

GEIST

TM

THE SIN-EATERS

Free Quickstart Rules and Adventure

Begin Your Journey Across The Threshold

This free booklet gives you and five of your friends everything you need to play your first game of Geist: The Sin-Eaters, White Wolf's all-new Storytelling game set in the World of Darkness. It contains all of the rules and characters you need to start, as well as "The Return of Mr. Monster," a complete introductory scenario. All you need is a few 10-sided dice and you're ready to play.

Geist: The Sin-Eaters goes on sale August 2009.

ISBN 978-1-58846-397-5
WW60508

FREE!

www.worldofdarkness.com



PRINTED IN CANADA

This is Your Second Chance

You knew when it happened that it was the end. Everything you'd hoped to be, all those things you wanted to do before you died, all of it was gone. All the promise of your life winked out in an instant, and why? It just didn't make sense. In that split second before you became an obituary, you looked back on your life and—no matter how long you lived, no matter how much you had done—it wasn't enough. So when that other part of you first came, you listened. When it whispered in a voice like water over tiny, polished rocks, you nodded desperately and agreed to anything, whatever it wanted, just for one more chance. And the moment passed, and you were alive.

But you were not alone.

After your near-death experience, everything changed. Your friends say that it was confronting your own mortality that made you change. They do their best to accommodate the new you, but sometimes, when they look in your eyes, they see a stranger staring back. Ever since the event, you've been a home to the other, bound to it like a spiritual conjoined twin. And sometimes, you need to step away from your old life and do what the other needs, even if it's only to shut it up for a little bit, to silence the voice so you can sleep.

You are now part of the **World of Darkness**, a world very much like our own, save that the shadows hide very real monsters from the ignorant masses, preying upon them, playing with them or haunting them.

In **Geist: The Sin-Eaters**, the seventh Storytelling game set in the **World of Darkness**, you and your friends tell the story of those people who have cheated death and found a new lease on life by allowing themselves to be bound with shades known as geists. This is not a deal to be struck lightly. Geists clamor and claw on the other side, so determined to reach their goals that they seek out people like your character, on the brink of death. But simply dying (or almost dying) is not enough. A geist needs someone already touched by death: a sensitive or medium. A deal is struck, and the sensitive returns to the land of the living with a passenger in tow. The Bound cannot simply go on with their lives, for the scales have fallen from their eyes. Their brush with mortality forever alters lives; once you have crossed the threshold, you cannot return unscathed. Those who return find

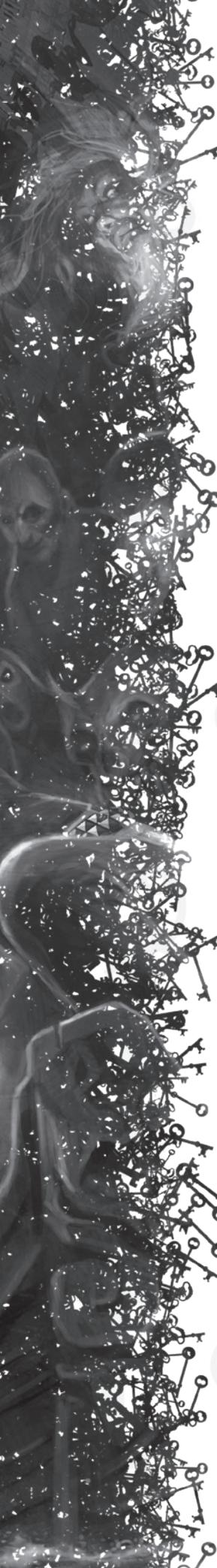
the world a darker place, full of shadows and ghosts. Always ghosts. And the geist is not simply a spectator, hoping their hosts will fill their part of the bargain. They whisper and cajole and sometimes force the issue, acting of their own volition.

Each Sin-Eater deals with their situation differently. Some take on the role of judge, reaping those souls they deem worthy of punishment and saving those they deem to be innocents, according to their own personal code. Others listen to the pleading of ghosts only to use their secrets for their own benefit. Still others, having touched death, are determined to enjoy every moment of life.

And geists are not simply ghosts. They are ghosts distilled into an almost pure expression of violence, need or sickness. Each geist has come unmoored from their living identity and embraced the essence of their death. The ghost who used to be Tommaso "Tommy" Sorvino might remember his life and still nurse a grudge against the Manetti family for double crossing him, but that person has been so shaped by the violence of his life and death that he has been transformed in a crucible of bullets and blood into the Trigger Man.

The Game

Geist is a Storytelling (or roleplaying) game. In it, a group of players cooperates to tell a story. Each player takes on the role of a single Sin-Eater, except for the Storyteller. This player essentially takes on every other role, describing the world to the other players, acting out the parts of other characters and determining what challenges the players' characters face. Players roll dice to determine whether their characters can overcome the challenges before them. In a typical exchange, the Storyteller describes the scene in which the players' characters find themselves. ("You rise from a night's rest in the small shack on the outskirts of town you use as a hideout. A scratching at the door tells you someone is trying to get in. What do you do?") The players in turn describe their characters' actions, usually in the first person. ("I sneak up to the door and look through the peep hole.") The Storyteller then describes the results of the action, and he and the players go back and forth until the scene is resolved. Dice are rolled when players have their characters try things that aren't guaranteed success. Jumping out of a moving car without getting hurt would require a dice roll; leaving a stationary one wouldn't.



This booklet contains everything you and five of your friends will need to play your first game of **Geist**, except for some pencils, paper for notes and several 10-sided dice. (These specialty dice are available in most hobby shops and are sometimes called “d10s.”) Those of you who are going to be players should read over the character backgrounds in the back of this booklet and choose the one you want to play. The Storyteller should read the rest of the booklet in preparation before playing.

T he Rules

Geist uses a set of rules called the Storytelling System. Many of the rules are introduced in the scenario proper or on the character sheets, but there are a few basics to go over first.

Rolling Dice: When rolling dice in the Storytelling System, you do not add the numbers together. Instead, any single die that comes up 8 or better is considered a *success*. You usually need only one success to accomplish a task, but more is always better (causing more damage in combat, for example). Any die that comes up 0 (considered a 10) counts as a success and can be rolled again to potentially get another success. If you roll no successes at all, your character has failed that action.

Dice Pools: The number of dice you roll to attempt something is called your *dice pool*. It is usually made up of the total of one Attribute and one Skill on your character sheet, along with modifiers imposed by adverse conditions or any special equipment your character uses.

Modifiers: The Storyteller determines what *modifiers* apply to any dice pool. These either add to or subtract from the number of dice rolled in the dice pool. Modifiers usually come from tools used, Merits the character has or general circumstances. The Storyteller should grant or impose a bonus or penalty if the circumstances are especially favorable or deleterious, usually ranging from +5 to -5 (although modifiers tend to be closer to +2 to -2). For example, an attempt to climb a wall that is slick with rain and slime could suffer a -2 penalty, whereas doing so on one with a few handholds could gain a +1.

Chance Die: If modifiers reduce your dice pool to zero or fewer dice, you should roll a single die called a *chance die*. A 10 rolled on a chance die generates a single success, while any other result is a failure. Rolling a 1 on a chance die indicates a dramatic failure, and the Storyteller should describe especially

troublesome results (a gun jamming, a blowout during a car chase, etc.).

Actions: Almost anything a character does is considered a *simple action*. You determine the dice pool, roll the dice, and see whether you succeed or fail. In combat you can perform one simple action per turn.

Sometimes you'll be asked to take an *extended action*, which represents doing something over a period of time, like researching something in a library or searching a room. In this case, each roll of the dice represents a fixed amount of time (usually 10 minutes, but it varies for some more involved actions). You accumulate successes from roll to roll until you run out of time or get a certain number described in the text.

Some actions can also be *contested*, which means two people are working against each other, such as in an arm-wrestling match or when a character tries to sneak past a watchful guard. In a contested action, each player (or the player and the Storyteller) rolls the dice pool for his character, and the person with the most successes wins.

Finally, some actions are *reflexive*, which means they happen automatically and don't take up any time. You can perform them and still perform a simple action in that turn.

Turns and Scenes: A *turn* is a 3-second period used to track time passing in combat. A *scene* is a longer period of time, usually as long as it takes for everyone to do what they want in a particular place.

T he Character Sheet

This booklet contains character sheets for the five characters players will use in “Mr. Monster Returns.” These sheets contain all the game numbers that define a character’s capabilities, divided into a variety of traits. Most traits are rated from one dot (•) to five (•••••), much like a star rating system for movies. Different traits represent different things.

Attributes represent inherent capabilities, such as Strength, Intelligence or Presence. Nearly every roll uses one of these as a basis for the dice pool.

Geists, spirits and ghosts use three special Attributes: Power, Finesse and Resistance. Power represents a ghost’s ability to affect its environment. Finesse represents a ghost’s capability in interacting with or manipulating elements of its environment. Resistance represents a ghost’s ability to withstand forces that could banish or destroy it.

Skills represent learned abilities, like Firearms or Medicine. A word or phrase in parentheses next to a Skill indicates a Specialty, an area of the overall Skill in which the character is particularly talented. If you are asked to roll a dice pool in which your character doesn't have the right Skill, you suffer a penalty of either -1 (for a missing Physical or Social Skill) or -3 (for a missing Mental Skill). If, on the other hand, you have a relevant specialty in the Skill in your dice pool, you get a +1 modifier.

Health determines how wounded your character is, and it has both dots and points. Your character's dots are filled in on your character sheet, and they represent the total number of Health points available to him when he is uninjured. His lost Health points are recorded in the corresponding boxes, denoting his current state of health. (See "Health and Damage" for how to mark off Health points and the effects of wound penalties.) Geists, spirits and ghosts use Corpus points instead of Health points.

Willpower represents your character's reserves. You can spend only one point of Willpower on any roll, and you get three additional dice in your dice pool. Alternatively, you can spend a point to raise your Defense trait by two against a single attack. Willpower is valuable, and it's regained by acting in accordance with your character's Virtue and Vice (see individual character descriptions). It is ranked from 1 to 10, unlike most of the other traits.

Merits are special edges a character has, such as Contacts, Resources or Striking Looks. The effects of each are explained in the character's description.

Defense and **Initiative** **Modifiers** are traits used in combat, and are explained below.

Speed is the number of yards a character can move in one combat turn and still perform an action. A character can run up to twice his Speed rating yards in a turn if he sacrifices his action. Speed will most likely come into play in a chase.

Combat

Violence is common among the Sin-Eaters. Some of them are so filled by aggressive deathly energies that they simply can't avoid it. When a fight breaks out, it can be important to keep track of who is doing what, and how badly they are hurting each other.

First, the Storyteller tells the players their characters are entering combat. Until the combat ends, everyone acts turn-by-turn, with each character getting one chance to act each turn.

Next, have everyone roll Initiative, which is the result of the roll of a single die + the character's Initiative modifier as listed on the character sheet. This is a rare case in which you add the number that comes up on a die to the value of your trait, instead of rolling a dice pool and looking for a success.

Starting with the character with the highest Initiative result and continuing to the lowest, each character gets to take a single action (usually an attack). The player can choose to yield her character's action until later in the Initiative queue, or until the next turn if she wishes. The Storyteller resolves each character's action before asking the next player what her character does.

If a character attacks another character, the attacker rolls the appropriate dice pool:

Unarmed close combat: Strength + Brawl, minus target's Defense and armor (if any)

Armed close combat: Strength + Weaponry, minus target's Defense and armor (if any)

Touching an opponent: Dexterity + Brawl, minus target's Defense

Ranged combat (guns and bows): Dexterity + Firearms, minus target's armor (if any)

Ranged combat (thrown weapons): Dexterity + Athletics, minus target's Defense and armor (if any)

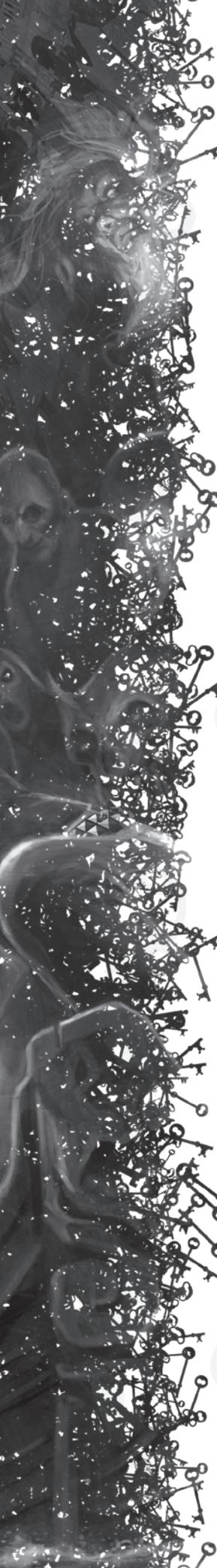
Add bonus dice based upon what weapon is being used or what effect is being performed, then subtract penalties for circumstance conditions. The player rolls the remaining pool. Each success equates to a Health point of damage inflicted, the type of which is determined by the nature of the attack. The Storyteller describes the attack and wound in narrative terms.

Once everyone has acted, a new turn starts and the player with the highest Initiative gets to act again. Players do not make new Initiative rolls every turn.

Complications

Avoiding Damage in Close Combat: Your character's Defense trait represents his instinctive ability to duck and weave and make an enemy's close-combat attacks more difficult, and so serves as a penalty to incoming attacks. If your character hasn't yet acted this turn and is willing to forgo that action, he can dodge, which doubles his Defense for the rest of the turn.

If your character is attacked multiple times in the same turn, however, it becomes harder for him to avoid being hurt. For every attack targeted at him past the first, reduce the character's Defense by 1 (to a minimum



of 0). If your character is dodging, the doubled Defense reduces by 1 for each additional attack.

Avoiding Damage in Ranged Combat: Unless a ranged attacker is only a few feet away or is throwing a weapon, Defense doesn't apply. To avoid damage in a firefight you can either hide behind something solid or fall prone to the ground. Falling prone constitutes a character's action for the turn but levies a -2 penalty on ranged attacks. Anyone within a few feet gets a +2 bonus to hit a prone character, though.

Concealment and Cover: If your character is partially concealed behind an object, she is harder to hit with ranged attacks. The penalty goes from -1 (crouching behind an office chair) to -3 (poking up out of a foxhole). If you are completely concealed, the attacker suffers no dice pool penalty but has to score enough successes to shoot through the intervening object (called the cover). Piercing an object reduces the number of successes rolled by a number based upon the durability of the cover: from 1 (for wood or thick glass) to 3 (for steel). If this penalty reduces the number of successes to 0, the attack fails to penetrate the cover and you take no damage.

Improvised Weapons: Combatants invariably grab whatever items come to hand to use as weapons against each other, especially when they come to a fight unarmed and opponents prove to be well-armed. This is particularly true of Sin-Eaters moving into the Twilight realm (see p. 9) to engage unmanifested ghosts directly. Use of an improvised weapon, like a bottle or wooden plank, incurs a -1 penalty due to the awkward nature of fighting with an item that isn't built for combat.

Range: Every ranged weapon has three ranges listed in yards, in the format "short range/medium range/long range." An attacker suffers no penalty when her target is within the short range. If the target is at medium range, she suffers a -2 penalty. At long range, this penalty goes to -4.

Specifying Targets: Sometimes your character wants to direct an attack at a particular part of an opponent, or at an object carried by an opponent in order to achieve a specific effect. Since smaller targets are harder to hit in this way, the Storyteller must impose penalties to the attack roll based on the size of the intended target. A torso might be at -1, a leg or arm -2, a head -3, a hand -4 and an eye (or the "off" button of a machine) -5. If no successes are gained, the attack misses altogether.

The results of a successful attack are determined by the Storyteller. A successful Strength + Athletics roll might be required for a victim to hold onto

a held object, with a penalty to the effort equal to the damage done in the attack. A successful attack staged on a body part might ignore armor, because none is worn there. A blow to the head with a blunt object that normally inflicts bashing damage might inflict lethal damage, or cause the victim to be stunned.

H Health and Damage

There are three types of damage, each more serious than the last: bashing, lethal and aggravated. *Bashing damage* generally results from blunt or stunning attacks. *Lethal damage* often comes from cuts, gunshots and other more serious attacks. *Aggravated damage* is the result of especially vile supernatural attacks or extremely damaging effects (like fire).

Marking Damage: When a character suffers damage, the player marks off that number of Health points, starting with the box under the leftmost dot of his Health trait and proceeding left to right. The symbol used depends upon the type of damage.

Bashing damage is marked with a slash (/) in the first available empty box. So imagining that Lee (one of the characters in this scenario, who has eight Health dots) had just taken one point of bashing damage, his Health boxes would look like this:



Lethal damage is marked with an X, and it pushes any existing bashing damage right on the track (so that it always appears to the left of bashing damage). If Lee next took a point of lethal damage, her track would be:



Aggravated damage is marked with a large asterisk (*) by adding a vertical bar to an X. It also pushes any existing lethal and bashing damage right on the track (so that it always appears to the left of lethal or bashing damage). If Lee next suffered a point of aggravated damage, his track would be:



No More Health: Marking off a character's last Health box usually means the character has become incapacitated. If that rightmost wound is bashing, he falls unconscious. If that rightmost wound is lethal or aggravated, the character quickly bleeds

to death. Note that this would mean the character has no bashing damage at all, since it will always be the rightmost. Some supernatural creatures may react differently to damage.

Additional Damage: An unconscious or severely battered Sin-Eater can still be damaged by further attacks. Without further Health boxes to mark off, you represent this damage by upgrading existing wounds. Any new bashing wound upgrades an existing bashing wound to lethal (make the leftmost / into an X), while new lethal damage can upgrade older wounds to aggravated (make the leftmost X into an asterisk). Additional aggravated damage also converts a point of bashing or lethal damage to aggravated (make the leftmost / or X into an asterisk).

Healing: Sin-Eaters recover from damage with rest and medical attention. Left to heal naturally, characters recover one point of bashing damage every 15 minutes, one point of lethal damage every two days, and one point of aggravated damage every week. Lost Health is recovered from right to left on the character sheet.

Life as a Sin-Eater

The characters in this scenario are already familiar with their geists and the shadowy world of the bound, but since the players can't be expected to know the various aspects of sin-eater existence, we have compiled the details into this comprehensive list.

Archetypes

Sin-Eaters send a lot of time thinking about death. Even those who celebrate life do so as a reaction to death. A Sin-Eater's archetype defines her relationship with and philosophy regarding death. The Sin-Eater's archetype may not utterly express her beliefs, but it should express the gist of her outlook. It is also worth noting that two Sin-Eaters with the same archetype may have very different approaches. A Sin-Eater's archetype also helps to determine how she regains plasm.

Advocate: Dedicated to finishing the unfinished business of the dead, Advocates may be driven to serve the dead or just relate to shades better than those who are still alive. Of all the members of a krewe, they have the best relations with the dead simply because they focus on the needs and wants of each ghost they meet.

Bonepicker: Scavengers using their otherworldly powers to make this world more comfortable. The whole point of dying and coming back is to get another chance at life, another set of years to live. Unlike people who believe in reincarnation, Bonepickers carry on where they left off, out to make their new lives as comfortable as possible.

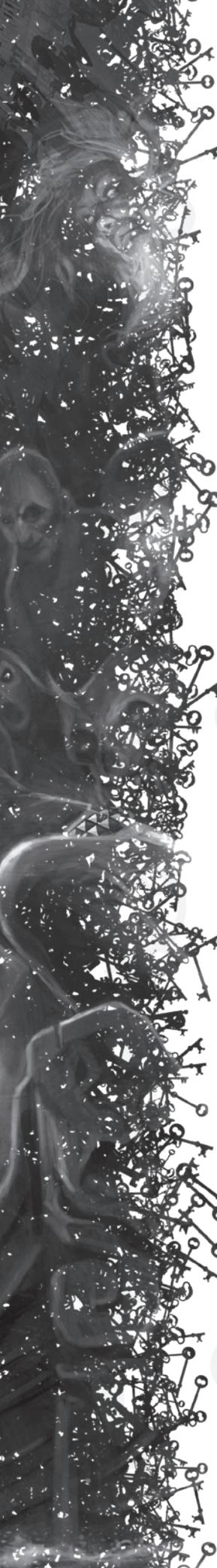
Celebrant: Knowing with absolute certainty that you're going to die is a powerful motivation to go out and live. Celebrants don't just know that, they embrace it. Whether a Sin-Eater enjoys life through sex, drugs or base-jumping, one thing's for certain: his life's never boring. Time alive is a finite resource, so it's up to a Celebrant to spend it as best he can. And if he can make other people's lives more interesting, that's just great.

Gatekeeper: Sin-Eaters have a deeper insight into life and death, and the distinct difference between the two. Having been in both states, some take on the role of Gatekeeper, policing the boundary between the living and the dead. Young ghosts may try to live vicariously through the living, while others torment the living world just because they're no longer part of it. Older ghosts have stranger motivations, having lost so much of their sense of self that few can understand *why* they try to kill anyone who spends a night in the Barker House. When the dead interfere with the living, a Gatekeeper has to make a stand.

Mourner: Life after death is just a different kind of life, a new way of encountering the world, where the fetters of emotion and importance become explicit rather than implicit. Consciousness remains, albeit altered by the lack of a physical form. But all death is really a change, not an ending. Sin-Eaters who recognize this first and foremost are known as Mourners. To one of these brave souls, her time among the living was forfeit when she died that first time.

Necromancer: A ghost is more than the echo of a person who was once alive. Not only do the dead carry on existing, some of them learn. Some Necromancers discovered just a taste of that occult lore when they died, and returning with a geist just makes them hungry for more. Others realize that they barely know anything about what happens after death, and hunger for details and secrets that can help them prepare their loved ones for their eventual death. A Necromancer's family may think him morbid, but he's not really thinking about death, he's concentrating on what comes after.

Pilgrim: For some people, dying is a fundamental chance, a moment when everything they've done



in life is taken apart and shown to be pointless. A Sin-Eater is unique because he knows all this when his geist gives him another chance, a means to get things right one last chance. If a soul dies without fetters to the living world and no need to complete one last task, then it likely will not come back as a ghost, instead moving on to their final reward. Those who follow the Pilgrim's path try to live a life that will lead them to a reward, and they encourage those they help to do the same.

Reaper: Whatever standards of moral relativism a person holds to, it's only the most saintly—or the most misguided—who think that everyone has a right to life. Some people poison the world just by existing. Beyond redemption in this life, it's up to someone who's seen the other side to offer them another chance in the afterlife. Reapers do what they can to make the world a better place, bringing death to those who don't deserve to live any more.

Thresholds

Every Sin-Eater has encountered death and returned indelibly marked by the experience. A character's Threshold and his geist are inseparable. When an appropriate candidate brushes mortality, it attracts a geist attuned to that sort of death. The manner in which a Sin-Eater died (or nearly died) forever colors the use of his powers, by creating an affinity for a certain Key (see below).

The Torn, Death by Violence: Chosen of the Red Horseman, the Bleeding Ones are victims of murder or suicide, those who have had great trauma inflicted on them, or inflicted great trauma on others. Some Torn choose to perpetuate the violence that nearly ended their lives, while others transcend that violence, choosing to fight only for a better way. Their abilities tend to be stained by Stigmatic and Passionate effects.

The Silent, Death by Deprivation: Chosen of the Black Horseman, the Starved Ones are those who die for lack of something vital: starvation, suffocation, dehydration or heartbreak. The Silent endure, but they also hunger. Their existence is now marked by a need to see, to experience the dead. Their abilities are most likely to have a subtle Stillness and a Cold Wind.

The Prey, Death by Nature: Chosen of the Pale Horseman, the Eaten and the Drowned are the victims of exposure or animals; those taken by the wild. Nature encompasses all things. To the Prey, the term "supernatural" is wrong. All of this—the ghosts, the underworld, second chances—is part of the cycle of

nature. Where there is life so too will there be death. The Prey tend to manifest their Primeval nature as well as an affinity for Grave-Dirt.

The Stricken, Death by Sickness: Chosen of the White Horseman, the Ravaged Ones are plague victims, those taken by disease. Each looks upon the existence of the unquiet dead as a challenge, a puzzle to solve, an adversary to pit herself against. The geist drives her to see the dead as a challenge, and in return, the Sin-Eater engages in a battle of will and wits for ultimate control of her soul. Their abilities manifest as Phantasms, illusory horrors, as well as a connection with Tears.

The Forgotten, Death by Chance: Chosen of the Gray Horseman, the Lightning Struck are victims of freak accidents, those who were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. The Forgotten feel no need to interact with the unquiet dead. One of the Lightning Struck tries to move on, to pretend that he did not look up just in time to see debris from a falling satellite plummeting toward him. But everywhere he goes, the dead follow. They have an affinity for Industrial effects as well as those of the Pyre.

Keys

Emotions and actions resonate, affecting everything they touch. When a Sin-Eater dies, he crosses a threshold that stains him indelibly with a certain resonance. Every manifestation a Sin-Eater channels is flavored by that stain. When the Sin-Eater *unlocks* (activates) a manifestation, the intent is filtered through the key used to unlock the power. Two Sin-Eaters may call upon the same power and achieve vastly different results, simply because they have different keys at their disposal. There are ten common Keys.

The Elemental Key: Powers unlocked with the four elemental keys manifest through the classical elements – earth, air, fire and water – as seen through a lens of death and decay. The four elemental Keys are the *Grave-Dirt Key*, the *Cold Wind Key*, the *Pyre-Flame Key*, and the *Tear-Stained Key*.

The Industrial Key: This Key grants influence over the trappings of modern society, allowing the Sin-Eater to control machinery or become the ghost in the machine.

The Passion Key: Manifestations unlocked with the Passion Key shape the emotional responses of people or instill emotional resonances within places or things.

The Phantasmal Key: This Key creates illusions of such realism that they can drive men mad or cause physical injury.

The Primeval Key: The Primeval Key unlocks manifestations that grant influence over nature and forests. It also grants authority over the animal kingdom, and allows the Sin-Eater to acquire animalistic traits.

The Stillness Key: Powers filtered through this Key aid in stealth, invisibility and in dulling the senses of others.

The Stigmata Key: This Key uses blood and sacrifice to assert dominance over the spirit world. The Sin-Eater may influence or harm ghosts and spirits, bind them in place or take on certain of their traits.

Mementos

Certain items are infused by deathly energies. The blood-stained veil of a murdered bride or a forgotten toy, thrown from the wreckage of a five-car pileup. Sin-Eaters treasure these artifacts quite highly, wearing them as badges of honor, shamanic totems of power or deathly “bling.” At their most common, they are simply charms that augment a Sin-Eater’s abilities slightly. Other items, however, hold great power all their own. These items, called Memorabilia by the Bound, are legendary objects even among mortals, like the silken cape buried with Bela Lugosi or a saint’s reliquary.

Every Sin-Eater has at least one memento, known as a *keystone*. Each keystone is different, and the form it takes bears direct significance to the history of the geist, even if the geist can’t remember exactly why that might be. The waterlogged specter of a geist, dripping with seaweed, might not remember why its keystone is a polished, ivory tusk, but that in no way diminishes the power of the memento. Only the keystone mementos of geists that have been defeated and destroyed can be stolen, traded or lost.

Synergy

A human who has been to the edge of death and returned bound to a twisted and warped geist understandably sees the world in an unusual way. Sin-Eaters must follow a different code of conduct than that of the “normal” humans around them. There are rules governing the compact between the living and the dead.

Synergy tracks the delicate balance that exists in the symbiotic relationship between a Sin-Eater and his geist. The bond between the two parties is important, and it behooves the pair to maintain at least a modicum of cooperation and civility. A Sin-Eater with a high Synergy score finds it easier to act as a conduit for his geist’s strange abilities, allowing

him to manifest certain powers with less difficulty. By contrast, a Sin-Eater with a low Synergy score has more trouble convincing his geist to work with him, causing myriad problems among the dead.

At a rating of 7 (where most of the characters start), destroying a memento or ghost can cause a loss of Synergy. When the character commits such an act, the player rolls a number of dice based on the severity of the trigger. The worse the trigger is, the *fewer* dice are rolled: destroying a memento is four dice, destroying a ghost or manslaughter is three dice, and murder or destroying a geist is two dice. If the roll fails, the character loses a point of Synergy. (Willpower can’t be spent on this roll.) Characters with reduced Synergy find a way to cope with their loss of symbiosis, and allow themselves to drift further from their geist. It will now take a worse trigger to cause another roll to degenerate. At Synergy 6, only destroying a ghost (or worse) can spark such a roll. At Synergy 5, it takes destroying a keystone. At Synergy 4, the Sin-Eater can go as far as committing manslaughter before their Synergy is at risk.

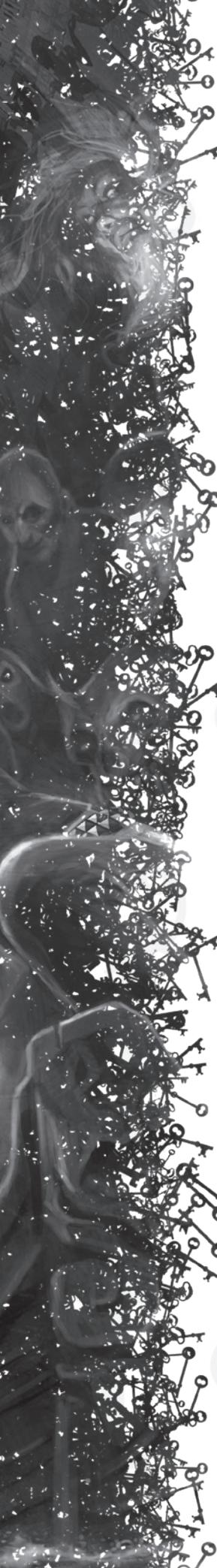
Characters who do lose Synergy also risk becoming unhinged mentally. If a player fails a degeneration roll, he should immediately roll his character’s reduced Synergy as a dice pool. If he fails that roll, the character gains a derangement. This can be any form of minor but pervasive mental disorder, such as depression or a phobia. The player should roleplay this new character quirk, but it has no mechanical effect.

One significant event can also have a strongly deleterious impact on Synergy: death. Sin-Eaters who “die” a second (or third, or fourth) time may be pushed back from the brink once more by the geist, but in doing so the geist must expend significant energy and shunt the Sin-Eater’s death onto another person. The result is an automatic loss of Synergy, as well as a permanent reduction in the Sin-Eater’s maximum Synergy score by two points. A Sin-Eater who drops to a Synergy score of zero becomes a soulless shell that can only react with instinctive horror and aggression in response to the ghostly apparitions that it can neither shut out nor control.

Plasm

The deathly power that fuels a Sin-Eater’s powers is called *plasm*. It can be used to activate manifestations, resist toxins and temporarily staunch wounds that would otherwise be incapacitating.

Resisting Toxins: As long as a Sin-Eater has at least 1 plasm in his system, he gains a bonus equal to his Psyche score to resist poisons and other toxins.



Regaining Plasm: There are a number of ways to regain spent plasm. Each character has specific ways of harvesting plasm, by acting in accordance to their Virtue and Vice in a way that also expresses their archetype. A Sin-Eater may also harvest plasm from a Haunt or by devouring the corpus of a ghost (see below).

Eaters of the Dead: Sin-Eaters can devour the corpus of a ghost to gain plasm. Sin-Eaters that are known to routinely practice the eating of dead earn the disdainful moniker of “ghoul.” The geists, however, don’t really seem to care.

A Sin-Eater that looks at a ghost as his next meal must first defeat the ghost in combat before dinner can begin. This requires either that the ghost has manifested itself to fight or that the Sin-Eater has taken the fight to the ghost by possessing his geist. Once the ghost has been defeated, the Sin-Eater has a short window of opportunity to feast from the corpus before it fades away into nothing. After a ghost has been defeated, the Sin-Eater is allowed three Resolve + Stamina rolls to devour its corpus before it fades away. A Sin-Eater may only eat the corpus of a manifested ghost or while possessing his geist.

Devouring the corpus of a ghost has the potential to shift the balance of Synergy away from the Sin-Eater. A roll for degeneration should be made by characters with Synergy 7 or higher (roll four dice).

Domains of the Bound

Though Sin-Eaters are still undoubtedly creatures of the mundane world, they may find themselves drawn into the lands of the dead for any number of reasons. Like Inanna’s trip to the underworld, or Orpheus’ quest to save Eurydice, there is always a price to be paid for passing into the Low Places. The Underworld is a terrible and beautiful place, full of pain and wonder in equal measure. While some Sin-Eaters brave the stygian depths to make deals with ancient, enigmatic shades and darker things, others see it as their calling to act as guardians of the gates that lead into the Underworld, blocking passage from both sides.

On the other hand, the realm of Twilight is a state of being more than a physical place, coexisting slightly out of phase with the material. Twilight creatures and objects are the shadows of physical reality, but the physical still remains (or did at one time). One doesn’t travel to Twilight; it’s always there, but you just might not be able to see it. Twilight is simply another layer of reality, just beneath what we know.

Abilities of the Bound

Ghost Sight

Sin-Eaters see ghosts just as readily as they see the living and can easily discern between the two. The ghost of a man that leapt in front of a subway train to commit suicide is easy to pick out even among the throngs that rush the station after work. Every Sin-Eater shares this ability, whether they like it or not. The trick is not seeing the ghosts, and every Sin-Eater develops a filter that allows them to block out sights they’d rather not see. The closer a Sin-Eater becomes to death (metaphysically speaking), the harder he finds the trick to pull off.

One particularly useful aspect of ghost sight is that a Sin-Eater can tell, at a glance, if someone is possessed by a ghost. The bodies of the possessed have a strange sort of double exposure look to them, with the spectral image of the ghost overlying the human body it has stolen.

A Sin-Eater can attempt to filter out his ghost sight for one scene by rolling his Synergy rating in dice. With success, the Sin-Eater has managed to block the dead from his vision. Ghosts can attempt to hide from Sin-Eaters by becoming invisible or mundanely lurking out of sight. Spotting a hidden ghost requires a successful Wits + Perception roll on part of the Sin-Eater. Assuming a Sin-Eater hasn’t turned off his ghost sight, he can automatically detect ghostly possession on sight.

Morbid Reality: Sin-Eaters can determine the relative health of a human with a reflexive Wits + Composure roll. Creatures that mimic humans but aren’t actually alive (vampires, for example) register as dead. No roll is necessary for a Sin-Eater to determine age. In the case of non-living human imposters, she learns the apparent age of the body, not its actual age.

Clinical Precision: A Sin-Eater can attempt to discern the cause of death by touching a corpse and rolling Wits + Medicine. Not every cause of death is easy to discern with this method. Since the Sin-Eater is *feeling* the death rather than witnessing it, deaths without much in the way of physical sensations (such as a poison designed to be painless or the peaceful death of old age) impose a -3 penalty on the roll. For purposes of this particular bit of necromancy, the age of the corpse doesn’t matter. The sensations of death remain even if the Sin-Eater has nothing more to work with than a splinter of bone.

Reverse Possession

Although a Sin-Eater can see ghosts as a matter of course, he isn't actually looking into Twilight to do so. What he is really seeing is the reflection of the ghosts in his geist's eyes. Looking into Twilight requires a bit more effort. In a sort of reverse possession, the Sin-Eater seizes the full senses of his geist, pouring his consciousness into the alien creature bound to him. This allows a Sin-Eater to see into and physically interact with Twilight at the cost of losing some sense of his physical surroundings. Of course, by opening himself up to Twilight, a Sin-Eater places himself in a position where ghosts can interact with him as well.

In this state, a Sin-Eater can combat a ghost that hasn't manifested and can manipulate Twilight objects. Only the essence of a Sin-Eater makes the translation. Any physical weapons held by the Sin-Eater at the time are left behind, along with his flesh and bone. Occasionally a Sin-Eater that has taken the fight to a ghost will find a useful Twilight object he can use as a weapon, but he can't rely on that possibility. The only weapon a Sin-Eater can rely on when he becomes one with his geist, other than his wits and his fists, is his keystone memento. As both Twilight and material objects, keystones alone make the transition from physical to ephemeral. A Sin-Eater can transfer his consciousness into his geist by spending a point of plasm (pp. 7-8) as an instant action. This allows the Sin-Eater to see into Twilight as well as physically interact with its denizens and any Twilight objects. However, the shift in focus from material to Twilight can be somewhat distracting. A Sin-Eater that has possessed his geist suffers a -3 penalty to all Perception rolls dealing with activities outside of Twilight.

While possessing his geist, the Sin-Eater can combat unmanifested ghosts. Any Twilight object close to hand can be picked up and used as an improvised weapon (see Combat, p. 4), the Sin-Eater may make unarmed attacks or he can use his keystone as a weapon. Keystones that are already weapons follow the usual rules for attack and damage. Non-weapon keystones can be wielded as improvised weapons and don't suffer from the usual penalty when used in this manner in Twilight.

Combating an unmanifested ghost is apt to draw some strange looks from bystanders. Instead of a life-or-death contest, normal humans only see some weirdo slashing and flailing around him at imaginary foes. Fortunately, attacks made in Twilight remain in Twilight, unless someone walks directly into the

Sin-Eater and takes an elbow or fist to the face. A Sin-Eater that owns a keystone memento in the form of a gun needn't worry about hitting innocent bystanders. Bullets, gun and even the noise of gunfire all remain in Twilight. The same is true for other types of keystone weapons.

Sixth Sense

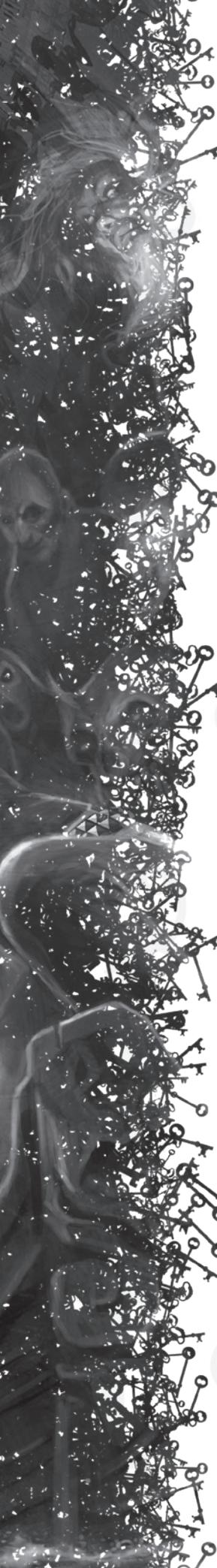
Sin-Eaters possess something of a sixth sense when it comes to dealing with ghosts. Even when a Sin-Eater is actively filtering his ghost sight to enjoy a movie uninterrupted, he can sense the presence of a ghost using Numina to affect to living world. The exact nature of the sensation varies from one Sin-Eater to another and also by Threshold. A Sin-Eater with the Silent Threshold might register the use of Numina as acute hunger pangs. A Sin-Eater with the Torn Threshold might find that his scars tingle and throb. This paranormal sensation goes both ways. A Sin-Eater can never hide his presence, nor use of Manifestations from a ghost. Whether it's because ghosts notice the shadowy mien of his geist, merged with the Sin-Eater's flesh or just an instinctual reaction isn't clear and if the ghosts know the truth of the matter, they aren't talking.

Any time a ghost uses a Numina within 30 yards of a Sin-Eater, he may roll Wits + Occult + Psyche to notice the phenomena. On a success, the Sin-Eater notices the use of Numina.

Unnatural Mediums

Ghosts are drawn to Sin-Eaters like a moth to a flame. Sin-Eaters represent all kinds of possibilities for ghosts as one of the few living they can easily interact with. The inherent ephemeral qualities of a Sin-Eater magnify the energies of death in an area, which allow ghosts to more easily manifest in the immediate vicinity of a Sin-Eater (see "Manifestations" below). The presence of mementos increases this effect, since each memento is, in essence, a repository of death. To ghosts, Sin-Eaters (especially those with plenty of mementos) are walking, talking graveyards, and there's no better place for a ghost to manifest than among the quiet dead. Because of this unfortunate side effect, Sin-Eaters must be cautious about where and when they confront violent shades. It's no use visiting a family home to rid them of a poltergeist just to have the ghost manifest and wreck serious havoc on the people that live there.

Ghosts gain a +1 to manifestation rolls within 10 yards of a Sin-Eater and an additional +1 for each memento carried by that Sin-Eater. In the case of



multiple Sin-Eaters being present (or just a single Sin-Eater with a lot of bling), these bonuses stack to a maximum of +5.

Plasmic Infusion

Ghosts are inherently unstable entities. Even the most lucid of specters is nothing better than a hollow replica of the person it was in life. In theory, a ghost could provide Sin-Eaters with a wealth of knowledge about what it's seen, but most ghosts just aren't capable of that kind of interaction. The solution to this problem lies within the veins of a Sin-Eater. The plasm generated by a geist can reinforce the personality of a ghost, allowing it near-human cognizance for short periods of time. The reaction to this abrupt return to consciousness varies. Some ghosts are ecstatic at the ability to *think* properly again, even if that awareness is fleeting. Other ghosts are less sanguine. The brief interlude of sanity makes them bitter, knowing full well it can't last.

The Sin-Eater must anoint the ghost with some of his own blood to begin the plasmic infusion. This either requires that the ghost be manifested or the Sin-Eater to possess his geist. The spilling of blood causes one point of lethal damage to the character performing the infusion. As the Sin-Eater touches his blood to the ghost, he also spends a point of plasm. Plasm and blood are absorbed by the ghost, infusing its corpus with the energy of both life and death. Use against an unwilling ghost requires the Sin-Eater first touch his target by rolling Dexterity + Brawl (or Weaponry) – the target's Defense rating.

For the remainder of the scene, the ghost is restored to an echo of its living self. It can act, think and communicate as though it were alive (to anyone who can see and hear it, that is). Assume the ghost has an Intelligence rating equal to its Power. The ability to think and speak doesn't necessarily equate to a desire to be helpful, however. Most ghosts will take this opportunity to barter their knowledge for some deed on part of the Sin-Eater questioning it. Especially canny ghosts will even refuse to disclose information without proof the favor it's asked for has been completed.

Ghosts

Sin-Eaters walk a line between life and death and, as such, they interact with both the living and the unquiet dead that exist in a state of Twilight. These ghosts may manifest their own powers called *Numina*, powered by *Essence*. These abilities allow them to possess mortals, throw objects and other stranger, more dangerous things. Often, the Bound are called upon to mediate between the breathing and the unquiet dead. A ghost is defined by his passion for a thing, be it his still-living wife or son, the courthouse in which he spent his career trying cases or the gavel he used when he finally became a judge. They never just give something up for free. They will *always* extract a price from a Sin-Eater who finds himself in need of their knowledge or powers.

The Return of Mr. Monster

This story takes the characters deep into the World of Darkness, and reveals some of the terrible secrets that exist just outside human understanding. It is meant as an introduction to the strange lives of Sin-Eater characters and as a launching point from which Storytellers can begin chronicles of their own devising. Though the characters start out in New York, their ultimate fate is in your hands. This stand-alone scenario is meant for the Storyteller's eyes only. If you are planning to take on the role of one of the characters in "The Return of Mr. Monster," please stop reading now. Storytelling games are much more enjoyable if you experience the plot

twists and surprises along with your characters, so don't spoil the fun for yourself.

Preparing for Play

First, read through the rules at the beginning of this document, just to get an idea of how the mechanics of the game work. Then take a look at the character sheets at the end of the booklet and note the characters' different capabilities and advantages. We don't expect you or the players to memorize everything right out of the gate, but if you give the

characters a quick once-over in conjunction with the rules, the numbers will make more sense in game play. Let the players read over their characters' backgrounds, roleplaying hints and traits, and answer any questions they might have. Help them understand how the rules work with regard to the dots and numbers on the character sheets. Also, read through "The Return of Mr. Monster" once before attempting to act as Storyteller. We've tried to make it as easy as possible on you, but you should have an idea of what's coming up. Plus, players will always make decisions that you—and we—didn't see coming. That's great! That's part of roleplaying. It does, however, require you to think on your feet.

If you know how the plot progresses, you can take what the players do and allow those decisions to steer the game toward a satisfying conclusion, rather than having to say, "No, you can't do that because it would take us too far off track."

Characters and Background

"The Return of Mr. Monster" takes place approximately two months after the characters formed a krewe in the Pelham Bay neighborhood of the East Bronx in New York City. The Bronx is the northernmost borough of New York City, and the only one primarily on the mainland. Many signature landmarks of the city are here, from Yankee Stadium to the New York Botanical Gardens and the Bronx Zoo. The district runs from rich to poor, with the South Bronx as a focal point of urban decay. The neighborhood suffered from a wave of arson in the 1970s, and mementos from that period frequently manifest the Pyre Flame Key. Even today, the South Bronx suffers from poverty, drug trafficking and violent crime — here Death by Violence is strong, and resilient Torn may arise.

The krewe banded together to protect one another and keep their neighborhood safe from threats to the compact between the living and the dead. When the story begins, the members are on the trail of a killer who has committed killings that echo murders that took place in the same neighborhood over 30 years ago.

The Bronx Saints, as they have named themselves, consists of six members. Gianni Esposito is the krewe's leader, and the oldest member. He founded the Saints along with Lee Kovach, an ex-cop, and Joey Cavanaugh, an investigative reporter.

The other members of the krewe are Zita Vargas, a car thief, Tyson Bishop, a martial artist, and Ellis Myer, a neo-primitive vagrant.

The Saints are, first and foremost, part of a community. Each member of the krewe has their individual goals and desires but, as a krewe, their mission is to protect their neighborhood and its heritage. To that end, they have recently begun to retrieve heirlooms and artifacts that once belonged in the local community.

To Gianni, the experiences of a neighborhood, like the experiences of an individual, forever color the "personality" of that community. Culture is nothing more than an aggregate of the tics and habits of the trendsetters and power players of a community writ large. The melting pot of New York City melds many different cultures into something new. You can take the purest example of an ancient culture and drop him into the mill that is New York City, and if he survives the city long enough to thrive, he'll be a New Yorker.

But New Yorkers are also defined by their shared experiences. Everyone who lived in the five boroughs was changed by the events of September 11th, 2001. It was a watershed moment, and it will inform the attitudes of the people of New York City from now on, passed down from generation to generation, a modern legend. These experiences haunt the citizens of New York City, figuratively and literally. Sin-Eaters see the victims of the past wandering the streets of the city everywhere they go. When one of the Bound stands at Ground Zero, it is not mere memory or sentiment that gives them pause.

Ghosts are plentiful in the city that never sleeps.

Treatment

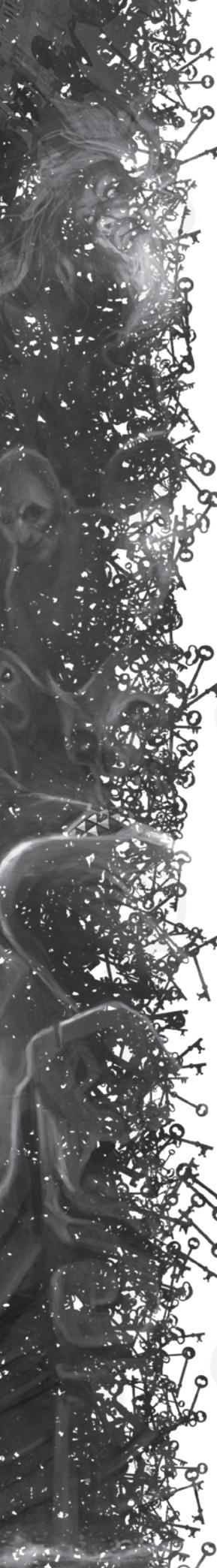
"The Return of Mister Monster" revolves around a series of killings that echo those of the "Son of Sam," an infamous figure of Pelham Bay's past. A spirit who goes by Mister Monster is committing murders in a pattern that only the local Sin-Eaters can see, part of a ritual to crack open a gateway to the underworld, freeing ghosts and worse to prey upon the living. The krewe is at the epicenter; the neighborhood they have claimed as their own is the same neighborhood that was the start of the Son of Sam killings over thirty years ago.

As the story begins, the second killing has just occurred, in front of Lee's newsstand and mere blocks from the apartment building Joey and Zita live in. The first letter to the media follows shortly

About the Format

The format we use for scenes in this quickstart is our Storyteller Adventure System (or SAS for short). To keep this quickstart lean and focused, we haven't included many of the core premises and Storyteller suggestions that are at the heart of the SAS. If you want to learn more about how our stories work in this system, be sure to read the free SAS Guide, found at the SAS website:

www.white-wolf.com/sas



thereafter, referring to the underworld and signed "Mr. Monster."

The second victim lingers, her ghost haunting the street in front of the newsstand. She tells the characters what she can, when they feel the tug of a ghost manifesting one of its spectral abilities nearby. The ghost provides information and helps to send them after her killer, who remembers nothing of the murder. After the krewe decides what to do with Mr. Monster's first host, they receive word that the unknown killer has mailed a letter to the newspaper Joey works at, giving the characters their first glimpse into Mr. Monster's psyche. The letter includes information that sends the krewe to Woodlawn Cemetery, where they meet another ghost, named Izzy, who can fill in some of the blanks. She leads them to a mausoleum where the krewe discovers the method to Mr. Monster's madness, as well as clues that might lead to a cult collaborating with him. When Mr. Monster strikes again, a handwritten note is left at the scene of the crime, specifically for the krewe. With the note in hand, the characters are engaged in a high-speed car chase to apprehend the second host. While they are deciding what to do with him, they hear gunshots again. A fourth victim has been taken, and only just down the street. The krewe has the chance to catch the last host with Mr. Monster's anchor and put a stop to the killings.

Theme: Haunted by the Past

In the 21st century, everything seems transient. People move from trend to trend, from one earth-shattering issue to the next like children playing hot potato. As information moves faster and faster, epochs blur into one another, and we forget monumental events weeks after they occur. In "The Return of Mr. Monster," events from the past float to the surface again, forcing the characters—most of whom weren't even born the first time around—to confront something most of the older inhabitants of Pelham Bay had thought long behind them. Something that shaped most of the characters' attitudes in some way, whether they knew it or not.

Mood: Charged

Traditionally, ghost stories are all about the mood. They generally have a slow, building mystery, like putting a puzzle together. The fear comes from the at-

mosphere of the piece, punctuated with a few startling shocks. In many ways, "The Return of Mr. Monster" uses that formula, but just as the Sin-Eaters themselves are a strange hybrid of specter and man, so too is this story a hybrid of a ghost story and an action adventure. "The Return of Mr. Monster" is charged, in many senses. The pacing is high energy, more like a modern television show than *The Turn of the Screw*. It is possible to draw out the events of the story, to slow things down and build an atmosphere of paranoia and sensationalized fear, or slam through the story at breakneck speed. Either way, the story works best at high volume.

Background

The characters presented in this scenario are all fairly new to Bound existence. They have had enough time to come to terms with their spiritual guests and gather under the banner of the Bronx Saints.

The Saints were formed by Gianni, Lee and Joey almost instinctively. After their experiences, finding others who had gone through something similar was a huge relief. That they all lived in the same neighborhood in the Bronx sealed the deal. As far as Gianni is concerned, Lee and Joey are his family. The other members are more recent additions. Lee found Ellis sleeping in the dumpster behind his newsstand and, recognizing him for a Sin-Eater, brought him in. The core of the krewe keeps trying to help him, but Gianni fears he might be too broken to save. Joey "recruited" Zita after he did a story on street racing in Manhattan. She's the only outsider, Californian by birth. She doesn't feel the same connection to the neighborhood that the others do, but the krewe treats her more like family than any of her foster families ever did. Zita brought Tyson around after she met him at a warehouse party.

The Investigation

As the characters progress through their investigation of the murders, there are several secondary elements of both the story and the game that bear remembering. The presence of these elements is easy to adjust, leaving you to decide how much you wish to emphasize each in your story.

Gianni Esposito

The characters ostensibly work for Gianni Esposito, the founder and leader of the Bronx Saints, but that

A Note on the Son of Sam

The original killings in the Bronx and Brooklyn were committed by David Berkowitz and, if he is to be believed, a number of fellow cultists. This story is not intended to belittle the victims of these crimes. It is a fictional story grounded in an event that still affects the psychological landscape of an entire city. We don't have enough space to detail David Berkowitz or the original killings in depth. Here's a quick summary:

David Berkowitz (and others, allegedly) held New York City in general and the Bronx in particular in a reign of terror for a year in the late 70s before he was caught. There were at least eight shootings – of which, Berkowitz was only tied to two – largely of blonde women. The letters he sent to the press were signed "Mr. Monster." During questioning, Berkowitz said that the "Sam" mentioned in the first letter was Sam Carr, his former neighbor. Berkowitz claimed that Carr's Labrador retriever dog, Harvey, was possessed by an ancient demon, and that it issued irresistible commands that Berkowitz must kill people. Berkowitz said he once tried to kill the dog, but was unsuccessful due to supernatural interference.

For more in-depth information on the Son of Sam and the effect the murders had on New York City, see the following:

- *Summer of Sam* – A brilliant film. The killings themselves are a backdrop, the important thing here is the effect they had on the community.
- *Biography: David Berkowitz* – Includes interviews with David himself, including discussion of the cult aspects of the murders. Notable for how different the "Son of Hope" is today.

In the context of this fictional account, it's up to you whether the ghost Mr. Monster (the name which Berkowitz signed to his first letter to the media in 1977) was the instigator of the original killings or not in your game. Perhaps the cult served him, or willingly offered themselves as hosts like some twisted parody of vodoun *chevals*. Or maybe he's just a ghost losing his identity, caught up in the legend of the .44 caliber killer. Whether he's actually the hideous creature he believes he is or just a deluded, shattered thing is left to your discretion. Mr. Monster is a dangerous and volatile enemy, regardless of the answer you choose.

The Police

Obviously, the Saints aren't the only people interested in the case. That said, in the World of Darkness, a few killings hardly rate the same scale of attention they did in the late 1970s. If it weren't for Mr. Monster's letters to the press, it would be assigned to a couple of detectives. The media attention, however, is in danger of turning the entire thing into a circus. Lee still has some ties to the department, but each killing is a crime scene, and touching a corpse or otherwise disturbing the scene is generally frowned upon. Lee might get a little info from Nathan Cord and Robert Markan, the detectives working the case, but they can't see the things that will be truly helpful to the krewe.

The Media

Like the Son of Sam, Mr. Monster is speaking directly to the media, giving this case an inordinately large amount of coverage. As they say, if it bleeds it leads, and words directly from the mouth of a killer who is still at large is a scoop any reporter would salivate at. Joey can get access to the unedited email and letters before the general public through his connections, but there will still be a number of reporters snooping around the krewe's territory, making it difficult for them to rely too heavily on their otherworldly abilities. Depending on how long the events of the game take, the story could become chaotic as the media turns the ongoing shootings into a frenzy of paranoia and vicarious thrill.

The Ghosts of Pelham Bay

While there are a few ghosts (Nancy, Larry the Gimp, Izzy, Laura, Sherri, and of course Mr. Monster) who are detailed in particular scenes, they are by no means the only unquiet dead wandering the Twilight streets of the neighborhood. Other shades might help or hinder the krewe or introduce your own custom subplots. Keep in mind that ghosts exist because they *want* something. Every ghost exists because they are passionate about something. Whether it's seeing their killer meet justice or helping their loved ones, there is always something a ghost wants from the Sin-Eaters. Even the ghosts who want to help the krewe will barter for it—after all, they may not get another chance to find an agent who can so easily interact on both sides of the curtain.

doesn't mean he sits idly by and lets them take all the risks. When he can, he likes to be involved in the krewe's activities, but he's still recovering from the toll cancer took on his body. He can be as hands-on or hands-off as you like, depending on your style.

Ghosts and their Anchors

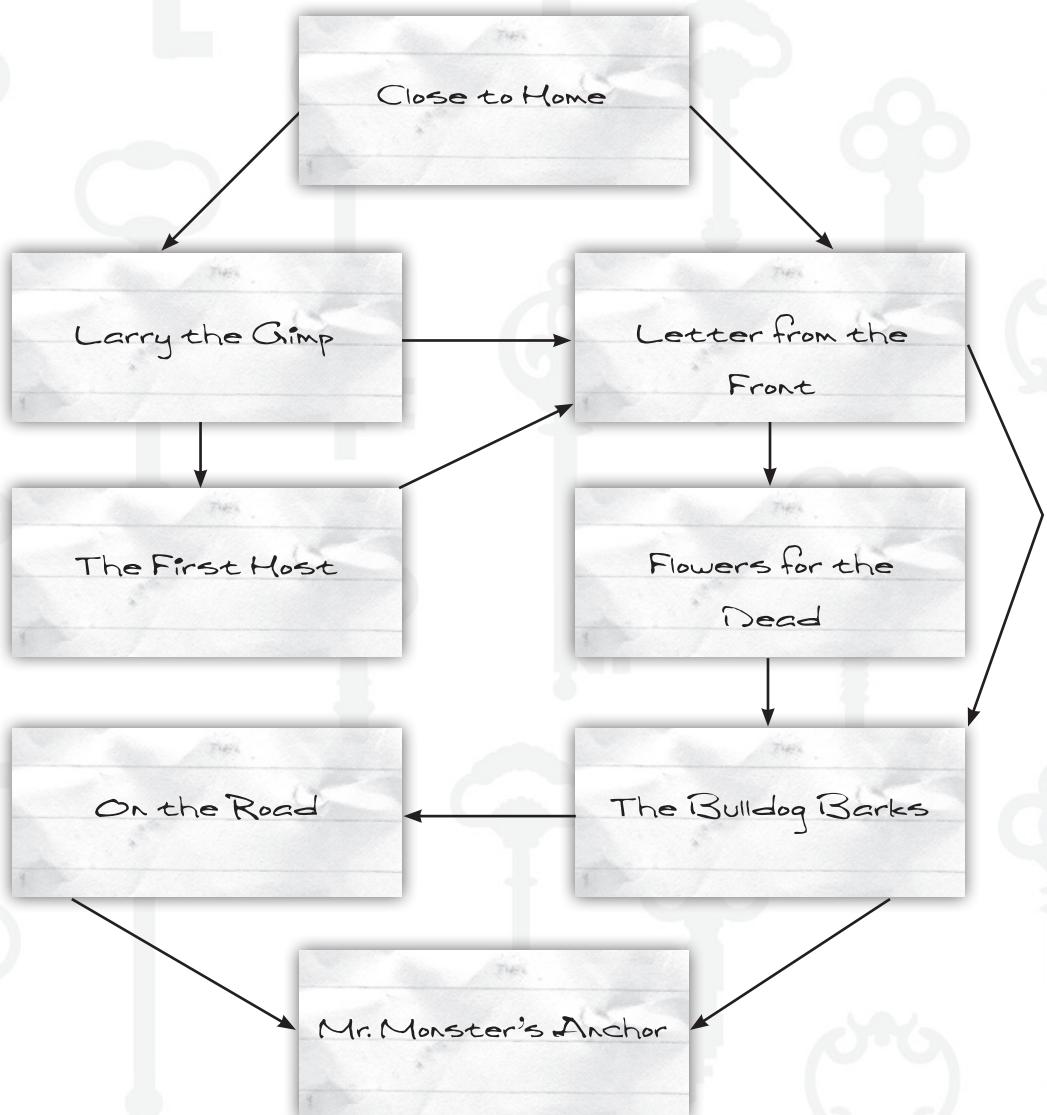
Every ghost outside the Underworld is tied to a person, place or thing that holds special meaning for it. Something anchors them there, preventing them from continuing on to the Underworld or whatever comes after. The number and nature of a ghost's anchors depends on the individual and the circumstances surrounding its death. In most cases, an anchor is a physical place or object that held great emotional significance to the ghost during its mortal existence. A bookee who spent his days holding court in a small restaurant might be anchored to the restaurant or the booth he claimed for himself. A man whose life was punctuated and defined by a gun might be anchored to the revolver that killed him.

Ghosts must remain close to their anchors at all times, whether they manifest or not. A ghost can travel up to 10 yards from its anchor per point of Power that it has. Thus, a ghost with 3 Power can travel up to 30 yards from its anchor. Ghosts anchored to a place instead of a person or object measure this distance from the spot where they died or from where a structure ends. If a ghost is within one yard of its anchor it can manifest automatically with no roll required.

If a ghost has multiple anchors it can jump from one anchor to another with the expenditure of a single Willpower point, regardless of the distance between anchors.

If all of a ghost's anchors are altered (subjected to sanctification or exorcism) or destroyed, the ghost can no longer remain in the physical world. It passes on into the Underworld and cannot return without the aid of an external force, such as a Sin-Eater or necromancer.

Scene Flow Chart



Close to Home

Mental .., Physical .., Social ..

Overview

The krewe is already alert; a killing occurred on their turf only a week ago. They haven't gone out of their way to do anything yet. After all, people get killed all the time, and there was no indication that the murder was anything more than a one-time thing. But now, the killer has returned. After recovering a trunk full of photos and letters that belonged to a local ghost named Tommaso and delivering it to one of his descendants, the characters are on their way back to Gianni's antique shop when they hear a series of gunshots in the direction of Lee's newsstand.

Description

The train rumbles overhead as you make your way back to Curious Things, Gianni's antique shop. It took forever to track down that trunk, but it was worth it to get it back to Tommaso's family. He was so happy when you left it on their doorstep.

"Anything you need, just let me know," he said. Funny, he was pretty good at making your life miserable until you recovered the trunk. You never know when someone like him might come in handy by doing the same to someone else. The late night streets are almost empty, aside from a few vagrants and a couple of indie kids drunkenly singing a Yeah Yeah Yeahs song down by the corner. But it's only been a week since someone was shot and killed right up the street, so what do you expect?

The beginning of the scene is largely rooted in the mundane aspects of the characters' neighborhood, with only a few hints of their supernatural nature. When you're ready to move things ahead, kick things off with the shooting.

You can see the barred windows of the antique shop ahead. As you cross the street behind a passing Chevy truck, the night is split by a distant scream, followed by the Pop! Pop! Pop! of gunfire. The police said last week's shooting was an "isolated event." Guess they were wrong.

When you arrive at the newsstand, you see her. A young woman lies very still in the street, her head resting on the curb. Her purse is a few feet in front of her, untouched. In the amber glow of the streetlights, her t-shirt has two

blooming black flowers that match the growing halo spreading from beneath her neck and head. You know without touching her that she's already dead, but not gone.

You see her ghost, a translucent shade awash in the same blood that stains her solid flesh, crouching near the shuttered doors of the newsstand, shielding her head from the killer who has already succeeded.

The victim, Nancy, is in a considerable (and understandable) panic. When a character approaches her, she starts shouting and crying, becoming more and more agitated unless the characters talk her down (see "calming Nancy" below). If they fail to calm her, Nancy's volatile emotional state will start to manifest physically via her telekinesis. She doesn't have much control over her abilities, but she has lots of anger.

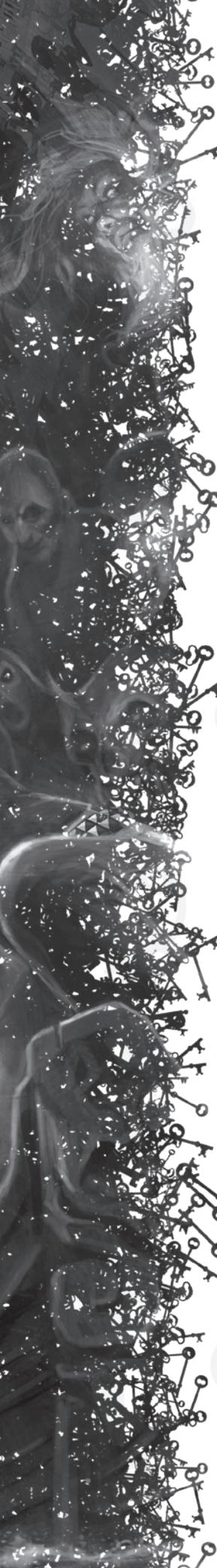
Once the characters have calmed Nancy, she'll answer their questions to the best of her ability. There is one catch, though: Nancy wants the Sin-Eaters to make sure the old ring around her corpse's neck makes its way back to her boyfriend, Jonah. It belonged to his grandmother, and Nancy's mom hates him and won't lift a finger to return the heirloom.

- **What did your killer look like?** He was just some kind of nobody, you know? Dumpy little guy with his hands in his pockets... hurrying across the street like he was heading somewhere. When he got close you could see he was sick or something.

- **What do you mean, sick?** Like, he was all sweaty and pale, and oh! His eyes—they were like, all grey. No pupils, like cataracts. But he looked right at me.

- **Did he say anything before he shot you?** Oh, God. I'm—I'm sorry. Yeah... He said "open your gates" or something like that.

Keep in mind that if the characters stay too long, the police will arrive. Lee owns the ramshackle newsstand, but even so, the krewe will have a hard time explaining why all of them are there and none of them have any helpful information. If the police do arrive, they'll hold the characters at least until they can issue statements and get some face time with Detectives Cord and Markan, the officers assigned to the case. You can give the characters a little warning; since the police will be running



with sirens and lights, the krewe will hear them long before they see them.

Meanwhile, Mr. Monster and his host stuck around long enough to watch the characters give the scene a once-over and even talk to Nancy. When you're ready for the characters to move on, Mr. Monster frees the killer (after having him dump the .44) and Larry the Gimp uses his Terrify Numen to scare the shit out of the confused and clueless killer. When Larry Terrifies him, the characters should all roll to detect his use of Numina (see below).

Storyteller Goals

This scene is designed to introduce the characters and their place within the setting before finally giving them their first call of action. This scene is intended to have a feel similar to the pre-credits vignette on most television shows. If this were the pilot of a television show, the reveal of the characters turning from Nancy's body to look at her ghost would be the moment where the music crescendos and the title screen appears. Feel free to give the players a little leeway to converse in character and get a feel for their personas, but when things start to slow down... *Bang! Bang!* Gunfire has a way of focusing things.

Nancy's death and subsequent unstable behavior needs to be handled with care. Her life is over, and the characters have all been there. They were lucky (or impetuous) enough to get a second chance, but each of them know that *there, but for the grace of God...* She was just murdered. Her circumstances may be peripheral in the grand scheme of things, a bump in the road for the Sin-Eaters on their way to catching Mr. Monster. Eventually they may become blasé about exactly this kind of situation, but it's important, particularly this early in their existence as Bound, to treat the situation with the weight and horror it deserves.

Character Goals

The character's goals are extraordinarily simple at the beginning. They're just trying to go back to Gianni's shop when the gunshots distract them. When they hear the shots, they have a choice to investigate or try to get indoors. Assuming they investigate (because what kind of krewe would they be if they sat around drinking tea all evening?), they might try to reach the newsstand before the killer can get too far away. Each member of the krewe has their own mo-

tivation for wanting to investigate, if not help. Lee's police training is still strong, and his reflex might be to try and catch the assailant. Joey might just smell the story on the wind, an early shot at scooping other reporters in town. Gianni's charitable nature would lead him to send the krewe to help the victim, while Ellis may just want to observe the moment of life becoming death. Zita's thrill seeking might lead her to chase the killer just for the rush of it, and Tyson's sense of honor and community would require it.

Actions

Examining the Crime Scene

Dice Pool: Wits + Investigation.

Lee's investigative training is the strongest of the krewe, and he knows how to avoid contaminating the scene. Joey's skills lay in the uncovering of evidence, but he doesn't necessarily think of the ramifications of his actions.

Action: Extended (5 successes; each roll represents 10 minutes of activity)

Hindrances: The characters search in the bad lighting of the streetlamp (-2).

Help: The characters open up Lee's newsstand and get his flashlight (+1).

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character contaminates the crime scene so much that future attempts are at -2.

Failure: The character uncovers no useful information.

Success: The character finds a bullet hole that looks like it was created by a .44 caliber weapon.

Exceptional Success: The character discovers the bullet hole, and a piece of paper with a sigil burned into it.

Calming Nancy Down

Dice Pool: Presence + Persuasion or Manipulation + Persuasion (depending on the character's approach).

Use these rolls as a guide; if the player roleplays convincingly but rolls horribly, feel free to fudge things a bit.

Action: Extended. The character must accumulate 4 successes. Each roll equals 10 minutes of conversation.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Not only does the character fail to calm Nancy down, he enrages her, trigger-

ing a barrage of poltergeist activity (see Nancy's telekinesis, below).

Failure: The character makes no progress toward calming Nancy.

Success: The character makes progress toward calming Nancy.

Exceptional Success: Nancy calms down enough to talk.

Detecting Numina Use

Dice Pool: Wits + Occult + Psyche.

You should ask each player to make this roll when you are ready to move on from this scene.

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Sin-Eater not only fails to notice the ghost's use of Numina, he also automatically fails to detect the next use of Numina from the same ghost.

Failure: The Sin-Eater doesn't notice anything unusual.

Success: The Sin-Eater notices the use of Numina. This sense manifests differently for each character. Joey feels his scars start to itch and throb. Gianni feels a faint echo of the painful cramps he did when the cancer was gnawing at him. Lee feels his chest tighten. Ellis's mouth goes dry. Zita has a moment of vertigo, like the world is flipping over on her. Tyson feels a dull pulling sensation in the scars on his wrists.

Exceptional Success: As above, and the Sin-Eater knows exactly where the sensation originated.

Recognizing the Rune

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Occult.

Ellis's knowledge of the occult is extensive, and he may even be able to decipher the rune, given enough successes

Action: Instant

Hindrances: The police have arrived (-2).

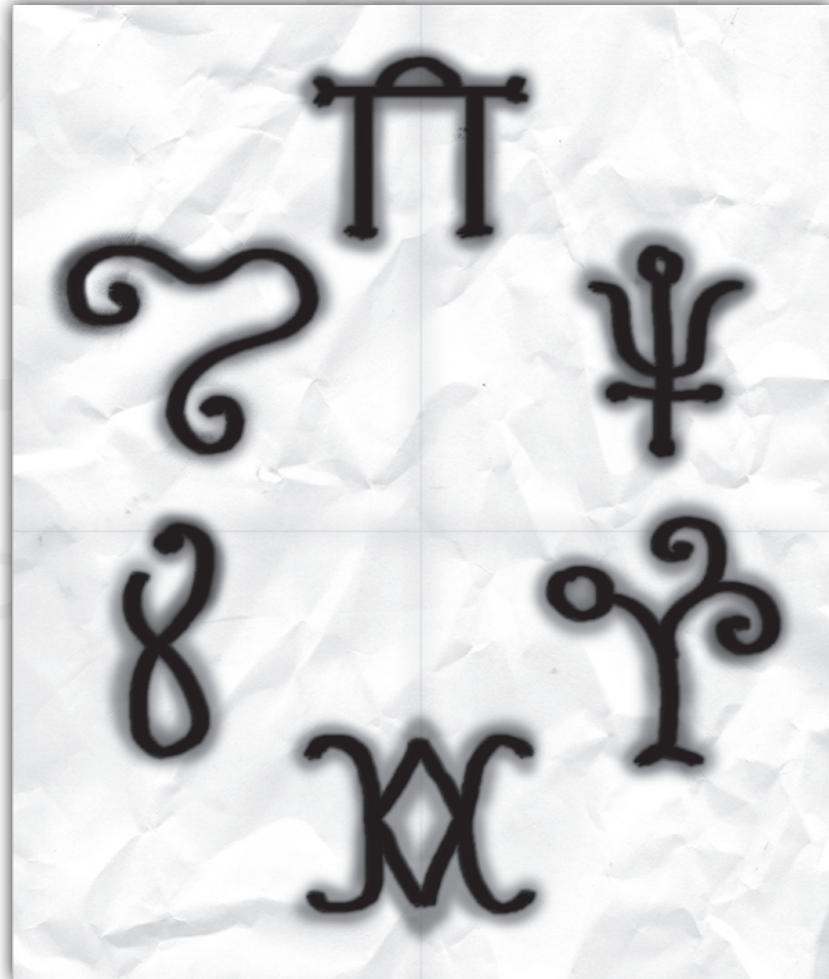
Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Ellis drops the paper or rips it, rendering the sigil illegible.

Failure: Ellis cannot positively identify the sigil.

Success: Ellis identifies the sigil's underworld origins, but cannot decipher it.

Exceptional Success: Ellis recognizes that the sigil is not just one sigil, but a number of them organized into a kind of mandala. It seems to be a spell for breaking an opening.



Characters

Nancy

Quote: "What the fuck is happening?"

Background: Nancy's life was pretty average. She was a student at the local community college, studying nursing. She had a boyfriend and parents who loved her. She was a regular at the newsstand, since she lived in an apartment across the street. Nancy was one of those familiar strangers. Lee took her money and said hello, but he never knew her name.

Description: Nancy was a pretty girl. Now her face is covered by a mask of the blood still seeping from the hole where her left eye used to be. She has two more bullet holes in her torso, and her shirt is stained with the blood from those wounds as well. Her remaining eye is blue, and her hair is dark brown.

Storytelling Hints: Nancy isn't dealing well. She just died, and her anger and fear has the potential to turn the situation volatile in the blink of an eye. She's confused and in denial. She has a tendency to manifest her powers instinctively now, as an extension of her extreme emotional state. She doesn't necessarily *mean* to hurt the characters or attack them, but it might happen anyway.

Attributes: Power 3, Finesse 3, Resistance 2

Willpower: 5

Morality: 6

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Speed: 16 (species factor 10)

Size: 5

Corpus: 7

Essence: 10

Numina and Abilities

Manifestation: Nancy may manifest within one yard of the newsstand automatically, with no roll required. Otherwise, she must roll Power + Finesse, with a base penalty of -2 dice to do so. If there is more than one mortal present, each person after the first imposes a -1 modifier to the roll. Note that Sin-Eaters do not count as mortals in this case; rather they make it easier for a ghost to manifest (see "Unnatural Mediums," on pages 9–10 for information).

Ghost Sign: Nancy is capable of creating messages or images in malleable forms of media. She must spend one Essence point and roll Power + Finesse. If the roll fails, nothing happens. If the roll succeeds, Nancy can create a single message or image. A sentence can be written in the morning dew condensed on the newsstand's window, a ghostly statement can be heard amid the static of a dead radio station, or an image can be superimposed on a frame of camera film or videotape.

Magnetic Disruption: Nancy causes electronic equipment to malfunction due to an intense magnetic distortion. No roll is required. If Nancy manifests successfully, she disrupts electronics within 3 yards. Radios, TVs and telephones emit static. Appliances stop working. Lights go out. Videotapes and camera film is erased or exposed, ruining any captured images.

Telekinesis: Nancy can manipulate physical objects as though she had a pair of physical hands. She can pick up objects, throw them, open and close doors and windows, write messages—basically anything a mortal can do with his hands. Nancy must spend one

Essence point and roll Power + Finesse. The number of successes rolled determines her relative Strength when attempting to lift or move an object. If the successes rolled are equal to the Strength needed to lift an object, Nancy can move it up to one yard. Each extra success allows her to move the object an additional yard. If she wishes to hurl an object at someone and enough successes are rolled to lift the object (and reach the target), the total number of telekinesis successes is rolled as a dice pool in an attack against the target. Alternately, she can make a direct attack on a victim, using her raw power to inflict cuts, bruises and bites on the victim's body. Treat this as a normal attack with a -3 modifier. The attack ignores the target's Defense trait, any available cover and armor worn (unless the armor is supernatural in nature).

Police Officers

Quote: "Put your hands against the wall!"

Background: Many people become police officers out of a desire to protect others. Some, often former soldiers, join the force looking for a chance to use their capabilities against live opponents. Police officers are generally well trained in criminology, investigative procedures, armed and unarmed combat, and basic lifesaving techniques.

Description: Most police officers are tall and broad-shouldered, with close-cropped hair (many have military-style haircuts) and muscular physiques. They actively cultivate an intimidating persona, an attitude they have a hard time letting go of when not in uniform.

Storytelling Hints: Police officers are trained to be polite but detached when dealing with civilians. They can't afford to make friends or appear to favor one person at the expense of another. They tend to assume people are guilty until proven otherwise, and cops with many years' experience can be sarcastic and cynical when dealing with the public.

Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 3, Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Skills: Academics (Criminology) 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Computer 1, Drive 3, Empathy 2, Firearms 3, Intimidation 2, Investigation (Crime Scenes) 3, Larceny 2, Medicine 1, Stealth 1, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 2, Weaponry 2

Merits: Allies 2, Fast Reflexes 2, Status 2, Stunt Driver

Willpower: 7

Morality: 7

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 7 (9 with Fast Reflexes)

Defense: 3

Size: 5

Speed: 11

Health: 8

Weapons/Attacks

Type	Dmg	Range	Shots	Dice Pool
Glock 17 (light pistol)	2 (L)	20/40/80	17+1	8
Remington 870	4 (L)	20/40/80	8+1	10

Merits

Allies: A Policeman can always call for backup, even if they aren't exactly on "police business." He may roll Manipulation + Persuasion with a +2 bonus to call in a medium-sized favor. This roll suffers a penalty of -3 if it could get Lee's ally suspended, or a -5 if it could get them jailed or killed.

Fast Reflexes: The officer's mix of sharp reflexes and steady nerves helps him to get the drop on adversaries. He gains 2 Initiative.

Status: As a badge-carrying police officer, a patrol officer has legal powers of search, seizure and arrest, is permitted to carry a firearm at all times and has access to a wide range of local databases.

Stunt Driver: Officers are highly trained for pursuit situations. A policeman can drive a vehicle and perform an unrelated action (e.g., fire a gun, punch another passenger) in the same turn. Drive rolls may still be necessary for dangerous maneuvers or situations.

Conclusion

The players should have had a chance to get a little banter in, and start to work their way into the skin of the characters before the gunshots turned things a little more prosaic. Depending on how long the characters spend with Nancy, the police might have arrived, making life a lot more interesting for the characters. If the krewe investigates the nearby Numina use, go to "Larry the Gimp." Otherwise, move on to "Letter from the Front."

Larry the Gimp

Mental .., Physical -, Social ...

Overview

Running to investigate the flash of ghostly power they felt, the characters discover Larry the Gimp, a local ghost, who saw the killer. Larry tells the krewe which way the killer went, but he only saw the physical host, not Mr. Monster himself.

Description

Under the eaves of Bava's Diner, a portly man sits at one of the outside tables. Some of you are old enough to remember when he sat there every day, taking bets while he stuffed his face. He grins out at you, the moonlight glinting off the ruined back of his head.

"That's right, ya mooks, he went that way!" he gestures in the general direction of Edison Avenue. "Scared him good I did. Larry's still got it!"

The characters can choose to chase the killer or talk to Larry. It's likely that more active characters

like Lee, Zita and Tyson will take off after the killer, while Gianni is most likely to stay with Larry or Nancy back at the newsstand, if he is along.

If the characters talk to Larry, he takes on a paternal "little Godfather" attitude.

"I know you. That's right, you're that newsman's son," he says, pointing at Lee. "I've seen all o' you kids around here. Never seen that bozo around here before, though. I'm tellin' ya. No class these days, guys just runnin' around poppin' people like that.

"But I scared him, yeah. You shoulda seen the look on his face! Like he seen a— I guess he did! HA!"

Larry gives a similar description to Nancy's, enough that the krewe knows they're talking about the same guy, but if asked, Larry doesn't think the guy looked sick at all. His eyes were brown, not covered in cataracts like Nancy saw.

Storyteller Goals

Your main goal is to impart two bits of information: which way the killer went, and why. Larry used his power to Terrify (see below) the host after Mr. Monster stopped possessing him. As a secondary goal, you can set up one of the ghostly inhabitants of the neighborhood as a recurring bit of local color and a potential source of information for future sessions.

Character Goals

The characters are investigating Larry's use of Numina in hopes of discovering Nancy's killer. Once Larry tells the krewe which way he went, it's probable that they'll adapt and start chasing the killer, but they might choose to try and get some information out of Larry.

Actions

Chasing the Killer

Dice Pool: Stamina + Athletics versus the killer's Stamina + Athletics (4 dice).

For each turn the characters wait to begin chasing Mr. Monster's current host, give him 1 automatic success. The killer needs a number of successes equal to the highest Speed rating among the pursuers to get away. Each pursuer needs to accumulate as many or more successes as the killer has achieved on any given turn to catch up with him.

Action: Extended and contested

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The participant trips, falls or wipes out. He may suffer a Health point of bashing damage at the Storyteller's discretion. The race is over for that participant. If killer falls, the characters catch him.

Failure: The participant gains no ground in the pursuit.

Success: The participant gains some ground in the chase, whether fleeing or in pursuit.

Exceptional Success: The participant gains a great deal of ground through a mixture of luck and capability.

Characters

Larry the Gimp

Quote: "Hey, I know a guy who knows a guy, alright?"

Background: Larry used to be a big man in the neighborhood. Everyone knew him, and everyone knew that you could always find him at a corner booth at Bava's Diner. He operated out of his favorite restaurant with the Bellucci family's permission, as long as he paid them their fair share of his take. Eventually, he got greedy and started skimming too much, and the family found out. The Belluccis sent someone down to the diner to collect. They broke his right leg when he tried to run, and then shoved a pistol in his mouth. The men dragged him out into the street out of deference to the diner's owner before they blew his head off in broad daylight.

Now Larry keeps his ear to the ground, taking note of mortal rumors as well as ghostly ones. Someday, he'll get his revenge on the Bellucci family, but he learned patience from two men with guns.

Description: Larry's a large, round man. He favors his right leg, which looks broken and drags when he walks. The back of his head is blown out. From the right angle, you can see out through the back when he opens his mouth.

Storytelling Hints: Larry's no fool. He may not know exactly who the Saints are, but he can see their geists clinging to them. He may recognize Gianni or Lee: they were kids when he was alive, and he knows the krewe is from the neighborhood. That alone makes them preferable to Mr. Monster, who just ensured that the cops would be crawling around Larry's block.

Larry's a good source of information, as long as he likes you. And he likes just about anyone who helps keep his favorite restaurant open or makes life hard for the Bellucci family.

Attributes: Power 2, Finesse 1, Resistance 2

Willpower: 4

Morality: 7

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Gluttony

Initiative: 3

Defense: 2

Speed: 13 (species factor 10)

Size: 5

Corpus: 7

Essence: 9

Numina and Abilities

Manifestation (dice pool 3): Larry may manifest within one yard of Bava's Diner automatically, with no roll required. Otherwise, he must roll Power + Finesse, with a base penalty of -1 die to do so. If there is more than one mortal present, each person after the first imposes a -1 modifier to the roll. Note that Sin-Eaters do not count as mortals in this case; rather they make it *easier* for a ghost to manifest (see "Unnatural Mediums," on pp. 9–10 for information).

Terrorify (dice pool 3): Larry has the power to strike terror in the hearts of mortals who witness his

manifestation. Roll Power + Finesse in a contested roll against the Resolve + Composure of each mortal who witnesses Larry's manifestation firsthand. If Larry loses or ties, mortals in the area are unaffected and are immune to uses of this power for the remainder of the scene. Mortals who lose flee from Larry and will not return to the haunted area for at least one day.

Conclusion

It's possible the characters caught the killer. If they did, move on to "The First Host." Otherwise, go to "A Letter from the Front."

The First Host

Mental .., Physical .., Social ..

Overview

The krewe catches Roger Jacobi, Mr. Monster's first host, and discovers that he's not the killer they thought he was. When questioned, Roger describes how he came to be possessed, giving the characters an important bit of knowledge: Mr. Monster's anchor.

Description

The man lying on the pavement wheezes and chokes from the exertion of trying to get away. He doesn't have a pistol as he scrambles back against a nearby wall, dumb panic in his eyes.

"Wha—Where am I?" he says. "Who are you?"

Roger Jacobi, Nancy's murderer, is pathetic and useless. He pleads with the krewe, confused and convinced that they're trying to mug him.

"Look, I don't got nothin'. Here, take my wallet, you'll see. Nothin'. Take the bank card – pin number's 0722 – Just don't hurt me, please." He tosses his wallet at your feet. He keeps backing against the wall. His chest is still heaving, but now it's fear making him short of breath.

When the characters accuse him of Nancy's murder, he seems even more confused. In fact, he thinks the krewe is trying to set him up – trying to get him to take the fall for a murder they committed themselves. If

the characters interrogate him, they'll learn that he's a janitor, and that he blacked out yesterday after finding a .44 Bulldog revolver discarded near the hospital's dumpster. He doesn't recall what happened to the gun, or anything else about the last 24 hours.

If the characters search for the gun, it is already gone, but traces remain. If one of the characters succeeds on the Investigation roll (see below), read this passage:

Down a slope from the sidewalk, you see a glint of metal in the streetlights. After making your way down through the brush, you find a bullet casing. The earth is disturbed, as if a small but heavy object had fallen here. A trail of boot prints lead away from the bullets to the nearby sidewalk, but there's nobody in sight.

Storyteller Goals

The keyword for Roger is "pathetic." He's doesn't seem like a killer at all, and he really has no idea what he's done. Be sure to make it clear that Roger could not have done this on his own. If the characters absolutely aren't getting it, perhaps one of them might notice a spiritual residue that indicates possession. Legally, he's screwed if the police catch him, and the krewe has a choice to make. They can turn him over

to the authorities, or they can let him go, in favor of meting out their own form of justice when they find the shade responsible. The main piece of information that you're trying to convey in this scene though is that the revolver is Mr. Monster's anchor.

Character Goals

The krewe is looking for answers. Once they hear his story, it should be obvious that he was possessed. From there, the characters may choose to search for the gun, which has already been picked up and moved by Mr. Monster's next host – but, by all means, let the characters search.

Actions

Interrogating Roger

Dice Pool: Wits + Intimidation versus Roger's Stamina + Resolve.

Lee's style of interrogation is more vigorous than the other members of the krewe. After all, he lost his badge for excessive force. Tyson makes, if not a "good" cop, at least a better alternative to Lee. If the two characters choose to, they can work together to break Roger quickly which, given the amount of time they have before the police find all of them, is probably a good idea. Choose which character should be the primary actor (most likely Lee), and allow the secondary interrogator to make his Wits + Intimidation roll first. Any successes accrued on the secondary interrogator's roll are then added to the primary interrogator's roll as bonus dice.

Action: Extended and contested. The first participant to accrue 4 successes wins.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Lee's system of threats, violence and deprivation falls apart, reinforcing Roger's resistance. Lee cannot break him at this time. If Roger suffers a dramatic failure, he collapses completely and tells everything he knows.

Failure: The participant fails to make any headway against his opponent, either as interrogator or subject.

Success: The character makes progress against his opponent.

Exceptional Success: The character makes dramatic progress against his opponent.

Searching for the Bulldog

Dice Pool: Wits + Investigation.

Lee and Joey are the characters most likely to find the gun, but all of the characters may search. Remember that any character that does not have the Investigation Skill suffers a -3 penalty to their roll. Should a character succeed, they do not find the gun itself, but they do discover an empty bullet casing still redolent from being fired and boot prints leading away from the scene ("Frankie" Kowalski dumped the empty casings into his hand as he was reloading, but one fell to the ground – see "On the Road," pp. 31–32).

Action: Extended. The character needs to accrue a total of 5 successes.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character does not discover evidence of the gun's presence at all.

Failure: The character fails to make any progress towards uncovering the evidence.

Success: The character makes progress towards finding the evidence.

Exceptional Success: The character finds the evidence and recognizes the boot prints as a type of boot worn by telephone linesmen and other climbers.

Characters

Roger Jacobi, the First Host

Quote: "Where am I? Who are you?"

Background: Roger's never been, well, much of anything. Born and raised in the Bronx, he's never been anywhere else, not really. He's never been popular, or even unpopular. All Roger's life, he's just sort of been there. He works as a janitor at a nearby hospital and lives alone since his mother passed away last year. Most of his life is spent watching trivia game shows. While he was working the day before Nancy's death, he came across an oily bundle on the ground near the dumpster behind the hospital. As he unwrapped the bundle, he heard a susurruus at the edge of his senses, a tickling whisper that slipped inside his head and flipped a switch. Everything between then and when Larry scared the shit out of him is a blank, black void.

Description: Roger's an out-of-shape, middle-aged janitor. He's a little scruffy, but relatively clean. There's nothing remarkable about his appearance at all. The sort of man your eyes slide right over when

he walks by you on the street. His salt-and-pepper hair is close-cropped and balding, and his gut hangs over his belt by a few inches.

Storytelling Hints: The word nondescript was created for Roger. He'd fit the profile of a serial killer if only he had some motivation, enough gumption to actually *feel* enough to kill. Tonight, he's just bewildered. He has no idea that he just killed a girl. He doesn't know how to wrap his brain around the idea of it, if it's presented to him. Killing is just so... *definitive*. He has trouble deciding whether he wants a hot dog or a hamburger for lunch.

Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 1, Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Computer 2, Crafts 4, Firearms 3, Intimidation 2, Larceny 2, Medicine 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Encyclopedic Knowledge 4, Natural Immunity 1, Resources 2, Strong Back 1

Flaws: Behavior Blind. Roger doesn't really understand human behavior and is blind to common social cues that communicate other people's basic feelings. He can't tell when others use sarcasm or innuendo, or if he's boring them.

Willpower: 4

Morality: 7

Virtue: Prudence. Roger despises risks and rash action. Once per chapter, he regains all spent Willpower points whenever he refuses a tempting course of action by which he could gain significantly. The "temptation" must involve some reward that, by refusing it, might cost him later on.

Vice: Sloth. Roger takes comfort in the knowledge that if he does nothing, someone else will step in and fix the problem sooner or later. Once per scene, he may regain one Willpower point if he successfully avoids a difficult task but achieves the same goal nonetheless.

Initiative: 5

Defense: 2

Size: 5

Speed: 10

Health: 8

Merits and Abilities

Encyclopedic Knowledge: Roger is a veritable font of useful (and sometimes useless) information on a wide variety of topics. Chances are he can come up with an anecdote pertaining to any situation based on something he's read, witnessed or seen on TV.

Roger can make an Intelligence + Wits roll any time he is confronted with a situation or phenomenon outside his normal realm of experience. If the roll is successful, he may recall a "factoid" that he's heard at some point that may shed light on matters.

Natural Immunity: Roger has been working at the hospital for years, and he's built up a powerful immune system. Roger gains a +2 modifier on Stamina rolls to resist infection, sickness and disease. His immune system is exceptionally effective at resisting infections, viruses and bacteria. Roger can count on one hand the number of times he's been seriously ill.

Resources: Roger has a crappy job, but he doesn't have anything to spend money on, so he has about \$1000 worth of disposable income available each month.

Strong Back: Roger gains a +1 modifier to actions involving lifting or carrying heavy weights. He can lift and carry much more weight than his build and body type suggests.

Conclusion

The characters have reached a point where it seems they have to take the initiative. They need to check in with their various contacts, do research and find out what they can about the killings, and about a ghost with a .44 revolver as an anchor. Depending on the character's choices, they may need to interact with the detectives officially investigating the killings, as well. Either way, move on to the next scene, "A Letter From the Front."

A Letter From the Front

Mental •, Physical –, Social •

Overview

The characters may start to put out the word to their various contacts and allies, looking for information on the shootings that have already occurred and, on the ghost side, begin searching for word of a ghost with a .44 caliber revolver as an anchor.

The first letter arrives at the paper. Joey gets called in, because he lives in the neighborhood, giving the characters access to the letter before it is censored and printed in the paper.

Description

If the characters put out the word, describe each successful result as follows:

Tyson (gangbangers and street kids): The kids are all abuzz about the killings. The gangs aren't taking credit for the kills – no point in them. There's no glory in capping soccer moms and students. Word is that a cat named 2Tone is offering a reward of two grand to the person who delivers the killer to the cops and gets them out of the neighborhood.

Joey (journalists): The people you call all expect you to know more about what's going on than they do, since it's

your neighborhood. Your boss at the paper tells you to check your e-mail. You've got a message with an image attached, allegedly from the killer! He wants you to look into things from a local perspective. "Oh yeah," he says, "I'd look up the Son of Sam, if I were you." See below for the letter.

Lee (cops): Officially, the beat cops don't know shit. They aren't being told anything out of the ordinary. "There's no evidence to suggest the killings are related" is the party line. Unofficially, they're thinking it's a Son of Sam copycat. Nate and Bob, the detectives working the case tell you that the same gun was used in both killings.

"But don't spread that around. Just telling you since it was in front of your shop and all. Tough break, man," Nate says.

Ellis and Gianni (local ghosts): The local ghosts are quiet. They're only this quiet when they know something, and it scares them. Some of them have told you conflicting stories about a killer ghost who goes by Mr. Monster. (Feel free to feed the players one or two of the stories listed in Mr. Monster's description on pp. 33–36.) Best you can figure, he can't be more than around 40 years dead, since they didn't even make .44 Bulldogs before the 70s. But the ghosts are nervous, and that can't be a good sign.

Zita (chop shops): Business is starting to dip, if only because the police are making a show of better night

It has been to long. Did you really think I could be stopped so easily as just arresting one pair of my hands? My work was done, father Sam was silenced. I was left to rest but no more. The season of my discontent has returned and I must go out and kill. I am Wicked King Wicker, and my time has come again. No longer is there one father Sam but hundreds drunkenly mean. Silence is no longer possible and I cannot sleep with the banging and yelling and crawling of the people like rats above my bed. Behind my bedroom is the graveyard. No holy ground – just murdered young buried in dirt. The dirt will become mud with their blood.

The nights are my time and my mouth is a bulldog. I will speak again and again. I have slipped my leash and have no other recourse – I am trained too kill. I cannot be silenced until the Wooden Ground splits and the underworld belches its captives back into the streets. Father Sam screamed to the children to get off of his Wooden Lawn and I listened from my attic. When those hypocrit children would not leave, father released me to hunt for them. I love to hunt. I told you before I love fresh meat. I will write with many hands before this chapter is finished. I would only use 2 but that would make things to easy wouldn't it? Please tell the detectives working on this case good luck. They are the last hope of the living, for I WILL MAKE MORE DEAD.

Yours in murder,

Mr. Monster

TT

patrols in the area. The killings themselves aren't really registering, but they let you know about 2Tone's reward offer: two grand to the person who delivers the killer to the cops so they'll step the fuck off.

Storyteller Goals

Your main goal here is simply to provide the players with the clues in Mr. Monster's first letter to the press. This is a quiet scene, intended to give the players something to chew on while also providing a bit of downtime to decide on a course of action.

Character Goals

Joey and Ellis have the best chance of discovering useful information related to the letter itself, but that doesn't mean they are the only ones who have something to do in this scene. Each of the characters has a different sphere of influence they can inquire in. Lee can attempt to contact Detectives Cord and Markan, to get a little background on the current case. Zita can ask around the chop shops to see if her people have heard anything, and Tyson can put feelers out among the local street kids and gangbangers. Ellis can go straight to the source, asking the neighborhood ghosts if they know anything about the killer. (They all have a different story, of course. See Mr. Monster on pages 33–35 for a few example rumors.)

Actions

Researching the Letter

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Academics.

Joey's research skills are best used to attempt to find information on the mundane aspects or references within Mr. Monster's letter. Insight into the occult aspects requires Ellis' knowledge (see below). If Joey garners 7 successes, he discovers a number of parallels with—and direct repetition from—the original Son of Sam letters. The main difference between the letters is in the “Wooden Lawn” references and the mention of the dead rising from their captivity. The largest cemetery in the Bronx is Woodlawn Cemetery. (For information on the Son of Sam, see p. 13)

Action: Extended. Joey must achieve 7 successes. Each roll represents 30 minutes of research.

Helps: Internet connection (+1), Accessing newspaper archives (+1)

Hindrances: No Internet connection (-2)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Joey obtains flawed or inaccurate information that leads him to draw incorrect conclusions about the references in the letter.

Failure: Joey makes no progress in locating the information he is after.

Success: Joey makes progress in his search for information on the references made in the letter.

Exceptional Success: Joey is well on his way to discovering the elusive information he's after. If the roll provides enough successes to push the total well above the amount necessary to complete the task (by five or more), he gains additional information pertinent to his research, providing greater detail and insight into Mr. Monster's thought process.

Finding the Hidden Truths

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Occult.

Action: Extended. Ellis must achieve 7 successes. Each roll represents 30 minutes of work.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Ellis mistakenly identifies an example of occult phenomena or remembers incorrect information that impacts his decisions for the worse. Depending on the mistake, this flawed information could be deadly.

Failure: Ellis makes no progress in identifying any occult references in the letter.

Success: Ellis makes progress in his search for occult references in the letter.

Exceptional Success: Ellis is well on his way to identifying the occult references hinted at in the letter. If the roll provides enough successes to push the total well above the amount necessary to complete the task (by five or more), he gains additional information pertinent to his research, providing greater detail and insight into Mr. Monster's thought process.

Conclusion

If the characters picked up the clues leading them to Woodlawn, go to “Flowers for the Dead.” Otherwise, they'll need to happen upon the crime scene in “the Bulldog Barks.”

Flowers for the Dead

Mental ..., Physical -, Social ...

Overview

The krewe visits Woodlawn cemetery in hopes of discovering more about Mr. Monster, thanks to multiple references to the graveyard in his first letter to the media.

Woodlawn Cemetery is one of the focal points of local Sin-Eater culture, with more than 400 acres and 300,000 people buried there. Many a Sin-Eater will take a covert pilgrimage to the grave of a particularly respected figure. Locals frequently pour out rum at the tombstones or mausoleums of such diverse figures as Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, Herman Melville and Bat Masterson.

While the characters are there, they run into Izzy Waters, an old ghost who can give them information as long as the krewe can keep her entertained.

Description

Woodlawn is a sprawling graveyard. Elaborate tombs and memorials dot the landscape as far as you can see. Most of you have been here before. The place is rich with deathly energy; you can feel it pulsing beneath your feet. The skin between the worlds is thin here. You feel your geists flex and stretch, closer to the surface than ever.

Graveyards are conducive to ghostly manifestations. Any shade attempting to manifest one of her powers gets +3 dice in addition to the ones she gets for being near the Sin-Eaters (see Unnatural Mediums, pp. 9-10).

As you search the graveyard for clues, many of the shades slink away, avoiding you. They fade into their crypts as if they know what you're looking for and don't want to get involved. One solitary ghost sits on the steps of a mausoleum inscribed with the word "WATERS" in large, block letters above the door. Long, elegant legs unfold as she stands and saunters toward you, the tassels on her blood-soaked dress swaying in time with her hips. The flapper girl looks at you from under the bangs of her bob haircut and grins mischievously. "Ain't you a sight? Don't you know it ain't safe ta be in a graveyard?"

Izzy's the only one of the ghosts here who doesn't fear Mr. Monster's growing power. Whether that's because she's more powerful or simply foolhardy is another matter entirely. She's happy to talk to the characters, though like with many ghosts, there is a price to be paid for her help.

"Sure, I can show you where Mr. M's been digging around, but I want... her," she says, pointing at Zita. "Just for a little while... I'll give her back, I swear! C'mon doll, do you know how long it's been since I had a smoke?"

If the krewe won't let her possess Zita, she won't push the issue, but she will dig her heels in until they find her a girl she can possess, or make some other arrangement she'll agree to. The secret is keeping her entertained. She gets stubborn or simply loses interest and wanders off if she gets bored. When the characters get her to focus on "Mr. M," instead of flirting or teasing or just trying to have some living company, she takes them to another crypt.

"This way, guys and doll. Over here, and if you look to your right you'll see more dead people. This is it, folks. Tour's over. You can go in there if you want, but Izzy's staying put." The crypt she leads you to is large, its wrought-iron gate chained shut.

Zita (and possibly Lee) can pick the lock with few problems. This would be a good time to make sure the krewe has at least one flashlight between them.

The gate opens silently, on well-oiled hinges. Someone has been coming here, and they didn't want to be detected. It's dark inside, but in the circle of your flashlight beam, you see a strange but familiar sigil engraved in the back wall. It's one of the symbols from the piece of paper you discovered near Nancy's murder scene. The engraving is almost entirely filled in with a rusty brown-black pigment. Within the colored segment, a red "X" is scratched across the symbol every few inches.

When the characters realize that the brown-black pigment is essentially a map, they can cross-reference the Xs on an actual map of New York City to predict where Mr. Monster's next victim will be found.

Storyteller Goals

You can use the ghosts' reluctance to interact with the characters as a way to make them paranoid, especially given that Sin-Eaters usually have to actively concentrate on ignoring ghosts to be left alone for a moment. Izzy was a thrill seeker in life who loved to break social mores, so she's just playing to type here. She *wants* to scandalize the other ghosts of the graveyard. It's almost as much fun as she'd have if Zita does agree to let her possess her for a while.

Once the krewe finds the tomb, you want them to decipher the pattern so they can move on to find the next victim.

Character Goals

The characters are looking for anything that might give them a clue to Mr. Monster's plans or whereabouts. Once Izzy leads them to the crypt, they need only decipher the rune to figure out where Mr. Monster will strike next.

Actions

Discerning the Pattern

Dice Pool: Wits + Occult

Ellis sees things from a rather unique perspective. He has the likeliest chance of making the kind of intuitive leap needed to make the connection between the wall of the tomb and the pattern of Mr. Monster's attacks.

Action: Extended. The character must accrue 5 successes. Each roll represents 15 minutes of studying the tomb.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Ellis comes to an incorrect conclusion. Perhaps he transfers the pattern to a map incorrectly, putting the characters on the wrong side of town entirely when the next victim is killed.

Failure: Ellis makes no progress toward discerning the pattern.

Success: Ellis makes progress toward discerning the pattern.

Exceptional Success: Ellis sees the pattern, and realizes that, in addition to lining up with Mr. Monster's killings, it is the Lower Tongue sigil denoting a shattering.

Characters

Isabelle "Izzy" Waters

Quote: "Well, hello handsome. What I wouldn't give for a body right now."

Background: Izzy was the cat's meow. She was known in all the best joints, and she danced the Charleston with the best of them. She was rich, young, beautiful and an adrenaline junky. She drove her car at breakneck speeds and drank and smoked with the best of them. All the men wanted her, but she only wanted the interesting ones. Of course, to Izzy, "interesting" was a synonym for "dangerous."

It was only a matter of time, really. The gossip columnists all had bets in on when one of the torch-carrying lugs Izzy strung along would finally get fed up and take her for a ride. But in the end, that wasn't what happened at all. Izzy started shacking up with a guy and even told her friends she going to tie the knot. But she didn't know he was already married. His wife found the two of them drunk and getting into heavy petting, and slit Izzy's throat before burying the knife in her husband's chest.

Since then, Izzy's flipped back and forth between three anchors. Her mausoleum, a choker with a cameo silhouette of her that now belongs to her great-niece in San Francisco, and an old dancehall-turned-bar in Manhattan that still has photos of her on the wall.

Description: Izzy is still wearing her flapper finery. She's done up in a tasseled dress and a woolen overcoat with a fur-lined collar. Her bobbed hair gives her a look reminiscent of Louise Brooks, all glamour and mystery. She's gorgeous, until you notice that her throat yawns wide when she looks up, and the front of her dress is covered in blood.

Storytelling Hints: You've been a ghost over four times longer than you lived. Your mindset has become so alien that you really don't understand the value of life, and your priorities are a little wonky. The krewe is there to make your existence more entertaining. If they can make that coincide with stopping Mr. Monster, swell. But you're easily bored, and they need to keep things interesting to keep your attention. Use slang from the 1920s in your speech.

Attributes: Power 4, Finesse 4, Resistance 3

Willpower: 7

Morality: 4

Virtue: Fortitude
Vice: Envy
Initiative: 7
Defense: 4
Speed: 18 (species factor 10)
Size: 5
Corpus: 8

Numina

Phantasm (dice pool 8): Izzy has the power to create illusory images. Spend one Essence point and roll Power + Finesse. A negative modifier may be applied to the roll depending on the size and complexity of the illusion. Mimicking a person's voice alone or creating a distinctive smell (like perfume) doesn't incur any negative modifiers, but creating the illusion of a person might be subject to a -1 penalty. Creating the illusion of a specific person (down to patterns of speech and mannerisms) that a witness knows might call for a -2 penalty. Creating a complex illusion that seems to have physical substance (the witness is convinced that he can "touch" the illusion and it feels solid) incurs a -3 or more severe penalty. Small, subtle illusions are generally much more effective than large, overt ones. This power works on only one victim at a time. Other mortals in the subject's vicinity do not see what he does. When a subject witnesses an illusion, roll Wits + Composure (or the Storyteller may allow Composure to be replaced by Occult if your character is aware of ghostly activity). If the roll generates as many or more successes than were achieved in the phantasm roll, the victim recognizes that the image can't be real. If the phantasm roll wins, the subject believes the illusion is genuine, but another Wits + Composure (or Occult) roll is made for him in each successive turn to attempt to see through the power. Izzy can maintain only one

illusion at a time, and each illusion remains for the duration of the scene unless dispelled.

Possession (dice pool 8): Izzy may attempt to possess a living human being and control his or her body for a short time. Spend one Essence point and roll Power + Finesse in a contested roll versus the victim's Resolve + Composure. If she wins, Izzy gains control of the victim's body for the duration of a single scene. Use the victim's available traits (except Willpower points, which are equal to Izzy's current Willpower points) and dice pools for any action he wishes to take. If the mortal wins or ties the roll, Izzy fails her possession attempt. As long as Izzy has Essence points remaining she can continue to make possession attempts against a target. If a possessed body is killed or knocked unconscious, Izzy is forced out and must possess another victim if she still wishes to act.

Attacks using a blessed object against one of Izzy's hosts damage her Corpus instead of the physical host.

Terrify (dice pool 8): Izzy has the power to strike terror in the hearts of mortals who witness her manifestation. Roll Power + Finesse in a contested roll against the Resolve + Composure of each mortal who witnesses her manifestation firsthand. If Izzy loses or ties, mortals in the area are unaffected and are immune to uses of this power for the remainder of the scene. Mortals who lose flee from Izzy and will not return to the haunted area for at least one day.

Conclusion

The characters should have deciphered the mapping pattern that Mr. Monster is using to choose his victims. He's trying to complete the symbol, and he's very close. Move on from here to "the Bulldog Barks."

The Bulldog Barks

Mental ••, Physical •••, Social •

Overview

The characters find the third victim, along with two letters left by Mr. Monster, and get another chance to catch his host before he discards Mr. Monster's anchor.

Description

You're too late. A young woman's corpse lies facedown on the sidewalk in a pool of blood. A few onlookers stand nearby, taking photos with their camera phones. Only one of them is actually using his phone to call the

police. The ghost of the victim is standing mere feet away from her corpse, staring fixedly at her own body. She's in total shock.

Ask the players to roll Wits + Composure (see "Noticing the Letters," below), and if they succeed, read the following:

A few feet away, you notice a sheaf of paper stuck under the windshield of a parked car. The papers have spatters of blood on them, and the same symbol you saw in the graveyard drawn on them.

After the characters have read the papers, Frankie, Mr. Monster's current host, makes his move.

Sirens drone in the distance, but suddenly, you hear the roar of an engine straining and the squeal of tires fighting for purchase as a car fishtails around the corner. You only have a moment to see the driver point a gun in your direction before he opens fire!

Each character must roll one die and add his Initiative rating to the result. For Frankie, roll one die and add 7 to the result. Characters who achieve a higher Initiative than Frankie may use their action to dive behind cover as he squalls by, firing at them. Frankie randomly fires at any characters left in the open as he passes. His first choice is members of the krewe, but he'll settle for any of the spectators vicariously enjoying his kill.

As the shooter drives off, Zita notices a car she knows would hotwire quickly.

Storyteller Goals

You want the characters to find the letters and read them before Frankie/Mr. Monster tries to take them out. Keep in mind that he's not actually trying to kill them. He won't be upset if they die, but he's having fun, in an arrogant, completely sociopathic way. Make sure to let the characters have a chance to chase him, but don't make it too easy.

Character Goals

When the characters arrive, they were hoping to catch him before he had a chance to kill Laura. Failing that, they try to find evidence and then to survive when Mr. Monster attacks. It's possible one or more of the characters will try to approach Laura to console her. Keep in mind that there is a crowd of onlookers, and it's only growing.

I know you. I saw you at my last performance, standing there with your eyes bugging out and those hateful hurtful things on your backs like monkeys. I know you hypocrits. The underworld doesn't want you any more than the living one. Why do you chase me when I am the hunter only doing the things you are too afraid to do?

Mr. Monster



Too those detectives who would chase me, I am Grendle. The living hurt me with their presence. I cannot abide it. I am love and light - I do not want to kill but it is the only way for them to join me. The dogs that guard the underworld are after me. To them I say I am not your enemy. Free yourself from the leashes of your Old Laws and join me. Only when they are ALL DEAD can we all live.

This is my love song. Every bullet is a beat. Bang, bang, bang! I will make music until the world is a wasteland and the only frequency is mine. The Labyrinth is coming and you will all lose your way if you do not follow the sound of my gun.

Yours in Murder,

Mr. Monster



Actions

Noticing the Letters

Dice Pool: Wits + Composure.

Any character has a chance to notice the letters stuffed into the windshield wipers.

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character is completely oblivious to the notes.

Failure: The character does not see the notes unless they are pointed out to him.

Success: The character spots the letters.

Exceptional Success: There is no additional result beyond noticing the letters.

Carjacking

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Larceny (picking the lock), Dexterity + Crafts (hotwiring the car).

This is Zita's *raison d'être*. She's all over this. She can also use her Marionette manifestation as an alternative, if she wishes.

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: On the lockpicking roll, Zita's tools snap. If she's trying to hotwire the car, Zita is electrocuted, and takes 1 point of bashing damage.

Failure: Zita fails to jimmy the lock or hotwire the car.

Success: The door opens or the car starts.

Exceptional Success: Success is its own reward.

Characters

Laura, the Third Victim

Quotes: "No, you don't understand, I can't be dead."

Background: Laura was on the cusp of success. She was walking from the subway, coming home from rehearsal for her first Broadway show. It was a supporting role, but every step matters. When she rounded the corner, Frankie, Mr. Monster's current host, approached her with his head down. As he passed her, he turned as if to say something, raised his revolver and fired.

Description: Lithe and graceful, Laura has the wiry muscle and confident coordination of a dancer. Her dark hair is matted with blood, and her eyes look like shattered crystal. She's wearing a summer dress over a leotard and tights, and everything is drenched in hot, red blood.

Storytelling Hints: It was all laid out for you. Your future was about to *happen*. All of your dreams were going to be realized. And now, nothing. You're stuck in the shock of disbelief, and you can't get around it.

Attributes: Power 2, Finesse 1, Resistance 2

Willpower: 4

Morality: 7

Virtue: Temperance

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 3

Defense: 2

Speed: 13 (species factor 10)

Size: 5

Corpus: 7

Numina

Clairvoyance (dice pool 3): Laura can speak to mortals through the body of another living person. Roll Power + Finesse, with the subject's Resolve subtracted from the dice pool as a penalty. If the victim is a willing participant, no roll is made. If Laura fails, no communication is possible. If she wins, she can speak using the victim's vocal cords for a single turn. At the end of the turn the victim suffers a single point of bashing damage due to the strain of contact. If Laura wishes to continue speaking through the medium, a further Power + Finesse roll must be made each turn. The medium continues to suffer an additional point of bashing damage at the end of each turn of communication. If the medium is rendered unconscious, no further contact is possible.

Conclusion

This one heads straight into "On the Road," wherein the characters are led on a high-speed chase back towards Woodlawn Cemetery. It's possible that Zita might use her Marionette abilities to try to cut the car chase short. If she succeeds, you can try to extend things, or you can skip straight to "Mr. Monster's anchor."

On the Road

Mental ++, Physical **, Social -

Overview

In this scene, the characters find themselves caught up in a high-speed car chase through crowded streets, trying to catch Mr. Monster's current host before he has a chance to ditch the ghost's anchor and leave the characters no closer to stopping the murders. Mr. Monster uses Frankie Kowalski and tries to lead the characters into Woodlawn Cemetery. If he succeeds, he takes the krewe on another foot chase into the center of the graveyard, where he feels more confident about fighting them.

Description

You can hear horns ahead as the killer shoots through traffic. Zita's hands grip the wheel as she slips left, then breaks right through a hole in traffic. You're still in one piece and, despite the congested New York traffic, you're flying along with as much speed as she can coax out of the car's engine.

When Mr. Monster arrives at the cemetery, use the following description:

The battered SUV skids to a halt, sliding sideways into the gates of Woodlawn Cemetery. As soon as it stops, the door opens and the driver staggers out, shaking his head for a moment before taking off into the maze of graves.

Character Goals

In this scene, the characters are trying to keep up with or stop Mr. Monster's SUV. As the driver, Zita's player will be taking most of the actions, but driving is not the only thing to be done. The characters can attempt to shoot out the tires or anything else the characters can plausibly do in a car travelling at high speeds while they aren't driving. Whatever their actions, the krewe's main goal is to catch up to Mr. Monster or stop him entirely.

Storyteller Goals

This scene is an adrenaline-pumping action sequence, designed to give the players a period of fast-paced action before the final confrontation with Mr. Monster himself. Depending upon how their luck is running, your job as Storyteller is to make this sequence last as long as necessary to keep the action and suspense at a high level.

Keep in mind that extending a chase too long can cause the players to become bored with it.

Actions

Vehicle Chase

Dice Pool: Wits + Drive + the vehicle's Handling rating. (Frankie is driving an SUV, which has a Handling of 0, giving him a dice pool of 6, while Zita's stolen car has a Handling of 3, giving her a base dice pool of 9.)

Action: Extended and contested. Each dice roll represents about two city blocks of travel.

Hindrances: Heavy traffic (-1), pedestrians (-2), rain (-1), stopped traffic/red light (-2), blown tire (-2 per tire)

Help: No traffic (+1), know the area (+1)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Choose one of the following: your vehicle breaks down, you hit another car (dealing two bashing damage to everyone in the vehicle), or you take a wrong turn and lose the SUV completely.

Failure: You are losing ground on the SUV. It is still in sight, but out of range of any gunfire.

Success: You gain some ground on the SUV.

Exceptional Success: The SUV begins to sputter and shake. You can catch up to it easily.

It is best to throw as many obstacles as possible in the characters' path for the most dramatic effect: near misses with pedestrians, cars stopping abruptly after nearly T-boning yours, etc.

While the driver is the one attempting most of the action, the other passengers may attempt to fire at the SUV in order to stop it. This is a very difficult shot, and doing so will bring reciprocal fire from the SUV. All attempts at long-range weapon fire will incur the normal penalties for long-range combat (-2 for medium range, -4 for long range—most of this combat will be in medium range). There are also penalties for any specified shot at the opposing vehicle's tires (-2). Any attack against the tires requires three successes to puncture one. If you are firing at the occupants inside, you need two additional successes to have the bullet puncture the window.

Characters

Frank "Frankie" Kowalski, the Second Host

Quote: “*Fuck you, I’m not playing around here!*”

Background: Frankie comes from a family of blue-collar workers. He doesn’t work construction like they did; rather, he makes his living scaling the tall towers that house cell phone and broadband wireless antennae, installing, repairing or upgrading the sensitive electronics within.

Frankie was packing his equipment after working on a cell tower in Pelham Bay when he heard a rustling nearby. He investigated, and discovered the .44 Bulldog dumped in the brush. As soon as he got close enough, Mr. Monster made his move, and Frankie blacked out.

Description: Frank is lanky, skinny but strong. He moves with an almost apelike grace, like he wouldn’t be out of place brachiating from branch to branch like a monkey. He wears a jacket with an embroidered patch on the left forearm that says “28:06:42:12,” a t-shirt, a pair of worn jeans and calf-high work boots. His left hand has burn marks from where he caught the hot bullet casings after Roger Jacobi’s shooting (in “The First Host”).

Storytelling Hints: See Mr. Monster’s storytelling hints (pp. 33–36) if the characters don’t drive him out. Otherwise, you’re a geek, but you don’t like to let people know that. It makes it harder for you to fit in on work sites. People tend to be a little standoffish when they realize how smart you really are, so you try to tone yourself down in social situations.

It’s not that you’re ashamed of how smart you are. You’re proud of it, but you know that most people aren’t as smart as you are, so you don’t like to make them feel bad.

You’re not at your best when dealing with the krewe. You’re confused. You’ve lost hours, if not days, and now they’re telling you that you *killed someone*.

Attributes: Intelligence 5, Wits 3, Resolve 3, Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3, Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Skills: Academics 3, Athletics 3, Computer 4, Crafts 3, Drive 2, Expression 1, Firearms 2, Science 1, Socialize 2, Streetwise 1, Survival 2

Merits: Fleet of Foot 3, Iron Stomach 2, Resources 2

Willpower: 6

Morality: 7

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Size: 5

Speed: 15

Health: 8

Weapons/Attacks

Type	Dmg	Range	Shots	Dice Pool
.44 Bulldog	3(L)	35/70/140	3	9

Merits and Abilities

Fleet of Foot: Frankie is *fast*. He may move up to 15 yards in a single turn (3 seconds) and still take another action, or up to 30 yards if running is his only action for the turn.

Iron Stomach: Frankie can eat almost anything, under almost any conditions. He could be dropped in the middle of the forest and could live off bugs and roots as long as necessary in order to survive – with no ill effects. Add two dice to appropriate Survival rolls.

Resources: Frankie has \$1,000 worth of disposable income each month.

Conclusion

Whether the characters find a way to stop the SUV short or simply follow him to the cemetery, move on to the final scene, “Mr. Monster’s Anchor.”

Mr. Monster's Anchor

Mental ..., Physical ..., Social ..

Overview

The krewe recovers and possibly destroys Mr. Monster's Anchor, a .44 caliber Bulldog revolver.

Description

If the characters stop him before he reaches Woodlawn (by causing a wreck, for example), he still tries to make it to the cemetery. Once inside the cemetery, read this description:

As you hurtle past the gravestones after the killer, you feel a surge of deathly energy building up ahead. An Avernian Gate, a pathway to the Underworld, is opening, and something inside is beginning to stir. You feel its burgeoning senses reaching out into this world as a twisting in your guts. Mr. Monster has to be stopped before he reaches the crypt.

If the characters fail to stop him and he gets to the crypt, use this description:

The crypt, once dark, is now awash in a sickly green glow coming from the engraved sigil on the wall. The seams of the wall are separating. The Underworld is beginning to intrude into physical reality and, behind the wall, you see movement. The thing's voice is in your head, and your geist shakes in rage or fear, you're not sure which.

If Mr. Monster gets to spend a full minute (20 turns) in the crypt, the wall collapses and what happens next is entirely up to you as Storyteller. The creature within is extraordinary. It may escape into the world, bringing a new terror to the World of Darkness, or you can improvise an epic battle against the horrific thing.

It's in the krewe's – and the world's – best interest to destroy Mr. Monster or his anchor before he has a chance to release the beast. If the characters succeed, read the following:

The shade who called himself Mr. Monster fades away in a swirl of ragged ectoplasm, like cobwebs settling to the ground. The Avernian Gate pulses and begins to fade as well, the glow dying out and the wall becoming more and more solid with every passing second. The creature behind the wall wails in frustration, and you feel your nose begin to bleed.

Then, everything is silent.

Storyteller Goals

Mr. Monster is attempting to get back to the crypt in Woodlawn so that he can open the Avernian Gate and free something terrible.

Character Goals

To stop Mr. Monster, first they have to get him out of Frankie. The easiest way to achieve this by rendering him unconscious or dead. If the characters kill him, they risk Synergy loss (see p. 7). Finally, they need to destroy the revolver (or Mr. Monster) to really end the threat definitively.

Actions

Destroying the Bulldog

Dice Pool: Strength + Brawl or Strength + Weaponry

Action: Special. The characters must physically attack the gun itself to destroy it.

The Bulldog has a Durability of 3, which means that an attack only damages the .44 with successes in excess of 3. For example, if Lee achieves 4 successes, he does 1 point of damage to the gun's Structure. The revolver must take 4 points of Structure damage before it is destroyed.

Characters

Mr. Monster

Quotes: "I will make the world a better place, if you'll let me."

Background: Even Mr. Monster doesn't know for sure where he came from. He can't remember how he died, or who he was before he took on his current sobriquet. The ghosts who whisper about him tell a number of stories...

SCENE: Close to Home

(15)

MENTAL ..

PHYSICAL ..

SOCIAL ..

HINDRANCES

Examining the Crime Scene: Bad Lighting -2
 Recognizing the Rune: Police have arrived -2

HELP

Examining the Crime Scene: Get a flashlight +1

OTHER

STs Introduce the Characters/Setting; first call to action

PCs Investigate the shooting

SCENE: Larry the Gimp

(19)

MENTAL ..

PHYSICAL --

SOCIAL ...

HINDRANCES**HELP****OTHER**

STs Point the characters after the first host

PCs Investigate the Numina use, chase down the first host

SCENE: The First Host

(21)

MENTAL ..

PHYSICAL ..

SOCIAL ..

HINDRANCES**HELP****OTHER**

STs Convey that the Bulldog is Mr. Monster's anchor

PCs Get answers, search for the dumped gun

Some say Mr. Monster was himself the victim of a vicious murderer. They say he was nothing and nobody until the killer's gun *made* him something. That the first identity he ever had was Victim. So, tied to the gun, he started whispering to the killer and, when the killer pawned the gun, he started whispering to the pawnshop's owner. After weeks on end of the monster's urging, the owner took the .44 home with him and slaughtered his family.

Others say that Mr. Monster was a hoodlum in life, mugging and robbing at gunpoint. His life revolved around the .44; it was his only real companion, his only livelihood. Everything else in his life had let him down, but the bulldog was faithful and dependable, like its namesake. Until the transfer plate malfunctioned and the pistol jammed, giving one of his rivals a chance to shoot him instead. The rival took the .44 and soon, Mr. Monster began to slip inside, injecting his killer with paranoia and fear. Eventually, they say, Mr. Monster's killer turned the .44 on himself.

Another tale has the killer ghost in the role of a policeman. He takes care of his family, providing what he can, and working hard. But it's not enough. One night, he finds his beautiful, brunette wife having sex with another man in the back of his car. Officer Monster pulls his revolver and fires five times, killing his wife and her illicit lover. Then he sits on the curb and uses the last bullet on himself.

Any of these stories could be true – or contain elements of truth – or the truth could be something else entirely.

Description: When Mr. Monster is not possessing a mortal, he's squat and coarse. Solid. His hair is dark and his features are rough, like a sculpture that has only been blocked in. His eyes are black and hollow, like staring down the barrel of a gun. When he moves, it's with a heavy surety. He wears a dark, bulky windbreaker over a stained and yellowed wife beater and jeans.

Storytelling Hints: You're quiet most of the time, but every once in a while, you just let loose with a rant, a long and clumsy rage against the living. The world would be better if nobody were trapped in the Underworld, if there were no such thing as the Kerberoi, and of course, if everybody was *dead*. Without the living, there'd be nothing to compare ghostly existence to, so you wouldn't keep being reminded how much better it could be. On the other hand, it is fun to take a host out for a spin now and again... And the feel of power when you pull that trigger is almost like breathing.

SCENE: Letter from the Front

MENTAL .. PHYSICAL — SOCIAL ..

HINDRANCES**Researching the Letter:**
No internet -2**HELP****Researching the Letter:**
Internet connection +1,
Accessing NYT database
+1**OTHER**

Attributes: Power 5, Finesse 4, Resistance 5
Willpower: 10
Morality: 3
Virtue: Justice
Vice: Wrath
Initiative: 9
Defense: 5
Speed: 19 (species factor 10)
Size: 5
Corpus: 10
Essence: 30

Numina and Abilities

Manifestation (dice pool 9): Mr. Monster may manifest within one yard of the .44 Bulldog automatically, with no roll required. Otherwise, he must roll Power + Finesse, with a base penalty of -3 dice to do so. If there is more than one mortal present, each person after the first imposes a -1 modifier to the roll. Note that Sin-Eaters do not count as mortals in this case, rather they make it *easier* for a ghost to manifest (see “Unnatural Mediums,” on pages 9–10 for information).

Animal Control (dice pool 9): Mr. Monster is able to exert his will over an animal, controlling it completely. Spend one Essence and roll Power + Finesse, subtracting the animal’s Resolve from the Dice Pool. Success means the ghost is able to command the animal to perform any task the spirit desires, to the limit of the animal’s physical abilities. Mr. Monster can control the animal for the duration of the scene if desired. He can control up to 4 animals simultaneously, provided he has sufficient Essence.

Compulsion (dice pool 9): Mr. Monster is able to exert his will over a living person, commanding him to perform actions like a puppet. Spend one Essence and roll Power + Finesse in a contested roll versus the victim’s Resolve + Composure. If the ghost fails or ties the roll (or the mortal wins), the victim is unaffected. If the ghost wins the roll, it seizes control of the victim and can command him to perform any acts the spirit desires, within the victim’s capabilities. The victim can attempt to throw off Mr. Monster’s control each successive turn with another contested roll. Use the victim’s own dice pools to determine the outcome of his actions. Mr. Monster can compel up to 4 victims simultaneously, provided he has sufficient Essence.

Ghost Speech (dice pool 9): Mr. Monster is capable of speaking directly to mortals when he

STs Provide clues via Mr. Monster’s first letter**PCs** Do a little information gathering**SCENE:** Flowers for the Dead

MENTAL ... PHYSICAL — SOCIAL ...

HINDRANCES**HELP****OTHER****STs** Build a sense of paranoia, introduce Izzy and the rune**PCs** Decipher the rune, learn where Mr. Monster will strike next**SCENE:** The Bulldog Barks

MENTAL .. PHYSICAL ... SOCIAL —

HINDRANCES**HELP****OTHER****STs** Provide letters. Create action w/ drive-by**PCs** Search for evidence, try to survive

SCENE: On the Road

MENTAL ..

PHYSICAL ...

SOCIAL -

HINDRANCES

Heavy Traffic -1
Pedestrians -2
Rain -1
Stopped Traffic/Red Light -2
Blown Tire -2 per tire

HELP

No Traffic +1
Know the Area +1

OTHER

(31)

STs Give the players a good, action-packed chase scene**PCs** Keep up with or stop the fleeing SUV

gains control of the victim's body for the duration of a single scene. Use the victim's available traits (except Willpower points, which are equal to Mr. Monster's current Willpower points) and dice pools for any action he wishes to take. If the mortal wins or ties the roll, Mr. Monster fails his possession attempt. As long as the ghost has Essence points remaining he can continue to make possession attempts against a target. If a possessed body is killed or knocked unconscious, Mr. Monster is forced out and must possess another victim if he still wishes to act.

Attacks using a blessed object against one of Mr. Monster's hosts damage his Corpus instead of the physical host.

Terrify (dice pool 9): Mr. Monster has the power to strike terror in the hearts of mortals who witness his manifestation. Roll Power + Finesse in a contested roll against the Resolve + Composure of each mortal who witnesses his manifestation firsthand. If Mr. Monster loses or ties, mortals in the area are unaffected and are immune to uses of this power for the remainder of the scene. Mortals who lose flee from Mr. Monster and will not return to the haunted area for at least one day.

SCENE: Mr. Monster's Anchor

MENTAL ...

PHYSICAL ...

SOCIAL ..

(33)

HINDRANCES**HELP****OTHER****STs** Mr. Monster wants to open the Avernian Gate and free something nasty**PCs** Stop Mr. Monster and destroy his anchor

manifests. Spend one Essence point and roll Power + Finesse. If the roll succeeds, he may utter a single sentence.

Possession (dice pool 9): Mr. Monster may attempt to possess a living human being and control his or her body for a short time. Spend one Essence point and roll Power + Finesse in a contested roll versus the victim's Resolve + Composure. If Mr. Monster wins, it

Conclusion

This is the end of this story, but there are threads you may use to continue the game. Characters have been met, contacts and denizens introduced. If the characters destroyed Mr. Monster's anchor, they did not necessarily destroy him. In fact, unless they destroyed him by besting him in direct combat in Twilight or devoured him, he was instead consigned to the Underworld. From there, he finds a way to return to seek revenge on the krewe in the future, or they may find their way into the depths through an Avernian Gate and find themselves forced to deal with him—or a more powerful ghost who has forced Mr. Monster into servitude. If you chose to hint at Mr. Monster's involvement with the Black Gate, the other members of the cult in the city may take an interest in the krewe as well.

Player Characters

Tyson Bishop

Quotes: "You don't get it, do you? Here, let me help you understand."

“These things are just chains, binding you. Let me free you.”

“How can I help?”

Background: Tyson Bishop was a troubled kid. He was always in trouble in high school, skipping class and selling dope to buy sneakers and rims for his ride. His teachers wrote him off as a lost cause, and he probably would have been if it weren't for the local community center. He got busted tagging a wall and sentenced to a few hundred hours of community service. He spent his time at the center and paid his dues. Along the way, he started spending his afternoons after work sitting in on martial arts classes taught as part of the youth outreach program. Martin, the teacher, took him under his wing and taught him the value of discipline and respect, and helped him clean up. Over time, Tyson received his black belt and took a job at Martin's dojo as an instructor. He started volunteering at the youth center, trying to reach kids that reminded him of the bad old days.

And he did. Tyson reached the kids because he wasn't preaching abstinence, but control. He knew these kids weren't going to suddenly become pillars of the community. So he encouraged moderation, and he promised the kids a future. That didn't sit well with some of the dealers and gangbangers in the area. They felt that Tyson was getting too big for his britches. That he thought he was better.

One night, they torched the dojo, but Martin and Tyson opened in another location, undaunted. So they took Tyson by surprise, pistol-whipping him and knocking him out. When Tyson awoke, he was being chained to the cross-shaped support on the back of a tow truck.

"You wanna be some kinda martyr, motherfucker?" Here's your chance," the banger said, before driving a nail through Tyson's wrist. He hung from the truck, fixed to the struts by chains, bleeding from the torn wounds in his wrists and ankles. The last thug drove a blade into his left side, grinning, and said, "see you in three days."

They left him there, deep in the mountainous labyrinth of a junkyard, to bleed out. When he did, the Discarded was waiting for him.

He woke, and when he had healed, he went to a warehouse party in search of the gangbangers who killed him. After he put the fear of God into them, he ran into Zita, and she brought him home to the Saints, like a stray. He's worked with them ever since.

Name: Tyson Bishop		Geist: The Discarded	Archetype: Advocate
Player:		Virtue: Temperance	Threshold: The Torn
Concept: Hoodlum Made Good		Vice: Envy	Krewe:
 Attributes 			
Power Intelligence:  00000	Strength:  00000	Presence:  00000	
Finesse Wits:  00000	Dexterity:  00000	Manipulation:  00000	
Resistance Resolve:  00000	Stamina:  00000	Composure:  00000	
 Skills 		 Other Traits 	
Mental (-3 Unskilled)		Merits	
Academics	00000	<u> Allies</u>	 00000
Computer	00000	<u> Fighting Style</u> (Kung Fu)	 00000
Crafts	 00000	<u> Parkour</u>	 00000
Investigation	00000		00000
Medicine	00000		00000
Occult	 00000		00000
Politics	00000		00000
Science	00000		00000
Physical (-1 Unskilled)		Flaws	
Athletics	<u> Climbing</u>	 00000	
Brawl	<u> Kung Fu</u>	 00000	
Drive	00000		
Firearms	 00000	<u> Manifestations</u>	
Larceny	00000	<u> Boneyard</u>	 00000
Stealth	00000	<u> Shroud</u>	 00000
Survival	00000		00000
Weaponry	 00000		00000
Social (-1 Unskilled)		Manifestations	
Animal Ken	00000	<u> Boneyard</u>	 00000
Empathy	00000	<u> Shroud</u>	 00000
Expression	 00000		00000
Intimidation	<u> Stare-Downs</u>		00000
Persuasion	 00000		00000
Socialize	 00000		00000
Streetwise	 00000	<u> Weapons/Attacks</u>	
Subterfuge	 00000	<u> Discarded Flame (Damage 2 (R) + (L))</u>	
		<u> Discard 2, Dice Pool 5! </u>	
 Ceremonies 			
 Weapons/Attacks			
 Keys: Stigmata, Industrial			
 Size: 5			
 Defense: 3			
 Initiative Mod: 4			
 Speed: 10			
 Armor:			
 Experience:			

Attributes: 5/4/2/3 Skills: 1/7/4 (+3 Specialized) Record Archetype and Threshold • Manifestations: 3 dots • Select 1 Key from Threshold and 1 to represent keystone • Merits: 7 (+Buying the dot in Attributes, Skills or Merits costs two points) • Health • Stamina • Size • Willpower • Resolve • Composure • Size = 1 for adult human-sized • Defense = Lowest of Dexterity or Wits • Initiative Mod = Dexterity + Composure • Speed = Strength + Dexterity • 5 Starting Synergy = 7 • Psycho starts at 7 dots • Blasts start at 5, no dots

Description: Tyson is a handsome, pale-skinned guy with Asian-styled tattoos across his upper chest and down his back and both arms. On the front, flowing from his right arm is a samurai, his sword at the ready, staring down an oni on the left side of his chest. A whirling scene takes up his back, the same samurai and oni locked in combat. The oni's face is a mask of rage, while the samurai appears impassive, almost peaceful. Tyson prefers loose-fitting clothing, but he avoids the extreme bagginess of urban chic.

Roleplaying Hints: You still have that punk kid in there, somewhere. But you try to restrain the extremes you used to go to, the selfishness and anger. Sometimes that anger slips out and you hurt someone. You want to help others, both living and dead, and it informs much of what you do. Always, you keep in mind that you've been given a second chance, and you have to atone for the things you've done. You must perform your penance before you die again. Before it's over, and you're trapped as one of the pathetic creatures you see everywhere you go.

Virtue: Tyson believes in *Temperance*. Trouble come when things are taken to excess, whether it's a noble or base impulse. Too much righteousness can be just as bad as too much wickedness. Once per chapter, Tyson regains all spent Willpower when he resists a temptation to indulge in an excess of any behavior, whether good or bad, despite the obvious rewards it might offer.

Vice: Tyson still feels the twinges of *Envy* that initiated his life of crime, despite his best efforts to renounce them. Once per scene, Tyson regains one Willpower point whenever he gains something important from a rival or has a hand in harming that rival's wellbeing.

Archetype: Tyson sees in ghosts that unfinished business can hold you up, stop you on the path to whatever comes next. Though his temperate nature keeps him from becoming a true ascetic, Tyson believes that our ties to material things doom us to wandering the earth as unquiet dead, and as such, he has become a spiritual *Pilgrim*. Once per chapter, if Tyson fulfills his Virtue by showing someone the futility of tying yourself to *things*, he also regains all of his spent plasm in addition to his Willpower. Once per scene, Tyson may regain one plasm in addition to one Willpower by helping a rival get over their dependence on an object by stealing it for himself.

M Manifestations and Abilities

Plasm Expenditure: Tyson can expend one plasm per turn.

Discarded Flame (Keystone Memento): Tyson's keystone manifests as a blackened, oily wooden torch, its ever-burning flame tinged green by its otherworldly fuel. Tyson receives a +3 bonus to rolls to enact the *Stigmata Boneyard* and *Unlocking the Stigmata Shroud*, below. If Tyson uses reverse possession (see page XX) to enter a Twilight state, he may use the torch as an improvised weapon. Likewise, if he spends 1 plasm, the torch may manifest and be used as a weapon against mundane foes. Tyson may also increase his skill in Occult by 1 point for every plasm he spends, up to a maximum of 5. Since the torch is an improvised weapon, he suffers a -1 penalty to all attacks, but because of its flaming nature, it inflicts 1 point of lethal damage in addition to the damage it causes on a successful strike.

Industrial Boneyard: To create an Industrial Boneyard, Tyson must spend 1 plasm and roll Wits + Crafts + Boneyard. The area of effect is equal to 30 yards for each success achieved on the activation roll, or a single structure, whichever is smaller. Within the Boneyard, Tyson may extend his senses throughout the area of effect and can perceive anything within that area which is not magically concealed with a standard Wits + Composure roll, adding the activation successes as bonus dice. Tyson may also add his activation successes to any Wits-related roll to perceive or understand any aspect of the structure within which he stands. He can easily perceive hidden passages, concealed safes and the like.

Stigmata Boneyard: By spending 1 plasm and inflicting 1 and roll Wits + Occult + Boneyard. The area of effect is equal to 20 yards for each success achieved on the activation roll. Within the Boneyard, Tyson may extend his senses throughout the area of effect and can perceive anything within that area which is not magically concealed with a standard Wits + Composure roll, adding the activation successes as bonus dice. While this Manifestation is active, Tyson can also perceive ghosts anywhere within the Boneyard's radius. He also automatically senses pathways to the Underworld, which exist anywhere within the Boneyard's radius.

Unlocking the Stigmatic Shroud: By spending 1 plasm, ritually causing 1 lethal health level or 3 bashing health levels to himself or another, and rolling Resolve + Occult + Shroud, Tyson gains an Armor bonus equal to the successes on the activation roll. In addition, Tyson may add his Shroud rating as bonus dice to his Resistance rolls against all Numina powers used against him by spirits or ghosts and against all Manifestations used against him by other Sin-Eaters which affect his body, mind or soul.

Unlocking the Industrial Shroud: By spending 1 plasm and rolling Resolve + Crafts + Shroud, Tyson gains an Armor bonus equal to the successes on his activation roll. In addition, the Industrial Shroud allows him to fashion plasm into an armor which is particularly resistant to attacks of a technological nature. By reflexively spending 1 plasm, Tyson can double his Shroud's Armor rating against a single attack which involves a crafted melee weapon (such as a knife or sword), a firearm (provided that he is aware of the attack) or any attack made with a crafted technological device, whether someone trying to run him over with a car or trying to hit him over the head with a laptop computer. However, the Industrial Key is associated with anachronistic technology and is incompatible with many modern devices. The Industrial Shroud does not damage such devices, but while Tyson wears the Shroud, they will refuse to function for him. In order to operate any technological device which has come into use within the last thirty years, the Sin-Eater must spend 1 plasm.

Merits

Allies: Tyson can call upon some of the young men and women he has influenced within the gang community during his time teaching martial arts at the youth center.

Fighting Style: Kung Fu

Tyson is trained primarily in the southern Tiger style of Kung Fu. He focuses on strength over say, the rapid strikes of Snake, or the graceful avoidance of Crane style. While he strives to follow the philosophical tenets of Shaolin, he adapts them to a Western mindset.

Focused Attack: Physical conditioning and accuracy allow Tyson to deliver blows at vulnerable spots on targets. Penalties to hit specific targets are reduced by one. See "Specifying Targets," p. 4. Even when a specific part of an opponent is not targeted, armor penalties to Tyson's Brawl attacks are reduced by one.

Iron Skin: Tyson has hardened his body to physical blows, allowing him to withstand repeated hits with minimal effect. He has an effective armor trait of 1 against bashing attacks only.

Defensive Attack: Tyson has mastered the ability to fight defensively. When using this maneuver, he gains +2 to his Defense for the turn, but any attack he makes suffers a -2 penalty. He can move no more

than half his Speed while performing a Defensive Attack maneuver in a turn.

Parkour

The purpose of parkour, which is also called "free running" or "urban running," is to move as quickly as possible through an environment with a variety of obstacles, sprinting through the terrain and using a variety of climbing techniques, leaps, rolls and other athletic movements to navigate.

Flow: Your character has some basic training in the techniques of parkour, allowing him to act instinctively to obstacles and jumps. When running, Tyson may negate hazardous terrain penalties equal to his dots in the Parkour Merit. Additionally, the roll to gauge a jump distance is a reflexive action.

Cat Leap: Your character has mastered some of the twisting leaps, landing rolls and wall taps used by *traceurs*. When using a Dexterity + Athletics roll to mitigate damage from falling, Tyson gains one automatic success. Additionally, add one per dot in this Merit to the threshold of damage that can be removed through this roll.

Wall Run: Tyson has mastered the quick wall-run and leaping climb techniques of parkour. When using Athletics to climb, he is capable of scaling heights of 10 feet + 5 feet per dot in Athletics as an instant action (rather than the normal 10 feet), though every full 10 feet beyond the first imposes a -1 die penalty.

Joey Cavanaugh

Quotes: "Can I quote you on that?"

"Ok, and this is very important. Where did you bury it?"

"No, really. I'm getting very close on this one. Just give me a few more days."

Background: A native of the Bronx, Joey was born in a little house just off Bainbridge Avenue, in the old Irish neighborhood known as Little Belfast. When he was six, Joey had his first brush with death. He heard a mournful wailing song outside his window, and watched a woman sing in the tiny front yard of the brownstone across the street. The next morning, they carted old Mike Sullivan away.

The woman returned to the neighborhood, again and again. At first, he told his mother, but that stopped when she started beating him for lying about such things. Nobody but Joey saw the woman

Tyson's Geist: The Discarded

Tyson's geist manifests as a humanoid shape of stitched together torn newsprint and litter. Its face is a surging storm of missing persons posters. Its skin is constantly shifting refuse. Where you can see skin, it is the grayish-pink of mouse feet. Its calm voice is the rustle of garbage and debris. When it screams, its voice becomes the crushing roar of heavy machinery.

or heard her song. In time, he learned from his aunt legends of the *bean sidhe*, and understood.

By the time he was a teenager, his family had moved to Pelham Bay. He told a friend named Cillian about his visions and worse, Cillian believed him. The next thing Joey knew, he was working lookout while his friends broke into an old man's house, the *bean sidhe*'s song still echoing in his ears. The guilt he felt over the burglary was assuaged by his cut of the take, so he did it again. The second time, he was busted.

After spending some time in juvie, Joey determined to turn over a new leaf. He went to NYU and got a degree in journalism. He cut off contact with the old crowd and started working freelance, blogging and even writing a few stories for the *New York Times* website.

But his old friends weren't done with him. They came looking, and Joey lied and told them that he couldn't hear death's song anymore, even with the sound of the *bean sidhe*'s wailing so loud it made his ears ring. Cillian grinned and looked around Joey's apartment.

"Guess not," he said, shoving Joey through the window. Joey fell twelve stories and "miraculously" survived.

Now Joey spends as much time interviewing ghosts as he does people, finding the things they've left behind and uncovering their stories to build his reputation as an investigative journalist.

Description: Joey's brown hair is in a perpetual state of disarray and his clothes tend to look rumpled and slept in. In the end, his distracted demeanor gives him a look other people spend hours trying to achieve. He has glasses for reading and writing, but he often forgets he's wearing them.

Roleplaying Hints: You're a little scattered. It's not that you can't focus, or that you're stupid. You've just got a hundred different things going on in your head at once. You mine *everything* for potential stories. If you get a little *somethin' somethin'* out of helping a ghost point the finger at his killer, hey! It's not like you didn't work for it.

Virtue: Joey seeks *Justice* through his writing. He believes that the good work he does uncovering the corrupt and malignant heart of the city is necessary. Once per chapter, Joey may regain all spent Willpower points if he does the right thing at risk of personal loss or setback.

Vice: Joey struggles with his *Greed*. He wants to be a good person, to feel like he's better than Cillian is, but he knows that things wouldn't have gone the way they did if he hadn't played his part. Once per scene, Joey may regain one Willpower point if he acquires something at the expense of another. Gaining it must come at some potential risk (of assault, arrest or simple loss of peer respect).

Archetype: As a *Bonepicker*, Joey feels he's paid his penance for the things he did with Cillian. Since the merger, he's been feeling like it's time for the worm to turn a little. He helps people with his reporting and, increasingly, with the Saints. Doesn't he deserve to get a reward for it? Once per chapter, if Joey fulfills his Virtue by taking from those who have wronged society as a punishment, he regains all of his spent plasm in addition to his Willpower. Once per scene, he may regain one point of spent plasm by fulfilling his Vice in a way that rewards Joey materially for his efforts.

GEIST

The SIN-EATERS

Name: Joey Cavanaugh
Player: [REDACTED]
Concept: Freelance Journalist

Geist: The Asphalt Woman
Virtue: Justice
Vice: Greed

Archetype: Bonepicker
Threshold: The Torn
Krewe:

Attributes
Skills
Other Traits

Power Intelligence:

Finesse Wits:

Resistance Resolve:

Strength:

Dexterity:

Stamina:

Presence:

Manipulation:

Composure:

Merits
Health

Willpower
Plasm
Psyche

Synergy

Manifestations
Ceremonies

Size: 5
Defense: 3
Initiative Mod: 4

Speed: 10
Armor:
Experience:

The Shared Damage (L1)
Size: 1, Dice Pool: 2

Keys: Stigma, Stinkess

Attributes: 5/4/3 Skills 11/7/4 (+3 Specialties) • Record Archetype and Threshold • Manifestations: 3 dots • Select 1 Key from Threshold and 1 to represent keystone • Merits 2 • (Buying the fifth dot in Attributes, Skills or Merits costs two points) • Health = Stamina + Size • Willpower = Resolve + Composure • Size = 5 for adult human-sized • Defense = Lowest of Dexterity or Wits • Initiative Mod = Dexterity + Composure • Speed = Strength + Dexterity + 5 • Starting Synergy = 7 • Psyche starts at 1 dot • Plasm starts at 5 points.

Manifestations and Abilities

Plasm Expenditure: Joey can expend one plasm per turn.

The Shard (Keystone Memento): Joey's keystone is a long, wicked shard of glass that drips with dark, viscous blood. It has a stained and tattered fragment of an evening gown wrapped around one end. Joey receives 3 extra dice on his rolls to activate *Unlocking the Stigmatic Shroud*, *Unlocking the Still Shroud*, *Stigmatic Rage* and *Still Rage*, below. If Joey uses reverse possession (see p. 9) to enter a Twilight state, he may use the Shard as a dagger. Likewise, if he spends 1 plasm, the Shard may manifest and be used as a weapon against mundane foes. Joey may also increase his skill in Subterfuge by 1 point for every plasm he spends up to a maximum of 5. Since Joey has no skill with Weaponry, he suffers a -1 penalty to all attacks with the Shard.

Unlocking the Stigmatic Shroud: By spending 1 plasm, ritually causing 1 lethal health level or 3 bashing health levels to himself or another, and rolling Resolve + Occult + Shroud, Joey gains an Armor bonus equal to the successes on the activation roll. In addition, Joey may add his Shroud rating as bonus dice to his Resistance rolls against all Numina powers used against him by spirits or ghosts and against all Manifestations used against him by other Sin-Eaters which affect his body, mind or soul. In addition, he may touch unmanifested spirits and ghosts and harm them with a successful Brawl attack. This benefit does not extend to any melee weapon he may carry.

Unlocking the Still Shroud: By spending 1 plasm and rolling Intelligence + Stealth + Shroud, Joey gains an Armor bonus equal to the successes on the activation roll. In addition, Joey may add a number of dice equal to the successes achieved to all Stealth-related rolls for the remainder of the scene. While under the effects of the Still Shroud, Joey may not utter a sound. If he does speak, the effect ends immediately.

Stigmatic Rage: By spending 1 plasm and rolling Strength + Occult + Rage – the target's Defense, Joey can cause the blood to boil within the veins of a subject in Joey's line of sight and within 2 yards, causing 1 point of lethal damage per success.

Still Rage: By spending 1 plasm and rolling Strength + Stealth + Rage – the target's Defense, Joey may inflict 1 point of lethal damage per success upon a subject in Joey's line of sight and within 20 yards that cannot be traced back to him.

Merits

Allies: Joey's built up a certain amount of cache among his fellow journalists in the city. He may roll Manipulation + Persuasion with a +2 bonus to call in a medium-sized favor. This roll suffers a penalty of -3 if it could get Joey's ally suspended, or a -5 if it could get them jailed or killed.

Resources: Joey has access to \$1,000 worth of disposable income per month, a small apartment and a Macbook he carries with him everywhere.

Status: Joey has press credentials. His press pass will get him into the press area at certain events and gives him certain privileges that civilians don't enjoy at places including crime scenes.

The Weeping Wall (Vanitas Memento): In Joey's apartment, one full wall is dedicated to a morbid collection of articles printed from websites or clipped from the newspaper. Some even have Joseph Cavanaugh as the byline. Each article reports a tragic story of violence and loss: here a drive-by shooting, there a home invasion turned triple homicide. Joey can, once per game session, ruminate on the nature of his Threshold and his own near-death experience. Doing so necessitates he be in the presence of the "Weeping Wall." Roll Joey's Wits + Resolve. For every success on this roll, he regains one lost Willpower point. Joey must spend a full scene on this meditation; he cannot simply do it on the fly.

Lee Kovach

Quotes: "I'm not sure you understand the severity of the situation."

"Yeah. Actually, that is how I want to play this."

"How long can you hold your breath?"

Background: Lee's father owned a newspaper stand in the neighborhood. He spent his childhood all but tied to the stand, watching his friends play while his father tried to drill the American Dream into his head. "This stand belonged to my father," he'd say for the fiftieth time, "and in time, it will belong to you."

But even then, Lee knew the dream had passed his father by. Lee's grandfather had died tending the stand, shot by an idiot kid for reaching for the cash drawer during a robbery. Lee knew that his grandfather Kovaci hadn't come here from Albania for that. His dreams had not been realized, and Lee's father's dreams had died stunted, tiny deaths when he took over the newsstand.

Joey's Geist: The Asphalt Woman

Joey's geist looks to be the statue of a woman rendered in asphalt. Her body is cracked and pitted with potholes. Blood seeps sluggishly from split seams that glimmer with shards of broken glass. Joey hears her voice as the scrape of skin on pavement, except when she's angry, when it becomes bone shattering on concrete.

Besides, Lee was meant for more important things. He had a way of telling when bad things had happened in a place. He could feel negative energies flowing from things. When his father made him run the stand, he would take people's cash and feel their sins roll off of them: this man stole from his boss, that one raped a woman. *That* one was a murderer.

So Lee became a cop. He wanted to be bigger than his father's tiny world, and he wanted to help people. Lee wore his uniform proudly, but told everyone it was just a step on the road to detective. He told them that he would never waste his life peddling newspapers.

And then his father's newsstand was robbed, and his father was shot. It took Lee three weeks to track down the robber, and two more for the time to be

right. He watched him patiently, until he tried to rob a convenience store. And then Lee killed him.

It didn't take long after that for Lee to get bounced from the squad for excessive force. He had no choice but to take up the family business, and that's where they found him. The robber's father was a local "pillar of the community," and he was looking for a little revenge of his own. Lee shot one of the men who came for him, but the other two took him. They weighted him with chains and dumped him in the bay.

He struggled as he sank, but he could not free himself. As he came to rest on the bottom of the bay, he could see others, through the murk. An underwater garden of chain and bone, hidden and forgotten. The edges turned in, and his vision dimmed, and everything went black.

Choking and gasping, Lee broke the surface only minutes later. He could feel hands on him, but he was too weak to fight. When he recovered, he learned that a garbage scow's crew had fished him out of the bay.

Description: Lee is a solid man with a shaven head and a goatee. He tends toward clothing that doesn't call attention to him—practical attire, jeans and a T-shirt or something similar. His voice is surprisingly soft, which has the effect of making people pay more attention to what he has to say.

Roleplaying Hints: You're a heavy, but not blatantly so. You can be civil when it's warranted, even friendly. But woe to the bastard who gets on your bad side. You're very loyal to those you count as friends, but you hold grudges like nobody's business if someone proves themselves an enemy.

Virtue: Lee is a survivor. There is nothing that does not kill him that he cannot overcome or endure through *Fortitude*. Once per chapter, Lee can regain all spent Willpower points if he withstands overwhelming or tempting pressure to alter his goals. This does not include temporary distractions from his course of action, only pressure that might cause him to abandon or change his goals altogether.

Vice: Lee is also *Prideful* to a fault. He regains one Willpower point whenever he exerts his own wants (not needs) over others at some potential risk to himself. This is most commonly the desire for adulation, but it could be the desire to make others do as he commands.

Archetype: As a *Reaper*, Lee has come to the conclusion that some people just need killin', and that goes for ghosts, too. Once per chapter, if Lee fulfills his Virtue by maintaining his judgment against a

ghost or person he has determined needs to be reaped despite being sorely tempted to withhold punishment, he regains all of his spent plasm in addition to his Willpower. Once per scene, he may regain one point of spent plasm by fulfilling his Vice by making sure that his victim goes to his grave knowing just how Lee out-thought or out-fought him.

Manifestations and Abilities

Plasm Expenditure: Lee can expend one plasm per turn.

The Gardener's Fetter (Keystone Memento): Lee's keystone is a length of rusted chain that leaks rank seawater from its links. Lee receives a +3 bonus to rolls to enact the *Silent Caul* and the *Tear-Stained Caul*. If Lee uses reverse possession (see p. 9) to enter a Twilight state, he may use the Fetter as an improvised weapon. Likewise, if he spends 1 plasm, the Fetter may manifest and be used as a weapon against mundane foes. Lee may also increase his skill in Intimidation by 1 point for every plasm he spends, up to a maximum of 5. Since the Fetter is an improvised weapon, he suffers a -1 penalty to all attacks.

The Silent Caul: By spending 1 plasm and rolling Stamina + Stealth + Caul, Lee may unlock the *Silent Caul* bonding himself to the essence of forgotten souls and hidden memories. He can walk without fear of anyone remembering him. While he isn't necessarily any better at hiding, simply manifesting this Caul applies his activation successes as a penalty to all Wits + Composure rolls made to detect him by sight, sound, or scent. While under the effect of the *Silent Caul*, Lee may not utter a sound. If he speaks, the effect ends immediately.

The Tear-Stained Caul: By spending 1 plasm and rolling Stamina + Occult + Caul, Lee may unlock the *Tear-Stained Caul*, infusing his body with water. For the rest of the scene, he heals one point of bashing damage per turn, and heals lethal damage as though it were bashing as long as he's at least half-submerged in water. In addition, Lee holds his foes with the same crushing inevitability that the chains once held him at the bottom of the bay. He adds his activation successes to her Strength when grappling someone. While under the effects of the *Tear-Stained Caul*, he also moves with the fluid grace of water, flowing around attacks. Lee applies his Defense against firearms attacks.

Merits

Allies: Lee still has a few friends on the force. He may roll Manipulation + Persuasion with a +2 bonus to call in a medium-sized favor. This roll suffers a penalty of -3 if it could get Lee's ally suspended, or a -5 if it could get them jailed or killed.

Brawling Dodge: Whenever Lee performs a dodge (see "Avoiding Damage in Close Combat," p. 3), you can choose to add his Brawl Skill dots to his Defense instead of doubling his Defense. He essentially draws on his training in blocking and evading attacks rather than relying on his raw ability alone. Brawling Dodge applies against incoming Brawl- and Weaponry-based attacks, against thrown-weapon attacks, and against Firearms attacks made within close-combat range.

Quick Draw – Firearms: Lee can draw a pistol and fire without penalty as a single action in a turn. If a weapon is hidden on his person (under a coat, or in his boot), it can be drawn and used in the same turn without the normal loss of Defense.

Resources: Thanks to the newsstand, Lee has \$500 in disposable income each month.

Fighting Style: Boxing

Lee is trained in the art of boxing. He may use the following maneuvers:

Body Blow: Lee can deliver powerful blows that leave opponents reeling and gasping for air. If the successes achieved on a single Brawl attack equal or exceed a target's Size, the victim loses his next action.

Duck and Weave: Lee is trained to instinctively duck and evade an opponent's blows. Use the *higher* of Lee's Dexterity or Wits to determine his Defense when dealing with Brawl-based attacks only (not against Weaponry attacks). If a combination of Brawl- and Weaponry-based attacks is focused against your character in the same turn, use his normal Defense against both.

Ellis Myer

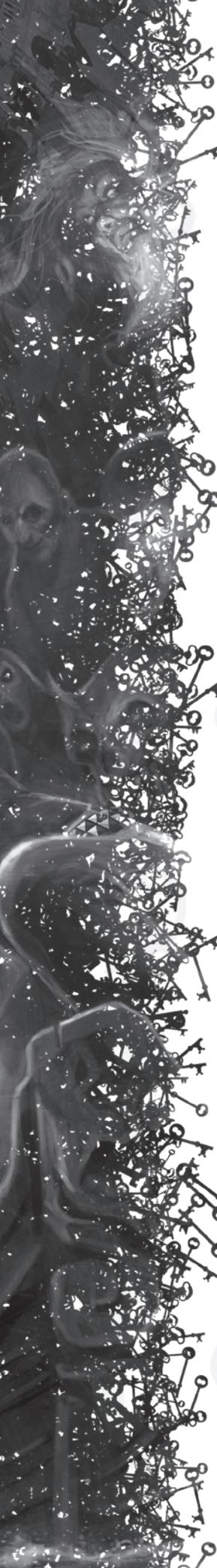
Quotes: "What? Will you please shut the fuck up? I can't hear what my friend is trying to say."

"Can I sleep on your couch tonight? I won't freak out this time, I promise."

(whispering) "We know what you did."

Lee's Geist: The Drowned Gardener

Lee's geist is a bloated, blackened nightmare. His sodden clothes are rotted and grown into his flesh, and heavy, rusted chains hang from his neck. His voice is distant and muffled, interspersed with bubbling breath.



Background: Ellis Myer was once an anthropology graduate student with a bright future. His thesis work on “Adoption and Assimilation of Indigenous Cultural Belief Systems into American Society (1492-present)” was going well, and portions of it had even been published in prestigious journals.

When doing fieldwork in Arizona, Ellis was separated from his companions in the tortuous heat of the desert. As the sun beat down on him, Ellis knew his mind was playing tricks on him. He saw faces in the shimmering waves of heat puddling in the dunes, heard voices on the dusty wind. But they seemed too real. This was not the fevered imagination of a man gone mad from heat stroke. No, these voices were too coherent. They explained things to Ellis. They told him where to go.

They led him back to his colleagues.

After Ellis was released from the hospital, he was different. The voices he heard in the desert were not gone, in fact, they were worse in the city than they had been in the desert. The sight of the dead in New York frightened and repelled him. Ellis fled into the tunnels, trying to get away from it all. To make the voices fade.

When Ellis returned from the underworld, he was no longer afraid of the dead. He had learned some of their secrets, and he was hungry for more. Even now, his passion is knowledge, and if others are willing to listen, he's happy to share.

Description: Ellis is the guy everyone pretends to ignore, looking at the pavement as they pass him, deep in conversation with thin air. His matted hair hangs thick and wild in his face. His ragged clothes are stained with dirt and marker, decorated here and there with bottle caps and utensils secured by scavenged twine or stapled on. He has the look of an urban primitive, a cog in the machine gone feral. He is unrecognizable to those he taught or studied with at NYU. Even when one of the Saints makes him clean up, he has a barely-contained manic way about him that makes others uncomfortable.

Roleplaying Hints: To others, even the other members of the Krewe, you seem crazy. Broken. And in a certain sense, you are. But really, you just see things in ways they don't. You have embraced your Bound nature almost to the exclusion of mortal society. You have looked into the Lower Mysteries, and you know that there are worse—and better—things out there than the other Saints have even begun to imagine.

You cock your head to listen to silent voices, and rearrange everything to fit some pattern known only to you. The things you have seen *have* broken you.

Whenever you are stymied by a quandary and must make an important decision about a course of action, or are under extreme stress, you might talk to yourself without realizing it. Roll Resolve + Composure to avoid this discomforting habit. On a failed roll, you vocalize your internal monologue but only realize it if it's pointed out by others, at which point you can stop for one turn per dot of Wits you have. After that period, you forget yourself and start doing it all over again. This behavior persists for the remainder of the scene. You vocalize even if opponents or rivals can hear. It's hard to keep your thoughts and feelings secret when you speak them aloud. For example, if an enemy demanded that you reveal the location of a hidden memento, you might think to yourself (and unwittingly say aloud), “you'll never find it behind that angel statue at Gianni's shop.”

Virtue: Everything has a pattern. Ellis has *Faith* that he just needs more information before he can discern the pattern of his life. Once per chapter, he may regain all spent Willpower points by forging meaning from chaos and tragedy.

Vice: Ellis has always been the type to throw himself *Lustfully* into his passion for knowledge. Once per scene, Ellis may recover one point of Willpower by indulging in his obsessive search for knowledge at some risk to himself or a loved one.

Archetype: Ellis is a mystic, a seeker, and he always has been. That much has not changed since the merger. What has changed is the specific focus of his quest for knowledge – now he's a *Necromancer*. Once per chapter, Ellis may regain all of his spent plasm by fulfilling his virtue searching for meaning amid chaos by querying the knowledge of the dead. Once per scene, Ellis may regain a single point of plasm by fulfilling his vice in a way that expands his knowledge of the dead.

M

Manifestations and Abilities

Plasm Expenditure: Ellis can expend one plasm per turn.

Unlocking the Grave-Dirt Caul: By spending 1 plasm and rolling Stamina + Occult + Caul, Ellis may transform his body into dirt and rock from the inside out. While under the effects of this Manifestation, he takes bashing damage from firearms, instead of lethal.

Unlocking the Pyre-Flame Caul: By spending 1 plasm and rolling Stamina + Occult + Caul, Ellis may kindle a flame within himself. While under the effect of this Manifestation, he always feels warm to

the touch, as though he's running a fever, and can cause his body to glow bright enough that people out to 10 yards per activation success can read comfortably. Anyone trying to attack Ellis while he is glowing so brilliantly suffers his activation successes as a penalty.

Grave-Dirt Rage: By spending 1 plasm and rolling Strength + Occult + Rage, Ellis crushes his foes, causing 1 point of lethal damage per success. Victims of the Grave Dirt Rage feel tremendous pressure crushing them, as if they're being buried alive. In addition, Ellis's victim is weighed down, reducing his Speed by one for every point of damage caused.

Pyre-Flame Rage: By spending 1 plasm and rolling Strength + Occult + Rage, Ellis wreathes his victims in ghostly flames, causing 1 point of lethal damage per success.

Merits

Eidetic Memory: Ellis has a near-photographic memory. He does not need to make a roll to remember an obscure fact or past experience unless is under stress (such as in combat). Under stress, Ellis receives 2 bonus dice on any Intelligence + Composure or other Skill-based roll (say, Academics, to remember a fact) for memory recall.

Final Vision (Ceremony): There are legends that the last thing someone sees before they die is permanently imprinted upon their now-dead eyes. This ceremony allows the Ellis to see this final vision. These images are always from the person's point of view. Ellis sees exactly what the now dead person saw, no more and no less. If someone was shot in the back, all he sees is the world appearing to jerk suddenly and then the ground rising up to meet the person as she fell. This ceremony only provides visual information; Ellis cannot hear anything that was said. To perform this ceremony, Ellis must touch the corpse and look into its dead eyes. The corpse can be no more than three days old, but even if the eyes have dried and withered or been pecked at by crows, Ellis may still use this ceremony. However, this ceremony cannot be used on a corpse if the person was blind. Also, it reveals nothing but blackness if the person was blindfolded or in a totally dark space when they died. Carving out or otherwise removing the corpse's eyes, makes this ceremony useless, a fact that is not lost on murderous Sin-Eaters, and a few of the cleverer ghosts.

Ellis must make a series of Psyche + Wits rolls until he accumulates at least 3 successes. Each roll takes

one turn of game time. Upon success, Ellis sees everything the corpse did during its last turn of life.

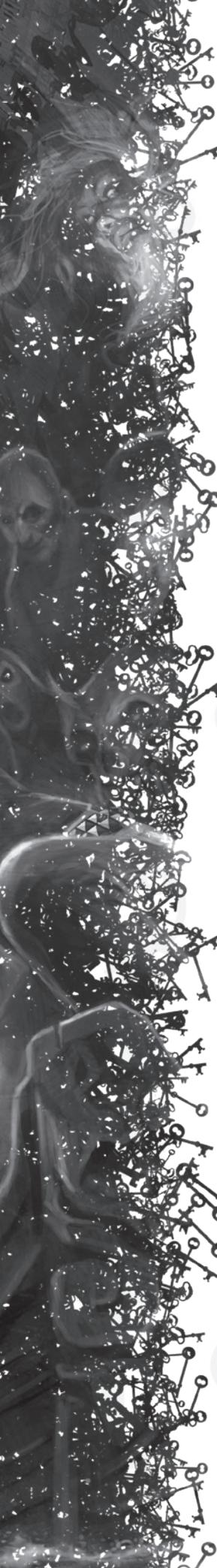
Dreamcatcher Memento (Charm): Tied among the tatters of his clothes, Ellis keeps a Dreamcatcher with a tiny bird's skull hanging from its hoop. The charm gives him a one-die bonus on Primeval Key-related rolls.

Speaker of the Dead (Ceremony): With this ceremony, Ellis may provide a ghost with a conduit to the living world, if only for her voice. She can speak through Ellis, and the words she utters come out in her own living voice. Ellis's appearance does not change, but that does not matter, because he may not be seen. Like Orpheus, the mortal cannot look. It is acceptable for Ellis's silhouette or otherwise obscured form to be seen, but if the recipient looks

Ellis' Geist: The Schism

Ellis' geist appears as a rent in reality. It is a rip, light bleeding through it from somewhere else. The Schism does not have one voice, but multitudes. Each of them whispers to Ellis constantly, pushing him onwards. They croon and scold and flatter and condemn, often at the same time.

Attributes: 5/4/3 Skills: 11/7/4 (3 Specified) • Record Archetype and Threshold • Manifestations: 3 dots • Select 1 Key from Threshold and 5 to represent: keystone • Ments 7 • (Buying the fifth dot in Attributes, Skills or Merits costs two points) • Health = Stamina + Size • Willpower + Resolve + Composure • Size = 5 for adult human-sized • Defense = Lowest of Dexterity or Wits • Initiative Mod = Dexterity + Composure • Speed = Strength + Dexterity + 5 • Starting Synergy = 7 • Psyche starts at 1 dot • Blasts start at 5 points.



closely enough to see his features, the ghost's voice is lost in the wind. Ellis cannot predict what the ghost will say through him, but if the conversation takes a turn he isn't comfortable with, he may pull the plug at any time.

To perform this ceremony, Ellis simply takes the ghost's hand and concentrates on relaxing and letting go of his voice, making a series of Psyche + Manipulation rolls until he accrues 3 successes. Each roll takes one turn of game time. The effect lasts for one scene or until Ellis chooses to end it, whichever comes first. If the recipient does look and cause the ritual to end early, Ellis is unable to act as a conduit for that ghost for 3 days.

Warding Circle (Ceremony): Ellis can draw a circle that will keep out ghosts and spirits and will also prevent any of their powers from affecting everyone inside this circle. This circle can be no more than 13 feet across, but provides total, if temporary protection against ghosts as well as also helping to protect those inside the circle against other supernatural beings.

To perform the ceremony, Ellis draws a circle surrounded by a series of strange symbols. The circle and symbols may be drawn in any medium, from chalk lines to ink. The circle may be any size up to 13 feet across. The ceremony requires Ellis to make a series of Psyche + Resolve rolls until he accumulates 5 successes. Each roll takes 10 minutes of game time. Should the roll succeed, Ellis and anyone else inside the circle is completely protected by ghosts.

Zita Vargas

Quotes: "I can make it. Hold on."

"What the hell are you looking at?"

"Sure, I'll give you a ride. It'll cost you, but I can get you where you need to go."

Background: Zita grew up as a foster kid after her grandmother died, shuffled from one home to another across California, dumped whenever she fought too much or got caught stealing again. She wasn't stupid, but few of her teachers reached her. She saw things just like her *abuela* had, down in Mexico, but nobody believed her. So she stopped telling people, afraid of being put away for being crazy.

When she got old enough, she tried for a new start, moving across country to New York City. She got into trouble pretty quick, stealing cars and racing them in the underground drifting circuit, where the driver intentionally causes the rear wheels to

lose traction and slide, riding a razor line between control, speed and completely letting go. Zita started betting to make money to pay for a tiny apartment and eventually, she ended up on the wrong side of a bet. To pay it off, she took work for a chop shop, paid to steal cars and drop them, turning them into spare parts and cash. It wasn't the worst thing that could have happened, until a boost went bad and the cops were chasing her down the Jersey Turnpike and she rolled the car into oncoming traffic.

After the merger, she still steals cars and races them, but she's also begun to do side work as a messenger, for the right price, she'll deliver messages to loved ones or enemies, uncover lost or buried secrets, even take on a shady fare or two as an unlicensed gypsy cab, if she needs to.

Zita met Joey, a reporter, when he was doing a story on street racing. She needed a place to stay, so he hooked her up with his landlord, and introduced her to a group of Sin-Eaters who call themselves the Bronx Saints. Now she wears their colors, a white halo drawn on the shoulder of her leather jacket with a bottle of whiteout.

Description: Zita has long, black hair, and a small scar on her right cheek from fighting in high school. Her arms are covered with sleeves of *Dia de los Muertos* tattoos. She tends to dress in jeans and t-shirt, along with a black and white leather jacket and a pair of worn steel-toed boots.

Roleplaying Hints: You've got a chip on your shoulder you have been cultivating since your grandmother died, and your temper gets you into a lot of trouble. It started out as a front, a wall put up to protect yourself after you learned that letting people in just got you labeled "weird," or "freaky." Or hurt, when they died or left. But you played that role too long, and now the hardness is part of you. You think quickly, though, and you're nothing if not adaptable. Besides, trouble comes around so much it's almost like seeing an old friend.

When you're alone, you write rap lyrics, but you've never shown them to anyone else. You have a hard time letting people know they matter to you, and that's been weighing on you since the accident.

Virtue: Zita clings to *Hope* for a better future. Once per chapter, she may regain all spent Willpower points whenever she refuses to let others give in to despair, even though doing so risks harming her goals or wellbeing.

Vice: Zita's *Wrath* gets her in deep on a regular basis. Once per scene, she may regain one spent Willpower point whenever she unleashes her anger

in a situation where doing so is dangerous. If the fight has already begun, no Willpower points are regained. It must take place in a situation where anger is unwarranted or inappropriate.

Archetype: Zita's outlook on life since the merger has changed only in that she is now constantly aware of her own mortality and that of others. She is a *Celebrant* of life in her way, constantly seeking new experiences. Once per chapter, if Zita fulfills her Virtue in a way that not only gives others hope to carry on, but makes them appreciate life all the more, she regains all of her spent plasm in addition to her Willpower. Once per scene, she may regain one point of plasm by fulfilling her Vice in a way that makes her feel more alive. For example, by fighting, or telling off an authority figure and getting away with it.

Manifestations and Abilities

Plasm Expenditure: Zita can expend one plasm per turn.

The Passenger's Keychain (Keystone Memento): Zita's keystone is a worn rabbit's foot keychain, stained black with dried blood. She gains a +3 bonus to her activation rolls for the *Influence Ghost* and *Halt Metabolism* manifestations, below. She may spend plasm to increase her Drive skill 1 point per plasm spent, up to 5.

Industrial Marionette: By spending 1 plasm and rolling Manipulation + Crafts + Marionette, Zita can control machines up to the size of a sports car or sedan. She can turn automobiles on and off and even make them drive, as if by remote control, as long as they remain within her line of sight.

Stigmatic Marionette: By spending 1 plasm, ritually causing 1 point of lethal or 3 points of bashing damage to herself or another target and rolling Manipulation + Occult + Marionette, Zita can influence a ghost into cooperating with her. For the rest of the scene, the targeted ghost suffers a dice penalty equal to the activation successes on all actions which seek to harm Zita or which are undertaken in direct violation of her commands. On the other hand, if the ghost undertakes any actions demanded of it by Zita, the ghost gains a dice bonus equal to the activation successes. Actions undertaken by the ghost which neither contradict Zita's wishes nor fulfill them suffer neither a penalty nor gain a bonus.

Industrial Caul: By spending 1 plasm and rolling Stamina + Crafts + Caul, Zita may implant a simple small mechanical item (up to Size 3) within her body, concealing it. For example, Zita keeps an old dagger stashed within her forearm. She may reveal or hide the dagger as a reflexive action.

Stigmatic Caul: By spending 1 plasm and rolling Stamina + Occult + Caul, Zita gains control over her own body, negating the need for sleep, food or even air for the rest of the scene.

Merits

Contacts: If Zita's looking for information, she can ask around at the chop shops. On a successful

Zita's Geist: The Passenger

Zita's geist appears in the back seat just outside her peripheral vision. She's never seen him clearly, but she can smell him when he's there, a mix of sickly sweet rotted blood and charred flesh. His silhouette appears in the rearview mirror, and he speaks to her through the static hiss of a dead AM radio station. No matter what she does, all of her cars gather a black stain in the back floorboard.

Manipulation + Persuasion roll, she might uncover something useful.

Crucifix Memento (Charm): Around her neck, Zita wears a rosary she found wrapped around a wrought-iron fence spike at the local graveyard, its wood blackened and the Christos rusted. The charm gives her a one-die bonus on Stigmata Key-related rolls, such as her Influence Ghost Manifestation.

Forgotten Key Ring Memento (Charm): A ring of broken keys for forgotten or demolished

cars, taken from a jar in a junkyard. The keying provides Zita with a one-die bonus on rolls related to the Industrial Key, such as her Control Machine Manifestation.

Resources: Between Zita's racing and boosting cars, she has about \$500 a month of disposable income and a tiny apartment.

Language (Spanish): Zita can speak and read Spanish fluently.

Credits

Written by: Christopher Lee Simmons

Additional Material by: Shamus Glass and Eddy Webb

World of Darkness created by Mark Rein•Hagen

Developer: Eddy Webb

Editor: Genevieve Podleski

Art Director: Craig Grant

Book Design: Craig Grant and Aileen E. Miles

Cover Art: Robert Dixon and Craig Grant



WHITE WOLF PUBLISHING
2075 WEST PARK PLACE BOULEVARD
SUITE G
STONE MOUNTAIN, GA 30087

© 2009 CCP hf. All rights reserved. Reproduction without the written permission of the publisher is expressly forbidden, except for the purposes of reviews, and for blank character sheets, which may be reproduced for personal use only. White Wolf and Vampire: The Requiem are registered trademarks of CCP hf. All rights reserved. Vampire the Requiem, Werewolf the Forsaken, Mage the Awakening, Promethean the Created, Changeling the Lost, Hunter the Vigil and Geist the Sin-Eaters are trademarks of CCP hf.

All rights reserved. All characters, names, places and text herein are copyrighted by CCP hf.

CCP North America Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of CCP hf.

This book uses the supernatural for settings, characters and themes. All mystical and supernatural elements are fiction and intended for entertainment purposes only. This book contains mature content. Reader discretion is advised.

Check out White Wolf online at <http://www.white-wolf.com>

PRINTED IN CANADA.