



# THE WHISPERING AFFAIR

A ONE-SHOT ADVENTURE FOR THROUGH THE BREACH

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## TARDY TIE-INS

CRSC 8♣: “The melody will be lost within the gutters” could reference Anne Marie Weston being taken into the slums, her innocence overtaken by death, madness, and rot.

CRST A♣: “And you will hear the whispers beyond” might come about if, during the adventure, a character begins hearing the Whisper in the same manner as the adventure’s antagonist. This option could be particularly horrifying, as they will see to what lengths such voices can drive a person.

ALBC 12X: “You shall find the man with the missing heart” is a good description of the protagonist, as he’s lost what once made him good and decent (i.e., his “heart”). This is especially appropriate if the Fated is the first one down into the cellar.

ALRC 7♥: “And you will arrive too late to save her” has an obvious tie-in with the climax of the adventure. With luck, the Fated will be able to deny this step of their destiny and save Anne Marie in time, but then again, fate is a cruel mistress...

## PROLOGUE

The Fated have been quickly called to the home of Dr. Avry Weston, a man of psychology and considerable means. His large home in Downtown Malifaux City has been broken into, his daughter Anne Marie and their maid Dorsa Mathers are both missing, and foul play seems to be involved. The doctor is in a near panic when the Fated arrive and implores them to find his daughter.

Dr. Weston should have some reason to believe that the Fated will be able to help him. One of them might be a former patient or friend, and if the Fatemaster is able to introduce Weston in an earlier adventure, it will make his appearance here seem all the more natural. Failing that, the doctor might contact the Fated based on the recommendation of someone else they have helped, who just so happens to be one of Weston’s patients.

When the Fated arrive at Weston’s home, read the following text:



*You arrive at the home of Dr. Avry Weston just as the sun is setting to the west. The doctor's home is tall but slim, and it is squeezed in between two larger homes. Aging wood covered in dark, peeling paint gives the place a look of incredible antiquity, and the windows are smoky and partially opaque.*

*As you approach the door, you notice that it appears to have been recently damaged: the wood around the lock has been splintered, rendering the lock unusable and the door unable to be properly closed. You knock, and almost immediately, you can hear the sound of a large, heavy object being slid away from the door to allow it to open.*

*You are met by a disheveled man of about forty, with handsome features worn down by constant work. His shirt is stained and wrinkled, and his glasses are askew atop his nose. "Thank goodness you've come so quickly," he says, stepping back as he ushers you inside. "Please forgive my manners, but I fear the matter at hand is extremely time sensitive."*

## **SCENE 1: THE SINS OF THE FATHER**

Read the following text to the players:

*Dr. Weston leads you into his sitting room, but makes no effort to offer you a seat. Instead, he pauses at the threshold and gestures into the disorganized room. "My daughter, my Anne Marie, has been kidnapped. I came home to find the lock forced open and my little girl missing. Our maid, Dorsa, is also gone."*

*The Doctor gestures to several sprays of blood on the wall and floor, and for the first time, you realize that the room's crimson carpet had originally been white. "There is...too much blood here. I fear the worst has happened, but..." His voice trails off before he snaps his gaze back to you, his gaze intense. "Please, find my daughter. I'll provide you with whatever information you wish and I will pay you handsomely. The house is yours to search, but I've found nothing on my own."*

Anne Marie Weston and Dorsa Mathers have both been kidnapped by one of Dr. Weston's former patients, Sulden Pithy. The tormented Pithy had come to Dr. Weston complaining of hearing strange voices, but despite a generous regiment of barbiturates, water therapy, and electric shock therapy, the voices in Pithy's head only continued to grow stronger. Eventually he broke off his treatment with Dr. Weston, thinking that he was making the voices worse, but without Weston's treatments they soon became overwhelming.

Pithy visited Weston's home, wanting to resume his treatment – he's desperate to find some way to silence the voices – and had a breakdown when Dorsa informed him that the doctor was out. In his weakness, the voices convinced him to kill Dorsa and animate her corpse, whispering the words of the ritual in Pithy's ears as he raised her from the dead. Pithy was horrified to realize what he had done, and when Anne Marie stumbled across the scene, he kidnapped and fled in a panic with the undead Dorsa in tow. He hopes that having the doctor's daughter will persuade Weston to heal him once and for all, but that thought is just a straw in the tornado of Pithy's mind. He's teetering on the brink of insanity.

If the Fated suggest that the doctor contact the Guild, he dismisses the idea immediately; he claims that the guards wouldn't care about his daughter's fate and would likely spend much of the time they could be looking for her trying to extort a bribe from him. A TN 10 Scrutiny Challenge reveals that while Weston believes what he is saying, there's something he's holding back. A TN 10 Bewitch, Convince, or Intimidate Challenge gets him to come clean, and the Fated gain a + to this Challenge if they imply that holding the information back might cause them to not look for his daughter.

On a success, Weston reveals that he has had a number of dealings with less than reputable patients, and that he does not wish for the Guild to learn that he has been trying to help people that they would just as soon toss into their asylum without a second thought. For the most part, his treatments have been successful... but the doctor has also been overcharging people for his services, a fact which any close look at his ledger will reveal.



The doctor offers the Fated a total of 40 scrip to safely return his daughter, but a TN 11 Barter Challenge can get that number up to 50 scrip. He'll toss in another 5 scrip if they return Dorsa as well, but that's just an afterthought to his daughter's safety.

### SEARCHING FOR CLUES

The Fated can attempt an Ongoing Challenge to search the house for clues.

#### [Ongoing Challenge]

#### Search the House

**Skills Allowed:** Notice, Track

**Target Number:** 10

**Duration:** 3 minutes

**Success Requirement:** 6

**Failure Requirement:** 3

At the end of each Duration, the Fated learn one Clue from the list below for each Success they achieved. For every Failure, they learn one Mistake from the list below. If your players can easily separate player knowledge from character knowledge, feel free to give the Clues and Mistakes to them individually, perhaps even written down on small slips of paper they can reveal to the group. This allows them each to have an "Aha!" moment where they reveal their findings (or their false assumptions) to the group.

If your players find it difficult to separate what their characters know from what they know, however, you can just give the Clues and Mistakes to them all at the same time, ensuring that – like their characters – they're not easily able to separate the truth from their false assumptions.

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 Doctor is fairly wealthy, and several items of value are placed fairly openly throughout the various rooms. Nothing valuable appears to have been taken.
- Large quantities of blood cover the carpet, which appears to be soaked through with blood. It is unlikely that a single person could survive losing so much blood.
- The kitchen is also in disarray; a wooden knife holder has been knocked over and one appears to be missing.
- There are faint shapes drawn in the blood which soaks the drawing room carpet. They're circular and appear to be arcane in nature, though it's impossible to make them out in any further detail.
- The entryway has a hardwood floor, but there are bloodied footprints that suggest two people left the house. One set of footprints is larger than the other. The footprints lead out the broken front door but the trail is too faint to follow any further.
- A drawer reveals some letters and a thick patient book with long lists of patients, their treatments, and what he has charged them. It covers his work in Malifaux and back on Earth in New Amsterdam. The most recent entries show three names – Marcus Braskin, Hilda Bruune, and Sulden Pithy – that are struck through with red ink and marked with the phrase "UNTREATABLE."
- Dr. Weston appears to work from home, and one room has been converted into an office, complete with a reclining bench for his patients. His desk is cluttered and is piled with handwritten letters, leaflets, and messages. Many condemn the doctor for failing to cure them or overcharging them for services rendered.



## **MISTAKES (IN NO SPECIFIC ORDER)**

- There is an empty envelope on the kitchen table, which is stretched in a way that suggests it once held a large amount of Guild scrip. The front of the envelope bears the doctor's name and address, and the return address is the "Blackwood Home for Mental Healing," the city's private sanitarium. (The sanitarium pays Dr. Weston for each patient he incarcerates, and while the doctor is not comfortable with the unsolicited arrangement, he's also not foolish enough to turn down the cash.)
- In Anne Marie's room, there is a stack of love letters hidden in a drawer. The letters are from three different men, Joffrey Ashworth, Marcel Hedley, and Velimir Schwarz. The last letter was from Marcel Hedley and is dated three days ago. In the letter, Marcel expresses his affection for Anne Marie and begs her to run away with him, citing that even a small portion of her father's wealth would set them up for life. (Anne Marie enjoys the attention heaped on her by her admirers, but doesn't feel too strongly about any of the three men. She has kept the letters secret from her father because she is a teenage girl and he is her father.)
- The doctor's office has a bookshelf which contains a number of books on anatomy and stitching. Tucked to one side is a small leather pack which unfolds to reveal a number of wicked-looking knives and hooks with worn ivory handles. (Dr. Weston had been an amateur taxidermist back on Earth, but has drifted away from the hobby since coming to Malifaux. He keeps his tools because they were expensive and he has yet to have any reason to throw them out.)

## **BREAKTHROUGH**

- The Fated find a scrap of paper that has fallen behind an end table in the sitting room. The following text has been scrawled onto the back in a shaky hand: "Doctor – You didn't help me before but I need your help. They won't stop talking. Please help me. **THEY WON'T STOP TALKING.**" The front of the note is an advertisement for "The Thief and Pipe," a tavern in the Easterly slums. (Pithy placed the note on the end table in the hopes that

the doctor would see it, but the reanimated Dorsa bumped the table and resulted in it falling to the floor, out of sight.)

## **RED HERRING**

- While searching the sitting room, one of the Fated finds an old pipe beneath one of the chairs. (The pipe was dropped by Marcus Braskin at the end of his last session with the doctor, when the waiting Blackwood orderlies wrestled him into a straight jacket and carried him away from Weston's home to be incarcerated. Neither the doctor nor his maid has noticed its presence before now).

## **FALSE ASSUMPTIONS**

If the Fated find the Red Herring pipe and show it to Dr. Weston, he immediately recognizes it as belonging to Marcus Braskin, one of his former patients who was treated for hearing voices that encouraged him to do terrible things. Dr. Weston arranged for Braskin to be incarcerated at the Blackwood Home for Mental Healing, but upon seeing the pipe, he becomes convinced that Braskin kidnapped his daughter out of revenge and begs the Fated to accompany him to the asylum. If they agree, they eventually learn that Braskin is safe within his cell (though still quite insane). By the time they realize that he could not have taken Anne Marie, the girl has already been killed by Pithy.

The Fated could still reexamine the evidence and track Pithy down, but by that time, Anne Marie will have been raised from the dead to serve Pithy as one of his Rotten Belles.

## **THE RIGHT TRACK**

If the Fated show the Breakthrough flyer note to Dr. Weston, he recognizes the handwriting as belonging to Sulden Pithy, one of his former patients who was being treated for hearing voices. Weston explains that Pithy's condition grew worse as their sessions continued, until Pithy eventually ceased to show up for his appointments. He still has Sulden Pithy's last known address in his patient book, and it proves to be a residence in the Easterly Slums (which are, contrary to common sense, just to the west of the Downtown district).



If Weston is asked about Pithy, read the following text:

*The doctor sighs as he massages his forehead with one hand. "Sulden Pithy was a disturbed man. He came to be complaining of voices that encouraged him to hurt others, and he asked me to help him. I did what I could, but neither electroshock nor water therapy seemed to help him. Every day he complained that the voices only grew stronger and stronger."*

*Weston's expression turns to one of defeat. "Eventually, I prescribed him some drugs to help keep the voices at bay, but I doubt that Mr. Pithy could afford them. He could barely afford my therapy fees, and more than once he paid me in gold watches that... well, there is little reason for a man to own more than one watch." The doctor clears his throat. "In any case, I had determined that incarceration was the only treatment left, as Mr. Pithy had grown dangerous to others, but he failed to attend our next appointment. That was over two weeks ago."*

*"If he has taken my daughter, and I am somehow responsible..." Dr. Weston's voice trails off as he closes his eyes and rubs them with one hand.*

## SCENE 2: THE EASTERLY SLUMS

If the Fated did well on their investigation, they should suspect that Pithy has taken Anne Marie to the Easterly Slums, and they might even have a street address. Unfortunately, the Green Sleeves gang is also in the area, and they're looking to mug some people and use their stolen cash for a night out on the town.

The Green Sleeves aren't a particularly notable or dangerous gang – they mostly just stick to a bit of mugging and the occasional robbery, and aren't interested in killing people – and thus have managed to remain beneath the Guild's radar for the time being. They all work in the Downtown district during the day, and see their nightly excursions as a way to "get back at the rich and wealthy," even though the people they prey upon are laborers and workers just like themselves.

Read the following text to the players as they enter the Easterly Slums:

*The slums to the west of Downtown are probably the safest and most stable of the city's various slum districts, but that's not saying much. As you leave the relatively civilized Downtown behind you, the surrounding buildings become shabbier and more decrepit, and the streets become noticeably less clean. During the day, you might see people sitting on their porch steps, lounging on windowsills, or clamoring through the streets, but now, in the darkness of the night, the streets may as well be deserted. Every so often you catch sight of someone peeking down at you from a window, but they quickly pull the shutters closed once they realize they have been spotted.*

*A block away, a scruffy-looking dog is chewing on a tattered slipper that has become grimy with dirt, blood, and canine drool. According to the address given to you by Dr. Weston, Pithy's last known address should be about a half dozen blocks down this street.*

The Fated will only get another block or so before they're approached by the Green Sleeves gang. Read the following text to the players:

*As you approach the dog, it looks up, the slipper dangling haphazardly from its jaws. Its remains frozen for a moment, then bolts down the street as a half-dozen men come out of an alleyway. They're talking quietly among themselves, but they stop as they notice you in the street.*

*"Well, well," the largest man says as he approaches you, and it's then that you notice the iron pokers and wooden clubs in their hands. They're all wearing threadbare coats, but the sleeves of each have been dyed a bright green color. "What have we got here? Don't you know it's dangerous to wander the slums at night?"*

*The comment draws chuckles and snickers from the other men, who begin to fan out behind their leader in expectation of a fight. "Now," the first man says as he points his iron poker at you, "why don't you just put yer scrip at yer feet and back away, and nobody has to get hurt."*



The Fated can attempt to talk the Green Sleeves down with a TN 12 Convince, Deceive, or Intimidate Challenge, but if they achieve a Margin of Failure on the Challenge, the Green Sleeves will be insulted and will attack the Fated.

Alternatively, they could leave all their scrip on the ground as the gang demands, in which case the thugs are true to their word and will let the Fated go about their business; they're not going to put themselves in danger if the money's already on the ground. If the Fated feel like bargaining, a TN 10 Barter Challenge can convince the gang to accept a single payment of 3 scrip as a "toll" for passing through their territory, which is enough to buy the thugs a few drinks down at the Thief and Pipe tavern.

Failing that, the Fated are likely going to get into a scrap with the Green Sleeves. The six thugs fight until they're reduced to two Wounds or less, at which point they abandon the fight and attempt to flee.

### SCENE 3: SULDEN PITHY

Once the Fated have gotten past the Green Sleeves, it's only a few more blocks until they reach Suldén Pithy's residence. The building is little more than a shack; the timbers are dilapidated, and rot and moisture are eating away at its wooden foundations. The door has been carelessly left open, but the interior is dark and has a foreboding aura to it.

The interior doesn't prove to be much better. There are four rooms – a bedroom, a small kitchen, a sitting room, and a bathroom – and all are covered in grime and debris. The smell is unpleasant, and rats skitter into bolt holes when the Fated enter each room. There are currently no lights within the shack, so if the Fated don't have a lantern or another source of illumination, it's going to be a very creepy journey through the home.

- **Sitting Room:** The front door opens onto this room, which is plastered with newspaper cuttings of seemingly unrelated content. A lantern sits on a table, but there is barely any oil inside; the flame sputters and flickers as if it were on the verge of going out (which it is). If the Fated have light, a TN 9 Notice Challenge allows the Fated to pick up some words that have been scrawled across the newspaper clippings: "STOP THE VOICES NEVER STOP NEVER STOP THEM"
- **Kitchen:** The kitchen is a scattered mess of overturned pots, pans, and rotting food. The rats here barely look up as the Fated enter the room, as they're busy consuming what's left of the room's perishables. So long as the Fated don't bother them, they continue eating in peace. Any aggression against the rats will send them scurrying for their bolt holes in the walls. Something will bang against the inside of the wood-burning stove as the Fated look around the room; if opened, an emaciated rat leaps out of its iron prison in a flurry of biting teeth; if the Fated did not take precautions to stand back as they open the stove, the nearest one takes 1 damage from the rat's biting before it darts off to safety. If the Fated have light, a TN 9 Notice Challenge reveals a wooden trap door in the floor that leads down into the Cellar.

## GREEN SLEEVES

Minion (5), Living

Might 1	Grace 2	Speed -1	Resilience 1
Charm 0	Intellect -1	Cunning 1	Tenacity 1
Defense 3 (8)	Walk 4	Height 2	Initiative 1 (6)
Willpower 5 (13)	Charge 4	Wounds 6	

**Skills:** Evade 1, Intimidate 1, Labor 2, Melee 1, Notice 2, Scrutiny 1, Toughness 1

**Talents:**

**Combined Efforts:** When this character is within 2 yards of a friendly character, it gains  to its attack flips.

**(1) Crude Club (Melee)**

AV: 6 (14) ===== Rg:  2 ===== Resist: Df  
Target suffers 1/3/4 damage.

If this weapon deals Severe damage, the target suffers a Weak Critical Effect.



- **Bathroom:** The bathroom is foul and contains a single non-flushing toilet which drops its waste into the sewers below. Rats have crawled up through the pipes and now infest the home, though they scatter when the Fated enter the room. The bathtub and the wall behind it are splattered with blood, and a strong odor of rotting flesh hangs over the room. If the Fated approach the tub, a Canine Remains – the results of Pithy's first experiments with necromancy – leaps out and attacks the nearest character, sending rats over the side of the tub in surprise. The Canine Remains is half-eaten and barely resembles a dog anymore; it's little more than a four-legged mass of rotting flesh and raw muscle at this point. Canine Remains stats can be found on page 193 of the Fatemaster's Almanac.
- **Bedroom:** The foul stench that permeates the house only seems to strengthen as the Fated enter this room. The bed and its sheets are stained and grimy, and one of the pillows twitches and makes disturbing sounds (a rat is giving birth inside it).

## THE CELLAR

The cellar can be accessed via a trap door in the floor of the kitchen. When the Fated are ready to descend into its depths, read the following text:

*Heaving the trap door open, you're immediately overwhelmed by a puff of putrid air; something is rotting down in the cellar's dark depths. A discolored but seemingly sturdy wooden ladder leads down into the darkness.*

The ladder only descends seven feet to the cellar, but once the first Fated has climbed down, they will immediately be forced to deal with Pithy. This could prove to be a hindrance, if the first person down into the cellar doesn't have much in the way of words or combat prowess.

Read the following text to the players after the first Fated descends into the cellar, adjusting as appropriate depending upon the character's light source:

*It takes a moment for your eyes to adjust to the gloom, but near the back of the cellar, you can see a fat man holding a knife to a young woman's throat. There are tears streaming down the cheeks of both, and around them are several dismembered corpses, piled up alongside saws and other homemade surgical tools. "Please help me," the man begs, his voice little more than a whimper. The girl in his arms is silent, but her body shakes in fear as she looks to you with imploring eyes.*

*Something moves to his right, and as it stands up, you realize that it's not a corpse like the others. It's certainly dead – its dead eyes make that clear as it turns its head towards you – but as it turns completely you realize that it is dressed in the blood-stained clothes of a servant. The undead creature pulls its lips back in a smile, but there is nothing good or wholesome left in its pale visage.*

What the doctor had thought were just voices of Pithy's own creation was in fact the phenomenon known as The Whisper. The voices have been whispering blasphemous truths into Pithy's ears in an attempt to teach him necromancy, but Pithy has been resisting as best he is able. Unfortunately, Selden Pithy was not the most stable of people before coming to Malifaux, and he's given in to the voices more than once.

Now, his mind is close to snapping beneath the weight of the constant voices in his head and the knowledge of all the terrible things it has convinced him to do. He kidnapped the Anne Marie in an attempt to convince her father to help him, but now he's unsure whether that was because he wanted it or because the voices told him that. In short, he's close to snapping once and for all.

The Fated can attempt to talk Pithy into releasing Anne Marie, but doing so will be tricky. A TN 12 Convince, Deceive, Intimidate, or Leadership Challenge will convince him to lower the knife, allowing Anne Marie to rush over to the Fated. Pithy slumps forward, grabbing his head with both



hands as he rocks back and forth and mutters “Why won’t they stop, why won’t they stop...” If the Fated attempt to approach or attack Pithy, Dorsa will immediately leap to his defense, attacking the Fated with all the energy she can muster.

If the Fated fail to convince Pithy to release Anne Marie – or if any additional Fated climb down the ladder in the cellar – the scene will immediately shift into Dramatic Time. Dorsa will attack the Fated on her initiative, putting herself between Pithy and his attackers, and on his action Pithy will slit Anne Marie’s throat as he sobs and shakes his head back and forth. Anne Marie falls to the ground, clutching her throat and bleeding, but any form of magical healing (or a TN 10 Doctor Challenge) administered in the next four rounds will save her life (and will give her a nasty scar for the rest of her life).

On subsequent turns, Pithy will surrender to the voices and will animate the remains of his victims into The Dismembered, at a rate of two per round. There are enough pieces to create a total of six Dismembered, at which point Pithy will resort to attacking the Fated with his knife.

Sulden Pithy uses the stats for a Stable Master (Fatemaster’s Almanac, page 135), while Dorsa Mathers is a Rotten Belle (Fatemaster’s Almanac, page 195). The Dismembered use the stats given here.

### CONCLUSION

If Anne Marie is rescued, she thanks the Fated profusely and asks to be taken home to her father, who is quite grateful to have his daughter back. The death of Dorsa weighs heavily on Anne Marie, however, and it’s up to the Fatemaster whether it’s merely a bad experience that she overcomes, a traumatizing event, or the catalyst that enables her to start hearing a Whisper of her own...

Dr. Weston is good to his word and will pay the Fated the agreed upon sum of 40 scrip for returning his daughter (or 50 scrip, if they bartered him up to a higher price). He will remember the good work that the Fated have done for him, and may prove to be a valuable ally in the days to come. After all, he knows a great deal about the inner workings of the mind, and now that he’s been exposed to the Whisper, the good doctor is certain to want to study it more. Perhaps this could be the first chapter in an ongoing campaign to understand just what the Whisper truly is.

If Anne Marie dies, however, Dr. Weston will be quite upset, though he understands that the Fated did everything they could to save her. In the end, he blames himself more than them. If the doctor learns that Pithy had been taught necromancy by the voices in his head, he may even go so far as to hunt down his former patients, Marcus Braskin and Hilda Bruune, who had both exhibited the same symptoms as Pithy. It wouldn’t be difficult for the doctor to tease the knowledge out of their shattered minds, and with it, he can bring back his darling little girl. If he were to show up as a villain in a later adventure, the Fated might be surprised to see just how far Dr. Weston has fallen!

## THE DISMEMBERED

Minion (6), Undead

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> -1	<i>Resilience</i> 2
<i>Charm</i> -5	<i>Intellect</i> -3	<i>Cunning</i> -1	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 4 (10)	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 1 (7)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (10)	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 7	

**Skills:** Evade 2, Intimidate 1, Labor 1, Melee 2, Notice 2, Pugilism 3, Toughness 2

#### Talents:

**Hard to Wound:** Damage flips against this character suffer .

**Rotten Contents:** After suffering damage, this character may discard a card. If it does, all Living characters within 2 yards suffer 2 damage.

#### (1) Meaty Fist (Pugilism)

AV: 5 (11) ===== Rg: 1 ===== Resist: Df  
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

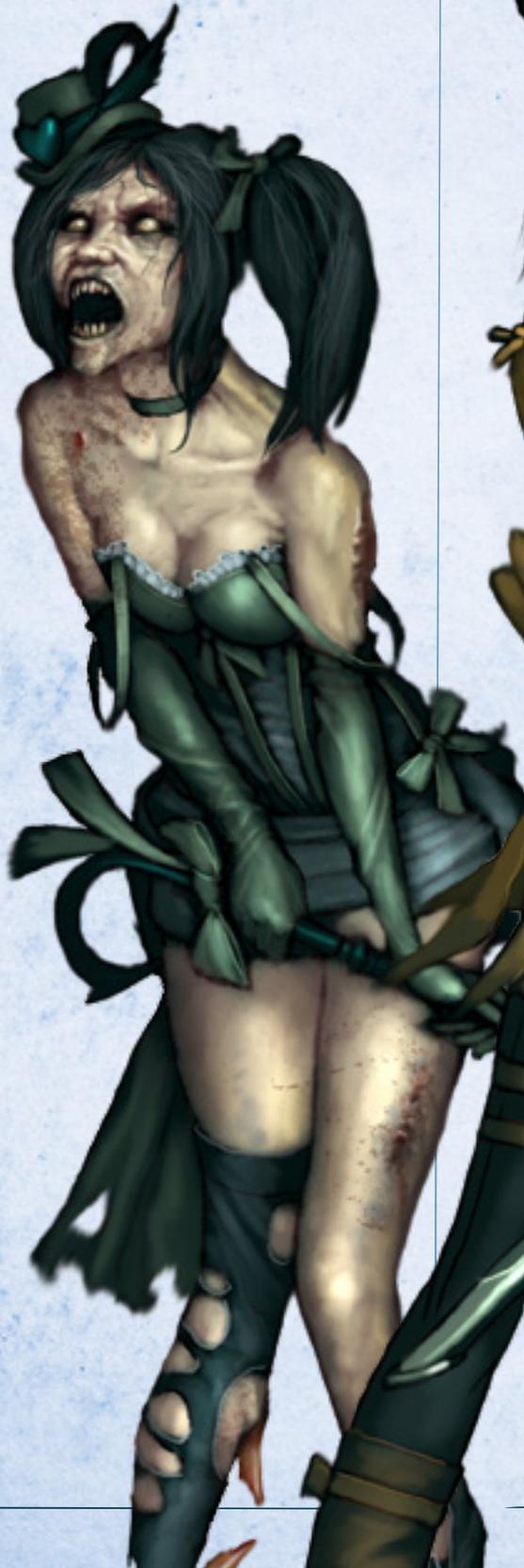
**☞ Pound into Meat:** After damaging, immediately take this Action again against the same target. This Action may not declare Triggers.



If Pithy is defeated but not killed in the final battle, the Fated have a choice: do they turn him over to an asylum, despite the threat posed by his magic and obvious insanity? Would a bullet to the brain be a better solution for everyone involved (Pithy included)? In a way, Pithy is as much a victim here as Anne Marie, and there's no easy choice to be made.



◀ ANNE MARIE WESTON



DORSA MATHERS. ▶  
DEAD MAID