



RUST AND RUIN

A ONE-SHOT ADVENTURE FOR THROUGH THE BREACH

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In this adventure, the Fated are challenged with finding the missing daughter of a Guard sergeant, but are things really what they seem?

DESTINY STEPS:

CRSC 13P: “When you sup upon your pride and dance with cadavers” could describe the character’s encounter with the Iron Zombies, especially if she was particularly prideful earlier in the adventure. In this event, the Iron Zombies can be described as moving in a manner that resembles a “jerky dance.”

LLBC ABB: “If overconfidence proves your theory true” is a great step for a character that suspects the true reasons behind Annabelle’s disappearance.

PROLOGUE:

The Fated are stopped by a Guard patrol and told that their presence has been requested at a nearby Guard station. If they question why, the guardsmen explain that they’re not in any sort of trouble; their sergeant would simply like to have a few words with them. If the Fated refuse to cooperate, the Guard won’t force the matter but will instead point out that at some point in the future, the Fated will likely need help with something, and that having the gratitude of a Guard sergeant could make everything much easier.

If the Fated agree to accompany the guardsmen, read the following text:

The guardsmen escort you to a fortified, two-story building a few blocks away. A blonde woman in a Guard jacket sits in one of the upper story windows, cradling a long rifle in her arms as she watches you approach with indifferent attention.

Once inside, a large man with a sergeant’s insignia pushes to his feet and approaches you, offering his hand. “Thanks for coming,” he rumbles in a deep voice. Behind his sideburns and bushy mustache, you can see the face of a very proper and attentive man.

“I’m Sergeant Adam MacAlester. You seem like people of action, so I’ll cut right to the chase. I need discreet assistance with a matter of a personal and time sensitive nature. I can’t pay very much, but I can make certain that the Guild looks upon you with a softer eye for a while. Do I have your attention?”

MacAlester can offer the Fated 10 scrip for their assistance, but more importantly, he’s also willing to pull some strings in the Guild for them, either after they’ve finished their mission or at a future date.



SCENE 1: THE SERGEANT'S DILEMMA

Once the Fated have agreed to help him, MacAlester will go into more detail on what he wants them to do. Read the following text:

MacAlester motions for the other guardsmen to step outside, and he folds his wide arms behind his back as he waits for them to obey his orders. Once you're alone with him, he explains the situation. "Yesterday afternoon, one of our patrols went missing under suspicious circumstances. The Guard has been searching for the patrol since they failed to report in, and suspicion has fallen upon the woman they were escorting. I would like for you to find the missing patrol before the Guard does and bring the woman to me."

He reaches into his pocket and withdraws a folded black-and-white photograph, which he hands to you. It depicts a young woman of about fifteen years. "This is the woman. She is not to be harmed under any circumstances."

If the Fated ask why MacAlester doesn't want the Guild Guard to find the girl, read the following text:

"Politics," he sighs, clearly exasperated. "Her father supported Rowan von Brandt after the Governor-General died, and there are a few people in the Guild that wouldn't mind seeing a bit of misfortune coming his way for backing the wrong horse. I can't count on anyone in the Guild actually putting much effort into looking for her."

If the Fated ask about the woman's identity, MacAlester claims that she is "the daughter of a Guild officer," and leaves it at that, but a TN 12 Notice Challenge allows a character to notice the family resemblance between MacAlester and the girl in the photograph. Similarly, a TN 12 Scrutiny Challenge allows the Fated to realize that the man is holding something back and that he seems more concerned about the girl's safety than he is letting on.

If any of the Fated mention that they suspect a connection between MacAlester and the girl, read the following text:

"She's my daughter," he admits, an unpleasant look crossing his face. "Her name is Annabelle. She's a bit of a firebrand, like her mother, but she's still a good kid, despite the mouth on her. There have been a few disappearances in our neighborhood lately, so I put two guardsmen on her for protection."

MacAlester snorts in amusement. "Oh, you can bet she hated that, but it was for her own good. They're both good soldiers, the sort who would lay down their lives to keep her safe. If all three of them have disappeared..." He pauses, then shakes his head. "Something must have happened. Time is of the essence."

A TN 12 Scrutiny Challenge reveals that MacAlester is being truthful, even if he is downplaying the situation a bit. He's on duty and can't leave his post, or he would be looking for Annabelle himself.

MacAlester gives the Fated a map of Downtown with the patrol's route marked out on it. He notes that they arrived at the woman's home and checked in as they had been doing all week but disappeared while escorting her to her finishing school fifteen blocks away. He suggests that they start at his home and walk the route, looking for clues.

If the Fated choose to investigate Annabelle's home, go to Scene 2: The MacAlester Residence (pg. 46). If they choose to investigate the finishing school, go to Scene 3: Finishing School.



SCENE 2: THE MACALESTER RESIDENCE

When the Fated arrive at the MacAlester residence, read the following text:

The two-story home in front of you is crafted from sturdy brick and surrounded by a well-trimmed landscape and a sturdy, wrought iron fence. The other houses on the street are similarly built, and the frequent gas lampposts lining the wide street give you the impression of a relatively safe neighborhood.

There are two Guild guardsmen standing watch outside the home, and as you approach, they casually place their hands on their holstered pistols, as if to say, 'keep on walking.'

Until the guardsmen know that the Fated are there on behalf of Sergeant MacAlester, they'll order the Fated to leave them alone. They have their orders, and those orders don't involve talking with street riff-raff.

Once the Fated explain that they're visiting the house on behalf of Sergeant MacAlester, the guardsmen relax and show them into the house to look around. The main floor consists of a small den, a dining room, and a small half-bathroom, while the second floor mainly contains three bedrooms, one of which has been converted into a small library. Christine MacAlester, Annabelle's mother, welcomes them but otherwise tries to stay out of their way; a TN 8 Scrutiny Challenge reveals that she's beside herself with worry.

The guardsmen don't really think that there's much to find in the house, and they will tell the Fated as much, but neither do they believe that there's any harm in being thorough.

Searching the house for clues is handled via an Ongoing Challenge:

SEARCHING FOR CLUES

Skills Allowed: Notice, Scrutiny

Target Number: 9

Duration: 1 Minute

Success Requirement: 6

Failure Requirement: 2

At the end of each Duration, the Fated learn one Clue from the list below for each success they achieved.

If the Fated manage to successfully complete the Ongoing Challenge, they learn the Breakthrough, which should give them a solid push in the right direction. If they critically fail the Ongoing Challenge, however, then they learn the Red Herring, which is likely to pull them well off course.

CLUES (IN NO SPECIFIC ORDER)

* The Fated find a playbill to a show in the southern part of downtown with feminine handwriting on the back: "L30, R43, R2." MacAlester or his wife can identify the handwriting as belonging to Annabelle. (This is the combination to the lock that Annabelle purchased for her warehouse; she wrote it down on the first piece of paper she could find, which hints at her location.)

* While questioning Mrs. MacAlester, she mentions that Annabelle has been "a bit moody" lately, though she attributes that to being a teenage girl more than anything else. However, she also mentions that she's caught her trying to "sneak out at night." The disappearances were more of an excuse to put guards on her than any real worry on their part; she and her husband were more concerned about her sneaking out to meet with boys. (In actuality, Annabelle has been sneaking out to abduct people and practice necromancy.)

* Tucked under the mattress in Annabelle's room is a list of female names. A few of them have been circled with words such as "Legs?" or "Chest?" written next to them, while others have been scratched out. If the Fated think to check, the circled names match the names of the women who have recently disappeared in the neighborhood. (This is Annabelle's list of potential victims from when she



was first planning her abductions; she forgot that the list was here when she gathered the rest of the incriminating evidence against her.)

* As the Fated are searching Annabelle's room, they uncover the shattered remains of a ceramic piggy bank in one of her dresser drawers. (If the Fated think to ask her, Mrs. MacAlester reveals that Annabelle had been saving up her allowance lately and must have had "twenty or thirty" scrip saved up in total. They give her three scrip per week to spend on dresses or other luxuries... which hints at the generous size of Sergeant MacAlester's paycheck.)

* Mrs. MacAlester mentions that Annabelle has been listening to the Aethervox lately, but whenever she went into to her room, Annabelle just flicked the device off and yelled at her mother to leave her alone. Mrs. MacAlester remembers hearing a male voice talking on the Aethervox and suspects that a boy might have gotten a hold of some broadcasting equipment and tried to woo her daughter. The Aethervox is nowhere to be found in her room. (Annabelle was actually listening to the broadcasts of Professor Albus Von Schtook on the creation of Iron Zombies; she moved the Aethervox to her warehouse the day before her parents assigned guards to watch over her.)

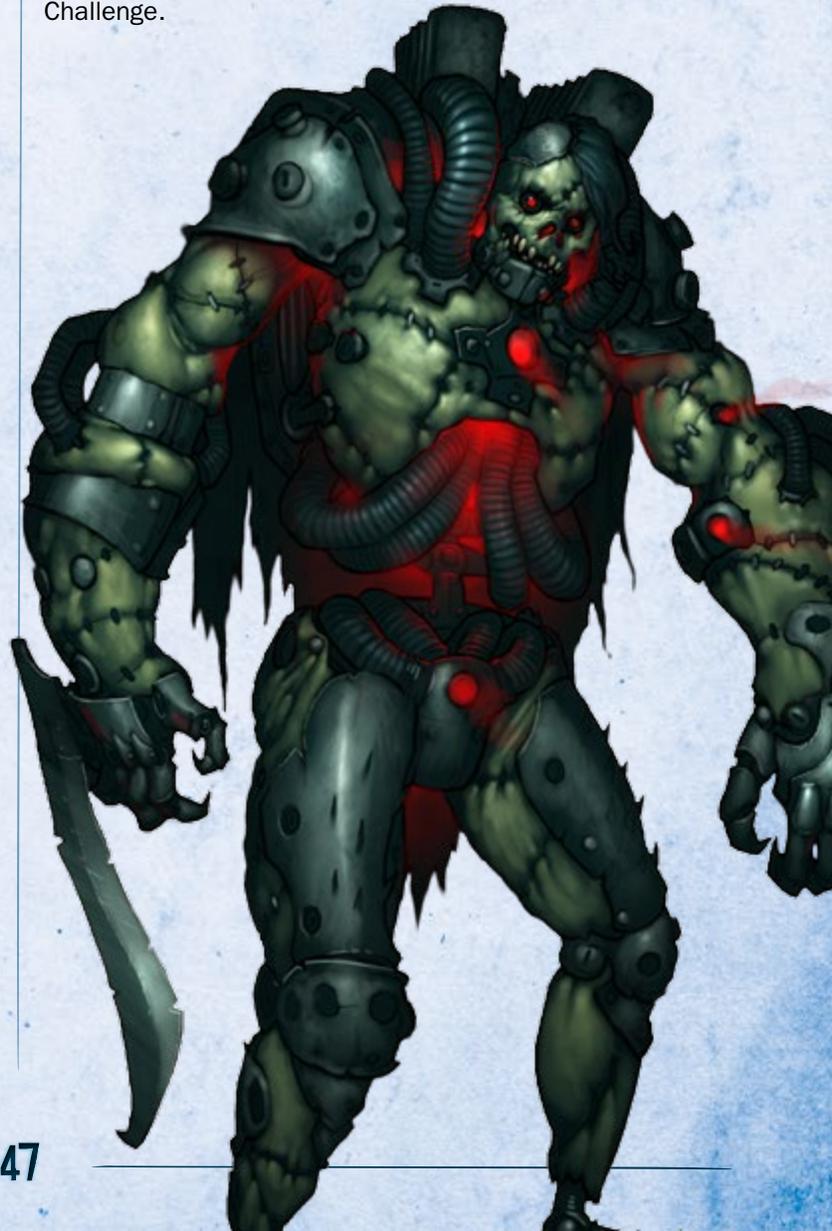
Breakthrough: The Fated find half a hand-written receipt for the rental of a warehouse in the trash in Annabelle's room. The receipt lists the location of the warehouse, which is along the riverfront at the very southern part of the Downtown district. (This points the Fated toward Scene 4: The Warehouse, where Annabelle has set up her "secret" lair.)

Red Herring: Tucked away in the upstairs library is a long letter from "R. James" professing his love for an unnamed woman in graphic and sensual detail. It looks like it's been read and reread multiple times. (The letter actually 'belongs' to Annabelle's mother, Christine, who is editing it for a friend of the family, in the hopes of helping him impress his girlfriend. Mr. James' spelling and grammar don't quite match his heart, so she was doing him a personal favor... but has neglected to mention such to her husband, under the (correct) belief that he would be upset. If the letter is brought up to either of them, it sets off a very heated and very loud argument between them that lasts through the rest of the adventure.)

FOLLOWING THE TRAIL

If the Fated attempt to follow the route of the guardsmen, they can make TN 12 Track Challenges to pick up the trail and start following the tracks of the group, but only if they start at her home; there are no tracks leading from the school that are recent enough to follow, and even if the Fated were able, they would just lead back to Annabelle's house.

The footprints follow the usual path Annabelle takes to the schoolhouse, down a somewhat slow side street, until around the halfway point when Annabelle's footprints suddenly branch out from the two guards, as if she started running. All three sets of prints lead to a large warehouse near the southern, riverfront edge of the Downtown district. This is the same warehouse the Fated may have learned about in the Searching For Clues Ongoing Challenge.





SCENE 3: FINISHING SCHOOL

If the Fated choose to investigate Annabelle's finishing school, read the following text:

Miss Nevaeh's School For Young Women is a simple, squat brick building that looks more like a warehouse than a traditional school. The symbol of the Guild is prominently displayed to either side of the building's doors, and next to those, a Guild Guard in a long red cloak is leaning against the brick and eating an apple.

Upon noticing your approach, he swallows one more bite, tosses the apple core to his feet, and raises a hand. "Thowwy," he says, his mouth still full of food. "No entranth."

The guardsman – Brian Taylor – has worked hard to obtain the cushy job of guarding a schoolhouse filled with pretty teenage girls, and he takes offense to any suggestions that he might not be doing his job correctly. If the Fated are polite and respectful, however, he's friendly enough, and a TN 9 Bewitch Challenge (or a TN 12 Intimidate Challenge) gets him talking freely about Annabelle MacAlester.

Taylor explains that Miss Nevaeh's is a finishing school for the daughters of prominent Guild officials, and as such, security is "pretty tight." That security consists mostly of him, of course, but he's confident in his own abilities. He claims that Annabelle MacAlester never arrived at the school yesterday (or today, for that matter), and that while he is sworn to protect the young women at the school, he's not actually responsible for getting them there in one piece. As far as he's concerned, that's a failing of her two bodyguards.

As far as Annabelle herself, Taylor always got the impression that she was a bit "stuck up," and that the other girls didn't really care for her all that much. He had to step in a few times after her mouth got the better of her – "that girl can swear out a sailor any day of the week" – and he's seen Miss Nevaeh haul her outside by the ear on more than one occasion to scold her away from the other students.

MISS NEVAEH

If the Fated ask to speak with Miss Nevaeh, they have to succeed on a TN 10 Convince Challenge to persuade Taylor to bother her. On a failure, he tells them that she's busy teaching and can't be bothered, but on a success, he steps into the schoolhouse and fetches her.

Nevaeh Adira is a black woman in her late fifties. She peers out at the world from behind delicate spectacles, and her dark hair is pulled back behind her head in a tight bun. Nevaeh is annoyed at being pulled away, but if the Fated make a successful TN 10 Bureaucracy, Bewitch, or Convince Challenge (or a TN 14 Intimidate Challenge), she sighs, removes her spectacles to clean them, and tells the Fated that Annabelle is a very intelligent young woman who nevertheless is a problem student.

Nevaeh also reveals that Annabelle is actually the third one of her girls to go missing, though none of them went missing at her school. If the Fated achieved a Margin of Success on their Bureaucracy, Bewitch, Convince, or Intimidate Challenge, she adds that of all three of the missing girls, Annabelle is the only one she doesn't particularly want back. "That girl is trouble," she says.

She refuses to allow the Fated to search her school, noting that her girls "don't need to be disturbed by any more disappearances; they're already on edge as it is."





SCENE 4: THE WAREHOUSE

When the Fated arrive at the warehouse, read the following text:

The warehouse seems to be divided into two sections, one on solid ground, and one that opens out onto the river, allowing for the easy loading of crates and other materials from a docked boat. The only entrance – or at least, the only entrance that doesn't involve swimming – is a wooden door with a hefty padlock hanging from a brand new latch. The latch and the padlock are both currently open, hinting that someone is inside.

If the Fated enter through the front door, the front room is stacked with empty crates that Annabelle moves out of the back room. Two of her creations – the former remains of two of her classmates – linger here, preserved in death as Iron Zombies.

The Fated can attempt TN 12 Stealth Challenges to sneak past the two Iron Zombies. On a success, they can enter the rear of the warehouse without alerting them, but if even a single Fated fails the Challenge (or if the Fated don't bother with Stealth), they attack with screeches of warning. Read the following text if this happens:

Suddenly, there's a high-pitched shriek as a misshapen abomination lurches out from behind a wooden crate. It might have been a teenage girl at one point, but its flesh has been cut up and sewn back together in multiple places, and its hands have been replaced with a mangled mess of knives, like spiny gloves. The most horrible thing, though, is the way its swollen tongue hangs limply from its upper skull, which is entirely missing its lower jaw.

The shriek is answered by a second creature, similar in basic design as the first but somehow more horrible. Its chest has been opened up like an autopsy, and its internal organs have been replaced with what you can only assume is some sort of petrol motor from a motorized boat. It sputters as the creature raises its right arm, once, twice, before finally jumping to life and powering the rotating cutting blade which has replaced its entire head.

The stats for the Iron Zombies can be found on page 52.

ANNABELLE'S FLIGHT

The shrieks and the sound of the second Iron Zombie's petrol motor starting up are loud enough to alert Annabelle of the Fated's presence, and she hurries to escape the warehouse as quickly as she can by climbing into a moored boat and motoring off down the river.

She climbs into the boat at the start of the fourth round of combat, starts the motor at the start of the fifth round, and starts driving it out onto the river at the start of the sixth round. By the start of the seventh round, she's out of sight. If she escapes, see the Conclusion section on page 50 for more details.





THE BACK ROOM

If the Fated are able to quietly make their way past the two Iron Zombies (or if they dive into the water and swim around to the side of the warehouse that's open to the water), read the following text:

The rear room of the warehouse opens up to the river at its far end, allowing small boats to dock inside and unload their cargo at their leisure. At the moment, there's only a single boat moored to the docks, a small, two-person rowboat that's been fitted with a cheap petrol motor.

At the center of the room, the grisly remains of an adult man are spread across a low, flat table. His corpse has been dismembered at all the major joints, and in places, there are what look to be salvaged industrial parts bolted onto the bones in these pieces in a thoroughly unwholesome manner. A second corpse lies nearby on the ground, still dressed in its Guild Guard uniform.

A young woman wearing a surgeon's smock and mask – a teenage girl, really – is hovering over the pieces and listening intently to a nearby aethervox, from which emanates the soothing tone of a man's voice.

"...consider the benefits of a ball-and-socket joint over that of a hinge joint," the voice says in an academic manner. "Mobility, of course, is the most obvious, and for that reason alone it is often better to leave the natural anatomy in place at the shoulder. The elbow joint – a hinge joint, remember – is a much better place to add improvements to the corpse..."

The girl nods in silent agreement with the voice and moves the large knife in her hand down as appropriate, as if following the instructions being broadcast over the aethervox airwaves.

The girl is Annabelle MacAlester, a budding Resurrectionist. The broadcast she is listening to is one of the "academic lectures" of Professor Albus Von Schtook, one of the city's most notorious necromancers.

If the Fated snuck up on Annabelle, they can attempt TN 12 Stealth Challenges to get the drop on her. Otherwise she shouts in surprise and rushes toward the motor boat in an attempt to escape. If hard-pressed, she draws upon her magic to defend herself while trying to get to the boat and escape. If the Fated didn't defeat the two Iron Zombies in the first room, she calls out to them to defend her, and they rush into the second room.

The motor boat is an unstable platform, so characters firing ranged weapons while on it receive \square to their attack flip. The engine can be started as a 2 AP Action, and once started, it can be moved 15 yards per AP spent controlling it.

Any character who suffers damage while on the motor boat must succeed at an Acrobatics Challenge (TN 6 + damage received) or be knocked into the water by the force of the attack. Climbing back into the boat requires 2 AP and a TN 10 Athletics Challenge.

If the Fated decide to attack the boat, it has Armor +1 and 8 Wounds. When it reaches 0 Wounds, it breaks apart.

If the Fated failed to sneak up on Annabelle, she's likely either in the process of leaving or already gone, as described in Annabelle's Flight on page 49.

CONCLUSION

If the Fated return Annabelle to her father, he happily pays them the 10 scrip he promised and acknowledges that he owes them a favor. He initially doesn't listen to any claims about his daughter being a Resurrectionist, but a TN 14 Convince Challenge is enough to get him to look at the evidence objectively... provided that his daughter is still alive. If the Fated killed her, MacAlester is blinded with grief and vows vengeance against the Fated; they're likely in for some deep trouble with the Guild as he finds every excuse he can to make the Fated's life miserable.

If Annabelle escaped, she returns home and tells her parents an elaborate story about being kidnapped by a necromancer and escaping in a boat as he became

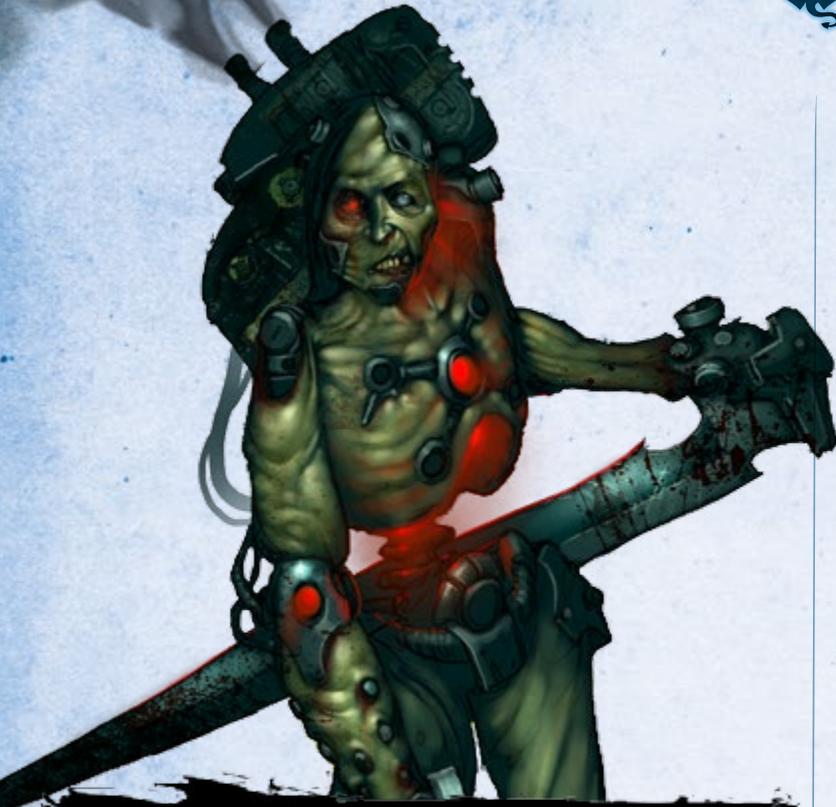


distracted by someone attacking his “secret” lab. There are plenty of holes to be found and evidence to the contrary, but her parents are glad to have her home and don’t bother to investigate the matter further. A TN 14 Convince Challenge is once again enough to get her father to look at the evidence objectively, though his response is to place her under heavier protection, rather than subject her to the Guild’s criminal justice system.

If Fated inform the Guild of Annabelle’s activities, the Death Marshals investigate the situation and quickly confirm the Fated’s belief that she’s responsible for the deaths and resulting necromancy. If Sergeant MacAlester hasn’t been convinced of his daughter’s guilt, he does his best to block the investigation while sending his wife and daughter south to Edge Point under assumed names. If he’s been convinced that his daughter is responsible, he does the same but takes his own life afterward.

If the Fated don’t find some way to bring Annabelle to justice (or at the very least, to stop her interest in necromancy), she eventually kills her parents in their sleep and transforms them into Iron Zombies. She leads them into the sewers in search of Von Schtook, intending to become his greatest student. Von Schtook is all too happy to learn that a gifted student has been listening to his lectures, and he happily welcomes her into his University of Transmortis... and then promptly has his students murder and reanimate the egotistical young woman as an Iron Zombie.





IRON ZOMBIE

Minion (5), Undead, Construct, Horror, Academic

Might 3	Grace -1	Speed 1	Resilience 2
Charm -3	Intellect 0	Cunning 2	Tenacity 2
Defense 3 (8)	Walk 5	Height 2	Initiative 2 (7)
Willpower 4 (9)	Charge 5	Wounds 7	

Skills: Artefacting 1, Evade 2, Melee 2, Notice 1, Stitching 1, Toughness 2.

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

Hard to Wound +1: Damage flips against this character receive \square .

(1) Dissectors (Melee)

AV: 5 (10) ===== Rg: /// 1 ===== Resist: **Df**

Target suffers 2/3/5 damage.

☞ *Mutilate:* After damaging, the target gains **Slow**.



ANNABELLE MACALESTER

Enforcer (7), Living, Academic

Might -2	Grace 1	Speed 1	Resilience -1
Charm -1	Intellect 2	Cunning 1	Tenacity 0
Defense 3 (10)	Walk 5	Height 2	Initiative 2 (9)
Willpower 2 (9)	Charge 5	Wounds 4	

Skills: Art 2, Artefacting 2, Deceive 2, History 1, Literacy 2, Mathematics 1, Notice 1, Stitching 2, Toughness 2.

Cynic: Annabelle finds it difficult to believe that people are able to act for honorable reasons. She gains \blacktriangle on any duels made to resist deception.

Wp (X) Twisted Mind: After Annabelle succeeds, the attacker suffers 2 damage.

(1) Purloined Guard Pistol (Pistol)

AV: 1 (8) ===== Rg: /// 12 ===== Resist: **Df**

Target suffers 1/3/4 damage.