all the others in suspicion. At some point, the paranoia breaks into panic, and panic into violence. The one figure that everyone agrees is at fault, the Zeka, becomes the target of panicky mob violence. She could well be lucky to get out alive.

Throng

It's not easy for a Zeka to join a throng, but it's possible. If a group of "ordinary" Prometheans can get past the difference of the Zeka, a Zeka could become one of their companions on the Pilgrimage for a time.

It doesn't mean it's going to be easy. The Zeky have the added problem that they make others' lives as difficult as their own, just by being there.

For example, the itinerant nature of a Promethean throng is pretty likely to be compounded. If a throng stays in any area for too long, the Zeka's colleagues might find that there's suddenly nothing in the area they can eat.

The vicissitudes of the Pilgrimage pose other problems. Other Prometheans can heal easily. All most Prometheans need to do is just climb up an electricity pylon and make a connection or smash open a power outlet and grab hold of the wires. Meanwhile, if the Zeka wants to heal fast, she needs to find a source of radiation, which is potentially lethal to her friends. A Zeka in a throng either has to drag her friends from radioactive hazard to radioactive hazard, or be very careful about the dangers she experiences.

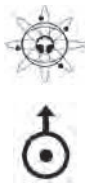
Sleeping overnight next to a source of radiation is easier. There are many sources of radiation that don't hurt anyone (or haven't been proved to hurt anyone). For example, mobile phones give off tiny amounts of microwave radiation. It's not enough to harm anyone, but a Zeka who sleeps at the base of a mobile phone mast would regain that point of Pyros. Sleeping next to a microwave oven set to run for an hour or so after she drops off also supplies that point of Pyros.

Zeka in throngs can, of course, also gain Pyros from their friends, although the Zeky will have to reciprocate on occasion. Other Prometheans find that Pyros taken from a Zeka itches and burns slightly.

The Pilgrimage and Redemption

The Zeky are few, and so far, not one of them has achieved the Magnum Opus.

This doesn't mean it's impossible. The truth is, the Zeky can attain Mortality. Although the temptations of Centimani and the Humanity-eroding qualities of some of the Irradiation Transmutations make it easy to stray from the path, the rewards are great.



The risks are greater.

The fact is, the radiation saturating the Zeka's body is likely lethal to a human. The more powerful the Zeka, the more dangerous the radiation is. A Zeka who becomes human must be able to weather the ravages of the radiation that formerly empowered him.

When a Zeka succeeds in becoming human, the character takes damage from the radiation left behind by his Azoth. The radiation has an Intensity equal to the Promethean's Azoth (or ••••, if the Promethean has more than five dots of Azoth) and a damage bonus equal to 10 – the Promethean's Humanity rating.

For example, if the former Promethean who had four dots of Azoth and a Humanity of 5, the player rolls nine dice, minus the new human's Stamina score. Because the radiation has an Intensity of ••••, the radiation damage is aggravated.

There's a good chance that a Zeka, particularly a powerful one, who reaches the end of the Pilgrimage, could die moments (or a few days or hours) after becoming human. It might well be worth it.

Sample Nuclear Milestones

- Recovering from a mortal wound the hard way (not using radiation).
- Finding other Prometheans who accept the Zeka as one of their own.
- Going without any contact with radiation for a week or more.
- Meeting and combating a Zeka who has abandoned the Pilgrimage.
- Meeting one of the Zeka Progenitors.
- Visiting the site of an atomic explosion (including a test site).
- Visiting the site of a nuclear accident, and recognizing the human cost.
- Causing a Wasteland to rise enough that even other Prometheans find it inhospitable.
- Learning that Redemption might be fatal, and pursuing it anyway.

Athanors

So far, none of the surviving Zeka have created Athanors. This doesn't mean that an enterprising Child of the Bomb couldn't learn how to invest Vitriol and create Reagent. It just needs the right Promethean and the right concept. Two possible concepts for Zeka Athanors follow.



Cockroach – Survival (Zeka)

Cockroaches can survive nearly anywhere. Legend has it that they even have it in them to survive a nuclear holocaust.

The Zeka creating the Athanor of the Cockroach accepts difficulties and

hardships. He fights through to the end, no matter what the cost.

Trait Affinities: Stamina, Survival

Promethean Boon: The character gets one extra Health dot.

Further, the Zeka can spend one Reagent to gain one point of armor. The Zeka can only get one point of armor this way. It lasts until the end of the scene, and appears as a thin, blackish carapace across the Zeka's flesh when his disfigurements are visible.

Redeemed Boon: The character retains the extra Health dot.



Machine – Service (Zeka)

The robot of science fiction and automotive factory alike is made to serve, and serve it does, without thought, following simple rules that allows it to protect and obey.

The Zeka were created to be a quintessentially selfish force of destruction. By sublimating his own desires and becoming the willing servant of his friends, the Zeka creating the Athanor of the Machine hopes to offset some of his curse, becoming stoic and quiet, like a machine, albeit a machine that can be repaired and improved.

Trait Affinities: Stamina, Strength

Promethean Boon: The Promethean gains the benefit of the 9 again rule when following an order that benefits another individual, or when performing any action that directly protects another individual from violence or harm.

The Promethean can also spend Reagent to heal his own injuries. Each point of Reagent spent in this way heals one point of damage, whether bashing, lethal or aggravated.

Redeemed Boon: The character continues to enjoy the benefit of the 9 again rule when following orders and protecting others.

Tales of the Bomb – Story Hooks

• **The Eye of the Storm:** A throng of Prometheans are trapped in a severe Zeka Wasteland. Swarms of flesh-eating roaches, dead men and possibly even giant bugs attack the Prometheans. In the center of it all is a Zeka who claims that she is not the culprit, and that something far worse is here. The question is, what is it? And can they trust the Zeka they've just met?

• **Reds Under the Bed:** A Promethean throng suddenly find themselves in the middle of a town seized by mass hysteria. The people believe that they're in the middle of a terrorist attack. The cause is, of course, a Zeka's Disquiet. The Zeka, appearing to be blameless, approaches the characters and asks for their help. There's an army base not far from the town. The Zeka claims that



he needs to free his friends from the base, where the paranoid military have imprisoned them. The irony is that there really is going to be an attack, and the Zeka really is behind it. For a few days, a convoy of atomic warheads is being stored in the base, en route for decommissioning. The monster is planning to break into the installation and set them off, the “friends” he would “set free.” When will the characters get wise to him? And will it be too late? The characters have to deal with a treacherous monster, paranoid locals and twitchy soldiers as the characters try to avert a minor apocalypse of their own.

• **Choices:** A throng including a Zeka character (possibly one who recently has taken a severe injury) meets another Zeka. This Child of the Bomb is planning to cause a nuclear accident on scale with the Chernobyl accident, in an area full of people who have caused the troupe’s throng a great deal of pain and injury. The other Zeka, who is powerful and deadly, approaches the throng, and asks them if they want to join him. The characters should make the right choice, but what will be the consequences of the choice? The other Zeka, a Centimanus, has Pandorans and zombies on his side. The characters could find themselves hunted, desperately trying to stop the disaster, perhaps even facing the hostility of the people they’re trying to save at the same time.

Bestowments

The unpredictable nature of the atom reflects itself in the wide variation of innate abilities that the small number of Zeky reveals.

A Zeka character, just as any Promethean, receives one Bestowment at character creation. The Zeka’s player can choose any one of these Bestowments, or create an entirely new one, using these and other Bestowments found in **Promethean: The Created** and its supplements as guidelines.

Similar to other Prometheans, a Zeka’s player can choose to buy Bestowments as Transmutations. Other Prometheans can also buy these Bestowments.

Re-Animator

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

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

Cost: 4 Pyros

Action: Instant

Transmutation Cost: Azoth x 7

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

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

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

Roll Results

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

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

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

Exceptional Success: The Promethean creates a hungry, infectious zombie whose bite has the potential to cause other humans to rise as similarly infectious zombies. This might not necessarily be a good thing. A zombie plague can quickly get out of hand.

Other Prometheans can buy this Bestowment as a Transmutation, but a Promethean character must have had some sort of exposure to dangerous radiation before his player can purchase it.

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

Looks, Brains and Everything

Each zombie created by the Re-Animator Bestowment has the following base traits:

Attributes: Power 1, Finesse 1, Resistance 2

Size: 5 (or less if the corpse is small, such as a child’s or animal’s)

Speed: Equal to the lower of Finesse or Power

Initiative: Equal to Finesse

Defense: A zombie has no survival instinct whatsoever, and doesn’t know how to block attacks or dodge. Its Defense is always 0.

Health: Equal to Resistance (**Size** doesn’t get added)

Zombies do not possess Willpower or **Morality**.



For every success the Promethean's player rolls, the player can choose to assign points on a one-for-one basis to the zombie's Attributes. For example, if the player rolls four successes, he might choose to put one in Power, one in Finesse and two in Resistance.

In combat, a radioactive zombie usually attacks with its fists, rolling Power + Finesse and inflicting bashing damage.

If the Promethean's player rolls an exceptional success on her Bestowment roll, the zombie is constantly hungry and has an infectious bite. The zombie's player adds +2 to attack dice pools and still inflicts bashing damage. Any human, werewolf or mage character killed by an infectious zombie rises as an infectious zombie in three turns. A zombie werewolf is stuck in human form and has no powers. A zombie mage has no more powers than any other corpse. A vampire destroyed by a zombie just crumbles to dust — he's dead already.

Zombies don't suffer wound penalties and can't heal damage. They take bashing, lethal and aggravated wounds in the same way as any other character, but it's impossible to incapacitate a zombie — it just keeps on going until its last Health point is lost to aggravated damage. There's never any need to roll to see if a zombie falls unconscious or starts bleeding to death. Just as with any other character, if all of a zombie's Health boxes are filled with lethal damage, any further damage upgrades to aggravated damage.

When a zombie starts taking aggravated damage, the zombie loses a body part with each wound it takes. When all of the zombie's Health boxes are filled with aggravated damage, it's completely pulverized, reduced to hunks of rotting flesh on the ground.

An active zombie continues to rot. It suffers one lethal point of damage after a number of days equal to its Resistance have passed. For example, a zombie with a Resistance of 3 takes one lethal point of rotting damage every three days. When the zombie completely falls apart, it stops moving, and the Promethean needs to find himself another body.

Zombies created by this Bestowment are extremely vulnerable to damage to the head. If a zombie suffers at least one lethal or aggravated point of damage from an attack to the head, it is destroyed instantly (aiming an attack at the head incurs a -3 dice pool penalty; see "Specified Targets," the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 165).

Victim Shadow

When the first atomic bombs fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the force of the blasts instantly annihilated those close to the blasts. All that was left of many people and objects were shadows, etched into the bricks and concrete of the cities. Today, anti-nuclear campaigners sometimes paint human silhouettes on the outer walls of buildings in cities around the world, as a reminder of what nuclear proliferation really means.

Stories surrounding the Nuclear Promethean sometimes mention these silhouettes appearing on walls where this strange, lonely Promethean has walked. One version says that the Child



of the Bomb paints these figures on to the walls of the buildings near where he makes his lair, as a warning, a unique and extreme kind of Pilgrim Mark.

Another story goes that when the Nuclear Promethean makes his lair, these figures spontaneously appear. They're a reminder, the account goes, of the people who died because of him. They follow him around.

Yet another tells of how the Nuclear Promethean can *become* an atomic shadow, burning his body into the earth and concrete so that all that's visible is a scorched silhouette.

Cost: 1 Pyros

Action: Instant

Transmutation Cost: Stamina x 7

With this Bestowment, the Promethean can vanish into the ground, with no evidence that he was ever there other than a scorched shadow burned onto the stone. The Zeka must be standing beside or lying on concrete, asphalt, brick or stone. The player rolls Stamina + Azoth.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Promethean cannot use this power again for 24 hours. The Pyros is wasted.

Failure: The Promethean cannot meld with this patch of earth, and must find another patch. The Pyros is wasted.

Success: The Promethean vanishes into the stone, becoming a vaguely humanoid scorch mark. As a shadow, the Zeka doesn't cause Disquiet or the Wasteland effect. The Zeka isn't aware of what's going on around her when she's in shadow form, although if someone approaches her who isn't a member of her Branded throng (if any) the player can roll make a reflexive roll of Wits + Azoth for the Promethean to become aware that someone is there. If she wishes to know more than that, she must change back into flesh.

Exceptional Success: The Promethean becomes a shadow in the ground, but remains aware of the immediate area (about a 10-foot radius around her). She can also see perfectly into Twilight, although she cannot interact with any ghosts or spirits that may be nearby.

A side effect of this Bestowment appears when the Wasteland of a Promethean with this Bestowment reaches the second stage, scorched nuclear shadows do indeed spontaneously appear on walls, roads and stone.

A Promethean from another Lineage who buys this power as a Transmutation takes on something of the characteristics of the nuclear shadow. A Galateid or a Tammuz takes on a scorched look when her disfigurements show. An Ulgan finds the shadows that leak from his flesh staining the edges of the joins and scars that crisscross his body. A Frankenstein or an Osiran finds that shadows gather around him more readily, even in the brightest of light.

Radioactive Affinity

The Zeki channel radiation through their bodies to heal in the same way that other Prometheans channel electricity. A Zeka with this power can also use radiation to empower herself above and beyond a simple healing of injuries.

A Zeka with this Bestowment also knows where to find the elusive radiation she needs to empower herself, becoming able to sniff out the rare source of Pyros and healing across enormous distances.

Cost: None

Action: Reflexive

Transmutation Cost: Azoth x 7

After having used radiation to heal, a Zeka with this Bestowment can continue to bathe in the energy, allowing her to regenerate Pyros, too. For each point of radioactive "damage" the fully healed Zeka takes (whether aggravated, lethal or bashing), the character gains one point of Pyros.

This power is always in effect. The player cannot choose to gain Pyros first: the radioactive "damage" first heals the character's wounds and then grants extra Pyros. The sensation of gaining power from radioactive materials is powerful and ecstatic.

Just as any other Promethean, a Zeka can't absorb more Pyros than her Azoth allows. If the radiation "damage" would supply more Pyros than the Promethean's Azoth can contain, the player must make a reflexive roll of Resolve + Composure each turn. If the roll fails, the character stays where she is, bathing in the radiation, unable to do anything other than enjoy the sensation. She's unable to use her Defense and suffers a -2 dice pool penalty to all actions.

The Promethean's player can also make a reflexive roll of Wits + Composure once per scene, allowing him to divine the direction of the nearest source of radiation within 100 miles per dot of Azoth the character possesses. It doesn't matter whether the radiation is shielded or not. It's not a matter of detecting the radiation; it's a matter of it calling to the character, speaking in his head, telling him where it is. The sure knowledge of where the radiation source is fades after a scene.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Promethean believes that the nearest source of radiation is in an entirely erroneous direction. It might not be the opposite direction: if the source is far enough away, a mistake of even a few degrees can mean a huge detour.

Failure: The Promethean can't divine the existence of any source of radiation.

Success: The Zeka knows the exact direction to travel in order to find the radiation source.

Exceptional Success: The Promethean doesn't only know the direction; he knows how far he has to travel, as well.

Prometheans of other Lineages can buy this Bestowment, but a Promethean who does becomes unable to heal wounds using electricity, only being able to heal through taking damage from radiation, just as a Zeka. In fact, any other Promethean who purchases this power becomes slightly radioactive himself, not to a dangerous extent, but enough to set off Geiger counters and other detection devices when in their proximity.

Transmutations

As mentioned above, a Zeka can choose to take Irradiation as an Affinity Transmutation list instead of one of the lists normally available to his Refinement, or, if he's practicing Centimanus, in addition to Pandoran Transmutations.



Other Prometheans can learn Irradiation Transmutations, but a non-Zeka Promethean's player must roll for Humanity loss (three dice) the first time a character uses an Irradiation Transmutation in any given scene.

Irradiation

The bomb and the Divine Fire gave the first Nuclear Promethean his power, and the Irradiation Transmutations are as much influenced by the action of the Pyros as they are by atomic energy. One theory states that the Pyros captures human imagination. If that's true, these Transmutations are evidence of that, since they capture the spirit of the nuclear age, making possible horrors that would otherwise only be the province of science fiction.

When a Promethean performs an Irradiation Transmutation, he glows slightly. Some Transmutations in the list create a brief flash of light, akin to the blue flash that occurs when two bars of radioactive metal are brought to criticality.

Flashburn (•)

A single flash of radioactive energy can give a human a sensation akin to sunburn. Similar to sunburn, the skin itches and peels, which can be distracting and uncomfortable.

Cost: 1 Pyros

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Medicine – victim's Stamina + Azoth

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Promethean wastes the Pyros and suffers the effects of the Transmutation himself, no longer benefiting from the 10 again rule on non-combat actions for a number of turns equal to his Azoth.

Failure: The Promethean fails to gain any successes. The Pyros is wasted.

Success: The target's exposed skin reddens and becomes sore. The target loses the benefit of the 10 again rule for a number of turns equal to the number of successes the player rolled.

Exceptional Success: No additional benefits.

Conceal Radiation (•)

Sometimes it serves a Zeka well to hide the fact that he, his Wasteland or something he has in his possession is radioactive. This power allows a Promethean to do just that, although it doesn't change the actual radiation that the target emits.

Cost: 1 Pyros

Dice Pool: Wits + Science

Action: Instant

The Promethean can choose one object or person (whom he must touch to activate the power) as a target for this power. Alternatively, he can use this power on his Wasteland.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The object, person or place appears more radioactive to detection equipment, perhaps danger-

ously so, although it hasn't in fact increased the amount of radiation it emits. The Pyros spent is wasted.

Failure: The Promethean fails to gain any successes. The Pyros is wasted.

Success: The target doesn't appear to be radioactive. Geiger counters, other detection equipment and Prometheans with the Radioactive Affinity Bestowment can't detect any radiation coming from the target for the rest of the scene.

Exceptional Success: The target doesn't appear to give off radiation until the following sunrise.

Suggested Modifiers: Large Wasteland (–1 per mile radius)

Reduce Radiation (• to •••)

These three Transmutations must be bought in sequence. A Promethean who knows these powers can reduce the amount of background radiation in an area or object.

A Promethean can affect an area with a radius equal to his Azoth in yards or less. Affecting a larger area imposes a –1 die modifier for every 10 yards in radius.

Cost: 1 Pyros

Dice Pool: Wits + Science

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Promethean fails so badly that for the rest of the scene, the Intensity of radiation coming from the target or target area increases by one dot. The Pyros is wasted.

Failure: The Pyros is wasted.

Success: The Promethean reduces the Intensity of radiation in the target or target area by one dot for every dot in the Transmutation. A character with more than one of these Transmutations doesn't have to use the most powerful version he has if he doesn't want to.

Exceptional Success: The Promethean reduces the radiation Intensity by an extra dot, on top of the usual reduction for success.

Blast (••)

This Transmutation gives the Promethean the power to produce a blast of radioactive energy from his hands, although at this level, the power doesn't further irradiate the target beyond the damage it does.

Cost: 1 Pyros

Dice Pool: Stamina + Azoth – victim's Stamina + Azoth

Action: Instant

The Promethean must touch the target for this power to take effect.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The power sputters and fizzles. The Promethean can't attempt to use the power again for the rest of the scene.

Failure: The Promethean fails to gain any successes. The Pyros is wasted.



Success: The Promethean causes one point of bashing damage to the target for every success rolled.

Exceptional Success: As for success, but the Promethean causes lethal damage.

Blue Flash (••)

With this Transmutation, the Promethean can create a flash of light, exactly like that created by a small criticality accident, which momentarily blinds the target.

Cost: 1 Pyros

Dice Pool: Presence + Science – victim's Stamina

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Promethean himself suffers the effects of the Transmutation.

Failure: The Promethean fails to gain any successes. The Pyros is wasted.

Success: The victim is blinded for one turn for every success the Promethean's player rolls. See "Fighting Blind," the *World of Darkness Rulebook*, p. 166, for the penalties this incurs.

Exceptional Success: No additional benefits.

Irradiate (•• to •••••)

These four Transmutations must be bought in sequence. A Promethean who knows these powers can increase the

amount of background radiation in an area or object.

A Promethean can affect an area with a radius equal to his Azoth in yards or less. Affecting a larger area imposes a –1 die modifier for every 10 yards in radius.

Cost: 1 Pyros

Dice Pool: Wits + Science

Action: Instant

The Promethean can affect an object or person of up to Size 7 without any modifier. Affecting an area becomes progressively more difficult.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Promethean fails so badly that for the rest of the scene, the Intensity of radiation coming from the target or target area reduces by one dot. The Pyros is wasted.

Failure: The Pyros is wasted.

Success: The Promethean increases the Intensity of radiation in the target or target area by up to one dot for every dot in the Transmutation, minus one (for example, the two dot version of this Transmutation increases Intensity by one dot, and so on). A character with more than one of these Transmutations doesn't have to use the most powerful version he has if he doesn't want to.

Exceptional Success: The Promethean increases the radiation Intensity by an extra dot, on top of the usual increase for success, to maximum of five dots.



Fallout(•••)

The Promethean causes a layer of radioactive gray dust to appear in the wind. The dust burns and sickens anyone it comes into contact with.

Prerequisite: Blast (••)

Cost: 1 Pyros

Dice Pool: Stamina + Science

Action: Instant

The Promethean stands at the center of the cloud of dust he creates, and is immune to the effect of his own power. The cloud has a radius equal to the character's Azoth in yards.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The dust appears in the Promethean's throat, choking him. The player misses the next turn due to coughing, and suffers a -2 dice penalty to all dice pools for a number of turns after that equal to the character's Azoth dots.

Failure: The Promethean fails to gain any successes. The Pyros is wasted.

Success: The dust causes choking and burning. It causes one point of bashing damage to everyone caught inside the cloud for every success rolled. Worse, characters without some kind of protection (and who need to breathe) choke on the dust. A character caught in the cloud loses his next action due to coughing, and suffers a -2 dice penalty to all dice pools for a number of turns after that equal to the Azoth of the Promethean.

Exceptional Success: No additional benefits.

Lord of the Roaches(•••)

Cockroaches caught in a Zeka Wasteland behave in a strange, hostile fashion. This power enables a Promethean to preempt that, calling a swarm of hostile, irradiated roaches that will attack anyone the Promethean directs it toward.

This Transmutation is similar to the "Demon's Call" Pandoran Transmutation, (see **Promethean: The Created**, p. 238), although it is easier to use and has no cost. The Promethean always calls a swarm of roaches, and there don't actually need to be roaches in the immediate area for the Transmutation to work. They just appear, crawling out of the earth. Further, the Promethean is assumed to automatically have a connection with cockroaches, and doesn't need to see one or to have had any contact with one to be able to activate this Transmutation.

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Presence + Stamina + Animal Ken

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: A two-yard swarm of roaches appear, but it attacks the Promethean.

Failure: One or two cockroaches crawl out of the ground, but no more than that. They wander off after a few seconds.

Success: The Promethean calls a swarm of roaches with a radius of one yard for every success gained (see "Swarms," **Promethean: The Created**, p. 239). The swarm follows the orders of the Pro-

methean, attacking or withdrawing at his behest until destroyed or until the end of the scene, at which point it disperses.

Exceptional Success: No further effects.

Sicken(•••)

The Promethean with this Transmutation learns how to inflict some of the symptoms of mild radiation sickness on a target. The character must touch the target to use this Transmutation.

Cost: 1 Pyros

Dice Pool: Presence + Science - victim's Stamina + Azoth

Action: Instant and Contested

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Promethean feels ill himself, and suffers a -1 die penalty to dice pools for the rest of the scene.

Failure: The Promethean fails to gain any successes. The Pyros is wasted.

Success: The victim suffers from vomiting, nausea and skin lesions. The disease causes one automatic point of bashing damage for every success the Promethean's player rolls. Once a day after that, it continues to inflict that amount of bashing damage unless the victim's player can succeed on a reflexive, extended Stamina + Resolve roll. When the victim's player has rolled a total of 15 successes, the victim has shaken the disease from his system and no longer suffers the symptoms of the disease or the damage (see "Resisting Poison and Disease," the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 49).

Exceptional Success: No additional benefits.

Swift Malignancy(••••)

With this Transmutation, the Promethean can give a living being a lethal case of cancer. The victim of this terrible power suddenly develops swiftly growing tumors all over his body.

Prerequisite: Sicken (•••)

Cost: 2 Pyros

Dice Pool: Stamina + Science vs. victim's Stamina

Action: Instant and Contested

This power works on ordinary humans, mages and werewolves, but not on vampires.

If the Promethean using this power (including a Zeka) has Humanity 4 or higher, the player must make a degeneration roll (three dice).

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Promethean's body breaks out in terrible, painful lesions. The player suffers a -1 die penalty on all dice pools for the rest of the scene.

Failure: The Promethean fails to activate the power. The Pyros is wasted.

Success: The victim suffers from a virulent, spreading long-term cancer. The victim immediately suffers one point of lethal damage for every success rolled. After that, the victim suffers the same amount of



damage once a month, unless the victim's player manages to succeed in a reflexive, extended Stamina + Resolve roll. The victim fights off the disease if the player's total successes add up to more than 30 before the victim dies *and* if the character is receiving appropriate treatment (chemo- and radiotherapy). Otherwise, the victim continues taking the damage indefinitely.

Exceptional Success: The damage inflicted on the victim by the first roll is aggravated. All subsequent damage is lethal.

Talking Tumor(•••••)

With this bizarre Transmutation, the Promethean causes a hard tumor to grow somewhere within the victim's body. Working its way to the surface, the tumor grows a mouth, through which the Promethean can talk to the target. A person who has been the recipient of this power retains traces of the contamination within himself, and becomes much easier to contact.

Cost: 1 Pyros

Dice Pool: Presence + Science vs. victim's Stamina + Azoth

Action: Instant and contested

The Promethean needs to have spoken directly to the victim at least once to be able to use this power. He doesn't need to be in the victim's presence at the moment he activates the power. If the target isn't within sight when the Promethean uses this power, he still has to be within the radius of the Promethean's Wasteland.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Promethean suddenly finds that the flesh of his own vocal cords has grown together. He's unable to talk for the rest of the scene.

Failure: The Promethean fails to gain any successes. The Pyros is wasted.

Success: The target suffers one point of aggravated damage as a small tumor grows somewhere in his body and wrenches itself free from the place where it grew. It works its way to the surface, burrowing through the flesh that nurtured it. The next turn, the Promethean can talk to the target, and can continue to talk for a number of turns equal to the number of successes rolled.

Exceptional Success: The tumor grows rudimentary eardrums, meaning that the Promethean can also hear what the target has to say.

Suggested Modifiers: Promethean can't see the target when using the power (−1), Promethean is more than a mile away from the target (−4), Promethean has used this power on the target before (+3)

Elevate Bugs(•••••)

A Promethean with this power can imbue a simple ant, termite or cockroach with enough Pyros to make it grow to an impossible size.

Prerequisite: Lord of the Roaches (•••)

Cost: 3 Pyros

Dice Pool: Presence + Animal Ken

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Promethean's Pyros surges accidentally, killing all the eligible bugs within a three-mile radius.

Failure: The Promethean fails to gain any successes. The Pyros is wasted.

Success: The bug grows to enormous size, and will obey one simple command from the Promethean (usually "Attack!"). The giant bug dies at the end of the scene. This has its own consequences, as giant bugs, even dead ones, create a great deal of comment. Prudent Prometheans destroy or hide the corpses of the giant bugs they make.

Exceptional Success: The bug obeys every command the Promethean gives.

THEM!

Giant bugs have the following Traits:

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 0, Wits 1, Resolve 0

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5

Social Attributes: Presence 0, Manipulation 0, Composure 0

Skills: Brawl 1, Survival 1

Willpower: 0

Initiative: 3

Defense: 3

Speed: 11 (species factor 5)

Size: 5

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
------	--------	-----------

Mantibles	2 (L)	6
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Health: 10

Homunculus(•••••)

This is the same as the four-dot "Metamorphosis" Transmutation (see **Promethean: The Created**, p. 133).

Brain Blight(•••••)

The Promethean with this Transmutation can cause a tumor to bond with his victim's brain. The tumor grows a



sort of supplementary brain of its own, which seizes control of the victim's higher functions. The tumor shows up on x-rays as a tumor of a size that should, by rights, kill the target.

The victim becomes the Promethean's slave, having no choice but to obey the Promethean's commands. Similar to the "Talking Tumor" Transmutation, this power leaves a residue behind, allowing the Promethean to seize control of the unfortunate far more easily on subsequent occasions.

The Promethean must be able to talk with the victim when using this power, either directly, over the phone or through the "Talking Tumor" Transmutation. It's almost as if the Promethean using this power *convinces* the brain to grow the mind-controlling cancer, coaxing the organ to mutate.

Prerequisite: Talking Tumor (....)

Cost: 1 Pyros

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Science vs. victim's Resolve + Azoth

Action: Instant and Contested

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Promethean accidentally inflicts the effects of the power on himself. He falls unconscious, and cannot be roused for the rest of the scene.

Failure: The Promethean fails to gain any successes. The Pyros is wasted.

Success: The Promethean causes the tumor to grow and bond with the victim's brain, causing the victim one automatic point of aggravated damage. For the rest of the scene, the victim obeys any commands given by the Promethean (except for clearly suicidal ones — the tumor has a survival instinct, too). The victim appears sluggish and dazed. He can use Skills if necessary, but suffers a -2 dice penalty to all dice pools. When the scene is over, the tumor shrinks back into the brain and the victim regains his faculties, but has no memory of what happened while the Promethean was controlling him. If a former victim of this power ever undergoes a brain scan, he looks as if he's undergone some sort of trauma or surgery in the past, likely puzzling any doctor who sees it.

Exceptional Success: The tumor bonds perfectly, and although the victim is in the Promethean's thrall, he appears to be behaving perfectly normally and suffers no dice pool penalties.

Suggested Modifiers: Promethean has used this power on the target before (+3)

Azothic Bomb (.....)

With this most awful of powers, the Promethean directs his Azoth toward creating the central reaction in a small radioactive explosion, turning himself into a miniature atomic bomb.

Prerequisites: Fallout (....), Irradiate (....)

Cost: 5 Pyros

Dice Pool: Stamina + Science

Action: Instant

The explosion has a radius of three yards for every dot of Azoth the character has.

If the character's Azoth isn't high enough to allow him to spend five points of Pyros in one turn, he must wait for the reaction to build up, spending points of Pyros each turn until he's spent five. He can't perform any other action while doing this, and if injured while building up the reaction, the Transmutation fails and the Pyros already spent is wasted.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The reaction happens *inside* the Promethean. He takes a number of points of aggravated damage equal to his Azoth.

Failure: The Promethean fails to gain any successes. The reaction fizzles, and the Pyros is wasted.

Success: Everyone (except the Promethean) caught inside the explosion automatically takes one point of lethal damage for every success rolled. Being caught inside the explosion requires a Stamina + Resolve roll to remain conscious. Furthermore, the area becomes radioactive in the following turn, and remains radioactive for one week per dot of Azoth the character possesses. The background radiation has Intensity ... and damage equal to the Promethean's Azoth.

Exceptional Success: The same as success, except that the damage caused is aggravated.

Antagonists, Allies and Other Horrors

The Zeky have terrible powers, and can be possessed of equally terrible motives. But they can just as easily be tragic or noble figures. Hardship doesn't have to make someone a beast.

A Zeka Centimanus could well be a zombie-creating force of anti-nature, a vast, near-unstoppable evil standing just at the edge of the chronicle, a murdering, sociopathic horror who stands at the center of a fallout-covered wilderness. Tsar Bomba serves that purpose. His hulking presence in a chronicle promises violence, weirdness and horror. Few throngs of Prometheans could hope to defeat him in a flat-out battle. Although insane, he's capable of subtlety, too, using agents to pursue an awful, if limited, agenda.

But then, a Zeka could be a different sort of sociopath, a Machiavellian figure, still bent on destruction, but able to hide among people and use considerable resources to manipulate criminal and governmental figures into making a terrible, terrible mistake that could cost millions of lives. Oleg Wormwood is an example of this. He's rich and well-connected, and if people are scared of him, why shouldn't they be? He can end dozens of lives with a snap of his fingers, if he thinks it's necessary. Such a figure as Oleg could be the nemesis of not only a throng of Prometheans, but groups of vampires, werewolves, mages and even human investigators.

A Zeka doesn't have to be a villain. Take, for example, the lonely, screwed-up individual who's practicing Centimanus



because she doesn't know what else to do. She falls in with a throng of Prometheans, perhaps even becoming a shaky ally for a while. Can the throng trust her? Will she sell them out? A Storyteller character like this is a tragic individual, as, perhaps despite herself, she ends up betraying the troupe's characters. The Skin Girl, Tsar Bomba's creation and unfortunate dupe, is a perfect example of this kind of character. She's well on the way to becoming a monster herself, and even she doesn't know if it's too late. The vast, spreading evil of her creator sucks her in, and she'll need help to escape from his control. Even then, what's to say she won't turn on her saviors?

A Zeka could also offer a lesson in tragedy, showing that even one of these creatures can embark on the Pilgrimage. But is it even possible? Does a Promethean on the Pilgrimage have a hope of humanity, and even if she does, what would be the consequences? A character such as Windscale could play a part in a story addressing the difficulty of gaining Humanity. A throng of Prometheans who learn the answers to the conundrum could find themselves achieving milestones of their own.

Windscale

Quote: "Can't stay here. You're not welcome. Land doesn't want you."

Background: Windscale came to herself in the middle of a fire. There was no one else around. She remembers bathing in radiation for days, and she remembers being followed by shadows, even when the light didn't seem to allow for them.

When the fire died down, she left the reactor and began to travel, learning something about humanity and deciding that she desperately wanted it.

Eventually she wound up in Cumbria, England, at about the time of the Windscale power station accident. She became quite fond of the place, as time went on, and when the facility was renamed Sellafield, she took the name "Windscale" as her own, reasoning that since the station wasn't using it, she would. She's been here, on and off, for 30 years, and although she does her best to mitigate the damage she's done to the region, the land has soured.

She knows that she's poisoning the land, and she knows that Humanity is something she desperately wants. She even knows how to get there, having conversed at length one day with a strange pair of Prometheans, a man with rock salt skin and a patchwork nun, who passed through the blasted patch of English countryside she calls her home.

Windscale has stayed where she is for some time now, and has more or less stalled in her Pilgrimage. She knows what to do, but she's scared. She's afraid to inflict another creature like herself onto the world, and she's afraid that stoking the fire within her would further damage the countryside she loves. She loves the bleak, rocky fells more than she can put into words.

Description: Windscale appears to be a rail-thin, hard-faced woman in her 40s. She's thin-lipped and flint-eyed and rarely smiles. Her hair is dead straight. It's curiously colorless, and it falls to her shoulders. Windscale speaks with a Cumbrian accent.



Her voice has a grating quality that makes it difficult to listen to her speak for long. She wears faded combat fatigues and worn army boots.

When her disfigurements show, Windscale can be seen to have no skin. Her flesh, covered with scabs and rents, bleeds and weeps when she moves.

Storytelling Hints: Windscale appears to be utterly humorless and forbidding. In fact, she's desperately lonely. Her attitude toward other Prometheans is ambivalent, to say the least. On the one hand, she doesn't want them here. They'll make the land worse than she has. On the other, she's desperate to know more about the Pilgrimage.

She'll approach any throng that passes through her land, perhaps even aiding the Prometheans in whatever conflict they're bound up in, if only to get them off her precious fells.

Lineage: Zeka

Refinement: Cuprum

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 2, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Crafts (Woodcraft) 3, Science 3

Physical Skills: Athletics (Hiking) 1, Larceny (Breaking and Entering) 1, Stealth 3, Survival (Countryside) 4

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Insects) 2, Empathy 1, Expression 1, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 2, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Eidetic Memory, Unpalatable Aura

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 8

Virtue: Temperance

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 5



Defense: 2

Speed: 9

Health: 7

Azoth: 2

Transmutations: *Irradiation* — Reduce Radiation (•); *Metamorphosis* — Mask of Medusa (•); *Sensorium* — Sensitive Ears (•)

Bestowment: Victim Shadow

Pyros/per Turn: 11/2

The Skin Girl

Quote: “Don’t make no difference to me what you do. I ain’t moving. Got nowhere to go.”

Background: The Skin Girl’s first memory is of waking and staring into the shadowed eyes of her creator. She screamed, and screamed and screamed, and the monster, her own Old Man, he just shrugged and picked her up and threw her into a concrete room with hair and body fluids all over the floor.

She knew what he had done. She knew somehow that the thing had murdered the body she was using. The monster told her about what she was, and he told her that she was like him.

After a few weeks, he left her there in the bunker, to make her own way.

She hasn’t done all that well. The headaches never go away. She has dreams of faces, running on the track, camping, cycling, a boyfriend, a family she never had. No matter where she goes, the monster is there, and it’s not even as if he’s following her. She just always seems to find her way back to him.

It’s beginning to weigh on her. Every time she finds some kind of friend, every time she gets a break, there he is to drag her right back down, and he puts his fingers in her head and then . . . and then there’s nothing. She’s his, and she’s no more than one of the dead men and the walking cancers, a toy. She’d do anything to be rid of him, but when he’s there, she can’t even think, let alone plot his demise.

Description: The Skin Girl is a pale, short, slightly stocky young woman in her late teens. Her brown eyes are wide, giving her a slightly startled look. Although otherwise quite pretty, she’s got the symptoms of full-body alopecia: there isn’t a single hair anywhere on her body. She doesn’t even have eyebrows or eyelashes. Her voice is high-pitched, and she talks with a Texas accent.

When her disfigurements reveal themselves, her skin becomes transparent, revealing the movement of blood and muscle in her flesh, and laying bare the network of silvery wires that run under her skin. Here and there — at her left temple, her wrists, her right shoulder, her collarbone — the wires run together, joining at sockets, electronic terminals and metal studs that erupt from ragged, gangrenous rents in her flesh. Her eyes become very dark, so that pupil and iris are a single dull black disc.

Storytelling Hints: The Skin Girl is deeply insecure. She believes that nothing she does will work out. She’s given herself over to the Refinement of Flux, but she’s just going with the flow. She hides her terror of the world under a thin veneer of



cynicism and worldliness, but, just as any other cynical, supposedly self-reliant teenager, she isn’t very convincing, and should she meet another Promethean, she quickly takes on the role of little sister.

She’s terrified of her creator, and hates him more than any other thing on the planet, but if he’s near, she will not hesitate to sell any friends she has to him, though she hates herself for it.

In the end, although she would like to be a better person, the Skin Girl is weak-willed, selfish and cowardly. She likes people, but won’t stand up for them if she’ll be endangered, and lets friends and strangers die rather than stick her neck out for them. She’ll kill people who show her kindness for a meal or a handful of cash, and she’ll hate herself afterwards, although she doesn’t care quite as much as she did when she was first made.

Lineage: Zeka

Refinement: Centimanus

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 1

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 1

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Computer 2, Investigation 2, Medicine (First Aid) 1, Science 1

Physical Skills: Athletics (Sprinting) 2, Drive 1, Firearms 1, Larceny 1, Stealth 3, Survival 3

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Expression 2, Persuasion (Whining) 2

Merits: Eidetic Memory, Residual Memory (Academics, Medicine, Athletics) 3, Strong Back, Unpalatable Aura

Willpower: 2

Humanity: 5 (Inferiority Complex, Submission when in presence of her creator)

Virtue: Charity

Vice: Gluttony

Initiative: 4

Defense: 3

Speed: 10

Health: 8

Azoth: 1

Transmutations: *Irradiation* — Conceal Radiation (•), Flashburn (•), Blue Flash (••); *Deception* — Chameleon Skin (•)

Bestowments: Radioactive Affinity

Pyros/per Turn: 10/1

Oleg Wormwood

Quote: *"In this world, my friend, there's always someone prepared to buy and sell. If the price is right."*

Background: Oleg doesn't know where he came from or who made him. He awoke on April 30, 1986. He was lying in a cellar, in a deserted house, in the middle of the town of Prip'yat, and all he knew was that there was a fire raging and that he needed to go there.

Most of the people in the town had gone by then. The whole area was a mess of army men and ambulances and firefighters. But somehow, finding his way through the chaos, the newly awakened Promethean found his way into the wreckage of the Chernobyl reactor and bathed in the radiation.

It was later that he learned what had caused the disaster, and by that time he'd somehow managed to find a way into the lower ranks of the Kiev Organyzatsia. No one liked him much (or at all, in fact), but he killed enough men to carve out a reputation for himself, and he was smart and eloquent. If people were scared of him, he capitalized on it enough to make himself a feared figure, never quite sticking around long enough to make things difficult. If the city got a bit unhealthy that year, well, the wind was blowing from Chernobyl.

When he moved to Russia, his enemies and colleagues slept a whole lot more easily. As the communist system collapsed into chaos, the mobs moved in and soon, it became impossible to tell the politicians, the criminals and the KGB men apart.

Although the movies might present it differently, in the mob, human affection doesn't have much influence. Living in a world where human interaction meant little, compounded with the disintegration of the Soviet Union meant that almost without even trying, Oleg found himself in the right place in the right time, and had made his first million.

One million led to another. Armed with contacts and an unerring ability to know when to move on before Disquiet caused mass panic, Oleg got richer without ever making a friend. He regained his Pyros and healed himself through various means. Over a space of 10 years, a huge number of hospitals in the former Soviet Union suffered break-ins and vandalism committed against x-ray and radiotherapy devices, for example. Simple proximity to people kept the Divine Fire burning. As a result, a frightening proportion of those women in several Russian cities who would have been counted among the better class of prostitute have cancers of some kind.

Oleg's in the arms trade now. He used a plethora of surnames for years. One day an American contact, an arms dealer who

happened to be a Christian fundamentalist, told him quite erroneously that "Chernobyl" was Ukrainian for "Wormwood," and that the Wormwood Star was the Book of Revelation's symbol for a nuclear holocaust. To the American, the Chernobyl disaster was a sign of the End Times. The American was of the opinion that hastening the world's end was only a good thing. Oleg was unsure of the American's religious beliefs, but liked the connotation of Wormwood and has since adopted it as his name in most of his business dealings.

Oleg's goal is coming closer. Ever since his exposure to the Chernobyl fire, Oleg has dreamed of seeing it again. He pictures Europe and America on fire. He imagines black rain and radioactive dust settling across the world, his own private paradise. He's currently in the middle of dealings with individuals who have access to an installation where he can manufacture weapons-grade plutonium. Meanwhile, he's working on elements in the governments of both India and Pakistan who would like nothing better than to wipe their hated neighbor off the face of the Earth. And he's got a dozen more irons, warming in the fire.

Description: Oleg appears as a tall, cadaverous man in his 40s with cropped gray hair and a salt-and-pepper goatee. His skin is pockmarked and blotchy. He smiles a lot, but his smiles don't always go all the way up to eyes hidden behind expensive sunglasses. He wears incredibly expensive suits, and has heavy gold rings on every one of his fingers. He speaks all of his many languages with a heavy Ukrainian accent.

When his disfigurements are showing, Oleg's skin appears covered with burn scars, except for his face, where he has no skin at all. His face is simply a skull, with only a few shreds of flesh and tendon holding in his eyeballs and surrounding his mouth. In the dark, it's vaguely phosphorescent.

Storytelling Hints: Oleg is charming and personable, and when Disquiet hits, his charm makes him all the more sinister. In





truth, he doesn't really value anyone. When he talks, he weasels information out of the people he meets, in an attempt to find out something he can use. He doesn't waste his time with people who have nothing he can make capital from.

He's never met another Promethean. If he does meet a throng, he'll probably at first be intensely curious. Once he figures out that the Prometheans are like him, he'll cautiously try to sound out whether they would be on his side or not, either through agents, or some other means, such as telephone or email. He'll likely only arrange a meeting if they're amenable to his plan for Armageddon. If they're not, he'll see them as a threat and use his contacts to take steps to get them out of his way.

Lineage: Zeka

Refinement: Centimanus

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Computer 1, Occult (Urban Myths) 1, Politics (Arms Trade, Western and Eastern European Criminal Politics) 4, Science (Fission Science, Plutonium Manufacture) 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl (Beat Downs) 2, Drive 3, Firearms (9 mm Auto, Sniper Rifle) 3, Larceny 3, Stealth (Concealment) 1, Survival 1, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Expression 2, Intimidation (Threats) 4, Persuasion (Charm) 3, Socialize 1, Streetwise (Criminal Connections) 3, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Contacts (Arms Trade, International Criminal Connections, Russian and Ukrainian Organizatzia), Languages (English, French, German, Russian, Spanish, Portuguese; Oleg's native language is Ukrainian), Resources 5

Willpower: 5

Humanity: 4

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Greed

Initiative: 6

Defense: 4

Speed: 12

Health: 7

Azoth: 2

Transmutations: *Irradiation* — Conceal Radiation (•), Reduce Radiation (•), Flash Burn (•), Blue Flash (••), Sicken (••), Fallout (•••), Lord of the Roaches (•••); *Mesmerism* — Flight Instinct (•), Suggestion (••)

Bestowment: Re-Animator

Pyros/per Turn: 11/2

Tsar Bomba

Quote: "Hold still."

Background: Even if Tsar Bomba is the Progenitor of a line, he was not the first Nuclear Promethean. He was the first to be called Zeka, certainly. For some years, "Zeka" was the only name he had.

In Mary Shelley's account, Victor Frankenstein only realized the mistake he'd made when his monster opened his eyes. Up to that point, Dr. Frankenstein had been convinced that he was laboring on perfection. When the creature arose, the beauty of Dr. Frankenstein's dream vanished. Breathless horror and disgust filled his heart. It wasn't like that with Elizarov. The doctor knew, long before the spark of life ever entered into his creation, his *zeka*, that what he was doing was wrong in every conceivable way. He still carried on. It was a compulsion, as if some outside force was driving him to complete this horror. The horror of the thing he created, then, came as no surprise to the doctor. That same breathless horror and disgust consumed him from the beginning of his very first experiment, and yet he could do nothing to stop himself from making his monster.

It was as if the creature was commanding that he be made.

There was an irony, then, in Elizarov naming his creation "Zeka," and it was not lost on the creature. He was convinced from the beginning that he was made to rule, made to control and command.

After his escape, the creature traveled for a while. Although he never strayed too far from Novaya Zemlya, he began to find his way around human communities. Unlike Frankenstein's creation, Zeka never really tried to make friends or elicit sympathy. He just watched and learned. He decided early on that he had no wish to become human. He preferred the power, the lack of fragility. The inevitable result of this choice was the swift embarkation down the road of the sociopath.

To his frustration, the monster couldn't control the humans. Although convinced of his superhuman condition, the only emotion he could elicit in them was terror, and although it served him at times, it made it impossible for him to really command them. His yearning to rule was thwarted over and over again. Although he later learned how to enslave others to his will through the influence of the Pyros on human brain tissue, he could not make it last, and commanding one human at a time was a poor substitute for rulership.

A few years after his creation, the Soviet government detonated a 100-megaton bomb. The foreign media called the bomb "Tsar Bomba"—King Bomb. The creature knew that it had been made. He could feel its raw destructive power calling out to him. He broke into the installation where it had been built, and, meeting the bomb, had a something akin to a religious experience. He realized that his purpose was akin to the bomb's. He was made to destroy. He was destined to rule, but the world he was to reign over would be the world after the bombs had fallen. The humans, in his estimation, were cattle. He found that he could use their flesh to grow cancerous Pandorans and re-animate their corpses as silent, hollow slaves. They were his raw material. There were other Prometheans, some of which he had created. They would be part of his post-world order, or they would feed it.

He took the name Tsar Bomba as his own. He's convinced that he is the chosen vehicle of fate, destined to rule the Earth when human life has finally been eradicated.



Description: Tsar Bomba appears as a vast, leathery-skinned man, nearly seven feet tall and enormously fat. He seems to burst out of his practical, hard-wearing clothes. No matter where he is or how bright the light is, shadows seem to gather around his face, making it difficult to see what he actually looks like.

When his disfigurements are visible, this effect is compounded: darkness wreathes his entire body, seeming almost tangible. He literally darkens any room he enters. What little of his skin that's visible under the shadows seems to be covered with lesions and scabs.

Tsar Bomba's voice is a high tenor, quiet and clear, no matter what language he's speaking in. He's capable of being extremely eloquent, but most of the time, he doesn't say much.

Storytelling Hints: Tsar Bomba is, of course, utterly mad. It's just about conceivable that his apocalyptic dream could be achieved, but Tsar Bomba overestimates his own powers. He believes that the radiation speaks to him. He hears voices in his sleep. Everything he sees is imbued with a meaning. In his own view of the world, he is central to the grand plan of fate. Because of this, he's lazy. He doesn't try all that hard to pursue his dream, because he thinks that fate will contrive to make it happen. He's capable of truly awful deeds, but the things he does, although horrendous, are not steps toward the final destruction of life on Earth.

Tsar Bomba's crimes are all the more vile because they are, in the final analysis, banal and pointless. For example, he might slaughter every single human working at a power station and bring the reactor to critical mass. But then, he just sits there, wallowing in the radiation and reviving the unfortunate staff as zombies and Pandorans. He holds court there for a while, convinced that he's master of the whole nation, surrounded by silent, monstrous flunkies, and that's all he does. His delusion is actually supported by human authorities, who inevitably evacuate the area and cordon it off. He sits where he is, and in a limited way, is terribly dangerous. Prometheans entering into his circle of power could well end up as a source of Vitriol for him and food



for his Pandorans. On the other hand, he might stop and talk before eating them. It depends on what the voices have been saying to him. Falling into his clutches is likely lethal and he possesses tremendous power, but nevertheless, his grand plans mostly work out as smaller, unimaginative atrocities.

Tsar Bomba is not the harbinger of the end of the world. He's just sick. But being who he is, he's never going to get help and he is far too dangerous to be pathetic.

Lineage: Zeka

Refinement: Centimanus

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Computer 1, Crafts 1, Investigation 2, Science (Atom Bomb) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl (Enormous Fists) 5, Stealth (Hide in Shadows) 3, Survival (Desert, Nuclear Wastelands) 5

Social Skills: Animal Ken 1, Intimidation (Instill Fear) 3

Merits: Direction Sense, Giant, Languages (English, Polish, French; Tsar Bomba's native language is Russian), Repute 3, Unpalatable Aura

Willpower: 7

Humanity: 2 (Paranoia, Megalomania, Schizophrenia)

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Sloth

Initiative: 7

Defense: 2

Speed: 13

Health: 10

Azoth: 8

Transmutations: *Irradiation* — Conceal Radiation (•), Flash-burn (•), Blue Flash (••), Irradiate (••••), Blast (••), Sicken (•••), Fallout (•••), Lord of the Roaches (•••), Talking Tumor (••••), Elevate Bugs (••••), Brain Blight (•••••), Azothic Bomb (•••••); *Pandoran* — Demon's Call (••), Flux Within the Shade (••), Clockwork Servant (•••), Mantle of Lordship (•••••); *Vitality* — Fist of Talos (•), Might (••), Bludgeon (••), Defenestrating Blow (•••)

Bestowments: Radioactive Affinity, Re-Animator, Unholy Strength

Pyros/per Turn: 30/8

How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb(a)

Tsar Bomba and Oleg Wormwood have the same goal. The difference is that Oleg has the means to actually achieve it. He could actually bring about a final nuclear holocaust. On the other hand, he's in a really shaky position. He's got money and contacts, but no friends. A clever group of characters, whether Promethean or otherwise, could bring Oleg down. It needs brains and effort, but Oleg can be stopped.

Tsar Bomba, on the other hand, is living a pipe dream. He might claim that he's going to create a new holocaust, but in fact he's no more than the Promethean equivalent of a very sick man with a very big gun. Although the danger he poses to the world is less than that posed by Oleg, Tsar Bomba is much harder to stop, and much more dangerous to an individual or to a throng of Prometheans.

Carcinomas (Zeka Mockery)

Exposure to radiation causes cancers to grow on flesh. The radioactive Pyros that animates the Zeka has terrible risks, and if, by design or accident, a Zeka's creation stalls and a Pandoran results, a creature that is wholly tumor results, a thing of hard, crawling flesh without bone or sinew, just an animate, hungry cancer. Usually, they appear to be shapeless, eyeless lumps of flesh with toothless, sucking mouths. Sometimes they take the forms of little misshapen humanoid figures, or might even take on a vaguely insectoid form with an uneven number of legs and fleshy mandibles. Whatever form they take, they never have eyes.

Pandorans rarely show intelligence, but the Carcinomas are particularly mindless, brainless things that show no guile, throwing themselves hungrily at their prey with no finesse and no regard for survival. Only when a stronger directs them do they behave with anything approaching cunning.

Dormant Form: When dormant, the Carcinomas meld into stone, concrete, brick or asphalt, becoming scorched nuclear silhouettes, albeit distorted ones, in much the same way as a Promethean with the Victim Shadow Bestowment.

Bestowment: Carcinomas have the Radioactive Affinity Bestowment. Similar to the Zeky, Carcinomas cannot recover damage from electricity, instead healing through exposure to dangerous radiation.

Sublimati: Carcinoma *Sublimati* are quite possibly the strangest creatures anyone could ever hope not to meet. Although intelligent, their motives and actions are utterly alien. They simply make no sense at all, sometimes pursuing a goal with terrible conviction one moment and utterly ignoring it the next. They're as unpredictable and as uncertain as the atomic fission that created them.

Weakness: The Carcinomas are always blind, and although they can hear, taste and smell, they don't have any really superior senses to make up for the deficiency. If a character stands still and makes no sound, a Carcinoma's player must make a Wits + Composure roll with a -3 dice pool penalty to be able to figure out where the character is.

The Things from the Vats

Quote: <a brief sucking noise>

Background: A Promethean attempts to create another of his own. He immerses a corpse in a vat of pitchblende, imbuing the radioactive material with Azoth. Something goes wrong. The



flesh sloughs off the bones, reforming itself into a thing not unlike a huge fleshy caterpillar. It crawls from the vat. Another follows. And another. The creator tries to fight them off, fails.

Sated, they crawl back, leaving the remains of their creator to rot.

Description: The creatures appear as dark pink fleshy caterpillars, traveling on dozens of tiny, footless legs. Each has a sucking mouth at one end, surrounded by folds of slightly lighter, wrinkled flesh.

Storytelling Hints: The vat is long gone, but three of these creatures still lie in wait. The Things from the Vat currently lie melded into the concrete of the cellar. When something comes near that they can eat, they attack, crawling mindlessly at a frightening speed for the nearest source of Pyros and Vitriol.

All three have the same Traits.

Mockery: Carcinoma

Rank: 1

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 0, Wits 2, Resolve 1

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 0, Manipulation 0, Composure 4

Mental Skills: None

Physical Skills: Brawl (Sucking Mouth) 2, Stealth 4

Social Skills: None

Willpower: 5

Vice: Gluttony

Initiative: 6

Defense: 2

Speed: 11

Size: 3

Health: 7

Transmutations: *Pandoran* — Small Stature (•), Scurry (•), Balsam Flesh (••)

Bestowment: Radioactive Affinity

Pyros/per Turn: 10/1

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Mouth	1(L)	6

Sublimatus: The Kaiju of Nagasaki

Quote: <silence>

Background: The myths about this creature abound. It's almost as well-known as some of its Promethean betters.

It might perhaps be the *Hibakusha*'s failed attempt at making another one of her own. It might have been created by another like her. Whatever happened, it exists, with an army of Pandoran slaves of its own, a faceless atomic fiend with no hope of redemption.

Description: It appears as a tall, hugely muscled man, naked from the waist up. In its stomach, a wide lateral scar sometimes opens up, revealing an enormous, ragged-toothed mouth with a long prehensile tongue. Sometimes its arms bend in ways they shouldn't — it has no bones. Although it looks like a man, it's made entirely of rock-hard flesh and muscle. It has no head. Instead, a riveted, sharp-edged cube of rusty steel sits on its neck. When the *Kaiju* uses its power to grow to enormous size (befitting the name, a Japanese word usually translated as "monster"), the cube doesn't grow with it.

Storytelling Hints: The *Kaiju* doesn't just eat: it creates bizarre, dreamlike horrors, gardens of unearthly disgust, using its Pandoran followers and the unfortunate bodies of its victims to create vile, perverse tableaux. Its slaves manifest all manner of tentacles, mouths in odd places and teeth where there should be no teeth. To fall into the clutches of any Pandoran is bad

enough, but to fall into the hands of the *Kaiju* is to face an end as long and imaginative as it is painful and degrading.

Mockery: Carcinoma (*Sublimatus*)

Rank: 4

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 1, Composure 5

Mental Skills: Investigation 1, Science 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl (Strikes) 3, Stealth 3, Survival 1

Social Skills: Animal Ken 1, Intimidation 4

Merits: Strong Back

Willpower: 8

Vice: Lust

Initiative: 8

Defense: 3

Speed: 13

Size: 6

Health: 9

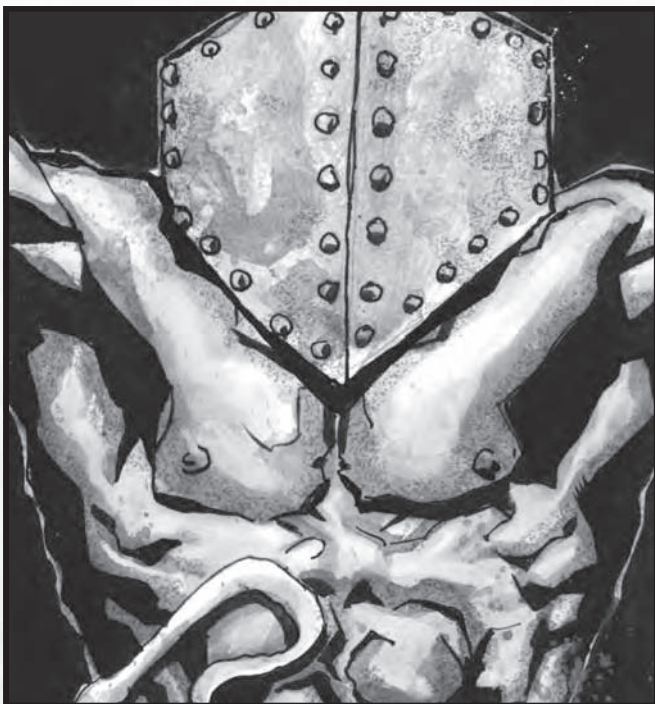
Transmutations: *Pandoran* — Bizarre Weaponry (Fangs ••), Flux Within the Shade (••), Frog Tongue (••), Great Stature (••), Perfected Bezoar — Blunt Weapons (••), Malleate Flesh (••••), Titanic Form (•••••), Mantle of Lordship (•••••)

Bestowment: Radioactive Affinity

Pyros/per Turn: 17/4

Weapons/Attacks

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Fists	0 (B)	9
Tongue	0(B)	8
Mouth	2(L)	10



Rumors — Nuclear Prometheans

• “We’re all Nuclear Prometheans. It what we were all supposed to be. We just don’t know it yet. We can all become radioactive, if we know the way. We’re not supposed to be human at all. That’s actually the *failure* of the Pilgrimage. We’re intended to be the harbingers of the world’s end. Only the Children of the Bomb really understand that.”

• “A Nuclear Promethean doesn’t become human when he reaches the end of his Pilgrimage. He explodes, with the force of a fifty-megaton bomb. You must never, ever allow one to become even close to the end. It could mean the end of us all.”

• “Any of us can create a Nuclear Promethean. They’re not a Lineage. They’re a mistake, or maybe a design. We just need to be there in the fire of the bomb.”

CHAPTER FOUR

STORYTELLING

XIII. I John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation

John awakens in the soft ash, unable to ascertain which way is down, unable to figure out where the light has gone. He finds it comforting. The taste of ash in his mouth is by no means unfamiliar.

He doesn't know how he gets to the surface. He fights against the ash and rubble for hours, flailing and burrowing and pushing, and then suddenly his hand meets no resistance, comes out in air. He pushes some more, and finally, squinting, groping into the air, he is free, head and shoulders and hands in moonlight. He drags himself to the surface, turns over, lies on his back panting in the night air.

He's naked. The earth that covers his skin has, in part, in small patches here and there, turned to black glass. He sees a patch on the back of his hand, glinting as it reflects the stars. It hurts a little.

But he is alive. He died. And he is alive. Not, he thinks, in a third-day miracle kind of way. Not as an atonement or sign. But because Heaven has rejected him. The Almighty saw John waiting at those pearly gates and sent him right back down again. There is no grace for John Ash. Salvation is for God's creation. John Ash is not counted as part of God's creation. In that, at least, the Skin Girl was right.

John sits in the middle of a crater that looks like it's a half-mile wide or more. There are isolated bits of blackened wreckage here and there, but nothing that looks like a building, or a lab, or anything that was here before.

He wonders if the Skin Girl survived this. He remembers the look in her eyes when she gave him to the corpses, and he wonders what the big, wide man did to her, how he made her do what she did. And then John wonders if he made it out, too. John gets the terracettes on his arms again. The gooseflesh prickles as it rubs against little shards of glass, embedded in his skin.

He remembers what she said, as he rubs his forearms: "It mightn't hurt you, but it'd stick to you, and you'd carry it round with you wherever you went. You'd make things even sicker than you do already, and you couldn't make it better by just going away."

If it's true, it's true. But how will he know? John shrugs. Best to take it as it comes.

He'll sit here for an hour or two, but then he's leaving here. He's going to get out of this place. He's going to head north, for Truth or Consequences.

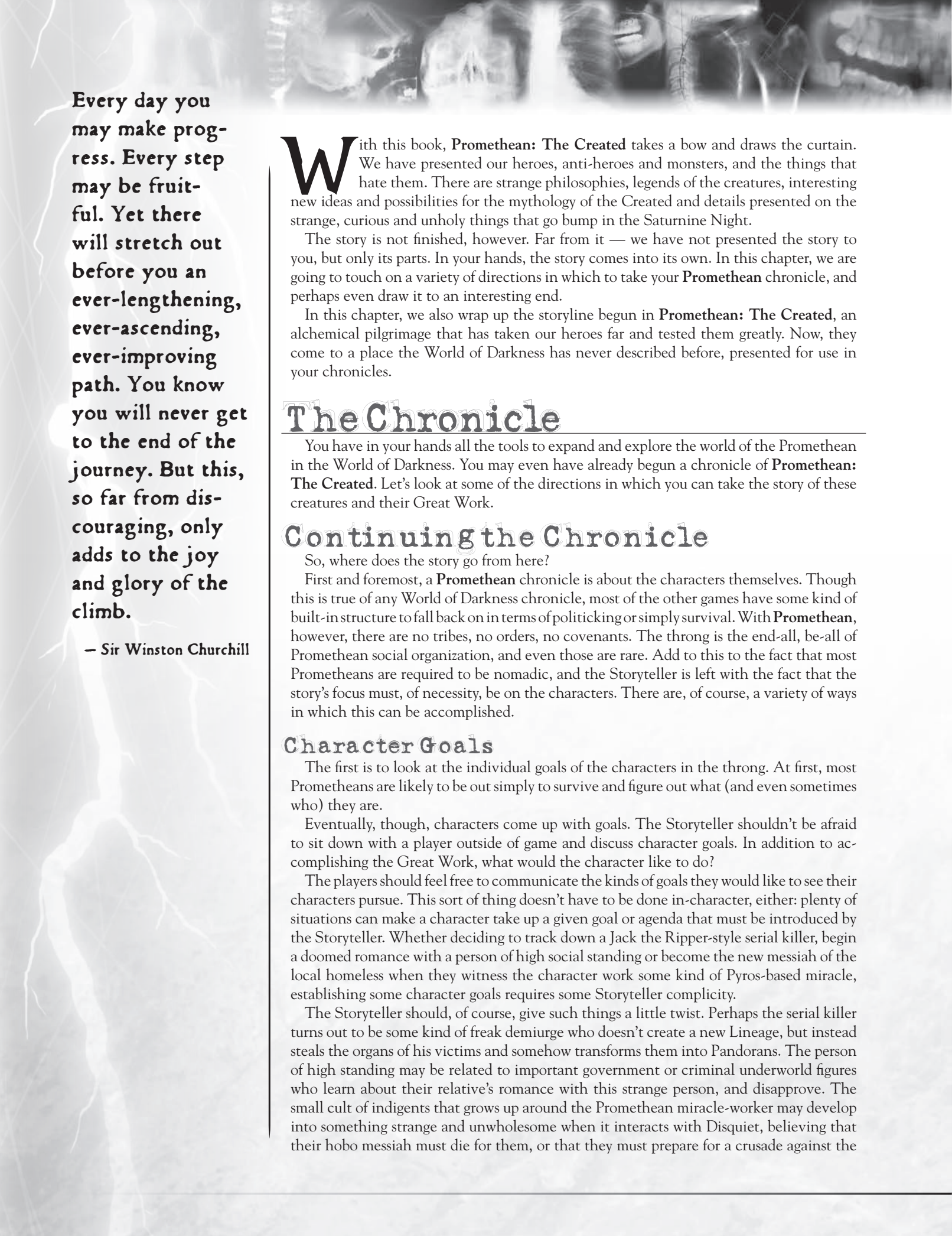
He shrugs, lets out a single, sad sort of laugh, says out loud to no one in particular, "Heh. Truth or Consequences."

The stars go out, one by one, above his head as the clouds roll in. It's going to be a long, dark night.

But it can't last forever.

-transcribed from the account of John Ash





Every day you may make progress. Every step may be fruitful. Yet there will stretch out before you an ever-lengthening, ever-ascending, ever-improving path. You know you will never get to the end of the journey. But this, so far from discouraging, only adds to the joy and glory of the climb.

— Sir Winston Churchill

With this book, **Promethean: The Created** takes a bow and draws the curtain. We have presented our heroes, anti-heroes and monsters, and the things that hate them. There are strange philosophies, legends of the creatures, interesting new ideas and possibilities for the mythology of the Created and details presented on the strange, curious and unholy things that go bump in the Saturnine Night.

The story is not finished, however. Far from it — we have not presented the story to you, but only its parts. In your hands, the story comes into its own. In this chapter, we are going to touch on a variety of directions in which to take your **Promethean** chronicle, and perhaps even draw it to an interesting end.

In this chapter, we also wrap up the storyline begun in **Promethean: The Created**, an alchemical pilgrimage that has taken our heroes far and tested them greatly. Now, they come to a place the World of Darkness has never described before, presented for use in your chronicles.

The Chronicle

You have in your hands all the tools to expand and explore the world of the Promethean in the World of Darkness. You may even have already begun a chronicle of **Promethean: The Created**. Let's look at some of the directions in which you can take the story of these creatures and their Great Work.

Continuing the Chronicle

So, where does the story go from here?

First and foremost, a **Promethean** chronicle is about the characters themselves. Though this is true of any World of Darkness chronicle, most of the other games have some kind of built-in structure to fall back on in terms of politicking or simply survival. With **Promethean**, however, there are no tribes, no orders, no covenants. The throng is the end-all, be-all of Promethean social organization, and even those are rare. Add to this to the fact that most Prometheans are required to be nomadic, and the Storyteller is left with the fact that the story's focus must, of necessity, be on the characters. There are, of course, a variety of ways in which this can be accomplished.

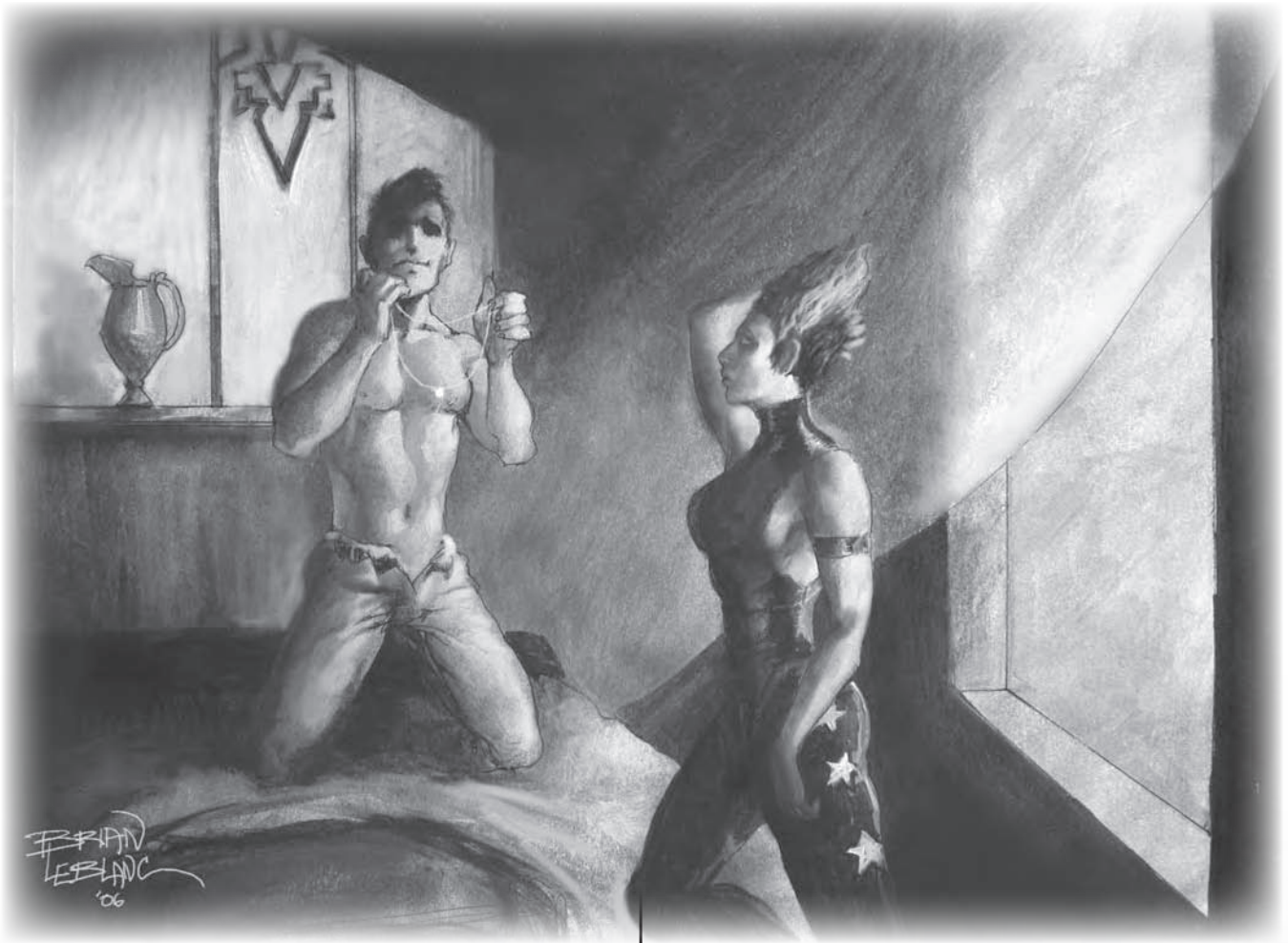
Character Goals

The first is to look at the individual goals of the characters in the throng. At first, most Prometheans are likely to be out simply to survive and figure out what (and even sometimes who) they are.

Eventually, though, characters come up with goals. The Storyteller shouldn't be afraid to sit down with a player outside of game and discuss character goals. In addition to accomplishing the Great Work, what would the character like to do?

The players should feel free to communicate the kinds of goals they would like to see their characters pursue. This sort of thing doesn't have to be done in-character, either: plenty of situations can make a character take up a given goal or agenda that must be introduced by the Storyteller. Whether deciding to track down a Jack the Ripper-style serial killer, begin a doomed romance with a person of high social standing or become the new messiah of the local homeless when they witness the character work some kind of Pyros-based miracle, establishing some character goals requires some Storyteller complicity.

The Storyteller should, of course, give such things a little twist. Perhaps the serial killer turns out to be some kind of freak demiurge who doesn't create a new Lineage, but instead steals the organs of his victims and somehow transforms them into Pandorans. The person of high standing may be related to important government or criminal underworld figures who learn about their relative's romance with this strange person, and disapprove. The small cult of indigents that grows up around the Promethean miracle-worker may develop into something strange and unwholesome when it interacts with Disquiet, believing that their hobo messiah must die for them, or that they must prepare for a crusade against the



cult's enemies, drawing the attention of law enforcement, other religions and similar authority figures.

Finding an enemy and dealing with them is a fairly common character goal, particularly among the Created, who have an entire Refinement based on the pursuit of revenge. This is also fairly simple to instigate: all that is required is that a Storyteller character takes advantage of or harms one of the characters in some fashion. Many stories throughout the ages focus on the goal of vengeance or justice (depending on the telling), from *The Count of Monte Cristo* to *Kill Bill*.

The interesting part of this sort of story lies in the complications. Whether the villain is simply too strong to face head-to-head, because he is impossible to find, too rich or influential to get near or simply holds something the hero holds dear, there is some reason the character has not achieved his revenge immediately.

When creating such an antagonist, the Storyteller should make sure to look at the accessibility of that character: How difficult is he to reach? How powerful is he? What's to stop the protagonists from simply walking up to his castle, warehouse or cavern, knocking down the door and treating him to a dose of violence, Promethean-style?

The answers to these questions change the feel of the antagonist-protagonist interaction. A supremely powerful foe may be hunting the Created, who try to stay a step ahead of him, frantically searching for his weakness. A sickly but brilliant enemy may always be a step ahead of the Prometheans, outsmarting them and manipulating them at every turn, until they wise up to his schemes.

Some players also seize upon things that happen in the chronicle as the basis for their own goals. Storytellers should take advantage of such opportunities, even if it perhaps means taking the chronicle in a direction she didn't originally intend. Perhaps one of the protagonists falls in love with the *Sublimatus* intended to be menacing and amoral. Certainly, this may mean that the *Sublimatus* can easily manipulate that poor fool. But it may also result in the *Sublimatus* finding something strange and alluring in the affection, and trying desperately to return it in some way.

The interaction between character goals and milestones is essential in running a successful **Promethean** chronicle. The Storyteller should discover what the character's goals are, and then shape the milestones to interact with those in some fashion. For instance, if "Be betrayed by a lover" is

one of a Galateid's milestones, the romance she instigates with another Promethean is likely to end badly — perhaps even revealing him to have been one of the Centimani interested in her affection and her Vitriol.

The Throng

Another source for interesting continuing stories lies with the throng as a whole. Most of the Created walk their Pilgrimages alone, meeting others of their kind when Azoth calls to Azoth, but then departing after a while. The lot of the Prometheans is solitude, but when they find allies — and possibly even actual friends — among their kind, remarkable things happen.

Prometheans who understand such things point to the success of throngs in the accomplishment of the Great Work, suggesting that one of the vital lessons of humanity is working as part of a group. Humans are social creatures. It is any wonder, then, that finding a place in such a group, a tribe, perhaps even a family, lends understanding of the Elpis? In solitude, there is despair. In the faces of friends and loved ones, one might find Hope.

The activities of the characters' throng are bound to draw attention. What other Prometheans have heard about the throng, or their reactions to the throng's actions can provide interesting new directions for the story. An argumentative throng whose members often clash may gain a troublesome reputation. When the throng comes to a new locale, any Prometheans already there may not be interested in the sort of trouble the characters often create for themselves, and ask them to leave — perhaps politely, perhaps forcibly.

If the throng is known for performing amazing deeds or for their wisdom in the Great Work, they may attract others who wish to learn from them. A throng of experienced Created may seem like a godsend to young Prometheans. Remember that the setting changes as the characters change it. A dynamic world responds to the changes brought to it by the throng, and others take notice of the ones who are making waves. *Sublimati* may hear of them and hunger for the Vitriol they have accumulated; others may seek to challenge them, ask their advice or get their aid.

Ultimately, what the throng accomplishes — or fails to accomplish, in some cases — does not go unnoticed. Great achievements and losses cannot help but come to the attention of others, and this can change the tenor of a chronicle. No longer are the Prometheans strangers, just another face on the Pilgrimage. Now, they form a throng about whom stories are told, secrets whispered and rumors exchanged. Success brings envy, and Prometheans are not exempt. It also brings responsibility — or at least the attention of those who need someone to take responsibility. They cannot fail to attract those who come to them because they are strong, skilled, wise or simply

successful, particularly if they have a reputation as Good Samaritans. What happens when other Prometheans come to the characters for protection, or guidance on their own Pilgrimages?

Storyteller Characters

Another source of continuing chronicle development lies in Storyteller characters. The people and Prometheans the throng meets all have goals, aspirations, prejudices and passions. A wise Storyteller learns to fit those characters the throng meets into the story, evolving them to fit the needs of his game.

Rather than introducing a new character to fulfill a role in a story, the Storyteller might look through the roster of characters the throng has already met, and see if any of them can be suitably evolved to fit that role. Rather than introducing a wholly new love interest, perhaps one of the current Storyteller characters may fit that role, developing a new perspective on one of the characters, or even having simply hidden his feelings until now. Likewise, a Centimanus villain is all the more riveting — and perhaps a little more sympathetic — when she is a former ally of the throng who has since despaired of the Pilgrimage, and taken solace in the nihilistic philosophies of the Hundred-Handed.

The changing opinions of the throng's members regarding Storyteller characters are likewise an excellent resource for a continuing chronicle. As the chronicle progresses, dynamic Storyteller characters leave an impression: the demure young love interest who turns out to be a meth addict and the jaded, monstrous Centimanus who spends his time wistfully watching scenes of domesticity through the windows of family dwellings both shake up assumptions about those characters. Knowledge of these facets will change how player characters interact with them, and such characters will react differently to those who know their secrets.

The Power of Secrets

Everyone has secrets. These are rarely major, earth-shattering secrets — even in the World of Darkness, serial killers, members of occult conspiracies and others with deadly secrets are still uncommon. Regardless, everyone has a secret of some sort, something he doesn't want others to know.

Determining what kinds of secrets a person holds tells a lot about him as a character. Two characters may have experienced abuse as children, and resorted to alcoholism as a means of dealing with those experiences. But where one character talks openly about the abuse and hides her drinking, the other may seek to drown the things from his past with a party-boy demeanor. Identical pasts, but the ways in which they cope, and the things they keep as secrets tell a great deal about them.

Storytellers and players both should determine the sorts of secrets their characters don't want revealed. For Prometheans, this can be strange — the Created are often

ashamed of things that others take for granted as a matter of simple development, and don't know when other things are "supposed" to be embarrassing. For example, a young Promethean may be embarrassed about his cravings for ice cream. Perhaps his creator didn't like the stuff, or because he accidentally frightened someone while eating it, associating their fear reaction with the food, rather than the revelation of his disfigurements.

Seeming Chance

Fortuitous occurrences also have their place in the continuing chronicle. Though the number of Prometheans is miniscule in comparison to the overall population of the world's mortals, Prometheans often encounter one another. Moreover, these chance encounters often occur at either very fortuitous times or at phenomenally unlucky ones.

Those Prometheans who have encountered the *qashmallim* have spoken of the missions that the fiery angels have given them. But they are also forced to acknowledge that these entities only seem to show when something needs to be "fixed," as it were — something has moved out of some kind of harmony that the Principle the *qashmallim* serve can perceive. Some Ophidians take this to an extreme, claiming that the Created do not need luck, for they have the Pyros.

Of course, Ophidians warn that this works both ways; Pyros encompasses both purified Azoth and filthy Flux. Some Progenitors warn their progeny for a reason: "If there are Pandorans in the city, you *are* going to stumble across them. Just be prepared."

This provides the Storyteller the opportunity to introduce elements into the throng's path that seem to counter probability. Prometheans stumble upon one another in the midst of a battle, just in the nick of time. The one person who manages to resist Disquiet is the one who is the key to that Promethean's next milestone.

The Created might go out for a walk to clear his head, witnessing a collision between a truck and another vehicle. He is the only one who witnesses the strange package fly off the truck and into the underbrush. Upon investigating, the package has broken open, revealing a variety of strange archaeological artifacts, including one with the mark that he remembers from his days with his creator, before she disappeared. These small coincidences seem to frame the Great Work and drive it ever forward, and the Storyteller is encouraged to make good use of them in his chronicle development.

Ending the Chronicle

One of the perhaps most-overlooked aspects of telling a story using a roleplaying game system is ending that story. All too often, we approach gaming from a perspective that looks ever onward into the future. Unfortunately, this means that many games just sort of fade away in mid-story. Rather

than using the momentum built in game-play to bring the story to an interesting resolution, it is simply allowed to continue on and on until it simply runs out of steam. Attention wanes, thoughts turn to other games or stories and the process begins again.

No one wants the fun to end, of course — when a Storyteller is excitedly working on the details of his upcoming chronicle, the last thing he wants to do is dampen his enthusiasm by contemplating how to end it. Yet, planning a chronicle with an end in mind can enrich the experience for both Storyteller and players.

Story Formats

By choosing the format of her unfolding chronicle, the Storyteller can help establish the potential length of the story she wishes to tell. The length of the story can help the Storyteller determine the complexity and number of subplots she will introduce, when to plan for a climax and how far ahead to foreshadow events.

The One-Shot

The One-Shot may be just that: a single game session, such as at a convention, or just a night of hanging out with friends, perhaps when the rest of the gaming group can't make it. The One-Shot may extend into two or three game sessions, but rarely goes beyond there. The Storyteller should aim to make the plot simple but interesting, with minimal subplots. Character-based subplots generally tie into the main plot somehow.

When conceiving of this sort of format, think of the chronicle in terms of a movie: a quick introduction of characters and the problem, working through the difficulties presented (which presents a backdrop for character development and resolution of character subplots), culminating in a climactic encounter or scene.

For Example: In an effort to interest his group in **Promethean: The Created**, Marcus puts together a One-Shot. His group is pretty loathe to try new games, but Marcus wants to hook them, and gets them to agree to a two- or three-chapter trial chronicle. To that end, Marcus creates a One-Shot chronicle called "Perdition," based around a throng's search for one of its own. The story is short, centering around a search for clues as to the whereabouts of a missing throng-mate, an encounter with a mysterious assailant and the discovery of a small group of Retrievers who call themselves Perdition, who have captured the throng-mate and are trying to rediscover the process by which they were created.

The Short Arc

The Short Arc is generally slightly longer than the One-Shot, with between five and 10 chapters. The Short Arc has a more complex story plot, and the time to go into some subplots. Character-based subplots generally still tie into the main plot in some fashion, but can also be purely for character development or setting-building.

When planning a Short Arc, the Storyteller is encouraged to think in terms of a comic book arc or a single graphic novel: she has time to introduce the characters and explore their lives in a more leisurely fashion, while introducing the problem upfront. The difficulties they face may come in waves, giving a sense of victory over an immediate problem, which really only presages the actual challenge.

For Example: Sophia decides she wants to run a Short Arc of **Promethean: The Created**. She wants to tell a story about a group of Prometheans who don't really know one another, but who are put into one another's path by one of the *qashmallim*. She names the short chronicle "Holist of Fires."

In the opening chapters, the Prometheans are each individually visited by this fiery angelic force, which prompts them to all travel to a place where they meet one another — and, unfortunately, awaken a horde of Pandorans. The Prometheans must work together and fight the Pandorans to stay alive, and at the end of that chapter, the *qashmal* reveals that it was testing the Prometheans. Having proven their worth, the *qashmal* guides them in becoming a Branded throng.

As the story unfolds, the Prometheans follow more and more of the guidance of this *qashmal*, but they can't help but notice the results of their actions: people are hurt needlessly, Pandorans are unleashed, places become tainted with Flux. The *qashmal* assures the Prometheans that this is the price of the good they have been joined to do, but in the end it is revealed that this angel is in fact one of the Lilithim, leading to a climactic battle with the creature and its Pandoran minions.

The Medium Arc

The Medium Arc encompasses between 10 and 15 individual chapters. Such story arcs tend to incorporate a variety of challenges, with the bigger story being slowly revealed as the arc unfolds. By the time the climax of the arc happens, there should have been plenty of opportunity for in-depth development of the characters, exploration of the backstory for both characters and the current plot and solid setting exploration as well.

A Medium Arc might be compared to a novel or story-based video game: ample time to focus entire chapters on single characters and how the plot affects them. The Storyteller need not rush to necessarily reveal the whole of the full plot, allowing time for that story to slowly unfold, providing the rewarding experience of characters (and thus, players) piecing together what is going on without having to rely on some kind of plot exposition.

A Medium Arc has one or two "mini-stories" wrapped into it, which contribute to the story's plot as a whole. It may be helpful to think of a Medium Arc as two or more Short Arcs pieced together with a couple of chapters of character and setting development, leading up to a final climax.

For Example: Corbin enjoys road-trip style stories, and so wants to run a **Promethean: The Created** game focusing on the nomadic themes of the game. He plans a medium-length chronicle, titled "The Hard Road," and has his players create a throng. He wants the focus of the game to be on the Pilgrimage, and plans their milestones appropriately.

The first half of "The Hard Road" deals with the throng discovering an old abandoned town on the back roads of California. Azoth calls to Azoth, and the characters discover a Promethean, barely alive and imprisoned, who tells them about a small pack of Pandorans, mastered by a powerful Frankenstein Centimanus. The throng is attacked by the Pandorans, and is forced to flee with the unfortunate Promethean when the Centimanus shows up. The next several chapters involve fleeing from the motorcycle-riding Centimanus and his pack of Pandorans, who are intent on getting their prisoner back and punishing the throng, maybe adding the characters to the Pandorans' "feeding stock."

Though individual Pandorans encounter the throng for occasional spates of violence — interspersed with an encounter with a group of nomadic vampires or a pack of werewolves into whose territory the throng stumbles — the climax happens in Mexico, when the throng discovers a town being terrorized by a large band of criminal bikers that the local police can't do anything about. When the characters choose to make a stand, helping the police fight against the bikers, the characters feel the rise of Vitriol — only to discover that the Centimanus has recruited the biker gang.

The Long Arc

The Long Arc encompasses something in the neighborhood of 15 to 20 chapters. This length gives ample time and space for the exploration of character goals and development here, as well as more than sufficient time for complex plots and myriad subplots to be unwound into a whole story.

A Long Arc is probably best compared to a single season of a television series. The plot, which is often either intricate or simply long in development, unfolds slowly. Such stories usually contain several sub-arcs within the Long Arc; it might be useful to think of a Long Arc as the piecing together of three to five Short Arcs, with some room to play with either odd Storytelling formats in-between them, character development chapters and other "joining" elements.

For Example: Marcus, having convinced his group to try a full **Promethean** chronicle, brainstorms a Long Arc chronicle. Interested in the "Stages of Transformation" section of "A Primer on Promethean Alchemy" in **Promethean: The Created** (see p. 45, **Promethean: The Created**), he decides to use those stages as a theme for his chronicle's sub-arcs. He names the chronicle "Sins of the Fathers."

The first sub-arc, based on the concept of *Albedo*, opens with the creation of the Prometheans. The first chapter involves interaction with the throng that creates them, allowing the new Created to choose their Refinements. Though strange conflicts are bound to occur, along with the

inevitable rise of Wasteland, peace can be had there. This lasts until the place is attacked by a band of paramilitary forces while the throng is away in town getting supplies (and likely dealing with their first taste of Disquiet). The characters return to find a camp scarred by violence, and their creators nowhere to be found, with only the corpse of a soldier wearing a strange badge. The rest of the arc involves the characters deciding what they want to do, dealing with their new solitude in the world and figuring out how to live.

The second sub-arc, based on *Citrinitas*, takes place five years later. In the first chapter of this sub-arc, one of the Prometheans (likely following the Refinement of Ferrum) not only fulfills a milestone in his exploration of the US military's training techniques, but recognizes the badge on a man who isn't dressed the same as the others. Upon investigation, they discover that he belongs to an "private military company" — he's a mercenary. With some work, they find where the mercenaries are headquartered and can explore the options of finding out what they did with their creators or even simply getting some payback. As part of this process, however, the characters discover that the

mercenaries were hired to do that job. With some research, they discover that the cult that serves the Lady of Chains (**Promethean: The Created**, p. 228) is responsible for hiring the mercenaries to capture their creators. Moreover, the characters learn that the mercenaries just received another contract from the cult: hunt the throng down.

The third and final sub-arc, *Rubedo*, involves the last part of the Lady of Chains' plan. Depending on what the throng chooses to do, this arc is centered around either the throng fleeing from the *Sublimatus*' agents, who attempt to capture the characters, or the throng attempting to find enough information to find out where the Lady of Chains herself is and go to her before they can be brought to her, helpless. The climax of the arc comes when the throng is finally face-to-face with the Lady of Chains — and their creators, long since brainwashed by deprivation and imprisonment into adherents (however tenuous) of the Centimani philosophy.

The entire process has been an experiment, of the sort the Lady of Chains is so infamous for: What bonds loyalty? Will those who are tortured into enlightenment turn away from it due to simple emotional attachments? What hap-



pens when a throng spends time and effort seeking out those the throng cares for, only to find the ones they sought are now corrupted and willing to kill them? The arc ends with creators coming before the progeny, with orders to perform lacunae on their own creations. Some will resist, some will give in, based on the actions of the throng, but violence and pathos are assured.

Now What?

Once the planned chronicle comes to an end, then what? This need not, of course, be the end of the stories involving our heroes. There are several options, even without including the possibility of simply playing something else for a while.

The Sequel

Though the original story has been told, life goes on for the heroes of the previous chronicle. There is always more to be done in the world, especially for the Created. The Pilgrimage demands to be walked, unless the chronicle ended in the New Dawn for the entire throng — and even then, it may be interesting to see what sorts of stories might be told about the men and women they have become.

The Storyteller is cautioned to try and explore some new ideas and themes in this follow-up game. The very same thing, only “bigger and better” runs the risk of “sequel syndrome” — no new development of characters or the world, just the same events and themes presented with different window dressing. Still, a whole world’s worth of stories waits to be told involving each of the Created.

Spin-Off Games

Another idea on following up the chronicle involves a spin-off. Perhaps some of the players are itching to play new characters, while other players are attached to their current ones. It is simple enough to have the previous throng-mates go their separate ways, to explore some facets of their Saturnine Night alone or in the company of others. Perhaps they may even come back together some night, with new stories to tell one another.

The spin-off is fun because it allows an exploration of some facets of the Storyteller’s story that it might not have been possible for the main throng to deal with. Maybe the end of the chronicle left a Stannum character with a raging mad-on for someone that the others aren’t really interesting in tangling with, so he goes out and finds some others who dislike his new target as much as he does — or are simply willing to help him in return for his help with their problems.

The spin-off might begin with one of the previous chronicle’s protagonists having gone to the wastes. The new chronicle might be built on what — and who — she finds there after a time away. Perhaps one of the Created goes in search of something like an old Aurum’s journal, or someone who studies a rare or forgotten Refinement. A fun variation on this might be to have one of the throng go off

and create a progeny himself, meeting others as part of the training he gives his creation.

Handing Over the Reins

It may also be that someone else in the group wants a chance as Storyteller, and has some ideas for the current group. So, the Storyteller hands over the reins, makes his own character and takes a seat on the other side of the Storyteller’s screen for a while.

The two Storytellers will have to agree to compartmentalize a bit: the first Storyteller should set aside his assumptions about the story and setting he’s built to date, and just be willing to let the new Storyteller exercise some creativity without needing constant script approval. Likewise, though, the new Storyteller should keep the previous chronicle in mind — after all, if she wants to diverge radically, she might as well make up a new chronicle.

This grants some interesting possibilities, though. The second Storyteller has a resource for her chronicle; she should feel free to come to the original Storyteller with ideas or questions about the background, and the two of them may be able to do some brainstorming (assuming the original Storyteller is both willing to act in such a capacity and is willing to keep his out-of-game knowledge separate from that of his character).

Chronicle Subplots

In each book of the **Promethean** line, we have presented a small piece of a chronicle. The story has taken the throng across the United States, through encounters with horrific creatures and interesting characters and maybe even to the verge of Redemption. Below are some ideas for ways of extending the plots and ideas presented in these chronicles, taking them into wholly new directions.

The Water of Life

The throng’s time with the alchemist Calogero, detailed in the scenario “The Water of Life” (see **Promethean: The Created**, p. 266), may lead to several further interactions down the road.

- Perhaps another alchemist discovers Calogero’s methods of creating the false Azoth flame, using it to lure other Prometheans to him — particularly damning if he sells the method to those interested in creating clones of Azoth-infused flesh, or to *Sublimati* interested in consuming those drawn to the false Pyros.

- In gathering ingredients for Calogero’s creation of *aqua vitae*, the throng may very well have stolen something valuable. Its original owners might have hired a private detective to find the ones responsible for the theft. Alternately, its owner might be a supernatural entity with the ability to psychically or magically find those responsible. The item chosen as the Eye of Thoth, for instance, serves as a connection for clairvoyant or

screaming abilities. What happens when someone capable of this kind of magic gets access to this item?

- What brought the characters to Chicago in the first place? If some or all of them were created there, perhaps their creators followed their trails from Calogero's workshop on the rest of their travels. Perhaps someone has been only a week or so behind them through the entire chronicle, putting together the story of their lives and Pilgrimages . . . but to what purpose?

A Sheltering Storm

The throng's time in the camp of Papillon, detailed in the scenario "A Sheltering Storm" (see **Pandora's Book**, p. 115), can present a variety of opportunities for continuing stories.

- Perhaps someone investigating the scene of Havelock's murder takes an interest in the descriptions of the throng. Alternately, Havelock may have asked a neighbor in his building to hold onto something of strange alchemical significance for him, just in case. This neighbor may seek out the throng after police investigation reports that the man who killed Havelock was likewise burnt to death — maybe these were Havelock's friends.

- Supernatural creatures of New Orleans, whether vampire, werewolf or mage, may be interested in the terrible Firestorm that erupted. Such an entity might seek the characters out — or send servants to capture them and bring them to him — in order to question them about their nature and the nature of the strange storm.

- The fate of the camp is left untold. What happened to it? Did they set up shop elsewhere? Perhaps it fell to infighting among the factions that make up its population, and they each went their separate ways. Perhaps Papillon turned out to be a Centimanus, seeking to corrupt either to the philosophy of the Freaks, or to provide herself opportunities for lacuna. Indeed, Yellow Fever may have been allied or subservient to Papillon the whole time.

Strangers on a Hill

The strange events in Boston, as described in "Strangers on a Hill" (see **Strange Alchemies**, p. 122), might provide more than a few opportunities for advancing the chronicle as well.

- Federal crews investigating the attack on one of their black sites may find evidence of the throng's involvement somehow. Things suddenly become much more dangerous if the characters are tied to the suitcase nuke, as well — their appearances could very well put them on the list of known terrorists in the United States.

- Should Lighthouse live, when he returns from the wastes, he may have envisioned a new goal. Depending on whether or not they aided him, he may come to the throng for assistance in accomplishing some aspect of this idea.

- Perhaps one or more of the Prometheans in the area after the riots took advantage of the viciousness of the event, steal-

ing away bodies to make new progeny from. What happens when one of these young Created has visions of the throng, and comes seeking the characters in an effort to understand the life his body held before becoming a Promethean?

To the Wastes

The story found in "To the Wastes" (see **Magnum Opus**, p. 118) has plenty of potential for continuing stories. Below are some suggestions.

- Perhaps the blood of the cattle and sudden introduction of the throng's Azoth (and even perhaps the fear and hatred of the workers) at the slaughterhouse mixed to awaken something slumber deep beneath the packing plant. It rises, tasting the air of the place, and, finding one of those elements missing, goes hunting the Azoth that awakened it.

- Several of the miners who died in Act Two asked the throng to deliver messages to their families, or otherwise honor last wishes. These simple goals are easily not only sources of Vitriol and Humanity but of continuing stories. What happens when one of Hector's children becomes very troubled and starts getting into trouble as a result of his grief, and his mother asks the characters to intervene? The human experience of grief — both expressing it and resolving it — can provide tremendous potential for Promethean stories.

- When other Prometheans hear that the throng has discovered a Shrine, and the Bloody Querent Cycle, the characters almost inevitably attract the attention of those who are interested in such tales. The characters may be occasionally sought out to tell their tale and relate the whereabouts of the cavern. A particularly desperate Promethean may even kidnap one of the throng and force her to show him where the cavern lies, precipitating a cross-country chase.

These Mortal Engines

Though "These Mortal Engines" (see p. 119) brings the chronicle begun in "Waters of Life" to a close, the story need not end there. Below are some ideas for directions to take the chronicle, based on what happens in Detroit.

- Some of Carla Two's "bad little children" may share in her strange visions somehow, and come seeking the throng. They may simply be hungry, and looking for an easy-to-find meal, but they may also be looking for her, specifically.

- The discoveries within the lab may unlock some kind of strange cipher for someone in the throng — dreams begin to reveal a greater truth than Dunleavy was capable of piecing together from his writings and findings there. What secrets does this lead a Promethean to, particularly one with a strong Elpis Merit rating?

- The awakening of the God Machine — or the refusal by the throng to aid in such — can have dramatic repercussions. What if, in its wake, *qashmallim* become more common, appearing to bid other Prometheans to do the will of the God Machine . . . or bidding them to work against it?

Detroit: The Dead Engine

Detroit: The Motor City, D-Town, the 313. This city, located on the Detroit River in Michigan, longs for harmony. It's *hungry* for it, but for every step forward the city is kicked two steps back. Sure, the Downtown and Midtown revival is great for the city, but the factory closings and mounting crime rate sully that success. The new casinos and shopping centers are lovely, but those things don't change the increasing budgetary failures and crumbling city infrastructure. The suburbs are often rich and affluent (and often white), while the city itself is poor and overworked (and usually black). Racial and financial disharmony grows out of a dearth of jobs, declining real estate values and corrupt politicians.

What is Detroit? What themes and ideas can you explore when setting a story in this decaying American city?

A Working Man's Town

The people of Detroit have proven that they want to work. This is a strongly principled blue-collar factory town, the very cradle of the American auto industry. And yet, corporations don't seem interested in the people's needs. The auto industry has sent thousands of its workers home, laid off before they can reap the benefits of long employment, cast away like broken fan belts or alternators. It's not just the car industry, either, though auto manufacturers are certainly the guiltiest parties. Over the last couple of decades, too many plants and factories have shut down in search of greater profits and outsourced jobs, leaving Detroit's blue-collar populace in need of employment. They're willing to work, ready to bloody their hands to feed their families. But the jobs just aren't there. The labor force here is stagnant like pond water, and in such rancid run-off nothing good will grow.

A City in Ruins

Detroit is a modern ruin. Countless buildings sit abandoned, whole blocks go unused. Factories are gutted shells, houses sit like hollow skulls and whole streets lie empty of anything but blowing trash and starving dogs. For every new building that goes up, two more are condemned and left to sit (because the city doesn't have the money to knock them down). Within the city lurk shadowy portions of forgotten life, whole regions swallowed by the rust and crumble of urban blight. In these portions linger those whom the city and factories have cast off: addicts, gangs, prostitutes, lost children, rabid animals. They comprise a deep malady within the city, a septic moral and physical infection that will not be easily routed. The good people of the city want these places cleaned up or cut out. But year by year, the good people find themselves outnumbered by the bad.

Ready for Rebirth

This city's like an engine that revs, turning over and over but never quite getting the spark to the plugs. New growth in Downtown leads the newspapers to speak often of the town's "renaissance," and in some parts it's apparent. Remember, though, that they've been bandying that word about since 1973, and three decades is a long time coming for this supposed renaissance. Many part of the city see no such renaissance occurring. They *want* it, however, which is what matters. They're willing and ready to make a difference if the city will let them. The people are desperate for change, hungry for hope. Just as Prometheans, these people have gone through a dark and turbulent journey along the lines of the Saturnine Night. They are ready for the New Dawn. They want to prepare their Great Work.

The Promethean City

Detroit is a very **Promethean** city. Why? It comprises various dead parts still grafted onto the living pulse. It's given over to decay (Wasteland) and disharmony (Disquiet). It is a nexus of creation (the auto industry was born here, after all), driven into being by the will and obsession of a few key men (the "demiurges" of the car manufacturers). And, similar to Prometheans, this sometimes wretched city has a great opportunity to become something greater and better, to crawl out of its long suffering and into the light of new hope. Similar to every Promethean, Detroit is a place of massive potential. That potential is hard to reach and requires great work, but it's there for those who seek it.

Fast Facts

Below are just a few quick facts about Detroit that may come into play during your game.

- The metro area has about 5.5 million people, and the city proper has about 900,000 (down from more than a million 10 years ago and nearly two million in the 1950s; the city is hemorrhaging its population).
- The city is more than three-quarters African American, with whites comprising about 13% of the total population. The city has a fast-growing Hispanic sector, and also is home to a rising number of Asians and Middle Easterners (Arabs, Yemenis, Chaldeans, Iranians).
- Cold in the winter (low teens before wind chill), and hot in the summer (mid-80s, low-90s).
- Two major newspapers: *The Detroit News* and the *Detroit Free Press* (or the "FreeP"). The *News* is editorially right-leaning, whereas the *Free Press* is more liberal.
- Main airport: Detroit Metro Airport
- Bus services (DDOT) run in the city and suburbs (called SMART). The city also operates a light rail system called the People Mover. The People Mover loops only around the Downtown area.
- It's home to the Big Three auto companies (Ford, GM, DaimlerChrysler), but also has a booming IT and services industry.

- Detroit is the most dangerous city in America, at least according to crime statistics. Arson, murder, rape, gang violence and drug trafficking are all way above the United States' average. Budgetary cuts in the city's police departments haven't helped.

- More than 47% of the city is functionally illiterate.

- Post 9/11, border crossings between Detroit and Windsor, Canada (likely through the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel or over the Ambassador Bridge) don't yet require a passport, but *do* require current ID. It costs a few dollars to cross both ways, and the wait times can be egregious. Border Patrol asks a lot of questions, performs car searches and has the right to turn anybody away from crossing.

Salt City

Did you know that beneath Detroit sits a massive salt mine? The salt mine offers more than 100 miles of road, and 1,500 square miles of massive tunnel. The mine was closed for the last few decades, but recently reopened under the Detroit Salt Company, which is in turn owned by the Glaser Company. The mine itself is more than 1,100 feet below the surface of the city.

They use a "room-and-pillar" method of drilling for salt — they blast and drill tunnels horizontally across and vertically down. Once in the tunnel, they blast whole new rooms, chipping away at the monstrous salt vein that lurks in the ground (the area was once a seabed).

Note: We mention the salt mine here because it is a central plot point of "These Mortal Engines," the story presented later in this chapter.

Interesting History

The history presented here is by no means comprehensive. It's meant to give a taste of what history matters in the World of Darkness, what has reflections today for the characters that may live and work here in the Motor City.



Mound Builders

Pre-Detroit, the area was claimed by mound-building Native Americans, whose conical and pyramidal mounds housed the trappings of their civilizations: flints, arrows, axe-heads, ceremonial dress and lots of animal and human bones. Once in a blue moon, someone finds the remnants of one of these mounds in and around the city. Someone even found such a mound beneath the basement foundation of his house. One mound, discovered in the late 1970s, featured a skull that was attached to a human skeleton, but itself could not have been human and appeared more reptilian than anything. That skull has since been lost.

Transportation Hub

The city has long been a nexus of the transportation industries. From ship-building to car-manufacturing, since the 19th century Detroit has been a powerful hub of this industry. The prosperous carriage-building trade led Henry Ford to establish his first automobile plant here, and the rest is history. The irony is, for a place once dedicated to creating objects whose very purpose was motion, the city has become stagnant and stationary. An old legend says that some of the major auto barons of the area (Henry Ford, Louis Chevrolet, the Dodge brothers) all had little tin-plate gears turning the dark of their eyes, seen only if you looked *real hard* into the pupils. It's said that some are still born in the city with such a strange mark, but that those people are kidnapped away from the city by parties unknown. It's probably just a legend.

The Purple Gang

Prohibition in Detroit didn't stop the bootlegging industry. In fact, being on the border with Canada only helped move alcohol into the country. Detroit's infamous Purple Gang, a group of mostly Jewish bootleggers, were the prominent players in the criminal underground, even more so than the Sicilian gangs. They were named as such because they were rotten, "purple like the color of bad meat." While they were eventually shouldered out of business in the late 1930s, some say that the Purple Gang still operates in the town. Except now, they don't bootleg alcohol, but instead operate a truly bizarre black market that seems capable of getting anything for anyone . . . if the price is right. Word is that you don't find the Purple Gang — they find you.

Arsenal of Democracy

During World War II, Detroit was a prominent manufacturer of war munitions for the U.S. government (the city simply turned the auto plants over to weapons manufacturing for a time). Occasionally, someone will find a small cache of old wartime weapons hidden beneath the city or in old buildings. An irony of the city is that it has some of the worst gun-related crime in the country, and it seems as if guns fall into the hands of anybody who wants one, regardless of criminal background. The cops continually reclaim truckloads of weapons from the streets, only to have to do it again and again. Detroit remains an arsenal, to be sure.

Motors and Music

Worth noting is Detroit's rich connection to the history of American music, tied in some ways to the history of the automobile (radios in cars, cruising down Woodward Avenue with some Smokey Robinson or KISS coming out of the speakers). Similarly, just as the auto industry picked itself up and left Detroit, so, too, did Motown Records get up and leave in the 1980s, heading out to Los Angeles along with Detroit's musical future.

Music is still a part of the city's soul, though, just like the smell of leather seats and the roar of engines. Those two things are facets of the American dream and experience, and Detroit embodies them. But they're ghosts, now, memories of a thing that was once great but is now dead. But as Prometheans prove, not all that's dead needs to remain that way. With the right amount of effort and sacrifice, anything can be brought back from death.

Notable Geography

The geographic areas and neighborhoods listed below are not meant to be a comprehensive guidebook for Detroit. For that, libraries and bookstores are homes to great guidebooks. The Internet, too, can provide an excellent resource when researching the Detroit region. The areas listed below are relevant to the World of Darkness and any stories told in this setting. The areas are listed alphabetically, but they

can be found on a map or online (use a search engine such as Google or refer to a website such as Cityscape Detroit [www.cityscapedetroit.com]).

Belle Isle

Not far from Downtown, the island of Belle Isle sits in the Detroit River, connected to the rest of the city by the MacArthur Bridge. Belle Isle offers a number of museums (including the Great Lakes Museum) and other tourist attractions (Boat Club, Yacht Club, Belle Isle Casino, the Horticulture Building). The Isle provides powerful views of both the Detroit skyline as well as neighboring Canada.

Rumor is among "those-in-the-know" that Belle Isle is a "safe place" for the city's supernatural population to meet and carve up the city into its little territories. The city's populace knows that the Belle Isle Aquarium has been closed for years despite an overwhelming public vote to reopen it in 2005, and they also know that despite it being closed, at least once a month it seems to host late-night gala affairs for a number of unusual individuals in dark cars and SUVs. Security is high at these gatherings, and as yet, nobody has been able to get close enough to see anything of substance. They're told it's a government affair, and they should go on their way.

Bricktown

Once an industrial area, Bricktown's recent inclusion of lofts, clubs and casinos has given it something of a resurgence, and stands as a small emblem of what the city could become. Bricktown offers a pocket of nightlife dominated by live music, whether it's early rock talent hitting Jacoby's or rap battles taking place in the basement of St. Andrews' Hall while trend-setters play upstairs. Of course, Bricktown is also where a lot of urban predators do their hunting, hungry for sex, meat or blood.

Brightmoor

Brightmoor is another working-class neighborhood gone to pot. This one, in the northwestern part of the city, is unique because it once served as a bastion for autoworkers. They have lived and raised families here since the early part of last century, but once the plants started laying people off in the 1980s through to the present, Brightmoor has become a depressed neighborhood. Almost half of the neighborhood lives below the poverty line.

Most inhabitants want to get back to work so they can survive, taking whatever meager jobs come their way. They all dream of the day when they can get back to working in the plants again, though. Most want it because it's a good — if no longer stable — paycheck. A few want it because they become addicted to the machines, to the smell of machine oil on their hands and clothes, the sound of massive blades cutting and crimping steel.

Brush Park

Brush Park, next to Cass Corridor (and unofficially part of "Midtown") is on the cusp of major revitalization, but has yet to move forward. Brush Park was once an area of great wealth, and now all the old fantastic homes — each

as unique as a snowflake and offering amazing glimpses of architectural potential — sit gutted and hollow like empty skulls. Many of them have been flagged for renovation, either by wealthy homeowners or by companies looking to build condos and lofts. That said, most “flagged” buildings still sit unchanged. Why?

Development companies engage in a secret war with those who believe they truly “own” the buildings: a group of vagrants calling themselves the “Discarded.” It’s almost guerilla warfare, with the vagrants sabotaging efforts to revamp the area. The news media have yet to pick up on this hidden war, and that’s just how the companies want it. They dare not let investors know of the troubles.

Cass Corridor

Cass Corridor, running along Cass Avenue (parallel to the main artery of Woodward Avenue) has been a grungy, impoverished area since the 1960s. During the last decade or so, however, the area has seen something of an “urban living” resurgence as the neighborhood has been claimed by those living a kind of bohemian lifestyle. Cass Corridor has a thriving subculture, broken up into little tribes of students, poets, musicians, graffiti artists and wandering homeless. The city calls the area “Midtown” in an effort to give it a new, polished name, but the local tribes of the Corridor care little for such a title. These tribes often act out against the city whenever it attempts to take over or re-brand parts of the area with most tourist- or business-friendly renovations. Small cults of masked individuals make great trouble for “big business,” and rumor has it they operate either out of the Cass Corridor Food Co-Op or the Masonic Temple.

Delray and Zug Island

The neighborhood of Delray sits at the southwest end of Detroit on the border with River Rouge. It’s an eerie place, an immigrant area (sometimes called a “white slum,” as much of its populace consists of European immigrants). The industrial towers of Zug Island (not a natural island but a human-made factory island devoted to the steel industry) loom over the neighborhood. The neighborhood is impoverished and polluted. It seems the pinnacle of a Galateid Wasteland, with its still air and almost warped geography, and yet no evidence of a Muse can be found here.

Worth noting is that Zug Island, sitting out on the river, is closed to the public. Few pictures exist of the island except for those taken from afar. Security seems unnaturally high for an industrial area, and though the area continues to function and churn out smoke, it’s oddly difficult to find someone who actually *works* there.

Downtown

Downtown Detroit, which includes the CBD (Central Business District) has undergone serious revitalization during the last several years. Millions of dollars have gone into renovating pre-World War II skyscrapers, increasing entertainment venues and developing new condominium living. Like a rotting limb, though, Downtown is still pocked with derelict buildings, though even some of those have been marked for demolition (Statler Hotel was recently brought down, much to the chagrin of city historians) or restoration (Broderick Tower). Below Grand Circus Park, the small courtyard park that marks the center of this district, new construction and renovation fan out in an area the locals call the “The Necklace” or “The Fan.”

Prometheans wandering this area in and around the old buildings of Downtown may occasionally find markings from past Created who have come through here. These Brands and markings indicate that the Created felt the area was already plagued by the Wasteland, even though they could find no persistent Promethean presence other than themselves.

Greektown

Outside of Chicago, Detroit’s Greektown embodies the biggest ethnically Greek neighborhood in the country. Two things are worth noting about Greektown:



Detroit

Henry Ford
Hospital

Wayne State
University

Detroit
Medical
Center

Ford
Field
Comercia
Park

Tiger
Stadium

Michigan, USA
Ontario, Canada

Riverside
Park

University
of Windsor





3

Mt. Elliot
Cemetery

Elmwood
Cemetery

Gabriel
Richard
Park

Henderson
Park

Waterworks
Park

Belle Isle
Gold Course

Belle Isle
Park

Ford Motor
Company of Canada

Ford Test
Track Park

Windsor



First, the Second Baptist Church of Detroit is here, and was the first African American congregation in the city and served as the last Underground Railroad point before the slaves entered Canada. Second is the proliferation of bakeries and pastry shops dotting the neighborhood. An odd phenomenon is that many little pastry shops hide away from the main thoroughfares, interested not in money but in selling unusual foods and confections to patrons with highly *specialized* hungers. Aphrodite's, a small shop off Monroe in a narrow alley, is a two-man operation: Rocky Georgakas and his 13-year-old daughter, Nia. He doesn't advertise, but for the right price, there's not a food he can't make.

Grosse Pointe

East of the city, against Lake St. Clair, sits the affluent suburb of Grosse Pointe. The gradual "white flight" from Detroit carried many of the city's upper middle class or wealthy whites here. Although only 5,000 or so people actually live here, the town is home to a large number of summer homes (many of which sit against the lake). Property values are high, and the people here know when someone doesn't belong.

That includes Prometheans. The Created who come here stand out more than they might elsewhere. Assume that rolls for Disquiet are made at a -1 die penalty.

Indian Village

Indian Village is a combination of suburban sprawl paired with opulent mansions. Oddly, this neighborhood isn't a suburb at all, and is instead smack dab in the middle of the city. While the homes are nice and the lawns are green, the property values are comparably in the toilet. First, tax rates are abnormally high, and second, nice homes remain the constant target of petty crime (theft, usually).

This neighborhood is also home to Pewabic pottery, a type of ceramic pottery glazed with a colored metallic sheen (*Pewabic* is a Chippewa term for "metal" or "metallic"). It's said among Prometheans that a Frankenstein of some Repute came through here, collecting these tiles. Part of his Pilgrimage was reportedly to include these tiles — along with Mercer Moravian tiles from Pennsylvania and broken Bauer pottery shards from California — in the flesh of his soon-to-be Created "child."

Mexicantown

A small-but-thriving Hispanic community, Mexicantown sits beneath the shadow of the Ambassador Bridge. This neighborhood represents a hard-working sector of people who are largely abused by the system but continue to work it regardless. It's maybe starting to pay off: various Hispanic businessmen have formed a development coalition to keep the neighborhood strong *and* in the hands of their culture.

Mexicantown is also home to illegal cock, dog and other animal fights. Fight operators move the location of the events.

Fights happen once every few months, and have grown in popularity and grandiosity. Just last year, police raided one such fight, removing a number of expected animals (dogs, chickens, a coyote), as well as a lion and a baboon.

The Rivers

The Detroit River runs through metro Detroit, connecting Lake St. Clair to Lake Erie. Curiously, some battles of the War of 1812 were fought along the banks of the Detroit River. Listening at night, some hear the distant report of musket fire and cannons, chalking it up to gun violence or other crime. Occasionally, someone finds a piece of boat or odd artifact from the war washing up out of the river.

South of this, the Rouge River runs as a tributary into the Detroit River. The Rouge River (largely marking the border between the town of River Rouge and Detroit proper) is said to claim several lives a year. One of these lives is always a little girl, under the age of 10.

6 Mile, 7 Mile, 8 Mile

These three roads stretch east and west far beyond Detroit, but in Detroit proper they represent a diving line between the haves (those outside of Detroit in affluent suburbs) and the have-nots (those in the city). It's not segregated; blacks and whites mix here, living in ramshackle houses, trailers and crumbling housing projects. Those who live here are also a mix of those who want to work for their living and those who want to *take* from those who want to work. Gangs such as the Vice Lords and the Black Mafia Gang play territorial war games in this area, flooding it with drugs and violence, keeping the good people pinned down for fear of their lives. (Worth noting is that the Black Mafia Gang scours the area looking for hip-hop hopefuls, helping them score record contracts, which act as a front for drug trafficking and money laundering.)

In the World of Darkness...

Want to know what the rest of the World of Darkness is doing in Detroit? No problem. Note that some of the terminology used below comes from **Vampire: The Requiem**, **Werewolf: The Forsaken** and **Mage: The Awakening**, but hopefully the basic ideas are general enough that a Storyteller without access to those books can still make use of them. The information in this book about crossover games (p. 33) might also be helpful.

Vampires

The city is lorded over by a relatively young — and unusually powerful — Carthian Prefect known as Malik Hargrove. Hargrove claims to have created a place for vampires to work together more freely, where territory and resources are easily shared, and to a point, this is true. It's true for those vampires who come from the lower class, who have experienced the

worker's struggle (common in this industrial city). For those who haven't, or for those who have worked their way out of that struggle and into wealth, Malik cares little and often obstructs their efforts to be successful. Hargrove, despite claiming that religion is a drag on most men's souls, counts himself as an occasional adherent of the sanctum's Midnight Masses. Also worth noting is that in recent nights, Detroit has seen a surprising upswing in its vampire population. The odd thing is, few can explain why they braved the dangerous journey to come to a new place, only that they did it in service to a barely perceptible urge.

Del Ray Dunn's

In the midst of Greektown lies an old 1920s speakeasy that doesn't announce its presence, and in fact lurks behind a dead-bolted, nondescript metal door. Were one to press his ear to that door, however, he might hear the odd syncopations of live jazz bleeding through the metal. Beyond that door waits the club of Del Ray Dunn, prominent Mekhet of the few local Invictus allowed to remain in the city. From within this club, Dunn lets his buddies listen and play music, and bring their mortal "toys" for a few hours of play-time and blood-spray (the floors are covered with tarp, and below the tarp, easily cleaned glazed tile). Of late, however, some have reported that Del Ray has played host to a number of unusual vampires, all of whom belong to or are allied with the local Crone cults. Are they fomenting a rebellion against the working-class Carthians?

Werewolves

Detroit represents one of the few places in the world where the Pure and the Forsaken aren't at each other's throats. They don't like one another, and the city sees its fair share of bloody fighting between the two sides. But the sad fact is that neither side has the time or energy to fight one another, because every werewolf is so busy keeping a lid on a violent, despairing Shadow. The city is choked with Ridden and breaches of the Gauntlet. Wounds spring up with alarming frequency. Beshilu gather in gross armies beneath the city and in its broken places. While the humans rarely catch sight of it, the werewolves know the truth: this place is a *war zone*. And they aren't necessarily winning. The two most powerful packs in the city struggle nightly to keep the worlds from crumbling into one another. On the Forsaken side, the Brightmoor Devils, a mostly Iron Master pack, protects the neighborhood from a constantly sucking hole of despondency that opens periodically in the Shadow. Among the Pure the most powerful pack is composed of five African American Ivory Claws who believe its time once again to enforce the slavery of humans — specifically *white* humans.

The Hunting Path

Woodward Avenue runs nearly 30 miles through Detroit and as well as suburbs such as Ferndale, Highland Park, Royal Oak and others. Historically, this long stretch served as a

ritual hunting path for the local Indians. Rumor has it that it still serves as a hunting path to this day. Packs of roving werewolves stalk its length, supposedly hunting dangerous spirits. The spirits believe that *they* are the ones hunting the shapeshifters. It creates a curious game of cat-and-mouse, for Woodward Avenue is a very public thoroughfare. Spirits care little for secrecy, making the hunt all the trickier.

Mages

The mages of the Mysterium work tirelessly to figure out why parts of the city seem to "go dead" with regard to magic. Sometimes, a part of the city equivalent to about a city block suddenly becomes resistant to magic, and performing any feats of magic requires massive exertions of effort. Even those outside the Mysterium are unable to explain a number of the city's odd phenomena: an occasional mumbling from deep beneath the city, strange mechanized things that look like clockwork birds gathering in dead trees and a serial killer who seems bent on cutting off heads and burning High Speech symbols onto the tongues. Also worth noting here is the curious affair that is the Consilium. To belong to the presiding council of mages, one must renounce any and all connections to the orders. One's judgment must serve magic before politics (though the lack of subscribed order membership doesn't actually stop politics, it just changes its stripes), so says the rarely seen presiding cabal, the Mirrored Witches.

Stockpile on 6 Mile

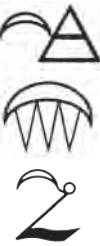
Police raided a house on 6 Mile, finding a major cache of automatic weapons and homemade explosives. They reported all this to the media, *also* talking about the "odd, Satanic books" found amidst the weapons. The books weren't Satanic, but instead representative of the library of a local Adamantine Arrow cabal, the 666 Kings. The Kings had ties to local gangs, and were planning a local takeover of the apolitical Consilium — until the Kings disappeared. The Kings had been gone for the few weeks prior to the police invasion of their 6 Mile sanctum. They were last seen heading into the mini-mansion of local real estate mogul, Charles Weiler. They haven't been seen since, but a Mysterium mage recently found one of the Kings' trademark silver-enameled medallions. It was left dangling from a rosewood-handled knife piercing one of the doors of a Mysterium safehouse. The medallion was crusted with blood and bits of bone.

Weird Detroit

Below are a few elements of Detroit that don't fit anywhere else. These bizarre elements are ready to be dropped in any chronicle set in Detroit's World of Darkness.

Bad Cars

Detroit and its surrounding environs are considered to be the country's eminent auto-making sector, and more impor-





tantly, it's where the American car was more or less born. Much of the city's history and therefore its urban mythology are tied somewhat to this dominant industry. The auto industry is tied to various "good" American myths — the myth of Western expansion, luxury for all and the personal statement a car makes about oneself. But this industry has its bad side, as well. Not only is the auto industry responsible for such significant layoffs that Detroit is one of the most poorly and erratically employed cities in the nation, but automakers also drive aggressive oil policy by creating consumptive cars.

The weirdest effects, however, remain unseen by the majority of mortal eyes. Cars have a dark mythology, and the manifestation of this sinister side may find a home in your story.

The first instance of dark automobile myth is the presence of cursed automobiles. These accursed automobiles seem normal. They look good, sound right and drive well. But from time to time, the curse seems to rear up suddenly like a spooked horse — and the driver may suffer for it.

How are cursed cars born? Nobody knows for sure, but stories suggest that sometimes when blood is spilled on the assembly line, the part upon that blood spattered still goes into the making of the car. This blood carries a kind of mystical weight that imprints the finished product with a grim curse. Others who speak of car curses talk of things such as gremlins frittering around under the hood or vengeful spirits possessing the engines. What is known is that, from time to time after the curse kicks in, sometimes blood can be found somewhere in the car. Maybe a bead runs down from the vents or CD player. Could be that a mechanic finds blood lining the belts and wires, and assumes that the driver hit a raccoon or something.

The curse manifests like this: If a driver has one or no Willpower points left — perhaps his will and effort were expended on a tough day at work or vicious spat with the soon-to-be ex-wife — then the car seems to awaken at the possibility of a sapped or lapsed will. Sometime during the drive, the car will lurch or shudder, or maybe it'll hit a pothole or hydroplane across a sudden sheen of water. A Drive roll is

required – but that roll is *automatically* reduced to a chance die. Failure means a simple car accident in which nobody gets hurt. Dramatic failure means people die.

The other instance of strange car myths in Detroit is the occasional sighting of a spectral car. Driven by nobody, sometimes at night on dead moons, a seemingly *real* car comes out of nowhere (an alley, an empty intersection, a highway exit) and careens into someone who's driving her own car. There's the sound of slamming metal and shattering glass, but when the driver looks up — there's no accident. The other car is gone, too. It's as if the whole thing never happened. By and large, this doesn't hurt anybody. But from time to time, it can cause a heart attack or other stress response.

The Real Urban Jungle

Detroit is dead in many places. Buildings have been repossessed as foreclosures or taken from the hands of gangs, drug dealers or other criminals. Some buildings have simply been condemned. And so, they are left to rot. This has created an odd phenomenon in which nature seems hell-bent to reclaim them. They become overgrown with weeds and vines. Trees even sprout within the buildings, pushing aside mortar with slow growth over the ages.

This in itself is somewhat odd, but other, stranger stories come out of these “urban jungles” and “urban prairies.” Some say that they've lost friends, family or gang members in there. They go in, ostensibly to wander around or maybe get high away from prying eyes, and they never come back out.

Others have spotted animals in these places that maybe shouldn't be there. Wild dogs and feral cats aren't exactly unusual, though sometimes they're seen in abnormally high numbers. Some have claimed to see wolves, coyotes and bears hiding in the decrepit, nature-claimed buildings. One guy even said he saw a *lion* stalking around, but he was homeless, and nobody really trusts the homeless, do they? Surely he's lying, because he also claims to have seen a burbling stream, and a strange, black-stoned ruin sitting half-buried in the ground floor of the old Farwell Building on Griswold Street, and that *can't* be true.

Forgotten Detroit

Some refer to the various parts of Detroit that sit abandoned and lost as “Forgotten Detroit” (you can even check out a lot of these places at www.forgottenmichigan.com or www.forgottendetroit.com).

Interestingly, some people have taken on a hobby of exploring these old derelict structures with the aplomb — and the equipment — of cave spelunkers or mountain climbers. They literally crawl through these places with head-lamps and climb ropes hooked on broken floor mooring with

grappling hooks. The homeless presence and criminal element are often viewed in the same way that a wilderness explorer looks at tigers or vultures: just animals in their element. It lends further credence to the “urban wild” idea and may find a place in any *World of Darkness* game.

These Mortal Engines

Speramus Meliora; Resurget Cineribus. (Translation: *We hope for better things; it will rise from the ashes.*)

— Detroit City Motto

The Saturnine Night is suffering. Prometheans meet with a world that wishes nothing but pain for them. People want Prometheans exiled or destroyed. Animals attack or go mad in their presence. Their surroundings can't bear the aberration of a Promethean's company, and so even the physical world spurns them. The only answer to this is to keep moving, to usher oneself from one tale of woe and madness to the next. While those Branded into throngs have at least some anchor to keep them safe and sane in this sea of suffering, being part of a throng provides only a small set of breakers against Disquiet, the Wasteland and Torment.

For many, hope remains. The Created are afforded the chance to break this numbing, seemingly ceaseless cycle and become human. And yet many Prometheans feel they are seeking the impossible. A human soul can seem beyond the pale, always just out of reach.

In this story, the light at the end of the tunnel becomes apparent. The characters come to or are invited to Detroit, where they are told that for the right Created an opportunity will arise to learn the truth about the human soul — and in learning that truth, they are allowed the chance to complete the equation and perhaps find a soul for themselves. This story represents a possible end to their journey, whereupon they might rip the snake's fangs away from its own tail so that the endless cycle may finally draw to a close. But it won't be easy. Yes, they'll be given the chance to consider the soul and what it means for them, but in the process they'll confront horrors born of a soulless science, and face an ultimate reckoning that forces them to wonder if the reward of Humanity is worth all of this . . . or if it even exists in the first place. More importantly, are they worthy of the reward of Humanity? Will they be willing and able to sacrifice properly to fulfill their desires? Must pain always come before the prize?

Structure, Theme, Mood

“These Mortal Engines” is the fifth and final chapter in the chronicle that began with “The Water of Life” in **Promethean: The Created** and has taken characters through post-Katrina New Orleans in “A Sheltering Storm,” an explosive Boston race riot in “Strangers on a Hill” and through a dark and isolated journey of the soul through the Rocky Mountains in “To the Wastes.” While it’s true that all these stories can work together and point toward this chapter as a whole chronicle’s conclusion, you needn’t run them together or in the sequence that they are presented. This story can easily stand on its own, or you can mix up the parts as you see fit.

This story is told in a three-act structure, though the story and the characters should be flexible enough for that to change if your narrative needs or game-time requires it to. In the first act, the characters come to Detroit to follow a lead, meet with Carla Two or continue their Pilgrimages. For a time, they’re given room to do as they wish, and are made to believe that great opportunity awaits them if they can muster the patience and resilience to remain in the city for a time. Opportunity knocks all right . . . in the form of half-human, broken-souled clones that cannot abate the consuming hungers that drive them to remain alive in this world.

The second act involves the characters tracking these creatures to their source and potentially halting their out-of-control creation, only to find that their master and demiurge has fled the scene. Some characters may find this repulsive and seek to destroy his lunatic science, while others may find that his work has the potential to help them regardless of its . . . unpleasantness. Moreover, they meet with a new Promethean who seems desperate for their friendship.

In the third act, with a power outage plaguing the city, this new Promethean wants to reveal to the characters the powerful force below the ground that gives him hope and is the focal point of all his efforts. This strange machine, found in the salt mines beneath Detroit, carries great promise, terrible retribution and a steep price. Characters hold in their hands the fates of many, including themselves.

Theme: Sacrifice

Through this story, characters learn the multifarious nature of sacrifice, and how nothing is gained without it. On one hand, humans sacrifice every day. Detroit is a deeply impoverished city with a massive unemployment rate. The people in this town existing below the poverty line are often capable of great sacrifices for their families, and the characters may see that some of these sacrifices are good and pure, while others are petty and potentially damning. Is there a difference? Can the ends justify the means?

Moreover, the characters will be called to witness sacrifice among their own kind and may be called to themselves display their understanding of sacrifice. Again, is it possible that both man and Created are capable of both good and bad sacrifices? One can give in to selfish urges or selfless altruism: Are both of equal measure? Does the soul care about the nature of sacrifice, or does it only care that some sacrifice is made? Worse, is it possible that some sacrifices are meaningless, performed to great agony and effort but granted little or no reward?

Mood: Hope and Horror

The city of Detroit provides a daily mural of hope and horror, and the characters will be forced to confront both separately and in tandem. This story should be seeded with little moments of both throughout: the people of this city have found ways to survive and even overcome their struggles, and build something lasting out of the piles of ash and shit that have been heaped upon them. Others have given in and given up, selling themselves or their families for a quick fix, even indoctrinating their children into lives of slavery and pain so that someone somewhere can find a moment’s worth of happiness.

The throng itself will encounter its own duel of hope versus horror. On one hand, the characters are finally given the chance to see the light at the end of the tunnel . . . but they’re not through the tunnel yet. Down its length lies deep shadow, and terrible things — both real and imagined — lurk in that tenebrous stretch. To get to the light and grab hold of hope’s true promise, the characters will have to crawl through this metaphorical tunnel. They will not emerge unscathed, but therein lies the nature of the aforementioned theme: sacrifice. To grab hope, one must endure horror and commit to sacrifice. To reach the light, one must wade through darkness.

Before the Game

This section details some of the events and plot threads that need to come into play before the characters settle into the actual story.

Getting There

Detroit is the default setting for this story, and it’s important to work with players to get their characters to this city. This section will help you do that.

The time of year is irrelevant to the tale (though a blistering hot summer is perhaps appropriate), and the only thing that matters is tying the characters to this chapter so that the players don’t feel railroaded into concluding their story here. Below are a number of options and considerations when getting the throng to the Motor City.

- **From the Mountains:** In the last story, the characters found isolation and darkness in a collapsed mine outside of

Denver. This story may follow naturally from that point, with characters pursuing leads that take from the Mile High City to the Motor City. If seeking out the mining company that put them and others at risk, the characters will find its main offices are here in Detroit. If pursuing the alchemist demiurge known as Moses Moon (found initially in the “Strangers on a Hill” story), they meet with a tip that suggests he has come to Detroit to stay with family. It’s possible, too, that Revelation from the Bloody Querent Cycle takes the throng to further Shrines within and beneath the city. Other chronicles may have left loose ends that the characters wish to pursue. Did they attempt to follow Lighthouse from “Strangers on a Hill?” Did you create a *qashmal* in the Denver story that can lead them to a new place? All plot threads lead to Detroit.

- **Set the Chronicle Here:** This story can stand alone in Detroit, or if it would best serve your needs, you could run every chapter of this chronicle in Detroit with some minor adaptations.

- **Lure of Elpis:** The Elpis Merit is a great plot motivator. Prometheans can be driven by their Pilgrimage, and if Elpis points them toward Detroit (images of motors, ghost cars, smoke stacks, assembly lines), so be it.

- **Carla Two:** Carla Two, from the “Water of Life” story found in **Promethean: The Created**, contacts the characters. This is the default “hook” that will bring the throng to Detroit, and is discussed below.

Call from Carla Two

Presuming that Carla Two lived through “Water of Life” (or was resurrected, either on her own or by another Created), she contacts the throng. The nature of the throng’s initial relationship with her may be adversarial or affable. She contacts them regardless, as they’re some of the only Prometheans she still knows and feels connected to. Even if their relationship was problematic or outright confrontational, she feels the need to “mend fences” as she’s taken out a whole new lease on her so-called life.

Carla contacts them in one of two ways, depending on the needs of the story. In one way, she calls them. This should be somewhat eerie; as the throng passes by a dusty phone booth, the phone inside rings. If they don’t answer it, the same phenomenon happens again a day or two later. It’s Carla Two. She claims she got the number from her “dreams.”

The second way is that she tracks them down in person (this is also what happens if they ignore her persistent calls). Once again, she follows her “dreams” to track them down.

Carla explains to the characters that Detroit is “where it happens,” and that she sees in her dreams a “fiery bird rising from a dark city” that just so happens to have the skyline of Detroit. Her dreams give her the feeling that there’s “good work to be done” (a phrase she uses over and over again, almost to the point of obsession) in the city, and that therein lies the possibility of ending the long darkness

of the Saturnine Night. She profoundly believes that she is able to offer the throng a true shot at becoming human, or at least at taking a lot of long strides along the Pilgrimage. Her enthusiasm may be infectious or creepy. If characters follow her or meet her in Detroit, she’ll bring them to her lair (see Act One, under “Carla’s Lair”).

The Sad Case of Doctor Dunleavy

Nine months ago, Dr. David Dunleavy’s son Shaun died in a drunk driving accident. Shaun, a passenger, was found folded up under the dashboard, his body broken and mostly crushed. The organs were made useless, his bones pulverized into skin-tearing shards and as a result, the boy’s body was barely recognizable as having ever been human.

Dunleavy was the one driving. He was drunk at the time, having come from a local bar where he had been drowning his sorrows and spilling his drink over a sheaf of divorce papers. He realized he was late picking up his son from basketball practice, and drove to fetch him.

The accident occurred on his way home. Dunleavy simply went straight around a curve when he should’ve been following the road. His Oldsmobile hit an SUV head on. The family in the other car suffered serious wounds, but nothing critical. Dunleavy walked away from the accident with nothing more bruises and grief. Dunleavy’s story continues and intermingles with the throng’s in Act One below.

Unusual Attacks

The newspapers and news media devote a good portion of their coverage to the “latest” attacks across the city. These attacks are described differently on different news stations and in newspapers, with each thinking it has the scoop on what’s really going on.

The baseline facts are that people are attacked at least once a day by strange, bald white men whose teeth are “filed to points.” Several people have been killed and, depending on the news outlet, either “cut up” or “partially eaten.”

Further disagreement lies in the supposed identity of these attackers. The *Detroit Free Press* says it’s some strange religious cult. WXYZ News claims it’s the result of a “new drug” hitting the streets. A few local bloggers claim the attacks are made up by the police, and that these are actually the result of animal attacks because the “urban prairie” effect has drawn countless wild animals (including bears and coyotes) into the city limits. These blogs claim some degree of conspiracy on part of the police.

The police in every instance make no hard claims about the attacks. The media outlets are glad to pick up the slack.

Blackouts

Detroit’s been suffering a series of brownouts and blackouts. Whether due to overuse of air conditioning in heat waves or heating costs associated with a wintry cold snap, or whether

simply due to a strained system on an imperfect grid, power has waned in and around the city. It's rarely severe and never lasts for more than a few hours, and it only happens once or twice a week. But it's got the city up in arms, and so far the civil engineers and power companies can't seem to figure out just what's preventing them from keeping the system running full-time. They'll make excuses (hot summer, cold winter, it's New York City's fault because they're all on the same grid), but it's evident that they're (sometimes literally) in the dark. The characters may learn of this before they get to Detroit (it's on the news) or once they get there (seeing it on the front cover of a newspaper or overhearing a conversation on the street). Note that during a brownout or blackout, a Promethean cannot easily draw electricity to himself for purposes of healing.

Act One: Assembly

In this Act, the characters come to Detroit and potentially meet with Carla Two. They witness and maybe experience some of what the people of Detroit go through. They also confront the legacy of Dr. David Dunleavy and his dead son, Shaun.

Carla's Lair

Carla Two has made her home in the midst of humans. Not far from the Detroit River sits a small housing project called Dragoon Court. Despite the best efforts of the city to control violence and crime in and around that area, Dragoon Court remains a crumbling, crowded bastion of welfare families, drug dealers, addicts and broken humans.

It's possible that Carla doesn't work for this scenario. Perhaps she's dead or simply doesn't suit the tone of the tale. It'd be best to pick another Promethean with which the throng is familiar, though, if need be, you can create a whole new character to serve in the role.

Alternately, for extra creep factor, what if this new Promethean is called "Carla Three," looks a lot like Carla Two and seems to know the characters from some place she can't quite recall?

Dragoon Court

A successful Wits + Occult roll tells the characters even before they step through the hip-level rusted gates of the project that this place has been potentially marked by Carla Two's Wasteland. While the place probably looked pretty bad



before she got here, it has worsened since she staked a claim in a small corner apartment in the far back of the project. Plants are dead. Brick walls — traditionally strong, even when other materials crumble — are pocked with pitted holes that blow red dust when the wind kicks up. The project's populace, often gathered around outside at rickety picnic tables or blasting music from stoops, look haunted and malnourished, with the tendons in their neck standing out like heavy-gauge cable.

Assume that the project's population has no more than four dice to roll in their Resolve + Composure dice pools to resist Disquiet. Characters could meet a number of encounters here:

- A tall, freakishly skinny black man or woman runs up and begins a stuttering tirade about the system: "System keeps us all fucked up. It works against us. You want to do right. You want to make good with your life. But others, they don't want that! You still got the dope-dealing! You still got the killing! Can't get no job. *Can't get no goddamn fucking job!*" The individual will follow and hound the throng. He only has three dice to resist Disquiet.

- A pit bull and rottweiler fight off in the corner, playing a snarling game of tug-of-war with a chewed-up tire tread. If the characters get too close, the dogs might attack. Despite being broad-chested fighting dogs, both are obviously underfed (ribs showing). Animal Ken may be used to stave off an attack or otherwise distract the animals. (Stats for the dogs can be found on p. 203 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. Assume that from starvation and tussling, these dogs already have two bashing levels of damage present.)

- Outside of Carla Two's tenement apartment on the third floor sits a hollow-chested, fat-bellied black man. He's sitting against her door on the dirty floor, and he's furiously scribbling in a notepad. He's belligerent about moving away, though characters can easily physically move him (Strength + Brawl) or Intimidate him into sliding over (Manipulation + Intimidation). If asked what he's doing, he'll respond that the "white bitch" who lives in this apartment is "weird as shit." He's taking notes, because he knows someday the cops will want to know about her. He'll begin vocally taking notes about the throng, too — loudly talking up their physical descriptions and throwing in some insults.

Inside the Lair

Carla's apartment isn't much more than a glorified closet with a barebones kitchen and a bathroom so small a person's elbows and knees touch the wall when he uses the toilet. A few flies buzz around the window. Cockroaches cling to the ceiling in flagrant disregard of the characters' presence. The room is greenhouse hot (either a summer heat wave or she's got the heat on full blast).

The place is eerily clean. (If asked about this, she explains that she throws all her trash out the window onto the fire escape. A glance outside shows this to be true.) Two details stand out, however.

The first is that stacked up all over the room are piles of newspapers (the *Detroit News* and *Detroit Free Press*). Characters can see that some of them are marked with red pen. Some words are circled, others crossed out. If asked, Carla says that she looks for "secret messages" in the articles, and some of that is why she believes this place is where she and others will meet their salvation. The characters don't need to go through the papers themselves to see what supposed messages she's gleaned. She has a small black notebook half-full with ramblings. It reads like stunted poetry, and can be interpreted to sound Promethean. Lots of religious terms are used ("pilgrimage" among them, which Carla will note was taken from an article about the Middle East).

The second is that she's used sidewalk chalk (which sits in a plastic kiddie beach pail nearby) to draw all over her walls. Some of the drawings are nothing but swirls, spirals and stars. Another image shows several fiery phoenix-like birds flying up from a darkened Detroit skyline. On the ceiling she's drawn two more pictures, one that is a series of faceless men standing in a line. The other is a startlingly detailed close-up picture of a man's face. His face is long and lean, and his lips are twisted in an unsettling smile. He's bald, and in the dark of his eyes, Carla has sketched wisps of orange flame. The other detail worth noting requires either a reflexive Wits + Composure roll (–2 dice penalty due to the chaos of all those drawings) or an instant Wits + Investigation roll (without penalty because the character is actively looking to dissect the chaos). Success on either roll reveals three small letters chalked upon a few places across the walls and ceilings. These letters are "DDD."

Carla explains that all of it — the clandestine mystical messages taken from newspapers, the chalk-born images on her walls — comes from her "newfound dreams." The reality is, Carla Two is different now from when the throng first met her several chapters ago. She appears more clearly focused (almost obsessively so) and better kept. She might speak of various epiphanies along the way, speaking in non-specific terms but alluding to a general air of enlightenment (perhaps referring obliquely to the completion of milestones). She seems confused when asked to recount *reality*, and she may talk of "destroying those who shackled her" (the Botherúð) or "being hunted by her own bad little children" (Pandorans, potentially from her own botched attempts). Otherwise, she refuses or is unable to recount exact recollections.

What she tells them is that, again, Detroit is where it will happen, where she will look upon the New Dawn, and she believes others can join her on this. She'll note that the characters "look ready" and that she hopes to help them along their path.

The problem is, she has nothing more to tell them. She has no leads. She has no concrete idea or evidence that anything is going on here besides her own unfounded beliefs or delusions. She's almost blissfully happy that she's here with the throng, but it's all hollow. The meeting with Carla Two

yields very little fruit, and she explains that she'll "contact" them when the time is right.

New and Improved Carla Two

Carla Two is different. She's not unrecognizable, but she's grown and changed since the throng last encountered her, much as they themselves have.

Carla Two continues to follow Cuprum, the Refinement of Self. She's also taken on a strong interest in the Sensorium Transmutation, gaining Bloodhound's Nose (•), Translator's Eye (•), Aura Sight (••), Ephemeral Gaze (•••) and Firesight (•••). Her Azoth is now 4.

Her Skill set is mostly the same, but assume that all Social Skills are now operating at one dot higher, and her Investigation score is now at three dots. In Merits, she's gained four dots of Elpis — up from zero dots, which is why she talks so much about her dreams.

Around Detroit

Below are just a few encounters and story hooks in and around Detroit.

The Death of Moses Moon

Moustafa Jaymes — aka Moses Moon, the demiurge presented in "Strangers on a Hill" and mentioned in "To the Wastes" — is dead. Characters searching for him among the New Age and occult bookstores of Detroit (successful Presence + Socialize or Manipulation + Persuasion required) discover that he died a week ago. Upon further inquiry, the throng learns that he was shot in the head one night while leaving the Oculus Bookstore just off Grand River Avenue near Downtown. The assailant, said to be a white man dressed all in black, absconded with Moon's backpack and laptop case, but not his money or jewelry.

The throng learns of a wake being held for Moon at the Oculus Bookstore that night. It's open to the public, as apparently Moon was much-loved by Detroit's small New Age community.

The Oculus is a single-room store, broad, wide and dimly lit. It is only barely a bookstore, as most of the shelves are stocked with a number of New Age and occult antiquities (anything from suits of armor to dried animal paws). The place has one wall devoted to nearly every Tarot deck created, including many handmade (and very expensive) decks. Several white cats skulk about the store.

The wake itself is a wholly non-traditional and lengthy affair. A "who's who" of Detroit occult personalities attends the service. (This serves as a great opportunity if you're running a crossover-intensive game. Certainly, several mages and maybe a vampire or two will attend this odd ceremony. Moreover, if Lighthouse hears about it on his own or from the characters, he, too, may show to pay his respects before returning to the wastes.) The service itself is a reading of the entire Egyptian Book of the Dead, which the store refers as

the Papyrus of Ani or the *Kitab al Mawta*. This takes hours. Most stay for the reading, while a few individuals come in and out. The characters might engender Disquiet should they stay too long, though these people possess a slightly higher will due to their dealings with esoteric forces (assume a Resolve + Composure score of six).

More interesting is what Jenny and Thorn (the married owners of the bookstore, also known as the "High Priest" and "Tempest Queen" of the community) do with Moon's body. They have Moses's preserved corpse dressed in a plain white flaxen *kalasiris* (rectangular sleeveless robe in ancient Egyptian style). After every chapter read of the Book of the Dead, Jenny and Thorn sink Moon's body in a black-painted porcelain claw-foot tub while the room takes a few moments of silence. Then the body is removed from the water, and the reading continues.

(It's not impossible that someone, be it the characters, another Promethean or one of the attending occult personalities, could use Moses Moon's corpse to create a Promethean. That's not a necessary part of this story, but could figure prominently if deemed appropriate or if the players have the interest.)

If characters hang around, they could ask some questions about Moon. It won't be easy, as even those outside of Disquiet aren't too keen to talk to "outsiders" about one of their favored sons. The throng should expect resistance, and must succeed on a Manipulation + Persuasion roll — three dice. (This penalty might be mitigated if the characters appear to blend in more appropriately, wearing New Age or Egyptian garb or prominent pagan or occult jewelry.) If the roll is successful, information gleaned tells them that the material stolen from Moses included his unique translations of the "Emerald Tablet" as well as a number of small amulets and bezoar stones he reportedly used in his "spells" (those gathered know next to nothing about the Prometheans that Moon created, having only heard whispers of his ability to "raise the dead").

The Glaser Company

The throng might be in Detroit to pursue the home office of the large corporation that owned and operated the small mine in which they became trapped during "To the Wastes." That information leads them to the Glaser Company.

A Research roll (six successes necessary, each roll represents 30 minutes) at a library, newspaper archive or courthouse reveals some interesting tidbits about the company: it's been involved in more than one mine collapse. Twelve, actually, during the last three years. Their safety regulations are notoriously lax, and any class action suits or fines from the government haven't been enough to hurt its substantial profits (the company is involved in all manner of mining, anything from stone to salt to natural gas). For more sinister plot threads that go beyond the company's negligence with human life:

- An Ulgan might note that, upon visiting the company, a passing group of Glaser executives is thick with those who

are possessed by spirits. These ephemeral entities look like sucking maws, as deep and dark as an unlit mine tunnel. Are these things feeding somehow off the misery born of mine collapses? Are they forcing the collapses, thus moving from “negligent” to downright murderous?

- The Glaser Company has recently reopened the salt mines beneath the city (see “Salt City,” p. 111). Are their safety policies lax below the city just as they are everywhere else? A mine collapse here would be devastating, as whole parts of the city would crumble into sinkholes. Stranger is the fact that a number of mine employees have been “let go” and released into psychiatric care because they feel they’ve “unleashed” something that speaks to them at all hours of the day. What did these lunatics — if they *are* lunatics — find?

- Perhaps records concealed in a locked room in locked cabinets inside the company indicate that the company only uses its mining operations as a front for a greater search: someone high up is looking for something. An artifact, a person, even a Promethean. They obviously believe that this “thing” will be found beneath the ground somewhere, maybe even here in Detroit.

D-Town Encounters

As the characters travel around the city, either waiting for Carla Two to contact them or perhaps performing other ancillary functions (tracking down a lair in the various decaying parts of the city, sniffing out other Prometheans, Dumpster-diving for food), you may want to provide them with a few encounters within the city that enforce the mood and theme of this story. What follows is a handful of quick encounters potentially meant to reinforce theme.

Burnt-Hands Bernie

On the street, the throng is accosted by what might be a homeless man. He’s dressed in a white wife-beater (even in winter he has no jacket) and a pair of oil-stained jeans. His hands don’t look right. They’re marked with clumps of pink scar tissue ringing his black hands.

He tells the throng that he’ll “do anything” for some money. He doesn’t mean sex, he explains (though if they want to talk about that, he’s open to negotiations), and instead he suggests that he’ll perform all kinds of humiliating stunts for money. He’ll eat garbage, he’ll hit himself, he’ll fight someone, anything at all for a little leg-up.

Is he really homeless? And why is he willing to do these things? He’ll talk about his misfortunes if asked, though he’s reluctant to get too deep about his situation. A Manipulation + Socialize roll with a –3 dice penalty gets him talking in more depth. A successful Wits + Empathy roll prior to the Socialize roll eradicates that penalty as it allows characters to play to his downtrodden “the world is shit and we’re all swimming in it” attitude.

Bernie’s story is that, a year or so ago, he worked at one of the major auto plants, but a machine explosion sent shrap-

nel into his hands, cutting *and* burning them. Since that time, he’s had a hard time getting a job because his hands can’t work with precision for long. He’s not homeless, he’ll explain. He has a wife and four children in a house on the edge of the Brightmoor neighborhood where a lot of other auto workers live. So, he comes out here and does all manner of embarrassing things to get a little cash to help keep his family in food, shelter and fresh diapers. The welfare check, he notes, just isn’t enough.

Should characters end up fighting Bernie (he’ll let them beat the hell out of him for money), consider his stats for combat to be minimal. He’s easily abused. Other solutions might be to help him get a real job, or even do some work for him to get him money.

The Detroit and Beyond Project

Detroit is home to a number of homes and businesses that are utterly defunct. They have become overgrown with weeds as nature struggles to reclaim parts of the city (see “The Real Urban Jungle,” p. 119).

Occasionally, the throng notes that some of these buildings are swarming with people, like ants on a hill. Most of them are young, though a few old folks are found there, too. They seem to be improving the buildings — standing on scaffolding, painting, constructing new supports, hacking away at the vines and weeds that seem desperate to swallow the buildings and so on.

These people belong to the Detroit and Beyond Project. They’re a non-profit group that helps revitalize areas and buildings through the charity of hard work.

They’re also a little . . . *weird*. If the throng becomes at all involved with the group, they discover that the group has religious leanings. The workers stop every couple of hours to pray. They eat together and engage in alarmingly sanitized conversations about morality, the Bible and sin. Over time, one of the group leaders (calling himself an “architect” despite having no degree in architecture or engineering) says something like, “By building, we get closer to God, and we can all hear His voice.”

Seems fine, right? They’ll eventually try to recruit the throng to come to their nightly churches (if the characters go, it’s more of the same talk against sin, and lots more discussion linking “building” and “architecture” somehow to “God”; they might even mention the Tower of Babel as a model of what they hope to achieve). If the characters resist, they’ll still be allowed to work, but Disquiet will soon move against them. The group eventually bands together and mobs the characters with a religious diatribe that may end in old-style religious persecution: stone-throwing, curses from the Lord, spitting, even crucifixion if Disquiet is allowed to simmer long enough.

Rules-wise, assume that the group has a Resolve + Composure score of five when resisting Disquiet. If the characters reject or shun offers to join the group’s church, this roll is then made at a –2 dice penalty.

The Timekeeper

A *Sublimatus* hunts the throng (see “The Timekeeper” under *Dramatis Personae*). This intelligent and insane Pandoran messes with the characters long before making any kind of physical move against them. Mostly, it uses the “Clockwork Servant” Pandoran Transmutation against them from afar. Cars lurch forward into them. Doors open into their faces. Manhole covers drop out from beneath them as the characters walk over them. The environment seems to work against them.

When the time comes that either the Timekeeper attacks them or they attack the Timekeeper, they’ll find that the Pandoran is surprisingly chatty. The creature may verbally comment on a number of things:

- Before getting too deep in conversation, he’ll ramble on about Detroit in a manner that makes little sense: “. . . the fuel mix might’ve been too rich, *too rich*, and that’s why the engine died. And then they killed the public clock, and the public needs a clock, it’s what keeps these monkeys together, what keeps them on a *schedule*. Nobody wanted all that winding, all that *maintenance*. How do you know the journey’s over if you don’t have a gods-damned clock?”
- The Pandoran may note that there’s someone else “like them but not like them” who lurks sometime beneath the city, sometime just outside of it. The Timekeeper says that he’s “crazy as Flux with fire in his eyes.”
- The Timekeeper might elicit a moment of grim sympathy, suddenly breaking out in weeping and claiming that he can’t really control what he is, just as the characters can’t control who they are. But at least *they* have a way out if they work hard enough. “Not us,” the Timekeeper hisses. “We’re hungry forever.” After this, he attacks with renewed vigor.

The creature makes a persistent enemy throughout the story if desired, though you may want him dispatched early. If so, fine. If you want to keep him around, his strategy allows him to get in a bite or a bit of ripped flesh so he can feed just before fleeing again only to return later to renew his attacks (always announcing his presence with Clockwork Servant).

Tick-Tock, What Clock?

It takes four successes on a Research roll (each roll equals 30 minutes of work) for characters to learn that, sure enough, Detroit has had several clock tower projects in the works. Every time they fail to manifest for one reason or another (funding, politics, council claims a clock requires overly complex mechanisms and upkeep). The closest the city has gotten is installing a small art installation at the front of the historic Himmelhoch Building. The installation is two lit murals of the city traversed by automated bars of light, with each light representing either hours or minutes. Oddly,

some people seem easily hypnotized by this clock, and often stand staring for several minutes, and some stay for hours. Characters must succeed on a Resolve + Composure roll to pull away.

The Half-Formed

At some point during Act One, the throng encounters one of the Half-Formed. (See p. XX for more information on “Unusual Attacks” across the city.) This section covers that initial encounter, as well as general information on the origin and nature of these aberrant creations.

Origin

As previously mentioned, Dr. David Dunleavy lost his son in a car accident (Dr. Dunleavy was the driver). Since that time, he has been wracked with guilt over the loss and has totally withdrawn from the world. Not long after the accident and initial trial, Dunleavy fled his home and tangled life, and has since been living hand-to-mouth amid the urban ruins of Detroit.

A genetic counselor (Dunleavy advises soon-to-be parents on the genetic concerns and predispositions that may be visited upon their as-yet unborn children), Dunleavy has a firm, if largely theoretical, scientific background. He has very little hands-on experience when it comes to genetic engineering.

Sadly, that hasn’t stopped him from trying. Given over to madness born out of overwhelming grief, Dunleavy became convinced of his ability to resurrect his son as a clone of the original boy. Over the last several months, David has established a down-and-dirty lab on the upper floor of a derelict auto-body factory in the part of town known as Milwaukee Junction (a description of the factory and lab can be found in Act Two, p. XX). Unfortunately, Dunleavy’s relative inexperience and persistent lunacy didn’t allow his grotesque cloning efforts to bear any fruit.

It was just over a month ago that Dunleavy turned to the occult to ameliorate his scientific effort. He shadowed the New Age and occult bookstores, asking a lot of “hypothetical” questions and buying up scads of black market books and artifacts to help him in his crusade. Even still, bringing so-called magic to the table with regard to his experiment still failed to give it the success his son deserved.

That’s when Moses Moon came back to town, and a local store owner told Dunleavy all about what Moon had reportedly been able to do (i.e., “raise the dead”). The doctor didn’t want to raise his son from the dead (the body was too far mangled and by now, decomposed), but clearly Moon was capable of great magic nevertheless. David decided to meet with this purported Lazarus, but Moon wouldn’t have anything to do with the doctor, claiming instead to be seeking rest and contemplation — and he advised the good doctor to do the same.

Dunleavy shot Moses Moon outside the Oculus Bookstore (see above, "The Death of Moses Moon") and stole his books, scrolls and what were supposedly enchanted icons. These materials provided Dunleavy's experiments with just the kick they required. But it wasn't meant to be, for while the strength of his obsession was finally at its pinnacle, what was born from his deviant and desperate will was most certainly not his son, Shaun.

Eventually, characters may learn some of this information through Dunleavy's journals, found in Act Two, and perhaps through interviewing various bookstore and New Age venue owners.

Botched Creation

Admittedly, the clone that crawled free from its dirty tank of pig's blood and amniotic fluid looked, at least a little, like Shaun. It *was* Shaun, but without any body hair, fingernails, nipples or even a full set of genitals. It was also without imperfections: no wrinkles, marks, moles or abrasions. The flesh was soft, and eerily smooth like plastic. The one thing this Half-Formed anomaly did possess was a set of poorly made teeth, sharp and jagged along the puckered, glistening gums.

The thing screamed as it was born, obviously in deep pain as its flesh gained depth and breadth in the bloody swirling waters of its generative tank. Dunleavy, hoping that it was in some way his son, helped it crawl free from the tank, swaddled it in a filth-crusted blanket and helped the creature cough up the gobs of knotty phlegm that remained thick in its throat. He tried to get it to speak. It couldn't. It only panted, moaned, gibbered. And then it attacked.

It bit into Dunleavy's thigh and removed a good hunk of his skin and pants. It chewed voraciously, hungry for more. The Half-Formed was implacable in its assault against the doctor, this time going for the throat. Somehow, David managed to get the upper hand: the thing slipped on a puddle of its own fluids, and when it hit the ground, Dunleavy slammed a chair down on its head until it stopped moving.

That's when Dunleavy noticed something. The generative tank was bubbling again. In its red and pink depths, he saw something floating in the dark of the tank: a heart, pulsing arrhythmically in the fluid. Cells swam to cells, and fibrous tissue formed. Another one was growing. With that realization, Dunleavy wept and fled.

Imperfect Duplication

Note that the Half-Formed aren't quite the same as the clones in *Promethean: The Created* or those found in the first chapter of this book. The clones and the Half-Formed are certainly similar, having diminished souls and incomplete bodies, but as noted below, the rules for the Half-Formed are a little different. The most important difference is

that Prometheans were not used or required in the creation of the Half-Formed. They *can* be, if that suits your game, in which case they should probably take on some characteristic that marks them as such. If the characters know of other Prometheans, perhaps that's what brings them to and keeps them in Detroit: what if Dunleavy used one of the throng's allies to fuel his cloning experiments?

Nature of the Beast

The Half-Formed are incomplete Prometheans. Dunleavy has created an out-of-control biological assembly line born of science and fueled by magic and alchemy. His obsession allowed the process to begin, but it was not enough to carry it through to a singular creation. And so what has resulted is a constant creation process, where more of these things grow and spawn and enter the world. The following rules apply when dealing with the Half-Formed:

- As incomplete Created, the Half-Formed have no Azoth score, Transmutations or traditional Bestowments. They can, however, be felt with Azoth Radiance. If a Promethean is within 10 feet of a Half-Formed, the Promethean has the chance to feel for the Radiance. When Azoth calls to Azoth, however, the Promethean finds that the connection is imperfect. It flickers like a guttering candle.

- They do not cause Disquiet or the Wasteland Effect, or suffer Torment. In some ways, however, the Half-Formed are caught in a constant state of Torment, and any human who sees them may not feel Disquiet, but certainly sees the creature as a freak.

- Half-Formed are capable of maintaining a small pool of Pyros, up to five points. They can only spend three Pyros per scene (at a rate of one per turn).

- Pyros can be spent in a few ways. One point of Pyros spent can increase one of the creature's Physical Attributes by +3 for a single turn. One point of Pyros can be spent to heal a point of bashing or lethal damage. And finally, one Pyros can be spent to gain a dot of Armor (as the Pandoran Transmutation) as the creature's skin becomes waxy and tough. This lasts for the remainder of the scene.

- Pyros is regained by eating raw meat. Only one point of Pyros can be reclaimed per day when eating the meat of an animal. Human flesh restores Pyros at approximately one point per pound of raw meat consumed (if eating a corpse, the corpse cannot have been dead for more than eight hours or it fails to provide Pyros).

- When the Half-Formed's Pyros pool is empty, the creature succumbs to terrible pain. His body is wracked



with tightness and constriction, and all rolls are made at a -1 die penalty until Pyros can be reclaimed.

- The ragged teeth of the Half-Formed allow them to do +1 damage when biting. This damage is lethal, but still requires a successful grapple.

- For every 12-hour period spent within a 100 yards' proximity to a Promethean, the Half-Formed gains a point of Pyros. The feeling is somewhat addictive, and a Half-Formed may strive to remain in the presence of a Promethean not only for the Pyros, but for the euphoric feeling it creates in the botched monster.

First Encounter

The exact nature of how the characters discover one of the Half-Formed is up to you. Three suggestions follow:

- One of the Half-Formed shadows the throng for as long as it can without being spotted, basking in the throng's presence. (The Half-Formed stats, including those for Stealth, are found below under "Dramatic Personae.") The Half-Formed attempts to remain within the 100-yard radius that earns it occasional Pyros and pleasure. Shadowing rules can be found on p. 76 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. Upon discovery, the creature remains

at a distance unless approached. If the characters approach calmly, it flees. If they're aggressive, it attacks.

- Upon looking for a lair or wandering around the city, the characters hear something: a *chewing* sound, like a dog wolfing down hunks of ground beef. Soon, they smell fresh blood. If they approach, they find one of the Half-Formed eating off the leg of a freshly killed woman. Her body bears the marks of other bite attacks. The thing looks up like a deer in headlights, blood and stringy gore hanging from its chin. It pauses and appears subject to a moment of ecstasy as the throng approaches. Still, it doesn't like its meal being interrupted. It attacks.

- The characters may only indirectly encounter one of these things. In a scene that might elicit curiosity and mercy, the characters come upon one of these things beset by a group of humans. It might be police officers beating the Half-Formed, calling it "monster," or a group of cruel teens whipping it with chains and spitting on it. The thing howls in agony, unable to muster human language to reflect its misery. Maybe it dies. Maybe the characters save it. Their actions determine this awful creature's fate.

Distorted Reflections

Much as Prometheans are a broken, distorted reflection of humans, the Half-Formed are distorted reflections of the Created. The Half-Formed are held to life by a flickering whip of Divine fire.

What does this mean to Prometheans? It can mean a number of things. One Created might note that, hey, at least they're not the bottom of the food chain anymore. A character might see the Half-Formed as a plague to be destroyed, while another character might see them as a target for Redemption. (Act Two has rules for potentially Redeeming the Half-Formed and making them into full Prometheans.) You might be able to tie a number of milestones to the throng's interactions with the Half-Formed. Can a character exhibit the human side of either mercy or cruelty when interacting with these things? Does Redeeming the Half-Formed ahead of their own potential salvation fulfill a critical sacrificial role? Is destruction a kind act born of mercy and pity, or a punishing act made of wrath and scorn?

Further Encounters

At some point, the characters suffer through more encounters with these things, the purpose of each encounter being to let the characters know that more than one Half-Formed exists. Of course, the characters might mistakenly assume that the one they killed before has somehow resurrected itself. If the throng makes such an assumption, fine. Let the characters operate on that belief for a time while they try to decide what to do with the creature. Maybe they kill it, maybe they capture it, maybe they let it follow them around and skulk in the shadows like some kind of bedraggled stray. Eventually, they're forced to reconsider because while dealing with this one, they see or hear of another, providing proof that more than one of these things exists. From this point forward, feel free to stage various encounters with the Half-Formed throughout the rest of this chapter. Maybe the characters find the Half-Formed chasing down a pack of schoolchildren, interrupting construction workers or hiding in a dark warehouse surrounded by various half-eaten animal carcasses.

To the Source

Characters may want to track these things to their source. They have a number of ways to do this.

Establish a Pattern

Scouring news reports (through newspapers, TV news, police reports, etc.) requires a Research roll with eight suc-

cesses required, and each roll equals a half-hour of time. The Research shows the characters that several of these things have been spotted across the city. One attacked a woman and fled when she stabbed it with an umbrella. Another ate a dog along the railroad tracks in the middle of town. One dismissed report from 7 Mile Road claims that two of them were fighting to break into a family's row house. The reports aren't connected, and nobody seems to have drawn any hard conclusions as of yet (though for flavor you might mention a blogger's report that these things represent a conspiracy regarding a disease born of some CDC experiment gone horribly awry). The picture of the attacks should unfold as characters achieve successes. By the time a full load of successes is gained, the characters have found every instance of the Half-Formed in the city.

From this, the characters can draw a pattern. A Wits + Academics roll allows them to draw a tightening circle around the attacks and infer that the approximate center of these attacks is somewhere in the factory district (known as Milwaukee Junction). Alternatively, an Intelligence + Science roll might allow them to establish a "feeding pattern," as one might do with wolves or lions, and thus allow the characters to determine its "lair." Finally, a Wits + Occult roll may grant the characters a chance to see a strange alchemical symbol in the attacks — one that represents the result of *mercury sublimate*, which in alchemy can represent dissolution and decay. Any successful rolls point to the factory district as the likeliest "center" for the reflective activity. Note that the attacks do not perfectly line up with this alchemical symbol, but create the symbol's imperfect form. Its imperfection is perhaps appropriate, given the botched nature of the Half-Formed clones.

Elpis

Provided that the story of the Half-Formed can be somehow tied into that character's milestones (not a difficult feat, seeing as how the Half-Formed represent many milestone opportunities throughout this chapter), the character may then use Elpis to help guide his search for the nexus of these stunted creatures.

Elpis visions provide clues pointing toward the factory district. The first clue is given as a vision revealing a churning factory with tall smokestacks. The stacks blow blood-red smoke. Out of the front door of the factory comes a conveyor belt, and the belt continues to spit out limbs and torsos. All of them look like the Half-Formed the throng has encountered. (It's possible that characters may mistakenly believe that Zug Island, with its smokestacks, is the location. Let them assume this; they'll find eventually that this isn't true, as they find no evidence to support the claim. Note that Zug Island workers are unusually opposed to outsiders as they believe the workers have earned enmity for keeping such well-paying factory jobs, so assume they only have three dice to resist Disquiet.)

Subsequent clues might include two railroad tracks intersecting, images of the Half-Formed interspersed with various

car parts (eyes as headlights, fangs of rust-pocked chrome, one arm is instead a broken car door hanging limp at the creature's side) or three letters (DDD) scratched into the rust of a decrepit car bumper.

Carla Two

If all else fails, Carla Two contacts the throng. She asks them to meet her back at her lair, where she has captured one of the Half-Formed.

She's got the thing pinned beneath a fallen refrigerator in her tenement apartment. The thing lies beneath the old appliance, moaning and wailing. Neighbors pound on the wall. Angry Dragoon Court residents line up at her door, yelling and screaming for her to "shut up." Disquiet has clearly taken hold.

Carla is ignoring them, and seems very excited at her find. She claims the thing was stalking her, and she was able to lure it back to the housing project where she captured it. She has drawn a new chalk image on the floor around the thing's wailing head: a skyline of factories churning out thin wisps of dark smoke. She'll tell the throng that she knows where this thing comes from, and that more of them are "growing." She says they'll need to go to the factory district.

Madness in Tight Spaces

The end of Act One comes in a sudden explosion of force and chaos. Two things happen in close succession. One, the Half-Formed is able to regain some Pyros from being in the continued presence of Prometheans. The Half-Formed increases its Strength and throws off the fridge and begins flailing and writhing about. It attacks inanimate objects (including the fridge). The thing also attacks Carla and the characters, acting like a caged beast. Moments later, Disquiet finally brings the mob into the apartment.

The mob is insane, made only more so by the screaming, thrashing Half-Formed. Some of them are destitute people who use their fists. Others are gangbangers or drug addicts carrying weapons (no guns, mostly small knives, bike chains and brass knuckles). While most of the mob has stats equivalent to the Homeless Guy or Gangbanger antagonists (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 204–205), one or two are hopped up on methamphetamines (see "Drugs" in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 176–177).

The Half-Formed tries to escape through the window, where a rickety fire escape partially collapses as the thing clambers out. Characters trying to get out and safely down the broken fire escape must succeed on an extended Climbing roll. The fire escape is four floors up, and so requires four successes. The roll is made at a –4 dice penalty because of the loose moorings of the fire escape and because of all the trash Carla Two tossed outside. Jumping from her window is 40 feet down, thus incurring damage from terminal velocity. Characters may also beat their way free, or somehow force the mob back outside. The throng controls how this scene occurs.

The Half-Formed may perish in this scene. If it does, its demise is a grisly scene. The body seems to also *deflate* in a hissing, gurgling eruption of blood, bile and other fluids.

This chaotic scene represents the end of Act One.

Act One Milestones

This first act is rife with possible milestones. The Dragoon Court housing project is thick with the human experience: some who the system has left behind and kept down, others who seem to prefer their place as kings of the shitpile. Prometheans can reflect on the nature of humanity here, and what it is to sacrifice yourself — or others — just to scrape by. Greater milestones might be achieved if they choose to live among these people, sharing their experiences despite the Disquiet and Wasteland, putting themselves in the center of this poverty and decay.

Carla Two also represents potential milestone fulfillment. Here is proof that Prometheans can change and grow and are not necessarily fixed in their ways. She seems oddly happy despite the long suffering of the Saturnine Night. A morose, Tormented character may find some hope (and possibly Vitriol) in this.

Other elements provide interesting Pilgrimage opportunities. The death of Moses Moon represents the end of one potential plotline, but also puts the spotlight on grief and mourning, and shows that a man who can purportedly raise the dead can be seen as a celebrity in the right eyes. Does a character seek to claim a piece of that celebrity for himself? Or does it show him that people's priorities are truly disturbed, focused more on giving life to the dead instead of living life themselves? The Glaser Company, too, provides closure to a story, and also reveals the broad depths to which a company will go to achieve its goals: while the people working in such companies have souls, the corporations are clearly soulless.

Finally, the Half-Formed. Although greater opportunity for milestones exist in regards to these not-quite-Prometheans, here characters may find the fulfillment of lesser milestones. If a character hopes to destroy the Half-Formed, what does that say about what Prometheans deserve from the world? If even disgusting creatures such as the Half-Formed can elicit sympathy, doesn't that imply that there's hope for the throng, too?

Act Two: Lights Out!

In this act, the characters track the Half-Formed to their source, encounter a powerful Promethean and endure a citywide power outage.

The Meat Factory

Milwaukee Junction (the factory district) was once the nexus of Detroit's automobile industry. During the early part of the 20th century, the Ford Piquette Avenue plant was considered the biggest auto-manufacturing factory in this burgeoning industry. Decades later, the industry only grew, with factories providing parts for all stages of car manufacturing, from auto bodies to electrical systems. Milwaukee Junction was where they made both the flesh and bones for just about every automobile an American could drive.

This factory district served also as the nexus between various railroad systems, thus allowing the car manufacturers to roll out shipments on train cars with ease. In World War II, some factories were claimed and used by the government for munitions and vehicle manufacturing, and after the war returned to the service of the automakers.

Lately, though, time hasn't been so kind to Milwaukee Junction. Now, it's mostly a ghost town of dead factories and urban jungle, with trees and grasses sprouting up through the steel and concrete, and ivy climbing through the thousands of busted-out windows. Some factories still have working parts, but simply go unused. Others are totally dead, sitting as burned-up, bombed-out gutted husks. (Detroit has long been plagued by arsonists. Various factories have been cast into flame, such as the old Studebaker plant that now sits as a charred remnant of what it once was.) The characters come to the factory district, not really knowing what they're looking for. That's to be expected: they can tour the area, seeing how this entire region has crumbled and corroded. How can humankind let such an area go to ruins around them? It's all scrap: busted brick, rusty nails, broken windows and pitted earth. It's a Wasteland but without the Prometheans. (Milestone alert: If a character realizes that humankind is responsible for marking the earth with his own brand of Wasteland, such a revelation might be worth a Vitriol point or two.)

Eventually, after they characters have wandered the avenue and train tracks and maybe gone in some buildings, they must succeed on a Wits + Composure roll. Success indicates they catch sight of a Half-Formed staggering out of a building, naked and shivering, barely able to stand. He's still slick with gobbets of tissue and a sheen of pinkish fluid. He's only recently been "born," and the characters now know from what building these things are crawling.

That building is the Fisher Body Plant #22, a seven-story concrete corpse once used to manufacture the bodies of cars. It has been in total disuse since the early 1980s, and looks more like it's suffered from an earthquake than neglect.

Walls are crumbling. Bathrooms lie bare without walls, the urinals and toilets exposed and half-shattered (some used as trashcans, others as receptacles for dead animals such as cats or raccoons). Inside and outside the factory lie hunks of twisted steel and lots of garbage. The garbage tells the characters one thing: they may not be alone.

Through the Plant

The trip through the plant should be frightening, because even in the daylight there are parts that lie concealed in long strips of impenetrable shadow. The following elements are in play throughout the characters' journey within the factory:

- The first floor is empty, though sounds echo from above. The sounds are human: an occasional disembodied chuckle, a distant weeping, a glossolalian goblin-esque gibber.
- Getting from floor to floor requires going up some dank stairwells at either end of the factory, because the freight elevators have no power (though Transmutations such as Jolt or Generator can change that). The stairwells are clogged with hunks of concrete, furniture and garbage. Characters can clamber past the junk, but getting from one floor to the next requires an extended Dexterity + Athletics roll. Each transition from floor to floor requires seven successes, with each roll equal to a minute's worth of time. Failure indicates a character is stuck and may be freed by another character's Strength + Athletics roll. Dramatic failure indicates the character is stuck and takes a single point of lethal damage from a sharp hunk of metal or glass.
- While walking around any of the production facilities found on the ground floor of the factory, characters may need to occasionally make a Wits + Composure roll to avoid a danger — a falling hunk of stone, a swinging beam, a floor of hidden glass. The Danger Sense bonus applies. Failure results in at least a single level of lethal damage taken from dangerous surroundings. Dramatic failure means a character becomes trapped or more seriously injured.

Fresh Meat

As the throng progresses through the factory, a few of the upper levels (mostly industrial offices gone to ruin) give off the ripe stink of death. If the throng checks it out, they find a grisly scene.

This was obviously a squatter domain. Because this area was composed of offices, it was safer than the lower levels, and so homeless people, drug addicts and other discarded citizens made this their home. These people are all dead.

They're not just dead. They've been *eaten*. Some of them have half their flesh stripped off, bitten away from the bone like meat from a stringy drumstick. Others are worse, mostly skeletons in dirty jackets and pants, the bones red and brown with old muscle and blood.

These people have been dead for awhile. Characters may make a Wits + Medicine roll to give a quick estimation that

tells them the corpses are in varying stages of decomposition. Some are weeks dead. Some are relatively fresh. Most are given over to maggots and beetles. The air is thick with squat black flies (so distracting that they confer a -1 die penalty to any Physical actions made while on this floor).

Three Half-Formed are present. Two are feasting on corpses right next to each other, while a third tries to get in on either meal and is constantly pushed away by the other two. The Half-Formed who are feasting seem to be gaining no sustenance from the dead meat: they eat, spit it out, moan in pain and horror and then try to eat some more.

The Laboratory

The top floor of the auto-body plant was once used for storage: wooden crates and scrap metal ring the room, and along the far wall sit about 100 corroded car doors stacked against the brick.

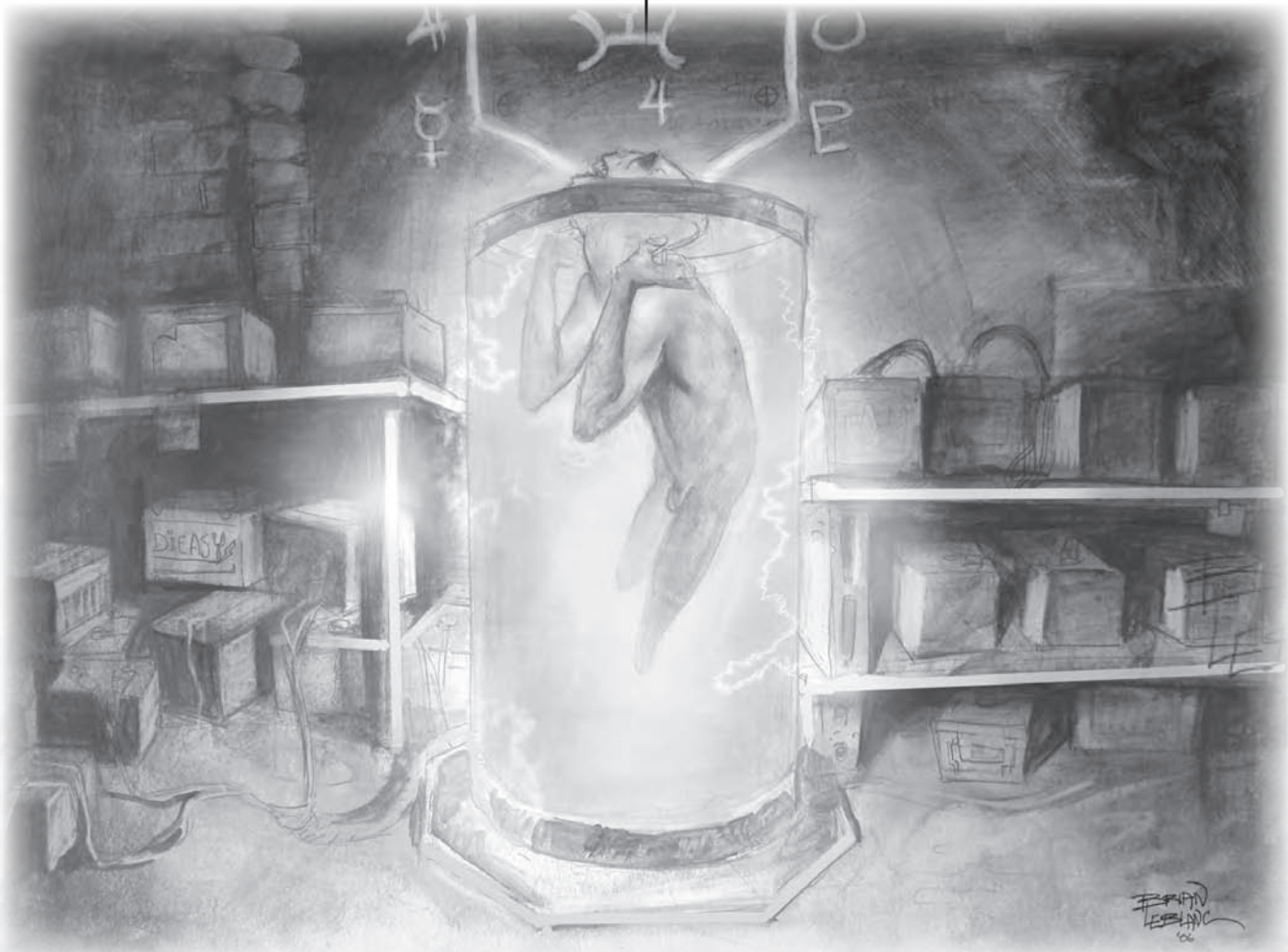
This is where Dunleavy established his makeshift laboratory. The place is well-lit during the day, because the ceiling is broadly slanted and features many windows (most of which are dirty but undamaged).

The laboratory represents a crude amalgamation of science and the occult. The characters can immediately notice the following:

- A wall of car batteries sits at the back wall, with wires leading from each to a single duct-taped cable. This cable leads into a filthy Plexiglas tank that sits about five feet tall on the ground. The cylindrical tank is filled with a murky pinkish fluid that occasionally coruscates with a white wisp of electricity.

- Inside the tank is approximately half of a Half-Formed creature. Its head, arms and upper torso are complete, and part of its face is cresting out of the turbid fluid. Its lower half seems to be forming before the characters' very eyes — little bits of tissue seem to grow out of the liquid and drift toward the body, where they attach, bit by bit. As they're looking, the face rises slowly from the fluid — when the mouth is exposed minutes after the throng's arrival, the thing gurgles and wails in obvious pain. This process causes the Half-Formed great misery during the entire "birth."

- The place is in total disarray. Tables are overturned. Science equipment such as microscopes lay broken against



the ground. Bookshelves are toppled, with their books bent and torn on the floor.

- Not far from the tank sits three rusted wire cages. In each cage is a dead animal. The first cage holds a dead dog. In the second is a dead monkey (a Wits + Science roll reveals that it's a rhesus monkey), and the third a chimpanzee. They've been dead a long time. The chimpanzee features something the others do not, however: its left arm dead ends in a human hand, fused to the creature's arm with thick metal staples. All the animals are crawling with maggots.

Investigation

A successful Wits + Investigation roll reveals the following:

- Moses Moon's notebooks sit crumpled up beneath a pile of other scientific and occult tomes. While many pages are stained and unreadable, some are still legible. One page reads: "*. . . rubies and water made to blood, dust and marble and corpse-flesh made into sinew. This isn't a lie, this is real. I've seen them and I shall make my own from water. Death given a short, sharp shock may again see life, and if that life is given its own short, sharp shock it can be something more. We all need that kind of shock, I think. This creation shall be mine. As Gerhardt Dorn wrote, 'Transmute yourselves from dead stones into living philosophical stones.'*" These notebooks can provide a +1 die bonus to the Humanity roll used in the generative act when creating another Promethean (see p. 187, **Promethean: The Created**). The bonus is increased to +2 if the Promethean is an Osiran.

- In a small red pouch cast under a collapsed table sits a simple amulet marked with Moses Moon's initials. The amulet is a bezoar (i.e., a hardened agglomeration of hair and fibers found in an animal's or human's stomach) wrapped in copper wire and hung from a brown leather cord. The amulet is tagged by a yellowed piece of paper (actually an old movie ticket whose only remaining ink indicates a Boston, Massachusetts, theater), tied to the item with a piece of ratty string. Upon this tag are the words: "bezoar. Lighthouse, stomach. —witness." A character who wears this amulet experiences the *feeling* of being re-born as an Osiran Promethean named Lighthouse (see "Strangers on a Hill," the story in **Strange Alchemies**). This gut-wrenching awakening in brackish fen water seems to take many minutes, but only takes a second in real-time. (Wearing the amulet provides a single point of Vitriol to the first Promethean to wear it.)

- Dr. David Dunleavy's journals sit atop a high metal cabinet. The journals make it clear that Dunleavy set up this laboratory. The journals chronicle his journey from just after his son's death to an entry detailing the slow growth of his first Half-Formed clone (an entry written with a trembling hand and detailing his great hope and delight). Dunleavy's entire story is laid bare in highly controlled, block-letter script that becomes wild as the journal progresses. He details his journey into cloning and his addition of "magic" into the mix using Moon's notes. The journal also details how, from

time to time, he sits outside his ex-wife Mira's house at night and watches her from the road. If characters attempt to use his various journals when creating a Promethean, doing so *hampers* the generative act. The Humanity roll made suffers a –2 dice penalty if using Dunleavy's notes.

Science

A successful Wits + Science roll reveals the following:

- The brick walls, wooden floor and much of the equipment are painted with various symbols, all in black. At least half of these are symbols representing science and math: transfinite numbers, chevrons, lemniscates (i.e., the sideways '8' indicating infinity), Borromean rings and triangles. They don't seem to mean much in coordination, scrawled with no apparent pattern in mind.

- The room offers much in the way of salvageable lab equipment: a microscope, a few Erlenmeyer flasks, scale and weighing dishes and one syringe. The lab also features a lot of broken items: smashed microscopes, a demolished centrifuge, a dozen busted beakers.

- The center of the room has a human-shaped stain beneath a collapsed bookcase. This stain can be found without any roll, but examining the nature of the stain requires the Science roll. The stain's makeup seems ostensibly human: blood, bile, hair. A few sharp teeth (nearly like shark's teeth) sit embedded in the floor. But all of it seems partly scorched, as if the mess was run over with a torch flame. (This stain is the Half-Formed that Dunleavy destroyed before fleeing.)

Occult

A successful Wits + Occult roll grants the following:

- Mingled in with scientific symbols are a number of alchemical symbols. Most of them seem ragtag, without any meaning. One shows up more than others, though: the symbol for alchemical Vitriol. Also mixed in with the symbols are the three letters found in Carla Two's lair: DDD. Characters may confirm that these are the initials of Dr. David Dunleavy.

- Most of the journals and symbols indicate more than just a connection to alchemy. The lab also features a proliferation of Egyptian symbols and occult ideas, clearly gleaned from Moses Moon's journals.

- A map on the wall of Detroit (flecked with blood and ash) is marked with a number of blue pins. One red pin indicates the lab's location. Looking closely reveals that the blue pins seem to mark a "connect-the-dots" symbol of *mercury sublimate*, a powerful intestinal poison that, in alchemy, is linked with something called the "secret fire." Characters at this point might be able to link the Half-Formed sightings with this map — the two overlap much of the time. Did Dunleavy predict their pattern or purposefully invoke it? Note that the symbol, just as the Half-Formed, is imperfect. It's lopsided, wrong-leaning. Does that infer a flaw in the "secret fire" Dunleavy hoped to harness when creating his clones?

Sudden Radiance

When the characters have examined some of the laboratory, they need to succeed on a Wits + Azoth roll to detect a sudden tingle of Radiance. This Radiance is different from normal. It feels less like vague tingling, and more like an intense feeling of pins and needles. The characters also smell a pungent odor like burnt hair.

Putting on a search for the source of this Radiance turns up nothing, at least not for a while. Whoever the source of the Azoth is, he's either hiding or powerful enough that he's far off and still able to reach them with his Radiance.

Fate of the Laboratory

If the characters leave the lab unharmed, it continues to churn out Half-Formed at one every eight hours. If they destroy the lab — or at least the mechanisms that spawn the gibbering clones — then the steady growth of new Half-Formed ceases (though a handful of them still exist in the city).

Perhaps the characters continue to watch the laboratory, standing as its vigilant guardians, destroying or capturing or even attempting to rehabilitate those Half-Formed that come howling into existence. For rehabilitation, see below under “Making the Half Whole.”

Cancer Boy

For as long as you wish, the throng remains aware of the “burnt hair” odor and numbing Azoth tingle. It lingers with them like a long calm before the inevitable storm.

The preferred method of introducing the Promethean known as Cancer Boy is to have the characters track him down. It's no easy feat, since Azoth Radiance gives no direction, or strengthen as one gets closer to the radiant Promethean.

The characters can attempt to track down the signs of a Wasteland. Not knowing what kind of Wasteland to expect, however, incurs some difficulty. An extended Wits + Occult roll with a –3 dice penalty allows the characters to track the subtle signs of impending Wasteland. Five successes are necessary. Each roll is equivalent to two hours' worth of wandering and searching if on foot, and one hour if driving, with eight total successes required.

Characters may also ask around and see if anybody's noticed anything odd. Detroit has a lot of people, and asking random questions isn't likely to yield instant information: this requires an extended Presence + Persuasion roll (though variant approaches might replace Persuasion with either Socialize or Intimidation); this roll suffers a –3 dice penalty, which worsens to –5 if Disquiet begins to affect the populace as the throng passes. Ten successes are required, and each roll is equivalent to six people questioned, which is further equivalent to 30 minutes. (We note the number of people for purposes of potentially tracking Disquiet.) Characters may also examine those they meet for Disquiet. This is

tricky, but a Wits + Empathy roll with a –3 dice penalty may allow the characters to find the telltale signs of Disquiet. If they find mounting Disquiet, they may follow it along like a trail of breadcrumbs, moving from affected person to affected person until they find an area clearly touched by a Promethean.

Any action on the part of the throng should eventually yield some fruit. All searches take them to the Highland Park area of Detroit, a neighborhood about four miles north of Milwaukee Junction. (See “Highland Park” in the beginning of this chapter, p. 117) This area is marked by an unusual Wasteland effect: the walls seem marked with human-shaped shadows, and trees and animals are sometimes afflicted with what look like cancerous keloids or small tumors. The people seem sick, too, with skin that looks washed-out or bruised. Everybody seems to have thousand-mile stares, looking off at nothing. Prostitutes line dark avenues along rotten houses, so skinny that their gaudy garb hangs off them like a shirt on a scarecrow. Drug dealers mill about, looking like shadows or ghosts.

If the characters wander into this neighborhood, Cancer Boy comes to them. If they do not actively search out the source of the odd Azothic Radiance, he eventually finds them wherever they are. (Description and stats for Cancer Boy are found at the end of this chapter, under “Dramatis Personae.”)

A Strange Measure...

Cancer Boy places a great deal of faith in his Measure, and he lets this be known. He'll immediately tell them that it's been a long time since he's seen another of their kind. He gives a great deal of scrutiny to the throng, and he seems oblivious to the goings-on around him while he does so (if they're in the middle of the street, he'll ignore oncoming cars until he feels satisfied in his Measure).

Cancer Boy is overtly and almost eerily friendly to all the characters, but he eventually speaks only to the member of the throng who fares best during the Measure (i.e., the Promethean marked by the least Torment). If they're all equally saddled with a great deal of past Torment, he may bid them goodbye and simply walk away, but it's likely that he finds at least one of them whose Azoth he can tolerate.

...A Stranger Ramble

He invites the throng to sit with him and talk for a time, and he takes them to his lair. On the corner of Woodward and 6 Mile sits a single house that seems almost compressed in by oddly growing trees (these trees give the appearance of two hands crushing the building between their slowly creeping grip). This home is his lair.

He takes them to the second floor, which is better shaded and concealed than the first, because downstairs the walls are perforated with huge holes of missing brick and mortar. Upstairs, he's built fortifications out of busted couches and chunks of wall and floor.

The characters immediately notice the pair of Half-Formed that sit lurking in the shadowed corners of the second floor. They're chained to the walls. They seem oddly content. Cancer Boy comes over and pets them as a human would a dog. One of them mouths the word "food" in a groaning croak, and Cancer Boy tells it to wait, he'll get them both something when he's done talking to his "new friends." If pressed on this subject, for the moment he says nothing more than, "They hunted me, so I hunted them in return. They make *excellent* pets!"

A successful Wits + Composure roll reveals old bloodstains in various parts of his lair. If asked about them, Cancer Boy grows somber for a moment and notes that, sometimes, people come to him and wish him harm. He says no more on the subject.

It doesn't take long for Cancer Boy to ramble about his days as a Promethean. He claims to have been "made" not long ago: nearly 20 years before by his account, here in Detroit at the Fermi II nuclear plant. His tale skips around, and vacillates between time periods and locations, and he claims to have met very few other Prometheans (though he seems to have encountered nearly constant Pandoran resistance). His tale is notable in a few ways:

- He claims to be a believer in and servant to God. Not necessarily the Christian God, but he holds up the Bible, the Torah and the Qu'ran as "interesting evidence." He claims that humankind is good and powerful, but has lost its moral center. Humanity "needs God to return to this world." Cancer Boy references the Jewish Golem and the giant Nephilim from Biblical lore, though he doesn't seem to know what these really *mean* in context. He may also ramble on about the Jews being enslaved by the Babylonians and Moses leading his people to the Promised Land. He also mentions the holy conquests of Mohammed. (He's a mouthpiece for this information, but doesn't seem capable of parsing it with his own thought.)

- He seems further fascinated by notions of sacrifice, specifically of animals, humans or sacred figures dying for the greater good. He goes off on a tangent about organ donors, animals used in medical testing, Jesus Christ and men thrown into peat bogs or killed upon altars in an effort to satisfy the old gods. This subject enlivens him more than any other. His eyes go wide, and he talks of sacrifice with childish, wondrous delight.

- Just as Carla Two, he believes his journey through the Saturnine Night is near its end. He has a "few more things to do." He also believes that the characters are nearing the ends of their respective journeys, as well, and he'll note this with pleasure. He tells the characters that he can help them get to their final reward, provided they help him get to his. He believes that great glory awaits them all, if they care to chase it. After explaining this, he'll claim that he's tired and has not slept for days, and would like time to rest.

Reaction

Do the characters believe Cancer Boy? A successful Wits + Empathy roll tells them that he's certainly earnest about his promises. That said, Cancer Boy is odd. While he may not read exactly as a Centimanus, it's still worth considering. His attitude and delight regarding such topics as sacrifice and religion should at least give the characters pause. So, what do they do?

If they leave to let him rest, fine, he'll contact them later. If they linger, he may grow discontented with their presence. And if they attack him?

He first attempts to subdue them. He wants to be their ally, and takes a few blows while trying to speak reasonably about the rewards he can offer them. If they seem determined, he'll allow his Half-Formed "pets" to enter the picture. If he suffers too many injuries, he'll attempt to escape, leaving his pets behind to delay and distract.

And if the characters destroy him? Assume first that he's capable of one resurrection, but if you'd prefer Cancer Boy out of the picture, no problem. Assume that the characters defeat him and his pets. A subsequent Wits + Investigation roll reveals a ratty, filthy journal that details Cancer Boy's aspirations (which, if alive, he vocalizes throughout this story). This should still allow them access to the rest of the story, as his journal mentions the God Machine and its ambiguous ability to grant "transcendence." Note, however, that this journal needn't exist if Cancer Boy remains alive.

Tailored Offerings

Consider the possibility of having Cancer Boy offer the characters something more particular than the ambiguous "transcendence." Let him dangle more specific rewards over their heads, offering the Prometheans something specifically suited to their stories. Does he know where one of their creators is hiding? Will he promise to teach them some of his strange Transmutations? Can he serve up their enemies — a traitorous Promethean, a persistent Pandoran or a cruel Centimanus — on a silver platter? Feel free to connect this to some earlier stories, too. Will he help them shut down the mining company from "To the Wastes?" Can he contribute to their search for Lighthouse or Moses Moon (both from "Strangers on a Hill")?

Cancer Boy, ultimately, is about hollow promises. It's unlikely that he'll fulfill any of these promises, but he can certainly make them. Alternately, maybe he has to throw one or two small rewards in the characters' direction to keep them hooked.

Interim

At this stage in the story, the throng has a break in the action. This break allows the characters to attend to their own stories and Pilgrimages in Detroit. Below are some encounters that might take place during this interim. If characters' own stories need attending to, however, make sure that this time goes toward these more intimate and meaningful pieces. **Promethean** is a very personal game, and it would be an injustice to let character-driven threads go dangling.

Making the Half Whole

The Half-Formed remain a presence in the city whether or not the characters destroyed Dunleavy's lab. If the throng continues to pursue the Half-Formed as a story point, or even as a focal point for milestone completion, consider the following options.

Annihilation

Wiping out the Half-Formed might be a crusade the throng considers necessary. If the characters see the Half-Formed as a plague — or as creatures deserving of mercy killing — the characters may choose to hunt the clones down. Note that this takes them into direct conflict with Cancer Boy. He has taken two of them as beloved pets, and defends them with great violence (though if a fight occurs, he'll bail out of it before suffering too much damage himself). Harming his "pets" earns his automatic distrust. That said, it might be possible for the characters to kill his pets without him knowing. Once every few days, he goes out and brings them animals or humans to eat. He's gone for one to three hours during this time.

Enslavement

The Half-Formed can be taken as pets or slaves, as evidenced by Cancer Boy. Creativity is key when it comes to forcing the Half-Formed to heel. Do kind words and rewards of food lure them close? Or do they respond better to abuse? Characters might even couple their attempts with the kind of training one might use on a dog (feel free to let them add some or all of their Animal Ken dice to rolls). All such actions are extended, with each roll taking approximately one full day of training. Assume that it takes at least 10 successes to bring a Half-Formed to heel. They need to be fed, as well, during this time, or dice penalties may apply (as they only gain limited Pyros from Prometheans). By the end of training, it's possible that the Half-Formed slave is capable of speaking a few guttural words or pleas, such as "food" or "sleep" or other words that the throng teaches it.

Redemption

For characters willing to make the sacrifice, the Half-Formed can be made whole. If you deem it appropriate, a character can turn one of the Half-Formed into a full-fledged Promethean by sacrificing a dot of Azoth. Feel free to hint to the characters of this possibility either through Elpis dreams or through odd visions. Maybe Dunleavy's journal

or Moses Moon's notebooks hint at "a missing piece," or it could be that Cancer Boy or Carla Two says something that indicates the possibility of turning these creatures into something more.

If you allow this to occur, assume that the Half-Formed takes on the Lineage of the character who sacrificed the dots. (Alternately, reference Chapter One for more info on new Lineages.) Note that this shouldn't "just occur," but should be given some thematic resonance. A Nepri sacrifices her Azoth while holding the Half-Formed's head beneath the river, or a Tammuz buries the creature in a shallow grave of mud and gravel. No roll is necessary, and this doesn't count toward the actual creation of a "new" Promethean. That said, it *should* probably confer some Vitriol, likely as a result from achieving a sudden milestone. This is a lesson in sacrifice, and should let the Promethean recognize that if even a stunted creature such as that can be given a partial soul, then maybe she really has a shot at becoming human.

Consider, too, what happens if a Promethean is Tormented when she does this. Does this harm the new Promethean (or allow that Promethean to purchase Pandoran Transmutations from the get-go)? Is it possible that passing off tainted Azoth can replace a character's need to go to the wastes?

Alternately, this process can go awry. Maybe the Half-Formed splits into a terrible triumvirate of Pandorans, or simply expires in a hot flash of burning Azoth, blood and acid. The lesson learned is different, of course, but may be more appropriate to the tenor of your game. If it goes this way, any Azoth "sacrificed" should be regained.

Carla Two

Characters may rejoin with Carla Two for a time. Maybe they tell her about Cancer Boy (she'll wish to meet him), or maybe they fail to mention him (if she finds this out later, she acts betrayed and grief-stricken).

Consider, too, that she needs to find a new lair, as hers is besieged by a terrible wave of Disquiet (per the end of Act One) and is otherwise lost to the Wasteland. The search can be coupled with encounters throughout the city, driven by the prevalence of crime and poverty.

Pilgrimages and Side Stories

If this is truly the last (or at least a later) story in the chronicle, the characters have certainly built up their own sub-plots that link to them personally and drive their quests for Mortality. This period of the chapter allows you to attend to these unique connections. If they're allowed to dominate the main story, so be it. This is the characters' story, and any organized plot comes in second.

Consider during this time: Will one of the Prometheans attempt (or *re-attempt*) the generative act? Is the throng hunted by a persistent and cruel *Sublimatus*? Are the characters shepherded along by a bizarre and often contradictory *qashmal*? This chapter may have given them time away from



their own stories to pursue this overarching story thread. This is a good time to get back to these elements, reconnecting with their own intimate stories and thus ensuring their inclusion.

Cast into Darkness

And then, lights out. Detroit is suddenly plunged into a citywide power outage affecting the metro area (including all neighboring suburbs such as Ann Arbor, Grosse Pointe, Dearborn and Lincoln Park). When you decide to trigger this event is up to you, but it shouldn't happen until at least a few days have passed since the throng's initial meeting with Cancer Boy.

The power outage isn't easily explained. Within the first eight hours, Detroit Edison sends out white vans filled with its power company employees. Since television and radio broadcasts are now inaccessible to the broader public, the workers must use megaphones to tell the populace to stay calm. The workers claim that they're working around the clock to restore power, and that the outage happened as the result of a seasonal system overload (i.e., an HVAC burden). A Wits + Science roll helps a character realize that this isn't the likely truth: such a broadly persistent blackout isn't consistent with Detroit Edison's explanation.

Detroit's outage causes a number of expected consequences: food spoils, people die from the heat in summer or the cold in winter, medical and emergency services suffer and factories shut down and suffer loss of revenue from the lack of production. The outage also results in a number of other problems:

- The city doesn't riot. Frankly, most of its population is used to living in problematic conditions, so what's rioting going to do? Crime, however, sees a sharp spike. The characters may encounter thieves, addicts and killers at work. The Prometheans themselves may even take advantage of the outage to perform criminal misdeeds. If they don't directly encounter crime, they may be affected by it indirectly: cars are stolen or broken into, squatters crawl into their lair, allies and friends suffer.

- A lack of power forces people out of their homes and into perhaps uninvited contact with their neighbors. People suddenly have to deal with one another again. In some cases, this is inspiring: for instance, a group of citizens banding together to sing hymns or share food. In others, the characters witness instances of bullying or fighting brought on by increased tensions.

- Without power, the Prometheans have no access to electricity. This is an obvious point-of-fact, but needs to be taken into consideration because they use electricity to heal. While some locations (hospitals and other public buildings) have backup power, 99% of the city is without electricity.

- People pass rumors back and forth in a mad game of 'Whisper Down the Lane.' Characters are likely to hear

stories about how this is the government yet again plunging the African American community into disaster (as with Hurricane Katrina), or how this has to be the result of some as-yet-unknown terrorist attack. Conspiracy and urban legend thrive in this environment.

- At night, the city is completely dark. The city itself, when powered, is really a beacon — it lights the horizon 100 miles away. And now it's gone. Assume that operating in darkness will confer a number of penalties to rolls that require some kind of light to perform (anything from Research to Lockpicking). The average penalty is -3 dice, but that can vary.

Milestones in the Darkness

It's possible that during this time some milestones may see completion. In some ways, Detroit's citizens are thrown into a situation similar to what the Prometheans experience. The Created live in isolation, are forced to eat spoiled food and endure all manner of discomfort to survive. Another revelation, however small, is the fact that Western civilization obviously thrives on its connection to electricity. Since electricity is in many ways the "giver of life" and healing force when it comes to Prometheans (conducting Pyros), comprehending this fact may complete a milestone for the appropriate character (a Frankenstein, or maybe a Created who follows the human-connected path of Aurum, or Stannum, which is tied to the "Electrification" Transmutation).

Errands for Cancer Boy

The throng should be given a chance to revisit Cancer Boy in the midst of the power outage. Maybe they want to see how he's doing, or perhaps if he is in any way responsible (he was born in Detroit's own nuclear power plant, after all). If they don't go to see him, eventually he comes see them.

Provided that their relationship remains sound, he politely asks them to perform a task for him. If their relationship is strained or antagonistic, he may still come to them with this task in hand, but he instead demands that this task be completed "for the good of the city."

The task is for the characters to track down David Dunleavy and bring him to Cancer Boy. Cancer Boy claims that he'll "handle the rest." The Promethean won't offer any more information beyond that, but he gladly answers questions. When asked if he had anything to do with the power outage, he'll note with pride that he was fully responsible (though he won't explain how

other than his “divine might”). With minimal probing, Cancer Boy elucidates upon his theories and plans.

He claims that he has the power to bring God back into this world to save it. God will prepare the world and make it into the “Promised Land,” whereupon all death is given life. On this point, Cancer Boy is a *little* foggy as to whether or not this will give Prometheans a soul or whether it will allow all the dead to walk as Prometheans, but he seems unconcerned with this particular point of ambiguity. What he does believe with utter confidence is that he has found something called the “God Machine,” and that he must prepare the city for this “Living Engine.” He claims that humankind must be humble in the face of the God Machine. Seeing as how electricity is a carrier of Divine Fire, and only God is befitting of that source of power, then humankind must not flaunt its power in front of the divine. Hence, the God Machine must be given the sole glory of electricity. If humankind is allowed access to the Divine Fire at the time the Engine roars to life, God will be “most displeased.”

How?

Characters might never learn this, but it’s good to know exactly *how* Cancer Boy shuts down the Detroit Edison power grid. With creative use of the “Electrification” Transmutation (between alternating uses of Shock, Jolt, Generator and Blackout), Cancer Boy was able to wreak enough havoc on the system of the power company. It was already under strain (as illustrated by the brownouts and blackouts), and with Cancer Boy’s supernatural agitation of the system, it shut down. The Torment that went into the system has burned it beyond the capacity of humans to fix it easily.

God Machine

Characters researching the term “God Machine” may uncover some interesting information. The Research roll requires six successes, but each roll takes six hours of investigating due to the limited access of information (the power is out, and with it electronic catalogs and the Internet are unavailable). Note, too, that characters may have to break into a library or occult bookstore to even be allowed the Research attempt. That said, success on the roll grants the following:

- Two years ago, two employees of the Detroit Salt Company (owned and operated by the Glaser Company) shot up a schoolyard with semi-automatic rifles. Seven children and one teacher died, with others wounded. When questioned, the employees spoke of the need of sacrifice, and how “The God of the Salt Mine” demanded it. Before the trial, both men were found dead in their cells, alone, their throats slit and a gear-shaped symbol burned into their tongues with match tips.

- Professors at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor did a study on the contagious nature of hysteria. Key to their studies was a local unnamed mental health facility whose

patients all began to exhibit similar delusions. Some patients claimed to have been spoken to by the “God Machine.” Others claimed no such contact, but simply wrote the term on the walls of their room in blood and feces. They can’t remember having done so.

- Refer to “Voice of the Angel,” pp. 26–31 in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. The term “god-machine” is prevalent here. Research uncovers this odd tract in some old Gnostic or occult journal from several years back.

Words of the Pain Prophet?

How much you care to tie the words of Marco Singe in the **World of Darkness Rulebook** to this story is up to you. This chapter does not represent any kind of canonical mythology about Singe’s tract or the “god-machine,” but instead offers an unusual tale that creates the culmination of this particular **Promethean: The Created** chronicle. Certainly the story of the Pain Prophet has some interesting connections: the “third furg was named Torment,” and “what is fallen may rise again.” Looking for bits about the Created in this story isn’t hard, from the “Osiran age” to the inclusion of supposedly divine “electromagnetic waves.” Of course, all interpretations are in the mind of the interpreter, aren’t they?

Finding the Good Doctor

The characters may choose not to do Cancer Boy’s bidding, and that’s fine. (If they don’t, Carla Two takes up the mantle and seek out Dunleavy.) If they do choose to find him — whether to serve Cancer Boy’s wishes or to pursue their own interests such as warning him — then this section describes that pursuit.

Dunleavy’s journals are the key to finding him. He notes that he drives by his ex-wife’s place to spy on her and make sure she’s all right, and during this power outage that’s exactly where he’s gone. If the characters haven’t discovered this tidbit, they may make an extended Wits + Investigation roll to scour the journal for information. Five successes are necessary, and each roll represents 15 minutes of time. They find that he would drive down Newberry Place “over and over again” to look upon their old house. A quick phonebook search gives them an address.

Crisis

Dunleavy has taken his wife hostage, though he doesn’t see it that way. He believes he is protecting her from the outside world gone awry. They sit in her kitchen by the glow of a



fading Coleman lantern, with her duct-taped to a chair at the breakfast nook. She's gagged with towels except during those times when he feeds her. He has a gun (see Dunleavy's stats under "Dramatis Personae"), which he holds close most of the time. The house has a security system, but it is offline because of the outage. The front door has two locks: each lock requires four successes on a Lockpicking roll.

The characters have a few options. If they go into the house without applying any Stealth and make noise going in, Dunleavy suffers a fit of panic. He shoots his wife, an act that the throng doesn't have time to stop. He then attempts to shoot himself, which is something the characters may have time to stop by handling him physically or supernaturally. (Mesmerism in particular could be useful, even at low levels of the Transmutation; Fixed Stare and Flight Instinct, both one-dot Transmutations, could interrupt the doctor's suicide attempt.) Dunleavy's Initiative modifier can be found under "Dramatis Personae."

If they sneak in, they overhear Dunleavy talking and cooing to his wife in a nervous voice. The doctor believes that this power outage is his fault somehow, that the darkness

cast over the city comes as a result of judgment upon him and his hubris. He tells all of this to his wife over and over again while she sits bound and gagged. Sneaking in, the characters have a chance to surprise him (see pp. 151–152, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) before he pulls the trigger on his wife.

If they wait, Dunleavy comes out of the house after two hours to fidget over a cigarette. They can apprehend him standing out on the front stoop of the house, but he attempts to run if given a chance.

Renewing the Process

If the characters bring Dunleavy to Cancer Boy, fine. If they don't, Cancer Boy finds them regardless of whether or not they agreed to get Dunleavy (remember, Cancer Boy "demands" the task be done if they refuse, and he becomes agitated if they refuse).

Provided Dunleavy is there, what Cancer Boy wants is more of the doctor's "creations," i.e., the clones of Shaun. Dunleavy refuses, of course, knowing full well that what he created was not his son but an assembly

line of aberrations. Cancer Boy doesn't really have the finesse to convince Dunleavy with anything but raw threats, and as such asks or demands that the characters do what they must to convince Dunleavy.

Physical threats fail to motivate him easily, as he seems to believe that any punishment he gets is deserved. (Intimidation rolls born of physical violence therefore suffer a -3 dice penalty.) Threatening Dunleavy's wife, however, grants a +1 die bonus to the Intimidation roll, as he fears for her safety (yes, he was willing to kill her, but only to "protect" her from monsters such as they).

Characters may also be able to use Persuasion to convince Dunleavy that *this* time, maybe his cloning project will truly create the desired result. Creative use of "Disquietism" or "Mesmerism" Transmutations may also convince Dunleavy into re-creating his failed experiment.

Alternately, the throng may choose instead to refuse Cancer Boy's request, let Dunleavy escape or even kill Dunleavy so that new Half-Formed cannot be made.

The future of Dunleavy's experiments lies in the hands of the characters. If they convince him to begin the cloning process anew, Cancer Boy asks that they supervise Dunleavy for the three or so days it takes to get the experiment up and running. If they fail to convince him or perform any task that prevents the doctor from reinvigorating the creation of new Half-Formed, Cancer Boy tells them that "God is soon at hand" and "He will judge them accordingly."

It's possible that the characters never brought Dunleavy to Cancer Boy to begin with. Maybe they were unable to secure Dunleavy before he fled or shot himself, or perhaps they simply refused to perform the errand. If Dunleavy isn't dead, Carla Two eventually finds him and fulfills the task as Cancer Boy demands.

If Dunleavy is dead, Cancer Boy laments the loss, but says that the city will just have to "make do." He then instructs the characters to round up those Half-Formed that remain in the city. He won't be satisfied until at least five of the rogue clones are caught and brought to him in his lair.

The characters may very well refuse Cancer Boy's demands at any point. Doing so causes Cancer Boy to run the gamut of emotions. First, he pleads with them, promising them the same repetition of "glory" and "transcendence" if they help him. If they continue to refuse, he becomes belligerent, dismissive and insulting. He'll throw in their faces the fact that Carla Two has already agreed to help him.

If they leave him, Cancer Boy continues with his quest, dragging Carla Two along. The characters can try to ignore him and his task, which leaves him to carry out this story (and its effects, found in the next act, take place). Alternately, the characters perhaps make it their mission to stop him. At any point in the next act, the characters

may intercede and attempt to end Cancer Boy's bizarre ambitions. Note that Cancer Boy fights ferociously, and has help from two of the Half-Formed — and, by this point, Carla Two joins his side, as well (she does not want to risk losing the potential transcendence that the Nuclear Promethean promises her). Once again, as before, if at any point Cancer Boy is destroyed, he has a chance at resurrection. Characters may also find the journal (noted under "Reaction," p. 135) that details his plans and aspirations, thus allowing them to forsake his goals or assume their mantle.

Act Two Milestones

Act Two has great opportunities for milestone completion. If a character re-forms and makes whole one of the Half-Formed, does that prove something and create the stir of Vitriol? If she loathes and destroys the Half-Formed, what does that say about things such as anger, justice, mercy or even natural principles such as the "food chain" or "survival of the fittest?"

The act also features a lot of reflections on science and what comes from it. A character may learn that science is without a moral touchstone, and that the ethics (or inequities) wait not in the practice but in the practitioner. The same can be said for alchemy as well as the creation of individual Prometheans. Dunleavy cannot seem to bear the burden of his own decisions, so what does this teach a Promethean about humans who try to circumvent the natural order? Is Dunleavy just a representation of all scientists, or did he go beyond the pale in his actions? Since this book and story are at least in part about the madness that can spring from the practice of science, it's only proper that milestones tie to that idea. Dunleavy is the poster boy in this story for science gone awry, and in him waits the potential for milestone completion.

That in mind, consider that Dunleavy is a madman who made some awful choices, but he isn't entirely unsympathetic. He lost his son, and tried to rectify his own errors (admittedly with shortcuts and gross misjudgments). Can Dunleavy be saved from himself? The characters may be able to rehabilitate him and even cure him of his derangement. They may also seek to punish him for his crimes. Depending on the character and Refinement, milestone fulfillment may lurk in how Dunleavy is treated.

Act Three: Salt of the Earth

In this last act of the story, Detroit's power outage continues, and Cancer Boy reveals the God Machine that he has found beneath the city. The characters control the fate not only of the city, but of their own fleshy bodies and burgeoning souls.

Continuing Darkness

The power outage continues through this act. This has a number of ramifications for the city of Detroit:

- Those with money and/or cars leave the city, abandoning their homes and jobs until the power crisis is over. The city is left to those with no means of escape or no interest in leaving. Like vultures, looters pick at the bones of cars, homes, businesses and offices. It's not a riotous explosion of trashcans thrown through windows. Most looters aren't looking for TVs or nice chairs. They want food, generators, flashlights, batteries and other necessities.
- The police presence seems nonexistent in most of the city. Rumor suggests that the cops are waiting for military intervention, but the military isn't coming — it's either strained thin from world conflicts or, as other rumors suggest, "America wants Detroit to die slowly. Just like New Orleans."
- Violent crime lurches upward again. Nighttime is punctuated by yells, shrieks, glass breaking and gunshots.
- More people die from weather-related concerns. Heat or cold (depending on the time of year) kills hundreds.
- Those with generators suffer home invasions. Unscrupulous city-folk with vans and guns drive out to the suburbs, shut off the van and listen for the sounds of generators. (Generators are often loud over the relative silence suffered by a city caught in a power outage.)
- Gasoline supply grows short. Gas requires electricity to pump. Siphoning gas grows common. So, too, are the fires born of the result of so much free-flowing fuel.

Revelation of the God Machine

When Cancer Boy is ready, he contacts the throng. (His "readiness" is marked by the number of Half-Formed available to him. He needs at least five clones. It matters little if they're gleaned from "new production" or wrangled from around the dark city.)

He comes to the characters with open arms and broad smiles, nearly beatific in his mirth. If the characters' relationship with Cancer Boy has at any point gone sour, this seems all the more unusual, because he *still* approaches them as if they're the oldest and greatest friends. It's as if he's forgotten any strained relations that may have occurred. Of course, if the relationship

remains largely undamaged, then his coming on strong may not seem quite so bizarre.

Cancer Boy asks that the characters meet him at an address: 12841 Sanders Street. He tells them to come at midnight.

Salt City

At that address sits the opening to the Detroit Salt Company mineshaft. The above-ground complex is about a city block's worth of mining equipment, featuring a few rust-pocked cranes, old conveyor belts, trailer offices and yellow dump trucks. No power means that the operation has shut down, and so the whole place is a forest of corroded metal shadows. Gathered here are Cancer Boy, his two Half-Formed pets, Carla Two and any clones brought by the characters. If the characters left Dunleavy with Cancer Boy, the good doctor is dead. If Cancer Boy didn't kill Dunleavy, he took his own life in the interim (which method of demise you prefer for Dunleavy is irrelevant for purposes of this story).

Cancer Boy isn't interested in what's above ground. He takes the characters to a six-man elevator, an oxidized wire-mesh cage dangling above a deep chasm. Using the "Jolt" Transmutation, he gives the elevator power. The group has to split, as the elevator can only hold six (and even then it does not hold them comfortably, with faces pressed against the cage). Because of the hands-on nature of the Transmutation, Cancer Boy remains present in each ride downward (unless one of the characters knows and is willing to use Generator).

The descent is slow. Each trip goes down about 1,200 feet, and takes almost 15 minutes. It is, for the moment, a slow plunge into absolute darkness. The Half-Formed grow agitated unless the characters brought some kind of food — i.e., raw meat, animal or human — to sate them. They don't need calming as they aren't yet out of control. They simply seethe and fidget, hissing and clacking their teeth together. On the ride down, Cancer Boy is mostly quiet unless spoken to. Otherwise, he hums hymns happily to himself.

At the bottom, Cancer Boy uses the "Generator" Transmutation to power a generator that bathes the mines in eerie, soft light.

The mine's "tunnels" are broad and hugely open rectangles of space carved out of the earth, big enough to sit a half-dozen trucks side-by-side. Claustrophobia does not apply. The walls themselves sparkle with the speckled crystalline texture of salt. The middle of each massive tunnel is marked by a rutted road. At the end of this first tunnel sit a number of massive white salt boulders. It's eerie down here, silent except for the buzzing generator. Words echo. Strings of pale lights hang at the corners of the tunnel but nowhere else, so the light is washed-out, leaving pockets and puddles of shadow.

Deeper

Cancer Boy asks the throng to follow and to keep the Half-Formed calm. The clones grow more and more agitated unless they've been fed. Calming them isn't too difficult, yet. Successful Social rolls relax them for a time, and can be made as instant actions; nearly any Social action is considered applicable. Intimidation can be used to threaten them into subservience. Cajoling (Persuasion) or the simple calming chatter of a constant voice (Socialize) might apply, too.

The trip through the tunnels is a long one. The group walks about 10 miles through these massive tunnels. This takes a little over two hours, though along the way Cancer Boy might note that the mine is far bigger than what they are seeing. About an hour into the trip, the characters again need to sate the Half-Formed either by feeding them or calming them. Food does the trick automatically, but Social rolls are now hampered by -2 dice penalties. Failure on any Social roll indicates that at least one of the Half-Formed attempts to flee and must be caught and restrained. While the Half-Formed do regain limited Pyros from Prometheans and are somewhat calmed in their presence, the creatures grow more and more agitated as the trip continues. Only raw meat can help assuage this panic.

Along the way, the group sees a number of sights:

- Some tunnels have massive trucks with 40-ton beds and seven-foot tall tires. (If at any point a character tries to drive one, it has the following stats: Durability 6, Size 21, Structure 27, Acceleration 2, Safe Speed 4 (3 mph), Max Speed 7 (5 mph), Handling 5.)
- Small camps sit abandoned. Camps feature small lanterns, small food storage (dried food mostly), tables, tents, decks of cards, hard hats, several hammers. The food doesn't automatically sate the Half-Formed, but it grants a +2 dice bonus to any Social rolls if used in conjunction with calming.
- Big boring drills sit unused. Each is nearly twice as tall as a character, and would require several men to operate.
- Someone carved something into one of the salt walls: "Give neither advice nor salt, unless you are asked for it." Noticing this requires success on a Wits + Composure roll.
- If the characters look around and succeed on a Wits + Investigation roll, they find wooden boxes here and there of dynamite, usually near thin-bore rock drills. Each box contains five to 10 sticks of dynamite. (See "Explosives," pp. 178–179, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.)

Cancer Boy, as he walks, goes on about random tidbits and facts. If the characters try to discuss these things with him, he simply talks over them as if they weren't speaking in the first place. Such bits include the following:

- He'll note that the air is pure down here, and is "good to breathe." He'll also point out how there are no rats or cockroaches because these tunnels feature nothing for them to eat. He reiterates the words "clean" and "pure" in needless repetition.

- This place was once a massive sea, and he'll quote the Book of Job (Job 26:10): "He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the night and day came to an end."

- He'll explain that in various chemical and alchemical processes, salt dissipates upon "fulfilling its grand purpose."

- Salt was used as a ritual emblem in the "old days." Newborns were rubbed with salt. Meat was ritually salted. And all sacrifices were salted before being offered to God or the "gods that came before."

- Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its taste, it's good for nothing." Cancer Boy repeats this fact periodically, almost as if he forgets that he said it before.

Off the Beaten Path

As noted throughout this story, the characters may grow to believe that Cancer Boy is *too* off-kilter to trust. He promises transcendence, but has no evidence of its coming. He at times vacillates between being pedantic, supplicating and confrontational.

Again, if the characters bail, they bail. Assume that this act continues, except with Carla Two in their place. The characters may follow along, stalking Cancer Boy in the deep shadows of the salt mine, waiting for the chance to end his plans (or at least glean more information from the relative darkness).

If they attempt to leave Cancer Boy and Carla Two in the middle of the salt mine, once again Cancer Boy goes through the motions. He pleads. Then he insults them. Then he dismisses them. This time, though, Carla Two is fully on board and does her level best to convince them to come along. (A note to Storytellers: This should never feel like railroading the players. Their characters are free to leave the story at any time, or pursue it from whatever angle they so desire. There's a fine line between having Cancer Boy want them to come along, and having Cancer Boy sound like he's your mouthpiece in trying to tie the story up.)

Once again, if Cancer Boy is dead by this point, or if they destroy him in the salt mine, that's fine. They can continue his quest in his place, or be glad that they thwarted whatever it was that he was trying to accomplish. Carla Two, however, will attempt to pick up the pieces of Cancer Boy's journey, even if the characters do not.

The Pit

Eventually, Cancer Boy leads the group to a dead-end tunnel. At this dead end, someone has broken one of the strings of lights from the wall and draped it across the ground. It disappears down a wide (10 yards in diameter) hole. One of the big drills rests nearby.

The string of pale lights drops about halfway down into this pit, which is approximately 100 feet deep. Someone has

bolted fat metal rungs into the salt walls of the pit, forming an erratic, only partially effective ladder. Cancer Boy says nothing; he just starts climbing down.

Because the ladder is slippery and poorly placed, characters must succeed on a Climbing roll to descend. The action is extended, requiring 10 successes, with each roll representing one minute of climbing. The presence of the partial ladder confers a +3 dice bonus to this roll.

Getting the Half-Formed down there can be tricky. Characters can bring them down on their backs, but doing so confers a -4 dice penalty to the Climbing roll. The Half-Formed can be persuaded to climb down themselves with a successful Manipulation + Persuasion roll (suffering a -3 dice penalty as the clones are now truly agitated). Throwing or pushing one into the hole damages the clone, as the drop is significant enough where lethal damage occurs from terminal velocity. Resultant damage will kill the clone over time as it hemorrhages internally. Cancer Boy tries desperately to stop the characters from throwing any more clones down the hole, as in this condition he believes they could become useless.

God Machine

At the bottom of this shaft, the ground widens out into a broad pit. The light down here is pale, and any Perception rolls requiring sight are made at a -3 dice penalty because the lights only descend halfway down the shaft.

Cancer Boy says that the workers found this anomaly, but he dreamt of it and it calls to him. The walls are painted with one symbol, over and over again: the symbol of a snake biting its own tail, the Ouroboros. A successful Wits + Occult roll reveals that this symbol is sometimes associated with alchemical processes. In many alchemical procedures, some chemicals must be destroyed to make the final material or *prima essentia*. This is a known paradox, that the snake must devour itself (or the chemical must consume itself) to create something: life from death, positive from negative.

Cancer Boy then points to the ground in the middle of the pit. Here, the smooth salt floor has been blasted and chipped open in a hole about five yards across. About three feet into this hole, characters note massive exposed machinery — in particular, the teeth of two giant gears meet here. The gears gleam, clean and bright, the bronze-hued metal polished almost to a mirrored finish. Beneath these two quiet



enmeshed gears, the characters see countless smaller gears. It's clearly only one small part of a much greater machine that exists deep and wide beneath the salt.

A Thousand Variables

What occurs below with the God Machine is the default scenario. This is what happens to tie up the story, and how the players react to it or deal with it is their decision.

However, **Promethean: The Created** is an intensely personal game. What happens here with Cancer Boy and the God Machine needs to be in line with the overarching themes and moods exemplified by the characters and their individual Pilgrimage journeys. As such, throughout we provide a few other options outside the default ending, thus allowing you to ensure the proper conclusion to the story. Also, don't hesitate to sacrifice bits of this story. After all, sacrifice is one of the themes of this chapter, so feel free to offer parts up on the altar of good Storytelling.

Oiling the Gears

It's time to "oil the gears," claims Cancer Boy. How does one do this? By killing the Half-Formed and spilling their blood on the exposed machinery, of course. That's what Cancer Boy wants, and he expects the characters (Carla Two included) to comply.

If the characters obey, they must attack each Half-Formed, grappling them and killing them in a way that pours their blood on the gears. The characters have a chance to surprise one or several of them on the initial attack (and the Half-Formed have the appropriate Wits + Composure roll to sense the surprise and apply Defense). After that, the Half-Formed fight with brutal ferocity: all gnashing teeth and thrashing limbs.

Only two Half-Formed need to actually be killed to get the gears moving. (Technically, they don't even need to die to produce the appropriate blood, but Cancer Boy demands that death "serve" the God Machine.) Once the blood of both clones has wetted the machinery, the gears begin to turn slowly against one another. Curls of steam rise from the hole. It stinks of sulfur.

Cancer Boy is satisfied once the gears turn. If the characters want to continue to sacrifice the clones, fine. If not, the remaining Half-Formed will flee into the depths of the salt mines, howling as they escape.

During this fracas, Cancer Boy doesn't harm his own two Half-Formed clone "pets." Once the gears start to turn, however, he wades into the fray himself, attacking them

with alarming swiftness. He doesn't just pour their blood on the gears; he tosses their struggling bodies into the works. Their bodies are pulled into the turning gears and crushed as they're drawn into its maw. Blood wells up. Bones snap. They scream as they die.

Revelation of the Arch-qashmal

The gears grind and rumble. The ground trembles with strange vibration, and the throng hears an odd high-pitched frequency interrupted by hard bursts of static (heard despite the lack of any radio or receiving device).

From the hole bursts a pillar of white fire. The fire, silent and bright, soon manifests into a single individual — a tall and willowy Arch-qashmal now straddles the hole as the gears churn beneath it. (See "The Hand of the Principle," under "Dramatic Personae.") Cancer Boy drops to his knees, weeping and laughing.

Firestorm

An Arch-qashmal has entered the world, materializing above the God Machine. A Firestorm results from this sudden intrusion (see pp. 253–254, **Promethean: The Created**). It takes 10 turns total to build to the point where its effects are felt. In that time, white fire licks at the salt walls, eventually moving closer to the throng. If you have access to **Pandora's Book**, feel free to customize the Firestorm as described in Chapter Three of that supplement.

In the time before the Firestorm, characters may speak to the manifested qashmal. The being answers all questions plainly, though it seems as ignorant as any other qashmal regarding anything beyond the Principle and its Mission. Its Mission, the qashmal notes, is to bleed radiation and to kill the humans of the city above its head (or, as it puts it, "Make this city of men sick with the Divine Fire").

Just before the Firestorm's effects actually take hold and ramp up in intensity, the entity thanks Cancer Boy for summoning it and serving the Principle.

Radiation

At this point, the God Machine begins to bleed radiation. Radiation is, of course, invisible, though during the chaos of the Firestorm it's possible the characters may become aware of it in part: Cancer Boy seems given over to sudden ecstasy, shuddering and grinding his teeth. The Hand of the Principle will narrate the scene, somewhat, noting in his soft (yet contrarily loud) voice that the intensity of the "sickened fire" grows. The qashmal's body pulses and throbs with nascent light.

Assume that for every five turns, the radiation Intensity goes up by another point, beginning at 0 and going all the way to 5. For the effects of this radiation, see "Radiation Poisoning" on p. 72 of this book.

Destroying the Hand

This entity does not have game traits, for it is an Arch-*qashmal*. Attacks made against it are fruitless. Hits never connect, always just missing the entity by a fraction of an inch. The Hand never fights back, though. It simply talks to the characters.

The being notes that Divine Fire is considered by some to be a limited resource. And while this isn't precisely true, Pyros so often "goes wasted" on the many when it could be hoarded by the few. The Hand will offer that this is true of humans, too, who once stole the Divine Fire from the gods. Now, the Arch-*qashmal* claims, its Mission is to offer the characters a way to steal the Divine Fire back — by ending many lives.

This is clearly what Cancer Boy desires. The Nuclear Promethean adds over the howling Firestorm, "Now the world is ours, I give you this reward!"

On the other spectrum is Carla Two, who seems confused and lost. She wants Mortality, not power. This is not her idea of transcendence.

Final Sacrifice

Hopefully, the characters will be the ones to ask the Arch-*qashmal* how to stop this from happening. If they don't, or seem to take too long in the asking, assume that Carla Two voices the question.

The Hand of the Principle simply answers, "Azoth calls to Azoth." He steps away from the exposed gears and gestures to the hole, as if to suggest "you first."

The direction is clear. If some number of Prometheans sacrifices themselves to the chewing gears of the God Machine, the Machine will stop and the radiation will dissipate.

Sequence of Events

What happens next is up to the players. If they allow their characters to do nothing, Carla claims that this is her "moment," that it's time to become human. She loudly proclaims her faith, and leaps into the Machine.

Her bones crunch as the gears chew her up at about one foot of her body per 10 seconds. She does not scream or cry out, though she's clearly in immense pain (teeth gritting, muddy humours running from her eyes like rusty tears). Her melancholic fluids and Vitriol well up over the flat gear heads, and spatter the salt floor. The characters can try to pull her out, requiring a Strength + Athletics roll with a penalty of -5 dice (the gears are strong, and she resists them as best as she can). If they pull her out and she's not dead, she'll try to throw herself *back* into the gears.

If she manages total dissolution at the mercy of the chewing gears, the ground shudders slightly. All the lights in the mine glow very brightly for about five seconds. Even the Firestorm seems to react, flickering and shuddering. The throng hears a deep, low *buzzing* sound, like the white noise generated by an electronic device.

Alternately, one of the characters may try to sacrifice himself. Entering the Machine is instantly painful as the gears begin to grind him up. As it draws him downward, the gears inflict two aggravated damage every 10 seconds. During those 10 seconds, his body is pulled down another one to two feet.

If the character decides to extract himself from the hungry gears, he must make a Strength + Athletics roll to pull himself out. For every 10 seconds he's been in the gears, however, a -1 die penalty is conferred (thus cumulating), to a maximum of -5 dice. Others may contribute aid as secondary actors in a Teamwork action (see p. 134 of *World of Darkness Rulebook*).

Alternately, it's possible that the throng sees an excellent sacrifice in Cancer Boy. Subduing him and throwing him into the God Machine will not be easy. Not only is he powerful, but the resident radiation can heal him. He fights tooth and nail, possibly entering the fiery Torment of his kind. He also pleads for the Hand of the Principle to help him, to which the entity answers, "That is not part of this Mission."

If thrown in, Cancer Boy tries to free himself from the grinding gears. Wrenching himself free requires the same roll as for one of the characters, noted above under "Self-Sacrifice." The characters may impede this by pushing him down, which increases his penalty by a number of dice equal to successes gained on a character's Strength + Brawl roll against him (which are therefore not applied as damage). He may try a last-ditch effort to grab hold of one of their limbs as he disappears through the gears, possibly dragging the character down with him. Contested Strength + Brawl rolls become necessary in such an instance.

(For those sacrificed, see below under "Fate of the Consumed.")

One, Then Another

Once a single sacrifice has been made, the Hand of the Principle notes, "And now another is needed to fulfill this part of the Mission."

A second Promethean must be sacrificed. The sequence of events depends on which Created was the first sacrifice. Carla Two will offer herself if she remains alive. Alternately, any of the characters may step into the Machine. Cancer Boy may remain alive, too — but he'll stand in the way of anybody trying to sacrifice anyone else. He does not want this process to end, and will fight zealously to guard what he loudly proclaims is his "legacy."

Other Solutions

Characters are known for a pesky thing called "free will," so what happens when they don't give in to either choice and concoct their own solutions? Perhaps they use some of the dynamite found earlier to blow up the God Machine. Does it

work? Up to you. Maybe you *do* want to give the Hand of the Principle stats, so they can throw the Arch-*qashmal* into the crushing gears (and what happens *then*?). The characters could run far, far away, gaining no benefits or detriments from the process and instead catching news of the “radiation leak” that killed or sickened most of Detroit’s citizens.

The End

So, what happens? To the characters, to the *qashmal*, to Detroit and its people?

Completed Sacrifices

If two Promethean sacrifices made it into the crushing gears of the God Machine, the Hand of the Principle says, “And so it is done.” The radiation stops.

The people of Detroit are, by and large, safe. Some of them living in the several blocks surrounding the entrance to the salt mine suffer radiation sickness damage from • and •• level radiation (p. 74).

If Cancer Boy is still alive at this point and did not go into the God Machine, he flees the scene. The characters may attempt to catch him (Foot Chase). Any damage he takes is automatic with no Defense applied; his will is gone.

The Hand of the Principle disappears, first into Twilight, and then altogether, back into the Pyros.

The characters gain eight Vitriol from this act. Though it is not technically a milestone, it still counts as the completion of a major event and significant choice. (Alternately, a Storyteller could award this Vitriol only to those players who can explain what their characters learned from this process, thus in effect making it the fulfillment of an impromptu milestone.) Also, the characters gain two dice when the time comes for their players to roll Humanity for Rebirth.

Also, if the story continues well beyond this point, consider that Detroit maybe sees a kind of resurgence, too. Auto plants reopen. Old buildings are renovated or replaced. Crime drops while wealth increases.

Failed Sacrifice

If the Machine did not consume two Prometheans (it’ll almost certainly consume one, as Carla Two does her level best to perish amid the crushing gears), then the radiation continues to amp up.

The Arch-*qashmal* explains to the characters that because of their choice, they are immune to the effects of the radiation.

The city of Detroit, however, is not. Most of the city suffers radiation sickness damage on par with a •••• level. Many people die in the coming days and weeks.

The characters gain an automatic point of Azoth and one Vitriol point (thus potentially proving the Arch-*qashmal* comments regarding limited Azoth and “stealing” it back from the humans). If the time comes that a player rolls Humanity for a character’s Rebirth, that roll is made at –2 dice. Their Azoth is marked with the choice they made (whether they consciously made it or simply failed to complete it).

Fate of the Consumed

What happens to the Prometheans who are minced betwixt the gleaming gears? Again, it comes down to what best serves the theme of the ongoing chronicle. Below are options. Whatever happens to a sacrificed character potentially happens to Carla Two and Cancer Boy, if either of them went into the Machine.

Remade

The Promethean reawakens at the point of her initial creation. Resurrection is automatic, and it doesn’t matter if the character has spent that “one chance” at rebirth. Upon awakening, the character has not lost a point of Azoth, but has *gained* one as a gift for the sacrifice in which she committed.

Reborn

The character awakens above ground in the city of Detroit, and is no longer Promethean, but human. For this character at least, the Saturnine Night is over, and the Great Work is complete. Alternately, if you don’t want this to be automatic, perhaps give the character’s player a chance to roll Humanity as per the normal Rebirth roll. Success indicates he achieves Humanity. Failure indicates either “Remade” or “Death” (above and below, respectively).

Death

Sacrifice means little if it fails to be permanent. Who wouldn’t sacrifice himself if it meant that the act of surrender and the giving in to pain would be undone after the fact? In this case, death is the end. The Promethean is gone. His sacrifice may have had a grand effect on the throng or the city, or it may have been for naught.

Something Else Entirely

Feel free to consider wilder possibilities. What if the Promethean is reborn as a *qashmal*? Certainly the character has entered the God Machine and become one with the Divine Fire. Is it possible that this changes flesh to fire and makes the character a lesser *qashmal*? Or at least allows him to commune with the Principle before returning to this world?

Alternately, maybe his parts reanimate as a mad Pandoran wriggling free from the grinding gears, or stranger still, a Pandoran capable of redemption? Perhaps in the last few moments before total dissolution the Promethean gains Humanity and feels bliss just before his bones and body are pulverized. If thinking far outside of the box serves your game, do it. This story should end on a note that really embodies the individual nature of a **Promethean: The Created** game, so do what needs to be done to achieve that.

Act Three Milestones

This final act is rife with milestone potential. The nature of sacrifice, and what is gained from it, may fulfill any number of mile-markers on the way to the New Dawn. Moreover, a single event may reward two Prometheans differently. One may find evidence that sacrifice provides the ultimate reward, while another gains proof that sacrifice is a meaningless endeavor.

These big milestones might be nearly religious in their depth and breadth. In this act, characters see what others are willing to do (Cancer Boy will sacrifice others, Carla Two will sacrifice herself) and furthermore, find out what they themselves are willing to do. In saving the Half-Formed from the gears, do they learn something about compassion? In hearing their bones snapping between machines, is there a lesson about the necessity of cruelty?

Moreover, does the God Machine allow for further milestone completion? Does the Machine prove that a higher power than man and Created exists? Does it prove that such a higher power is benevolent, or outright pitiless, or simply inflexible?

Botherúd

Here's something to consider: what the Arch-qashmal said and what Cancer Boy clearly believed are both in line with the principle philosophies of the Botherúd (found in several of the chapters of this ongoing Promethean chronicle). The Botherúd espouses and acts upon a theory in which Azoth and Pyros are a limited resource. By removing other Prometheans from the equation, one stands a greater chance of becoming more powerful or more quickly attaining Humanity. Now, what the Hand of the Principle claims goes one step beyond that, positing that by weakening humanity (here by destroying them), a Promethean affords himself more power (an act of "stealing back the Divine Fire").

If you want the Botherúd to have a more substantial wrap-up than what occurs in earlier stories, this may be your opportunity. Do the origins of the Botherúd come back to Cancer Boy? Did he inadvertently set other Prometheans onto this idea through his journeys? By destroying him, have they destroyed the society's origins?

Alternately, perhaps the qashmallim (or the Hand of the Principle in particular) have been behind the origins of the Botherúd. What's disturbing about this is that implies that some grain of truth lurks within the Botherúd principles. It's not misguided zeal, but based on a possibly real phenomenon.

Dramatis Personae

The following section details the characters that feature prominently in "These Mortal Engines."

Combatants

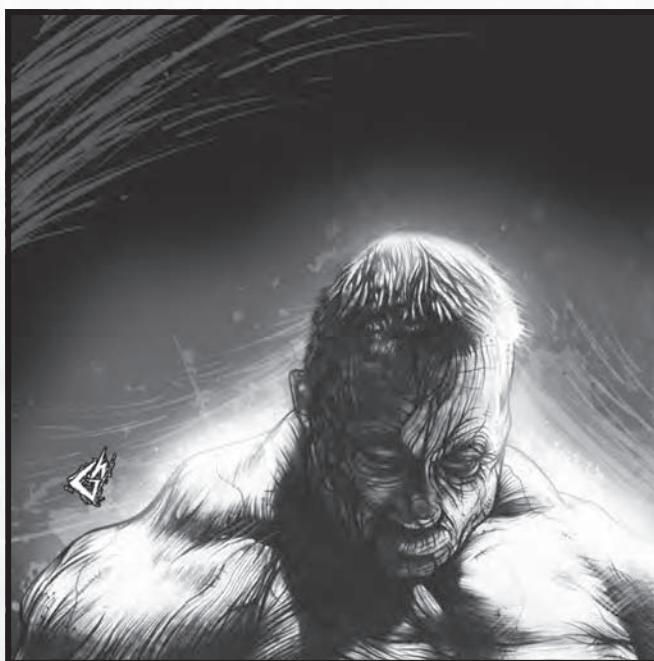
Below are those characters that may end up in combat with the throng.

Cancer Boy

Quote: "You are all my friends. We are all servants of something greater. Let us make something of this world and of ourselves, shall we?"

Background: Created in 1988 in the newly built Fermi 2 nuclear power plant in Detroit, Cancer Boy has never known his creator. The only evidence left of his creator was a note written in the blood of one of the plant workers dabbed onto the wall of the nearby reactor. The message read: "Terrible journeys to you, my child. I am become Death." Convinced that his creator destroyed himself so that he could be born, Cancer Boy left and went into the world.

During the last two decades, Cancer Boy has mostly stayed away from humanity, observing them from afar. He has little interest in interacting with them directly, but he is fascinated with the subject of what it means to be human, and what elemental and emotional factors go into the makeup of a human soul. He spent months at a time reading books on science and religion. He became fascinated with how some reagents are completely used up in chemical reactions, just as how some humans are used up in their acts of charity and kindness. The concept of how nothing can be created or destroyed also wormed its way into his brain, and he now considers that a key part of his own



makeup, that perhaps his creator (whom he calls “Father” or “God”) is a part of him.

It’s also led him to do quite a bit of killing over the years. Whenever he feels a human can make a sacrifice for his family, friends or town, Cancer Boy forces that sacrifice upon that person (convinced that the human isn’t really dead, but is simply becoming a soul going to Heaven).

Description: Despite his name, Cancer Boy is most certainly not a boy. He has a man’s body — a strong, robust man’s body, by the looks of it. His body is wrapped in turgid muscle, giving him a bodybuilder’s physique. He wears all white most of the time, either a dirty terrycloth robe or a yellow-stained wife-beater with baggy pale pants. His skin is pale, too, and all this serves to showcase the serpentine cancerous keloid that grows from the center of his back and rises up against the left side of his neck like some gigantic leech. Parts of this are scabrous, and bleed a little.

His disfigurement only deepens this grotesque countenance. His skin is so pale it’s translucent, revealing a body improperly stuffed with various organs, each of which is strangled by fatty tumors. The only part of his flesh that isn’t translucent is the cancerous keloid, which seems only to grow darker and more textured in its diseased topography. When in darkness, Cancer Boy glows with a wan, sickly light.

Storytelling Hints: He’s not a child, but he sometimes acts like one. Not in a petulant way, but more like he’s lost in wonder . . . like a child looking upon an amusement park ride or a toy store window at Christmas. This might at first seem hopeful and even contagious, but it should grow more disturbing as he appears this way in nearly any situation, even those that call for horror to take place before his very eyes. Even the most awful concepts seem to cast him into that wondrous place, and he animatedly “talks” with his hands or rapturously describes how good something horrible makes him feel. He treats his “friends” very well, and will go to the ends of the Earth to make them happy. But he also expects them to do the same for him. It’s a surprisingly stark and simple worldview, and he expects everybody to adhere to it. Moral complexities are lost on him.

Lineage: Zeka

Refinement: Mercurius

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 1, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Computer 1, Crafts (Found Parts) 3, Investigation 3, Occult 1, Science 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl (Grapple) 4, Larceny 1, Stealth 1, Survival (Hunting) 4, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Empathy (Motives) 4, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 1, Socialize 3

Merits: Brawling Dodge, Danger Sense, Fighting Style: Boxing 1, Elpis 1, Lair (Security 1, Size 1), Residual Memory (Science and Medicine) 2

Willpower: 9

Humanity: 4, Megalomania (severe)

Virtue: Charity

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Speed: 12

Health: 9

Azoth: 5

Bestowment: Radioactive Affinity

Transmutations: *Alchemicus* — Identification (•), Degradation (••), Fortification (••), Dissolve (•••), Transformation (•••); *Electrification* — Jolt (•), Shock (••), Generator (•••), Blackout (••••); *Irradiation* — Flashburn (•), Blast (••), Blue Flash (••), Fallout (•••); *Vulcanus* — Firebrand (•), Sense Pyros (•), Animate Firetouched (•••), Fire Grasp (•••), Steal Pyros (••••)

Pyros per Turn: 14/5

Half-Formed (Clone of Shaun Dunleavy)

Quote: <gibbering, followed by weeping and teeth-gnashing>

Background: The Half-Formed don’t have much of a background worth noting. Shaun Dunleavy was a nice kid, played sports, got pretty good grades, had a few girlfriends. He was in many ways an average American teenager. The Half-Formed exhibit none of that. They are hollow reflections of the boy, driven by hungers and a nameless need. This need is really to become something more than what they are, but the clones have no way of vocalizing or even comprehending this urge.

Description: The clones are hairless, with smooth, unblemished skin. Pink and bleeding gums give way to bleach-white needle teeth. The clones are genderless, as well. Sometimes they run, limbs flailing. Other times they lope, like gamboling beasts.

Storytelling Hints: The Half-Formed are mostly feral. They’re hungry and act as if caged most of the time, with the only calming influence being the presence of Prometheans . . . and that only calms the Half-Formed sometimes. It’s important, though, that the Half-Formed be portrayed with a kind of sadness, though. It’s as if the potential for something better exists in the darkness of those broad sad eyes, as if these animals have a small spark within that could — if fostered properly — become something greater.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Crafts (Crude Weapons) 1, Investigation 2

Physical Skills: Athletics (Foot Chase) 3, Brawl 4, Stealth (Hiding in Plain Sight) 4, Survival 2, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Animal Ken 1, Empathy 2, Intimidation 4

Merits: Direction Sense, Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 3, Iron Stamina 1, Iron Stomach

Willpower: 4



Humanity: 1 Melancholia (severe), Fixation (mild)

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Gluttony

Initiative: 8

Defense: 3

Speed: 15

Health: 8

Pyros per Scene: 5/3

Cancer Boy has fostered some additional abilities in his pets. As such, assume that the following stat changes are true for his two “claimed” clones: **Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Manipulation 2; **Skills:** Larceny 1, Survival 3, Weaponry 2

Doctor David Dunleavy

Quote: “I just . . . I just miss my son. I’ll do anything to get him back. Can’t you people see that?”

Background: Dunleavy has never really lived up to his potential. He’s always walked the middle line in life, never a failure but never a true success, either. While that would be perfectly acceptable for some, those in David’s life frowned upon his mediocre performance and failure to fulfill his potential. His parents consider him a failure, and his now ex-wife Mira always urged him to do more. As a genetic counselor, he felt he was doing just fine, but in reality he always exhibited the possibility to become something greater — a possibility he long squandered. With the divorce and the loss of his son, Dunleavy decided to pursue that potential at long last, but this time it was twisted, turned to obsession.

Description: These days, Dunleavy doesn’t look so good. He’s tall and thin, stooped over with scoliosis. His gaunt face sports a patchy garden of wiry beard. The lab coat he wears is so stained with dirt and fluids that it

doesn’t bear a single white patch of fabric anywhere on it. While the rest of his body trembles (lack of food, lack of sleep), his nimble hands and long fingers are always rock steady, regardless of the situation.

Storytelling Hints: David is a man given over to grief. It consumes him and shakes him every minute of every hour. He never smiles. He blinks a lot. He reacts irrationally, fluctuating from sorrowed pleas into paroxysms of spitting rage.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 1

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Computer 3, Crafts 2, Investigation 4, Medicine 2, Occult 1, Science (Genetics) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Drive 1, Firearms 1, Stealth 2

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Test Subjects) 2, Empathy 1, Expression 1, Persuasion 2, Subterfuge (Self-Delusion) 3

Merits: Allies (Ob-Gyn Doctors) 1, Ambidextrous, Contacts (Hospital Counselors) 1, Eidetic Memory, Languages (Latin, Greek), Resources 3

Willpower: 3

Morality: 4

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 5

Defense: 4

Speed: 10

Health: 7

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Snub-nose Revolver	2(L)	-	7	-





Sublimatus: The Timekeeper

Quote: “Nothing works when the clock doesn’t set the schedule! The tock of the clock marks the signposts!”

Background: The Timekeeper might provide characters with sporadic bits of his history. Apparently, Prometheans are sometimes drawn to Detroit. The city is like them, and something about it — or below it — speaks to them. And then they come, weak and unready, the Timekeeper finds them and eats them. Eating these Prometheans, thus consuming their Pyros and Vitriol, is what gave the Timekeeper his sentience. This is his hunting ground.

Description: He’s a grotesque hunchback that seems to have too many joints in his limbs. And yet, despite his lurching gait and dragging limbs, he moves alarmingly fast. Every inch of his body is swaddled with bile-soaked rags and newspaper. Watches line his arms from the wrists to the shoulders. Clocks and pocket watches dangle from his body on strips of leather cord and bundled yarn.

Storytelling Hints: The Timekeeper fluctuates madly between attacking with frothing fury and pausing to try to engage the throng in discussion. It’s as if he wants to be them, able to stop and be polite, but what he is simply won’t let him.

Mockery: Render (*Sublimatus*)

Rank: 4

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Crafts (Dismantle) 3, Investigation 2, Occult 1, Science 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl (Bite) 4, Larceny 2, Stealth (Shadows) 5, Survival 3, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Animal Ken 1, Empathy 3, Intimidation 3, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Ambidextrous, Direction Sense, Eidetic Memory, Fleet of Foot 3, Fresh Start

Willpower: 6

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 9

Defense: 4

Speed: 17 (with Fleet of Foot)

Size: 5

Health: 10

Bestowment: Bizarre Weaponry (Claws ••), Scurry (••)

Transmutations: *Pandoran* — Armor (••), Bizarre Weaponry (Body Barbs ••••, Fangs •), Manlike Stature (•), Flux Within the Shade (••), Ceration of Form (•••), Clockwork Servant (••••), Crucible of Flesh (••••)

Pyros/per Turn: 17/4

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Claws 1(L)	-	8	-	-
Bite (L)	-	8	-	-

Armor: 2

Non-Combatants

Below is the single non-combatant in this chapter.

Hand of the Principle

Quote: “What falls must rise again, and what rises again will eventually fall.”

Background: The Hand of the Principle does not belong to either of the other orders (Elpidos or Lilithim). It exists





as an Arch-*qashmal* of the third, unnamed order. Just as others of its kind, the Hand knows nothing of what it has done before, and can only comment on the Mission and the Principle.

Description: In Twilight, the Hand of the Principle appears as a column of white flame that pulses and shifts. When Materialized, the *qashmal* appears as a tall man with blond hair, white skin and milky eyes. When he speaks,

steam hisses from his mouth, and one may catch a glimpse of gears turning within the darkness of his throat.

Storytelling Hints: The Hand of the Principle speaks plainly, and possesses less of the curiosity that sometimes accompanies these angelic entities. He asks few questions, but provides (admittedly cryptic) answers to those posed to him. No matter what the outcome of the events, the Hand of the Principle always seems vaguely pleased.



