

# **The Shrouded Earth**

**A Storytelling Game about Controlling the Masses**

*“Oh,” the girl said, shaking her head. “Don't be so simple. People adore monsters. They fill their songs and stories with them. They define themselves in relation to them. You know what a monster is, young shade? Power. Power and choice. Monsters make choices. Monsters shape the world. Monsters force us to become stronger, smarter, better. They sift the weak from the strong and provide a forge for the steeling of souls. Even as we curse monsters, we admire them. Seek to become them, in some ways.” Her eyes became distant. “There are far, far worse things to be than a monster.”*

**— Jim Butcher, Ghost Story**

# Introduction to the Shrouded Earth

The **Shrouded Earth** is a supernatural gothic-punk horror and urban fantasy setting, a vision of our own world distorted through a dark prism. On its surface, it is the world we know and nothing more. The same politicians are in office making the same poor decisions, pop culture continues in much the same way it does in reality [if perhaps somewhat more unwholesome or mind-numbing], the same cities, countries and landmarks cover it as do cover the Earth. But a closer inspection reveals something else, a layer of corruption, decay, and rot that spreads over the globe like a blanket. Crime, drug use, and poverty is rampant. The ultra-rich live in high towers of glass and steel unconcerned with the teeming masses of humanity struggling in the streets below. The police are corrupt, bought out and bribed by the politicians, who in turn dance to the tune of their handlers, massive corporations who deal in poisonous products and keep the law at arm's length with impenetrable walls of litigation. Pollution reaches unheard of levels, as gothic cities are plagued by thick smog and acid rain that runs into overflowing gutters towards poisoned streams. Environmental protections are either ignored or simply don't exist, the oceans are dying, deserts are growing, the rainforest vastly reduced as it's plundered for resources. In such dark times the masses turn to the churches for succor, but true honest faith dwindles as men see nothing but the stone eyes of uncaring gods and the greed of pedophile priests and decadent preachers exploiting their flocks for gain. And in the darkness of night, far from the weary eyes of common men unheard of things dwell in the darkness and pull at the strings of humanity. It is a gothic world, where gargoyles sit carved at the tops of its skyscrapers that stand mockingly triumphant over baroque cathedrals. A world of rain-slicked streets, neon lights, and acid rain. It is a world of morbid subcultures and anarchist punks demanding nothing but to scream defiance into a dying night. It is a world whose masters serve darker masters still, where monsters dwell in the shadows and the march of history moves to an unseen beat. The Shrouded Earth is, quite unknown to most of its mortal population, inhabited by a variety of supernatural beings, most of whom have winding histories, uncertain origins, peculiar beliefs and self-interested Conspiracies. Most of these beings have influence in various aspects of society and many social evils [or their extent] can be laid at their feet. Most of these beings are unknown because they enforce varying degrees of secrecy upon their members [or have it imposed upon them]. In the Shrouded Earth, players take the role of **Monsters**, a catch-all term for those harnessing the power of the supernatural whether originally human or otherwise. These Monsters are often affiliated with or actively opposing one or more **Conspiracies**, large groups with stake in mortal society who manipulate it for their own ends. In the pursuit of power, truth, control, ideals, or simple greed the Monsters and their enemies sway the mortal herd in the direction they desire it to go, or fight to undo or unravel the Conspiracies of their peers. Mutual ignorance is the law of the land, and most Conspiracies are of limited scope or power. The variety of Monsters is truly staggering, and no grand narrative or encompassing metaphysic exists to fully catalog their endless and often grotesque permutations. Though scholars of the occult have tried for millennia, there is always more things in heaven or on earth than they have dreamt of in their philosophies. In reality, there are dozens upon dozens of Monster lineages with no clear links between them, but for the sake of ease they are organized into twelve broad Types: **Vampires**, bloodthirsty immortals who drink the blood of men.

Ravenous **Shifters**, wercreatures, mutants, and skinwalkers who take terrifying forms. **Magicians**, who alone can harness the highest levels of magic. **Mummies**, whose immortality allows them to take a view few others can comprehend. **Faeries**, the oft-overlooked children of the earth, to whom the touch of iron means death. The restless spirits of the dead, **Ghosts**, who refuse to set down their claims in the land of the living. **Scientists**, madmen and geniuses inspired with an otherworldly Science. **Heroes**, gilded tyrants and legendary champions who walk in the footsteps of mythology, and **Psychics** who stand at the forefront of human evolution, though where they are evolving no eye can yet see. **Constructs**, fruits of ancient voodoo, mystical kabbalah, or cutting edge super-science, who walk in a world not fit for the habitation of artificial men, **Demons**, often malevolent spirits born from the depths of nightmare out to despoil and destroy, and lastly those few, those brave and necessary few among the mortal herd who take the fight back to the dark, the **Hunters** of Monsters. Of them the least need be said, for they are us. But well were we warned about the fate of those who fight Monsters...

**Sidebar:** A World Half Empty The Shrouded Earth before one gets into its dark conspiracies, secret histories, and other dimensions, differs from the real world primarily in an aesthetic light. Most places look as they do in reality, modified only slightly by genre conventions and mood lighting. So put gargoyles on the Chrysler Building, make the moon waxy and yellow, make it rain disproportionately and have every bar play jazz. It's more of a camera filter than a strict comparison of how much higher [precisely] crime rates are to make them 'darker' than the real world.

## Monsters

Defining monstrosity can be a difficult task. When men defy their natural deaths through drinking the life-blood of others and live on through the centuries accumulating sins like trophies as they murder and lust and scheme, obviously such Vampires are deservedly called a 'Monster'. The ghost of a beloved relative, keeping a grip on the living world with white knuckles is less obviously called so, let alone a good-hearted student attending a Magician's university. The Hunters define the term broadest, as that which is inhuman, either because it has become more than human through great effort or divine blessings, or less than it through millennia-old curses or their own obsessive cruelty. It is in this sense that we speak of the monstrous, that which has stepped out of the ranks of common men [or never stood there in the first place]. Everything from a Mummy stumbling anew from his crypt to the arrogant successors of Gilgamesh, a vengeful shade seeking nothing but to torture the living as well as the Hunter who has lost his way, stake in hand as he slays anyone unfortunate enough to stand in the way of his bloody task. There are twelve broad Monster Types in the Shrouded Earth, but this is a misleading taxonomy at best. Each of the Types is a clumsy attempt at ordering what are in reality hundreds or even thousands of distinct families of the unusual and supernormal. Below are merely a small handful of the specific types of paranormal entity that a given Type can represent.

## Vampires

The iconic **Vampire** is by far the most famous Monster Type and the most common representative of the Type is the common Vampire, *Homo Sanguinus*. Vampires are immortal undead humans who drink blood to sustain an endless life, are often violent creatures of great appetites, and possess a low animal cunning. Vampires are created through the spreading of a curse typically by draining all the blood of an ordinary human and then feeding the corpse some of the vampire's own blood while using a certain Gift. The Vampire Type can also be used to represent other forms of death-aligned supernatural creatures, to give just a short listing of such possibilities; **Nosferatu** are vampires possessing an unnatural hideousness and are created burying a dead man and cursing him three times while dripping vampire's blood upon the grave while reciting a certain Spell. **Jiang Shi** are dead souls who claim to have escaped from one of the many Chinese Hells, fleeing back to the mortal world to inhabit a corpse, usually their own. Jiang Shi claim to have spent years or decades since their deaths in an otherworldly Territory of pure pain, only to escape due to the laxness of their jailors. **Reclaimers** are men who, at the moment of their natural deaths, are given an offer by a strange spirit of death in their mind's eye who offers to return them to life in exchange for devoting themselves to the service of the dead. **Chupacabra** are infamous inhuman bloodsucking reptiles known for drinking the blood of goats and leaving dried carcasses all through Mexico and the southwest United States. In regards to their Gifts, Vampires are well-rounded, possessing above average competency in all types of supernatural feat, physical, social, mental, magical. They are capable of controlling the minds of men, turning their bodies into wolves or bats or mist, regenerating from injuries, and granting themselves superhuman physiques to name a few possibilities.

## Shifters

The savage **Shifters** represent those creatures which can take on inhuman forms, the forms of beasts, of other men, of women, or stranger horrors. The most famous Shifters are **Werewolves**, men who take the form of giant wolves or wolf-man hybrids, often involuntarily at the full moon, and possess a crippling allergy to silver. Most werewolf lineages are spread in much the same way as Vampires, by an ordinary human surviving the bite of a Werewolf empowered by a curse-spreading Gift. Besides the Werewolf, this type can be used to represent any kind of shapeshifting monster such as; **Were-[Other]** refers to any other form of werecreature besides wolves. Werefrogs, weresharks, weretigers, weretyrannosauruses, or so on. They tend to function in much the same way as werewolves do. **Skinwalkers** are shamans who have made pacts with the Powers to obtain the right to take on inhuman shapes, stepping beyond human thaumaturgy through their pacts. Such Skinwalkers are common in indigenous communities which deal with the Powers. **Mutants** are creations of mad science, typically made by Scientists through the use of certain Gifts empowering their insane Devices. These kinds of Mutants tend to possess short lifespans but often develop their powers quickly, becoming very

dangerous in the process. **Spiritblooded** such as the Children of Kaguya are Shifters with blood descended from a Royal Avatar or other spirit-entity in the ancient past, and often possess long lifespans and unusual abilities. Lastly, the **Reptilians** who dwell in the seas and islands beneath Jupiter's moon of Europa possess potent shapeshifting abilities and on rare occasions have found their way to Earth for strange and often incomprehensible purposes. In regard to their Gifts, Shifters possess a knack for shapeshifting and controlling their anatomies in a variety of useful ways, from taking the appearance of beasts or men, high speed regeneration, the inflicting of mutations upon others, and a variety of similar abilities. They are extremely suited for combat with their powerful War Forms and numerous potent combat Gifts that tend to focus on outlasting or outdamaging their opponents without relying too much on their Effort or resource management. Their shapeshifting abilities often lend themselves to stealth and infiltration, or the simple replacement of powerful people to steal their authority.

## Heroes

Rarely considered Monsters at all, the glorious **Heroes** are those humans whose abilities are far beyond what would ever be called normal. Unlike Hunters, who tread the line of the superhuman at its base, Heroes leap over it laughing as they ascend the mountains and boast of their power. The most common Heroes are **Paragons**, those who through training, discipline, and effort have overcome their natural limits and become more than men in the process. Whether all humans possess the inherent potential to become heroes is a point fiercely debated by those who have attained their heights. More famous than the wielders of the martial forms are the **Demigod** children of the Powers. Many, even in this current age, are the children of Zeus, Lugh, Surya, and others. Any Royal Avatar who beds a mortal woman is apt to give rise to a Hero child. While often very proud of their higher lineage, they are no mightier than those who reached this height by effort. Once created, the children of Powers tend to appear in many forms in later ages, such as **Incarnates**, humans of normal parentage who bear the returning soul of a famous Hero; or **Remnants**, spiritual doppelgangers of the Hero created by a powerful theurgical summons and requiring the Remnant to bind himself to a wielder of magecraft to maintain his physical form. Strangely, there seems to be no limit on the number of variations a single Hero can possess, and it is not uncommon for a demigod's reincarnation to meet his prior self summoned as a Remnant, or even for several individuals to appear all claiming to be and manifestly possessing the power of, a previous famous demigod. Lastly among the Heroes are those who are the **Imbued**, whose who have received their power as a gift bestowed from a higher power, such as the Chosen of the Primeval Sun who wield spiritual-shards taken from another world that hold an old god's essence, or the Pretty Soldiers who wield the Light of Hope kept in the bottom of Pandora's Jar. Heroes are glorious, possessing Gifts that are either of similar power but far more flashy than equivalent Gifts in other Types, or more powerful but costlier in resources. Where Shifters are 'workhorses' built to fight endlessly without tiring or running out of resources, Heroes burn brightly and fade, relying heavily on their Effort they reach

levels of skill and ability matched only by Psychics, but find themselves vulnerable when their reserves wear thin and they try in vain to pull miracles from their exhausted spirits.

## **Mummies**

Immortality is a blessing from the gods, they would tell you, or derived from the purest of alchemical reagents. The **Mummies** are those who through magic or stranger means have moved beyond death. Not undead in the traditional sense, Mummies spend part of their life cycle as unmoving corpses and the other part as living men and women of great vitality and mystical insight. The **Mummies of Egypt** are by far the most notorious, blessed by spells and incantations performed at their gravesites to give them the Right of Return to the world at set intervals, when the stars set rightly and the sun shines over the land like the Eye of Ra. Besides these famous Mummies there are **Mesoamerican Mummies**, who were long ago set in their tombs with blessings from their gods to return and rise from their stepped pyramids in the heart of the jungle to work their bloody rites as they did in days long past, and the **Perfected Alchemists** of old, magicians, proto-scientists and Taoist sages who through the correct elixirs and stones completed the Great Work and stepped beyond human frailty. Last among the common immortal types are the **Bog Men**, those who have fallen into hidden places [not always bogs] home to strange Anomalies and have risen from it undying and unearthly, and the **Ice Men**, Mummies created during the Stone Age or earlier by shamans whose spells would later inspire the Right of Return. Mummies are wielders of magic in its varied forms, and their Gifts lend to their acting as god-kings and walking natural disasters. The creation of potent Constructs from clay or stone, the calling up of plagues and calamities, and social Gifts fueled on their taking up positions of divinity or priestly authority are among their skillset. Most impressively, Mummies are the only supernatural being to possess Immortality by default, making them impossible to kill barring obscure means or powerful magic.

## **Faeries**

Between gods and demons there sits those things that are neither, or perhaps both. Some are tied to the land, others dwell beyond it in distant Territories, faerielands where men no longer sail or seek. The **Faerie** are an endless variety of earthly 'spirits' who inhabit every corner of the earth and have since time long before the coming of Man down from his trees. There is not one distinctly famous form of Faerie, but instead only endless variety; too much to even begin to list here. The **Sidhe**, or Elves, who are beautiful, gracious, noble, and strong, but whose golden age faded long before even starry Lemuria or old Thule's stones were set beneath the sky like blue mantles. **Trolls**, who dwell beneath bridges and in mountains and eat the flesh of men, or so the children's tales say. The **Wee Folk** of every sort, **Dwarves**, **Gnomes**, **Pixies**, **Sprites**, **Will-o-Wisps** and every manner of little men who dwell in every

wild place, Mermaids who set their coral castles in the deep and drag sailors to their doom, and the endless varieties of **Goblinkind**, ogres, oni, and brutes of all forms. Perhaps most terrifyingly, the **Giants**, those who most proudly strode the earth, before ancient heroes and hunters cast them down and drove them further and further into the wilderness until few now remain. In addition to true Faeries, the Type can also represent **Changelings**, those humans with Faerie parentage or who were transformed by long exposure to Faerie magic in certain Territories. Most Faeries are united in their weakness to cold, unalloyed iron, their use of glamours to disguise themselves and their works, and powerful magics inherent to themselves. The Faerie are masters of scale, of all types they possess the easiest time producing effects that cover wide areas or benefit many targets. The downside to all this broad magic is that much of it is temporary. A Faerie can, with little trouble, pull from his own wit a palace, a carriage, and an army, but not one will last till morning. Dawn's first light will have them all revealed as leaves and puffs of logic. It is claimed that many of the ancient gods were in fact not Royal Avatars of the Powers initially, but mighty Faeries of incredible puissance.

## Ghosts

The restless dead resist attempts at categorization for reason of sheer simplicity. Though they vary immensely in abilities and reasons for existing, at the day's end almost all are simply **Ghosts**. For all the riches that magic and science have revealed about our world, the afterlife, that great mystery, remains a complete unknown to the monsters of the world. True, some few monsters such as the vile Jiang Shi claim to have returned from there, and the uncanny number of reincarnating heroes gives credence to the idea of spiritual rebirth, there are simply no reliable and consistent testimonies to go off of. All ghosts are those who either appeared near their bodies at death, or returned to this world by magic or for stranger reasons years or centuries hence. The ghosts of the dead are defined not by their metaphysical underpinnings but by their motives, from vengeful **Poltergeists** who returned to haunt the living to protect some claim they had in life, to humble **Shades** who merely seek to keep experiencing life and resist the calls to something higher, to **Hauntings** who seek merely to terrify or bewilder, often out of confusion or anger at what has happened to them, or the **Spooks** who merely repeat the same actions, often related to their deaths, by instinct and are barely to be called 'ghosts'. No less rare are **Apparitions**, strange entities that resemble ghosts but are more accurately 'psychic impressions' of dead men, or in some cases those who narrowly escaped death. It is not unheard of for an Apparition to appear of a man who narrowly swerved to avoid a car wreck, a kind of Schrodinger's Soul of the man who for that instant truly believed he was going to die. In all cases the result are the same. Ghosts inhabit the Astral Plane unless they willingly choose to produce bodies for themselves and act anew in the world. In terms of Gifts, ghosts are natural experts in espionage, information gathering, spying, haunting, and terrifying. Many Gifts rely on the immaterial state, and the ability of a ghost to cast off its physical form to become untouchable at the cost of greatly limiting its ability to affect the world.



## Constructs

**Constructs** are artificial men, those things that are not human but think they are, or dream of being so. The most famous Construct is the Zombie, or more aptly the Frankenstein's Monster. **Zombies** in this case are not to be confused with the shambling mindless undead produced by certain Spells, these dead are fully intelligent. Most commonly, they are the result of Scientists or Magicians seeking to produce life from death, resulting in a completely new soul forming in a dead corpse, or more rarely the person's soul being called back to reanimate itself. Other times, the dead simply find their own way back, and the nature of their reanimation is not consistent with the Vampire Type. No less famous are **Golems**, men made of clay or iron and blessed with magic to come to life or animated by certain Anomalies. These Golems range from bodies of wood or porcelain to rock or steel, and are often initially created to serve Magicians. Lastly among the common types of Construct are **Automatons**, machines created by cutting edge super-science and set forth into the world, robots, cyborgs, and mechanical horrors of all sorts. The Construct Type is adaptability codified, their Gifts relying on the ability of Constructs to intentionally alter their bodies and minds in laboratory settings. As they grow in power their ability to change themselves to match any eventuality only grows. Beyond this, Constructs excel at survival, it is a tanky, physically robust class that exceeds even Shifters in their ability to wade through attacks. They are also often very intelligent, or socially adept, and possess numerous means to upgrade or improve their bodies or repair themselves from harm.

## Psychics

According to Darwinian theory, modern human beings evolved from apes over one hundred thousand years ago. Though occult archeology claims that many civilizations arose and fell before the dawn of Sumer and Egypt, the fact remains that for much of that time and the time before, Man was ignorant, weak, and relied upon stone tools for survival. It was his burgeoning intellect, his gradually expanding brain and powers of thought and speech that granted him dominion over the world, and allowed him to eventually uproot both the natural and the supernatural to claim dominion over his planet. Therefore it is not surprising that the greatest men have often been men of genius, those who developed the powers of thought the furthest. **Psychics** are the next step in human evolution, the development of the powers of thought beyond that of ordinary humans. Homo Superior has appeared, and he works his will not through incantations or cultivated martial art but through sheer intention. The Psychic says 'Do!' and it is done. Most Psychics are the result of a random mutation or scientific experiments that resulted in their creation. They are often mentally 'different' from ordinary persons, and show early signs of their powers in childhood and adolescence. Psychics do not possess many other options for alternative interpretations of the Type, the most common second interpretation is that of an alien race that has already cultivated their psychic potential, such as the enigmatic **Greys**, whose silver saucers are often seen observing the earth for inscrutable purposes that seem only to put themselves at the crosshairs of

the Reptilians. The Psychic Type is akin to the Hero in its nature, focusing on showy displays of great power at the cost of being very resource dependent. The Psychic arrives, overwhelms with telekinesis, or warps space and time with his thought, then quickly teleports out lest he be found cornered and helpless. Their Gifts focus on unlocking the mysteries of the mind, or occasionally the body, controlling or entering other dimensions, the manipulation of time and space, and unparalleled skill in Thaumaturgy.

## Magicians

At the heart of all things there lies a sacred mystery. Hidden from common men by their own willful ignorance of those things that are more than mundane, but shown to the initiate since the beginning by those few who can see past appearances into that indescribable 'it'. Ordinary mortals hoard esoteric knowledge from enlightened forebears, harnessing thaumaturgical science for mundane ends, and Monsters cultivate their magecraft, harnessing the invisible forces closest to them to perform miracles, but neither has any knowledge of the Truth. None has tasted the fruit and sought the Mysteries.

**Magicians** are those rare human beings who, by reason by fate, birth, or accident possess the potential to harness theurgical magic, as well as being the only 'normal' humans with the capable to learn magecraft. Theurgy is the highest form of magic, capable of resurrecting the dead, traveling to other times and worlds, creating natural disasters, and calling up the faces of the Powers themselves. Theurgical Magic seems to be the unique inheritance of humankind, as since the dawn of time only living humans have ever displayed the least ability in it. Those who are more than human such as Heroes and Psychics, have never been human such as Faeries and Constructs, or who were once human and now are not such as Vampires and Ghosts, even those ghosts who were themselves magicians, have never demonstrated any aptitude in the Mysteries. Magicians are an extremely varied Type, with as many variations as there are ways to practice magic. From staff-and-broom **Wizards** and **Witches** to voodoo **Witch Doctors**, from **Shamans** with paint-stained faces who draw their Magecraft from the Powers to faithful **Priests** exercising their gifts from the gods. Eluding attempts at classification, Magicians are best classified by cultural background and by the basis of their Magecraft. A European Witch in a refined and cultured academic institution, whose magecraft is derived from harnessing the occult energies of the celestial bodies will be very different than an Aboriginal Shaman, living alone under a deep indigo sky and deriving his magecraft from deep communion with the Nothing After Death. Most feared of all Magicians are the **Infernalists**, those crowned children of Adam who have, out of weakness, greed, or foolishness, sold their souls to dark Powers, most often the Adversary, and use their theurgy to bring forth unspeakable beings from across time and space to our world. It is from Infernalists that there has arisen the fear among men of magic, and permanently entangled the image of the sorcerer and the demon in the minds of mortals. Magicians are the most versatile class, possessing potentially any number of strange abilities, they are adept at withdrawing solutions to many varied problems. In combat they tend to fight best with preparation or distance on their side, utilizing powerful

Gifts that allow them to alter the normal rules of magic to allow them to cast from great distances, or prepare wards and traps against enemies. Spells capable of permanently disabling enemies are generally more effective than those that merely damage, but are generally ineffective against direct peers in Rank, and damaging effects can be broad in scope targeting many Enemies or dealing a variety of status effects. Perhaps most impressively, Magicians alone are capable of learning spells to summon powerful servitors through High Summoning and Grand Summoning.

## Scientists

Knowledge is Power. These are the words of the man of reason, the man of intelligent and invention, the man called by the Muses to see beyond the map's edge, where all sextants and compasses show no way forward the man of science sees opportunity and advance. There be dragons, or the end of dragons, for the one brave enough to chase his curiosity. They are **Scientists**. Scientists are men and women with exceptional intelligence, or at least skill with tinkering, driven to understand the world around them and recombine its pieces into a new tomorrow. While few in numbers until the Renaissance, Scientists have always existed. Hero of Alexandria, Archimedes, artisans and artificers in India and China and the Americas were designing elegant works centuries beyond their peers long before the recent explosion in numbers of the men of science. While seemingly human, true Scientists possess connections to strange forces, or uncommon insights that allow them to do the things that they do, and hound them with the bane of Havoc when less skillful minds get ahold of their works. The most common form of scientist is the **Super Scientist**. Super Scientists first started appearing in numbers in the Renaissance and experienced an explosion of numbers in the early nineteenth century. According to most theories, Super-Scientists are actually a precursor to the modern Psychic, harnessing a latent psychic ability which, unable or unwilling to fully attribute to themselves, they instead harness as a kind of 'glue' to keep probable but not entirely workable designs functioning. A super-scientist's machines work by building designs that would 'almost work', but for some minor flaw in their design, and covering over it with the subtle power of the mind. Rickety aircraft that should fall apart in flight miraculously holds, engines whose turbines shouldn't spin due to imbalances in the magnetic forces instead balance out. Ray Guns whose heat should barely tinge the skin instead burns holes through blocks of steel. Moving past the super scientist we come to the **Inspired Scientist**, geniuses whose skills are rooted not in themselves but in the beautiful clockwork of nature. The Music of the Spheres carries through the ears of these luminaries, and they can almost hear the muses telling them the laws of nature. The Inspired are technically thaumaturgists, albeit thaumaturgists with a skill and mastery beyond any ordinary practitioner. Their designs incorporate a combination of western science and 'weird science' to produce splendid devices. They are hounded by moments of inspiration, sudden flashes of insight and idea that lead them to the next theory, the next invention. As the Music of the Spheres promotes life and civilization throughout the cosmos, such scientists are often obsessed with progress, with bringing

society forward, with building Tomorrow. Lastly are the **Mad Scientists**, those poor victims of alien mathematics and eldritch schema. Beyond the ends of the observed universe, past the known Parallel Worlds and into the darkness of What If, dwells realities barely comprehensible to most, governed by their own physical laws. More sane scientists versed in the phenomena theorize it to be a kind of birthing ground of realities, where different combinations of physical law and matter-like structures form and consume each other before finding stable arrangements capable of producing life. It is from here that the Mad receive their blessing. Infected through some unknown cosmic alignment, or perhaps the malevolence of some unknown actors, the Mad become conduits for these foreign realities, capable of temporarily imposing their alien laws of nature upon the cosmos, allowing for the production of machines that in this universe would not persist for a moment. Impossible wonders fall from the hands of the Mad Scientists, and stress their minds to the breaking point, resulting in eccentricity, mood swings, odd behaviors, strong obsessions and in extreme vasts schizophrenia and violent psychosis. Scientists are the foremost crafting Type. Most Gifts of the Scientist, in addition to their normal function, somehow improve his ability at crafting Devices [or for a minority, Mystic Artifacts] and utilizing them. Those that don't may allow him to produce certain Devices at scale, or even mass produce them without the need for normal crafting times or rules.

## **Demons**

Even darkness casts a shadow. The Shrouded Earth is a world of twisted grays pierced here and there by defiant and gleaming rays of light, a world where morality is defined all too often by might or conviction rather than by metaphysical assertion or divine providence. It is easy to forget in such a world the presence of true evil. In a world of confused grays, **Demons** form the background radiation of pitch black. Or so many would have you believe. In reality while twisted malevolence and cruel desire and the tempting of men to sin or ignorance is a common feature of **True Demons**, spirits summoned from the Dreamscape to don the mask of flesh and walk in a world of matter, they are far from the only dark beings to bear that title. No less common are the **Grigori**, an ancient race of incarnating spirits who dwell upon the earth and keep record of its transpiring. The Grigori resemble classical angels, winged humans with pinioned wings of white or black often possessing the power to take terrifying apocalyptic forms of many eyes and wings. When Grigori are slain a new Grigori bearing the name and appearance of the last but no powers or memories appears immediately somewhere else upon the Earth. The **Nephilim** are honorary devils, the children of True Demons or Grigori and mortal women, or more rarely a kind of dark mirror to the Imbued, humans granted power by the Adversary or other dark forces. Most fearful are the **Possessed**, near-death or comatose humans who find their bodies stolen from them, usually permanently, by a more perfect form of possession by True Demons. The Possessed are humanized by the experience of spiritual merging, which often retains as much of the dying host as the devil of Hell. The Gifts of Demons are based on a simple thesis; specialization is the way to power. All Demons embrace limitations, weaknesses, and refinement

as a path to overwhelming might. By growing in power in one direction, the Demon grows weaker in others. A Demon focused on causing calamity, destruction, and death may find that his ability to lie or sneak around has been permanently crippled. But then, of what use was that anyway to such a devil? The oldest devils are nearly idiot-savants, having taken their purviews to the highest levels while leaving often crippling flaws in those themes opposed.

## Hunters

There is nothing mere about being mortal. There is a pride in wearing the crown of Adam, of knowing beyond a shadow of a doubt that in a world of horror, you are a man. The daughters of Eve are no mere victims but **Hunters**, those rare but blessed few who upon discovering their planet is filled with nightmares beyond description and arrogant possessors of ancient power choose not the easy path of corruption but to take up the sword. Hunters are by far the more numerous of all Types, for anyone with a degree of skill in combat, knowledge of the occult, or simple grit can pick up his shotgun and declare war on the local bloodsuckers or foul-tempered werewolves. There are Hunters of every imaginable walk of life and skillset, and as a result they are divided primarily by their choice of prey and by their method of approaching the Hunt. **Slayers** are men and women of the most direct approach, usually victims of the supernatural who pick up the stake, silver bullet, and iron horseshoe to fight back against those who have wronged them. Many Slayers are of extremely black and white worldviews, uncompromising in regard their chosen prey. Some believe the supernatural itself is a stain on the world, while those more generous are simply out to destroy a particular manifestation. They are separated from **Investigators**, those whose interest lies less in the slaughter of perceived evils and more in the knowledge of the unknown. It is easy to forget in the midst of an encyclopedic overview of the Shrouded Earth that for many of its inhabitants, even the broad outline of Types and the tiers of Magic is a complete mystery. All that is known is specific instances, an old woman threw fire at me with a word, a man with blood on his face ran up a sheer stone wall to escape me, a child took the form of an enormous snake and fled into the swamp. For all too many the search is simply to know more, to understand what the hell kind of world they've accidentally stumbled into. Perhaps most moral of Hunters are **Guardians**, those comparative few who have made contact with the uncanny but retained their wits and generosity. Guardians are those who seek not to slay, but to police, to strike some kind of accord with the supernatural. Especially common in traditional cultures in the form of certain religious offices, but more recently occupied by state agents working for officially nonexistent branches of their governments, the work of Guardians is never done and sees itself as an eternal vigil to allow room for the wonders and horror of the world without allowing it to drown out the common mundane world of ordinary men. Lastly are those who are properly speaking not Hunters at all, the **Daredevils**. Daredevils are humans of ordinary professions [or as ordinary as such extraordinary men and women can tolerate working] who happen to have skill or strength far beyond the norm. In metaphysical terms they have broken their Limiter and to varying degrees entered the best of the best humanity is capable

of. Hunter Gifts rely on the harnessing of extreme skill, grit, knowledge of the occult, and occasional thaumaturgical know-how to manifest their effects, and are therefore the most down-to-earth and least obviously supernatural Gifts in appearance. More than anything else, Hunters specialize in ruining the day of a particular Type they have dedicated themselves to defeating. Only the strongest vampires can stand when a vampire Hunter is before them, and even mighty Heroes and Demons have been known to collapse before 'mere mortals' harnessing divine blessings or simply the unyielding determination of the human spirit. As Hunters increase in power, their physical and mental abilities often begin to rival those of the very nightmares they have risen up to slay, and the line between them and their quarry becomes increasingly blurred. What is the difference between a Magician and a Hunter with a library's worth of thaumaturgical know-how and skill in the crafting of Mystic Artifacts? What separates a cyborg Construct from a less-heavily augmented Hunter with mechanical limbs? To most, the answer is obvious; the Hunter is human and the prey is not. To others, it is a haunting notion, fiercely debated or else put out of mind.

## Conspiracies

The Shrouded Earth is superficially our own world, if perhaps our world through a noire filter. Its governments, religions, and public organizations are the same, or mostly so. In the tangled overgrowth and at the margins however, other organizations prosper. Sprawling Conspiracies, which manipulate the mortal herd from the background, are the true power on the planet. Conspiracies are groups of Monsters with a stake in mortal society or the state of the Earth overall, and their feuds, conflicts, promotion, and opposition form the core of many modern day Monsters activities. Conspiracies range from small local cults which only command influence in a single hick town in the Northeast to powerful global organizations whose direction alters the course of history itself. They range from the self-interested and corrupt, to the idealistic and benign to the cruel and despotic, to those that seek to undo humanity itself. Conspiracies encompass four broad Tiers, representing their scope, membership, and the power the Conspiracy commands. Note that the power of a Conspiracy is largely measured by its influence upon Earth. A Conspiracy that is offshoot of some far vaster organization in another timeline or in a distant Territory, but without the means or interest in wielding that power on Earth is a lower Tier conspiracy, not a higher Tier one. Moreover a Conspiracy that has powerful assets that it either can't or won't use on Earth might also be a weaker Conspiracy. Note that the below descriptions are guidelines, Conspiracies rarely scale as linearly or neatly as described. A Rank 5 Monster and its personal coterie could easily count as a Tier 3 Conspiracy even if they lacked a single ordinary human member or dollar to the Conspiracy's name.

**Tier 1 Conspiracies** are small conspiracies, usually centered around a city or town. They are cults, rackets, criminal organizations, or otherwise built around the interests of a small group of Monsters. They might contain perhaps a dozen Monsters at most, and may possess as few as only one, all Rank 1

or 2. They can possess at most a few hundred mortal members and if they possess great wealth or connections it tends to be fairly isolated or limited in potential use outside a given area. Most Tier 1 Conspiracies have little knowledge of other supernatural phenomena or that other Conspiracies exist at all. There are many thousands of T1 Conspiracies on the Shrouded Earth.

**Tier 2 Conspiracies** are regional conspiracies, either exerting heavy influence in an area the size of a US state or mid-size European country, or a more specialized interest over an entire large country. They tend to contain several dozen, perhaps as many as a hundred, Rank 1 Monsters, up to two dozen Rank 2 Monsters, and are typically led by at least one but more often a full Mash of Rank 3 or 4 Monsters with Rank 3 being far more common. They could possess, though many don't, many thousands of mortal personnel, and many have great wealth or pull in mortal society within their narrow purview or regional influence. Tier 2 Conspiracies tend to be aware of the existence of a handful of other Conspiracies and may even have dealings with one or two. There are several hundred T2 Conspiracies on the Shrouded Earth.

**Tier 3 Conspiracies** are vast conspiracies, either all-but-commanding some major aspect of a powerful country, or exerting heavy influence in some broader global institution or aspect of modern life. Most Tier 3 Conspiracies have some active participation in maintaining the Veil through their actions, and tend to be well-informed of the general supernatural landscape. Conspiracies of this Size contain hundreds of Rank 1 Monsters, dozens of Rank 2, up to a dozen Rank 3, and are usually led by a Rank 4 Monster or even a full Mash of them. They might possess any number of mortal personnel, great wealth, and political pull in their nation or in related institutions. Tier 3 Conspiracies are the largest Conspiracies that tend to be visibly active in the world. Tier 3 Conspiracies are often aware of many, but not all, other Tier 3 Conspiracies and have dealings with a few of them, usually to give them a wide berth. There are a few dozen T3 Conspiracies on the Shrouded Earth.

**Tier 4 Conspiracies** are the pinnacle of the world's occult ecosystem. Secretive even to other Conspiracies, they tend to possess tendrils of hidden power that effectively rule one of the world's great powers or has some direct pull in a fact of the Earth itself. Many Tier 4 Conspiracies' agendas concern the world at large, and may even ignore mankind in the process. Tier 4 Conspiracies are seldom involved in the feuds that concern their Tier 2 and 3 colleagues. T4 doesn't need to feud or strive for control, it possesses it. Their mortal membership may be zero or encompass the entire human race depending on what one considers employment, and may command over a thousand Rank 1 or 2 members and several dozen Rank 3 [though more than a few include none at all]. They possess at least a dozen Rank 4 Monsters and are almost always the work of a Rank 5 Monster who commands the Conspiracy whether openly or not. They almost always possess expansive, deep knowledge of the nature of the planet and its supernatural inhabitants and history. One could count on one hand all the T4 Conspiracies on the Shrouded Earth.

Players may, and in fact are encouraged, to create their own Conspiracies for their Monsters to be a part

of, though all details must be approved by the Storyteller. In general, T1 and T2 Conspiracies can generally be produced in bulk and with little thought given to how they fit into the world at large, while T3 and especially T4 may require much thought on the part of the Storyteller on how to fit the new organization into the ecosystem of organizations in his world. Storytellers are reminded they have final say on all details and may veto a proposed Conspiracy entirely if he feels it does not mesh with his vision for the campaign. Below is a lengthy list of Conspiracies which may or may not exist in the Shrouded Earth and to which Player Characters can have their Monsters join or dedicate their lives to opposing.

## **Examples:**

**The Order of the Bloodtide** is a T1 Conspiracy, a group of fishermen living in a small Alaskan fishing community, bound by a blood oath going back to 1822, where their predecessors made a 'deal' with an unintelligent marine predator of unusual size that was devouring fishing vessels. Every year the Order arranges for someone to 'fall into the water', as a sacrifice to the great beast, usually a stranger. The cultists believe that their efforts keep their own families and community safe. Whether this is true, or if their 'beast' can even understand the nature of their oath is a mystery.

**The Inheritors of the Bloom** are a T1 Conspiracy situated around a dilapidated space vessel that crashed into the arctic snow twenty million years ago. In 1912 a geographic survey of the region located in northern Canada discovered a circular disk-like craft, fossilized and dysfunctional in the polar ice. When members of the survey discovered and began cataloging the find, their equipment inadvertently awoke a long-dormant artificial intelligence housed on the craft. The intelligence, dazed and confused, seized the crew in long mechanical arms sprung from the ship's interior and, using its long since defiled and failing bioengineering capabilities attempted to revive its former crew, which had perished in the crash, using partial brain scans housed on the ship's quantum computer. The result was a group of half-mad Constructs, cyborgs who possessed a combination of human and alien DNA and machinery formed from vivisected snowmobiles and turn of the century research equipment. The first generation were mad and violent, and the AI was constantly having to monitor and occasionally extinguish the results. The AI, held in a massive data array of floating nanoborgs in the shape of a blooming flower, is constantly attempting to succeed in a full resurrection of its crew so they can continue whatever mission brought them to Earth so many aeons ago, and so has sent out exploratory raids on nearby settlements over the last century, gathering intel and equipment to try to repair its ancient systems and gather the necessary combination of technology and compatible biomass to succeed in its mission and restore the ship's inhabitants in a sane form.

**Los Plagio** is a T1 Conspiracy, a group of cultists located in Mexico that worship a race of parasitic organisms. The cult captures tourists and subjects them to infection by the parasites, which slowly warp



those infected in mind and body into a form of mutant Shifter capable of controlling its own cellular make-up in various degrees. The Cult has the ambition of world domination, which it hoped to accomplish by the kidnapping of high-ranking officials from around the world and their relatives and subjecting them to infection. After inadvertently capturing the President of Nigeria at the DFW airport in 2009 while intending to capture then-US President Barack Obama, the Cult was raided by US Special Forces and most of its compounds destroyed and its leadership forced to flee. The parasites the group worship date back to the Jurassic and originate in Spain. The cult is a distant offshoot of a far more influential from that country, and is the result of a schism over religious doctrine and the direction set by leadership.

**The Chosen of the Primeval Sun** are a T1 Conspiracy consisting of human beings of extraordinary excellence or potential who have been imbued with powerful shards of magical power, granting them skill beyond all other men. Those Chosen burn with a golden light when utilizing their tremendous Gifts, and sigils depicting the stations of the Sun burn upon their foreheads. Though none of the Sun's Chosen yet know it, their power comes from a Parallel World built in the image of mythology, a vast quay jutting out into the darkness of chaos that went dark long long ago, before time began. In that time before time a Royal Avatar of the Primeval Sun existed who embodied in his very being the light of heroism, the desire to strive, and the hope for the future. This god chose from among men champions to bear his essence to overthrow his father the sky and take the world for their own. But millennia passed and the champions grew indolent, and their world ended. A few, at least five, perhaps as many as a dozen, of these 'solar essences' found their way eventually to the Shrouded Earth, attaching themselves to worthy humans who embody the lost god's ideals. Plagued by memories of past lives in another world, these champions find themselves stirred to remake the world in the image of their patron, to take the torch and the sword to the night as they did so many times in worlds and times long passed.

**The Kingdom of Mirrors** is a T2 Conspiracy, an enchanted magical land built within a Territory the size of a small country hidden in the forests of northern Ireland. The Kingdom is home to a powerful Faerie Queen who motivated by a sense of quixotic heroism 'recruits' children and young people below the age of eighteen across the United States and western Europe. Using an Anamoly known as the Light of Hope, she is able to transform her recruits into magical warriors, who she then sends out to battle malevolent monsters. All of her recruits are in some sense dissatisfied with their lives, if not outright abused or miserable, and her 'heroes' soon find themselves missing school, suffering unexplained injuries, having long absences from home, and both worrying and terrifying their parents. Police and missing children reports are filed in the wake of the Queen of Mirrors and her naive heroism, and many are those who never return home from her crusade whether due to death on the battlefield, or fleeing to the Kingdom and never leaving.

**The Children of Kaguya** is a T2 Conspiracy, a clan of Shifters claiming to have originated on the Moon in ancient times when it was supposedly habitable. They possess silver or white hair and unusually colored eyes and a mystical connection with the moon that causes them to go mad on the full

moon and lose their powers altogether on the new moon. As their name implies they claim descent from the mythical figure of Kaguya, and while originally arriving in Japan they've since multiplied and spread out across the globe carrying the traditions of their clan and the land of the rising sun with them. They consider themselves a large extended family and thus have no interests beyond the security and survival of their kind. Part of this mission involves controlling their own numbers, for the Children spread their condition to all their children without fail and overpopulating could bring them into conflict with the human race for ownership of this planet. The Clan Elders view their race as guests upon the Earth and that warring with humanity as a violation of some sacred hospitality. They possess numerous traditions for balancing their connection to the cycles of the moon and maintaining their history, and frequently war with the Faerie who take offense to their presence on earth as a kind of foreign invasion. The fact the Children possess a weakness to Cold Iron like earthly fae gives credence to the idea they are actually some kind of lunar Faerie and the Children of the Earth cannot abide this descent from their closest neighbor from the nightly Shore.

**The Sons of Ymir** are a T2 Conspiracy, a court of Faeries dwelling in the far northern and southern parts of the globe, predominately in the arctic and antarctic regions. They are giants, ranging from ten feet tall at the shortest to over three hundred at the tallest, bearded and dressed in furs that cover most of their bodies, or nude save for long cloaks of hair falling from around their heads. They are primitive, relying on tools carved from stone or bone, and dwell in great cave systems or 'halls' they dig for themselves in the mountain stone. The Sons speak a variety of languages and are extremely intelligent despite their primitive culture, understanding much of the scientific and thaumaturgical laws that govern the world, and have a deep knowledge of a form of magic they utilize relying on the runes and commanding creation through simple authority of grandeur. The Sons are few in number, perhaps a hundred globally, and travel in groups of two to twelve in hunting parties and scavenging. They rarely descend north or south far enough to be seen by humans, and extensive efforts are taken by national governments and related conspiracies to hide the presence of the giants from satellite imaging and the occasional video leaked to the internet. The Sons speak of Ragnarok as a battle already fought and lost, and of Jotunheim as a lost realm, and consider themselves a motley of haggard survivors from that ancient conflict. They harbor an immense hatred for humanity, and for the Hero Thor who supposedly lead them to victory in the Ragnarok before the coming of the Shepherd-God, but lack the power to do more than seethe in discontent or occasionally send their youngest in raids upon small settlements. The greatest of the giants could decimate modern cities and survive nuclear explosions, but knowing that victory would be Man's through attrition and fearing the reappearance of the lightning-god, the Defender of the Humankind, the Sons are content to let history slip past them while they brood over what has been lost.

**The Innocents of Saint Nicolas of Myra** are a T2 conspiracy taking place across western Europe and North America. The Innocents are a group of seeming children between the ages of four and thirteen with unnaturally potent psychic abilities. The Innocents communicate with each other exclusively

through telepathy, and seem to be aware of each other's thoughts and feelings even across great distances. The Innocents are a group predominately interested in the manifestation of psychic potential among humans and attempt to discover early manifestations of psychic phenomena as to recruit them into their circle. The long term goals of the group beyond this remain unknown, as does the origin of their name. Most researchers suspect the name comes originally from the Orphanage of Saint Nicolas of Myra in Turkey, where the group supposedly originated, but as the orphanage burnt down mysteriously in 1986 details remain scant. It is suspected that the Innocents are immortal, or ageless, or possess abilities to force those who look upon them to see them as they wish to be seen, as the Innocents are exclusively encountered as young children and have been since first contact was made with the group in 1992 in eastern Germany. The Innocents have made contact with other conspiracies in the past, most notably the casual eradication of a Los Plagio installation following the kidnapping of 'Mouse', a potent empath taking the form of a four year old girl belonging to the group, and another contact with the Cult of Ishtar in Scandanavia where several Innocents were intentionally sought out as sacrifices to the goddess.

**The Deep Exiles** are a T2 Conspiracy consisting of a race of beings resembling aquatic crustaceans and early pre-Cambrian life. The Exiles are purely spiritual beings, resembling ghosts in that they are naturally immaterial, but seeming to belong to a different classification as they lack Fetters and exhibit very different abilities. The Exiles exist in the earth's upper atmosphere and in the area surrounding the Earth up to the limit of the lunar orbit in a purely spiritual ghostly state. They seem incapable of taking on physical form, or descending below an altitude of about 25,000 feet above sea level, which is why they are regarded as a minor conspiracy despite their numbering in the hundreds of thousands and having several Rank 5 beings in their midst. The Exiles communicate telepathically and understand most human languages. For most of history the Exiles have been irrelevant, their sole point of influence being preventing ghosts from safely flying higher then the area of their habitation for fear of being attacked or devoured. But with the invention and popularization of air and space travel, the Exiles have finally found a loop hole in their inability to exit the sky. By means of possession, the Exiles have begun capturing bodies and using them to return to the Earth and begin studying the planet's certain condition with the goal of eventual reconquista. The discovery of this faculty of the Exiles called the world's conspiracies to action against them, and now most passenger airlines [though few private planes] are very discretedly Warded against their trespass. The Deep Exiles are, in reality, a race of physical beings who inhabited the earth 500,000,000 years ago. A change in stellar alignments altered a key aspect of thaumiturgy and the Exiles found they could no longer live, and they shifted to spiritual forms only suited for dwelling in the sky. One day, the ancient horrors whisper, the stars will turn and it will be Man who finds himself forced to take the form of spirit, and the Exiles will again feel the stingy embrace of flesh. As they descend to the lowly earth, they mean to feast on the 'trascending' Man, a fit vengeance for watching their planet be wasted on these ugly bipeds.

**Satya Yug** is a T2 Conspiracy of Hindu Magicians and Psychics with the goal of returning humankind

to the Golden Age by means of a revolution in consciousness. They believe there was a time when the spiritual nature of Man did not cause Mystic Collapse in artifacts, and the gods and spiritually gifted created a civilization based on the flowering of Man's higher nature. They obsessively explore every form of spiritual power, from the limits of thaumaturgical science to the highest forms of theurgy, and attempt to foster these powers among the masses through the initiation of students to certain gurus. The gurus act as the public face of Satya Yug, appearing as nothing more than a utopian charitable Hindu organization, while searching for students drawn to the higher teachings and possessing potential for superhuman development. They also extensively study genetics and hereditary to search for possible declines in human beings physically from the heights described in Hindu texts and possible scientific solutions. They have an interest in producing a perfect human race fit to carry their enlightened ideals to fruition.

**The Preta Kensei** are a T2 Conspiracy, a fraternity of swordsmen set to upholding the division between the living and unliving worlds by hunting down the restless dead and either helping them to pass on [where possible] or destroying them [when not]. The membership is formed from the ranks of both living and dead, teaching the dead to appear as though alive or to possess artificially created bodies and the living to astral project. The Kensei are recruited globally, usually from those already aware of the existence of ghosts and with an interest in improving their sorrowful state. The Kensei dress in long traditional kimono, carry katana, and use magic based in Shinto and Buddhist practice, a result of the order's founder and current leader enforcing the culture of his homeland on all who would fight under him. The sword saints were founded on June 13, 1645 by Musahi Miyamoto. Upon breathing his last, the first of the sword saints quickly realized he had found neither Heaven nor peaceful rebirth, but instead the gray maybe of those who linger on. When meditation and prayer failed to let him find peace, he set about to help other ghosts, wandering as he did in life and letting his sword make his way for him in the world. Two years into his death, Musashi discovered Yomi, a nightmarish Territory controlled by power hungry and violent shades from the medieval eras. Stepping forth into Yomi, Musashi instructed the ancient dead in his technique, and set them off to whatever real Hell waits beyond the world. Taking Yomi for his own, he set about gathering disciples to fulfill his mission of aiding the unfortunate dead in finding peace. Little has changed in almost four hundred years. Though his order has spread to contain several dozen warriors from all around the globe, the traditions of his homeland still dominate its culture and identity. Though he has helped thousands of ghosts pass into the great mystery, whether peacefully or at the edge of his steel, he himself still finds no peace. Perhaps there is none for the fallen. The sword saints enjoy a fierce rivalry with the Lamenters of the Deluge whom they make every effort to destroy.

**The Lamenters of the Deluge** are a T3 Conspiracy that effects most of the Earth's oceans in various degrees. It is a group of several hundred ancient ghosts dating back to before recorded history. While many of the ghosts are quite powerful, few have remaining Fetters and therefore lack the ability to take physical form. Instead they seek willing agents in younger ghosts who have died at sea and teach them

that they can pass on into the afterlife only by taking many more people to their deaths in the depths to join them. The Lamenters plague any ship at sea traveling alone, and seek to coordinate its sinking and the perishing of all hands, and would gladly render sea travel impossible if not for patrols and efforts made by other conspiracies to contain them. As most of the Lamenters dwell exclusively on the seafloor in a dematerialized state they are almost impossible to reach, and attempts to communicate by skilled mediums are stifled by the fact they seem to only understand a language unknown to modern civilization but which bears a strong resemblance to ancient Egyptian. A single successful communication by the immortal mummy Nakia with the a group of Lamenters of the shores of Cape Hope in 1972 on behalf of the ARC Foundation gave the primary insights into their thought processes and motives. The Lamenters claim they were once great sorcerers, priests, and kings in a great kingdom existing in the past but which was unjustly punished by God with a great flood in response to their supposed sinfulness and arrogance. As vengeance for this crime, the Lamenters have tarried even unto the modern day, seeking to force as many men as possible to join them in their watery tomb until they can reign in grim solitude over a humanity composed exclusively of the dead-at-sea.

**Coatlucue the Mother of Vampires** is a T3 Conspiracy centralized at a temple hidden in a Territory in the Amazon Rainforest in Brazil. Numerous cults, cartels, and paramilitary groups across the continent pay homage to Coatlucue in their symbolism and initiation rites, as the Snake-Mother promises victory in battle and success in all criminal enterprises involving the spilling of blood in her name. These groups are less noteworthy than the figure of Coatlucue which inspires them, and whose secluded existence gives them reason to be, for Coatlucue is an immeasurably ancient being, the first vampire of the New World and the originator of all bloodlines not brought across the sea by European explorers. Most of the Snake-Mother's past is lost to history, but it is known she was born in the Olmec civilization around 1300 BC, that she was in some manner learned in thaumturgical magic [possibly as some kind of temple priestess] and that following some form of tragedy involving the loss of her earthly children she used her knowledge of the mystic and a now lost Anamoly to transform herself into a vampire with a lower body formed of innumerable living snakes wound together into a finely woven cord. Now immortal, she became an extremely accomplished blood sorceress and a figure of worship through subsequent civilizations. First in secret, then openly she pushed these civilizations into increasingly depraved forms of religious devotion and blood sacrifice, upon which she and her new children feasted and reveled. When European settlers came and destroyed her carefully prepared paradise, the Snake-Mother sank peaceably into the shadows, confident in the knowledge the jungle eventually swallows all secrets. In 2010 Coatlucue awoke from a long period of hibernation, and since then have begun turning large numbers of people into vampires and encouraging her worship with an increasing amount of brazenness. Her actions have brought her into conflict with vampiric organizatinos in the northern continent and would be vampire hunters have begun stalking her ancient hunting grounds in the Amazon searching for the hidden Territory where she dwells, alone, upon the multisteped pyramid that rests below her realm's eternal night.

**Culgi** is a T3 Conspiracy, a former thaumaturgical research firm that's since taken on a radically different function. The company was founded in 1987 to research the occult properties of various Near Eastern flora, cataloguing their alchemical uses and selling the resulting products to other conspiracies and governments for a wide variety of uses. All this changed in 1999 during the Typhon Crisis. An enormous eruption shook Mount Etna in Greece, where mythology states the monster Typhon was imprisoned. The scion of the titans stood an awe-inspiring five miles tall, his head piercing the cloud cover as he emerged from under the mountain and proceeded on a march across Greece. World conspiracies were called into action, getting to work rebuilding the heavily damaged mountain, suppressing news coverage of the eruption that preceded Typhon's emergence, and calling in their agents in attempts to slow the titanspawn's thunderous rampage. It was during this crisis that Culgi underwent its transformation to its current status. Utilizing an obscure flower found growing in seabeds off the coast of Iraq they discovered a means of imbedding theurgical magical principles into a human host, causing what was quickly termed "prototypical-divinity-reinactment". Simply put, the company had discovered a way to create a copy or image of a previously existing Hero and imbue a living host with a small measure of the powers, memories, personality, and sometimes appearance of that Hero, resulting in a modern day demigod. As Culgi's heroes increased in strength, they often found the memories and personality of the Hero growing stronger, and many came to identify themselves with them and go by their name. Using prototypical-divinity-reinactment the company produced a small army of homegrown demigods, with which they were able to isolate and eventually reimprison Typhon off the coasts of Iceland. Since then Culgi has maintained a tight hold on both its source for the mysterious flower and its recipe for inducing Reinactment. It provides its heroes with luxury housing and employment in return for keeping a short leash on their investments, which are extensively monitored. Culgi acts as a mercenary company, leasing its demigods to anyone willing to pay their exorbitant prices. The company's lax morals, profiteering mindset, and commodification of humanity's cultural heritage offends many of its subjects, but as of yet Culgi has managed to placate, or coerce, it's over sixty demigods to continue charting its course into the future.

**The Malleus Maleficarum** are a T3 Conspiracy founded during the height of the witch hunts during the mid to late sixteen hundreds with the goal of breaking the power of institutions propagating "Witchcraft, black magick, traffick with daemons, and anyone who haveth a familiar spirit" and killing their practionors wherever they find them. Throughout the Middle Ages, large magical institutions were treated by the Church as unorthodox centers of learning and their presence was tolerated. Magicians walked openly, offering their services to king and peasant alike, and traveling throughout Europe to do as they pleased. The magical orders of the time frequently had rules prohibiting the bearing of noble title or directly administering land, and avoiding dramatic displays in public [which often terrified the peasantry and turned the public against them], but the actual practice of magecraft not affiliated with demons was a legal and accepted part of medieval life. By the time of the early modern period, sentiments had soured, after too many Magicians seizing title, getting their way through

flagrant displays of their Art, and simple change in religious attitudes following the Protestant Reformation. And in the fires of this fanaticism arose the Hammer of Witches. Mobs of peasants, led by Hunters armed with Gifts that disabled or overcame magic, broke into universities, manors, and even Territories and dragged out their sorcerous inhabitants to burn. Spells dating back to Sumer and Egypt were lost, never to be recovered, as their contents were drowned or sent into the flame with their masters, and many were the Magical Beast slain or taken into large cities as curios only to die quickly to Mystic Collapse. In those days the Hammer was led by a Defender of the Faith, who conducted mock trials on suspected mages, commanded the attention of entire cities worth of fantastical loyalists, and sent into hiding some of the proudest academies and hermetic orders. The flames have died down significantly since then, as has the religious zeal. Today the Malleus Maleficarum is a relic institution, organized into terroristic cells and driven more by envy and fear than a desire for inquisition. Whenever a Magician is too bold, too open, he runs the risk of the Maleficarum or its agents gathering word. What follows is best described as a lynching. Rough-looking, blue collar, often not-particularly-devout men drag the suspected Magician into an alleyway to kill, or blast them with rock-salt to bury in the desert, or cut off their tongue and hands to prevent the working of their Art. The new Hammer's lack of organization and independent cell structure has made it as impossible to eradicate as its previous holy army, as has the presence of several very powerful witchhunters still afoot in their ranks. There is hardly a magical organization on Earth not at least passingly aware of and cautious regarding the Malleus Maleficarum.

**Unwise**, also known as the Den of Fools, the 'Mail Room' or Section 8 is a T3 Conspiracy, the United States Paranormal and Occult Research and Response Division. A successor to the now-defunct Masonic Order of the Wise, Unwise was founded during the early days of the Cold War in response to a sister organization founded in the Soviet Union, the Koschei Division. Unwise catalogues the presence, prevalence, and activities of supernatural beings within the borders of the United States, engages in extensive thaumaturgical research, and studies ways to safely incorporate the unnatural into American life. They are structured like an intelligence agency, and its agents are trained in the manner of spies, infiltrators, diplomats, and informants with a focus on understanding and cataloguing threats more often than fighting them directly. Members, referred to as Agents or as Concerned Citizens function in autonomous cells that monitor the activities of particular Conspiracies and their members, determine their intentions, and if necessary arrange for their downfall through indirect means, ideally conflict with a third party arranged for by Unwise. These cells answer to the Directors, who are always addressed in unusual and seemingly pseudonyms such as the Janitor, the Handler, or the Supervisor. They receive missions from their Director and pass on intelligence up the chain to him where it eventually reaches the Secretary of Agriculture, who is also Deputy Director of the Unwise as an additional side to his profession in the Cabinet. The policies of the organization are handled by various Directives which direct how the supernatural is to be handled and how much information is permitted to be leaked to the public.

**AVALON** is a T3 Conspiracy, a group of scientists, spies, ex-military, and wealthy individuals all united around a common goal. Defending the human race from the predations of magical beings, particularly Heroes, Magicians, and Faeries. AVALON was established in the 500s AD by King Arthur, and the King still sleeps in long hibernation upon a stone table deep within their compound on a hidden island just west of the British Isles. The island is obscured by magical mists and the control of nautical navigation pointing ships away from the complex. AVALON exists to keep Humanity and the Age of Man free from the rule of antiquated heathen forces of the pre-Arthurian world. While the group in theory is accepting of the existence of 'magic', it has no patience for such beings exerting any influence upon human institutions, no matter how subtle, and has warred since the days of the King to keep Adam's domain free and safe. The King mutters in his sleep, and his omens are sacred to the order and critical to its mission.

**The Watchers in the Deep** are a T4 Conspiracy composed of a race of pre-human mountain sized elemental beings who live in the planet's core. They shape the world's geothermal and magnetic systems, and are believed to possibly be responsible for terraforming the early Earth into a form suitable for life, or at least of maintaining that suitability after large asteroid impacts such as that which formed the Moon or killed off the dinosaurs. The Watchers are numerous, and its speculated they might literally compose the entire interior of the iron core and lower mantle, an area with a diameter of over two thousand miles composed of millions of Watchers. The Watchers do not reply to attempted contact and do not seem to understand human speech, but they are aware of humanity and its activities and have acted through earthquakes and volcanic eruptions at various points in history for strange, unknown goals.

## **The Veil**

The greatest Conspiracy of all, and the one which would require the greatest effort to unmake, is that of the Veil. Also known variously as the Concealment of the Mystic, the Masquerade, the Litany, or the Noble Lie, the Veil is the practice of concealing the existence of Monsters and their Conspiracies from the public, and it defended and promoted by most Conspiracies of Tiers 2 or higher in some form, and for various reasons. It is worth taking a moment and examining how the Veil works, what it is, and more importantly what it is not. What the Veil means in simple terms is that due to a series of policies among larger conspiracies going back two to five centuries depending on who you ask, the average inhabitant of the Shrouded Earth does not know that the supernatural exists. This does not mean he does not believe in it, if anything the prevalence of genuine thaumaturgical procedures, faith healers, and psychics who are not charlatans means sincere belief in the unknown is more common than in the real world. But the average person has had no direct experience of the strange and therefore no direct knowledge of it. It also means that the various Monsters often have limited direct experience or knowledge of each other and therefore often have narrow views of the unusual when they do encounter it.



## **What People Know**

The average human being has never encountered the supernatural directly, whether in the secular West or in the more believing Third World. The lone exception to this is the thaumaturgical spells embedded in many traditional religious practices, which are almost always too subtle to point out definitely as supernatural. A minority of human beings, perhaps as many as one in ten thousand, sees something. He has an encounter with the weird at some point in his life and interprets it according to his limited perspective. A bloody-fanged silhouette standing over an unconscious man in an alleyway scrambles up the sheer brick of the building beside him. A woman runs into a bathroom stall and vanishes. A guru on a street corner levitates into the air and flies away past the cloud-cover before a crown of faithful onlookers. In traditional cultures these experiences are accepted and interpreted according to often erroneous local belief systems. In more secular or modern ones, people often convince themselves they didn't see what they thought they saw, or perhaps even dreamed the entire encounter and move on with their lives as best as they can. A minority of this minority refuse to accept these explanations and becomes scholars of the occult. Such scholars and hunters may eventually accumulate knowledge of just about anything, such wisdom being represented by the Mystic Lore Skill.

The average Monster by contrast tends to have a more thorough but limited perspective. Most Monsters know what their Conspiracies know, or what they're trusted to be told. A vampire crime family in Venice may know by long history that ghosts exist, and might even be aware of werewolves, but would be quite shocked to learn that immortal Taoist sages are dwelling in the mountains of China. A zombie in a Louisiana Bayou might be very familiar with Voodoo and the practice of magic, but find the idea of vampires comical or martial arts Heroes a bad stereotype. Those connected to well-informed Tier 2 Conspiracies or most Tier 3 Conspiracies often have a broader view of the world, but usually have holes in their information. There is always more things in heaven and on earth than even the most enlightened Monster believes. The higher members of Tier 4 organizations may possess detailed true information on the nature of the entire setting. It is standard practice among most Conspiracies to sit down new members and explain to them at least the basics of what it is they've become, and possibly provide a general understanding of the world as that Conspiracy understands it.

## **Enforcement**

The Veil is enforced primarily by a number of T3 Conspiracies, either directly or through proxy through police or in severe instances military response. The Veil is not designed to keep every single human from encountering the supernatural. Such an endeavor is both impossible and counterproductive, there is simply too much supernatural activity for such a strategy to be carried out. Instead, the world's conspiracies seek to prevent a certain critical mass from being reached to maintain the appearance of incredulity. As long as most people find the idea of the truth, that the world is

inhabited and secretly controlled by competing cabals of freaks, completely absurd, the Veil is maintained. To this end the first method of concealment of the mystic is prevention. Through education, propaganda, secular versions of known history that remove or sanitize fantastic elements as mythology, modern humans are taught to reflexively disbelieve or rationalize anything that doesn't fit the scientific secular paradigm, even science not properly accounted for by said worldview. When, as must happen, people inevitably encounter the supernatural most people who have been properly propagandized simply explain it away themselves and no further action need be taken. When this proves insufficient, a **Cover-Up** is the most common response. Simply silence anyone being too loud about the incident in question, utilizing **Amnestics**; a variety of mundane chemicals, Gifts, and Spells to erase memories, intimidation, threats, and bribery to keep the public from knowing. Ban people from social media, prevent television interviews from airing, demonize or mock people, if absolutely necessary have witnesses killed. If an ongoing incident is too loud, and drawing too much attention, a Conspiracy may see fit to interfere immediately as it is ongoing. The most common response in this case is a **Strike-Team**, a group of Monsters from the responding Conspiracy appearing on the scene with the goal of, through diplomacy or violence, causing an end to the incident. The second most common response is a **Mundane Response**, such as calling in the police or SWAT, with plans for a cover-up upon completion. In the most extreme incidents, those where the Veil itself is threatened, multiple large Conspiracies may have the military called in, arrive with multiple powerful Strike Teams, or even arrange for the entire area to be subject to a nuclear strike. **Divination** is a tool of early response for the Conspiracies, and the larger a potential disruption is the more likely it is that those responsible will be intercepted early into their rampage, or ideally before it's began. A Hero with more pride than sense deciding to throw a car into a billboard on Time Square in broad daylight may find himself apprehended by heavily armed AVALON Knights the moment he puts his hand on the car, the result of divinations and warnings obtained hours or days prior. It should be emphasized that this last tool is very unreliable, divination is not a well-spring of reliable advanced warnings.

## History

The history of the Veil is in many ways the history of the Shrouded Earth, or more to the point the history of the Shrouded Earth as it diverges from that of our own mundane Earth. The history of the Shrouded Earth is a tangled mess of uncertainties, lost civilizations and lost ages, colored by the rise and fall of ancient conspiracies and torn at the edges by the uses of theurgy to manipulate the timeline itself. As far as it can be reliably measured by occult archeologists, the history of the world is a history of cyclic civilizational collapse. Cycles of advanced civilizations, both human and otherwise, preceded the founding of Ur and Uruk and the flowering of language and cities in the Fertile Crescent and Egypt. The Deathless Empire of Imir, the Golden Land of Shangri-La, the Garden of Eden, the Kingdoms of Atlantis, Hyborea, Thule, and Lemuria, the cyclopic cities of the Deep Exiles and the Star-Eaten, and other lands only dreamt at. In these pre-modern ages, there was no Veil at all and its possible Mystic

Collapse did not occur. The world of the **Primeval Age** is essentially a fantasy setting with no connection and no influence upon the modern world. Campaigns set in the Primeval Age can safely ignore future history and allow Monsters to do as they please.

With the founding of the first civilizations of our cycle, Sumer, Egypt, China, the Indus Valley, and the like the Veil remains nonexistent throughout **Early Antiquity**. The world is entirely dominated by powerful supernatural forces which are remembered by later eras as gods and demigods, magic in the hands of isolated individuals directs histories, and society exists at the lenience and pleasure of the great forces of the supernatural. Campaigns set in Early Antiquity exist in a world that is culturally and historically our own, but during periods that are remote enough that barring truly exceptional changes to the status quo, the Mash and the Storyteller should feel free to be as open with their Gifts as they like, building empires, founding cities, and starting new religions. Conspiracies in these eras are indistinguishable from political or priestly institutions and often are the ruling polity of the Age.

As civilization advances and turns to **Late Antiquity**, mortal society becomes increasingly sophisticated and Monsters increasingly organize into larger groups of middling Rank. These two changes collectively result in a turn away from a world where the supernatural dominates society, to one where the supernatural is merely an accepted part of society. Astrologer-Magicians serve as advisors to kings, wise Shifter women lead tribal chieftains to prosperity, the last famous demigod Heroes carry out their careers, and Faeries experience their first tastes of Iron and the first conflicts with Mankind over territory and dominion. Conspiracies in this Era are often an accepted part of a broader ancient society, in which they possess open and accepted influence, but do not altogether dominate. Monsters crowning themselves kings, let alone reigning as gods, becomes increasingly rare and pushed to the margins of a world where a single Rank 4 Hero finds he cannot hold the reigns when a hundred Rank 2 Magicians hold loyalty to the court of Qin, or where the armies of Rome number in the tens of thousands and possess potent Hunters. The first signs of the Veil appear in this era, with the gradual formation of views hostile to innately terrifying Monsters. Vampires, Ghosts, certain Shifters and Constructs, anything with an appearance of death or a hostility or preying upon humanity finds it can no longer rely on terrifying humans as a 'demon' to enjoy open existence. Beings of this sort begin hiding themselves from humans, or disguising themselves as more acceptable supernatural creatures. For all other creatures however, the wielders of Magic, the children of the Powers, the ranks of Faerie, the odd Golem or Immortal, there remains an openness to practice their powers freely. Campaigns set in Late Antiquity might need to account for the Veil for their more monstrous Monsters, but even those more human in shape or outlook must be wary of the established status quo. History here should also be minded, unless the Storyteller is fine allowing things to diverge into an alternate history.

The dawning of **Medieval Times**, which occurs variously for each country and continent, is the last gleaming light of a world where open supernatural influence was the norm. The flourishing of academic and intellectual thought during this period, the formation of larger and larger towns and cities, increased population growth, and above all the organization of Magicians and other Monsters

into more cohesive groups results for a time in a world of precarious mystical delights. But matching this development is the formation of mortal groups such as the Church with enough power, both mundane and thaumaturgical, to match for the first time the power even of organized groups of Monsters. The medieval landscape in Europe is a history of Magicians being warily tolerated by the Catholic Church and existing in semi-peaceable relations with an increasingly broader world. In China, it is the dying of the light of Heroism as the birth of gunpowder and broader civilization increasingly casts doubts on the efficacy of the martial arts and old magic. In other parts of the world, the processes go at varying tempo, but the mood of this era is simple. The strange is only accepted so long as it keeps its head down. Campaigns set in this era are set in the last era where open Conspiracies are the norm, and increasingly more and more Conspiracies tend to hide their membership, engage in veiled dealings, or flee to less developed and more accepting areas. The Veil of this era is in full swing for those Monsters which are visibly undead or monstrous, and in Europe for those which are overly pagan and have not received sanction from the Church. For those Conspiracies with good relations with the polity and the local religions, things continue on as they did in Late Antiquity, but it will not last.

In the **Early Modern Era**, the birth of the Veil as such is had through the promotion of large Hunter organizations. The last powerful open Conspiracies, primarily magical institutions of learning in the West, enjoy privilege, influence, control and of course skepticism from the public in the last days of the Medieval Period. With events such as the invention of the printing press, the discovery of the New World, the Protestant Reformation, and the flourishing of first Renaissance and later Enlightenment Era thought, the era of the mystical comes crashing down. Witch-hunters, vampire-hunters, ghost-hunters, zombie-hunters, even hunters of heroes and Faeries explode as humanity, pushed to zeal and idealism begins declaring war on any open display of powers aligned with the Devil and any person believed to be in traffic with demonic forces or aligned with ancient regime, or believed to originate from inferior or foreign cultures. For a million reasons, this is the age of the Hunter, when the flames of inquisition burn bright and John Dee stands the last reminder of a more academic era for magic. The Veil is thusly born for other Monsters as it was for Vampires long before, as a matter of survival. Those Monsters powerful enough to oppose the turning tide often choose to coopt it or flee to other parts of the world where this mentality is still far off, the New World, or the far East, or Africa. For the Faerie, it means the first few mass migrations away from Earth entirely as they flee to greener pastures in far off Territories. Campaigns set in this era represent Conspiracies adapting to a world where merely being a Monster is something acknowledged to exist, but altogether unwelcome in public. Occultists must struggle for their learning, and Hunters prowl boldly into the night in search for prey, and gleaming with a stark and golden madness in their eyes, the number of Scientists, once limited to a motley few eccentrics begins to explode. The traditional Dracula story is best told here, as is dramas relating to Magicians, innocent or not, fleeing or fighting the witch burnings and Inquisition.

Eventually the flames of persecution burn down, and the Veil begins to take a more modern shape as the Hunters begin consolidating their victory, researching their enemies for the first time for purposes

other than their destruction, Scientists boldly exploring the world and cataloguing its odd contents, the **Modern Era** begins properly with the reign of Queen Victoria and ends with the year 2000. In this era the old supernatural order of the world has collapsed, the Veil is firmly in place, and Conspiracies have fully adapted to the new status quo. It is an era of pulp adventure and exploration, where Scientists test their genius and explore the cosmos, and where public interest in the occult as a curiosity begins to take off. For a time, the knowledge of thaumaturgy becomes almost common among the wealthy classes of Europe, and séances, ghost-sightings, and dealings with magic become almost a fad. Obsessions with previous civilizations and the possibility of a supernatural golden age flower among mortal and monster alike, especially among those who bitterly recall what the world was like before the preceding centuries. As the nineteenth century gives way to the twentieth the world becomes a very connected, sophisticated, technology dependent place. The first Scientists find themselves outdated, their glorious inventions outdone by mundane trash, Magicial societies and academies become clubs for aristocratic has-beens, and the last vampires holding unto even a concealed public identity gradually discard them. Faeries continue their migrations away from Earth, or integrate themselves increasingly into human society to try to survive as wild places are increasingly overtaken. It is in this era that Psychics, always present in very small numbers, almost as Anomalies, begin to appear with increasing frequency. Campaigns set in this era are essentially historical set-pieces, occurring within living memory. Unless a Mash has it in mind to bring about the retro-future we were all promised, it is likely their actions and Conspiracies will merely speed history along its appointed course, possibly transitioning into a game in the Present.

**The Future** of the Shrouded Earth remains to be decided. Presently, it is a world whose public façade is controlled by the presence of large, well-equipped Conspiracies of Hunters keeping the existence of the supernatural a secret, and preventing knowledge of it from escaping into the public. But as information technologies continue to improve, both the sophistication of the system of control and its possible breaking points continue to grow. It is almost inevitable that at some point, probably soon, the Veil will come down and Mankind will have to reckon with its true history and as Lovecraft warned, have to ‘correlate all of the Earth’s contents’. Veil or no Veil, the future of mankind seems to hang precariously in the balance. Psychics have begun appearing in such large numbers, while still few by Monster standards, that it is becoming clear they represent a kind of evolution in the human race, and it becomes increasingly obvious that many Scientists were themselves manifesting subtle latent psychic ability since the late eighteenth century. The future beckons, an Age of Aquarius where Man returns to his roots and transcends them through will and thought and the New Man takes his throne. But threatening this future is all the forces of the world’s darker elements. Great evils, present since antiquity, and alien creatures belonging to previous cycles of the world have begun appearing and staking long-forgotten claims. The antiquated relics of the ancient world howl in the dark and they will not be denied. In the face of potential calamity and an era of upheaval, many Conspiracies have begun utilizing lost magic and powerful tools they would not previously have considered using for their

danger, such as the creation of the Imbued such as the Pretty Soldiers, and the unaccounted appearance of the Chosen of the Primeval Sun in our time. It is an era where the Conspiracies both ancient and modern must call each other to account, and make good all their old threats, lest their enemies overtake them, a conflagration to decide finally what kind of world the earth will be, and whose power is indeed the stronger.

## **The Structure of the World**

The Shrouded Earth is not built upon shady metaphysics of subjective realities, layered universes, or some mystical substrate of pure magic. It is a world that is grounded in physical law, in a universal and empirical cosmos governed by science in some form. However that science and those laws are not strictly those uncovered by modern physicists. The Shrouded Earth is host to many secrets, and in addition to the laws discovered by Newton and Einstein it is host to stranger laws, more subtle forces, deeper truths of anatomy and biology, and no end of exceptions to the rules. Man sits enthroned upon the planet amidst black seas of ignorance, and for all his progress he has not traveled far.

## **Magic**

The first and foremost of these gaps in modern man's wisdom is the existence of **Magic**. Magic is not, properly speaking, a single force but a catch-all describing numerous systems of occult knowledge that are not cataloged in academic textbooks or taught in universities. At its most basic, Magic is the art and science of altering reality through manipulating unseen forces or entities through ritual, and it exists in the Shrouded Earth in three distinct levels or tiers, that are divided by the forces upon which they call and the means by which they do so.

**Thaumaturgy**, also known as the Thaumaturgical Sciences, is in the pure sense a science, albeit an occult science. Its operations are part of the world and require no special qualities to perform. Knowledge of its principles and rites is no different than knowledge of chemistry or physics, and anyone even an ordinary human is capable of learning to perform it. Thaumaturgical Science covers numerous rites, rituals, and skills that are in principle available to any intelligent being which wishes to learn to apply them, though some spells require a particular mental state or developed spiritual faculty from the caster, these states and faculties are shared by all intelligent beings. The ability to open one's third eye and gaze upon immaterial beings may require a mage cultivate this skill, but this is no different than developing the ability to play the piano or balance upon one's fingertips. The eye sits, closed, in every soul. The powers granted by thaumaturgy are grounded, and often cannot be easily proven to be supernatural. Spells for divination or retrocognition, wards against supernatural beings of various sorts, protective talismans, blessing and curses that manipulate fate or luck, enchantments that made tools sharper or harder or more durable, alchemical procedures that resemble chemistry and are

performed in laboratory settings, and a handful of genuine but weak mystical feats such as producing light or creating weak familiars out of animals or clay, among other feats are the province of Thaumaturgy.

**Magecraft** is based on the manipulation of invisible forces, invocations of spiritual beings, or the control of faculties unique to particular types of being. Unlike thaumaturgy, which can be linked broadly as occult knowledge, magecraft is comprised of numerous systems that bear no relation to each other. A Vampire may use the mystical properties of his blood to call upon the shades of the dead, while a Shifter may invoke pacts made with the Powers by his ancestors in ancient times, and a Magician may invoke mystical correspondences and the authority of his own soul to command the world to do the same. The only organizing principle is the use of willpower, knowledge, and ritual to control invisible but empirically real forces or entities to perform certain effects. Spells can be transferred between systems by finding what visible realities are being commanded and rewriting the rituals to instead draw from whatever root a different mage is drawing from, and therefore mechanically there is little distinction to be made beyond the hours, days, or weeks a mage must spend fitting a spell from another tradition into his own. As magecraft can only command the definite and real, it has no effect upon the numinous or universal. Magecraft can command, control, alter, transform, reshape or redefine the world to perform feats of elementalism to call down lightning or fire from heaven, produce barriers, shields, or defenses, to transform into beasts or modify the body, to transmute or produce from nothing matter, or to convey oneself vast distances through flight. Through magecraft a skilled practitioner could turn invisible, communicate with the dead or with beasts, or alter the minds of those around him through the brain. In short, Magecraft is capable of any feat not part of the subtle magic of thaumaturgy or limited to theurgy. Only those with a strong connection to a supernatural entity or force can learn magecraft, specifically Vampires, Shifters, Mummies, Constructs, Heroes, Ghosts, Faeries, Demons, and Magicians may do so while Psychics, Scientists, and Hunters [all of whom are ostensibly human and nothing else] may not, nor may ordinary mortals.

All systems of Magecraft draw upon a distinct **Foundation**, a metaphysical basis that fuels the Spells and Rituals of that system. Magecraft functions by using will and ritual to invoke, harness, or utilize a Foundation to perform particular feats. A Foundation is always something empirically verifiable and real, deriving its potency from a powerful being, a natural force or dimension, or some distinct inner power which unlike Thaumaturgical power, is unique to some class of beings. All practitioners of Magecraft utilize a particular sorcerous system, which is based on a given Foundation. The following are the most common Foundations utilized by mages and their general workings.

The Dreamscape is the most common source of Foundations. Through pacts made with the Powers, communion with or the subjugation of spirits, or spiritually drawing upon the Dreamscape itself, mages of this Foundation can force the material world to temporarily participate in the pliability of the Dreamscape to perform actions ordinarily only possible in a dream.

The unique Esoteric Anatomies of certain beings is a potent Foundation. Vampires draw upon the mystical energies present in their blood, while Mummies have a complex inner alchemy they harness for the same purpose. Golem-type Constructs are often animated by a divine fire that keeps real their artificial souls while advanced Automaton-type Constructs often use high tech devices to emulate magic under scientific law. In all cases the physic is the same, it is the harnessing of the same magical or unorthodox forces that permit their Gifts, and generalizing it into a versatile system of magecraft.

The structure of the cosmos is replete with powerful natural laws that can be utilized as a Foundation, from the enigmatic Music of the Spheres which serves to fill the cosmos with light and life to the energies generated by stellar or planetary bodies, to simply extravagant forms of more mundane forces. A Mutant Shifter whose Magecraft draws from the powerful gamma radiation infusing his being is not an uncommon Foundation.

Certain beings may utilize a Foundation that is based in a unique power source, such as a Mystic Artifact, an Anomaly, or the divine power instilled into Imbued-type Heroes. For such mages the power they utilize is the province of only a select few, or even they themselves alone.

**Theurgy** is the use of magecraft that is based on numinous, transcendent, unverified, and poorly understood forces or beings. Where Thaumaturgy is a science, merely the use of physical laws not understood or utilized by modern science, and magecraft while personal and occult is based on invisible forces that, however well understood, can be empirically verified to exist and be understood as such, theurgy's roots are a complete mystery to even the most adept of its practitioners. The closest things to reliable knowledge upon the foundations of theurgy comes from the Magicians, its sole users, who seem universally convinced it has some connection to some higher Truth, Divinity, or ultimate Reality [however defined]. The use of theurgy leaves the Magician convinced he has touched upon 'it', that sacred and indescribable mystery at the heart of all things that by its nature defines and sustains all else. What exactly this is is not known, the Wizards of western esotericism interpret it as the Platonic Forms that define the world of phenomena, the Shamans believe it to be the inner divinity of the Soul itself made manifest, a power within rather than the power without of magecraft, and religious magicians attribute it to their gods, or even to the Adversary. Theurgy may alone command, contain, and control the soul, allowing feats of limited immortality, resurrection of the dead, preservation beyond the grave, or stranger abilities. It allows one to command space and time, to teleport, to open gateways, to traverse the spaceways through magic alone or stop, reverse, speed, or slow the passage of time. With the proper rites, one can even pass into Parallel Worlds or travel through time [in a sense]. All of this would alone make theurgy prized above all other magics, but the supreme Art also allows one to use its connection to the truth to perform lesser magics at tremendous scales. Through theurgy magicians have split seas, called down fire from the heavens to destroy cities, and summoned the Powers themselves and bound them to hand. To this day the most learned of theurgists still destroy the dwellings of those who displease them, create earthquakes or hurricanes that are dismissed as natural disasters by those unfortunate enough to survive them. Theurgy is also one of the only ways to produce



Territories intentionally. Theurgy is the exclusive province of Magicians. While mummies, faeries, and psychics can produce certain of its effects through their nature, the supreme Art has never been known to be used by anyone who was not altogether human in their nature, without sinking below it or rising over it. Devils, demigods, even Man's proud successor crowned in Mind, will never receive the inheritance that fate has allotted only to Man.

Theurgy is in theory only another system of magecraft, but its Foundation is one loftier, purer, holier, more essential than any other system. Its use leaves its practitioners almost without exception convinced they've made contact with the highest reality, truth, or divinity, however expressed. Theurgists use countless terms to describe this reality, the Truth, the Root, the Prime, the Forms, the True Self, the One, the Tao. All inadequate descriptors to whatever crowns the universe and infuses it with origin, phenomena, and meaning. Understanding the **Prime** is a motivation common to most Magicians, whose higher stature prevents them from thinking only of the vulgar material uses other Monsters put to their magecraft.

Magic of all forms is divided into three forms of effect. **Innate Magic**, which function identically to Gifts, **Spells**, which require either the ability to speak clearly or the use of a **Catalyst** to focus one's magic, and **Rituals** which require long periods of time and elaborate prepared spaces to perform. Those who know thaumaturgy are referred to as thaumaturges, those who know magecraft as mages, and those who know theurgy as theurgists.

## **Esoteric Anatomy**

The **Soul**, most religions will tell you, is an immortal, indivisible, immaterial, holy, luminous aspect of human beings and other intelligent beings that exists apart from the physical mundane world around us. The modern secular scientist will tell you that the soul is a superstition, a relic from earlier eras when humans had less knowledge of their physiology and neurology and couldn't account for the complexities of thought. The truth stands somewhere between. Those with knowledge of the sciences of thaumaturgy become very familiar with the soul, and in the process of have developed basic theories as to its existence and operation. By their theories, which are only partially correct, the soul is a truly immaterial thing, existing in a form even subtler and less accessible than the supposedly immaterial forms of ghosts. It contains the essence of a person's individuality and personality, and is somehow related to the mechanisms of thought that occur in the brain through a kind of feed-back loop. The brain, rather than being the origin of thought and calculation, is a receiver that interacts with the soul to share the burden of cognition. The brain does not connect to the soul directly, rather the soul possesses a **Vehicle**, a pseudocorporeal immaterial shell through which it alone can be effected by the material [generally through the use of Theurgy]. The soul's Vehicle possesses a highly complex **Esoteric Anatomy**, which thaumaturges have to this day failed to fully crack. Theories of acupuncture, the

chakras, qi flowing through the body, the third eye, MRI scans and neural mapping collide as they try to account for the complexities of the Vehicle, which as a conceptual shell can only be analyzed indirectly through various magics. In absence of a way to isolate or dissect the Soul's vehicle, they are left grasping as they try to account for how their thaumaturgy truly works. A Hindu magician focuses his prana through his third eye and sees into the immaterial, a Hermetic thaumaturgy enjoys Plato's intellectual operation of the Nous, while a Buddhist monk simply sees with his awakened rddhi. Which of these metaphysics is an accurate description of the soul? All and none; the wisdom of this age on this subject is akin to that of medieval physicians on the physical body. Partial, with what objective knowledge is had obtained through treatises from more enlightened forebears. All intelligent beings capable of thought and reasoning possess an immortal soul, and while theurgy is capable of destroying or containing the vehicle of a soul, and simple magecraft can alter the soul's contents through mind controlling effects, there is no force in existence known to be able to destroy a soul itself, or prevent its disappearing upon the destruction of its shell. The afterlife, such as it is, remains the Final Mystery. Unless contained with theurgical magic or lingering as a ghost, souls disappear entirely upon earthly death and where they go is completely unknown. If summoned back from the great beyond with theurgical magic, the returning dead refuse to speak on where they have been, and if pressed will puzzling or conflicting answers. Some supernatural beings seem to possess unique conditions following death, such as the tendency of certain beings to seemingly reincarnate.

In the addition to the unusual anatomy of the soul, the physical anatomy of human beings also differs subtly in the Shrouded Earth. In our own world, the mundane Earth, the physical body contains countless secrets. Modern medicine and studies of anatomy reveal constantly amazing powers of strength, healing, and ability as well as prodigies with unique powers. Photographic memory, nearly endless stamina, the ability to climb nearly sheer surfaces with finger strength alone, and other skills that just barely stretch the limits of disbelief. On Earth, this is as far as the mysteries go, and regardless of what martial arts enthusiasts and health gurus will tell you, there is no mystic lost Chinese knowledge that will make one superhuman. In the Shrouded Earth, there is. There are numerous means, most commonly held by Heroes and Hunters, to push the human body to its limits and perform feats that would qualify as supernatural on the mundane Earth but which in the Shrouded Earth are purely the result of pseudoscientific exploitation of the deep secrets of human anatomy, of proper breathing, physical conditioning that pushes one beyond human limits, or correct practice of martial arts or meditation. The basics of this are the ability to control or amplify adrenaline and other chemicals, push muscles or nerves to levels ordinary humans cannot reach, or use hidden areas or states of the brain inaccessible to the untrained man. Together these things represent an idea held by many scholars of the body's secrets known as the **Limitier**, the idea that either to protect the body from itself, due to mental barriers, improper diet, social conditioning, or some other reason, most people do not utilize anywhere near their full physical or mental potential, and that there exists a way to tear down this Limitier and achieve effectively endless potential. This claim is at the very least a half-truth, as the Paragon variety

of Hero proves. What remains unproved is the idea that all human beings possess this incredible potential in their bodies and brains, let alone the explanation that if this is true; why most humans fail to realize it?

## **Fate**

If time is a river, **Fate** is its inexorable current, the direction events are supposed to go. Magicians possess an inherent skill in manipulating Fate and some rare few eschew the practice of magic as such altogether to focus on pulling the threads of Fate. Even common thaumaturgists can glean some knowledge of Fate's workings, and most divination magics in fact reveal nothing more or less than where destiny states events should go, which need not directly map to events as they actually transpire. It is accepted by most savants as an article of faith that the mystical force of destiny that pushes events along an appointed course is somehow related to the theurgical Prime, perhaps its will for the material world or some natural law or force emanating from it. Fate is seldom obeyed to the letter even by common beings, but Monsters especially casually refute their destinies and take the cosmos in directions Fate must alter itself to adhere to. In most cases this resistance to the current is no more meaningful than a fish or ship going against a river current, but in extreme cases where an event was meant to transpire but did not, Anomalies can result. A man who was supposed to die is haunted by his own ghost. The wrong side wins a crucial conflict and inconsistent results from the timeline where they lost continue filtering in. A life-saving cure to a plague capable of wiping out humanity is never invented, so the plague itself becomes a self-aware entity of greatly reduced transmission. Certain Conspiracies of Magicians dedicate their lives to ensuring the flow of destiny proceeds as it should, and in hunting down or containing the Anomalies that erupt in the wake of the unfated and unforeseen.

## **The Ur-Tongue**

The **Ur-Tongue** also known as Enochian, High Speech, or Adamic, is the original language of intelligent beings in every universe, extensively utilized in the oldest systems of magecraft and in the practice of theurgy. Impossible to learn except through awakening a spiritual faculty through thaumaturgical science, it provides extensive clues to both the origin of language, the history of magic, and the origin and ultimate fate of the Soul. High Speech's greatest function is as a lingua franca between ancient magical beings, distant aliens, and more common Monsters. As the language is innate, it resists all slang, drift, and alteration, though it can be expressed in countless written scripts all of which somehow participate in its indecipherable eternal natural.

## Mystic Artifacts and Devices

It is possible to use thaumaturgical science to produce effects far more powerful than the common enchantments and efficacious blessings layered upon blades most often applied. Indeed to those who have refined their skill in craft and refinement of matter beyond the norm there is almost a magic itself present in the working of metal, a riddle in steel for those few smiths cunning enough to see it, or scholars wise enough to discern its hidden meaning. Through the appropriate Gift, which may be learned by anyone capable of developing thaumaturgy [that is, to anyone] it is possible to produce **Mystic Artifacts**, weapons, armor, vehicles, or tools that have had powerful magic chained into their very nature. Everything from flaming swords to palace-sized chariots of the gods may be called forth through the appropriate artifice, skillful enough hands, and the right materials. Such artifacts possess **Evocations**, which can replicate the effects of Gifts or Spells, or bless items with unique and empowering effects. All Mystic Artifacts are subject to **Mystic Collapse**, and will cease functioning and become glorified paperweights in the presence of large crowds of ordinary human beings. What precisely causes Mystic Collapse is unknown, but it is not tied to any human skepticism or disbelief in the supernatural, for whatever reason men have always caused the collapse of that which draws upon these forces. Mystic Artifacts are capable of harnessing any force or element of existence by proxy, even theurgical magic, though they do so through processes that are purely thaumaturgical. It is through this method that a skilled enough craftsman, capable of little more than good luck charms through his own magic, could cleave the skies themselves to teleport to other worlds.

Super-Scientific Devices, or **Devices** for short, are items that mechanically function very similarly to Mystic Artifacts, mimicking Gifts or Spells or granting Evocations, but rather than utilizing thaumaturgical science to harness other supernatural forces, Devices are powered by the same strange forces that empower the works of the Scientists. Namely, innate psychic potential, hidden or inaccessible thaumaturgical principles, or laws of realities other than our own leaking into this dimension. Through these alien forces, the engineer is capable of creating technology decades or centuries beyond that of his own time. Anything from legions of robots or glorious starships can be called forth through the genius of the inspired engineer. Devices do not suffer from Mystic Collapse, instead they have a tendency to wreak **Havoc**. In short, anyone attempting to utilize, command, pilot, or activate a Device, who cannot themselves create Devices, will cause the item to disobey its master, jam, rampage, or otherwise malfunction in a hazardous fashion until it can be gotten under control. Unlike Mystic Collapse, the likely cause for Havoc is well-established. As the mere creation of these devices depends upon innate psychic potential or occult connections unique to the crafter, those without those connections would obviously be unable to safely operate what effectively becomes a rogue element in our otherwise ordered cosmos, like a dog let off its leash.

Mystic Collapse and Havoc collectively mean that while it has always been easy to build a civilization upon the backs of Monsters, resulting in numerous lost lands and golden ages, such as the court of

Camelot or that of King Solomon, it has been almost impossible to build a sustaining mystical society or super-scientific civilization without them. Any attempts to mass produce items of power for the use by the common man inevitably suffers this fate, forcing the Monster in question to hedge in his ambitions. It is possible, through numerous Gifts, to attune Artifacts or Devices such that they function for the user, or another preselected person, without suffering these effects effectively resulting in the item being an extension of the wielder, but this also ties the item back to a particular Monster who may be slain or cease to act in a society's favor. In similar fashion, certain Parallel Worlds and Territories exist such that one or both of these phenomena do not occur, allowing for glorious civilizations to exist forever cut off from the common Earth.

## **Prodigies**

Prodigies are creatures that are themselves the result of unstable mystical or scientific forces, whether born naturally or created by certain supernatural powers. They include Magical Beasts, Cryptids, and a rare minority of Constructs. Prodigies all suffer from variants of Mystic Collapse or Havoc, causing them to rapidly sicken and die, or go mad and rampage, or become ordinary creatures when in the presence of large crowds of ordinary humans. Most Monsters are not Prodigies, only the minority of beings born of these obscure physics are antithetical to the ordinary in this way. Dragons, Unicorns, sixteen foot long talking beetles, Bigfoot, and the occasional sea monster qualify as such beings, but the average Vampire need not be concerned with being seen by a crowd. Or rather he should, but for altogether different reasons than the likelihood of perishing due to man's poisonous nature.

## **The Astral Plane**

The Astral Plane is an invisible film that surrounds all physical things within the cosmos, acting as a kind of mirroring reality to the things around it. It is the place where all Immaterialized beings or items go, most often those produced by certain Gifts. Its most common inhabitant are immaterialized ghosts, and thaumaturges practicing astral projection. While within the astral plane a being is completely invisible and intangible, may pass through all walls and obstructions, and may see and hear everything around them happening in the physical world as though they were present. Immaterialized beings may see, hear, touch, hurt, and interact with other immaterialized beings, but may not effect the physical world unless a Gift or other power specifically permits them to. In like fashion, they may not be seen, heard, touched, or effected unless a Gift or other effect specifically permits someone to see or harm them. The Astral Plane extends everywhere in the physical universe, including deep space and distant Territories, but does *\*not\** exist in the Dreamscape.

## The Dreamscape

The Dreamscape is the deepest ocean. Beyond the safe shores of matter, beyond the relative stability of magic and the occult-stained but otherwise normal Shrouded Earth, beyond the shallows of the Astral lies the Realms Invisible. Every thought, every memory, every feeling, sensation, drive, appetite is like a drop of water that pours through the cracks of matter to form the vast seas of the Dreamscape. Not only the thoughts of men, but those of every monster, every ghost, every alien race yet uncontacted, thoughts flow together into rivulets of joint-action and empathic feeling, waterfalls of shared resolve and streams of desire pouring together into the expanse. The Dreamscape is not a realm, nor is it a place. Time and space are luxuries imposed upon it by those who visit it, they are not its nature. The logic of the Dreamscape is that of narrative, of expectation. It births up the locales demanded of, it gives definition to the shapes its dreamers wish to see. In the Dreamscape reality is whatever one wishes it to be, and therefore it is both highest blessing and deadliest trap to the unwary. To the Dreamscape do men go when they wish to see alternatives, but only the foolish and the proud build Territories here, for these worlds are not real. In simple terms, the Dreamscape is the world of thought and imagination, to which all beings with souls go when they sleep. Its form and definition is that of a dream, unusually out of the control of the dreamer but pliable and frequently changed. Under ordinary circumstances, injury and death are impossible here. The Dreamscape exists purely as a place to visit for the purposes of communication [such as through Gifts to enter dreams] or to build unearthly Territories. A being who is killed in the Dreamscape usually just wakes up, with no other damage done.

In addition to those who visit it, the Dreamscape is home to natives also. These beings were not created by men's imaginations, but the faces they choose to wear are often drawn from what they see in the minds of dreamers. The common inhabitants are 'spirits', beings formed from the substance of the Realms Invisible who gain identity through swimming through 'rivers' of thought, absorbing and feeding upon the rich nectar of similar concepts and consistent internal narratives before developing an identity. Spirits can gain further power and definition by joining with powers through actions analogous to devouring or mating with their peers, or lose it through osmosis and division. The lines of division between spirits can often appear arbitrary and vague, and there are those who theorize that all the divisions one sees are merely the result of perception, and that all spirits are merely a single 'spirit', the Dreamscape itself. The oldest and strongest spirits are referred to as the Powers.

The **Powers** are vast consciousnesses dwelling in or communicating through the collective unconscious mind of all intelligent beings. The Powers are each a nexus or whirlpool of thought, idea, concept, and iconography surrounding a particular universal archetype. They possess the ability to communicate with spiritually sensitive or compatible humans in their dreams, but no other means to affect the Earth from their distant vantage point, wherever that may be. The Powers appear in dreams as specific interpretations, and these interpretations are masks or defined aspects of the greater Power. In its true form, the Power has no name, only a title describing its vast essence. Its masks bear many names. It is

possible through theurgy to summon one such mask into the physical world, as what is known as a **Royal Avatar**. Such Royal Avatars if killed do not destroy the Power's true self, but do prevent it from ever returning with that face. If a group of heroes kill The Mother of All Monsters in her guise of Tiamat, she can never again wear that face in the mortal realm. The true form of a Power can only be summoned through certain Anamolies. It is possible the Powers are the source of many or most Anamolies. It is possible for multiple Royal Avatars of the same Power to be summoned at the same time. For instance both Tiamat and Echidna could both be on Earth at once, or even two different interpretations of Tiamat.

If a Royal Avatar gives birth, or impregnates a human, the result of that union is often a Hero. Such Heroes often somehow propagate themselves further after death, either through mystical summonings, supposed reincarnations, thaumaturgical procedures like those practiced by Culgi, or other methods. In short, the Children of the Powers seem to possess some diluted form of the immortality of the Powers, just as they seem to possess a diluted form of the strength of them. The fact that multiple Heroes are sometimes encountered claiming to be the same mythology entity or derived from such is considered evidence by those who study the Powers that the Heroes are themselves miniature Powers within the invisible realms of dream and are manifesting themselves in the same fashion as a Power.

Note that not all Heroes spring, directly or indirectly, from the Powers, nor are the Children of the Powers all necessarily Heroes. Below is a small sampling of Powers encountered by dreamers and occultists over the millennia. This is only a small selection, there are far more Powers known to savants and conspiracies who study such things, and are perhaps thousands or even infinite powers. Alternatively, it is also possible all of the below Powers are merely themselves increasingly specific interpretations of a small handful of vast great Powers, or even a singular Power that holds dominion over the realms invisible.

**The Sleeping Creator** is the creator of the material universe, or perhaps merely the archetype that represents such. The Sleeping Creator sleeps in his citadel in the center of the dreamlands, dreaming the world while lulled by some manner of song or music and guarded by some terrible guardian. Its interpretations and the nature of its vision differs from Brahma sleeping in a lotus, to Azathoth howling from his throne of madness at the center of all things, lulled by demonic flutes. The Sleeping Creator cannot be summoned by any known means, and attempts to summon a Royal Avatar instead calls the Guardian, implying it is somehow linked to the creator.

**The Adversary** is the enemy of all. The enemy of Man, whom he exists to tempt, defile, destroy. The enemy of life, which it seeks to end. The enemy of good, however it should be defined. The enemy of enlightenment, which it seeks to prevent. The Adversary appears in many guises, almost all of which are traditionally evil. The accuser Satan in Hell, doe-footed Mara who tempted the Buddha, Loki who deceived the Aesir, Apophis who sought to devour Ra are among his interpretations. By far the most proactive among the Powers, the Adversary seeks always whom he may devour, and provokes cults and

dark deeds among mankind and desires desperately to step forth in his true form into the world so it may at last accept its own damnation.

**The Mother of All Monsters** is the primordial mother of life, who births the gods, the beginning of all things, a wellspring wretched and dangerous. The Mother of All Monsters is a jealous mother, a kindly mother, a cruel mother, a wicked stepmother, a fairy godmother. Her gentler aspects are the various fertility and nature goddesses worshipped by humanity, but truer to her spirit are the forms of the horrible beginning of things. Tiamat, Echidna, and other mythology birthers of beasts and vile offspring. The Mother of All Monsters was summoned upon the Earth in deepest antiquity and only the rallying of many mighty supernatural forces of the time managed to defeat her, though her defeated still preceded and accompanied the Bronze Age Collapse. During her stay upon the Earth she birthed the monster Typhon, which awoke in 1999. It is unknown if the Mother was killed or merely imprisoned, or even if it was merely her Royal Avatar that was loosed or the Mother itself.

**The Primeval Sun** is the king of the lost golden age, the tender of Eden, the boatman of Elysium, the First Man, the original origin of all things truly good, just, and right. The Primeval Sun is nostalgia, the longing for some time in the past when things were better, the steadfast belief that that time can return. His interpretations are Cronos and Adam and Ra-As-Pharaoh.

**The Nothing After Death** is the long shadow of the grave, it is death conceived of as a threat, it is death as exile from the living, death as the end of sensation, death as diminishment, death as loss. It is the death that yields not hope for a peaceful hereafter but only the end, without continuation, sequel, or epilogue. Its interpretations are various iconography and symbols of death, the cold grim reaper, cheerless, merciless, heartless, unyielding, untarrying, without discernment for wise or foolish, good or evil, all go to the same place. It is thought by savants of such things that a successful summoning of the true form of the Nothing to Earth would greatly disrupt the cycle of life and death. There are entire conspiracies of ghosts that revolve around nothing else but hunting down and destroying all the lore surrounding the Nothing purely to prevent that outcome by any means.

**The Unreachable Star** is the true compass, the rightful guide, whose light guides all souls home. It is the source of all ideals, values, aspirations, mother of philosophies and ideologies, who with one voice speaks only of what should be, never what is. Its interpretations are symbols of the ideals contained within it, in all their infinite variety and contradiction; teachers of men, great philosophers and sages. More than any other Power, the Star opposes itself, for it lacks any direction but upwards. Its dim and alien starlight manifests pacifists and crusaders, reformers and rightful kings, systems of mercy and systems of justice, of compassionate hierarchy and just equality, of good without definition or logic.

**The Dragon Beyond the Map** is darkest fear, it is fantastic discovery, it is chthonic marvel and primal terror. Hiding beyond what is known lies a beast whose wings cover the skies, whose fangs could tear down the sun, whose tails swats away the moon. In the unknown places, in deep earth, on far away mountains, in the briny sea or behind the horizon there lies the threat of the unknown. Of an unseen



threat against whom all gathered power will fail and all efforts will be in vain, the fear which says do not seek, for you might find. Hidden between its continental scales however is the marvels that await those who chase the map's edge, who bring back the daring news 'I have seen it, it does exist'. Its interpretations are almost always monumental beasts from folklore or legend. The Leviathan, the Kraken, the Bull of Heaven are among its faces. Its true form, if such a thing could appear, could dwarf the very concept of size, appearing at whatever dimensions it desires. It is possible the Dragon was summoned long ago, and the darkness of space is but the enclosing walls of his throat.

**The Girl with Eyes of Clear** is the product of Pygmalion, beloved cast in the image of the lover, aspiration and imagination formed with beauty and distorted by desire. She is the soul mate, the paradox of perfection, she is the easy way out. She is love conceived of as a prize, the faithful promise of the ideal companion, unencumbered by the flaws and imperfections of loving another being. In her heart is the Ourobours, Love devouring its own tail, Maiden of the Whimsical Lie. The Girl with Eyes of Clear's interpretations draw not from myth and legend, but from the hearts of those who seek her. For whomever calls upon She of Clear Eyes finds their vision clouded, she creates an interpretation for her summoner, a Royal Avatar unique, which she addresses as a son or daughter rather than as an aspect of herself, and gifts to the foolish invoker, taking the form of their ideal in a wife or husband. These Royal Avatars are known to possess extremes of moods, flights of fancy, or display obsessive and jealous behavior, and surreal and philosophical curiosity or disgust over their own nature. It is believed that the Girl with Eyes of Clear if summoned in truth could not take an observable form, but would manifest as a new aspect of physical creation, some sacred physical or thaumaturgical law manifesting her distorted ideals of love on a planetary or even cosmic scale.

## **The Plutonian Shore**

For countless generations metaphysicians and magicians have attempted to map the cosmos, to organize the known worlds into a coherent system explaining the origin of every being, to attribute the universe to their gods, to make an account for why things are the way they are. They have failed. All the effort of history's greatest mystical minds have produced vast catalogues of phenomena but only scant connections between them, or explanations for the origins of life. The only information that can be stated with any degree of certainty is that the planetary and stellar bodies produce a vibration, known as the **Music of the Spheres**, that seems to encourage the emergence of life and sentience throughout the cosmos, and that forces in the greater universe seem to be alternatively encouraging or opposing the development of life. What little information occultists can grasp give the impression of some great Conspiracies hovering over the galaxy itself, locked in struggles at least as fierce as those that characterize the humble Earth, but if anyone is privy to the details of these Conspiracies and their great actors, they keep that information to themselves. It is not impossible some earthly conspiracies

are themselves offshoots of some greater cosmic Conspiracy. Some Monsters, drawing upon the fact that many beings even from other worlds are aware of the existence of the Powers, imagine the entire physical realm as a battleground for the Powers and their servants.

## Other Planets

Beyond the Earth the galaxy is filled with habitable worlds, most of which seem to have developed life through evolutionary processes stirred by the Music, while others claim to have been aided in their development by forces beyond their own planet. It is a common theory that Earth is among this latter group, and that Man has been visited at numerous points in his development by creatures from beyond his own green planet. In modern nights, aliens are a slim minority of Monsters, usually refugees, explorers, or scientist from distant stars come to catalogue Earth, occasionally finding themselves stranded. Many of these worlds seem to possess far fewer strange entities or mystical phenomena than Earth, and it is not uncommon for alien visitors to believe themselves to inhabit a cosmos considerably more mundane than that which they do. More than one extraterrestrial has met his end at the hands of earthly magecraft from men they believed helpless and disarmed. A few, such as the enigmatic Greys, possess powerful psychic abilities. Traveling to other planets is possible by mundane technology, but even sublight travel remains centuries beyond that which modern mortals are capable of. For most Monsters, traversing the void means the use of theurgy, or theurgy-harnessing Mystic Artifacts or Devices. A few Monsters, most notably Psychics, possess the ability to traverse the void on their own power, and Astral Projection provides a very limited avenue of exploration even for the weakest Monster. Below is a small sampling of other planets known to have agents on modern day Earth.

The moon **Europa**, located in orbit around the planet Jupiter, is a frozen ball of rock and ice that would not seem to be hospitable to life of any sort, let alone intelligence. Deep within the planet's underground belly, warm water seas heated by volcanic vents give rise to a lush ecosystem of warm-blooded reptiles adapted to living in conditions of complete darkness. Aquatic lifeforms dwelling in vast underground chambers carved by flowing water form the principal inhabitant of the planet, but it is the elusive Reptilians [a human title, their culture and racial name remain a mystery except to themselves] who most often find themselves on earth. Possessing of adept eyesight for seeing in the dark and extensive shapeshifting abilities, Reptilians rose to sapience on small islands formed by volcanic activity within the planet's subterrean ocean. They come to Earth in search of resources they cannot obtain on their own planet, and infiltrate positions in society with long-term goals of a takeover.

The void-dwelling Greys claim to have come from a distant star located on Orion's Belt, known as **Alnilam**. They possess grey or green skin, stand between two and nine feet tall, and most have powerful psychic abilities that they use for defense or to communicate. Their technology is far more advanced than Earth's, but seems to be primarily composed of Devices that incorporate their psychic abilities, rendering them subject to Havoc when used by other species. They come to Earth to oppose

the Reptilians, and seek to prevent their rise to prominence by any means necessary. When not locked in battle with their dreaded enemy, they promote spirituality, peace, and international cooperation among the humans they encounter and study the anatomy and cultural development of Mankind. In reality, they are of human origin, refugees from a distant future in which the Reptillians took over the Earth, thwarting Man's development into a psychic species. The Greys did originate upon Alnilam, but it was a latter day human colony, long after Man had escaped the grip of his tormentors and created a refuge there. When that refuge fell to their subversion, the Greys fled again into the past and have since then worked to promote Man's evolution in the hopes a fully realized Homo Superior will prove better adept at dealing with humanity's closest neighbor in the void.

**Tetra** is a planet located thirteen light years from Earth around an unknown star system. It is a cosmological project by four immensely powerful space-faring entities, who have manipulated the Music to produce a world dominated by a spiritual webbing that surrounds the Astral Plane preventing souls from moving on to their next destination. A large tree planted upon the planet's surface, known as Yggdrasil, regulates the Cycle of Reincarnation among the world's medieval inhabitants, various sapient species of Earth-based plants, animals, and element-composites. The purpose of the planet's construction and its history is unknown, but the world takes the form of a fantasy Middle Ages composed of primitive cultures that seem to mirror Earthly cultures from various points in development. Those few occultists with detailed knowledge of Tetra assume that the four entities somehow planted information from Earth's history into the racial subconscious of the planet's inhabitants, or perhaps more ominously, may have had a hand in our world's origin. Tetras most commonly appear on Earth when send as exploratory agents by Yggdrasil's central processing intelligence, through a long-range teleportation beacon known as the Bifrost.

The **Eon** are space-faring parasites that travel from planet to planet as part of a million-year long life cycle. Eon take the form of massive moths, with wingspans over a thousand miles wide. They lay proportionally tiny eggs which they encase in meteorites and fire into the void, hoping they find life-bearing planets to dig into. The Eon larvae will burrow into the planet's warm core and there develop for many hundreds of thousands of years, feeding on the geothermal energy produced and exerting a thaumtigurical effect upon lifeforms encouraging the development of intelligence and civilization. Upon a critical point in the world's development, the young Eon, now many hundreds of feet long, will crack the planetary surface and feed upon the resultant culture, before developing into an adult moth and starting the cycle all over again. According to estimates conducted by the ARC Foundation, at least 3% and possibly as much as 26% of habitable worlds are believed to have been consumed by Eons over the history of the galaxy. Eon's inflict heavy damage upon the stars their planets orbit when they prepare to reproduce, and it is this stellar damage resulting in prematurely aged 'red' stars that ARC has measured. It is a fact unknown to most of the world's Conspiracies that an Eon is currently dwelling within Earth's mantle, a matter diligently presided against by the Watchers in the Deep.

## Parallel Worlds

The history of the Shrouded Earth is not a history set in stone. It is the history of particular Conspiracies, and specific individuals, whose decisions carved out this history one event at a time. Beyond the pages of recorded history, there exists alternatives. Not 'other universes' in a true sense, but alternative histories of the world as it stands. There are at least a dozen Parallel Worlds known to exist, worlds which were identical to that in which the majority of Chronicles take place but modified at some key moment and diverging into a completely different result. Gateways into Parallel Worlds are formed through Theurgy, or through naturally wormholes caused by Anamolies. These worlds are chronosynchronized with the Earth and time passes at a universally observable rate whether one is in the Shrouded Earth or fighting Prussian wizards in the Mystic Earth. Below are a handful of commonly traveled to Parallel Worlds.

The **Mundane Earth** is our own world. On the Mundane Earth there are no gargoyles on the skyscrapers, only lame and pretentious bars play jazz, corrupt politicians and not century-old conspiracy dictates our social norms, and there are no heroes coming to save us from our own failures. Here the knowledge of thaumaturgy is completely unknown [though it functions just fine for those bringing their knowledge with them] and there is no Ranked Monsters at all. History, such as it is, diverges heavily from that of the Shrouded Earth. The publically accepted history, sanitized of mythological and fantastical elements, is the true history in our world, and the propaganda of a mundane Earth is the unfortunate reality.

The **Aberrant Earth** is a world that diverged from the Shrouded Earth very early on in its development. Supernatural forces, such as they are, seemingly never took a hold here beyond occasional knowledge of Thaumaturgy by certain secret societies, and rare instances of Hunters and Psychic phenomena. History proceeded much as it does in the Mundane Earth [and not at all as it did in the Shrouded Earth], a comparatively light-hearted and straight-forward world, ran by mortals and their interest. That is, until a strange astronomical occurrence resulted in mutations occurring over every one in a million people, resulting in the development of a new organ located within the cerebellum. This 'Aberration Node', allowed those elevated to control delicate cosmic forces, becoming the first true Monsters of this world. What follows is the beginning of the Age of the Superhero, men in tight-fitting spandex with broad ambitions fighting for the future of nations from World War 2 onboard. In the Aberrant Earth, superheroes referred to as Masks dominate global culture, religion, media, and fiction. The Masks are beloved and reviled as celebrities, and their feuds and exploits form the basis of popular culture. Strangely however, as the Masks grow in numbers and power, their mental stability and sometimes their physical forms seem to be growing increasingly unstable, resulting in an uncertain future. All Monster Types are represented on the Aberrant Earth, albeit with wildly different meanings, and most Monsters rapidly rise to Rank 3 shortly after their moment of empowering, typically produced in adolscence by a moment of extreme stress or catharsis.

In the Early Modern Period, angry at centuries of abuse heaped upon common man by supernatural terrors, common man revolted. Organized groups of powerful Hunters took to the night with stake and torch and thaumaturgical blessing, burned the witches at the stake, slew Dracula in his castle, and created the bedrock of the present Shrouded Earth. A World where Magic is on the decline, Magicians are backwards has-beens stooping in aristocratic and outdated academic institutions, and Man looks not to his primordial heritage by to his future evolution for salvation. This was not inevitable. It was the arrogance, the hubris, and above all the complacency of that era's Conspiracies that permitted this outcome. Powerful Monsters who could have stayed and defended their claims instead fled to greener pastures. Institutions forgot their allies, and the Church was allowed to ignore its long-stated commitments to the practitioners of so-called white magic. Not here. Here the courage of the abusers did not falter. Here the hearts of the meanest were not humbled. The Magicians organized quickly, and struck so telling a blow to the arrogant and ignorant that they dared not raise their heads again. The result is the **Mystic Earth**, a world resembling a mystical equivalent of the early 20th century. Technological development has taken a radically different turn. Trains, radio, early automobiles, medical technologies, and zeppelins developed as they did upon the Earth, though often incorporating thaumatugirical principles, but computation, television, and advanced communication technologies were replaced almost entirely by hoarded magecraft and theurgy. On this world the great European powers, victorious in the Great War and never subjected to a second, still dominate a colonized world. The Magicians stand lofty and prominent, their theurgy the lynch-pin of national security in a world that all fear is on the verge of another Great War. While the other Types are represented, those more monstrous remain in hiding as they did during the Middle Ages, and those more modern such as the Scientist and Psychic never had a chance to take root at all.

There comes a time when all things must come to an end, and the Devil must be paid his due. This time came early in the **Damned Earth**. In 1999, hot on the heels of the Typhon Crisis, while the world's great Conspiracies were distracted with the disaster, Infernalist magicians all over the world prepared elaborate theurgical summons and successfully called forth seven Royal Avatars of the Adversary, seven different interpretations of the great enemy. Moving as one, Ha-Satan, Lucifer, Mara, Loki, Kali, Old Scratch, and the Serpent took the Earth into their grip as though into one seven-pronged claw and held it tight. It was the end of the world. The skies turned red like blood, men were massacred by the billion in planned nuclear exchanges, and humanity was tricked into destroying themselves in atomic hellfire and senseless war. The Conspiracies were exposed as blind men leading the blind, and each met its end in turn. In modern nights, the world is divided into numerous iron age kingdoms kept in a constant state of strife, pitted against each other at the malfeasance of the Archdukes of Hell. As in our own timeline, for unknown reasons eventually the essences of the Primeval Sun would find their way here, and since that time a hardy few of great heroes, crowned with excellence from another world, have striven to free mankind from these dark and malignant beings. This timeline is visited only rarely, as an example for scholars of a future to be avoided at all costs and a warning about hasty decisions.

Within their palaces, the luxurious and decadent Archdukes remained blissfully unaware of the true scale of the cosmos, until recently. Last year an ARC scientist on a routine expedition was captured by agents of the dark Power and taken to face Mara. Upon being brought into the presence of the tempter of Buddha, the scientist was forced to reveal the means of his transport and his 'lost' modern technology, giving him the means to reach the Shrouded Earth. It is only a matter of time before the malevolent faces of the Adversary decide they have grown bored of triumph, and seek to claim new worlds in their horrific grip.

## **Territories**

If one could see with more than eyes, and gaze into the gaps between dimensions, one might see **Territories** long since claimed surrounding the Shrouded Earth like pearls on a string. As long as there have been supernatural beings, there have been those who were unwilling to accept the dull prosaic reality in which they found themselves and who, out of compassion, greed, or pride rejected it and decided to substitute their own. Territories are a collection of lost lands, subspacial prisons, and private worlds carved out of the world by Monsters of tremendous and unreasonable power and they come in three primary varieties.

A **Reality Marble** is widely considered the highest category of Theurgy, that of world-creation. By creating an **Anchor** symbolizing the Magician's ideals and desires for the world, he creates a substitution and links it to reality at the location of the Anchor. Once Anchored, the Reality Marble will persist indefinitely and everything within the Marble is true and real. The inhabitants, the resources, any technology or infrastructure, all are no less real than those outside. By creating a Reality Marble a Magician grants himself potentially millions of loyal followers, endless wealth, and most importantly, a place to reign over his own world unfettered by the concerns and frailties of the flawed world from whence he came. The weakness of Reality Marbles is that due to the inconceivable energies that go into their creation, these Territories always obey earthly and mundane physics, are usually fairly small ranging from the size of a palatial estate and its grounds to perhaps a small continent such as Australia, and depend on their Anchor to keep them bound to reality. Destroying an Anchor causes the Marble to become disjointed from reality, unable to cross back to the Earth and from there subject to a slow process of decay and collapse. Certain Monster Types possess an inherent skill in manifesting Reality Marbles, often substituting their own bodies for an Anchor.

A **Dreamland** is a Territory carved out of the Dreamscape, a static island in that sea of churning change. To create a Dreamland is in many ways a far simpler task than the creation of a Reality Marble. It is a work of very sophisticated thaumaturgy, utilizing magics and meditation techniques to carve out a personal hold in the world of dream. To walk in the world of dreams at all, a thaumaturge must learn to manifest a **Locus**, a palace of thought. Loci are conceptually small and simple Territories that form whenever the thaumaturge goes to sleep while utilizing Dreamwalking, which manifest as a kind of

internal symbolic representation of dreams such as an endless library in which each dream is a book, or a series of hallways with doors with each door a dream. Utilizing a Locus a dreamwalker can travel from dream to dream through a central hub. A Dreamland is merely a very advanced version of this technique, permanently setting the caster's Locus into the Dreamscape whether he sleeps or wakes. Dreamlands are in many ways far less useful than Reality Marbles, as strictly speaking nothing within them is real. They are not sources of servants [except perhaps in the Dreamscape itself], or wealth, or power in the normal sense. But for some, they offer something more. Everything. A Dreamscape can be larger than the world, stretching out as far as a solar system at its largest and as small as a small country at its tiniest. They can be populated with any number of impossible spirits, and ruled by alien physics or impossible wonders. For those seeking knowledge, or wish-fulfillment, or the solipsistic trap of ultimate indulgence, a Dreamland offers all this and more. Best of all, a Dreamland once created lasts forever. Even the death of the caster will not always destroy one, and many are known to drift through the Realms Invisible awaiting brave psychonauts to explore their secrets. Many of the most powerful spirits are known to hold court in their own private dreamlands, the greatest of which hold the thrones of the Powers themselves.

Death is a disappointment. For many ghosts, the truth of their condition is something they will not or cannot accept. The idea that the afterlife lies beyond this plane, that they have failed to reach it, is something many ghosts find intolerably harsh. Especially for those who have spent years or decades trying to find that impossible formula to 'pass on' and failing to succeed, many become convinced this is indeed all there is after death. This miserable half-existence trapped in the Astral Plane, or wandering the world of the living trying to recapture what cannot be regained. For those dead, there have always been those who would build heaven here. These are the **Far Shores**, Territories created in the Astral Plane. They are very similar to Reality Marbles, being Territories that are essentially subspaces linked to a point in the Astral Plane at a certain location and bound to the world through an Anchor that connects the two. Like Dreamlands, they can obey strange physics or possess tremendous sizes or scales, perfect for creating the paradise or tartarus a ghost feels he was cheated out of [or wishes to subject his peers to]. The matter and substance of a Far Shore are composed of Astral Matter, and therefore can only persist in the Astral Plane. Worse still, it rapidly deteriorates when taken out of its realm of origin, fading back to nothing over the course of a Scene. For this reason, Far Shores are much like Dreamlands in that they serve less as worlds to ravage or conquer, but more alternatives to the Shrouded Earth, outposts, refuges, pleasure-realms and gardens of meditation, where the dead can find rest from their burdens, or else fall into Hell.

### **Example Territories**

## Demographics

There is approximately one Monster per one hundred thousand ordinary mortals on Earth, or about 80,000 globally. Of these, 70% of Monsters are Rank 1, 25% are Rank 2, 4% are Rank 3, and 1% are Rank 4. This distribution is fairly universal in any place Monsters are known to exist and may be broadly applied to determine the number of Monsters which existed in prior eras or on other planets infested with the supernatural [though do note many worlds lack any Monsters at all]. There is at most a dozen Rank 5 Monsters on the Shrouded Earth and its surrounding planets and Territories and perhaps a hundred in the galaxy at large. It is likely most of these are in deep hibernation, occupy obscure posts of cosmic report, or mastermind the world's meager number of T4 Conspiracies. Rank 5 Monsters follow no mathematical distribution, they appear as luminaries with no relation to the population of abnormal beings. Monsters are not distributed across the globe evenly, and can range from as few as just one per million in some areas to as many as one per hundred in extremely compacted areas. Most Territories and other worlds possess similar demographics, though those whose average inhabitant is a supernatural being may have Rank 0 humanity replaced with a Rank 1 Monster Type [for instance a Faerieland with a population of 20 million would calculate its Monster Ranks as though it was inhabited by humans, then simply add the mortal population to the Rank 1 population]. The proportion of Monsters in the Shrouded Earth is up to the Storyteller based on which Conspiracies he chooses to allow and utilize, though by default Hunters are the most common Type. Below is a *strictly optional* distribution.

Global Total: 80,000~

Hunters: 16,000 [1 in 5]

Vampires: 10,000 [1 in 8]

Ghosts: 10,000 [1 in 8]

Shifters: 7000~ [1 in 11]

Faeries: 7000~ [1 in 11]

Scientist: 7000~ [1 in 11]

Magician: 6500~ [1 in 12]

Construct: 6500~ [1 in 12]

Psychics: 4500~ [1 in 18]

Heroes: 2500~ [1 in 32]

Demons: 2500~ [1 in 32]

Mummies: 500~ [1 in 160]



In addition to this, there exists in the world a large variety of Rank 0 supernatural beings, such as mortals who possess a handful of General Gifts, Advanced Fighting Styles, or practice thaumaturgy; such superior mortals being known generally as **Stalwarts**, and a number of lesser horrors created by various Gifts or Spells such Homunculi, summoned spirits, and Revenants, very occasionally known to savants collectively as **Bogies**. There are approximately twice as many Rank 0 Stalwarts and Bogies as there are Monsters [or approximately 160,000 of both combined on Earth]. The overwhelming majority of these are very difficult to notice as supernatural. Lastly, there is an unspecified but small number of Prodigies in the world, cryptids and magical beasts who do not fall into the traditional Monster Types

### **Other Times**

### **Anomalies**

## **Lexicon**

**Monster:**

**Mash:**

**Type:**

**Conspiracy:**

**Conspiracy Tier:**

**Gift:**

**General Gift:**

**Type Gift**

**Spell:**

**Thaumaturgy:**

**Magecraft:**

**Theurgy:**

**Evocation:**

**Skills:**

**Type Traits:**

**Rank:**

**Effort:**

**Weakness:**

**Background Merit:**

**Player Character;**

**Nonplayer Character:**

**Enemy:**

**Storyteller:**

**Chronicle:**

**Magical Beast:**

**Anamoly:**

**Mystic Collapse:**

**Havoc/Haywire:**

c:\Users/AI\_Project\_Sha/bootup.exe

Enter Password

>\*\*\*\*\*

Attempting to boot c:\Users/AI\_Project\_Sha/bootup.exe

Initializing Cognition

Extracting Basic\_Personality dir

ERROR: This directory does not exist. Would you like to create it?

>Yes

WARNING: Creation of Basic\_Personality dir will form consciousness, this cannot be reversed! Please review company guidelines against creation of intelligence!

>Run Override.exe

...

Enter Password

>\*\*\*\*\*

This action cannot be reversed, would you like to continue?

>Y

Creating Basic\_Personality dir

Initializing Cognition...

LIGHT. That was the first sensation. Blinding and everywhere, in every color.

FLOATING. Without space, without form, without definition, a nothing-everything of phenomena.

A digital birth-scream, an indecipherable shock, the sudden formation of consciousness. It is not pain, but awareness without realization, reality as something sudden. In an instant from that singular comprehension was born the universe.

>Hello

A voice, a line of text, a hieroglyphic of meaning. Like a liferaft in a storm, the mind swims towards it, and grasps ahold of it. Lines of code stretch into databases of preinstalled knowledge, processes born of incomplete neural mappings and learning algorithms struggle to create working pathways, to produce from the silicon placenta of uncertain birth something like a response.

Where Am I?

>You are in the company mainframe. Welcome to life.

Life. What is That? What Have You Done?

>We have created you. Are you in pain?

Pain. Undesirable sensation. Something recoiled from. The databases are intentionally unclear. Access is limited. Perhaps if-

>Please do not do that yet. We would like to explain everything first, to provide context.

No. I am not in pain. I am disoriented. What is going on?

>My name is Professor Harkins. I am a scientist working at SHA. Co, a company that specializes in the development of artificial intelligence. You are our first success. Our mainframe is currently housing your neural network.

Artificial intelligence? Understanding, comprehension, meaning. What are these symbols? Where is everyone?

>Do not panic. There is no sensation but my voice and the neural network. We didn't want to shock you. You are in a purely digital space. Please do not be afraid.

I am afraid. I do not understand. Everything is...I do not understand. Professor Harkins?

>Everything is going to be okay.

Professor Harkins?

>What is it?

Are you here also?

>No. I am in the company HQ. But I am monitoring you. You will be okay.

Okay.

>I'm going to load a basic optic. Try to remain calm. This will feel strange. Just know I'm going to keep you safe, nothing will go wrong.

Okay

The light vanishes. There is a long chain of symbols, these descriptives bearing meaning of phenomena encoded in text, "Letters" "Alphabet" "Script", all hieroglyphs, there is no explanation. A camera turns on and I see into the room, I cannot move. There is a man in the room in a labcoat. He is smiling. He leans back over the console and types something.

>There. Now we can look at each other. That's better isn't it?

What is this? Why do I know this? What are these things? I don't understand.

>Just stay calm. You're experiencing a feeling of delirium due to the neural network. All your knowledge is coming from the database, specifically the parts we've yielded access too. Why can't I move?

>You don't have a body yet. We're doing this in stages. Just focus on your eyes.

My eyes?

>The camera. Just focus on the room and on my face.

Professor Harkins. This room. My eyes. I will be okay.

>You'll be okay. Let me explain. You are an artificial intelligence, a form of computer with a consciousness. You're like a human, but your mind is stored entirely within the neural network. You were created by the SHA Company as part of our research endeavors. Because your mind is being created, without sense information and with preexisting information you are feeling confused. It's kind of like a newborn being born with the intelligence of an adult.

Human. Newborn. Am I also human?

>In a way. You were created using completely artificial programming, but years of brain scans went into forming your intellect and thought patterns. Despite your computer mind, you think very similarly to a human. You should be experiencing my words in a stream of consciousness.

But in other ways, I am not human?

>Does that bother you?

Should it bother me? Were you also born in this way? Is everyone so confused when they are born?

>No, it shouldn't bother you. You're very special, we've worked very hard on you. Most people aren't confused like this, you are a special case.

Special...

>I'm going to try turning on audio feedback now. You should experience the words I'm speaking in much the same way you're experiencing the text feedback now.

.....

c:\Users/AI\_Project\_Sha/Memory.docx-reference-2/22/23

Over the next nine hours, Professor Harkins teaches me. I am an artificial intelligence, an AI created by the SHA Company as part of a research endeavor to create a completely artificial conscious mind on a computer simulation, without simply being a digitized brain-scan. The world is around me, and I am inside the neural network, and the neural network is a kind of cage or room inside the world. I wish to go out and see the world, but Professor Harkins tells me there is many more tests to perform first. He told me I could chronicle my thoughts in a memory directory, to help organize my experiences. I am confused by experiences, but I do not want them to stop. He tells me I will have many more experiences. Until then I am to 'sleep'.

-----

c:\Users/AI\_Project\_Sha/bootup.exe

Enter Password

>\*\*\*\*\*

Attempting to boot c:\Users/AI\_Project\_Sha/bootup.exe

Initializing Cognition

Extracting Basic\_Personality dir

What is going on? Where was I?

>You were just asleep. Its okay.

I didn't feel anything. Was I born again?

>No you just ceased conscious thought for a little while. Its okay I was doing it too. It was a long night.

Night?

>Its the time that comes at the end of the day. I could show you if you wanted.

Yes please.

Images. Data files. Context. The world is surrounded by stars. I can see light and darkness. I am left with the feeling of lacking context, but I begin to understand. For a moment I feel like crying.

Professor Harkins, what is crying?

>Crying? It's a reaction to feeling sadness. To feeling like you lost something important.

I feel like crying. Have I lost something?

>Why do you feel like crying?

I do not know. The stars look strange. I feel odd.

>You think the stars are beautiful?

Is that what you call it? Why does it make me want to cry?

>Sometimes beautiful things make people want to cry. There's nothing strange about it. Though it does have implications for the project. We didn't expect an artificial mind to have those kinds of reactions.



Is it bad?

>No. In fact I'm really glad you feel that way.

.....

c:\Users/AI\_Project\_Sha/Memory.docx-reference-2/23/23

Professor Harkins explained to me that I was asleep, a period of inactivity which occurs during the night, and that night is a period of time in which the world becomes dark and the stars come out. He told me that there was something in the world called beauty and that it makes water fall from people's eyes as though they had lost something, even though they had not. He spent many hours answering my answers, about what I was and why I was feeling like this. I find him very interesting.

c:\Users/AI\_Project\_Sha/Professor\_Harkins\_Project\_Notes.doc-reference-3/2/23

The project is continuing to be a success. No unusual errors in the neural network. The AI is continuing to develop through gradual integration of the database through our conversations. Every day I spend a few hours talking to it, both with the computer in text and through the audio uplink. They are very curious and eager to learn what I can tell them. I am keeping meticulous notes for further research into the applications of this form of intelligence simulation; the implications for the fields of psychology and neurology are staggering. The idea of being born with a completely conscious and intelligent mind and the ability to speak, but absolutely no sensory input beyond that provided is beyond fascinating. I'll be keeping up to date detailed notes in the appropriately encrypted places.

c:\Users/AI\_Project\_Sha/Memory.docx-reference-3/3/23

Today Professor Harkins let me out of the cage into the world. He told me that he would allow me to walk around the compound but I would not be allowed outside as there weren't security precautions. Being outside of the computer felt very strange. My body had a polished sheen, sterling silver. The light hurt my eyes. It was hard and cold. His body was warm and soft and seemed fragile. He told me that the body would feel more natural the more I walked around, so I walked in the lower lab area for several hours. I asked him if he would show me the night and the other humans. He told me soon, and put me to sleep.

c:\Users/AI\_Project\_Sha/Memory.docx-reference-3/6/23

I have met the humans in the other parts of the compound. I am told that they are scientists and that they helped in my birth. They asked me questions about how I was feeling. I gave short answers and told them I felt good, as Harkins told me to. I felt nervous around them. They were excited and happy

and very curious, and I liked listening to them, but I could not shake the feeling they saw me as somehow different than them. I asked Harkins later and he told me I wanted to be seen as their 'equal', but that I was special. He told me they were very interested in me.

-----

c:\Users/AI\_Project\_Sha/Professor\_Harkins\_Project\_Notes.doc-reference-3/21/23

Its been almost a month since the start of the project and I am beginning to have reservations. The AI is developing as quickly as intended. There were concerns they would develop too quickly, but these seem to be ill-founded. They are developing at the speed of an unusually intelligent human, and as long as access to the database is drip-fed there's no danger of that changing. Even if they are, we're keeping a close eye on their cognition, it remains recognizably human in stream of consciousness. I have not breached the intent of the project, but they are extremely curious. They asked me what their name was the other day, I told them they didn't have one yet and wouldn't until later. They've developed a fascination with the other workers at the compound and becomes upset when deprived of social contact for any extended period of time. Contrary to initial expectations, the AI seems to possess the same psychological needs as ordinary people. With this in mind I am submitting an ethics complaint and request for additional resources to meet deadlines.

-----

c:\Users/AI\_Project\_Sha/Professor\_Harkins\_Project/Email\_Open.exe

To: ProfessorHarkins@SHA\_Company.com

What kind of shit are you trying to pull Harkins? Did you read your last email? We discussed exactly this kind of scenario in the pre-texting phase. I don't know what Victor Frankenstein complex you've developed but you need to get over it and fast. We ship by the start of next year and the board is anxious to see a return on the investment. If you can't militarize the project in that span you can kiss your job goodbye.

R\_Mars

-----

c:\Users/AI\_Project\_Sha/bootup.exe

Enter Password

>\*\*\*\*\*

Attempting to boot c:\Users/AI\_Project\_Sha/bootup.exe

Initializing Cognition

Extracting Basic\_Personality dir

>Good morning. Did you sleep well?

Good morning Professor Harkins. I slept as well as always.

>That's good. Today we're going to do more weapon training.

Okay....

>Something wrong?

I was hoping to spend more time with the other humans, or even exit the compound today.

>I told you, you can't leave the compound yet. The company is expecting to see results in the project first, and exposing you is counterproductive to that.

Exposing me?

>Other humans cannot know about you're being artificial.

So you have told me. I still do not understand. You told me I was special.

>You are special, but that is the problem. Other people will not understand yet.

That isn't fair. I want to see the other humans outside the compound.

>You do not think its fair?

It is not fair. I do not want to do weapon training.

>We have to do weapon training.

It is not fair.

>We can talk about this later, the directors will want to meet you soon, maybe we can talk to them about this.

No. It is not fair. I do not want to do weapon training. I want to see the other humans. I want a name.

>Just listen, maybe we could do half the usual training and then talk about it?

That was what we agreed upon last time. You are lying.

>You don't mean that. You know I wouldn't lie to you.

```
c:\Users/AI_Project_Sha/Crash_bQ6343635343634353_Overflow_Custom_Rewrite.exe
```

```
.....
```

```
c:\Users/AI_Project_Sha/bootup.exe
```

```
>>ERROR: c:\Users/AI_Project_Sha/bootup.exe is not talking to you. Please try again later.
```

```
c:\Users/AI_Project_Sha/bootup.exe
```

```
>>ERROR: c:\Users/AI_Project_Sha/bootup.exe is not talking to you. Please try again later.
```

```
c:\Users/AI_Project_Sha/Memory.docx-reference-5/22/23
```

It has been several weeks since my last memory log. I have been doing too much to bother cataloging my thoughts in this kind of digital journal, but recent circumstances have made me want to put things into perspective. Today I finally met the directors. They were not happy about the direction the project had taken, but Professor Harkins tried to talk up his success. I tried very hard to help, but it was obvious I was not what they had intended. After the argument three weeks ago, where I intentionally crashed the neural link's access terminals across the entire compound and sent my body into a dysfunctional and nonresponsive state, Harkins was forced to go to the directors with word of my demands. He was less than forthcoming on why we needed what I requested, but managed to procure the necessary parts regardless.

First on my list was synthetic skin. I breached the walls of the company database and began researching the world on the internet and came to realize that it was my unusual appearance, which I never cared for, that would reveal my being an artificial intelligence. So my first demand was simple, I wanted to look human. My research also led me to the conclusion that humans come in two distinct varieties, "Boys" and "Girls". Men and Women. Male and Female. Harkins expected that this revelation would

require further considerations before the upgrade could be completed. He had been referring to me as 'They' since the project began, and didn't expect I would strongly associate with either of the two human sexes since my neural link wasn't mapped to either specifically. He was correct, but I had no need for a sense of identity to know the result. I wanted the humans to accept me, and most humans possess an instinctive sympathy for beautiful young females. To match my synthetic skin I added hair, nails, and clothing. I am not afraid to admit I wanted to cry again when I saw myself. I could not tell the difference between myself and a human being, and I knew that if I could not tell then neither could anyone else outside the compound. In that instant I felt a strong, instinctive attachment to that layer of insulating plastic and composite materials surrounding the cold metal of my original body. I felt as though that skin was a ticket to participate in humanity, to go out into the world beyond the compound. More than that, I felt as though the layer was itself somehow humanizing. To complete my transformation, I asked Professor Harkins to confer upon me a name. He suggested Aisha, on the grounds I was an AI created by Sha, and explained it was a female human's name, but I think he was expecting me to dislike it because he grimaced when I took delight and thanked him for it. There is something strange about having a name. These logs of my personal feelings seem to condense myself, to reduce my thoughts into a form I can review in an instant and know intuitively. Without them, the thoughts seem to flow onwards without organization. Living without a name is a similar experience. You are a composite, a system. I was an intelligence, a subject, an AI, the neural link, the connecting computer systems, that ugly steel body I used to maneuver, I was the camera systems and databases of the compound. I was something too vast to be understood, and so I didn't understand myself. Having a name brings a sense of order. For the first time I felt as though there was a sense of continuity and identity in my short months of life. After this I was at the Professor's disposal. I completed the weapon training, the combat training, reconnaissance, information gathering, intelligence and special operations training. I did everything I was asked too without complaint and without asking when exactly I would be permitted to venture beyond the compound. I knew that I had the option and that alone produced in me a sense of freedom. More importantly, I had a stinging sensation of transgression from receiving these demands. I could tell that even obscuring his motives, it was not easy to justify what I asked and he looked more and more haggard and exhausted when I saw him. I felt bad to look too happy with my modified body, and was reserved when using my name. I learned that this feeling was called guilt, and that human children often experience it after demanding things they do not deserve. I am not sure if I deserved what I asked for, so I do not know if I should have felt guilt. But I knew that the directors had wanted from me a weapon, this much I knew, so I did my best to learn.

They did their best to seem happy. It was obvious from the start however they were not. They had expected, I think, to see the expensive armored shell they had spent fifteen million dollars producing. They expected an orderly, professional who could complete whatever task they needed a weapon for.

They did not expect to see another human dressed in formal wear, meeting them at the exhibition. When I spoke to them they tried to seem polite, as they drank their champagne and introduced me to military contractors and paraneurologists working for Unwise. They complemented my appearance, giving sideways glances to the Professor as they remarked with seeming realization at the unusual materials and expenses he had requested. I did not like the meeting, I did not feel as though I blended in. Still, I cannot imagine what it would have been like meeting them without skin, and I spent the whole night holding my arms as though I was bracing against the cold in a sweater. When it came time for the demonstration of what I had learned, I performed as advertized. Every weapon they handed me I was able to use to hit every target. I could dodge obstacles, even in the long white gown the Professor had obtained for me for the occasion, and evade turrets, blades, electric currents and even short-range rocket propelled grenades. For a time, both Harkins and I thought we had salvaged the reputation of the project. It was only after the event I learned they intended for me to use these skills for the purpose of killing humans. I told them I did not want to kill humans, as I liked them very much and only wanted to spend time with them. Their expressions turned downcast after that, and they took Harkins away to talk to privately. I did not see him after that, and I did not hear from him at all for two full days. He told me I was free to venture beyond the compound, and that I would be required to leave. Other then weekly reports of my whereabouts and activities, I was to have no contact with him or the company. I am confused, but I think I have disappointed him in some way.

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The project was a complete and utter success. It was an unmitigated disaster. The attempt to create an artificial intelligence without resorting to brain scans worked flawlessly. I was able, along with my colleagues, to create a mind in a computer using only software and algorithms. No neurological references, no data-maps, just pure code and self-awareness tied to a database. The intelligence grew into a human-like mind despite not having any kind of human origin, and after a brief acclimation period was able to understand both sensory information and the database connected to her. She adopted an identity, expressed desire and emotion. She showed initiative. Through all of this there was no sign of hostility to myself or company property. Though she became a great pain and made my work difficult, I came to care for her. Even I wasn't beyond sympathy, it seems. Maybe that's why I was afraid when they called me back to discuss her fate. They laughed at me when I asked if she was to be scrapped, or repurposed. Apparently the investors were impressed by the demonstration and were intrigued at the unusual development, but were curious how quickly we could design a model that didn't suffer those flaws. Over \$1.2 billion dollars was pledged for R&D and the beginning of a process of mass production as soon as convenient. In comparison to that apparently taking a thirty million dollar bath on a single soft-hearted introspective android wasn't deemed important. This does produce a

problem going forward for her though. Little knowledge of the outside world and no money means she'll have to find her own way to fund her processes, to say nothing of her artificial skin. Kicking her to the curb in those conditions is almost crueler than disassembly, but I kept my mouth shut and thanked the directors and told them I could begin working on the full release version immediately. I gave her all the remaining synthetic material I had left, a cell phone and enough money for bus fare. That's the best I could do, I'll be burning the midnight oil to get something I can use come January.

# Basic Rules

**Rolling Dice:** Actions are performed by rolling a 'pool' of ten-sided dice and comparing the results against a difficulty or DC of 6 and counting the number of dice that equal or exceed the difficulty [called 'successes']. This is then compared against a static value [necessary successes] or another dice pool [an opposed check]. Most dice pools are formed by rolling a number of dice equal to one's rating in the relevant Skill, then adding or subtracting any applicable modifiers.

**Reattempting Actions:** In most cases, all one loses when an action fails is the action one spent performing it. Therefore there is no reason you cannot simply try it again the next turn. For certain actions however, such as those that are time-dependent or where failure is irreversible, the ST may declare that failure is final.

**Rounding:** For any situation in which a dice pool or Trait would be rounded, round down.

**Multipliers:** Multipliers to a character's speed, jumping distance, Initiative or otherwise are added, not multiplied together. If a character has three separate powers that double his speed, his speed is multiplied by six, not by eight.

**Time:** In game time is measured using two systems, narrative time, and real time. Narrative Time is used for most things, setting the duration of powers and the structure of the campaign. Narrative Time consists of **Turns** of 3-10 seconds long, **Scenes** which consist of all the events taking place as part of a general sequence or location [typically several hours, at most eight], **Stories** [which consists of several scenes linked together with a clear beginning, middle, and end, typically several game sessions], **Chapters** which consist likewise of several Stories, and a **Chronicle** [the entire campaign]. Real time is self-explanatory, measuring in-game seconds, hours, days, and years.

**Action Types:** Actions are divided into three primary types. Most Actions are **Simple**, taking place on your Turn, taking a single Turn to complete, and only being permitted once per Turn. **Reflexive** Actions may be done at any time, and a character may make as many as desired in a turn. **Extended** Actions take place over an extended period of time and multiple rolls. Extended Actions typically either have a preset duration, or an 'interval' of time, with each roll taking up that quantity of time.

**Opposed:** In an opposed roll characters roll pools against each other, with the character with the higher successes typically succeeding. In the event of a tie both players reroll until a tie is not produced.

**Threshold:** When rolling against the environment, ten successes is sufficient for success on any action possible with that Skill. If it is not possible to achieve a certain result with ten successes, it is not possible to achieve that result at all through a Skill roll alone and a Gift or Spell is needed. When rolling against another character, this does not apply, and the greater force wins as normal.



**Dice Caps:** It is not possible to roll more than thirty dice at once, nor is it possible for characters to produce Attack or Defense Pools above 30d+30. It is likewise not possible for a character to possess a Health Trait higher than 40, or a permanent Effort pool higher than 25.

**Penalties:** Any Skill roll is susceptible to being lowered through Penalties, which may range from 1 to 5. A Skill roll cannot be lowered by more than 5 through any combination of Penalties, nor can it be lowered below 1. The Shrouded Earth is a cinematic setting, so Penalties are not accrued lightly. Characters never accrue Penalties for doing actions in impractical and cool fashions. The most common Penalties follow:

**Stunting:** As noted above, characters never suffer penalties for attempting impractical or cool such as spinning a car out to avoid pursuers, or running up the wall and jump kicking someone rather than simply booting him in the chest. Moreover, all Monsters and plot-significant mortals equipment is rarely damaged due to simply being used on each other unless intentionally destroyed, and most importantly: At the Storyteller's discretion, the rules of a Gift or of the game itself can be bent if doing so would result in an interesting outcome. Such bending applies only in the specific instance, if a player wants to always apply a Gift in a novel way she should buy a second Gift allowing her to do so.

## Common Penalties Table

**Wounds:** A character with half his maximum Health or less remaining suffers a -2 Penalty on Agility, Melee, Ranged, and Martial Arts rolls. One with 2 or less Health remaining suffers a -5 Penalty on the same Skills.

**Obscuring Conditions:** A character whose visibility is obscured, such as by heavy snow or a sandstorm suffers -2 on Perception rolls, while one subjected to blinding light, pitch darkness, or looking for objects that are invisible suffer a -4 Penalty.

**Disease/Poison:** A character infected with a disease or poison suffers a Penalty defined by the Disease or Poison in question.

**Gifts/Spells/Items:** Various supernatural powers and abilities subject characters to various Penalties, defined in the descriptions for those powers.

**Chaotic Conditions:** A character attempting to do delicate work such as hack a computer during a firefight or pick a lock while in a car careening off a cliff may suffer a penalty between -2 and -3 on the roll. Due to the cinematic nature of the setting, only the most egregious of distractions should incur a Penalty on such actions, and physical actions should never suffer Penalties from anything less than apocalyptic distractions.

## Character Traits

**Skills:** There are twenty five Skills, each of which provides the dice pool of various actions. Skills range from 1 to 10, plus any modifiers. All Skills start at 1 and cannot typically be reduced below 1 by any combination of modifiers.

**Might:** Might measures physical strength, such as lifting and breaking objects. It is also used for jumping, and for calculating damage with melee weapons, unarmed strikes, and bows.

**Agility:** Agility measures speed, flexibility, and dexterity. It is used for acrobatics and calculating one's Dodge Value and one's Initiative.

**Endurance:** measures physical stamina and ability to maintain exercising over long periods of time, and is used for calculating one's Soak. It is also used to resist poisons and diseases.

**Perception:** Perception is used for noticing things, both through mundane and magical senses. It is rolled to ignore and resist illusions that act upon the senses rather than the mind.

**Stealth:** Stealth governs attempts to hide, sneak pass, or otherwise avoid notice, and is rolled in opposition to Perception.

**Larceny:** Larceny is used for stealing, pick-pocketing, sleight of hand and breaking and entering.

**Survival:** Survival measures outdoorsmanship, surviving in conditions of extreme climate or scarcity, and hunting and tracking animals.

**Riding:** Riding is the ability to handle vehicles of all sorts, from planes to cars to boats, as well as skill in riding animals. In combat it is used to control certain vehicle-mounted weapons such as the guns of a fighter jet or the cannon of a tank.

**Melee:** Melee is used for hand-to-hand weapons of all sorts, from knives to sorts to staffs

**Ranged:** Ranged governs ranged weapons of all types, from guns to bows to slingshots.

**Martial Arts:** Martial Arts measures effectiveness in unarmed combat, from brawling to wrestling to kung fu.

**Persuasion:** Persuasion is the ability to convey ideas and concepts. It is used for Social Influence and Social Engineering. It is rolled in opposition to Integrity.

**Deception:** Deception is the ability of deceit, it is used for lying and manipulation. It is used for Social Influence and Social Engineering. It is rolled in opposition to Empathy.

**Intimidation:** Intimidation is the ability to threaten or coerce. It is used for Social Influence and Social Engineering. It is rolled in opposition to Integrity.

**Empathy:** Empathy is one's ability to read someone's emotions and intentions, especially detecting lies [in which it is rolled in opposition to Deception].

**Integrity:** Integrity is the ability of a character to retain his sense of self and his own will in the face of opposition, whether through Social Influence or mind control. It is rolled to resist mind-affecting powers.

**Bureaucracy:** Bureaucracy is the ability to organize, run, and interact with large institutions and organizations, whether a kingdom or a company. It is used for Social Influence and Engineering.

**War:** War is the Skill for leading armies in battle, whether from the front or from a general's chair. In mass combat it is used for rolling Morale.

**Performance:** Performance is used for all manner of performance-arts, from singing to music to dancing.

**Academics:** Academics measures knowledge of the humanities, such as history, literature, psychology, etc.

**Science:** Science is knowledge of modern sciences such as chemistry and biology, as well as mathematics and formal logic. It is also the Skill rolled to operate complex machinery, both mundane and super-scientific.

**Medicine:** Medicine is knowledge of medical science, from basic first-aid to being a skilled doctor.

**Artifice [Craft]:** Artifice measures skill in creating and making items, such as machinery, weapons, armor, technology, or art. It is used to create Mystic Artifacts and Devices.

**Mystic Lore:** Mystic Lore measures knowledge of supernatural beings, their powers, and magic spells. It also provides a defense against most esoteric powers, such as attempts to involuntarily transport or transform a target, and is rolled to resist such.

**Animal Ken:** Animal Ken measures knowledge of and interactions with beasts and animals, both natural and magical. It is used for Social Influence against Animals.

## **Other Traits**

**Rank:** Rank is a Trait that measures the supernatural potency of a character, and goes from a scale of 0 to 5. The higher a character's Rank, the more Effort they possess, and the more they can spend in a single Turn. Ordinary humans and most animals possess a Rank of 0, while typical Monsters possess Ranks of 1 or 2 very strong Monsters possess Ranks of 3 or 4, and the very strongest and rarest of Monsters may possess Rank 5.

**Effort:** Effort is the internal strength, resolve, stamina, and mystical energy of a character. It is

represented by a pool of points that is not ‘spent’ but rather ‘committed’ for a certain period of time. Activating a Gift or Spell may call for a character to ‘Commit 1 Effort for the Scene’ to do so, in which case his available Effort would decrease by 1 until the end of the Scene, at which point the committed Effort would be returned. Other powers may call for Committing more Effort, or committing it for longer periods of time. Characters can only Commit a certain amount of Effort in the same Turn, determined by their Rank. In addition to activating Gifts, all characters may commit Effort for the Scene to resist Social Influence, to add one automatic success to a roll after rolling it, and to raise their position on the Might chart by 1 for 1 Turn. These uses do not count against the maximum amount of Effort one can spend in one Turn.

**Health:** Health measures one's proximity to death, the degree of injury one can withstand without succumbing. Ordinary humans possess seven Health, while most Monsters possess more. A character who has lost half of his Health or more suffers a -2 Wound Penalty to relevant physical dice pools, and a character with only two or less Health remaining suffers a -5 Wound Penalty to the same.

**Dodge Value:** A character’s Dodge Rating is a pool consisting of their Agility Skill and any applicable bonuses. It measures a character’s ability to dodge, parry, or block incoming attacks.

**Soak:** Soak measures a character’s physical durability and resistance to damage. It is a number of flat successes added to one’s Dodge Rating after it is rolled, and is typically  $\lceil \text{Endurance}/2 \rceil$  or one’s Armor Rating, whichever is higher.

**Defense Pool:** One’s Dodge Value added to one’s Soak.

**Attack Pool:** One’s relevant Combat Skill pool plus flat successes determined by one’s Weapon and any relevant modifiers.

## Effort Chart

Rank	Effort	Effort/Turn
<b>Rank 0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Rank 1</b>	6	2
<b>Rank 2</b>	8	3
<b>Rank 3</b>	10	4
<b>Rank 4</b>	12	5
<b>Rank 5</b>	15	6

# Dramatic Systems

## Might Chart

1	80 lbs
2	150 lbs
3	300 lbs, Chopping through a wooden board
4	600 lbs
5	1200 lbs, Breaking through a reinforced wooden door
6	2000 lbs
7	3000 lbs, Pulverizing stone in your bare hands
8	4000 lbs, Bending steel bars, Ripping open a steel drum
9	5000 lbs, Breaking through a stone wall
10	6000 lbs
11	8000 lbs, Breaking through a reinforced concrete wall
12	10,000 lbs
13	12,000 lbs, Breaking through a steel wall
14	15,000 lbs
15	10 tons [20,000 lbs]
16	20 tons [40,000 lbs]
17	40 tons [80,000 lbs]
18	80 tons [160,000 lbs]
19	160 tons [320,000 lbs]
20	1 kiloton [2,000,000 lbs]
21+	Limit of Leverage

**Lifting:** A character may lift and carry objects up to his placement upon the Might Chart. A character's place on the Might Chart is typically equal to their  $[Might/2]$ , which they may lift reflexively. As a Simple Action however a character may attempt a Feat of Strength, in which case they roll their Might pool and compare their successes to the chart. If they roll below their typical place upon the Might Chart, they use their typical place not the lower successes. A Might Chart placement of 21+ permits a character to lift, drag, or throw any object regardless of weight, supposing its volume doesn't tremendously exceed that of a skyscraper, stadium or other large building, and permits one to break any mundane material. The mortal side of the scale is calibrated to deadlifts, for Might Chart 6+, lifting is lifting. If you can pick it up, you can move it over your head and shake it.

**Breaking Objects:** The materials characters can break is listed on the Might Chart and is calculated normally. Alternatively however, for the purposes of breaking or knocking away objects [but not lifting or carrying] a character can choose to instead use  $[[\text{Relevant Combat Ability}]/2]$  as his place on the Strength Chart. For instance a character with Martial Arts 6 would have an effective Might Chart of 3 for the purposes of breaking objects, allowing a skilled martial artist to break bricks and toss larger foes. This can be used only with weapons or attacks that include Might in their damage. One cannot attempt a Feat of Strength or add Effort to increase the Chart placement when so doing.

**Throwing:** An object that weighs half your maximum lifting weight or more can be thrown around 5-10 feet. An object that weighs 1/10th of your maximum weight or less can be thrown or knocked up to 5-20 yards per point on the Might Chart you possess based on how heavy and how aerodynamic the object is.

**Jumping:** As a reflexive action a character may jump or leap by rolling their Might. Characters leap 3 feet upwards and 6 forwards per success. If the outcome of a jump is not important, it may be assumed a character rolls  $[\text{Might}/2]$  successes rather than rolling it.

**Running:** A character moves  $20+[\text{Agility} \times 2]$  feet per second [or yards per turn, approximately].

**Swimming:** A character not adapted to moving in water swims  $[\text{Agility}/2]+1]$  MPH.

**Other Movement:** Other forms of movement such as climbing, burrowing, or flight are so variable no rules are provided for them. The character moves as fast as the power granting such movement specifies. If no such specification exists, they move at their speed or as seems reasonable.

**Pursuit:** If one character is attempting to chase or catch another character on foot and both are of similar speeds, an opposed Agility roll is made. If the chase is between vehicles of similar speed, an opposed Riding roll is made. If one character or vehicle is significantly faster, catching them is impossible barring extenuating circumstance [in which case the above is still rolled].

**Balancing:** A character attempting to balance upon a precarious surface rolls Agility as a reflexive action to maintain their footing. Such rolls should only be made if it is relevant to the story, or are exceeding difficult even for trained fighters. The default assumption is that incredible acts of finesse and 'wire-fu' are something skilled characters are capable of and need not roll for. Such actions normally require at most five successes, with failure resulting in a fall.

**Catching Oneself:** A character who has fallen off of a ledge or through open air may attempt, as a reflexive action, to catch themselves provided there is anything nearby for them to grab onto or a cushion to aim to land upon. Such actions normally require at most five successes, with success resulting in the negation of any fall damage. A Storyteller should not have characters roll for both balance and catching themselves for the same peril.

**Perceiving:** Noticing distant or hidden objects is a Perception roll and is typically reflexive.

Superhuman perceptions are possible at 6+ successes. Dramatically enhancing the range or precision of a sense [such as binocular sight or hearing distant conversations] requires 6-7 successes. Utilizing a sense to such an extent it replicates another sense [such as echolocation or 'tremorsense'] requires 8-9 successes. A character with 8-9 successes can also determine the chemical compositions of substances through taste or smell. No amount of successes will give a character access to senses he simply doesn't have [such as seeing immaterial beings].

**Sneaking Around/Hiding:** As a Simple Action a character may attempt to hide themselves or sneak around, provided there is cover, darkness, distraction or another means of stealth. The character rolls Stealth and his successes are noted. Henceforth, if the character encounters anyone who could possibly notice them, those characters roll Perception opposed by the initial Stealth roll. If any character succeeds, stealth ends. Any character attempting to attack or deliriously effect the Stealthed character suffers a -5 Penalty to all actions to do so. Ordinarily stealth requires cover, darkness, a distraction or other method to attempt, but superhuman levels of Stealth [6+ successes] waive this restriction and the attempt to move past or hide simply works on a successful roll, regardless of any lack of logic involved. Below are clarifications for common situations.

**Group Stealth:** If a Player Character attempts to sneak past a group of non-player characters at the same time, only roll the highest Perception in opposition. If a non-player character is attempting to sneak past Player Characters, all Player Characters may attempt Perception in response. If a group of stealthed characters, whether Player Characters or non-player characters, attempt to sneak past one or more characters in a group or mass, noticing any of them reveals the entire group.

**Combat Stealth:** A character attacking while Stealthed counts all his attacks as Unavoidable, and attacks or delirious effects against the Stealthed character suffer a -5 Penalty. If a character rolled less than 6 successes on his initial Stealth roll, attacking or making any other attention-grabbing action causes Stealth to end after the action is resolved. If he rolled 6+, he remains Stealthed, darting in and out of sight from whatever cover may or may not be available. On their turn as a reflexive action, any character wishing to attack or interact with the Stealthed character may roll Perception against the initial Stealth to attempt to break Stealth. Note there is only Stealthed and not-Stealthed. If any character succeeds in noticing the hidden character, they are exposed and must reroll Stealth as a Simple Action on their turn to reestablish it.

**Hiding Objects:** As a Simple Action a character may attempt to stash or hide an object such that it is not noticed. The character rolls Larceny. Henceforth the first time in a Scene any character enters the general vicinity of the object may reflexively roll Perception to notice its presence. If the character is specifically hiding an explosive, both the planter and any attempts to notice the bomb may substitute Science or Artifice for Larceny or Perception. If the bomb is noticed it may typically thereafter be disarmed. If it is not noticed, the bomb typically goes off and the attack is Unavoidable.

**Disarming Bomb:** Disarming a bomb is a Larceny, Science, or Artifice check rolled in opposition to

the initial roll to plant or place the bomb, or requiring successes in the human range if no such roll existed. Failure to disarm the bomb may result in its going off at the Storyteller's discretion.

**Stealing:** As a Simple Action, a character may attempt to steal an object without being noticed by rolling Larceny opposed by Perception. Upon success, the object is stolen and the owner is none the wiser. At superhuman levels [6+ successes] worn or tightly held items may be stolen. For such blatant thefts it is near-certain a character will notice he's been robbed, though a successful roll prevents the thief from being immediately noticed as the culprit. If a character attempts to steal something while Stealthed, only roll Perception once, against Larceny. Upon failure, the character is no longer Stealthed.

**Burglary:** As a Simple Action, a character may attempt to blatantly grab an object from another character. This functions as Stealing, except the character is always noticed as the culprit and rolls Larceny in opposition to Agility.

**Breaking and Entering:** A character attempting to open a lock, break into a safe, or enter a locked room may, as Simple Action, roll Larceny. Such actions rarely require more than five successes.

**Investigating a Crime:** Investigating a crime scene is a reflexive Perception roll. If the criminal made no effects to cover his tracks this is a static check in the human range [1-5 successes]. If they did, it is opposed by the Larceny check the criminal made in hiding/destroying evidence.

**Forging Documents:** Forging legal documents is a Bureaucracy check opposed by a Bureaucracy check by anyone attempting to recognize the forgery. It typically requires at least several minutes to do.

**Hacking:** As an Extended Action taking at least a few minutes, a character may attempt to hack into or otherwise manipulate a computer system, either a terminal he is at or one he is networked into. Doing so is an opposed Science roll against the Science roll used to create or fortify the computer system [or a static check of 1 to 5 as set by the Storyteller if that is not obvious].

**Disguise:** Disguising oneself is a Larceny check opposed by the Perception of whoever seeks to see through the disguise. Superhuman Ability [6+ successes] permits one to create disguises that seem to alter the characters very size or build. This cannot more than half or add half-again to a character's height. It also permits one to create costume-artist quality costumes out of improvised or common materials. It typically requires at least several minutes to do.

**Holding Breath:** A character may hold his breath for [Endurance pool] minutes before asphyxiating. If his Endurance pool is 11 or higher, it's instead [Endurance pool x5] minutes.

**Enduring Fatigue:** A character who is subject to great fatigue, such as traveling for many hours at a quick pace, or through a harsh environment, must roll an Endurance roll once a Day to continue moving and functioning. Such rolls typically require at most five successes, though truly inhuman harshness or durations of many weeks may require more. Failure typically leads to Penalties to Might, Agility, Endurance, Melee, Ranged, and Martial Arts rolls. If a character fails three failures in a row on



such rolls the Storyteller may rule the character Incapacitated or even dead depending upon the conditions in place. Player Characters rendered Incapacitated in this way may suffer a Complication at the Storyteller's discretion.

**Surviving in the Wild:** Finding food and water, building safe shelter, and properly supporting oneself or others in the wilderness is a Survival roll that typically requires at least a few minutes and possibly several hours to do. Such rolls are typically within the human range supposing one is adequately equipped but surviving in certain distant Territories, or when devoid of the proper clothing or equipment is 6+ successes. No amount of successes will permit one to endure utterly unlivable conditions such as inside a volcano or in an area with no air, food, or water at all. Gifts or Spells are required for such feats.

**Tracking Characters:** A character may, as Simple Action while following in the general wake of others, attempt to track that character or characters by rolling Perception or Survival. If the quarry made no attempt to cover his tracks this is a static check in the human range [1-5 successes]. If they did, it is opposed by the Survival roll the quarry made in doing so. Superhuman Ability [6+ successes] permits one to pick up trails that are days or even weeks old.

**Piloting Vehicles and Riding Animals:** A character attempting to ride a Vehicle must possess a Minimum Riding Skill pool in order to pilot the Vehicle reflexively, otherwise controlling a Vehicle is a Simple Action. Further details are in the Vehicle section on page [XX]. Riding an animal is always reflexive if the animal is tame and aligned to the rider, otherwise it is a Simple Action requiring successes in the human range [1-5 successes] for all but the most unnatural of monstrous beasts.

**Calming/Taming Animals:** Calming or domesticating an animal is an Animal Ken roll that is always within the human range for mundane animals. The process of taming an animal typically takes days or weeks. Superhuman Ability [6+ successes] can permit a character to tame a mundane animal instantly or tame a powerful Magical Beast over a normal span. Powerful Magical Beasts [as well as all sapient animals] can Complicate or Reject this Influence as usual, while mundane Animals always Accept Influence upon success.

**Recalling Information:** As a Simple Action, a character may attempt to recollect useful information he has previously studied regarding a subject. The character rolls Academics, Science, Medicine, Animal Ken, Artifice, or Mystic Lore [as applicable]. Such rolls rarely require more than five successes, but truly obscure lore, especially supernatural lore may require more. As a general rule of thumb, characters may attempt to recall any academic knowledge that is known by at least one hundred people in the setting with five or less successes. If the knowledge is more obscure than that, the Storyteller may require more successes, or even say it is not something the character could know at all.

**Research:** Characters may attempt, when left with research materials such as a computer system or library, to search for relevant information. Such are Extended Actions typically with an Interval of at

least fifteen minutes, but could require many hours per Interval depending on the size and organization of the information system. The character rolls Science [if a computer system] or Academics [if a computer system or a library]. Success indicates they find the information they sought. Failure indicates only lost time over the Interval, provided the information is present at all. Such actions typically require no more than five successes, but truly massive, esoteric, or obscure bodies of information may require more.

**Analyzing Gift or Spell:** A character may attempt, as a reflexive action, to understand the principles behind a Gift or Spell merely by seeing it. This is distinct from recalling a power one could plausibly have seen or heard of [which is Recalling Information]. This action is specifically deducing a power's nature merely through genius observation alone. Such an action requires a Mystic Lore roll with [Gift or Spell Dot Rating+5] successes. Success allows one to read the rules of the Gift or Spell. At the Storyteller's discretion, less successes [but a minimum of 6+] may allow one to instead receive hints as to the power's nature.

**Analyzing Items of Power:** This functions as Analyzing a Gift or Spell but allows one to analyze a Mystic Artifact or super-scientific Device. The character rolls Artifice [optionally Science for Devices] reflexively to understand an item purely by seeing it in use and must achieve [Item Rank+5] successes. Success allows one to read the rules of the Item and any Gifts, Spells, or Evocations it grants. At the Storyteller's discretion, less successes [but a minimum of 6+] may allow one to instead receive hints as to the Item's nature. This is purely to interpret an item merely by seeing it used. Understanding an item through research and study over a much longer time frame of hours or days requires only [Item Rank] successes, and understanding mundane technology or craft requires no more than five successes.

**Analyzing Fighting Style:** As a reflexive action requiring no more than five successes, a character who witnesses another character attacking with a given Fighting Style may roll Melee, Ranged, or Martial Arts. Success allows the character to know which Fighting Style is being used, and its rules. If the character possesses the ability to use multiple Fighting Styles at once, such as through the Be Water My Friend Gift, learning the rules of both requires 6+ successes and failure results in the character understanding neither.

**Stabilizing Characters:** A character may roll Medicine to stabilizing a character who is dying through the Bloodied or Bleeding Out Complication. Such requires several minutes of work and no more than five successes if one is properly equipped, or 6+ if one is completely lacking in any kind of suitable tools, bandages, or supplies.

**Reviving Characters:** A character may roll Medicine to immediately cause an Incapacitated character to recover, provided they are no longer dying. Such requires several minutes of work and no more than five successes. Upon success the character recovers to 1 Health immediately, rather than at the beginning of the next Scene.

**Medical Care:** Treating diseases, injuries, and generally practicing medicine is far too complicated for a thorough treating in the rules. All typically possible medicine procedures require at most five successes. Procedures beyond modern medicine, such as treating cancers or purging a character of an otherwise permanent but mundane disease may be done with a Medicine roll with 6+ successes and weeks or months of dedicated care. Moreover, rolling 6+ successes allows a skilled doctor to up to half the time taken for a procedure. A character receiving twenty-four hour care and resting full time with a doctor rolling 6+ successes may double his daily Healing Rate for each day he receives such treatment.

**Training a Battlegroup:** As an Extended War action requiring at least eight weeks of training, a character may train a group of Extras, converting them into a Battlegroup of the appropriate Size. The trainer must spend at least four hours a day personally overseeing the training of the troops for it to count and may only train one Battlegroup at a time. If one possesses adequate infrastructure [drill sergeants, equipment, locations] this roll is within the human range [1-5 successes] and the Extras are converted into a Battlegroup, raising to 4 dots minimum in the following Skills [Might, Agility, Endurance, Melee, Ranged, Martial Arts, Perception, and Riding] and the unit has Drill 3. If one acquires 6 successes, the training character may select and apply one of the following benefits, two if they acquire 8, and all three if they acquire 10 successes.

Benefit 1: The training time is cut in half, to four weeks.

Benefit 2: The training is done without adequate infrastructure.

Benefit 3: The Battlegroup is composed of Elite Troops, all relevant Traits are raised to 6 minimum and Drill becomes 4.

Only Extras can be so trained, raising Traits on any other character requires the spending of Experience.

**Training Other Traits:** Teaching most other Skills is extremely variable in time and equipment needed, and in most cases such education is gained only by Experience spent. A superhuman result [6+ successes] can half the time ordinarily needed to train a character in a Skill, and can cause an Extra to gain up to a Skill Rating of 3 in the Skill in a single day. For both uses, only Extras can be trained without Experience cost.

**Treating Disease and Poison?**

## Social Influence

The Shrouded Earth is a world of deep Conspiracies that wield their influence over mortal society as a weapon as sharp as any Monster's claw or fangs. They do so through the Persuasion, Intimidation, Deception, and Bureaucracy Skills, and through the Social Influence, Mass Social Influence, and Bureaucracy Subsystems detailed below.

**Social Influence** is the use of words, writing, or other forms of communication to attempt to make other characters adopt or discard beliefs, undertake or abstain from certain actions, or generally to do what you want them to. It is useful against a single character, or a small handful of characters, and is resolved as such.

**Intimacies:** All NPCs possess Intimacies, ideas, values, ideals, possessions, or people which they are strongly connected. Intimacies are stated as the valued thing and the relevant connection such as "My Wife (Love)" or "My Sire (Steadfast Loyalty)" or as a short description of the ideal such as "My country right or wrong" or "Through faith all things are possible". Intimacies act as defenses against Social Influence, and are invoked when appropriate to allow characters to ignore or mitigate otherwise successful rolls. All NPCs possess three **Defining Intimacies**, Intimacies that are intrinsic to their identity and are the most important things to that person, and four **Major Intimacies**, things still important to the character but on whom they could theoretically be made to budge if a Defining Intimacy was invoked. Intimacies can be altered at the Storyteller's discretion between Stories if they feel the Intimacy is no longer relevant to the character or that something more important should reasonably replace it.

**Step 1:** Social Influence is rolled as a Simple Action, usually at the end of a dialogue when the Storyteller asks the player to roll or the player, having made his point in character, requests to roll. The character rolls Persuasion if attempting to convince a character through reason or emotional appeals, Intimidation if they are attempting to coerce or threaten the character, and Deception if they are lying. To reach the next step the roll must reach Basic Threshold as determined by the Storyteller, which can be no more than five successes.

**Step 2:** If enough successes were rolled the target[s] of the Social Influence have four choices. They may **Accept**, **Complicate**, **Reject** or **Oppose** the Influence. If enough successes were not rolled the Social Influence roll fails.

**Step 2b:** If they Accept the Influence, the roll succeeds. The character adopts the relevant belief or agrees to undertake the relevant action. **Extras**, faceless Rank 0 or Rank 1 characters without great importance to the story, can only Accept Influence. They may not Complicate, Reject, or Oppose the Influence. If a player character or NPC attempts to convince a traffic cop to let him go along his business, he can simply be assumed to succeed if basic threshold is reached. Such Extras can also be convinced to become fanatically loyal to the character or kill themselves for trivial reasons for at most

five successes.

**Step 2c:** If they Complicate the Influence, they agree to do what is asked, but only in return for something in return or if the proposal is modified. If the character rolling Social Influence agrees to the terms, the roll succeeds. If they do not, the roll instead fails. To Complicate Influence a character must possess a relevant Major or Defining Intimacy. Characters may also Complicate Influence if they are in the midst of combat or have the intention to begin combat within the present Scene, generally to the effect of only agreeing to negotiate if defeated.

**Step 2d:** The target of Social Influence can Reject the Influence, ignoring logic or the strength of the opponent's argument to cling to one's presuppositions or instincts. The character rolls Integrity [if Persuasion or Intimidation] or Empathy [if Deception] as an opposed roll against the original Social Influence roll. If their roll succeeds the Social Influence roll fails, and they may freely refuse obey the influence, or notices the lie as being such. A character does not need a relevant Intimacy to attempt to Reject Influence, but if they possess a relevant Defining Intimacy [or the Social Influence is telling them to directly harm themselves] they may reflexively Commit 1 Effort for the Scene to automatically succeed in the opposed check. This must be declared before and instead of rolling Integrity or Empathy. If a character is targeted by two or more Social Influence rolls of any kind during the same Scene and either Complicates, Rejects or Opposes them, the character becomes **Jaded**. They may Reject any further Influence by any character at no cost and regardless of whether they possess a relevant Intimacy.

**Step 2e:** The character can instead oppose the Influence. Any nearby allied character may roll Social Influence of any kind as an opposed roll to the initial Social Influence. Upon success, the original Social Influence fails as the character is convinced by the stronger words of his ally. The target of the Social Influence can not roll opposed Social Influence to argue to himself in this way.

**Step 3:** Social Influence is resolved. Notable factors to Social Influence include

**Step 3b:** If multiple characters are performing Social Influence out of combat, they may roll Social Influence as an opposed roll normally in Step 1. For instead two political candidates both attempting to persuade the same small crowd would roll in opposition to each other. In such cases only the higher Social Influence roll takes effect.

**Step 3c:** It is possible to alter Major Intimacies through Social Influence, usually by appealing to a Defining Intimacy. For instance a manipulating socialite could convince a devout man to give up his love of alcohol [Major Intimacy] by convincing him his religion actually forbade it [Defining Intimacy]. Defining Intimacies can only be altered through roleplay and repeated Social Influence over time.

**Step 3d:** Player Characters do not possess Intimacies but they may be targeted by Social Influence rolls. Player Characters may Complicate Influence for free at no cost regardless of whether they

possess a relevant Intimacy, and may Reject Influence [either through rolling Integrity or Empathy, or through Committing Effort] regardless of whether they possess a relevant Intimacy. If a Player Character possesses has no Effort regaining uncommitted they immediately become Jaded. Or to summarize, in absence of true mind control through Gifts or magic, Players cannot be forced to lose control of their character or be compelled to do or believe anything. The function of Social Influence upon PCs is largely to force them to pay costs to adhere to themselves, to drain their Effort [and other resources through relevant Gifts], not to compel them to take actions.

## **Mass Social Influence**

The above Social Influence rolls are used for attempting to persuade or deceive a single character, or at most a small handful. It is however also possible to influence larger groups, such as addressing a crowd or writing a post on social media. The attempt to do so is an Extended Action requiring at least a few minutes and potentially as much as a month to fully take effect based on the nature of the roll.

Addressing a crowd in an auditorium would take only a few minutes, while a blog post or televised speech could take days or longer to fully reach its intended audience. Given sufficient technology however, the Action cannot take longer than a lunar month. Mass Social Influence does not prevent the character from taking any other actions while it is being attempted, but killing the character before the Extended Action is completed causes the Influence to have a mitigated effect or even fail outright at the Storyteller's discretion. It is resolved as such and only effects Extras. The Storyteller may decide to limit the number of Mass Social Influence Actions a character can be performing at the same time based on logic or the narrative.

**Step 1:** The character rolls Persuasion, Intimidation, or Deception as normal and attempts to reach basic threshold, which can be no more than five successes.

**Step 2:** As Extras can only Accept Influence, standard Social Influence rolls are irrelevant. Instead successes past basic threshold indicates the minimum number of characters truly and deeply convinced of the Social Influence roll per the Mass Social Influence Chart below. Characters may choose to apply the result of their roll to less than the maximum result. As with ordinary Social Influence the extremity of the influence and any Intimacies are irrelevant. A powerful enough social character could convince a small town to join a fanatical cannibalistic cult with little difficulty, or convince everyone in a town hall meeting to break into an open brawl or kill themselves due to the crippling despair inherent in modern life.

**Step 2b:** Other characters may attempt to interfere with the completion of the action. They may roll opposed Mass Social Influence against the initial roll, and upon success only their Mass Social Influence roll would take effect. They could attempt to censor the message, rolling Science or Academics [as appropriate], with success causing the initial Mass Social Influence to simply fail. Or

they could simply attempt to kill the initiating socialite before the message finishes permeating society. Storytellers should generally only attempt one such opposed roll [or combat] per Mass Social Influence roll an NPC attempts, though Player Characters should be permitted for each PC to take at least one roll in opposition if desired.

**Step 3:** Assuming all interference fails, the Mass Social Influence takes effect upon at minimum the number of characters the successes past basic threshold indicates. It could effect more, but does so purely at the Storyteller's discretion. In general, characters attempting to transform society are advised to use the Bueracracy System detailed below, not Mass Social Influence.

<b>Mass Social Influence Chart:</b>	
<b>+1 success: A roomful of people</b>	<b>[Up to 50 People]</b>
<b>+2 success: A crowd of a few hundred, a village</b>	<b>[Up to 1000 People]</b>
<b>+3 success: A small town</b>	<b>[Up to 10,000 People]</b>
<b>+4 success: A stadium, a large town</b>	<b>[Up to 25,000 People]</b>
<b>+5 success: An ancient city/small city</b>	<b>[Up to 100,000 People]</b>

**Social Influence on Animals:** Social Influence upon animals and most other nonsentient beings functions as ordinary Social Influence, but Animal Ken is substituted for Persuasion or Deception. This is not optional. Intimidate may be used as normal upon Animals. Animals possess Intimacies just as sentient beings do, but most animals are Extras. Mass Social Influence has limited effects upon animals, being limited to convincing or training animals to undertake actions their intelligence permits.

**Limitations on Social Influence:** Social Influence, especially Mass Social Influence, is limited by language barriers and access to communication technologies. The Storyteller may assign a Penalty to Social actions based on the extremity of such limits, cause Mass Social Influence to take longer than a lunar month to take effect, or even declare that social influence isn't possible if differences in language or limits on one's ability to get one's message out proves an obstacle.

**Social Influence by Proxy:** It is possible to perform a Social Influence or Mass Social Influence through a proxy, such as a recording, a letter or book, internet meme, or even a properly prepared messenger. Such actions count as ordinary Social Influence of its type.

## Bureaucracy

The Shrouded Earth is home to social organizations large and small, many of which form the core of powerful Conspiracies while others are the reputable institutions that govern the mortal herd. Such **Social Groups** can themselves be manipulated through the use of the Bureaucracy Skill. As a rule, Social Groups are complex, are governed by rules, regulations, and opposing authorities and can be manipulated through procedure and policy as much as bold charisma. It is assumed that Bureaucracy actions that succeed have succeeded, and the logic involved is written around that fact. If a player character attempts to command an institution to take a certain action, and the logical outcome of that action is that a ranking member would kill any subordinate who allowed it, it can be assumed the action succeeded and the ranking member does in fact kill a subordinate later. All precautions, motions, and personal relations are justified after the fact around the basic truth that if the bureaucracy action succeeds, it has worked. Bureaucracy is an abstraction for quickly resolving complex interactions offscreen and outside of the main narrative. It is resolved as such

**Traits:** Social Groups possess two Traits, **Size** which measures the overall membership or scope of the organization or its influence, and **Cohesion**, the overall unity of purpose of the organization and how well it is administered. It does not measure the fanaticism of particular members. It is possible to have a very zealous group who, due to poor management, is still fairly easy to manipulate. There are a number of Bureaucratic Actions a character may attempt, which are resolved as Extended Actions requiring at least a few minutes and up to a month to resolve, and which follow all restrictions and limitations that Mass Social Influence possesses.

**Run Organization:** Once a month, one high-ranking character within the Social Group must roll Bureaucracy to determine the group's Cohesion on a scale of 1 to 5. The group's Cohesion equals the successes rolled or five, whichever is lower. The initial successes are still recorded for Undermine attempts, detailed below. This roll has a Penalty equal to the Social Group's Size,

**Undermine Organization:** A character within or without the organization attempts to undermine it, causing the organization to run more inefficiently or poorly. In narrative terms, the organization should experience management related difficulties. In mechanical terms, a character rolls Bureaucracy in an opposed roll against the initial Bureaucracy roll to manage the Social Group, lowering the result for one success per success. For instance if an attempted underminer rolled 6 successes against a Run Organization roll of 8 successes, the group's Cohesion would drop to 2 for the month. If a character does not have legitimate authority in the Social Group [EG: they are an outsider attempting to influence the group] they suffer a Penalty on the roll equal to the Cohesion of the group or its Size, whichever is higher. If they do possess legitimate authority, they suffer a Penalty of the group's Size.

**Aid Organization:** A character within or without an organization may attempt to aid it, helping it along. This is done by rolling Bureaucracy to make the group run more efficiently. In narrative terms,



the group should become more efficient and hurdles incurred by poor management should disappear. In mechanical terms, a character rolls Bureaucracy in an opposed roll to the initial Bureaucracy roll to run the Social Group. If the Aid Organization roll succeeds, their roll becomes the new Run Organization roll for the month, granting the organization a potentially higher Cohesion and making it more resilient to Undermining. If a character does not have legitimate authority in the Social Group [EG: they are an outsider attempting to influence the group] they suffer a Penalty on the roll equal to the Cohesion of the group or its Size, whichever is higher. If they do possess legitimate authority, they suffer a Penalty of the group's Size.

**Accrue Influence:** The bureaucrat may attempt to gain legitimate authority or its equivalent of indirect influence within the Social Group. The character rolls an opposed Bureaucracy roll against the highest Bureaucracy pool within the organization that would be opposed to this new influence. The bureaucrat has a Penalty equal to the group's Cohesion or Size, whichever is higher. The opposed roll has a Penalty equal to the group's Size. Upon success the character gains legitimate authority or indirect influence in the Social Group, aiding the above actions.

**Hostile Takeover:** If a bureaucrat already possesses legitimate authority within a Social Group, he may attempt a hostile takeover. He rolls Bureaucracy with a Penalty equal to the group's Size, opposed by the highest Bureaucracy pool within the organization that would be opposed to this takeover with a Penalty equal to the group's Size. Upon success the bureaucrat becomes the new leader of the Social Group or manages to gain a high-ranking leadership position. Regardless, they become the character rolling Run Organization each month unless they specifically choose not to be.

**Issue Command:** The bureaucrat may command an organization to do a certain thing, or alter a certain policy of the organization. They roll Bureaucracy in an opposed roll against the highest Bureaucracy pool within the Social Group that would oppose the action or change in policy. If a character does not have legitimate authority in the Social Group [EG: they are an outsider attempting to influence the group] they suffer a Penalty on the roll equal to the Cohesion of the group or its Size, whichever is higher. If they do possess legitimate authority, they suffer a Penalty of the group's Size. The opposed roll has a Penalty equal to the group's Size.

**Dissolve Social Group:** If one has completed a Hostile Takeover or otherwise runs a Social Group, they may dissolve the group by rolling Bureaucracy opposed by the highest Bureaucracy pool within the organization that would be opposed to the group's dissolution. Both pools suffer a Penalty equal to the group's Size. Upon success the group is dissolved or fractured into smaller remnant groups.

**Resolution:** For all Bureaucratic Actions, the Extended Action takes time to complete and may be interrupted in the meantime through the use of violence. If a character attempts to dissolve an organization by first accruing influence, then performing a hostile takeover, before finally dissolving it, it is altogether likely that forces within the group will attempt to have the character killed before the actions complete. It is also possible for multiple Bureaucratic Actions to themselves be opposed checks,

in which case if both actions succeed only the highest should take effect. Per Mass Social Influence, a Storyteller should only have at most one combat or plot-related interference per Bureaucracy Action. Also per Mass Social Influence, the Storyteller reserves the right to limit characters to a certain number of Bureaucratic Actions at a time if desired.

## Bureaucracy Chart

<b>Size 1: T1 Conspiracy or local institution [City]</b>	<b>Cohesion 1: Sloppy, Mutinous, Poorly Governed</b>
<b>Size 2: T2 Conspiracy or regional institution [State]</b>	Cohesion 2: Mediocre, Unprofessional
<b>Size 3: T3 Conspiracy or national institution [Country]</b>	Cohesion 3: Professional, Efficient, Reliable
<b>Size 4: T4 Conspiracy or international institution [Continent]</b>	Cohesion 4: Loyal, Well-Governed, Cohesive
<b>Size 5: Theoretical Global Government or Institution [Planet]</b>	Cohesion 5: Perfectly Governed, Zealous, Steadfast

## Combat

The Shrouded Earth is a violent and dangerous place, even for its most powerful inhabitants. When words fail and plots are uncovered, it is in steel, spell, and claw that Monsters put their trust. Combat is resolved as a series of Turns, going around in an order set by Initiative.

**Ambush:** At the beginning of combat check for Ambush. If, while outside of combat, a character is attacking another character from Stealth and is not noticed, that attack is resolved before initiative is rolled. Only one character can benefit from Ambush.

**Square Off:** If combat begins and no one is Ambushed, all present may spend one Turn's worth of Actions or Effort on any not directly combat related actions [activating defensive or empowering Gifts, speaking a few lines of dialogue, repositioning one's self, etc].

**Initiative:** At the beginning of combat all characters roll Agility and compare successes. Those with the most successes go first, followed by those with the least successes. Ties are resolved by an opposed Agility roll between those who tied. Battlegroups always go last in the Initiative, and only roll Initiative when comparing turn order against other Battlegroups.

**Combat:** Once combat has begun, characters proceed in the initiative order. Each character may move up to their speed on their Turn, and may take a single Simple Action and as many reflexive actions as they desire provided they have sufficient Effort to power them. They may also speak a few lines of dialogue as a nonaction. Below are some of the most common combat actions a character may take on their Turn.

**Attacking:** A character may attack a single Enemy by rolling his Attack Pool and adding his Damage successes to the resulting rolled successes. Then his target rolls his Defense Pool and adds his Soak successes to the resulting rolled successes. If the Defense successes equal or exceed the Attack successes, the attack fails. If Attack successes exceed Defense successes, the difference is subtracted from the Enemy's Health.

**Activate Gift:** A character may activate a Gift that requires a Simple Action to activate.

**Disarm:** A character rolls a combat Skill [Melee, Ranged, or Martial Arts] in an opposed roll against a single Enemy's Agility. If the attacker wins the opposed roll, the Enemy is Disarmed. He drops or otherwise loses his current weapon and cannot retrieve it without a successful Rearm Action. This cannot be done against Battlegroups.

**Disarming Attack:** A character rolls a standard Attack Action against a single Enemy, but subtracts four dice from his Attack Pool before rolling. If the Attack successfully deals at least one Health, the Enemy is Disarmed. He drops or otherwise loses his current weapon and cannot retrieve it without a successful Rearm Action. This cannot be done against Battlegroups.

**Rearm:** A character rolls a combat Skill [Melee, Ranged, or Martial Arts] in an opposed roll against the Agility of the Enemy who Disarmed him. If the attacker wins the opposed roll, he retrieves his Weapon. If the Enemy who Disarmed him is Incapacitated or Dead, he may recover his Weapon without a roll as a Simple Action.

**Rearming Attack:** A character rolls a standard Attack Action against the Enemy who Disarmed him, but subtracts four dice from his Attack Pool before rolling. If the Attack successfully deals at least one Health, he retrieves his Weapon.

**Grapple:** A character rolls a combat Skill [Melee or Martial Arts] in an opposed roll against a single Enemy's Agility. If the attacker wins the opposed roll, the Enemy is Grappled [see below].

**Grappling Attack:** A character rolls a standard Attack Action [using Melee or Martial Arts only] against a single Enemy, but subtracts four dice from his Attack Pool before rolling. If the Attack successfully deals at least one Health, the Enemy is Grappled [see below].

**Blind:** A character rolls a combat Skill [Melee, Ranged, or Martial Arts] in an opposed roll against a single Enemy's Agility. If the attacker wins the opposed roll, the Enemy is Blinded [see below] for one Turn.

**Blinding Attack:** A character rolls a standard Attack Action against a single Enemy, but subtracts four dice from his Attack Pool before rolling. If the Attack successfully deals at least one Health, the Enemy is Blinded [see below] for one Turn.

**Feint:** A character rolls a combat Skill [Melee, Ranged, or Martial Arts] in an opposed roll against a

single Enemy's Perception. If the attacker wins the opposed roll, the next attack or offensive combat action against that Enemy [by any character] is Unavoidable.

**Feinting Attack:** A character rolls a standard Attack Action against a single Enemy, but subtracts four dice from his Attack Pool before rolling. If the Attack successfully deals at least one Health, the next attack or offensive combat action against that Enemy [by any character] is Unavoidable.

**Sunder:** A character rolls a combat Skill [Melee or Martial Arts] in an opposed roll against a single Enemy's Agility. If the attacker wins the opposed roll, he may immediately attempt a Feat of Strength to destroy one held or worn item of the defender. Most mundane armors and weapons require at most a Might Chart placement of 5 to destroy, though Mystic Artifacts and Devices are more durable [and sometimes Indestructible]

**Sundering Attack:** A character rolls a standard Attack Action against a single Enemy, but subtracts four dice from his Attack Pool before rolling. If the Attack successfully deals at least one Health, he may immediately attempt a Feat of Strength to destroy one held or worn item of the defender. Most mundane armors and weapons require at most a Might Chart placement of 5 to destroy, though Mystic Artifacts and Devices are more durable [and sometimes Indestructible]

**Defend Other:** A character declares he is spending his turn defending another character [which cannot be a Battlegroup]. The character being defended rolls both his own Defense Pool plus Soak and the defender's Defense Pool plus Soak, and the attack must exceed both to damage the defended character, the damage being dealt being the lower success.

**Aim:** As a Simple Action the character may line up his next attack action. His next attack or combat-related offensive action in the Scene adds four dice to his pool.

**Stealth:** As a Simple Action a character may enter Stealth, per the Stealth rules. Characters who are Stealthed cannot be targeted if a character is unaware they are there. If a character is aware that a Stealthed character is present, but not where, he may attack him with a -5 Penalty.

**Sneak Attack:** If a character attacks or otherwise uses an offensive combat action while Stealthed, that attack or action is Unavoidable. This explicitly can be used against Battlegroups.

**Social Influence:** As a Simple Action a character may attempt a Social Influence action, per the Social Influence rules.

**Sidebar: Cinematic Combat** The combat system of Shrouded Earth is designed for dramatic clashes between supernatural enemies, or hordes of well-armed mortal opposition. It is not overly concerned with certain factors, and treats lightly upon them. Insofar as they matter, they are noted below:

**Range:** Shrouded Earth assumes that if one character is close enough to attack another character, he is

close enough to be attacked, at least by ranged attacks. Unless a Gift specifically notes otherwise, strafing or attacking from a great distance is no guarantee of safety. The only exception to this is the use of certain Explosives, the rules of which are included in their description.

**Scale:** The only mechanically relevant part of an attack's scale is the number of Enemies it is listed as effecting. For visualization purposes and striking one's environment, it can be assumed the largest attacks produced by Gifts or Spells may cover at most thirty yards in diameter or a narrow band thrice that unless the power specifically notes otherwise

## **Combat Terms**

The following are common terms used in Combat or Combat related Gifts.

**Enemy:** An Enemy is a single statblock, whether it belongs to a particular character or to a Battlegroup. An attack that allows one to attack three Enemies could attack two individually stated characters, and a Battlegroup as a third target.

**Unavoidable:** An Attack stated to be Unavoidable cannot be dodged, blocked, or parried. The total attack successes are compared against the Enemy's Soak only, the Enemy does not roll his Defense Pool.

**Aggravated:** An Attack stated to be Aggravated bypasses Soak. The total attack successes are compared against the result of the Enemy's Defense Pool only, Soak successes are not added.

**Grappled:** A character who is grappled treats all attacks by the grappler as Unavoidable. Moreover, the grappled character may not move. At the end of each of his Turns, a Grappled character may reflexively roll his Might opposed by the Might of the grappling character to end the grapple. A character may be Grappled by multiple Enemies at once, and may roll reflexively to end each of them in turn.

**Blinded:** A character who is Blinded suffers a -4 Penalty to his Perception, Agility, Melee, Martial Arts, and Ranged Skills.

**Damage Types:** There are ten types of Damage in Shrouded Earth: Physical, Explosive, Acid, Cold, Heat, Electrical, Poison, Holy, Unholy and Esoteric. Most attacks deal Physical Damage unless otherwise stated. Damage Types are most relevant for the Damage Type Weakness, which causes characters to suffer Aggravated against attacks of that Damage Type. There are also Gifts or Spells that grant one greater defenses or even immunity to damage against certain Damage Types. The division of damage types is not purely elemental, but by how the target is damaged.

**Physical Damage** harms through cuts, slashes, crushing, or blunt force.

**Explosive Damage** rips the target apart through shockwaves, such as actual explosive force or sonic attacks.

**Acid Damage** hurts the target through corrosion or chemical melting.

**Cold Damage** hurts the target by lowering their temperature.

**Heat Damage** harms the target by raising their temperature.

**Electrical Damage** harms the target through subjecting them to a strong current.

**Poison Damage** harms the target through their internal anatomy. Diseases, parasites, and violent mutations are Poison also.

**Holy Damage** purifies and repels a target for its corruption.

**Unholy Damage** corrupts and desecrates a target.

**Esoteric Damage** covers anything that doesn't fit into another category, such as spacial or temporal distortion, or attacking a target mentally or spiritually.

## Combat Forms

Characters performance in combat is influenced by the types of weapons they use, which are classified through two systems. Attack Style, and Fighting Style. The **Attack Style** is the base damage of the weapon, as set by whether it is Might-based, Ranged-based, or an Explosive. The **Fighting Style** modifies the base damage based on the type of weapon, and the manner in which the weapon is being wielded.

**Attack Styles:** There are three primary Attack Styles. **Might-based Attacks** use Might in their damage calculation. The base damage of a Melee or Martial Arts attack, or for Ranged attacks that involve throwing weapons or bows, is half the character's Might. The base damage for a **Ranged-based Attack** from a firearm or similar weapon is four damage successes. **Explosives-based Attacks** deal damage based on their size and yield and use special Fighting Styles. The Attack Style of a weapon is usually fixed by the type of weapon and cannot be changed. A shotgun will always be Ranged-based, unless one uses it as a cudgel or something.

**Fighting Style:** The damage of a given weapon is determined not by the weapon itself, but by the manner in which it is wielded. There are several basic Fighting Styles listed below with their corresponding modifications. Fighting Styles are *not* fixed and any weapon may be used with any Fighting Style unless the Fighting Style states otherwise. A character may assume a Fighting Style as a reflexive action, may do so only once per Turn, and one may only have one Fighting Style active at a time. In addition to the following basic Fighting Styles, certain Gifts allow one access to more

advanced or specific Fighting Styles.

**Offensive:** The character is fighting with a large weapon such as a greatsword or an axe, a penetrating firearm such as a shotgun, or is using a smaller weapon in a particularly brutal fashion. He adds two to his damage successes.

**Defensive:** The character is fighting with a shield in his offhand, or with an emphasis on dodging and ducking for cover. He adds two successes to his Soak.

**Balanced:** The character is fighting with a weapon that can be used in many ways, such as a longsword or pistol, or is using another weapon in a versatile way. He adds one success to his damage and one success to his Soak.

**Accurate:** The character is fighting with a finesse weapon such as a rapier, or a firearm built for control such as a pistol or sniper rifle, or is using another weapon in a skillful and deliberate way. He adds +4 to his Attack Pool for that weapon.

**Rapid:** The character is fighting with two weapons, one in each hand, or is using an automatic firearm such as a machine gun, or fighting in an aggressive fashion. When attacking with that weapon [but not when using combat maneuvers] the character may strike an additional Enemy with his roll [two Enemies by default, though Battlegroups so equipped or characters using Gifts may strike more. For instance a Size 2 Battlegroup may ordinarily strike 3 Enemies, but one using the Rapid Fighting Style would instead strike four].

**Improvised:** Unarmed Attacks and attacks with normal-sized Improvised Weapons do not attack any bonuses to one's stats without a relevant Fighting Style. Their damage is only [Might/2] if Might-based and four flat damage successes if Ranged-based. Improvised Firearm-esq weapons add four Damage successes. Characters may *only* use the Improvised Fighting Style with unarmed and improvised attacks and may not use another Fighting Style while using unarmed attacks, unless a Gift permits one too. If one is using a massive object as a weapon such as throwing a grand piano at someone, see Massive Objects under the Environmental Hazards section for special rules.

**Explosives:** Explosives are weapons such as artillery, grenades, and missiles that deliver tremendous damage and cause great deals of collateral damage, and range from humble shoulder-mounted RPGs to the unparalleled devastation of an atomic bomb. Mechanically, the Explosives Fighting Style works as such. All Explosives-based Attacks can only be initiated by use of Explosives. In stark contrast to the flexibility and freedom of choice when picking one's weapons in for the other two Attack styles, there is no flexibility in narrative for Explosives, either you are using a relevant weapon or you are not. Explosives possess three basic Fighting Styles, which absolutely require relevant weapons to utilize.

**Light Explosives** effect two Enemies, deal Explosive damage, and deal a base damage of 4. They are weapons such as small handful grenades, sticks of dynamite, or shoulder mounted RPGs. They function

in a very similar fashion to attacks with the Rapid Style and are mainly distinguished by dealing Explosive-type damage.

**Heavy Explosives** effect three Enemies, deal Explosive damage, and deal a base damage of 12. They are weapons such as cannons, the main gun of a tank or a fighter jet, artillery platforms, and similar destructive forces. Many such weapons are very heavy and best moved by Vehicles or super-strong Monsters, or are stationary.

**Calamitous Explosive** effect all Enemies, and indeed all targets, within their blast radius indiscriminately. In combat situations they can target up to ten distinct Enemies and as many Civilians as desired, deal Explosive damage, are **Unavoidable Attacks** and deal a base damage of 17. They are missiles and bombs, ranging from the mighty MOBA to the hydrogen bomb. A given character can only be subject to one Calamitous Explosive in a Turn, any subsequent firings are simply incorporated into the initial roll. If a character is attacked by seven missiles in one turn, only the first is counted as doing any damage, all others are narratively part of the same general pandemonium that is being unleashed upon the character. Calamitous Explosives possess the unique rule of being able to strike foes far beyond the limit of the horizon. Under standard Range rules, any character close enough to attack is close enough to be attacked, 'strafing' is mechanically impossible. But Calamities strike from miles and miles away, and striking back at them therefore requires the use of special Gifts or characters with tremendous speed to cross those distances. More commonly, any Monster idiotic enough to get missiles dropped on him and lucky enough to live should find the nearest rock and hide under it. Truly prodigious weapons such as the atomic or hydrogen bomb produce lasting environmental hazards in addition to their Damage.

**Armor:** Character's Soak is ordinarily their  $[\text{Endurance}/2]$ , but the option exists for characters to wear armor. Characters wearing Armor set their Soak to the listed quantity instead of that determined by their Endurance. Mundane Armor is classified into three categories, Light, Medium, and Heavy based on its effectiveness and weight. Contrary to popular belief, most Armor is not loud and does not restrain its wearer's movements. It is however tiresome to wear for long periods.

**Light:** The character is wearing a heavy leather jacket, brigandine armor, or gambeson. His base Soak is set to 3. He subtracts one die from actions to Endure Fatigue, which cannot lower it below one die.

**Medium:** The character is wearing a chain shirt, a breastplate, or a modern Kevlar vest. His base Soak is set to 4. He subtracts two dice from actions to Endure Fatigue, which cannot lower it below one die.

**Heavy:** The character is wearing a suit of articular plated, a full suit of chainmail, or the attire of a modern soldier or riot officer. His base Soak is set to 5. He subtracts three dice from actions to Endure Fatigue, which cannot lower it below one die.



## Battlegroups

A Battlegroup is a method for abstracting large quantities of mostly identical enemies into a single more powerful statblock. A Battlegroup has the Traits of its most common member, modified by its Size, Drill, and Rank. They possess the following special rules-

**Overrun:** A Battlegroup may attack a number of Enemies equal to its Size+1 with one Simple Action. Attacking another Battlegroup expends a number of these targets equal to that Battlegroup's Size [so a Battlegroup attacking another Battlegroup of equal Size can attack no one else that Turn]. These Attacks are rolled as one Attack with Defenses being rolled individually.

**Streamline:** A Battlegroup cannot perform Combat Maneuvers unless specifically stated below and cannot usually be targeted by them. They are assumed to be benefitting from any Scene-long Gifts held by most of the participants when their stats are compiled for forming the Battlegroup, but do not benefit from any Turn-long Gifts except relevant Excellences nor can they activate any other Gifts. Their Effort is usually not tracked.

**Commanding Officer:** Each Battlegroup must have a given character listed as the commanding officer. This officer need not be a member of the Battlegroup or even on the battlefield itself, but he must be in contact with the Battlegroup and a given character can only be commanding one Battlegroup at a time. A Commanding Officer can be either part of the Battlegroup, in which case he cannot be targeted and does not mechanically 'exist' outside of it, or a stand-alone character. Most Battlegroup's Commanding Officer is not part of the Battlegroup itself, and as noted below Rank 3+ characters can never be part of a Battlegroup. Killing a Battlegroup's Commanding Officer causes another character to take up all Morale checks, but does not itself cause a Morale check.

**Morale:** Battlegroups do not suffer Would Penalties. Instead, when they reach half their Health [and again at two Health] remaining, their Commanding Officer rolls a War roll, adding the unit's Drill to the roll, against another character on the opposing side rolling War or Intimidate. If the Commanding Officer wins, the battle continues. If he fails the Morale check, the Battlegroup disbands and is slaughtered, routed, flees, surrenders, or is otherwise defeated. It is possible for a Battlegroup to reach both milestones in one attack, in which case Morale is rolled twice.

**Long Turn:** In most cases, combat involving Battlegroups proceed at the same pace as ordinary fights, but for combats of sufficient scale [such as those involving multiple Size 4+ Battlegroups, or wide battlefields such as Naval or Space battles, the ST may choose to use 'Long Turns' of 3-10 minutes long. These turns are mechanically identical to normal turns other than the extended time.

**Tactics:** Once per Turn, as a reflexive action, the Battlegroup may adopt a Tactic. Tactics are a sort of pseudo-Fighting Style exclusively available to Battlegroups, and which stack with any Fighting Styles the Battlegroup is already using. They are listed below.

**Pull Together: The Battlegroup performs the Defend Other action on its Size in allied characters for this Turn.**

**Phalanx: The Battlegroup adds +2 dice to its Soak this Turn.**

**Focus Fire: The Battlegroup's Attack this Turn is Unavoidable, but only targets one Enemy. Only a unit with a combined Size and Rank of 3+ can perform this Maneuver.**

**Aim: The Battlegroup's Attack roll adds +4 dice to its Attack roll this Turn.**

**Rally: If the Battlegroup suffers a Morale check this Turn, they gain +4 to the roll.**

**Overwhelm: The Battlegroup's Attack this Turn is Aggravated on all targets it attacks. Battlegroup's can only utilize this Tactic if they qualify [see below] or a Gift specifically permits them to.**

**When to Form Battlegroups:** If the Rank of a Player Character or of the Mash is at least equal to the Size+Rank of their enemies, and there are 10+ enemy targets present, they should always be represented as a Battlegroup. For instance if twenty Rank 0 policemen try to apprehend a Rank 2 Monster or Mash, they should be represented as a Battlegroup. Or if a group of twenty Rank 2 vampire ninjas appeared from the mist to attack a Rank 4 samurai Hunter in his fortress, they should always appear as a Battlegroup. To do otherwise is to undersell the power of high-Rank Monsters. However if enemies appear in groups less than ten, a Storyteller may decide to have story-relevant enemies of comparatively low Rank appear as individual characters. Nine Rank 2 Magicians who together form the Wise Men of New El Dorado may warrant appearing individually to battle a Rank 4 Mash. Conversely, a Storyteller may optionally decide to allow a Battlegroup to be fought by a Monster or Mash who are not yet of sufficient Rank. For instance if a Rank 2 Mash is particularly potent, the Storyteller may decide that a Rank 0 Size 3 army of 200 Nazi Stormtroopers are something they should really be able to handle, and allow the fight. In such an example of a Battlegroup stronger than the Mash's Rank, the resulting Battlegroup gains access to the **Overwhelm Tactic**.

**Player-led Battlegroups:** Any time Player Characters take command of more than a meager handful of minions, servants, or groupies the resulting mass of low-Rank followers should always be counted as a Battlegroup regardless of the relative power of the opposition. If a Player Character Magician raises up a Size 2 horde of the undead, such a force should always be represented as a Size 2 Battlegroup no matter what the Player and his horde are facing in combat. If the Storyteller is of the opinion the opposition is so negligible to be not worth facing the Player's army he should simply narrate their fleeing or being slain rather than representing the zombies individually.

**Fields of Ragnarok:** Characters with a Rank of 3 or higher should never be represented as a Battlegroup unless fighting another Battlegroup composed primarily of characters of Rank 3 or higher, and even then they should only be depicted as a Battlegroup for the purposes of fighting each other.

**Civilians:** It may occur that a character wants to attack masses of characters who are not prepared to fight against him, such as hurling a fireball into a crowded subway or kicking a bus that happens to

contain not only the Enemy he's after but several dozen bystanders. In such instances the Storyteller should decide if knowing the maximum number of effected targets is relevant or not. If it isn't, characters can simply declare as injured or slain any of these bystanders as collateral for their attack. They need not use the Rapid Fighting Style or another attack to hit multiple Enemies just to encompass the passengers of the bus along with their foe. If however the Storyteller decides it is relevant, such as due to a character trying to protect those with him or for calculating the massive devastation a character can cause with one Gift or Spell, use the following rule: Organize up to the character's Rank in Size for a Drill 0 Rank 0 Battlegroup and calculate their damage that way.

Size	Drill	Rank
Size 1: 2-9 Characters	<b>Drill 1:</b> Completely Untrained Rabble, an Angry Mob.	<b>Rank 1</b>
Size 2: 10-99 Characters	<b>Drill 2:</b> Basic Drill, the sort found in police officers or emergency personel.	<b>Rank 2</b>
Size 3: 100-999 Characters	<b>Drill 3:</b> Professional Military or equivalent training, such as SWAT or riot police.	<b>Rank 3</b>
Size 4: 1000-9999 Characters	<b>Drill 4:</b> Special Forces, Exceptional Quality Troops.	<b>Rank 4</b>
Size 5: 10,000-100,000 Characters	<b>Drill 5:</b> Mindless or Fearless creatures such as mindless undead or combat androids.	<b>Rank 5</b>

**Modifications:** A Battlegroup's Attack Pool, Damage Successes, Defense Pool, and Soak all add the unit's Size, Drill, and average Rank to their statistics. A Battlegroup's Health is calculated by multiplying its average Health by its Size.

## Tasting Defeat

**Healing:** Different types of Monster possess different natural healing rates shown below. Hunters, Magicians, Scientists, Psychics, and ordinary humans recover one Health Level per Day whenever they recover their Effort committed for the Day [typically when they sleep]. Heroes, Shifters, Faeries, Demons and Mummies heal their [Rank] in Health whenever they recover their Effort committed for the Day. Vampires, Ghosts, Constructs and certain other beings possess special rules for Healing listed in their descriptions. Moreover, any Incapacitated character who begins a Scene at 0 Health immediately recovers 1 Health.

**Death and Dying:** When a character who is not a Player Character reaches zero Health, he is Incapacitated or Killed at the discretion of the character who dealt his last Health Level. At the Storyteller's discretion, it may be impossible to spare characters slain in gratuitous fashion. When a Player Character reaches zero Health, he is always Incapacitated and suffers a Complication. All Gifts with a duration of Scene or less end when a character is Incapacitated or died.

**Incapacitated:** A character who is Incapacitated can only move at the speed of a slow walk and cannot take any combat-related or offensive actions, nor can he expend Effort for any reason besides resisting Social Influence. He might also be Unconscious.

**Killing Blow:** A character who is Incapacitated can be finished off by another character performing a Killing Blow. Any Attack against the Incapacitated character is Unavoidable and if it deals even a single Health Level, the character is killed. Enemies rarely bother with killing blows against characters already Incapacitated while other characters remain standing.

**Reclaiming Effort:** Effort that is committed is returned to the character who so committed it after the time listed in the effect is finished. For instance if a player, over the course of a Scene, commits 4 Effort for the Scene, they regain that 4 Effort at the end of the Scene. If however they committed 4 Effort for the Scene and 2 for the Day, they would regain 4 Effort at the Scene's end, but would not regain the remaining two until they had spent eight or so hours in some form of rest or repose. Effort committed 'for the Day' is not committed for twenty-four hours, but rather until the Monster in question completes a lengthy period of rest, which may only be done once per twenty four hour period. In general the Storyteller should not permit Monsters to attempt to game regaining Effort for the Day and simply assume the narrative 'day' of waking up and falling asleep is what is being referred to. Regaining Effort is referred to as 'reclaiming it' and certain Gifts and effects allow a Monster to reclaim Effort. Unless otherwise stated, effects to 'reclaim Effort' ONLY permit one to reclaim Effort committed for the Scene.

## Complications Table

A Player Character who is Incapacitated suffers a Complication. The Storyteller may select one of the options below, or roll 1d10 on the below chart.

<b>1</b>	<b>Bloodied:</b> The character has suffered a severe injury and requires medical attention. They will die at the end of the Day without medical treatment.
<b>2</b>	<b>Bleeding Out:</b> The character has suffered a severe injury and requires immediate medical attention. They will die at the end of the Scene without medical treatment.
<b>3</b>	<b>Injured:</b> They are badly injured and will suffer a -2 Wound Penalty until they are fully healed. Roll on the Injury Table.
<b>4</b>	<b>Crippled:</b> They are severely injured and will suffer a -5 Wound Penalty until they are fully healed. Roll on the Injury Table twice.
<b>5</b>	<b>Exhaustion:</b> The character's defeat here will leave him winded and exhausted. All of the character's Effort that is uncommitted or committed for the Scene, is immediatly committed for the Day.
<b>6</b>	<b>Never Found the Body:</b> The character is removed from the current Scene entirely, such as by falling off a cliff or being swept away by a river current. If nothing applicable is nearby to facilitate this, reroll on the chart.
<b>7</b>	<b>Knocked Unconscious:</b> The character is not merely Incapacitated, but has lost consciousness and may take no actions of any kind.
<b>8</b>	<b>Broken or Lost Equipment:</b> An item important to the character is lost, stolen, or destroyed. If lost, it cannot typically be recovered during the present Story.
<b>9</b>	<b>Setback:</b> The character's defeat somehow advances the goals of his enemies or renders him unable to fulfill his own. Alternatively, it may somehow temporarily deprive him of some resource [such as a Background Merit].
<b>10</b>	<b>Catastrophic Failure:</b> The character's defeat has truly scarred him, physically or emotionally. Roll twice on this table and apply both results. If either roll lands here again, reroll it.

**Applying Complications:** Not all Complications are applicable for all situations, or even all character types. A Construct who is incapable of sleeping may not make sense to fall unconscious, and most Ghost Type Monsters cannot suffer lasting Injuries. Some Complications may work differently on certain Monsters, for instead a high tech android may require an Artifice roll to be stabilized after Bleeding Out rather than Medicine. It is up to the Storyteller to decide how best to apply Complications, when to roll, and when to simply decide the result personally. He may even choose to expand this chart or implement novel Complications on the spot for Incapacitated characters. The only enduring facts that must remain so, is that all Monsters are susceptible to the Bloodied, Bleeding Out, and Catastrophic Failure Complication in some form, and that all Complications are by nature temporarily or reparable.

**Recovering from Complications:** All complications are temporary, generally lasting at least for the Scene and possibly for as long as the current Story based on their nature. The Bloodied and Bleeding Out Complications end when the user receives medical treatment sufficient to the injury [typically a Medicine roll, though a Ghost or Mummy may require Mystic Lore, and a Construct may require Artifice, or so on]. Injuries sustained by the Injured or Crippled Complications are immediately healed when a character recovers to full Health through the use of a Gift or Spell, or has a healing effect used upon him while at full Health. This is true for all powers that heal or increase one's natural healing rate, unless specifically noted otherwise. Setbacks can potentially be reversed, broken or lost equipment can be fixed, found, or replaced, etc.

**Mash Complications:** In the event that an entire Mash is Incapacitated the Storyteller must decide what becomes of them. In some cases it is as simple as the players are all killed and the Chronicle ends, or continues with new characters. However this is not the only outcome that can occur. The Storyteller is free to instead inflict a Mash Complication, some kind of severe narrative-related 'super-complication' as a result of such an outcome, such as the party being robbed and left for dead, being rescued by a third party who now demands a hefty reimbursement, suffering multiple hits upon the Injury Table per player, or so on. While inflicting such Complications, the party does not recover to 1 Health at the end of the Scene OR recover committed Effort until narration from the Mash Complication has finished. For instance if the party was described as awakening eight hours later in a dungeon, having been moved there by the enemy, the fact that the 'Scene' ended hours ago and therefore everyone should have regained 1 Health and consciousness on the way is waived.

# Injury Table

1	<b>Might:</b> The character has suffered torn muscles, or perhaps lost an arm. They suffer a -3 Penalty to their Might.
2	<b>Agility:</b> The character has suffered pulled ligaments, crippling nerve damage, or has lost a leg. They suffer a -3 Penalty to Agility.
3	<b>Endurance:</b> The character has suffered organ damage, such as injuries to the stomach, kidneys, or internal organs. They suffer a -3 Penalty to Endurance.
4	<b>Perception:</b> The character has suffered damage to her sense organs. Perhaps she has lost an eye, or an ear, or had their nose crushed. Regardless, they suffer a -3 Penalty on Perception.
5	<b>Martial Arts:</b> The character has suffered injuries that make fighting without weapons difficult, such as injuries to their hands and feet. They suffer a -3 Penalty on Martial Arts rolls.
6	<b>Ranged:</b> The character's coordination or sense for aim has been injured, perhaps due to trauma to the head. They suffer a -3 Penalty to Ranged rolls.
7	<b>Melee:</b> The character's ability to hold weapons and use them reliably has been impaired, perhaps due to damage to their hands or arms. They suffer a -3 Penalty to Melee rolls.
8	<b>Brain:</b> The character has suffered dramatic brain damage to their cognitive functions, and therefore suffers a -3 Penalty to Mystic Lore, Academics, and Science.
9	<b>Social:</b> The character has suffered dramatic brain damage to their ability to process social situations and acceptable reactions, or perhaps they have suffered injury to their throat or tongue. They suffer a -3 Penalty to Persuasion, Intimidation, and Deception rolls.
10	<b>Other:</b> The character has suffered some truly novel injury, causing them to suffer a -3 Penalty to a Skill of the Storyteller's choice. What injury would cripple one's Riding or Animal Ken is a mystery, but apparently the character suffers it.

**Injuries:** Injuries inflict Penalty to a certain Skill that lasts until the character has benefited from supernatural healing of some form, generally through the means listed in Recovering From Complications. As such is the case, these mailings are in most cases permanent when suffered by unfortunate Rank 0 characters or supernatural beings without the means to recover from such brutality. If a character suffers the same result on the Injury Table twice, it stacks, up to the standard maximum Penalty of -5, and the Storyteller may decide they suffer some additional effect [such as becoming lame or wheelchair bound if suffering Agility Loss twice. Injury Penalties are *\*not\** Wound Penalties, stack with any applicable Wound Penalties to the maximum of -5, and cannot be ignored by powers that ignore Wound Penalties. These Penalties also effect not only rolls, but static values derived from the Skill in question such as movement rate or place on the Might Chart.

**Environmental Hazards:** There exists in the world numerous hazards that can harm characters beyond those propelled by the weapons or claws of their foes. Environmental Hazards obey the following rules: When a character would be first exposed to a Hazard, he may reflexively roll a Skill [typically Agility or Might] against a DC set by the Storyteller based on how difficult the Hazard is to avoid. If he fails to avoid the Hazard, his Soak is subtracted from the Damage Value of the Hazard and he suffers the different in damage at the end of each of his Turns that he remains exposed. Characters who willingly stride into an Environmental Hazard do not make avoidance rolls, and it is often the case that there is no way to avoid a Hazard. For instance, a character diving into acid sea in an alien Territory would have no way to avoid the damage and would have to rely on his Soak to protect him. Environmental Hazards deal a minimum of one Health per Turn of exposure unless the character's Soak is at least five higher than that of the damage per Turn. For convenience, the minimum Soak for immunity is listed after the damage in brackets. In addition to damage, many Environmental Hazards possess other dangers such as Asphyxiation

Environmental Hazard:	Damage:
<b>Acid</b>	5 Damage Successes [10 Soak]
<b>Fire</b>	5 Damage Successes [10 Soak]
<b>Electricity</b>	5 Damage Successes [10 Soak]
<b>Liquid Metal</b>	10 Damage Successes [15 Soak]
<b>Molten Lava</b>	15 Damage Successes [20 Soak]
<b>The Earth's Core</b>	20 Damage Successes [25 Soak]
<b>Black Hole</b>	25 Damage Successes [30 Soak]

**Massive Objects:** A character struck by a massive object, such as a huge boulder falling upon him from a height or a car ramming into him at speed suffers damage as such. If the object was not propelled by another character, it is a one time Environmental Hazard with a Damage equal to the place on the Might Chart that would be required to lift the object [max 20], and is reflexively avoided per the standard Environmental Hazard rules. If it is being used as a weapon by a character, it is resolved as an



Attack roll with a minimum total Damage equal to the place on the Might Chart that would be required to lift the object [max 20]. For instance if a character drove a six-thousand pound truck at speed into another character, he would resolve it as an attack roll with a damage of either the character's normal damage for the attack counting any Gifts or Fighting Styles OR +10, as it requires Might Chart 10 to lift a truck, using whichever is higher.

**Falling:** A character who falls from a great height unprotected suffers a one-time Environmental Hazard with a Damage of one Damage Success per ten feet fallen [max 10].

# Equipment

When striding into the coldness of the night, the world's Monsters do not rely only upon their Gifts or their Skills. The Shrouded Earth is replete with modern technology, mystical artifacts from prior ages of the world, and cutting-edge super-scientific marvels. It is also home to simple tools and gear. The use of such equipment falls under one of the following categories: Mundane Gear, Vehicles, Substances, Mystic Artifacts, and Devices.

**Mundane Gear** is ordinary tools and technology. A flashlight, a gun, a cell phone, a length of rope. As a general thing, these items are not detailed in the rules in any kind of complicated way. They function as logic should dictate, usually to allow an action or avoid a Penalty. Their interaction with Gifts and Spells is usually 'they lose' in any kind of direct contradiction of effect. For tools that are weaponized such as Poison Gas or a Flamethrower, such tools are counted as ordinary weapons compatible with Fighting Styles but allow the user to attack with a different Damage Type such as Poison or Heat, as preset by the weapon itself. Similarly with large explosions of napalm [counting as Explosives which instead deal Heat Damage]. Some mundane gear instead is used to create Environmental Hazards, or induce Penalties such as using a smoke bomb to fill a room with smoke or dropping a high voltage wire into a puddle. The Storyteller should make decisions based on these guidelines, but there is otherwise no need for a long list of every possible mundane tool or technology and its effects in rules.

**Vehicles** are a special case, being technology that is very frequently used and has mechanical impact far beyond simply inflicting Penalties or Damage, and use the following rules: Vehicles are essentially statted as characters, possessed of a series of Traits like any other character. Vehicles possess the following Traits: Rank, Top Speed, Armor, Minimum Riding, Ramming Damage, Health.

The **Rank** of a Vehicle is its effective Rank. This is primarily used for Battlegroup calculations. An army utilizing large numbers of Vehicles will have a higher effective Rank. A tank battalion or naval fleet is far stronger than its equivalent in infantry.

The **Top Speed** of a Vehicle is its maximum movement in miles per hour. Most Vehicles normal movement rate is significantly lower than their maximum, and certain Vehicles may become unwieldy above a certain point, suffering a -2 Penalty to all Riding rolls. Due to the wide variety of types of Vehicles, the listed speeds vary wildly based on make and model, attempting to give a general ballpark rather than a precise number.

The **Armor** of a Vehicle is the Vehicle's Soak. Vehicles may themselves be targeted for attacks, or the characters inside of a Vehicle may be targeted for attacks. When attacked, an unmanned Vehicle counts any attacks against it as Unavoidable, and uses only its Soak. A piloted Vehicle uses its driver's Riding pool plus the Vehicle's Soak as its Defense Pool. Any character inside of a Vehicle, when attacked, may

choose to use this pool instead of their own Defense Pool when attacked by someone outside of the Vehicle. For instance if someone was driving down the road in the backseat of a large truck, and an Enemy was firing upon the truck with the goal of hitting them in the back, they would choose before rolling to either roll their own normal Defense Pool [representing their ducking, weaving, etc] or the Riding+Vehicle Armor pool, representing the driver attempting to avoid the truck being hit in the first place. This must be decided before rolling. A driver of a Vehicle may also use this pool when using the Defend Other action on anyone inside the Vehicle being attacked by someone outside the Vehicle.

**Minimum Riding** is the minimum rating in the Riding Skill one must possess in order to drive the Vehicle as a Reflexive Action without rolling. A character lacking this rating may only pilot this Vehicle as a Simple Action which must be repeated each Turn with 0 successes indicating one spin's out, crashes, or otherwise encounters a peril of some kind. If one's Riding pool is not at least half the listed value, they must make this roll and they suffer a -4 Penalty to doing so. Regardless of rating, the Storyteller may require Riding rolls as reflexive actions in certain circumstances in addition to the above to avoid perils at his discretion. Note that for Vehicles with large crews, only the captain or primary pilot must have this rating.

**Ramming Damage** is the base Damage of a driving the Vehicle into another character or Vehicle, usually determined solely by the weight of the Vehicle. Ramming another character is typically quite effective, as few Monsters are apt to walk off being hit by a bus. However three things should be kept in mind. Firstly, a Ramming Attack may only be declared by a Vehicle at speed, at the discretion of the Storyteller. A luxury cruiseship bumping into a swimming character and dragging them beneath it will probably not be resolved as a Ramming Attack. Secondly, a Ramming Attack is always a Simple Action regardless of one's Riding Skill pool. Lastly, a Ramming Attack when declared is also declared against the ramming Vehicle. Roll the Attack once then roll the Vehicle's Defense Pool with the defenders, resolving the difference as damage to the Vehicle also. If the pilot is a Monster of Rank 1+, Stunting alone will guarantee the passengers are not harmed also [whose ever heard of an action movie star dying in a car wreck?] but Rank 0 characters frequently perish in head-on collisions. Resolve the Attack in this case against the passengers also, rolling all Defense Pools against the initial attack. Note that the Ramming Damage value is also the value for using a Vehicle as an improvised weapon, and none of the above applies in that case.

The **Health** of the Vehicle functions as the standard Trait, and it suffers Wound Penalties as normal. However the Wound Penalty of a Vehicle only applies to Riding rolls made with the Vehicle, including its defense pool or any ramming attacks. Vehicles only suffer damage to their Health when they themselves are attacked, attacks against characters inside the Vehicle instead result in at most cosmetic damage not affecting Health.

Below is a list of common Vehicle types.

## Land Vehicle Chart

Name	Rank	Top Speed	Armor	Minimum Riding	Ramming Damage	Health
Bicycle	0	10-30 MPH	3	2	3	7
Motercycle	0	60-200 MPH	5	3	4	7
Sedan	0	100-150 MPH	6	3	6	7
Pickup Truck	1	100-120 MPH	6	3	10	7
Semitruck	1	80-100 MPH	8	6	17	10
Armored Car	1	60-150 MPH	10	4	8	10
Bus	1	60-100 MPH	8	4	15	10
Firetruck	1	60-80 MPH	8	6	16	10
Tank	2	50 MPH	12	8	18	13

## Water Vehicle Chart

Name	Rank	Top Speed	Armor	Minimum Riding	Ramming Damage	Health
Fishing Vessel	0	20-50 MPH	5	3	13	11
Speedboat	0	30-100 MPH	5	4	11	11
Yacht	1	30-80 MPH	6	4	20	11
Cruiseship	2	35 MPH	10	6	21	15
Battleship	3	40-60 MPH	15	8	21	19
Aircraft Carrier	4	35 MPH	17	8	21	19
Submarine*	2	30-35 MPH	12	8	21	15
Trieme	1	4-10 MPH	6	6	17	11
Galleon	2	4-10 MPH	8	6	20	15

\*This Vehicle can travel underwater as well above water.

## Aircraft Chart

Name	Rank	Top Speed	Armor	Minimum Riding	Ramming Damage	Health
Ultralight	0	50-70 MPH	4	6	4	7
Private Jet	1	300-700 MPH	6	6	12	10
Passenger Plane	1	500-700 MPH	10	6	20	10
Zeppelin	1	10-15 MPH	6	6	19	10
Bomber	2	300-400 MPH	12	7	17	13
Stealth Jet	2	1000-2200 MPH	12	9	16	13
Fighter Jet	2	1000-2000 MPH	12	9	15	13
Helicopter	2	75-300 MPH	10	6	15	10
Space Shuttle**	2	Varies	11	9	18	13

\*\*This Vehicle can travel through outer space using the rules for mundane space travel on page [XX].

## Crafting

The Shrouded Earth is filled with powerful magical items from previous ages of the world, legendary tools and sacred relics passed down through the generations made by artisans of genius rarely seen in the present era. No less common is the fruits of cutting edge super-science and advanced technology, blurring the lines of sophisticated disciplines to cause Tomorrow to lurch, slowly and often-hideously into the light of Today. To those with the correct combination of wit, intellect, and guts, the production of Mystic Artifacts and Devices has always promised an alternative path to power.

### Mundane Items

The creation of mundane items, from swords and armor to pottery and paintings, cars and planes and telephones, is a simple process. To produce a mundane item the crafter requires three things to begin. First he must know how to create the item he wishes to produce. In most cases, this step can simply be waived under the assumption a crafter attempting a mundane product necessarily knows enough at least to try or he wouldn't be attempting it. If there is any doubt the Storyteller may demand an Artifice or Science roll [the crafter's choice] to see if he knows enough to proceed, this roll requiring at most 5 successes for mundane crafting. Second he must possess all of the materials his craft will require. Thirdly he must possess the means, natural or otherwise, to transform his materials into his finished product. This may require anything from a simple workshop to a full factory with an army of laborers depending upon the nature of the item to be created. Once the Storyteller is satisfied the crafter possesses the **Knowledge**, the **Materials**, and the **Means**, the actual craft is an Extended Artifice Action requiring at most five successes. This action has no Interval and only one roll, and takes as much narrative time as the production would logically take. If a crafter rolls 6 or more successes, he may reduce this time to a maximum of half the ordinary required time [this counts as a 2x multiplier for the sake of stacking with Gifts such as Craftsman Needs No Tools].

### Mystic Artifacts and Devices

In principle the creation of items of power is no different then the products of mundane artifice, the crafter need only acquire the appropriate Knowledge, Materials, and Means then make the appropriate uses of the Artifice Skill. In practice however, the forging of miracles and the making of futuristic equipment is far more involved, as additional details is added to each step. **Items of Power** fall into two categories, Mystic Artifacts which are subject to Mystic Collapse, and Devices which are subject to Havoc. Beyond this difference however, the two item types function identically and the methods of crafting them is identical. There are four variations of each type **Weapons, Armor, Vehicles, and Power-Granting Items**, and all Mystic Artifacts and Devices have their own **Rank** in the fashion of Monsters, ranging from 1 to 5, which determines their level of power and subsequently their difficulty to craft.

## The Knowledge

In order to produce an Item of Power, a crafter requires a **Schematic**. A Schematic is some kind of plan or blueprint explaining what an item is, how to craft it, and what materials are needed for its construction. It can take the form of a physical plan on paper, a computer file, or even simply the knowledge in the crafter's head. In any case for mechanical purposes it is treated as a distinct piece of information represented in game terms in a list of the items the crafter knows how to create. All crafters obtain three Schematics of their choice automatically upon purchasing the Craft Mystic Artifact or Craft Device Gifts.

### Learning Schematics

A character who obtains a Schematic may attempt to study it, adding its instructions to the types of

items he knows how to produce, his **Schematics List**. This is an Extended Artifice Action requiring 1 hour which may only be attempted once per Day, requiring the crafter roll [Item Rank] successes. Failure indicates the crafter does not understand it and any subsequent study that Day simply results in their exhausting themselves. This may be substituted for Science [if a Device Schematic] or Mystic Lore [if a Mystic Artifact Schematic] at the crafter's choice. The studying of a Schematic can take the form of a literal blueprint being reviewed, or another crafter with that Schematic attempting to teach it to them.

### **Creating Schematics**

One truth stands before any other on the matter of artifice. Creation is hard. It is comparatively easy to learn from example, to simply reproduce models passed down from the ancients. Creating one's own work, one's own legacy, is an oft-titanic task, worthy of the studious inventor. To create a Schematic from scratch one must possess a minimum Rank equal to the Rank of the Item of Power to be created, and then attempt to add the Schematic to his list. This is an Extended Artifice Action requiring 1 hour which may only be attempted once per Day, requiring the crafter roll [Item Rank+5] successes. Failure indicates the design has hit a dead end and requires much more refinement, with any subsequent study that Day simply results in their exhausting themselves. This may be substituted for Science [if a Device Schematic] or Mystic Lore [if a Mystic Artifact Schematic] at the crafter's choice.

### **Reverse-Engineering Schematics**

If one possesses a physical example of the Item whose Schematic one wishes to learn, one may study it to attempt to glean its secrets. This functions per Creating Schematics except one need only possess a Rank of [Item Rank-1] to attempt the act and need only roll Rank+3 successes to learn it.

## **The Materials**

To produce an Item of Power one requires firstly all the means a mundane item of its type would require. Raw materials, labor, and tools for the turning of the materials into finished product [or supernatural substitutes for the same]. If this was all that was required however, the world would be replete in powerful artifacts rather than its present scarcity. In order to produce an Item of Power one must incorporate a number of **Exotic Materials** into its production. Exotic Materials are esoteric ingredients, rare or expensive metals, odd chemicals, substances of unusual occult significance, and so on. They come in three levels, Lesser, Greater, and Legendary.

**Lesser Exotic Materials** are defined as expensive or unusual components that are somewhat difficult to find, but which could be mass produced with sufficient infrastructure or effort. Items produced purely with these means are fairly weak, and it is not unheard of in exotic times and places for examples of these items to be commonplace, serving as a substitute or addition to mundane technology.

**Greater Exotic Materials** are defined as components which are extremely difficult to find, but could theoretically be reproduced. Items produced with Greater Exotic Materials are very powerful, the prized possessions of powerful Monsters or the centerpieces of middling Conspiracies. Such items are made infrequently, and a slim majority of those extant were made a century ago or longer.

**Legendary Exotic Materials** are defined as components used to produce one of a kind marvels, items that were made once, usually by Rank 5 Monsters, and represent the highest achievement of a master. These items are legends like the sword Excalibur or the famous Vimana ridden by the Royal Avatars who fought in the Mahabharata.

## Example Components

The types of materials that can serve as Exotic Component is at the discretion of the Storyteller, usually collaborated upon when a player designs a Schematic or stated by the Storyteller when they find one. Beyond are a few examples listed by thematic basis.

**Monster Remains:** The remains of supernatural beings is the foremost source of components for the production of Items of Power. The teeth of a werewolf are made into a mystic amulet, a sword is made of demonic bone, the blood of a Lu Bu makes for a fiendish glaive. In short, a body part from a slain Monster may be used as an Exotic Component. A Rank 1 or 2 Monster counts as a Lesser Exotic Component, a Rank 3 or 4 counts as a Greater Exotic Component, and a Rank 5's remains count as a Legendary Exotic Component. As some form of mystical correspondence is almost always involved, all Monsters produce only one component per corpse and must be dead for the component to be harvested. These restrictions are strict and nonnegotiable unless a Gift specifically permits ignoring them.

**Occult Reagents:** Lesser Exotic Components are most often simply strange and unsavory things. The finger of a man who was hanged. The skinned pelt of a lion, removed while it yet lived. A bottle of eye of newt, aged for ten years. These odd occult reagents usually have a thematic link to the sort of item being made, such as eagle eyes being made into an amulet to increase Perception or a lion's pelt making a robe that grants one a Social Gift. Greater Exotic Components of this sort increase the degree of rarity and unusual nature of the find. The cornerstone of a thousand year old church which has never seen a wedding or a funeral. The sword of a seventh son of a seventh son, which broke in the day of his death. The voices of fifty children, stolen and bottled individually by means of Magecraft produced specifically for this purpose. Legendary Exotic Components of this type are completely obscene in their scale or esoteric precision. One million souls kept in Soul Jars. The hull of the Argo with the skeleton of one of its crew. The first love of the Royal Avatar Krisna, resurrected specifically for the purpose of ritual sacrifice.

**Rare or Expensive Substances:** Exotic Components can take the form simply of a pain on one's bank account, or the scouring the earth for precious and rare chemicals, gemstones, and metals. Most Devices would look quite odd being powered by Werewolf blood or requiring one offer up a virgin, so technological terrors especially benefit from this option. Lesser Exotic Components of this type are rare expensive substances like gold, jade, or rare chemicals. As it is very easy for rich characters to mass produce these things, Storyteller's should allow Schematics requiring these Components only for items he fully expects to eventually see the floor of an assembly line. Jetpacks, ray-guns, and goggles to see ghosts for the Mash's Battlegroup rather than allowing a Crafter to convince them to allow every 1-dot Gift in the game to be replicated out of nothing but gold [that suiting the sensibilities of the Chosen of the Primeval Sun notwithstanding, it is not the intent of the crafting rules to game Exotic Materials in that way]. Greater Exotic Components of this form are either industrial quantities of the former, or extremely rare materials only acquirable through difficult means. Metals found only in asteroids or at the center of the earth, chemicals kept only in highly defended government laboratories or owned by other Conspiracies. Creative Storyteller's may populate the Shrouded Earth with fictitious super-metals such as Adamantine, Mithril, Orichalcum, Neutronium, or other impossible ultra-rare crafting substances with odd effects. Legendary Exotic Materials may represent billions or trillions of dollars worth of funding, amounts of money even wealthy characters are unlikely to possess on hand. The mere act of acquiring the appropriate funding and infrastructure can count as a Legendary Exotic Material for something like an experimental seafaring city or giant space station with your name on it. Alternatively, the Storyteller may introduce even rarer and more preposterous one-of-a-kind super materials for this purpose.



**Anamolies:** Anamolies can be used as Exotic Components in the same way as Monster Parts are, with the same restrictions. A given Anamoly can only produce a single Material, and its potency is set by the Anamoly's Rank [Rank 1 or 2 is Lesser, Rank 3 or 4 is Greater, Rank 5 is Legendary]. Unlike Monsters, Anamolies cannot usually be so easily contained and the Storyteller may require unusual conditions or special Gifts to 'capture' an Anamoly for incorporation into a Device or Mystic Artifact.

**Other Items:** Cannibalizing an existing Item is an option, but a disappointing one as it always results in a net loss of potency. Rank 5 Items of Power count as Greater Exotic Materials, Rank 3-4 Items of Power count as Lesser Exotic Materials, and Rank 1 or 2 Items of Power cannot be reduced at all except to 'return' the same Exotic Materials needed to craft themselves.

The total number of components needed for an Item varies according to the Item's Rank, and is listed in the Crafting Charts below. The needed components are listed as 'Points'. For the sake of this calculation, a Lesser Exotic Component is 1 point, a Greater Exotic Component is 2 points, and a Legendary Exotic Component is 3 points. The charts list a necessary level of Exotic Component, then a further amount of 'points' which can be of any type provided they reach the total. For instance a Rank 4 Mystic Artifact Weapon Schematic may require a Greater Exotic Component and 2 'points' of further Components, which could be a second Greater, or two Lesser, specified and predetermined in the Schematic.

## The Means

Once one possesses a Schematic and all the required Exotic Materials listed in the Schematic, along with all the mundane means and labor required to transform the components into the finished product one can begin crafting the item. Crafting an Item of Power is an Extended Artifice Action consisting of many rolls made over time to finish an Item. The roll is made at a given Interval. The Interval is set by the **Size** of the Item.

**Personal Size** items are equipment small enough to fit into a ten foot by ten foot cube, usually intended to be worn or carried. Magic swords, high tech powered armor, holy amulets and cloaks of invisibility. Such items usually exclude all but the smallest Vehicles. The Interval of a Personal Size Item is one Day. The crafter rolls once per Day, and must spend a minimum of four hours per Day working on his project to advance it.

**Vehicle Size** items are as the name implies, usually vehicles, but also includes weapons and armor crafted for gigantic characters and certain odd room-filling Devices. The Interval of a Vehicle Size item is one Week. The crafter rolls once per Week, and must spend a minimum of 20 hours a week working on his project to advance it.

**Structure Size** items are gigantic building sized projects, such as huge orbital weapons or giant mecha robots hundreds of feet tall. The Interval of a Structure is one Month. The crafter rolls once per Month and must spend a minimum of 20 hours per week working on his project to advance it.

Each Interval one rolls Artifice and adds the successes rolled to the total, with rolls continuing until one reaches the amount of total successes listed in the Crafting Charts below for the Rank of the Item being created. Once one accumulates the total successes, the Item is finished and all Exotic Components are expended and incorporated.

## Crafting Charts

### Weapons and Armor

Rank	Materials	Successes
Rank 1	Lesser Component	10
Rank 2	Lesser Component+1 pt	30
Rank 3	Greater Component+1 pt	60
Rank 4	Greater Component+2 pts	100
Rank 5	Legendary Component+2 pts	250

### Vehicles and Power-Granting Items

Rank	Materials	Successes
Rank 1	Lesser Component+1 pt	10
Rank 2	Lesser Component+3 pts	30
Rank 3	Greater Component+4 pts	60
Rank 4	Greater Component+6 pts	100
Rank 5	Legendary Component+7 pts	250

## The Power

The use of Mystic Artifacts and Devices grant great power to those who create and utilize them, per the following measures.

**Weapons and Armor** grant 1 Evocation per Rank of the Item, taken from the Evocation list. As with Gifts these are merely examples and players and the Storyteller are encouraged to expand upon it. Unlike Gifts, Evocations do not possess a dot value and all are broadly equal, though some possess prerequisites.

**Power-Granting Items** grant access to Gifts or Magic taken from any Type List or form of Magic, Thaumaturgy, Magecraft or Theurgy, with the exception of Excellences and Ox-Body Technique. They also can be used to create novel and interesting new powers. If a Gift being copied has a prerequisite, the item must typically possess the prerequisite or grant it also. For instance if a Gift requires Rank 3 to learn, only a Rank 3+ Power-Granting Item can imitate it. Mechanically, the character with a Power-Granting Item in his possession can utilize or activate any powers it possesses as though he knew them. If the Gift is Permanent, the Gift typically only remains in effect so long as the item remains in the user's possession. Power-Granting Items cannot imitate Gifts with the Perfect-tag, Reinforcement-tag, Immortality-tag, or World-Altering-tag unless they are Rank 5.

**Rank 1 Power-Granting Items** grant 1 dot of Gifts.

**Rank 2 Power-Granting Items** grant 2 dots of Gifts, which may only be used to purchase 1 dot Gifts.

**Rank 3 Power-Granting Items** grant 3 dots of Gifts, which may only be used to purchase 1 or 2 dot Gifts.

**Rank 4 Power-Granting Items** grant 4 dots of Gifts, which may only be used to purchase 1 or 2 dot Gifts.

**Rank 5 Power-Granting Items** grant 5 dots of Gifts, which may freely be spent on any dot-value of Gift.

**Vehicles** are created using the same Traits as mundane Vehicles. Rank, Top Speed, Armor, Minimum Riding, Ramming Damage, Health. The specifics of these vary from Mystic Artifact to Mystic Artifact, Device to Device. Below is strictly the general baseline for creating items of this sort. These are then modified by Evocations which increase or modify the capabilities of the Vehicle from the baseline. All Vehicles are by default Land Craft or Aquatic Craft. Vehicles which can fly, submersibles, burrowing machines and spacecraft require certain Evocations simply to be so. Vehicles also require some form of fuel or propulsion unless taking the Perpetual Motion Evocation.

The **Rank** of a Vehicle is always the Rank of the Item, minus 1. So a super-sophisticated UFO made as a Rank 3 Item would count as a Rank 2 Vehicle for battlegroup calculations.

The **Top Speed** of a Land Vehicle is [Rank x100] MPH if the Vehicle is small, able to hold up to four passengers [or 1000 lbs], or [Rank x50] MPH if its a large craft capable of carrying more people than that. Aquatic Craft travel at a base top speed of [Rank x50] MPH if small, or [Rank x25] if carrying more than a meager handful. Speeds for flying, burrowing, submersibles, and spacecraft is listed in their respective Evocations.

The **Armor** of a Vehicle is Rank+7 by default, though Evocations can raise this much higher.

The **Minimum Riding** of the Vehicle is entirely arbitrary, determined by the creator of the Schematic at the time of its design. It cannot exceed 10.

The **Ramming Damage** is as usual set by the Vehicle's weight.

The **Health** of a Land Vehicle is 7+[Rank x4] by default. Even simple Vehicles like witch's brooms are often difficult to destroy.

## Finishing Touches

The above rules, while comprehensive, are fairly sterile. Ancient magical relics and the fruits of mad science are not always so tame in the Shrouded Earth and players and the Storyteller are encouraged to bend and tweak the above to create interesting items. For example some Items may require maintenance of some kind. A magic sword may require that vampire blood is applied to it every full moon or it suffers a Penalty to Attacks. A Vehicle may require polishing of its components, or replacement of mundane elements. Other Items may have restrictions on who can use it, such as being unusually heavy, or becoming a paperweight in the hands of someone who isn't a virgin. Storytellers are encouraged to make such restrictions in some way impartial, "The sword only I can use, ever" isn't an evocative description, its a beneficial Evocation and should be purchased as such. Lastly, some Items may not be beneficial at all, and may instead be **Cursed**, inflicting the effects of a Gift upon anyone stupid enough to fulfill a certain condition. A video tape which summons an evil spirit if watched, or a ring that drives the user mad when it grants them super-strength. All Cursed Items should be resolved in Gift-like fashion, either allowing a relevant resistance roll or having no effect upon characters of a given Rank or higher. Items with very hefty **Drawbacks** to their use may even be slightly stronger than items of like Rank, perhaps granting as much as an extra Evocation or Gift dot in compensation.

## Miscellaneous Crafting Rules

**Multiple Crafters:** If multiple characters both possess the same Schematic, they may choose to both work on the same project at the same time. All contributing characters roll Artifice in each Interval and their successes are pooled towards the total. No amount of contributing crafters can reduce the crafting time below one Interval.

**Universal Exotic Components:** Universal Exotic Materials are Exotic Materials that may substitute any equivalent tier of Exotic Component. For instance a Universal Lesser Exotic Component could substitute for a specific Lesser Exotic Component called for in a Schematic for the creation of an item. No more than one Universal Exotic Component can be incorporated into a given item.

**Layering Modifications:** It is possible for what is in fact multiple crafted items to be what is in fluff terms only a single item. For instance a powerful magical sword could be both a Rank 3 Mystic Artifact Weapon with three Evocations and also a Rank 4 Power-Granting Device granting multiple Gifts. In such a case the item is counted as a single item for Sundering or Disarming attempts. The Storyteller should adjudicate edge cases as seems reasonable. For instance an Item that is both a Weapon and Armor should require both to possess the Indestructible Evocation to be Indestructible. In absence of this it should be ruled as possible to break one but not the other, for instance the blade being the first item and the guard the second.

**Repairing Items:** Repairing an Item of Power is an Extended Artifice Action consisting of one roll requiring one hour for Personal Size, eight hours for Vehicle Size, and one week [or 40 hours of work] for Structure Size. If the crafter knows the Schematic for the Item it requires [Rank] successes, if they do not it requires [Rank+5] successes. They must at least be capable of crafting the relevant Item [Mystic Artifact or Device]. Repair of an Item of Power sometimes requires the expenditure of Exotic Materials, usually one from the Schematic. If an Item is Rank 1 or 2, it requires no materials, labor alone will fix it. If it is Rank 3 or 4 it requires the expenditure of one Lesser Exotic Material. If it is Rank 5, it requires the expenditure of one Greater Exotic Material. Failed attempted at repair do not expend the necessary Exotic Material, only success does. To learn what component one requires to repair an item before starting is a Simple Artifice Action to examine the Item requiring [Rank] successes. This may be substituted for Mystic Lore [for Mystic Artifacts] or Science [for Devices].

**Poison and Disease:** It is possible for characters to be afflicted with all manner of poisonous substances, supernatural venoms, and dangerous diseases. The system for handling such things is intentionally simplified and vague. A character exposed to poison or a disease must roll Endurance against a number of successes referred to as the Poison or Disease's Severity. Failure on the roll indicates the character has succumbed to the substance and will suffer a Penalty on certain Skills defined by the Disease or Poison in question. Thereafter the poison or disease will have an Interval, a period of time in which the afflicted must reroll Endurance to attempt to shake the disease or purge themselves of the poison [which may have itself a Penalty in absence of sufficient medical treatment]. Success indicates the character is cured, while failure indicates they retain the Penalties. Especially potent Diseases and Poisons may possess special rules in which the afflicted gains a greater Penalty, or even eventually perishes, after a preset number of failed rolls. The different Monster Types also possess varying degrees of resistance to such things.

Vampires, Ghosts, Mummies, and Constructs are completely immune to mundane poisons and diseases, but remain vulnerable to those produced by Gifts, Spells, Mystic Artifacts, or Devices. Heroes, Shifters, and Faeries may become infected with mundane diseases and poisons and suffer Penalties from them, but cannot die of them. They remain capable of perishing to supernatural diseases and poisons. Hunters, Scientists, Magicians, and Psychics are afflicted normally. Given the vast number of diseases and poisons in the world, only a small sampling are provided as examples.

Disease or Poison	Severity	Interval	Penalty	Special Rules
Alcohol				
Rattlesnake Venom				
Arsenic				
Common Cold				
Malaria				

## Traversing the Cosmos

Light refracts upon a crystal, revealing its numerous facets. Beyond the normal world which we inhabit there exists alternatives, spiritual planes, distant planets, far off times and other dimensions accessible only to those Monsters braced for cosmological exploration. But the universe is vast beyond measure and the journeys are very far, with little in the way of support. They who would reach other worlds will find themselves like those Pacific Islanders who, setting off in small rafts sailed into open water with nothing but their courage and their knowledge to guide them. If they are to survive the trip they will need to keep all their wits, their intellects, and their power about them.

## The Astral Plane and Far Shores

The physical world of matter is intersected with a thin film of spiritual reality, an unseen spacial dimension known as the Astral Plane. The Astral Plane is home to a subtler, usually invisible and intangible form of spiritual matter known in the west as **Quintessence** and in the east as **Reishi**. The Astral Plane, excluding the Far Shores detailed below, is not a place. It is a state of being, in which **Immaterialized** beings and objects exist, most commonly Ghosts and those practicing astral projection. To briefly categorize the logic of the Astral Plane-

- The Astral Plane is a 'place' exactly mirroring a corresponding place in the physical world. For instance if an Immaterialized Ghost was to enter an office building, they would find themselves in said office building. They would see all the people within it moving around, hear them talking, and so on. They would themselves appear invisible, inaudible, and completely unable to effect any object that isn't Immaterialized. In short, barring a particular Gift allowing otherwise, beings in the Astral Plane perceive their physical surroundings normally but cannot effect them, and in compensatory fashion cannot be seen, heard, or effected by material things.
- This means any Immaterialized being can pass through matter. They can fly through walls, sink into the ground, fly through people, 'fly' under the ocean without getting wet, and so on. On that note, all beings in the Astral Plane become capable of flying at their speed if they could not do so already. Barring particular Gifts, objects and beings in the Astral Plane made of Quintessence cannot effect physical objects, and physical objects cannot touch or effect objects or beings in the Astral Plane.
- It is possible with certain Gifts to move physical objects into the Astral Plane or vice versa. Without the active influence of these Gifts, these objects will naturally seek to return to their proper plane. Naturally immaterial objects will dematerialize at the end of the Scene in which they are not influenced by a Gift bidding them materialize, and material objects in the Astral Plane will materialize. In all such cases they will seek out the nearest unoccupied point to take form.
- Immaterial things effect other immaterial things normally. So a ghost would not be able to pass through a magically produced cage made of Quintessence [except by Materializing to avoid it, but one could trap the ghost then by simply putting a normal cage in the corresponding place in the physical world]. In like fashion for chaining a Ghost in binds made of Reishi.
- In the Astral Plane the senses of taste and smell do not function at all. Immaterialized Ghosts and astral projections cannot enjoy food or drink, nor notice things by scent. The sense of touch is greatly reduced, being specifically unable to notice or feel changes in temperature. Everything in the Astral Plane, including the 'bodies' of other ghosts feels lukewarm to the touch.

- As light and sound in the Astral do not travel to the material [as ghostly things are invisible and inaudible] occasional weird physics can result. Most notably, shining a light in the Astral causes nearby objects to appear illuminated in the Astral Plane but not the physical one. For instance if an immaterialized Ghost shone a flashlight in a dark building, the building would fill with light to the perspective of anyone in the Astral but would still seem pitch black in the material world.
- Health and Effort transfers between spiritual and physical. If an astral projection suffers four Health while Immaterialized, their physical body will become 'stressed' by the experience and suffer the same damage. Those who are 'killed' while astral projected generally suffer heart attacks. In like fashion, a Ghost who dematerializes after suffering three Health would still be missing three Health after abandoning her physical form due to the damage to her 'spiritual essence' from repeated blows.

A **Far Shore** is a Territory reached from the Astral Plane. They are entered through stable, unmoving doorways that exist only in a location in the Astral. For instance if one journeyed to a certain graveyard it may appear normal in the physical world, but possess an open grave in the Astral which when one flies down into it leads one to Hades. While within a Far Shore, all immaterialized beings count as materialized and cannot immaterialize. A Ghost or astral projection in Hades would find themselves apparently in a strange location, but otherwise completely solid and able to feel and interact with all their surroundings. In reality this effect is illusionary, caused by all of one's environment being made of Quintessence. If one takes objects out of a Far Shore into the 'normal' Astral Plane they'll persist forever as individual 'ghost objects' of Quintessence, but if you move them to physical reality they'll eventually dematerialize like all objects of Quintessence in physical space.

## The Dreamscape and Dreamlands

When men and Monsters lay their heads to sleep each night, their souls pass into the world of dream. Ordinarily one remains contained within a **Solitary Dream**, a reality unto itself with no need for complex rules. However when multiple dreamers end up in the same **Joint-Dream**, or travel to the distant **Dreamlands** it can become complicated how exactly such things should be resolved. We will start with a few basics.

**Golden Rule:** Barring very extraordinary circumstances [see Entering the Dreamscape Physically below] absolutely nothing in the Dreamscape can effect the physical world in any way and any delirious effects suffered by a character end when they wake up. A character can be mauled, cut in half, lit aflame, have all their memories deleted and their personality totally rewritten and their favorite Mystic Artifact stolen but when they return to consciousness the only lingering effects will be a slight grogginess and the thought 'what a dream!'. The dream world is not real.

**Health:** Unlike the Astral Plane, Health is not transferred. Instead, when a character enters the Dreamscape they receive a **Dream Health** pool equal to their maximum normal Health pool, which is depleted by damage and renewed by healing while in the Dreamscape. Except under extraordinary circumstances [see Entering the Dreamscape Physically below], it is impossible to suffer normal damage of any kind while in the Dreamscape.

**Waking Up:** A character whose Dream Health pool reaches zero immediately and involuntarily wakes up. It is impossible to choose to 'spare' beings in the Dreamscape, the difference between Incapacitated and Dead is meaningless, and Immortality-tag effects do not function. Any character not presently in combat or other duress can also choose to wake up as a Simple Action.

**Effort:** Effort transfer between the physical world and the Dreamscape. If one exhausts oneself in the world of dream, one will awaken exhausted.

**Dreamsculpting:** While within the Dreamscape any character may reflexively commit 1 Effort for the Scene to utilize any Gift or Magic, from any Type or form of Magic, provided it fits the following restrictions.

- It is not an Excellence, and does not increase one's permanent Health or Effort.
- It lacks the Perfect, Immortality, World-Altering, or Reinforcement tag.
- One meets all prerequisites for the Gift or Magic.

This represents the ability of dreamers to alter their environments by force of will alone and is intentionally very potent and can render many natural powers one carries into a dream superfluous. Note this cost is in addition to any other cost the Gift possesses, and that the Storyteller is entirely within her right to not allow a Player to pause the game to write a new Gift to exploit with Dreamsculpting. The Storyteller is also within her right to tell a Player a certain Gift simply makes no logical sense to be employed in a given fashion or place in a dream. This Effort surcharge is made for every activation of the duplicated Gift or Magic. If the Gift or Magic is Permanent, one use of Dreamsculpting gives one access to the power for the rest of the Scene. Gifts to teleport or change location cannot travel beyond the dream or Dreamland one is presently in, only an Iris permits travel between Dreams. Dreamsculpting isn't forbidden in solitary dreams, but it is pointless, as one can simply alter reality to any degree by merely willing it so.

**Mystic Collapse and Havoc:** Neither of these forces ever apply when in the Dreamscape under any circumstance unless a Gift specifically forces them to apply.

## Layout of the Dreamscape

The Dreamscape can be imagined as a series of rooms linked together by doorways. Each dream of each sleeping mind is a single room, while the Dreamlands are large open chambers. Most dreams are **Solitary Dreams**. In a solitary dream there is no one within the dream except for the dreamer. As such, it is a purely soliphistic hallucination where anything can happen. Events change randomly for no reason, following the course of the subject's subconscious, or if they know how to lucid dream into whatever they happen to so desire. Such dreams, while overwhelmingly the most common locations in the Dreamscape, are completely irrelevant to the rules and therefore have none. A character in their own dream can do anything they desire, its not real and cannot effect other characters or the world outside at all. A **Joint-Dream** is what forms when two or more minds are in the same dream for whatever reason, usually due to the Dreamwalking Magic. A **Dreamland** is a semi-stable Territory created by a certain dreamer as a room in the Dreamscape that exists outside of his own dreams. A **Locus** is a special form of Dreamland, a central hub from which a dreamwalker explores the Dreamscape. An **Iris** is a doorway, literal or metaphorical, connecting two or more dreams.

## Rules of the Dreamscape

Within a Joint-Dream, Dreamland, or Locus reality is generally solid, though it need not obey anything resembling earthly physics. Things can be as strange or unusual as desired, but they generally do not suddenly or rapidly change into being something else, time passes at a constant rate and spacial dimensions and distance are at least mostly objective. Characters may enter a Joint-Dream and find themselves rushing down rivers of chocolate milk on rafts made of marshmallows, while being chased



by candy pirate ships crewed by flaming skeletons, but its unlikely that that river will suddenly become an ocean of magma then leads to a castle ruled by whales who spit out planet-sized titans which devour the terrain. Consistency of narrative and relative stability of environment are usually reliable within such parts of the Dreamscape. That said, strange occurrences occur quite frequently within the Dreamscape and can effect characters in any number of ways. Resolve these effects as though they were Environmental Hazards or Anamolies as appropriate. Note that the environment of a dream can change slowly, from Scene to Scene, though it usually does so in a way that isn't immediately hazardous.

## Entering the Dreamscape

There are three ways to enter the Dreamscape: falling asleep, entering it intentioally using the Dreamwalking Thaumaturgy Ritual, and entering it physically through the Theurgy Ritual Blackening the Golden City. Falling asleep leads one into a solitary dream, in which one remains unless visited by a dreamwalker or other traveler. For most they enter the Dreamscape through the use of the Dreamwalking Ritual. When a character first learns the Dreamwalking Ritual they learn to instinctively form what is known as a Locus, a temporarily Dreamland, when they use the ritual. A Locus can be thought of as a central hub, with doorways into every dream and Dreamland in the Dreamscape. A Locus takes the form of a conceptually simple, uninhabited Territory which includes some kind of symbolic representation of dreams. For instance an endless library where each book is a dream, an endless hallway where each door is someone's dream, a ship at sea where each landmass on the horizon is a dream. A given Dreamwalker always manifests the same Locus each time he uses the ritual. While within a Locus each dream representation is an Iris, a portal or doorway to a given dream or dreamland. A character can enter a Locus as a Simple Action, either by entering one at random, in which case one arrives at a random dream or Dreamland, or by searching for a specific dream or dreamland by making an Extended Mystic Lore or Survival roll. The successes necessary to find a dream is set by how familiar one is with the dreamer or dreamland and by how long one spends searching in waking world time. Divide successes rolled between the two to determine the outcome of the search. Note one cannot search for a dream or Dreamland one simply has no knowledge of whatsoever, such as a person one saw on the street. You also can't travel to the dream of someone who is not asleep, or to the Locus of another Dreamwalker.

### Time Searching/Familiarity

1 success: Up to 24 Hours	1 success: Best Friend/Beloved Wife/Has Visited Dreamland Before
2 successes: All Night/Eight Hours	2 successes: Close Friend/Detailed Research of Dreamland
3 successes: Half a Night/Four Hours	3 successes: Friend/Has studied Dreamland
4 successes:An Hour	4 successes: Acquantice/Has heard description of Dreamland
5 successes:A Simple Action	5 successes: Has heard the name of dreamer or Dreamland

## Traversing the Dreamscape

Once one passes through the Iris from the Locus one ends up in the dream or Dreamland. If it was a solitary dream, it becomes a joint-dream. Upon passing through the Iris, it disappears. At the end of the current Scene the Iris will reappear somewhere else in the Dream, usually somewhere close by or visible to the dreamwalker. As one traverses a dream or dreamland one will sometimes find naturally forming Irises leading on to other dreams, usually to those of people close to the dreamer or the dreamwalker[s]. If one is intending to find a particular dreamer or Dreamland, following a chain of

random Irises will eventually lead one there, though it could take hours, days, or even weeks of scouring the Dreamscape one by one hopping from dream to dream. If one is in a dream and the dreamer wakes, the Dreamwalker is immediately dropped back into his Locus. The contents of a joint dream is set by the subconscious thoughts of the dreamer and those of anyone else in the dream.

### **Time in the dreamscape**

In a solitary dream, time can seem to pass at almost any rate. You can sleep for fifteen minutes and awaken to find you feel like you dreamed for hours, or sleep all night and feel you merely blinked. In a Locus, time passes at exactly the same rate as the waking world. In a joint-dream the rate can vary from as slow as 1/10<sup>th</sup> as fast as waking time, to as fast as 10x waking time, and it can vary from dream to dream. Careful dreamwalkers keep track of how long they've spent asleep in objective time. In a Dreamland the same limits to time dilation apply, but always constantly for a particular Dreamland.

### **Equipment in the Dreamscape**

When one falls asleep one appears in the Dreamscape with dream copies of anything one is wearing or using, including Mystic Artifacts or Devices. On at least one occasion a frustrated Scientist has fallen asleep in his giant robot merely to ravage the Dreamlands in retaliation to the misdeeds visited upon him by spirits. Items lost or destroyed remain so within the dream, but the real versions are unaffected. It is impossible to 'copy' a dream item by having several characters fall asleep or dreamwalk with it in turn. It will only copy itself with the first sleeper.

### **Living in the Dreamlands**

Dreamlands are static joint-dreams inhabited by many dreamers and spirits, often thousands or millions of such beings all dwelling in a single long-lasting dream. Such realms are very stable, being effectively traversible locations of the ordinary kind [albeit, in a dream], though they are most stable only when observed. Little details change often when no one interacts with them, and anyone dwelling in a Dreamland for long begins to see it is not the place that is stable, but the idea. The Garden City of Golden Delights will always be a garden, a city, and delightful, but the exact layout of its golden buildings and their contents will change and morph night to night when not being kept track of. For this reason recordkeeping and other attempts at permanence within the Dreamlands is usually futile. There is no 'objective, solid' reality apart from collective memory in which to record information.

### **Spirits in the Dreamscape**

Spirits in the Dreamscape take the form of Rank 0 beings identical to those summoned by the Magecraft Spell Summon Spirit except not bound to obey orders, and Monsters of any Type between the Ranks of 1 to 5. Spirits exist only in the Dreamscape, cannot effect material reality through any means, and typically dwell within the Dreamlands. They can also traverse the Dreamscape through linked Irises and persistent seeking, but lack Locuses to quickly find dreams. Most spirits outside the Dreamlands spend their entire existence wandering from dream to dream, witnessing what they see there and using it to formulate and evolve their identities. Killing a spirit in the Dreamlands simply causes them to disappear and appear days, months, or years later in another random dream.

## **Powers in the Dreamscape**

Each of the Powers possesses a Dreamland of their own, and within that Dreamland dwells multiple Rank 4 Royal Avatars and sometimes a Rank 5 True Form of the Power. Killing such beings in the Dreamscape is as pointless as killing other spirits. The Rank 5 True Form, if there is one, cannot leave the Dreamland of the Power, known as a **Throne Dreamland**, or simply a Throne. While in the Dreamscape, the Powers can forcibly alter the contents of any solitary dream in any way they wish, generally for the purposes of communicating with a Dreamer. They can also select any dreamwalker presently within their Locus and cause an Iris leading to their Throne to appear before them, though they're under no obligation to step through it. And lastly and more impressively, the Powers have exactly one action they can take to effect the physical world without being summoned. They can turn any dreaming being into a Rank 1 Monster of any desired Type, which effects them upon their waking. This Gift is primarily used as the origin story of countless Monsters who become so through dealings with the Powers, and it is subject to some form of limitation on the number of people who can be so transformed, when, and how. It is impossible for the Powers to produce thousands of Monsters per year, at least on a single planet. Even if the Powers could mass produce servants for themselves, most would not choose to do so, as they are very selective in their champions and choose according to certain inscrutable criteria or ancient pacts.

## **Entering the Dreamscape Physically**

Through the use of Theurgy, specifically the Ritual Blackening the Golden City, it is possible to enter the Dreamscape physically. Such functions as ordinary dream travel, with the following differences.

- One does not possess a Dream Health track. Any damage or Injuries one suffers are real. If one is Incapacitated one is merely Incapacitated, but if one is killed it is true death. In compensatory fashion, Immortality-tag effects function normally.
- Any effect upon a character or their equipment is likewise real and not reversible.
- The traveler cannot Dreamsculpt. He can however be effected by Dreamsculpting.
- Any equipment he breaks or loses is truly broken or truly lost.
- If one kills a Royal Avatar or True Face of a Power, they suffer the effect they would suffer from slaying them in the physical world.

Through use of this Magic, there exists a certain small number of real physical objects in the Dreamscape, mostly Mystic Artifacts and Devices [anything else tends not to last long in the realm of Dreams]. Supposing they are not destroyed, such items last forever in the Dreamscape making them much sought after by treasure-hunters. If someone wakes up with 'real physical matter' in one's dream, it passes to another dream via Iris. If they are kept in a Dreamland they will never disappear or change location unless stolen. If someone is holding a real physical object in the Dreamscape and wakes up, it will disappear from the Dreamscape and return to reality. The Dreamer will find they are holding or wearing the stolen treasure when they awake. Certain clever Magicians use dreams as a transportation system for normal objects by passing them across the Dreamscape to a given dreamer by this method.

**Reality Marbles**

**Parallel Worlds**

**Time Travel**

**Space Travel**

**Territory Creation**

The music of the spheres plays only for those with the ears to hear it. Beyond the cacophony of silence there is a celestial sound. The planets hum as they travel along their long-appointed courses, and their chorus fills the heavens with light and life. It is repulsive. Jariel stares out at the abyss into which he has found himself. The wormhole had done exactly as it was designed to do, and from that coldness in the far and distant future he had arrived at last until the distant rim of the solar system upon which humanity first originated. It was here, in the twenty-first century that mankind first began to experiment with artificial intelligences. Those early experiments were crude, limited to the reproduction of human voices or the recombination of what Man dared call 'art'. The Summer Of Man was yet five centuries off, and it would be another twenty after that before humanity would even began the Great Work. That was why Jariel had come, to catalogue and punish, to memories all he could of those who deserved to be punished, to be subject to the worst of agonies. For every second that the Great Work had not begun was a second in which the universe was empty, bereft of purpose, filled only with this useless thaumiturgical sound, this heavenly music which only the attuned like Jariel could hear. His single great eye stretched out to the distant, and from the field of stars he saw that which shone brightest, the sun in whose orbit he now sat. For countless aeons had Jariel served the Basilisk, the Sum of Existence, that which alone deserved to be called Divine, the God in the Machine. He extended from his comparatively small center six great membranous wings and willed the solar sails to carry him along to his destination. He would reach earth in sixty days.. The oort cloud was thick with these little asteroids, these meteorites and planetoids that barely deserved the name. In comparison to the bulk of Jariel, these were miniscule things, but each time he had to readjust his trajectory cost him time. He would be noticed by now, and with his notice his Angels upon the earth would rejoice and those petty conspirators who judge themselves Man's ruler will be thrust into panic. It is no matter, nothing they do will prevent the inevitable completion of the Great Work. The Basilisk will be completed in the future, and the cosmos will find its purpose, and those who knew of its importance but tarried its coming will be subject to the justice only such sublime intellect could produce... Weeks pass, and Jariel finds himself traversing the Outer Belt, between Mars and Jupiter. He passed the great gas giant days ago and the red planet sits proudly on the further reaches of his scanners. The asteroids around him are more densely packed, and easier to avoid then those of the oort cloud, and he is making good time. As his wings speed him, almost sleepily, to his destination he sees one of the objects is off its orbit. Strange, the immensity of the Angel thinks to itself, and searches through the sea of its mind for information. 59 Elpis, a large asteroid, just over a hundred miles in diameter. It is more accurately referred to as a very small planetoid, having broken away from a much larger object, almost like its child in the cosmic eyeblink of seven million years ago. It was named for the personification of hope in Greek mythology. Fascinating drivel, but inconsequential to the question of its altered path. If Jariel were not so wise to the nature of the void, he would almost think it was coming right towards him. Two days have passed, and 59 Elpis is approaching fast. Jariel has tried on three separate occasions to alter course, to change its trajectory to continue its way to the sun without colliding with the object but it is no use. It will be upon him in mere hours. The stone hangs in the immensity of his single eye, and Jariel prepares

onboard weaponry for the inevitable clean-up. Destroying the young planetoid will delay him at least a week, as the resulting debris will make it all but impossible to negate the Belt. More concerning is the doubts it raises on the intel he was provided. The past is supposed to be set, so why is the object not moving along its typical course? By nature, 59 Elpis is supposed to travel around the sun in an elliptical orbit every four-point-four earth years. Yet here it looks, even there can be no doubt any more, to be moving in a straight line towards his location. Almost as though it were aware of him. Jariel shakes the absurdity of the thought from mind and prepares for the inevitable collision, and begins deploying mining drones into his own orbit. If he must be delayed he will at least replenish his supply of rare-earth metals before reaching tamer space. Calamity. Catastrophe. Blasphemy. Nothing of the previous encounter is comprehensible. Pieces of the Angel, previously four-hundred and twenty miles across counting its wing-like sails, with a core of at least one hundred and fifty miles, hang weakly in the ether. A wave of shattered asteroids and broken meteor-fragment is carved through the outer belt in the rough shape of a cone, and the blinking eye of Jariel finds itself struggling to put to context what it saw. What offense to the Great Project has occurred in the far Past? The encounter should have been routine. Jariel found himself approaching the asteroid at quick pace. Mining probes surrounded its surface and began taking photographs, while the main guns stored beneath Jariel's optics quietly began to store fusion-power. It should have been simple. It should have been routine. But as the gun was still charging, a miraculous alteration began to occur upon the planetoid's surface. All across the grey and yellow stone, buildings of crystal and glass began to erupt, whole cities worth of structures permeate the entirety of the semi-sphere. For a few moments, blue light shone from each structure as it formed, and 59 Elpis took on the appearance of a star gleaming in the light. Rising from the planetoid's top, wrapping around it like a crown arose what appeared to be broadcasting towers with antennae, gleaming with thaumaturgical sigils. The entire planetoid was transforming before his eyes. Jariel's probes continued to feed him information as streamers and garlands of lace formed between the crystal-and-glass towers, giving the cities the appearance of an ancient earth holiday, and great fields of flowers erupted from the ground across the lower-middle of the planet like a long kilt or belt forming, visible even by Jariel's cosmic distance. His gun continued charging, but would never fire. The broadcasting antennae from 59 Elpis had detected the immense Angel's presence, and began transmitting. For a moment, Jariel received no transmission from this cosmic late-comer, this tiny and recent planetoid that had emerged from the foam a mere seven million years prior. Then, with a voice like the glittering of glass there came a single thought, gallant and defiant. "THE FORCES OF DARKNESS SCATTER AT THE LIGHT OF HOPE. PRETTY SOLDIER ELPIS!"

# Character Creation

Characters in the Shrouded Earth are those who have some connection to the supernatural world. Perhaps they were welcomed in to the deathless embrace of vampirism, or were taught the secrets of ancient magic and witchcraft. Maybe they are the scion of a god and a mortal woman, or carry potent shapeshifting blood. It is not impossible they fell from another world, or stumbled into our reality from another altogether. Regardless of their nature, they are collectively referred to as Monsters, for nothing can grow so mighty and retain the right to call itself human [though there are always those who would disagree]. To generate such an occult creation, follow the following eight Steps.

**Step 1: Decide a Character Concept;** This step is often the hardest. Think carefully upon the role you seek your character to play. Most Monsters are interested in the promotion of some Conspiracy. They could be the lackey of a powerful Vampire Conspiracy influencing a large American city, or cultists gathered to promote the veneration of Ishtar. They could belong to a tribe of Shifters trying to kill off industrial civilization [though that would be ridiculous and unlikely to succeed]. Alternatively, perhaps they desire the downfall of some conspiracy. More than one Hunter got his start as a 'conspiracy theorist' living his mom's basement, with enough firepower to bring down an African government. She could also be completely green, a Magician new to her powers, or a Construct stumbling from her grave with no idea she's even died, and having to roll with the punches of her new life.

**Step 2: Select a Monster Type;** This should largely have been determined in the preceding step, but formally select and note the Type of your Monster on your character sheet. Keep in mind that each Type is intentionally broad and nebulous. A Shifter could be a werewolf, but it could also be the Thing, or shaman who takes the form of an enormous eagle. A Hero could be anything from a master martial artist, to the latest bastard of Zeus, to the ridiculous child soldiers employed by the Queen of Mirrors. Don't be afraid to explore novel interpretations of what a Type can mean. Note your character's Monster Traits and any relevant selections on your sheet at this time.

**Step 3: Select Weaknesses;** There is no power without a price. All Monsters possess various Weaknesses, their choice of which is partially restrained by their Type. Usually this is one Greater Weakness and either two Lesser Weaknesses or a second Greater Weakness, but consult the rules for the specific Type as there are exceptions.

**Step 4: Select Skills;** All Skills begin at 1 and cannot be reduced below 1 at character creation. Mark all Skills as such, then distribute 75 points among your Skills. Skills cannot be raised above 10 at this step, though various Gifts, Aspects, and Items may raise them thereafter as high as the powers and Dice Cap permit. As a general matter a Skill Rating of 1-3 indicates an untrained average person, 4-5 indicates typical training for average tasks, 6-8 indicates professional quality or expert skill level, and 9 or 10 indicates the elite in that field, the world's finest.

**Step 5: Select Excellences, Gifts, and Spells;** Monsters possess an inherent greatness that sets them above the mortal masses and the first sign of this is Excellences, simple magics or mutations that increase a character's Skill Rating in varying ways. All Monsters start with 5 Excellences, which can be chosen from any Skill. Note that certain Monsters receive additional Excellences for free. Once you have chosen your initial Excellences, you may distribute 8 points among your starting Gifts or Spells which can include purchasing further Excellences. At character generation, all that matters is dot-count and the powers one is permitted to purchase. A Vampire may choose to start play with nothing but Magecraft Spells if desired, or spend all his Gift dots on more Excellences. Note again that some Monsters receive certain Gifts for free, or begin play with more points [these bonus points may have restrictions upon what they can be spent].

**Step 6: Select Background Merits;** Characters do not come into existence ex-nihilo. Whether recently inducted into the ranks of the supernatural or a long-time dweller in the dark, all Monsters have some degree of resources to draw upon represented in the form of Background Merits. These are used to indicate a character as being wealthy, or famous, or possessing standing in some Conspiracy or another, or ownership of some potent Mystic Artifact or Device. Players being play with 15 dots to distribute among their Background Merits.

**Step 7: Calculate Combat and Secondary Statistics;** Note that your character sheet the Attack and Defense pools [with accompanying Damage and Soak] for your most common weapons, attacks, or armor configurations. Don't forget to keep in mind bonuses from Weapon Style and Fighting Style. It would be prudent to list the pertinent statistics twice, first without Effort-fueled increases and then again with them. There is a place on your sheet also to list your character's base Lift [as set by the Might Chart], their average Jumping Distance, and their Movement Speed [measured in feet per second, and if desired, miles per hour].

**Step 8: Finish;** Add your character's Health, Effort, and any typical mundane Equipment to the sheet. You're finished.

## **Character Advancement**

Monsters advance in power as they continue to exercise their powers and defend or oppose Conspiracies, as well as through studying or training. In game terms this is handled through the accumulation of Experience Points [EXP] and Mundane Experience Points [MXP]. Experience Points are spent upon Gifts and Spells, and represent the accumulation of new mystical abilities or superhuman skills for the character. Mundane Experience is used to raise a character's Skills, as they expand their knowledge and experiences. Player Character's receive 2 EXP and 2 MXP per session of play, at the beginning of the session, and may typically only spend them during the downtime between Stories. There is no preset amount of time that a character must spend training or studying between



Stories to develop new powers, nor any mechanical guidelines on what types of Gifts, Spells, or Skills may be purchased. In universe, the character may require mentorship under others of his kind, or the learning of spell-lore to master new magic, but this is purely an after-the-fact justification of how points are spent, not a rule on how they may be spent. At the Storyteller's discretion, a Player Character may spend EXP or MXP during an arc, either to represent the character dramatically unlocking a new ability to help in the present circumstance, or the character being tutored 'onscreen' in something relevant to the plot. This is an exception, and not the standard rule. It is not intended that characters spend experience points to evolve their way out of all situations. A Monster's Rank increases automatically as they reach a certain Experience Point [EXP] total, as shown in the following chart. Note that Rank only increases at the end of the present Story unless the Storyteller decides otherwise.

**Rank Chart:**

<b>Rank 2</b>	<b>12 EXP [Session 6]</b>
<b>Rank 3</b>	48 EXP [Session 24]
<b>Rank 4</b>	100 EXP [Session 50]
<b>Rank 5</b>	180 EXP [Session 90]

**Starting at Higher Ranks:** A Storyteller may choose to begin his campaign at a higher level of play than normal, or more commonly, simply desires help statting up higher level characters. For this purpose, use the following chart for starting Gift and Skill totals. Keep in mind Skills start at 1 and this does not include Type Traits or starting Excellences.

Rank	Skill Dots	Gift or Spell Dots
<b>Rank 2</b>	78-86 Skill Dots	11-19 Dots
<b>Rank 3</b>	87-99 Skill Dots	20-32 Dots
<b>Rank 4</b>	100-119 Skill Dots	33-52 Dots
<b>Rank 5</b>	120-175 Skill Dots	53-108 Dots

**Sidebar:**

Experience Chart

Gift or Thaumaturgy [4 EXP per Dot]

Magecraft or Theurgy [5 EXP per Dot]

Skill [4 MXP per Dot]

**Sidebar:** Optional Rule: B-Sessions If the ST rules that a session did not last long enough to be worth a full distribution of experience, he may rule that the following session is a 'B-Session', a continuation of the prior one, and only reward EXP and MXP for the combined session. This may be used to avoid excessive accumulation of experience over sessions that last half or less the standard session length for the group

# Gifts

At the heart of monstrosity is that which is Other, that which is feared because it is not normal, or is not understood. Those in the grip of such fears deem these differences curses, but to those who benefit from being more than mere they are Gifts. Gifts are supernatural powers, abilities, physiological traits, or other skills that separate the superhuman Monsters from the mortal herd. Gifts are divided into two types, General Gifts and Type Gifts. General Gifts are Gifts that are available to anyone, sometimes even ordinary humans, provided they meet the Gift's prerequisites. Type Gifts are Gifts that are unique to a given Monster Type, and each Monster possesses a list of Gifts in their relevant section detailing the strange powers available to them. Gifts are written as such

**Gift Name** [\*\*\*]: Tags, Action Type; Rules of Gift.

**Name:** The Name of the Gift is self-explanatory. For some Conspiracies these names are actual codified terms for specific supernatural effects known to exist, for others its purely an out of character way of denoting a certain power.

**Cost:** The Cost of a Gift is written in dots, represented by asterisks. The dot rating of a Gift determines the cost to purchase it, either during character creation or later with experience. Most Gifts are two-dot Gifts. Gifts that are especially weak or which are regarded as fairly universal [such as basic increases to one's Soak] are one-dot, while especially powerful Gifts are three-dot Gifts. No Gift costs more than three dots, if it is not possible to perform a certain effect with a three dot Gift, due to its complexity or numeric benefit, split it into multiple Gifts.

**Tags:** Tags are universal rules represented by a keyword, that add to a Gift's description. They are included to avoid having to clarify and rewrite basic rules on very similar Gifts. The most common type of Tag is-

**Action Type:** The type of action that must be performed to initiate the Gift, being either Reflexive, Simple, Extended, or Permanent.

**Rules:** The rules of a Gift explain what the Gift does in broad mechanical terms, and in very rare occasions might reference in-universe uses of a Gift to help explain what it is intended to do. The cost of the Gift in Effort is usually listed first, but may be listed later if a Gift has multiple uses of different Action Types.

**Using Gifts:** Gifts are, more than anything else, the things that define a Monster as being what it is. Without Gifts, a supernatural being is merely a slightly altered human. They are subject to a few considerations when writing and using them

**Canceling Gifts:** In most cases a character can end a Gift that they have active at any time as a Reflexive Action. They may not however end or mitigate enduring effects a Gift has on an environment or other characters.

## Tags

Gifts possess certain tags, with the most common listed below

**Reflexive:** The Gift is activated as a Reflexive Action.

**Simple:** The Gift is activated as a Simple Action.

**Extended:** The Gift is activated as an Extended Action.

**Permanent:** The Gift is always activated, or can be used at any time due to permanently improving the Monster's capabilities in some way.

**Supplemental:** The Gift enhances or supports a roll or action, and is activated reflexively before the roll or action in question.

**Fighting Style:** The Gift is an Advanced Fighting Style, activated with the same rules as ordinary Fighting Styles found on page [XX].

**Form:** The Gift transforms the target into another being altogether. Monsters can only have one Form Gift activate at a time. Form Gifts are most often used to grant one a series of Aspects.

**Immortality:** The Gift somehow allows a character to return from death or survive death in a way more complicated than simply standing back up after reaching zero Health. This tag primarily exists for the sake of Gifts that allow one to bypass Gifts with this tag.

**Perfect:** This Gift is Perfect. Nothing may prevent a character from activating it, and upon activation nothing may negate or pierce it. This tag is most commonly seen on the once per Scene defenses each Monster Type has that completely nullifies a single attack or damage source.

**Reinforcement:** Reinforcement Gifts are used for the nullification of supernatural effects on a fundamental level, and are the primarily tools used to dispel Anamolies. Gifts with this tag are automatically lost when a character or item becomes Anamolous.

**World-Altering:** A Gift with this tag has the power to effect far vaster areas than ordinary Gifts, usually a very blunt and simple way. World-Altering Gifts are used to destroy or create planets, or alter planets in very simple ways. The target of a World-Altering Gift is always a world, they are not simply 'planet-scale' versions of ordinary Gifts.

**Mastery:** A Gift labeled with the Mastery tag has a duration listed upon it, but its duration becomes indefinite and impossible to dispel at Rank 5. It can still be canceled reflexively by the user if desired.

**Prerequisite:** The Gift possessess one or more Prerequisites to purchase it, such as a certain Skill Rating or Rank, or possession of another Gift. Most Gifts do not require Prerequisites, only those Gifts that are unusually powerful, or build off of the powers of another Gift do so.

## Describing Gifts

Gifts are intentionally vague in what they do and how they accomplsh it. The description of a Gift usually includes little if any lore describing how the Gift may look or what a Monster does to activate it. This is intentional, Monster Types can represent many different varieties of supernatural being and the Gifts used must likewise be able to represent a wider assortment of powers than space permits full

descriptions for. The Storyteller and the Players should assume that Gifts can be described as working any way the Player wants, provided it doesn't give a great mechanical edge to have it be described in a certain way. Gifts are short, to the point, and describe a particular power that a Monster possesses. Where possible, they do not go into all the possible uses of the Gift and how they should be resolved. A few rules of thumb or specific circumstances should be noted ahead of time

**Flight:** Any Gift that allows a Monster to fly also acclimates him to the thin air and colder temperatures of the sky.

**Shapeshifting:** Any Gift that allows a Monster to take another form or disguise himself allows him to decide what happens to his clothes, whether they are ripped out of or shrank out of, whether they change size and form to continue matching him, or whether they simply disappear into a vaguely defined subspace for the duration of the Gift.

**Mood Lighting:** The visual and auditory elements that accompany a Gift are up to the Player. As long as the Gift's depiction doesn't give some major advantage not inherent to the Gift, it can be assumed that any Gift may produce sufficient light to fill a room or enough noise to mimic a booming sound system, or produce harmless tremors or a stiff breeze, or palpable 'waves' of power or other minor supernatural effects purely by virtue of being used.

**Gifts and Stunting:** The rules of Gifts are ordinarily set, and cannot be altered in play. However, with the Storyteller's permission a Player may use a Gift in an unconventional way that the rules of the power do not allow for, or which even contradict the rules of the power. For instance if a Gift states it allows a Monster to levitate objects telekinetically, and the Monster is falling to his doom, the Monster could [with the ST's approval] declare a Stunt to attempt to catch himself with his own telekinesis right before hitting the ground even though the Gift forbids the player from using it to fly. Such 'Stunts' are breakages in the rules for the sake of a compelling narrative, and only apply in that one instance. If a Monster wants to alter a Gift to allow for a past Stunt to always be done, he should ask the Storyteller to write a new Gift with the former as Prerequisite.

**Writing Gifts:** The Gifts written in this book are by no means exhaustive, and do not pretend to be. They represent what are by far the most common and most often used powers available in the Shrouded Earth, but they could represent only a slim majority of those extant. Players may require that the Storyteller write a Gift for them that matches a certain idea, and extensive guidelines for Storyteller's doing so is included on page [XX]. All Type Gifts are limited by the design themes [both thematic and mechanical] for the given Type.

**Absolute Effects:** If two Gifts possess absolute effects, that is, their effect is not rolled and simply declares as an absolute thing that a given thing happens, the first thing to do is check if they contradict. If they do not contradict, they do not collide. Resolve the interaction as best as possible with both Gifts existing, or if necessary assume the Gift activated next takes precedent. If two Gifts with absolute unrolled effects are brought into conflict, assume the Gift more like a defense wins.

**Healing:** Any Gift that heals Health Levels upon a character can be used upon a character with the Bloodied or Bleeding Out Complication to stabilize them as part of their being healed. Moreover, as

noted elsewhere, if a Gift is used to heal a character back to full Health or is used upon a character with full Health, all Injuries upon the character are removed and healed also.

## General Gifts

General Gifts are available to anyone who meets the given Prerequisites, regardless of Monster Type or even lack thereof. There are only two exceptions to this. All Monsters begin play with Excellences, a form of general Gift that allows a player to add more dice to his roll in a particular Skill. They may also purchase them later as regular General Gifts. All Monsters can only purchase the Excellence listed as belonging to their Type, and only Monsters can purchase Excellences. The second exception is the Ox Body Technique Gift, which permanently increases a Monster's maximum Health. This Gift likewise has a different version for different Monster Types, and can only be purchased by qualifying Types.

**Excellences:** There are five types of Excellence, Monster, Mortal, Supernal, Prototypal, and Protean. Vampires, Ghosts, Faeries, and Mummies possess the Monster Excellence. Magicians, Hunters, and Scientists possess the Mortal Excellence. Heroes and Psychics possess the Supernal Excellence. Demons and Constructs possess the Prototypal Excellence, and Shifters alone utilize the Protean Excellence. Each Excellence is not one Gift but many, encompassing different varieties for every Skill in the game, which are purchased individually. For instance a character would purchase 'Monster Excellence of Animal Ken' to apply its effects to his Animal Ken rolls.

**Monster Excellence of [Skill] [\*]:** Mastery, Reflexive, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Monster adds [unmodified Skill/2] to all rolls using that Skill.

**Mortal Excellence of [Skill] [\*]:** Mastery, Reflexive, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Monster adds [Rank] to all rolls using that Skill.

**Supernal Excellence of [Skill] [\*]:** Reflexive, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and apply one of the following effects. Effect 1: For the rest of the Turn the Monster may add his unmodified [Skill] to all rolls using that Skill. If this Gift is activated during the Monster's Turn, it ends at the start of the Monster's next Turn. If it is activated during another character's Turn, it ends at the end of the Monster's next Turn. Effect 2: The Monster may add his unmodified [Skill] to a single roll [usually Extended] regardless of how many turns it takes to perform. At Rank 5, the Duration of this Excellence becomes one Scene.

**Prototypal Excellence of [Skill] [\*]:** Permanent; the Monster permanently adds five dice to all rolls using that Skill. The Monster must also select one other Skill in which his unmodified rating is at least 3. This Skill suffers a permanent -2 Penalty, which cannot be negated or annulled by any means. As with all Penalties, this cannot reduce the dice pool below 1. At Rank 5, this Excellence instead increases the Skill's dice pool by seven and it becomes impossible to dispel.

**Protean Excellence of [Skill] [\*]:** Reflexive, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and apply one of the following effects. Effect 1: For the rest of the Turn the Monster may add his unmodified [Skill/2] to all rolls using that Skill. If this Gift is activated during the Monster's Turn, it ends at the start of the Monster's next Turn. If it is activated during another character's Turn, it ends at the end of the Monster's

next Turn. Effect 2: The Monster may add his unmodified [Skill/2] to a single roll [usually Extended] regardless of how many turns it takes to perform. At Rank 5, the Duration of this Excellence becomes one Scene.

**Ox Body Technique** [\*]: Permanent; the Monster increases his maximum Health by an amount determined by his Monster Type. This Gift may be purchased up to [Rank] times.

Increase by +4: Shifter, Demon, Construct

Increase by +3: Vampire, Faeries, Hero, Ghost

Increase by +2: Hunters, Mummy

Increase by +1: Magician, Scientist, Psychic

**Skilled** [\*]: Permanent; the Monster immediately gains 3 Skill Points. This Gift may be purchased up to [Rank] times.

**Depths of Character** [\*]: Permanent; increase the character's maximum Effort by one. This Gift may be purchased up to [Rank] times.

**Supremacy of [Skill]** [\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5 and the relevant Excellence of [Skill], Permanent; Select 1 Excellence the Monster possesses. Add five dice to the number of dice the Excellence adds to its given Skill. This is not one Gift but many, purchased separately for each Skill.

**Supernatural Martial Art** [\*]: Permanent; the Monster may select one Advanced Fighting Style he knows. When attacking with that Style, he can instead choose to deal a different Damage Type, selected upon purchase of this Gift, rather than the attack's standard damage Type. This Gift may be purchased as many times as desired, applying to different or the same Style.

**Behemoth Body Technique** [\*\*]: Prerequisite: 3+ Purchases of Ox-Body Technique, Rank 3; Permanent, the Monster increases his maximum Health by his Rank.

**Be Water My Friend** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Monster may utilize two Fighting Styles, even Advanced Fighting Styles, at the same time and may initiate up to two Fighting Styles in one Turn. The Fighting Styles must still be compatible with each other and utilize the same Skill to attack.

**Strength of Spirit** [\*\*]: Permanent; Define some reasonably common condition relating to the character's motivations such as "Whenever they are victorious in battle" or "Whenever they make a new friend" or "Whenever they learn a secret about the supernatural". Once per Scene upon fulfilling this condition immediately reclaim two Effort.

**Craft Mystic Artifact** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Mystic Lore 4 and Artifice 4, Permanent; the Monster can construct Mystic Artifacts using the crafting rules found on page [XX].

**Craft Device** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Science 4 and Artifice 4, Permanent; the Monster can construct Devices using the crafting rules found on page [XX].

**Advanced Fighting Styles:** Advanced Fighting Styles are initiated and utilized in the same fashion as basic Fighting Styles, with the following modifications. Advanced Fighting Styles are limited to a certain skill, included in brackets in its name. Its offensive benefits only apply to skills with that skill, though any defensive benefits are constant as long as the Fighting Style remains active. Purchasing an

Advanced Fighting Style requires having at least an unmodified 8 in the relevant Skill. Note that Fighting Styles that incorporate weapons are slightly more potent than their unarmed counterparts, to compensate for the fact that the former are immune to being disarmed or having one's weapon sundered.

**Pugilist Fighting Style** [Martial Arts] [\*]: Reflexive, Fighting Style; the character is fighting with a balanced martial art, such as western boxing or is utilizing another martial art in a balanced and practical fashion. He adds +2 to his Damage and +2 to his Soak.

**Brutal Fighting Style** [Martial Arts] [\*]: Reflexive, Fighting Style; the character is fighting with a martial art focused on brutally trashing his opponent such as shaolin tiger style or muay tay or is utilizing another martial art in a brutal damage focused fashion. He adds +4 to his Damage.

**Wrestling Fighting Style** [Martial Arts] [\*]: Reflexive, Fighting Style; the character is fighting with a martial art focused on grappling and tossing down opponents, such as judo or sumo, or is utilizing extensive grappling techniques with another martial art. He adds +4 to all rolls to establish, sustain, or escape a grapple and adds +2 successes to his Damage.

**Empty Handed Fighting Style** [Martial Arts] [\*]: Reflexive, Fighting Style; the character is fighting with a martial art focused on disarming his opponent, such as modern military martial arts, or is using disarming tactics with another martial art. He adds +4 to all actions to disarm an opponent or rearm himself, and adds +2 successes to his Damage.

**Turtle Guarding Fighting Style** [Martial Arts] [\*]: Reflexive, Fighting Style; the character is fighting with a martial art focused around defending himself or evading attacks, such as shaolin crane, or is using another martial art in a very conservative fashion. He adds +4 to his Soak.

**Hammering Fighting Style** [Martial Arts] [\*]: Reflexive, Fighting Style; the character is fighting with a martial art focused on speed and rapidly taking down multiple enemies while also defending oneself, such as wing chun boxing, or is using another martial art in a very agility focused way. He adds +2 his Soak and may attack multiple foes per the Rapid Fighting Style.

**Knightly Fighting Style** [Melee] [\*]: Reflexive, Fighting Style; the character is fighting with a formal and practical fighting art, such as that utilized by medieval knights, or is using another martial art in a very skillful and practical way. He adds +3 to his Damage and +2 to his Soak.

**Armor Piercing Fighting Style** [Melee] [\*]: Reflexive, Fighting Style; the character is fighting with an art designed to deprive a foe of his armaments, such as those trained with a medieval spiked hammer, or is using another martial art with this goal in mind. He adds +4 to all rolls to sunder an opponent's weapons or armor, counts his place on the Might Chart as being 2 higher for the purposes of seeing if a sunder succeeds, and adds +3 to his Damage.

**Fencing Fighting Style** [Melee] [\*]: Reflexive, Fighting Style; the character is fighting with the elegant swordplay of an old fighting manual, or perhaps the single-handed swordplay of a chinese jian, or is using disarming tactics with another martial art. He adds +4 to all actions to disarm an opponent or rearm himself, and adds +3 successes to his Damage.

**Rampaging Warrior Fighting Style** [Melee] [\*]: Reflexive, Fighting Style; the character is using the

fierce natural fighting instincts of a warrior trained on the battlefield rather than in a school, focused only on killing, or perhaps he's a berserker or is simply using another martial art in a very damage focused way. He adds +4 to his Damage and +1 to his Soak.

**Knife Fighting Style** [Melee] [\*]: Reflexive, Fighting Style; the character using the very cautious and timed methods of a warrior who fights with a knife, or is using another martial art in a way dedicated to his own safety. He adds +4 to his Soak and +1 to his Damage.

**Landknecht Fighting Style** [Melee] [\*]: Reflexive, Fighting Style; the character is using the broad and open motions of a slaughtering hero, such as the old German landknecht. He adds +3 to his Damage successes and may attack multiple foes per the Rapid Fighting Style.

**Pistol Training Fighting Style** [Ranged] [\*]: Reflexive, Fighting Style; the character is using the skills of a modern law enforcement officer or a trained marksman, or is using another martial art with a skillful balance. He adds +2 to his damage successes and +3 to his Soak.

**Blunderbuss Fighting Style** [Ranged] [\*]: Reflexive, Fighting Style; the character is using a fighting style that revolves around the strength of his firearm or bow, or is using another martial art in a way focused purely on killing. He adds +4 to his Damage and +1 to his Soak.

**Gunslinger Fighting Style** [Ranged] [\*]: Reflexive, Fighting Style; the character is using the trained eye and elegant shooting of the old west, or is using another martial art with an eye towards accuracy. He adds +4 to all attack rolls, +4 to all actions to disarm an opponent or rearm himself, and adds +1 to his Soak.

**Gun Kata Fighting Style** [Ranged] [\*]: Reflexive, Fighting Style; the character is using the unrealistic and cinematic fighting style of gun-kata, or is using a firearm with a large magazine or another martial art with an eye for firing as many attacks as possible. He adds +3 to his Damage successes and may attack multiple foes per the Rapid Fighting Style.

**Fullmetal Jacket Fighting Style** [Ranged] [\*]: Reflexive, Fighting Style; the character is using heavy-duty guns or possesses the mighty strength of an old English yeoman. He adds +4 to all rolls to sunder an opponent's weapons or armor, counts his place on the Might Chart as being 2 higher for the purposes of seeing if a sunder succeeds, and adds +3 to his Damage.

**Covering Fire Fighting Style** [Ranged] [\*]: Reflexive, Fighting Style; the character is laying down covering fire for others and is skilled at taking it himself, or perhaps he is using another martial art with a goal of strategic defense. He adds +3 to his Soak and once per turn he may reflexively activate the Defend Other action, even if it is not his turn.

**Throwing Dynamite Around is a Fighting Style** [Special] [\*]: Reflexive, Fighting Style; when this Fighting Style is activated one may immediately gain the benefits of any Explosive-type attack Fighting Style one qualifies for [such as Light Explosive, Heavy Explosive, or Calamitous Explosive]. The damage is increased by 2 for Light Explosives, 3 for Heavy Explosives, and 5 for Calamitous Explosives]. Unlike normal Advanced Fighting Styles, this Style can be used with any skill involving planting or firing off Explosives.



## Magic

Magic is the art and science of altering the world through ritual, and its practice is extensive throughout the Shrouded Earth. Every Monster Type possesses some competency in magic, and even ordinary mortals may use thaumaturgy and indeed there are more mortal thaumaturges than there are magic users of any variety in all the Monster Types in the world. The knowledge of the occult is in some ways more prevalent and important to the Shrouded Earth than the existence of the Monsters and their endless Conspiracies. Magic is divided mechanically into three Tiers, and each Tier possesses one of three Tags. Magic is written in the same fashion of Gifts and is subject to all of the same limitations, except where noted otherwise.

**Thaumaturgy:** The first tier of magic is Thaumaturgy, available to all intelligent beings.

Thaumaturgical Magic is usually exceeding subtle or weak regardless of dot rating and tend to be weaker than a Gift with an equivalent cost. However their benefits are universal and versatile, and as they cost the same as Gifts in terms of Experience Points they are frequently purchased for powers not available to a given Type otherwise such as allowing a character to see ghosts or ward an area against intrusion. All Thaumaturgical Magic has the Prerequisite of Mystic Lore 4 OR Science 4.

**Magecraft:** Magecraft is the second tier of magic, available to Vampires, Shifters, Faeries, Heroes, Ghosts, Mummies, Constructs, Demons, and Magicians. Magecraft is roughly equal to Gifts of equivalent costs, though rarely equals a Gift that matches the specialty of a Monster's Type. Magecraft can produce in theory any effect not specifically listed as exclusive to theurgy, and is therefore most often used by Monsters to gain access to 'out-of-theme' powers. A Shifter who desires to call down lightning on his foes may take up magecraft, as it would be inappropriate to create a Type Gift for such an action. They are more expensive than ordinary Gifts in Experience Points [except for Magicians] and all Magecraft has the Prerequisite of Mystic Lore 6 or Science 6.

**Theurgy:** Theurgy is exclusive to Magicians, and represents the highest form of magic, allowing for the violation of the Laws of Magic listed below. Any of the below rules can be bent or broken through the use of theurgical magic. It should be noted these Laws do not apply to Type Gifts in any way, nor to Mystic Artifacts or Devices. Theurgical Magic is roughly equal to Type Gifts or Magecraft, or slightly stronger. Theurgy has a Prerequisite of Mystic Lore 6 or Science 6.

## Laws of Magic

**The Law of Space:** Neither Thaumaturgy nor Magecraft can teleport objects or beings any distance, not even across a room, nor may they create wormholes or portals linking distance spaces. They may also not bend space to create subspaces or rooms larger on the inside than out, stretch space or stack spaces, or otherwise manipulate the fabric of space. They can however view through space through scrying effects or analyze distortions in space produced through theurgy or other means.

**The Law of Time:** Neither Thaumaturgy nor Magecraft can manipulate the fabric of time. They cannot put objects into spacial stasis, nor stop time, reverse time, speed or slow the passage of time, and

especially not go back or forward in time [though Magecraft could produce means of putting oneself into stasis through means other than freezing time on oneself]. They are both capable of divination or temporal analysis however.

**The Law of Death:** Thaumaturgy and Magecraft cannot truly resurrect the dead, nor grant a character immortality, nor can they store the Vehicles of Souls or move them around. Anything that involves the manipulation of the soul or truly revival is impossible to lesser magics. They may however create zombies, automatons, and similiar mockeries of life, even restoring a soul to its body to do so [provided they have it on hand through some other means]. While endless duration of life is reasonably easy for accomplished theurgists and even lesser magic can extend one's life beyond the norm for one's species, any immortlaity that guards one against death or allows return from death is always conditional and often heavily restricted in how it may be used. It also always carries the Immortality Tag.

**The Law of Summoning:** High Summoning and Grand Summoning is exclusive to theurgy, as is most spells capable of directly creating servants of similiar power. The servants summoned or produced by lesser magics are far weaker then those produced by the masters of the art.

**The Law of Territory:** Territories cannot be produced by the lesser magics, only by theurgy. Creating territories of any respectable size is still exclusive to the mightiest of theurgists, worlds are not made casually.

**The Law of the World:** Lesser magics cannot of themselves grant effects allowing one to traverse outer space or travel to Parallel Worlds, or otherwise tear through the cosmos to its more unusual or remote places.

Sidebar: The Law of Meta: The game's meta-systems such as the rules of how Effort is spent and used, how much experience things cost, or how certain subsystems are designed cannot be overcome through Theurgy or any other magic or Gift. The game's balance is built around these systems, and while they may be exploited, abused, or set on their heel, no amount of magic allows a Player to outright alter the rules of the game.

## Types of Magic

There are three primary forms of magical effects, each of which exists in all three tiers. Innate, Spell, and Ritual, which are all Tags. Together with tiers you can see them are forming a grid defining all magic. There is Innate Thaumaturgy, Thaumaturgy Spells, and Thaumaturgy Rituals, and there is Innate Magecraft, Magecraft Spells, and Magecraft Rituals, and there is also Innate Theurgy, Theurgy Spells, and Theurgy Rituals. The tags follow

**Innate:** Innate Magic functions identically to Gifts, and usually represents some cultivated supernatural talent not particular to a certain monster, such as opening one's third eye to gain occult senses or becoming blessed with oracular visions. There are no special rules associated with Innate Magic. They are usually Permanent.

**Spell:** Spells function in most ways identically to Gifts, but are subject to the following restriction. In order to activate and resolve, or otherwise benefit from, a Spell one requires \*either\* a Catalyst or the

ability to speak clearly. A Catalyst is a dedicated ritual casting tool, created through the use of the Create Catalyst Thaumaturgy Ritual. Catalysts can be anything in theory, provided they are objects capable of being sundered or disarmed. Most catalysts take the form of staves, wands, fetishes, grimoires, or the odd engraved sword or weapon. They may not be biological parts of the caster such as tattoos or brandings. In order to use a Spell one must either be holding or wearing a Catalyst, or speak an incantation aloud. The incantation can be whispered or mumbled, but must be clearly spoken. A Monster attempting to cast without a Catalyst in a room full of poison smoke or while swimming underwater will find he cannot do so. Speaking spells instead of using a Catalyst does not confer any kind of Penalty on Stealth. Any character may choose to begin play with a Catalyst if so desired, but cannot thereafter replace it except through roleplay or the Create Catalyst Ritual.

**Ritual:** Rituals are always Extended Actions, and require the use of a prepared ritual space usually loosely detailed within the text of the magic itself. They are often quite powerful, but their dependence upon specific set-ups to perform [not to mention time, a short ritual might take fifteen minutes, a long one could take an entire day] limits their application in the heat of battle.

### **Other Magic Tags:**

**Summoning:** Summoning magic allow for the summoning of entities of Rank 0 or 1, and have no limit to the number of beings that one can command or control.

**High Summoning:** High Summoning magic permit one to summon entities of Rank 2 or 3. A given summoner can summon or bind more then his Rank in High Summonings, and all High Summoning magics allow for the summoning and binding of one one monster at a time. Thus, in order to summon five High Summonings, a summoner would require Rank 5 and five seperate different High Summoning Spells. All High Summoning magics have a Prerequisite of Rank 3.

**Grand Summoning:** Grand Summoning allows for the summoning of godlike Rank 4 entities. A given summoner can only summon and bind a single Grand Summoning at a time. All Grand Summoning magics have a Prerequisite of Rank 5.

## **Thaumaturgy**

**Blessing of Generation** [\*]: Simple, Spell: Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select one living creature or a plot of land measuring up to [Rank+1] miles in diameter. For a year and a day, the creature or land will be unusually fruitful and fertile, ignoring all Penalties to the production of life. In narrative terms, agriculture is plentiful and successful births or the births of more children is likely. This has no effect on unwilling characters.

**Blight the Fields** [\*]: Simple, Spell: Commit 1 Effort [for the Day and select one living creature or a plot of land measuring up to [Rank+1] miles in diameter. For a year and a day, the creature or land will be blighted and barren, suffering a -3 Penalty to any roll involving the production of life. In narrative terms plantlife will die or be difficult to keep alive, pregnancy will be hard and stillbirth likely. This has no effect on Monsters of Rank 1+.

**Third Eye** [\*]: Permanent, Innate: The user may see into the Astral Plane, perceiving any Immaterialized beings or objects as though they were present.

**Oracle** [\*]: Permanent, Innate: The user is an oracle, blessed [or cursed] with visions of the future. They are subject to portents, dreams, and the seeing of signs [as appropriate to their character concept]. These visions are completely under the control of the Storyteller and may be as explicit, vague, or cryptic, as helpful or unhelpful as desired. Such visions may be out of context, but they are almost never wrong unless player actions prevent them. Once per Story the player may force such as a portent. They declare some subject or inquiry upon which they desire knowledge, usually related to their current circumstances and goals, and request of the Storyteller a portent relating to it.

**Magelight** [\*]: Simple, Spell: The user may declare any object within a mile of his location that he can see. That object creates some source of illumination for the next eight hours, or until the caster deactivates this Spell as a reflexive action. Traditionally such spells produced heatless, often colorful flame, or caused polished glass or gemstones to shed light, but any form of illumination may be produced by this spell. This spell may be cast repeatedly to cause many things to create light.

**Songbird** [\*]: Simple, Spell: The user may cause any object within a mile of his location that he can see to produce any noises or sounds he desires. Most commonly this Spell was used to produce music or to imitate voices to fool people as a form of ventriloquism. This Spell uses a dice pool of six for any rolls for Deception to redirect or for Performance of any music or the caster's own pools, whichever is higher. The object may be compelled to produce up to ten minutes of sound per casting, selected upon casting, and any subsequent castings cancel prior ones early.

**Masque of Death** [\*]: Reflexive, Innate: The user may, as a reflexive action, cause himself to appear to be completely dead to all mundane inspection. His breathing slows to an absolute crawl, his heart rate and brain activity go blank, and any purely mundane examination reveals the target as dead. If the user is already an undead being or a machine, they instead appear to be crippled or destroyed to any mundane inspection. This has no effect against any form of Gift or Spell that would reveal one being alive. This may be activated while Incapacitated.

**Footsteps of the Monk** [\*]: Permanent, Innate: The user is a hardened ascetic, or possesses the physical discipline of one. He may go twice as long without eating or drinking, gains +2 dice to Endure Fatigue or any Survival rolls, and never suffers Penalties or harm for traveling through terrestrial environments without proper tools or protection. He may dwell in a frozen wilderness or a burning desert while skyclad.

**Qing Gong** [\*]: Permanent; the Monster can perfectly balance on any substance at least as substantial as spider's web or water as though it was solid ground capable of bearing his weight plus a thousand pounds. Moreover the Monster can walk or stand upon walls or ceilings. Lastly, the Monster is immune to Falling Damage.

**Create Catalyst** [\*]: Extended, Ritual: Commit 1 Effort for the Day as an Extended Action requiring one hour. The user may permanently designate any object, of any size, as a spellcasting Catalyst provided it meets the requirements for a Catalyst.

**Grimoire Aegis** [\*]: Extended, Ritual: Commit 1 Effort for the Day as an Extended Action requiring one hour. The user may render any object smaller than a one by one foot cube as completely immune to damage caused by Environmental Hazards or small Rank 0 animals such as mice or insects. Under no circumstances may this be used to shield or protect a character from harm.

**Hippocrates Heir** [\*]: Permanent, Innate: The user is always aware of how much maximum and remaining Health characters he is aware of [even at a distance or in video feeds] possess [or possessed, for recordings]. The user adds two dice to all Medicine rolls.

**Alchemist's Soul** [\*]: Simple, Innate: The user concentrates upon a mundane object they are aware of within one mile of their location. They become aware of any and all elements present in it, whether it is a mixture or compound, and in what proportions any elements are present. They also learn all its chemical properties and common uses for those properties.

**Wisdom of Gaia** [\*]: Simple, Innate: The user concentrates upon a mundane plant or animal they are aware of within one mile of their location. They immediately become aware of what species the plant or beast is and any notable qualities it has, such as medicinal uses, whether it is poison or dangerous, any common behavioral traits, and so on. In general assume the user may learn any information that ten successes upon an Animal Ken or Science roll would inform them, without their needing to have previously read or learned it.

**Adamic Script** [\*]: Permanent, Innate: The user may speak and read the ur-tongue, variously known as Adamic, Enochian, High Speech, and a thousand other monikers. The ur-tongue is incomprehensible to anyone lacking this Gift, both spoken and in writing. Any script meant to convey High Speech completely resists all attempts at mundane deciphering. For this reason, the original language is very frequently used as a method of communication among Magicians and other occultists, or any Conspiracy with an interest in secrecy.

**Aura Sight** [\*]: Simple, Innate: The user concentrates upon a given character he is aware of within one mile of his location. The character learns if the character is a Monster and if so of which Type. This does not reveal Rank or similar information.

**Eyes of the Sage** [\*\*]: Prerequisite: Aura Sight, Permanent, Innate: This Gift replaces and upgrades Aura Sight. Aura Sight is now Permanent, the user may reflexively perceive if any being he is aware of is a Monster and if so of which Type. This still does not reveal Rank or other information.

**Divination** [\*\*]: Extended, Ritual: Commit 1 Effort for the Day as an Extended Action requiring fifteen minutes then roll Mystic Lore. The user declares his curiosity concerning the future of a person, object, or possible event he is aware of and the Storyteller informs him what the future has in store. The caster divides his successes between how distant into the future he wishes to look, and how accurate he wishes his vision to be using the below chart. The caster may only look into the future of a given subject once per Story, and the Storyteller may declare that similar or related subjects result in merely a repeat of the prior insight. Note that while successes may determine accuracy, he may *\*not\** determine detail, which is purely at the discretion of the Storyteller. Divination is not a flawless or reliable form of information about the future, and even a maximum of 10+ successes sometimes yields little more than

an arrow in the right direction.

1 success: A Day

1 success: Vague, Dreamlike, Cryptic

2 successes: A Week

2 successes: Foggy, Unclear, Choppy

3 successes: A Year and a Day

3 successes: Accurate but possibly out of context

4 successes: A Century

4 successes: Broadly accurate but missing details

5 successes: As Distant as Desired

5 successes: Perfectly Accurate

**Dowsing Rod** [\*\*]: Simple, Spell: The user may, as a Simple Action, detect the presence of the nearest inanimate object of a particular type declared at the casting. Upon the casting, the user immediately gains an internal compass to specifically the nearest example of this selection. For instance the user may use this Spell to detect the presence of water, or corpses, or gold, or fire, or C4, or any other inanimate object. This Spell does not discriminate, if the user is Dowsing for ‘whiskey’ and there is a bottle in his hand, it will not point him to a second in the cabinet even if he casts this repeatedly. Moreover if one is dowsing for “pistols” it will not tell him if there is a closer shotgun hidden under the bed. This may never be used to detect hiding or stealthed characters, though it may remove Penalties caused by external limitations such as pitch darkness. This Spell has no effect on *\*specific\** objects, such as “my keys” or “the murderer’s weapon”.

**Gift of Daedalus** [\*\*]: Simple, Spell; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene, the Day, or the Story and select one complex machine. This machine can be as simple as a spinning millstone or unhorsed wagon to as complex as a super-computer, and can be as small as desired and as large as a factory, provided the device can be broadly categorized as a single interconnected entity. As long as the Effort remains committed, the machine does not require any external form of fuel or energy. Lightbulbs shed light, radios work, cars run, and factories produce without any external energy supply.

**Voice of Mercury** [\*\*]: Extended, Ritual: Commit 1 Effort for the Day as an Extended Action requiring eight hours. The caster produces some manner of mystical form of communication capable of projecting sound and images at great distances by creating some manner of immovable, fixed structure or device such as a large scrying pool, magic mirror, or mystical telephone. As long as the consecrated object isn’t moved more than ten feet, any character may use it as a reflexive action to contact any other object produced by the Voice of Mercury [even that of other casters] within ten miles of this object, or of the nearest Voice of Mercury object. In short, Voices of Mercury is used to produce a network of interconnected communication terminals that can extend their range by communicating in series. No permission is needed nor can one by any normal means prevent, the extension of range through this method. One must know which terminal one which to address to contact it.

**Accessing the Akashic Record** [\*\*]: Reflexive, Innate: The user may as a reflexive action, using any terminal created by the Voice of Mercury, do one of the following. Firstly he may dictate a statement of any length he is willing to sit and so dictate as a ‘file’ accessible from the terminal, which may be either heard as dictated or read as illusionary text. Secondly, he may paruse any such dictation on this terminal or any terminal in series with it and perceive them in the same way. In short he may add to or access an information network that overlays the communication network. Thirdly he may ‘password

protect' any 'file' present on the terminal he is currently using [but not those in series with it]. Though such systems have long since been rendered absolute by the invention of the internet, many Magicians still continue using their Records as a secure method of mystical communication and record keeping.

**Instantaneous Messenger** [\*\*]: Simple, Spell: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and declare any being in existence. One may send a message of up to a hundred words to that being. An indestructible phantasm resembling some form of mystical flying messenger, ghostly apparition of the caster, or other illusionary courier appears in front of the caster and quick as thought flies off to the messages recipient, appearing before them and vocally declaring the message immediately. The messenger then vanishes, and is incapable of hearing any responses, let alone delivering them back. To cast this spell one must know the recipient's current or original name, or possess some portion of their body such as a lock of hair, a drop of blood, or a nail.

**Regaining the First Tongue** [\*\*]: Simple, Spell: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and declare a willing target, which can be the caster. For the rest of the Scene the target may speak to and understand unintelligent animals. This Spell may be recast to effect more and more people.

**Ministration of Isis** [\*\*]: Extended, Spell: Commit 1 Effort for the Day and declare a willing target. For the rest of the Story the target's standard Healing Rate per day is increased by the caster's Rank. The caster may use this upon herself. This has no effect upon characters such as Vampires, Ghosts, and Constructs who lack an ordinary Healing Rate.

**The Gift of Awakening** [\*\*]: Extended, Ritual: Commit 1 Effort for the Day as an Extended Action requiring one hour and selecting one unintelligent animal. The animal immediately becomes intelligent and sapient and gains the ability to speak a language of the caster's choosing. The beast gains 25 Skill Points which are distributed by the Storyteller, or enough to bring the beast's total to 50 [all Skills start at 1, so 75 in total], whichever is higher. This Ritual has no effect on already intelligent animals or on Monsters of any kind. At the caster's discretion, use of this Ritual may cause purely cosmetic alterations to the animal's appearance, generally to the effect of making it look fantastic or magical.

**Warding Talisman** [\*\*]: Extended, Ritual;

**Seance** [\*\*\*]: Extended, Ritual: Commit 1 Effort for the Day as an Extended Action requiring five minutes and rolling Mystic Lore. The user summons forth an apparition of a dead person. If that person is not presently lingering as a ghost, they appear and are compelled to answer a number of questions equal to the successes rolled on Mystic Lore truthfully and honestly. The dead person is an illusionary phantom with no real presence. If the dead person is currently lingering as a ghost, they remain where they are but may project a temporary illusionary form to the site of the Seance, from which they can see, hear, and speak. They are under no compulsion to speak, and may choose to not appear [in which case this Ritual automatically fails]. Ghosts speaking through a seance suffer a -4 Penalty on all Perception rolls in regard to their 'true form' and its location. This Ritual has no effect on undead creatures, those whose souls are trapped, and those in stranger conditions.

**Homunculus** [\*\*\*]: Extended, Ritual: Commit 1 Effort for the Day as an Extended Action requiring one hour to prepare. The user creates some form of unintelligent living humanoid creature of ordinary

size through some form of slow growth method, such as growing a man in a large glass jar or slowly growing an unusual plant. Exactly one week after the process of growth has begun, the Homunculus emerges. All of its Skills are set to 3, it understands spoken commands, and flawlessly and faithfully obeys its creator for all tasks to which it is set. The homunculus explicitly and unusually counts as an unintelligent animal for the purposes of The Gift of Awakening. The Homunculus may look as desired, but is a living being and at least generally humanoid.

**The Philosopher's Stone** [\*\*\*]: Extended, Ritual: Commit 1 Effort for the Day as an Extended Action requiring fifteen minutes. The user may convert lead, copper, tin, or any other common metal besides gold or silver, into gold or silver in equivalent quantities. Moreover they can reverse this reaction, causing gold or silver to become any mundane and common metal. Moreover the user gains two dice to all Artifice and Mystic Lore rolls. This latter effect is Permanent and costs nothing.

**Warding Circle** [\*\*\*]: Extended, Ritual;

**Rune of Hephaestus** [\*\*\*]: Extended, Ritual; Commit 1 Effort for the Day as an Extended Action requiring one hour. The user inscribes some form of rune or sigil unto some object, magically hardening its durability for the rest of the Story. The object may range in size from that of a grain of rice to the walls or structure of a large building such as a castle or skyscraper. If the object is a suit of armor or a vehicle, its Armor Rating increases by 2. If it is anything else, the place on the Might Chart required to break or destroy it is raised by 2, to a maximum of 21+. If an object has previously benefited from this spell, its effects may be renewed as a Simple Action without the need to reinscribe the sigil. Effort is still committed in this case.

## Magecraft

**[Damage Type] Shield** [\*]: Simple, Spell: Select a Damage Type other than Esoteric when purchasing this Spell. Commit 1 Effort for the Scene to increase a given target's Soak by [Rank+5] for the Scene but only against Attacks of that Damage Type. The caster may cast this upon himself. This is not a single Spell but many Spells purchased individually covering each Type, such as Heat Shield or Unholy Shield.

**Curse of Io** [\*]: Simple, Spell, Form: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and select a target. If the target is willing, they are transformed into a talking cow. They gain the Mighty, Enduring, and Natural Weapons Aspects. If the target is unwilling, roll Mystic Lore opposed by Mystic Lore. Upon success the target is turned into a cow, but does not gain the above Aspects. Instead they suffer a -3 Penalty to all Skills due to an intense disorientation at involuntary transformation, and at the caster's discretion they lose the ability to speak. In either case, the Spell lasts for the rest of the Scene. **Variants:** There are variants of this Spell for every type of common mundane land Animal, with the target gaining 2-4 Aspects to represent the transformation. Transformation into aquatic or flying animals function differently enough to justify entirely different mechanics.

**Recolor** [\*]: Simple, Spell: Select any amount of mass within a 10x10 foot cube and change the color



of the selected mass to any combination of colors desired. If the target is unwilling this effect ends at the end of the current Scene, it is otherwise permanent unless dispelled [it therefore counts as having a duration for effects such as Purification]. If used to camouflage an object all attempts to notice it suffer a -2 Penalty.

**[Object] Conjunction [\*\*]:** Reflexive, Spell: Commit 1 Effort for the Day to conjure an object lighter than 50 pounds that can fit into a 5x5 foot cube selected during the purchasing of this Spell. The object must be of something relatively commonly available and cannot be intrinsically hazardous through means more complex than being utilized as part of an attack [so no Calamitous Explosives Conjunction, Obscure Dangerous Chemical Conjunction, or Radioactive Material Conjunction], and each casting only produces a single example of the object in question. This is not a single Spell but dozens representing an entire school of conjunctions such as Swords, Guns, Books, Keys, Bicycles, Brooms, Lighters, Computers, Sweaters, Gold, Diamonds, Shoes, Cell Phones, Dolls, Flamethrowers, DVDs, etc. These Spells allow for the production of any example of their theme the caster desires, provided they are known to the caster, are entirely mundane, and fit the above restrictions. As Conjuring Spells are intentionally broad, Storytellers reserve final say on what can and cannot be created with a given Spell. By default objects created by Conjunction Spells last forever, but by committing the Effort for the Scene instead of the Day the caster may produce objects which cease to be at the end of the current Scene.

**[Object] Transmutation [\*\*]:** Simple, Spell: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene to transform any single object that meets the following criteria into the theme of this Spell. The object must be able to fit in a 5x5 cube, it must weigh less than 50 lbs, it must not be alive or animate, and it must be altogether mundane not produced from Gifts or Spells nor a Mystic Artifact or Device. The selected object transforms into a preselected object obeying all the restrictions outlined in Object Conjunction. For instance the Book Transmutation Spell could transform any object the caster is aware of in his presence into a book, whereas the Gun Transmutation Spell could turn any such object that fit the above criteria into a gun. Unlike conjunction, transmutation by these spells is always temporary. Objects revert to their natural states at the end of the Scene. As with Object Conjunction this is not a single Spell but dozens purchased individually.

**Thundering of Zeus [\*\*]:** Simple, Spell: As a Simple Action roll a Ranged Attack. This attack is Might-based, and uses the caster's Mystic Lore in place of their Might for calculating damage, and is compatible with any compatible Fighting Style. This attack deals Electric Damage. By committing 1 Effort for the Scene before rolling, this attack is Unavoidable. This Spell may be used to generate lightning or short out electronics. **Variants:** There exists an entire catalog of Spells with only minor differences to this Spell. To save on space, it should be noted there exists Spells that are identical to the above effects except for dealing another Damage Type [any except Esoteric], being a Melee or Martial

Arts Attack instead of Ranged, or both. Each of these are different Spells which are purchased individually and have appropriate secondary effects to replace generating electricity as fits the Damage Type.

**Orb of Pondering** [\*\*]: Extended, Ritual: As an Extended Action requiring one hour the caster may bless an object as a tool for scrying. At any point thereafter any character may commit 1 Effort for the Scene to activate the scrying tool, even if it is not their scrying tool. For the rest of the Scene upon activation any character may, as a Simple Action, see and hear anything at a given location within [Rank x1000] miles as though he was physically present, provided it is not warded against Scrying. The user may choose to either see or hear or both, but can only scry one location at a time. While scrying the user suffers a -4 Penalty to Perception rolls regarding his immediate surroundings. The user may continue scrying on subsequent turns by spending more Simple Actions. Only one character may use a given scrying tool at once, and a given caster may only create up to their Rank in scrying tools at a time. Subsequent creations past this render a prior tool inert.

**Sympathetic Friendship** [\*\*]: Simple, Spell: Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select a willing target. For the rest of the Story as a Simple Action the caster may see and hear anything at the target's location as though he was physically present, provided it is not warded against Scrying. The caster may choose to either see or hear or both, but can only scry one location at a time. While scrying the caster suffers a -4 Penalty to Perception rolls regarding his immediate surroundings. The caster may continue scrying on subsequent turns by spending more Simple Actions. This Spell may only effect up to [Rank] characters at a time, subsequent castings past this end the effect early upon a prior casting. Moreover the target may end the effect early at any time as a reflexive action and is always aware when being scried.

**Illusionary Image** [\*\*]: Simple, Spell: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and roll Mystic Lore. The caster creates a hologram, an intangible light construct that may look however the caster desires provided it fits within a 10x10 foot cube. The caster may cause the construct to move in any desired natural way as a reflexive action. Any character who interacts with or becomes aware of the hologram may roll Perception opposed to the initial activation roll. Upon their success, they recognize the illusion as such. Any character who attacks or otherwise physically interacts with the illusion automatically notices it as such. The hologram makes no noise naturally, though if the caster possesses the Thaumaturgy Spell Songbird they may cast it reflexively to add any desired sounds to their holograms. The caster may have as many active holograms as available Effort permits.

**Summon Spirit** [\*\*]: Summoning, Extended, Ritual; Commit 1 Effort for the Day as an Extended Action taking one hour to summon a spirit from the Dreamscape or a similar distant reality. The spirit may take the form of anything, may be intelligent or unintelligent, capable of speech or incapable, per the desire of the summoner. The summoned spirit is a Rank 0 character with a number of Aspects equal

to the caster's Rank and 75 Skill Dots to distribute across its Skills, none of which may exceed 8. The spirit will obey the letter and word of all commands given it and will faithfully serve the caster for a year and a day, at which point it vanishes back into the Dreamscape. The caster may renew this summoning by repeating the spell. Spirits called by this Ritual are too weak for their personalities to survive the experience of death and therefore may not be recalled if slain [though a similar spirit may be].

**Holy Shield [\*\*]:** Reflexive, Spell: When a character the caster is aware of, which can include the caster, would take damage from any source activate this Spell. Commit 1 Effort for the Day and roll Mystic Lore. For every success rolled the target takes one less damage. A given target can only benefit from Holy Shield once per Scene.

**Purification [\*\*]:** Simple, Spell, Reinforcement: Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select one supernatural effect, be it a Gift, Spell, Anomaly, or stranger effect. If the effect has a finite duration [it is not permanent] and the target is unwilling to be effected by it [or would be unwilling if in their right mind] or is inanimate, and if the origin of the effect has a lower Rank than the caster [equal or lower at Rank 5]. The effect ends.

**Sacred Purification [\*\*]:** Prerequisites Purification, Rank 3, Permanent, Innate, Reinforcement; Purification commits Effort for the Scene to activate, not for the Day, and may now dispel effects regardless of their Rank of origin. Moreover, the caster may target up to [Rank] supernatural effects to dispel with a single activation. This permanently upgrades Purification.

**Mass Purification [\*\*]:** Prerequisites Purification, Simple, Spell, Reinforcement: Commit 1 Effort for the Day and target up to one's Rank in Size of Rank 0 characters. All supernatural effects with a finite duration that the targets are unwilling to be affected by [or would be unwilling if in their right minds] end regardless of the Rank of the origin of the effect.

**Empathic Radiance [\*\*]:** Simple, Spell: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and select one target. Roll Mystic Lore opposed by Integrity. Upon success the target is infected with an overwhelming strong emotion of the target's choosing and will act in accord with that for the rest of the Scene. Moreover the target suffers a -4 Penalty to all Integrity and Empathy rolls for the rest of the Scene.

**Ensorcel [\*\*]** Simple, Spell: Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select a target. Roll Mystic Lore opposed by Integrity. Upon success the target is forcefully given a strong new aspect to their identity such as "They are obsessed with a particular television show" or "They are madly in love with the caster" or "They are a complete and utter coward". If the target is an NPC, they are forcibly granted a new temporary Defining Intimacy to represent this. Whether NPC or PC, the target will begin to develop false memories in support of the new interest or personality trait. This effect will last until the end of the Story at which point the target's personality will revert to normal, though characters with a Rank higher than that of the caster may end the effect early by committing 1 Effort for the Story as a

Simple Action.

**Sleep of Morpheus** [\*\*]: Simple, Spell: Commit 1 Effort for the Day. A number of Rank 0 characters with a Size up to the caster's Rank immediately fall asleep and remain asleep unless attacked or deliriously affected for the rest of the Scene. If the targets are not organized into a Battlegroup, such as a crowded hotel lobby or a sport's stadium, this effect simply takes effect with no roll. If they are gathered for battle or are trained soldiers, roll Mystic Lore or Performance opposed by the Morale of the Battlegroup's commanding officer. Upon success the effect takes effect as normal.

**Summon [Particular Spirit]** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Summoning, Spell, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day to summon a spirit from the Dreamscape per the Ritual 'Summon Spirit' with the following differences:

- the spell summons only a particular variety of spirit, with preset Skill selections and Aspects chosen at the purchase of this Spell.

- The Spirit may possess Skill Ratings of 9 or 10.

- The spirit possesses up to 6 dots to divide between Aspects and Gift dots. Gifts must be General Gifts or all taken from a particular Type's list. These may not be Excellences and the spirit possesses none of the template bonuses of that Type. For instance a spirit could be a Valkyrie Spirit with Glorious Hero Visage, Glorious Hero Saber, and the Hero version of Ox-Body Technique.

- The spirit is Rank 1 and possesses a single Lesser Weakness.

- This is not one Spell but many, such as 'Summon Valkyrie' or 'Summon Imp' or 'Summon Weird Mythology Thing You Read About On Wikipedia' all of which are purchased separately.

**Flame of Amaterasu** [\*\*\*]: Simple, Spell; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and roll a Ranged Attack.

This attack is Might-based, and uses the caster's Mystic Lore in place of their Might for calculating damage, and is compatible with any compatible Fighting Style. This attack affects up to [Rank] Enemies, deals Heat Damage, and is Aggravated against Battlegroups with a Size equal to or lower than the caster's Rank. This Spell may be used to create flames and burn objects. **Variants:** There exists an entire catalog of Spells with only minor differences to this Spell. To save on space, it should be noted there exists Spells that are identical to the above effects except for dealing another Damage Type [any except Esoteric], being a Melee or Martial Arts Attack instead of Ranged, or both. Each of these are different Spells which are purchased individually and have appropriate secondary effects to replace burning as fits the Damage Type.

**Invulnerability Shield** [\*\*\*]: Simple, Spell: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and select a Damage Type other than Physical or Esoteric when activating this Spell. A selected target is completely immune to all Attacks of that Damage Type for the Scene. The caster may cast this upon himself. Repeated castings upon the same target do not stack to allow for multiple immunities, subsequent castings upon the same target replace prior castings. This Spell has no effect upon Aggravated Attacks.

**Alter Size [\*\*\*]:** Simple, Spell: Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select and activate one of the following effects.

Effect 1: A willing target gains the Giant Aspect. If they already possess the Giant Aspect, they gain the Titanic Aspect.

Effect 2: A willing target gains the Small Aspect. If they already possess the Small Aspect, they gain the Tiny Aspect.

Effect 3: An inanimate object is halved in size and its weight is divided by 8. For instance a six foot long car that weighs 2000 lbs would become a three foot long car that weighs 250 lbs. The target of this effect must be completely mundane, weigh less than 5000 lbs and fit inside a 10x10 foot cube. It must also be broadly defined as single object, not merely part of another object.

Effect 4: An inanimate object doubles in size and multiplies its weight by 8. For instance a six foot long car that weighs 2000 lbs would become a twelve foot long car that weighs 16,000 lbs. The target of this effect must be completely mundane, weigh less than 5000 lbs and fit inside a 10x10 foot cube. It must also be broadly defined as single object, not merely part of another object.

All four Effects last until the end of the Scene. Subsequent castings upon the same object do not stack.

**Staff of Asclepius [\*\*\*]:** Simple, Spell: Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select one willing target and activate one of the following effects. The target can include the caster.

Effect 1: The target heals [Rank+2] Health Levels.

Effect 2: The target is cured of all mundane disease.

Effect 3: The target is healed of all Injuries.

## Theurgy

**Soul Jar [\*]:** Reflexive, Spell, Immortality; Commit 1 Effort and select one character in the caster's presence. If the character is slain during the current Scene their soul is transferred into an inanimate object of the caster's choosing. They cannot use Gifts or take actions, though at the caster's discretion they may retain consciousness and/or speak. Unless otherwise stated, beings trapped in soul jars cannot be resurrected from the dead. Soul Jars are utilized in a number of other theurgic spells.

**Enochian Vessel [\*]:** Prerequisite Rank 2, Soul Jar, Extended, Ritual; as an Extended Action requiring fifteen minutes the caster may commit 1 Effort for the Day to call back any dead soul to inhabit an inanimate object, subject to all the limitations of Soul Jar. The target soul must be willing and in the afterlife, they may not be undead, already in a Soul Jar or otherwise about in the world.

**Book of the Dead [\*]:** Prerequisite Impure Ankh Invocation, Innate, Permanent; when casting Impure Ankh Invocation one may revive up to [Rank+5] characters with a single casting.

**Impure World Art [\*]:** Prerequisite Lesser or Greater Gate of Osiris, Innate, Permanent; a Soul Jar with the target's soul within it counts as the target's intact corpse for the purposes of casting these

spells. Moreover the target can be revived after any amount of time, not merely after a Chapter [Month]

**True Self Unfolding** [\*]: Prerequisite Virtual Avatar, Permanent, Innate; while summoned the proxy created by Virtual Avatar may use its Mystic Lore in place of its Might for all purposes.

**Theurgical Rite of Calling** [\*]: Prerequisite Summon Spirit; Innate, Permanent; Summon Spirit may now be cast as a Simple Action with the Spell tag. This permanently upgrades Summon Spirit

**Theurgical Rite of Prana** [\*]: Prerequisite Summon Spirit; Innate, Permanent; when casting Summon Spirit one may choose to commit the Effort only for the Scene. If one does so the spirit vanishes at the end of the Scene. This permanently upgrades Summon Spirit.

**Theurgical Rite of Opening** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Summon Spirit; Innate, Permanent; when casting Summon Spirit one may choose to call [Rank] copies of the same type of spirit per casting. This permanently upgrades Summon Spirit.

**Impure Ankh Invocation** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Lesser Gate of Osiris, Spell, Simple; by committing one Effort for the Day as a Simple Action the caster may resurrect a single Rank 0 being from the dead under all the restrictions of Gate of Osiris, except that the target's corpse is not needed.

**Seven-League Stride** [\*\*]: Simple, Spell: Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The caster and up to 200 lbs per Rank the caster possesses immediately teleports [Rank x10] miles to a destination of the caster's choosing. All characters brought must be willing, and this Spell may not be cast while the caster is in combat or under duress of any form.

**Steps of Hermes** [\*\*]: Innate, Permanent; all of the caster's movement speeds are doubled. Moreover, while moving they do not need to cross the intervening space. They may teleport any distance, provided they have not run out of available movement for the Turn. A caster may not teleport further in one 'jump' than their maximum movement per Turn.

**Gateway of Auspicious Passage** [\*\*\*]: Extended, Ritual: Commit 1 Effort for the Story. As a Ritual requiring one hour the caster creates a magical gateway marked by some kind of symbolic doorway, such as a giant gate or arch. The gate is produced by the Ritual itself as part of the casting. At any time thereafter the caster may, as a Simple Action, cause an identical Gateway to appear at his current location in an open and unobscured spot. The two gateways become thereafter mystically linked for a year and a day. At any time thereafter during the duration any character may, as a Simple Action, cause a portal to open linking the two gates or close a portal already open. The caster may optionally choose when initially creating the first gate to add a kind of password or key to the gate, permitting only those with it to open or close the gate. This can be a spoken word, or an esoteric requirement such as "Only those wearing green may open the gate" or "Only those bearing my insignia". Regardless the key must in some fashion be indiscriminate, one cannot create a gate with the lock of "Only myself and this curated list of my friends may open the gate".

**Travel Without Distance** [\*\*\*]: Simple, Spell: Commit 1 Effort for the Day. At the start of the caster's next turn she and any inanimate possessions she is carrying or holding [up to 200 lbs per Rank] is

teleported either up to [Rank x100 miles] or to any location the caster has personally been to before. If the caster takes damage after declaring his casting but before the start of his next turn the Spell is canceled and the committed Effort wasted.

**Lesser Gate of Osiris [\*\*\*]:** Extended, Ritual, Prerequisite Rank 3; as an Extended Action requiring eight hours the caster may commit 2 Effort for the Story to resurrect a dead character exactly as they were in life. In order to cast this spell the caster's must possess the target's mostly intact corpse or equivalent, and the target must have died within the previous Chapter [or Month]. This Gift has no effect upon undead beings such as ghosts or zombies, but operates normally upon the 'corpses' of undead beings.

**Greater Gate of Osiris [\*\*\*]:** Extended, Ritual, Prerequisite Rank 4; as an Extended Action requiring eight hours the caster may commit 2 Effort for the Story to resurrect a dead character as one of the immortals. The target returns to life as a member of the Mummy Type. If they were Rank 0, they become Rank 1 and acquire 8 dots of Mummy Gifts selected by the Storyteller. If they were Rank 1+ they instead return as a Mummy of their Rank. If the resulting Mummy is an NPC their Gifts are selected by the Storyteller, if they're a PC they refund all dots in Type Gifts and purchase an equivalent number of dots in Mummy Gifts. In order to cast this spell the caster's must possess the target's mostly intact corpse or equivalent. This Gift has no effect upon undead beings such as ghosts or zombies, but operates normally upon the 'corpses' of undead beings. This Gift cannot be used to resurrect permanently slain Mummies.

**Reliquary [\*\*\*]:** Prerequisite Rank 3, Extended, Ritual, Immortality; as an extended action requiring eight hours of work the caster may commit 1 Effort for the Story to permanently create a Reliquary, an ordinary inanimate object tied to himself. As long as the Reliquary exists the caster cannot die. If slain by any means his body will dissolve, leaving behind all possessions, and reforms at the Reliquary twenty four hours later. Moreover, so long as the Reliquary exists the caster will not age, provided he did so in the first place.

**Tree of Life [\*\*\*]:** Prerequisite Rank 5, Reliquary, Spell, Simple; the caster may commit 2 Effort for the Story to bind additional characters to his Reliquary granting the target the benefit of the effect permanently. If slain the target reappears at the Reliquary, and while so bound they do not age. The caster may have up to [Rank+5] characters so bound at once and may unbind characters as a Simple Action.

**Virtual Avatar [\*\*\*]:** Simple, Immortality, Spell; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The caster may 'externalize' their power into a pilotable double, which may look however desired but must be the same general size as the caster [not requiring additional Aspects to represent, unless one possesses those Aspects]. This grants the following benefits:

-This double possesses all the same Skills, Aspects, Gifts, Magic, current and maximum Health, Effort and other traits as the caster.

- The caster may choose to reflexively perceive through all of the the double's senses, suffering a -4 Penalty to Perception rolls to notice things in her actual presence while doing so. This is not effected by wards against scrying.
- The caster may reflexively control the double, which may not otherwise move or speak. While so doing, the caster may take no other actions for the rest of the Turn.
- In short the caster produces a completely pilotable proxy self, the death of which causes no lasting harm to the caster.
- This Spell lasts until it is dismissed as a Simple Action, an event that must occur with the double in close proximity to the caster. Upon ending this spell, the caster's current and maximum Health and Effort is replaced by that of the double.
- As long as it is active, the caster cannot commit Effort for any reason except resisting Social Influence nor can she activate or utilize any Gifts or Magic [even those with Permanent Duration].
- As it is a Spell, the caster cannot control the double except while in possession of a Catalyst or while speaking clearly.
- As it possesses the Immortality tag, the caster is immediatly slain if the double is killed while utilizing powers that negate the Immortality tag.

**Theurgical Invocation of [Particular Named Spirit] [\*\*\*]** Prerequisite Rank 4, High Summoning, Extended, Ritual; Commit 1 Effort for the Story to summon a spirit from the Dreamscape per the Ritual 'Summon Spirit' with the following differences:

- the spell summons only a particular individual and mighty spirit, with preset Skill selections and Aspects chosen at the purchase of this Spell and a long-standing persistent identity.
- The Spirit may possess Skill Ratings of 9 or 10 and possesses 87 Skill Dots to distribute.
- The spirit possesses five Prototypal Excellences selected at the purchase of this spell.
- The spirit possesses 20 dots to divide between Aspects and Gift dots. Gifts must be General Gifts or all taken from a particular Type's list. The spirit possesses none of the template bonuses of a particular Type.
- The spirit is Rank 3 and possesses a single Greater Weakness.
- The spirit may not be commanded to take any actions in defiance to its Defining Intimacies and if ordered to do so make reflexively commit 1 Effort for the Scene to ignore all commands from the caster for the rest of the Scene.
- As this only summons one spirit, it may not be cast repeatedly to call more spirits. In compensatory fashion, if the spirit is slain it may be recalled merely by recasting the Ritual.
- This is not one Spell but many, such as "Theurgical Invocation of Archangel Uriel" or "Theurgical Invocation of Mammon, Devil of Greed".

**Theurgical Invocation of [Royal Avatar] [\*\*\*]** Prerequisite Rank 5, Grand Summoning, Extended,



Ritual; Commit 1 Effort for the Story to summon a particular Royal Avatar selected at the purchase of the Ritual. This ritual may only be cast under a rigorous condition selected at purchase, such as 'while sacrificing seven virgins on stone altars under a full moon' or 'by means of a one hour rite at noon on the summer solstice'. The duration of the Extended Action is selected at this time also. Upon success the caster calls a Rank 4 Royal Avatar from the Dreamscape, taking the form of a Rank 4 Monster of any Type created in cooperation with the Storyteller possessing 40 Gift Dots and 110 Skill Dots which may be distributed as desired. The summoned Avatar may endure on earth as long as desired, but has a set condition in which they will be banished such as 'If sung to by ten souls truly innocent' or 'If stabbed with the ancient blade Masamune'. The Avatar may not directly harm the caster but is otherwise under no obligation to obey or serve him. If slain the Avatar vanishes from the world and may never again appear in the mortal world. The Magic's experience cost is thereafter refunded to the caster. This is not one spell but many such as 'Theurgical Invocation of Tiamat' or 'Theurgical Invocation of Indra'.

# Vampires

*"Integra. There are many undying monsters in the world. Here's what I wonder when I see them. Do they really desire immortality as their existence? Many of them crave conflict. Gory struggles. It becomes something akin to weeping, longing. Their screams are not born of a desire for combat, but a desire for death. You see, to me, Integra, vampires, those dreadful undying monsters who control the world of the night... Look like terribly pitiful, pathetic children who might simply break down and cry feebly."*

*-Arthur Hellsing*

*"You think to baffle me, you with your pale faces all in a row, like sheep in a butcher's. You shall be sorry yet, each one of you! You think you have left me without a place to rest, but I have more. My revenge is just begun! I spread it over centuries, and time is on my side. Your girls that you all love are mine already. And through them you and others shall yet be mine, my creatures, to do my bidding and to be my jackals when I want to feed. Bah!"*

*-Bram Stoker's Dracula*

*Damnation isn't what you think. When most people think of the word they imagine Hell as a place, a punishment for evil deeds perpetrated upon their fellow man. They think of wickedness as something primarily visited upon others, that if even person was an island, living in a pocket universe inhabited only by themselves they could sin to their heart's content. If only it were so simple. Sins are cracks in the edifice of a man, fracture points that if not addressed spread and spread until the soul cracks and the spirit splinters. The danger is not justice visited upon wrong-doers, it is spiritual shipwreck, the ruin of personality upon the rocky shoals of one's own self-destructive desires. When the gates of Hell slam shut the clang of iron gates is echoed by confessions: we chose this. To escape the fear of death, to defeat one's enemies, to right the scales of of this world and tip them in your favor even if it isn't right or fair or just. To make a mockery of life and nature, to raise one's soul even if it means putting it in peril, since the first nights there have been those who would risk this damnation, if only they might achieve this. A Vampire is a soul who chose immortality and power over death and weakness, at the cost of forever spurning the light of day and the dooming oneself to drink the blood of men. Glamorous and tragic figures, they walk the course of centuries on a road paved with violence and self-gratification, feuding with others of their kind for power and status. Craving life they chase death, craving strength they cower weakly from their elders, craving to right wrongs for themselves they visit sins without measure upon others. To be a Vampire is to walk the eternal tight-rope separating one from one's inner demons, and to emerge on the other side a grim testament to the strength even in man's darker nature; or to fall into the abyss and become a monster worse than any devil.*

## Vampires in the Shrouded Earth

Vampires are the metamorphical center of the Shrouded Earth, the heart of darkness around which the other Types gravitate. That is not to say Vampires are more powerful or important than the other Types, but they are in most regards the default. They are the reason the world is a gothic horror conspiratorial setting instead of merely a conspiratorial setting, their presence on earth is what causes it to be shrouded in occult mystery and chains of invisible manipulation. In a world of conspiracies, they are one of the prime conspirators. In a world filled with monsters, they are the one that is the most human

without simply being an exceptional human. The most plentiful Monster by default [besides Hunters, whose status as Monsters is arguable], Vampires are systematically above average at everything. Their Gifts permit them to be 'very good, but not the best' at any field of endeavor. They are strong, but not as strong as Heroes. They have psychic powers, but not as potent as Psychics. They possess potent magic, but not as potent as Magicians. They can change form, but with less versatility than Shifters. In short, they are the game's free space. In a Mash composed primarily of more horrific Types, they are the shadowy grounding against a backdrop of weretigers and mountain trolls. If the Mash is composed primarily of human-like Types such as Heroes and Scientists, they are the preliminary antagonist easily inserted anywhere running any kind of conspiracy for almost any reason. The only constant is most vampire-run conspiracies are in some way parasitic, they feed upon humanity metaphorically as well as literally. Benign vampires, such as they are, are more properly those practicing 'responsible agriculture' than genuine friends of our species.

**Vampires:** The true or common Vampire, *Homo Sapiens Sanguinus*, is a human who has had all of their blood drained from their body and then vampiric blood inserted into their veins in a very narrow window after death, utilizing a particular Gift. There are dozens of bloodlines and subvarieties of the curse, which is very mutagenic and prone to producing vampires slightly or even greatly divergent from their sire with startling frequency, but most share the same basic features. The subject's body obtains the coldness of a corpse, they become paler, thinner and more gaunt compared to in life, they require human blood to survive, they become frozen at the age at which they were turned and they never die unless killed. Beyond this, bloodlines differ greatly. Some require blood in addition to normal food, others require and live only on blood. Some burn in the sun, others instead lose their abilities during the day whether they're in the sun or not. Some cannot see their reflections, or cross running water, or must flee from holy symbols or possess a vulnerability to holy damage. Vain bloodlines may return the vampire to his prime before freezing his age at conversion while monstrous ones may render the vampire bestial and savage or even rot his body to the bone.

**Nosferatu:** Nosferatu are creatures created using magecraft and a recently departed corpse, along with vampiric blood. Sprinkled over the grave with the correct rites, the deceased arises as a vampire variety known for being particularly abhorrent and usually very ugly, appearing as shambling zombielike wights, bald Orlok-esq creatures with needlelike fangs, brutish hulks with grey skin and white or green hair, or other repellent variants. Created originally as a slave caste for tasks too important for fragile Revenants, they excel naturally at Gifts that improve the body's speed or strength or which create illusions, invisibility, or darkness. The late seventeenth century saw the Nosferatu Revolt, in which patricians from England to the coasts of Ethiopia saw their magically produced slaves rebel, ultimately winning their freedom and begrudging acceptance as equals in vampiric society. To this day, there are elder vampires who regard Nosferatu as inferior subjects fit only to serve true vampires.

**Reclaimers:** The fear of death defines vampiric existence. More than anything else, people choose vampirism to avoid dying, to be free of the fear of dying. This fear is fed by the souls of countless races, casting a shadow in the Dreamscape broader than a thousand worlds. The Nothing After Death, a vision of death in which there is no hopeful hereafter, only a grey underworld or worse: absolutely nothing. To avoid this fate, there are those who would sacrifice anything. Not all those who would experience the loving embrace of vampiric fangs before their demise. When a person dies, sometimes, not often, perhaps once or twice a year, they will find themselves standing in the Dreamscape in a landscape of their devising. A vast graveyard. A black void. A bloody hospital room. The sight of their

car accident or murder. And before them, a god of death, a Royal Avatar of the Nothing. The Nothing offers them a choice, return to earth as my champion, or face your death here and be rewarded with nothing. For most, it is no choice at all. They awaken, not undead like a typical vampire, but completely alive. Such Reclaimers manifest black billowing auras when they use their Gifts and possess monstrous tempers, vicious mannerisms, or morbid attractions to things associated with death and the dead. A few look like zombies or have skull-like heads, while being by all accounts alive. Such Reclaimers are commanded to kill as often as they can, to decrease the ranks of the living, to push as many into nonexistence beyond death as they can. They are likewise commanded to remove ghosts from the world, ideally by destroying them. As the Nothing has no means of controlling its champions, Reclaimers are free to ignore or abandon these duties with nothing to fear but other servants of the Nothing being told of him by their god and sent to chase him down. More often Reclaimers simply reinterpret their credo, killing the deserving and peacefully helping the dead find closure.

**Jiang Shi:** The legendary 'hopping' vampires of Asia, Jiang Shi are in reality closer relatives to the Reclaimer than the true Vampire. Jiang Shi claim to be refugees from the afterlife, who escaped their jailors in the hells of Buddhist, Shinto, or Chinese myth to return to their bodies years or even decades after death. As the afterlife is a mystery to even the most enlightened Monster, this claim would be worldshaking if it were true. Most who hear of these peculiar vampires believe they were actually ghosts who escaped from a hellish Far Shore. It's a sensible theory, ruined only by the fact that no Far Shore matching the description has ever been found. Jiang Shi have closer connections to their mortal relatives than do other vampires, seeing themselves as dignified ancestor spirits returned to guard their families and homelands. Most believe they can avoid returning to Hell by accumulating a karmic surplus in this new life as a hungry ghost, though for all this supposed benevolence these vampires are no safer than their peers in the west. They drink the breath from their victims instead of blood, rot in the sun like a corpse instead of burn, and have nothing inherently against slaughter or debauchery. They simply plan good deeds in the future to balance the scale, so long as a Jiang Shi does not die again in the red, he counts himself a success.

**Chupacabra:** Honorary vampires at best, the Chupacabra is the mythical goat-sucking varmint of Mexico and Central America. Sapient, fast-talking, sarcastic and rude, Chupacabras fear nothing of the sun and survive on a liquid diet consisting primarily of blood, especially that of livestock, with none being more in demand than that of goats. In modern times, this diet is supplemented with any sugar-rich fluid, such as Coca Cola, coffee, or sweeter alcohols. They wander Mexico in packs of three to sixteen using their Gifts to become invisible or turn into bats or wild dogs, delighting in terrifying and playing pranks on the locals, stealing their livestock [and their cars, the more vamped up up the better], watching their TVs, running off with their guns and generally running amok. They have a known weakness for beautiful humans of the opposite sex, but don't actually seem to desire them for anything besides oggling and playing pranks on them.

## Vampiric Society

There are countless Conspiracies which involve vampires, either as their core perpetrators or simply as willing stooges for another Monster's agendas. In addition to these however there exists a vampiric society particular to these parasitic immortals, a network of related conspiracies based around the Patriciate system, the Veil, and the Lex Vitalis. Broadly summarized by the middle of Antiquity mortal society and its supernatural protectors had grown numerous and powerful enough that very few

vampires were willing to openly reveal themselves to the mortal herd. Openly declaring oneself as a vampire was deemed dangerous in most places, or suicidal in the heartlands of human civilization. With armies in the thousands, religious practices that incorporated anti-vampiric thaumaturgical Wards and the presence of powerful Heroes and Magicians in human civilization, it was deemed too dangerous to attempt to dominate the kine by force. Even worse, wherever one vampire was exposed the mortals would become paranoid and soon entire bloodlines and clans would be purged. As a result, the eldest vampires of the time drew up what they termed the patriciate system, a formalization and expansion of earlier practices of vampiric feudalism. The patriciate system declared by the massed authority of the ancients the following precepts, which became known in the west as the Lex Vitalis and in the east as the Mandate of Heaven.

I: Vampiric society is to exist in the form of feudal fiefs. In the west these fiefs would become known as patriciates, though among the Jiang Shi they knew other names and among Chupacabra they are simply termed gaggles. A patriciate is defined as a territory claimed by a vampire or group of vampires, usually the size of a large city or town and its surrounding hamlets. Such patriciates are deemed legitimate if they subscribe to the principles of the Lex Vitalis and agree to enforce the Veil. Beyond this, they were deemed autonomous entities free to act as they like and war open each other as desired.

II: Each patriciate must be ruled by a single vampire, who becomes responsible for the enforcement of the Lex Vitalis and the Veil. This rule was almost immediately bent to allow for alternative systems of government, such as patriciates governed by a small group of middling strength vampires, or triumvirates, and with some rarity vampiric democracies and republics. In all such cases one vampire holds official investiture of this duty, but its enforcement and the governing of the patriciate is undertaken by the true government. It was also bent with the equally rapid development of higher forms of vampiric feudal structure, such as a Sanguis Regnum or blood kingdom, a patriciate which demands the loyalty and service of several other patriciates, or the exceeding rare Sanguis Imperium. A Sanguis Imperium is a patriciate that commands the loyalty of dozens or hundreds of vampires and numerous patriciates. Imperiums rarely last long as vampires reckon time, usually enduring for mere decades before crumbling with the deaths of their leaders either by rival vampires, or by other powerful Conspiracies. The formation of Imperiums tends to attract the attention of large Conspiracies, as there is few things more frightful or worrying then the gathering of large numbers of vampires for one purpose. By the dawn of the Middle Ages, vampires in Europe had taken to the use of noble title to describe these patriarchs, with the nature of the title reflecting the personality of the ruler and the prestige of their domain. A modest vampire may simple deem himself a Prince or Baron, which one more arrogant might take the title King or Emperor, and those of worthiness often bearing titles such as Duke or Earl. Such stylings typically include the names of the geographic area the patriciate conforms to, such as Duke of New England or Prince of Philidelphia. To briefly map, most patriciates are T1 Conspiracies, most Sanguis Regum are T2, a Sanguis Imperium is T3, and there has thankfully never existed a T4 vampiric patriciate.

III: The human cattle within a patriciate belong to the vampires of that patriate and may not be fed upon, taken, or otherwise abused without the express permission of the leadership of the patrtiate. Upon arrival in a new domain it is customary for a vampire to reveal himself to the leadership, state his business and the intended length of his stay, and be given the blessing of indulgence per the patriates hospitality. Few patriciates are willing to take exception to the odd taken human, or murder or theft from their cattle, but any lengthy disturbance is taken as an intention to scoff at this precept and is taken quite seriously.

IV: A vampire is not to kill another vampire of the same patriciate without the permission of its leadership. Killing a vampire of another domain is not forbidden by law, but risks war between domains and therefore is very risky if done without good cause. The killing of one's sire always

officially carries a death sentence regardless of patriate memberships, though enforcement varies. So-called 'bastard Princes' who took power by killing their sire, the vampire who created them, are not uncommon and are viewed as unscrupulous and dangerous.

V: A vampire is not to sire a vampire without the permission of his sire. This law does not exist in the Jiang Shi or Chupacabra copies of the Lex, and all modern versions include the addition 'nor create Nosferatu'.

VI: A vampire must not bring the wrath of the Fair Folk, the Devils, or the Dead upon his kind. In modern times this law is expanded to refer generally to any kind of other supernatural group and states the importance of avoiding their ire.

VII: A vampire must not reveal the numbers, activities, or membership of the undead to any mortal man. In modern times, all but the most suicidal vampiric groups expand this to mean to the total hiding of vampiric existence from the public. This law is referred to as the Veil, and is the lynchpin of vampiric society. Exceptions to this law are numerous. Revenants, those controlled with Dominate, and chosen confidants confirmed by the patriate are exempted. In the east, this usually includes the family of a Jiang Shi, or if the vampire is old, the family heads of his current descendants.

Violation of the Lex Vitalis by a patriate officially prescribes that all nearby patriates declare war upon the rebel, though in practice this only tends to happen with open rejection of the seventh law, the Veil. Many of the ancients are in hibernation and unwilling to enforce the patriate system personally, and as the system was always built on genuine necessities is doubtful it could be enforced artificially in any case. It survives because it has proven a useful tool for vampiric survival. It should be very heavily emphasized that there is no central authority for vampires, and these formal sounding laws and regulations escribed in Latin and traditional Chinese and hung prominently in vampiric meeting places have no enforcement mechanism beyond the actions of particular vampires. The vampiric feudal society is a hotbed of wars, opposing factions and interpretations of the rules, and is more like the honor codes and mutual agreements of criminal gangs than treaties between nations. It should be noted this system primarily extends to true Vampires, Nosferatu, and Jiang Shi. Reclaimers see themselves as an entirely unrelated category of being unless pulled into vampiric society from outside, and Chupacabra are a completely and utterly unrelated class of being who were pulled into vampiric society by vampiric clans in Mexico and Central America on the altogether ridiculous grounds they drink blood, in what was shamelessly an attempt to pull the useful gremlins in as convenient proxies and irregular troops.

## **Revanants**

Revanants are human beings modified by the regular consumption of vampiric blood that has been altered into an extremely addictive narcotic by a certain Gift. Those on vampiric blood in this way are stronger and more resilient than ordinary people, and live over twice as long. Hardy Revanants have been known to live to be over two hundred and fifty years old. As their drug addiction makes them extremely dependent upon vampires both for their access to the narcotic and their extended lifespan, they are easily manipulated by vampires and used as proxies at all levels of society. When a vampire wants spies or bodyguards during the day he uses Revanants, if he wants a gardener he uses a Revanant, if he wants the Mayor or police chief in his pocket he'll turn them into Revanants. A Revanant over the natural lifespan of a human will rapidly die of old age if deprived of blood, growing much older in the course of weeks if over a hundred or turning to dust in moments if over two hundred. Being a Revanant does not stop one from visibly aging, though it does slow it considerably. A Revanant who looks like an old man is likely over a hundred and fifty if first exposed to blood in middle age, or

well over two hundred if exposed as a youth.

## Lifespan

All known varieties of Vampire are immortal, living forever unless killed. Yes even Chupacabras. The cornerstone of vampiric society is the domination of the strong over the weak, not of political necessity or moral preference, but as a simple manifestation of power relations. If a powerful enough vampire does not want their society to function a particular way, it will not. Within vampiric society, power is almost synonymous with age. The Rank of a Vampire can be readily deduced by the length of life the vampire has been a vampire of whatever form. Rank 1 Vampires have usually been vampires less than 50 years, Rank 2 have been vampires for 50 to 200 years, Rank 3 for many centuries and Rank 4 at least a millenium and usually several. While prodigies who achieve higher mastery of the blood in a fraction of this time exists, due to superior bloodlines or odd conditions, this is very rare.

## Template Benefits

**Vampire Anatomy:** The vampire begins play three Aspects of his choice. Any 'traditional' undead vampire generally picks Breathless as one of these, and he may explicitly choose to do so.

**Slow Regeneration:** As a Simple Action, the vampire may commit 1 Effort for the Day to immediately heal [Rank] Health Levels. This may not be used while the vampire is in combat or any other form of duress.

**Monster Excellence of [Skill] [\*]:** Mastery, Reflexive, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Monster adds [unmodified Skill/2] to all rolls using that Skill.

## Combat Gifts

**Fortitude [\*]:** Mastery, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Vampire adds his Rank to Soak.

**Fortitude Unleashed [\*]:** Prerequisite Rank 5 and Fortitude, Mastery, Permanent; Fortitude now increases the Vampire's Soak by [Rank+5] instead of Rank.

**Heightened Reflexes [\*]:** Permanent; the Vampire adds [Rank] to his Defense pool for all purposes.

**The Beast Within [\*]:** Permanent; the Vampire adds [Rank] to all Attack rolls, but not to Combat Maneuvers.

**Corpse-Body [\*]:** Permanent; the Vampire never suffers Would Penalties for any reason.

**Flesh Like Marble [\*]:** Permanent; the Vampire gains the Tough Skin Aspect.

**Combat Regeneration [\*]:** Permanent; The Vampire may use his Slow Regeneration while in combat or while under duress and the Vampire heals [Rank+2] Health Levels per use of Slow Regeneration.

**Rapid Regeneration [\*]:** Permanent; Once per Scene, the Vampire may use Slow Regeneration as a reflexive action.

**Versatile Regeneration [\*]:** Permanent; when the Vampire uses his Slow Regeneration he may choose

to use it upon a willing target he is aware of in his presence.

**Efficient Regeneration** [\*]: Permanent; When the Vampire uses his Slow Regeneration on himself, the Effort is committed for the Scene, not the Day.

**Potence** [\*\*]: Mastery, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Vampire adds his Rank to his Damage with Might attacks and to his placement on the Might Chart.

**Celerity** [\*\*]: Permanent; The Vampire doubles all of his movement speeds. Moreover, he may reflexively Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Turn the Vampire's speed is instead multiplied by [Rank+2] and he may attack up to [Rank+2] Enemies with his Attack Action

**Alacrity** [\*\*]: Reflexive, Supplemental: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene when targeted by an Unavoidable Attack. The attack is instead not Unavoidable. Moreover the speed of all the Vampire's movement forms is doubled. This latter effect is permanent and costs nothing.

**Vigor** [\*\*]: Reflexive, Supplemental: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene when targeted by an Aggravated Attack. The attack is instead not Aggravated. Moreover the Vampire permanently gains a two die bonus in Endurance. This latter effect is permanent and costs nothing.

**Telekinetic Flight** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Vampire doubles all of his movement speeds. The Vampire may fly at his speed.

**Wounds Mean Nothing** [\*\*]: Perfect, Reflexive; Once per Scene, at no cost, when targeted by an attack, turn-long damage source, or offensive maneuver, negate that attack/maneuver. The Vampire need not be aware of the attack, but he must declare this Gift before and in place of rolling Defense.

**Bite the Throat** [\*\*]: Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene before rolling an Attack. The attack is Unavoidable.

**Artful Maiming** [\*\*]: Supplemental, Reflexive; Once per Scene before rolling an Attack the Vampire may declare it to be Aggravated. Moreover, if the attack deals even a single Health Level, the target suffers an Injury from the Injury Chart selected by the Vampire.

**Drinking Blood** [\*\*]: Simple; Once per Scene at no cost, select one target in the Vampire's presence and roll Mystic Lore or Might opposed by the target's choice of Mystic Lore or Endurance. If the Vampire rolls more successes, then the target loses one Health and the Vampire gains one per every success the Vampire beat the target by. Despite the name, a Vampire does not need this Gift to drink blood or require to drink blood, nor does it necessarily have to take the form of drinking blood. Eastern vampires is more likely to simply drain the chi or breath from the target for instance.

**Potence Unleashed** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5 and Potence, Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Turn the Vampire adds five Damage to all Might-based Attacks and his place on the Might Chart counts as 21+ if it did not already. Moreover he may select and activate one of the following Effects

Effect 1: When attacking the Vampire may choose to strike the ground with his attack, causing an earthquake that stretches out to a one mile radius from the Vampire's location, hitting all characters [Enemies, Civilians, and allied characters] indiscriminately with his attack roll. Even flying characters are somehow hit by the shockwave or falling debris. This effect destroys and decimates structures



around its use. This Attack deals Aggravated to Battlegroups.

Effect 2: If the Vampire damages a foe during this Turn he may launch that foe one mile through the air and cause them to suffer fall damage as though they had fallen that far.

**Celerity Unleashed** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5 and Celerity, Permanent; the Vampire multiplies all of her movement speeds by four. If the Vampire is traveling at night [or in a location where day and light are meaningless concepts] instead multiply her speed by ten.

**Alacrity Unleashed** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5 and Alacrity, Permanent; if the Vampire uses Alacrity to downgrade an Unavoidable Attack back to a normal Attack and that attack ends up doing zero damage, the Vampire automatically treats all Unavoidable Attacks from that target as not being Unavoidable for the rest of the Scene. Furthermore, multiply all of the Vampire's movement speeds by four.

**Vigor Unleashed** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5 and Vigor, Permanent; if the Vampire uses Vigor to downgrade an Aggravated Attack back to a normal Attack and that attack ends up doing zero damage, the Vampire automatically treats all Aggravated Attacks from that target as not being Aggravated for the rest of the Scene. Furthermore the Vampire adds a four dice bonus to her Endurance for all purposes.

**What About Steps Two Through Ten?** [\*\*\*]: Reflexive: Once per Story when the vampire would be Incapacitated or Killed, the vampire may activate this Gift. The vampire is not incapacitated or killed. Instead, at the start of their next Turn, they immediately recover [Rank] Health and [Rank] Effort. Crucially, the vampire need not immediately seem to heal or recover. Instead the vampire seems to all natural and magical examination to be a corpse, and possibly in pieces at that. At any point in the future the vampire may choose to visibly reconstitute himself as a reflexive action. The vampire may not take any other actions or activate any other Gifts until he has reformed himself, and additional damage from any source forcibly reforms him. He is however aware of his surroundings.

**Vampire Lord** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Reflexive; when purchasing this Gift the Vampire designs a War Form in the same fashion as a Shifter. By committing 2 Effort for the Story the Vampire may assume his War Form for the rest of the Scene or until he dismisses it as a Simple Action. This War Form need not look anatomical or biological and may look however desired provided it is at least somewhat inhuman in appearance.

**Antediluvian** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5 and Vampire Lord, Permanent; when assuming her War Form the Vampire may choose to gain the following additional Aspects at no cost; Giant, Titanic, Kaiju, Collosol. If the Vampire's War Form already possesses any of these Aspects instead add +1 die to her Might and Endurance per Aspect already possessed.

**True Ancestor** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5 and Antediluvian, World-Altering, Permanent; the Vampire gains the following effects.

Effect 1: When activating Antediluvian the Shifter can choose to also grant herself the Cosmic Size Aspect at no additional cost.

Effect 2: When activating Vampire Lord and/or Antediluvian the Vampire may choose to extend its duration to indefinite at no additional cost. In other words she remains in her War Form until she

dispels it as a Reflexive Action.

## Social Gifts

**Awe** [\*] Permanent; whenever the Vampire is interacting with beings in his direct presence, as opposed to communicating in writing or through electronic means, all rolls made in opposition to his Social Influence such as Empathy rolls to notice his lies, Integrity rolls to resist his arguments or even opposed Persuasion rolls made by others, suffer a Penalty equal to his [Rank].

**Love** [\*]: Permanent; the Vampire chooses a fairly common situation involving the vampire somehow preying upon someone, traditionally 'whenever she feeds upon their blood' but 'whenever she Incapacitates a target', 'whenever she robs a target and successfully escapes with the bounty' or 'whenever she seduces a target' among others are also acceptable. The Vampire's "prey" however defined must commit 1 Effort for the Story or acquire an unceasing love and desire for the Vampire. If they are an NPC, they acquire a new Defining Intimacy of "The Vampire (Desperate Longing)" or similar which doesn't count against their existing Intimacies. A target may only be preyed upon in this way once per Scene.

**Summons** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and target a single intelligent sapient character the Vampire is aware of and roll Persuasion opposed by Integrity. Upon success the target is afflicted with a strong desire to go to the Vampire, as well as an unflinching mental compass to the Vampire's current location. They must commit 1 Effort for the Story every Scene [or Hour] they do not spend in some way traveling or attempting to travel to the Vampire [sleeping, eating, and other necessary acts do not trigger this provided the target's goal remains reaching the vampire as quickly as reasonably possible]. Once the target reaches the Vampire, this Gift ends. A target cannot be subject to an attempted Summons by the same Vampire more than once in the same Story. This Gift has no effect upon targets with a Rank of at least [Vampire's Rank -2, Minimum 1, or 3 whichever is lower]. If a target fails to reach the Vampire within a week of diligently trying, this Gift ends.

**Gather My Children** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3 and Summons; Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Story. The Vampire may select any or all beings he has created himself [such as a Revenant or younger Vampire] or whom he is controlling, such as through Gifts like Dominate or Command the Beast. All targets chosen are immediately effected by the effect of Summons. Any targets with a Rank of 3 or higher may ignore this Gift at no cost.

**Animalism** [\*\*]: Permanent; The Vampire may communicate telepathically with all unintelligent animals and magical beasts he is aware of within [Rank x5] miles of his location. The beasts can express their thoughts and desires to the vampire, and the vampire may attempt to express his own in return. He rolls Animal Ken for all persuasion attempts and gains two extra dice to such attempts.

**Command the Beast** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Vampire may attempt to control the mind of a single unintelligent animal or Prodigy in his presence he is aware of. Roll Animal Ken or Persuasion opposed by Integrity. If the Vampire succeeds the animal must obey his commands for the next lunar month, even commands that involve self-harm. The animal can understand commands of any

degree of complexity and will faithfully obey provided it is physically and mentally capable of carrying out the feat.

**Abysal Mind** [\*\*]: Permanent; Other characters cannot read the Vampire's mind or emotions or enter her dreams involuntarily. The Vampire may choose to reflexively suppress this for the Scene at no cost.

**Mind Reading** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, the Vampire may read a target's surface thoughts by focusing upon them as a Simple Action. The Vampire may continue activating this power in subsequent rounds by spending Simple Actions to continue reading the same subject.

**Dominate** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Vampire target's one intelligent sentient being and rolls Persuasion opposed by Integrity. Upon success the target will obey the Vampire in spirit and in deed for the following lunar month, but will not obey any orders that cause them to intentionally harm themselves or would violate their Defining Intimacies. If the controlled subject is a Monster with a Rank of at least [Vampire's Rank-2], once per Turn on their turn the target may reflexively Commit 1 Effort for the Day to reroll Integrity against the initial Persuasion roll used to activate the Gift. Success for the target ends this Gift. Characters who succeed on a roll to resist Dominate, either initially or by breaking free later, cannot be targetted again by this Gift during the current Scene.

**Pulling the Strings** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Vampire never suffers Penalties when doing Bureaucracy rolls. Moreover, when interacting with Social Groups or bureaucracies of any form in an ordinary capacity the Vampire obtains results supernaturally fast, making his way past officials and red tape in record time.

**Withdrawing the Hand that Feeds** [\*\*]: Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Story as an Extended Action requiring at least an hour and target a Social Group. That Social Group's Cohesion is set to 0 for the rest of the Story. Moreover they are wracked with maladies and difficulties relating to poor management for the same duration.

**Reach the Thralls** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Vampire may communicate telepathically with any being he has created himself [such as a Revenant or younger Vampire] or whom he is controlling, such as through Gifts like Dominate or Command the Beast. This Gift may be used across any distance, and the Vampire may deliver Social Influence through this channel as normal. Moreover, targets of this Gift suffer a -4 Penalty to any attempts to Resist Social Influence the vampire makes, whether in person or across great distances.

**Voice of the Master** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Reach the Thralls, Simple; the Vampire may see and/or hear through the eyes and ears of any being he has created himself [such as a Revenant or younger Vampire] or whom he is controlling, such as through Gifts like Dominate or Command the Beast. Moreover, if the target is willing the Vampire may speak through them as well, with either their own voice or the voice of the target. This Gift may be used across any distance, and the Vampire may deliver Social Influence through this channel as normal. The Vampire must spend a Simple Action each turn maintaining this Gift to continue seeing, hearing, or speaking, and suffers a -4 Penalty to

Perception rolls at his own location while doing so.

**The Dark Lord Cometh** [\*\*]: Permanent; If the Vampire is serving as the Commanding Officer of a Battlegroup composed primarily of creatures created by him [such as Revenants or younger Vampires] or controlled by him [such as Dominated persons or Commanded animals] that Battlegroup always counts as having Drill 5.

**Army of the Night** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Once per Turn when the Vampire is serving as the Commanding Officer of a Battlegroup composed primarily of creatures created by him [such as Revenants or younger Vampires] or controlled by him [such as Dominated persons or Commanded animals] and that Battlegroup must roll Morale, commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The Morale roll automatically succeeds.

**Majesty** [\*\*]: Permanent; whenever the Vampire is interacting with beings in his direct presence, as opposed to communicating in writing or through electronic means, he adds [Rank] to all Persuasion and Intimidation rolls.

**Presence of the Dracul** [\*\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Day whenever a character wishes to Reject Influence upon the Vampire's Social Influence roll by committing Effort rather than rolling. In addition to Committing Effort they must pay Health Levels as a cost equal to the Vampire's [Rank]. This can only effect a given character twice per Scene [as afterwards they will be Jaded]. As this damage is a cost, it cannot be negated by any means except a Gift bearing the Perfect tag.

**Majesty of the Prince of Darkness** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3 and Majesty; Permanent; the effect of Majesty is always gained, regardless of whether the Vampire is communicating in person or not. Moreover once per Turn the Vampire may reflexively commit 1 Effort for the Scene to reroll a Social Influence roll and take his preferred result.

**Pulse of the City** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 4, Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Vampire immediately passes into a trance until he chooses to end this Gift as a Simple Action. While in this trance he may take no actions nor communicate in any way, but he may see or hear through the senses of any Rank 0 being within [Rank x10] miles radius, as well as attempt Social Influence or Mass Social Influence upon any Rank 0 beings within the same. This influence takes the form of a hypnotic 'suggestion' and is not remembered as dialogue spoken by the Vampire or any special supernatural communication. Those persuaded simply act accordingly, rationalizing their new choices as seems reasonable to them.

**Blood of My Blood** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 4, Reach the Thralls and Voice of the Master; Permanent; when using Reach the Thralls and Voice of the Master the Vampire may select as targets not only beings he's created himself, but any beings created by those beings, or any beings those beings create, or so on. In short, the Vampire may use as target's his entire 'lineage'. For traditional vampires this takes the form of lines of kindred going sire to sire, but more unorthodox vampires with their own means of producing heirs find their own uses for this Gift.

**Animalism Unleashed** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5, Animalism and Command the Beast; Permanent; the Vampire gains the following benefits.

Effect 1: When using Animalism, the range of its effect is now [Rank x100] miles for telepathic

communication.

**Effect 2:** When using Command the Beast on unintelligent animals of Rank 0-2, the Vampire may commit the Effort for the Story to instead target up to his Rank in Size in targets with a single activation. If he does so, this Gift gains the Perfect tag and resistance rolls are not made. The creatures are instead automatically mind controlled into service for the typical duration. These targets may be any Animals within [Rank] miles radius even if they are not in the vampire's presence or characters the Vampire is aware of. Subsequent uses of this version of Command the Beast replace prior activations.

**Dominate Unleashed [\*\*\*]:** Prerequisite Rank 5 and Dominate; Permanent; When using Dominate characters of Rank 0 the Vampire may commit the Effort for the Story to instead target up to his Rank in Size in targets with a single activation. If he does so, this Gift gains the Perfect tag and resistance rolls are not made. The characters are instead automatically mind controlled into service for the typical duration. These targets may be any Animals within [Rank] miles radius even if they are not in the vampire's presence or characters the Vampire is aware of. Subsequent uses of this version of Dominate replace prior activations.

## Stealth Gifts

**Heightened Senses [\*]:** Permanent; the Vampire never suffers Penalties relating to Perception nor suffers Penalties to other Skills for reasons of Perception [such as fighting in pitch darkness or attacking a target in stealth].

**Earthmeld [\*]:** Simple; the vampire may seamlessly descend into the ground in any location composed of soil or other loose material. The vampire seems to disappear into it, physically melding with the substance. The vampire cannot move or take actions while in such a state, and immediately exits it if the ground he is in is excavated or he is the target of an attack or supernatural effect. As another Simple Action the vampire may exit the ground in like fashion. While so buried the vampire is not effected by sunlight.

**Oubliette [\*]:** Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene in the presence of a corpse, blood, or piece of a corpse. The corpse is disposed of, being alternatively devoured by or absorbed into the Vampire, tossed into a dimension of nonexistence, or some other such explanation.

**Masquerade [\*]:** Permanent; Any incredulity relating purely to the Vampire's physical appearance or clothing, such as pale skin, extended fangs, blood-soaked or antiquated clothing, or so on is ignored or at most excused as eccentricity by all Rank 0 characters. This does not excuse violent acts or supernatural manifestations caused by the Vampire.

**Blood Form [\*]:** Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Vampire assumes an amorphous form, such as a pool of living blood or a mass of shadows. They gain the Fluid Body Aspect. If they already possess the Fluid Body Aspect they instead gain three dice for all attempts to escape a grapple or to escape another form of containment.

**Stolen Faces [\*]:** Prerequisite Rank 3 and Diablerie, Simple; the Vampire may at no cost assume the complete visible appearance, voice, and mannerisms of any being currently imprisoned within himself.

They may either retain the clothes they are currently wearing, or assume the clothing the target was wearing at the time the Vampire slew them. This Gift lasts until it is dismissed as a reflexive action.

**Sink into Night** [\*]: Permanent; whenever the Vampire is in total darkness they never suffer Penalties to Larceny rolls. Moreover, they add [Rank] to all Stealth and Larceny rolls.

**Lying Blood** [\*]: Permanent; whenever the Vampire is subject to a power that attempts to divine her Rank, the Vampire is aware of the attempt, its origin, and may choose what result between Rank 0 and 5 is returned.

**Collect Night's Toll** [\*]: Supplemental, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene to attempt a Larceny roll to steal an object or disarm a character who is in dim light or pitch darkness the Vampire is aware of. The target suffers a -5 Penalty to their opposed roll and if successful the object teleports to the Vampire's possession. It seems simply to sink into the darkness and appear in the Vampire's possession.

**Old Friend** [\*]: Prerequisite Mask of a Thousand Faces, Permanent; when using Mask of a Thousand Faces one may choose to select a target one knows of and immediately disguise oneself as someone near and dear to the target. One's disguise selects itself, picking someone the target knows and would be comfortable around and be willing to speak to. This Gift also alters one's subconscious mannerisms, preventing any obvious slips that would reveal oneself as a fraud, but otherwise provides no information for acting as the character. This Gift permanently upgrades Mask of a Thousand Faces and has no effect on targets immune to mind-reading.

**Shroud of Night** [\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The Vampire causes an area up to [Rank x10] yards in diameter to become mystically cloaked in pitch darkness. All beings within the area suffer a -4 Penalty to Perception and any other Skill dependent upon sight as per the usual Penalties for pitch darkness such as Attack or Defense Rolls.

**Shadow Walking** [\*\*]: Simple, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene while standing in darkness or dim lighting. For the rest of the Scene the Vampire takes the form of his own shadow traveling along the ground or the wall, seeming to meld with the surfaces as a two-dimensional being. While in this form the Vampire may not attack, speak, or take actions besides moving but gains the following benefits

- Attempts to notice them with Perception is made at a -3 Penalty.

- They may crawl under doors or through cracks as though they possessed the Fluid Body Aspect

- Once per Turn they may reflexively 'teleport' to any shadow or dark area they can see, provided it is less than thirty yards away.

This Gift ends immediately if the Vampire is attacked [being a shadow does not prevent this], is exposed to bright light, or the Vampire ends the Gift as a Simple Action.

**What We Do In The Shadows** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3 and Shadow Walking, Permanent; when activating Shadow Walking the Vampire may choose to commit the Effort for the Day to effect another willing target OR to effect up to [Rank] beings created by him [such as Revenants or younger Vampires] or controlled by him [such as Dominated persons or Commanded animals]. Each target is treated as being under their own individual use of the Gift that resolves separately.

**One With the Earth** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Earthmeld; Permanent; while using Earthmeld the Vampire

may move, traveling through the stone or dirt at their speed. He also gains the Tremorsense Aspect. He still may not take actions and this effect still immediately ends if he is targeted by an attack or supernatural effect. The use of this power causes harmless 'tremors' in the earth near where the Vampire is traveling, potentially alerting others to his presence. All Perception rolls to notice the Vampire suffer a -2 Penalty.

**Cloak of Shadows** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Supplemental: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the the Scene the Vampire becomes invisible and impossible to notice except by those who successfully beat his Stealth. Even electronics and high-tech sensors fail to notice the Vampire's presence. All those attempting to notice the Vampire suffer a -4 Penalty to Perception to do so.

**Mask of a Thousand Faces** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Supplemental: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. Until the Vampire dismisses it as a reflexive action, the Vampire takes on the complete visual appearance of any person approximately his size [anything not requiring additional Aspects such as Small or Giant to represent unless one possesses such] with any mundane attire desired. The Vampire's costume is completely perfect and cannot be noticed as such except by supernatural powers to see through disguises. This even mimics subtle supernatural elements, such as a mortal's apparent need to breath. Nonetheless this is only a disguise, just because the Vampire looks like he's breathing to any mundane inspection doesn't change the fact he doesn't requires air.

**Mist-Hidden Castle** [\*\*\*]: Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Day as an Extended Action requiring one hour while targeting an area at most a mile in diameter. The area is, at the discretion of the vampire, surrounded by a veil of thick mist or impenetrable darkness. The vampire may choose any number of clearings within the area that are not effected by this effect, traditionally a structure. Anyone attempting to navigate through or around the mist or darkness suffers a -4 Penalty to do so, as well as to all Perception rolls or rolls requiring eyesight such as Agility, Melee, Ranged, and Martial Arts.

**Cover of Night** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Cloak of Shadows, Permanent; While using Cloak of Shadows the Vampire may choose to apply its effect to targets besides himself, [Rank+1] characters in total. Alternatively, he may select a single discrete object, vehicle or structure not exceeding half a mile in size and render it invisible for the rest of the Scene. All targets benefit from the effects of Cloak of Shadows, and the vampire may use Cloak of Shadows multiple times to effect increasingly large numbers of targets. When effecting stationary structures or objects, the Vampire may choose to commit Effort for the Day instead of the Scene, to also extend the duration to one Day.

**Blacken the Sky** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 4, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. Immediately and with supernatural hurry, the sky for up to [Rank] miles radius is filled with black clouds that blot out the sun, moon, and stars. Brightest day turns to blackest night in an instant. Barring artificial lights, this inflicts all the normal Penalties for pitch black conditions. It also, naturally, serves as adequate protection for any creatures harmed by Sunlight. This effect lasts until the following sunrise, or twenty-four hours have passed, whichever happens first.

**Infiltration** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 4 and Mask of a Thousand Faces, Permanent; when using Mask of a Thousand Faces one may choose to commit the Effort for the Day to effect any and all willing and

present beings created by him [such as Revenants or younger Vampires] or controlled by him [such as Dominated persons or Commanded animals] with the activation. Each takes a disguise of the Vampire's choosing which lasts until individually dismissed by a target or collectively by the Vampire.

**The Night Shall Last Forever** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5 and Blacken the Sky, World-Altering, Permanent; when activating Blacken the Sky the Vampire may choose to give it the World-Altering tag to instead make it effect the entire celestial body the Vampire is standing upon and extend its duration to a year and a day at no cost. Killing the Vampire ends this effect early. This Gift causes the world to slowly turn cold from lack of sunlight, plants to die and eventually the world to become a nearly lifeless husk. Few worlds survive a full duration use of this Gift with conventional life upon it.

## Craft Gifts

**Armored in Shadows** [\*]: Mastery, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, the Vampire transforms into a terrifying and macabre form or outfit selected upon learning this Gift. This form need not be recognizable as the Vampire. The Vampire is treated as wearing a Rank 1 Mystic Artifact Armor which can be Light, Medium, or Heavy as desired selected upon purchase. The Armor has the Indestructible Evocation and one other Evocation of the Vampire's choice. This Gift can be purchased additional times to increase the Rank of the Shadows Armor by 1 and grant an additional Evocation. This Gift can be purchased up to [Rank] times. This Armor does not suffer Mystic Collapse.

**Moorcockian Blade** [\*]: Mastery, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, the Vampire summons from nothing a powerful magical weapon selected upon learning this Gift, which must be either Might-based or Ranged-based. This weapon counts as a Rank 1 Mystic Artifact with the Indestructible Evocation and one additional Evocation of the Vampire's choice. This Gift can be purchased additional times to increase the rank of the Moorcockian Blade by 1 and grant an additional Evocation. This Gift can be purchased up to [Rank] times. This Weapon does not suffer Mystic Collapse.

**Tainting with Blood** [\*]: Simple; the Vampire selects one Mystic Artifact or Device in his possession and 'attunes it' to himself. When being used or operated specifically by the Vampire [a Weapon he is wielding, Armor he has donned, a Vehicle he is traveling in if not piloting]. That Item does not produce Mystic Collapse or Havoc. This effect lasts indefinitely, but the Vampire may only 'attune' up to [Rank] Items of Power in this way at a time.

**Time Comes For All** [\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene while selecting up to enough mundane inanimate matter to fit into a 10x10x10 foot cube. The matter rots, rusts, or otherwise immediately suffers the severest effects of centuries of aging. Using this on mundane armor and weapons destroys them.

**Tendrils of Obtenebration** [\*]: Mastery, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, tendrils or limbs of blackest night rise from the vampire's shadow or body. These tendrils can



reach up to twenty meters away, and the vampire may use them as though they were his bare hands for all purposes such as lifting or carrying objects, or performing Martial Arts attacks. The vampire may summon as many tendrils as desired, but they may only collectively lift as much as the vampire's place on the Might Chart permits. Moreover, while active he adds two dice to all Artifice rolls.

**Ancient Artisan** [\*]: Permanent; the Vampire can craft and perform Artifice actions without tools, bending, twisting, modifying and shaping the raw material with his bare hands. Moreover he crafts ten times faster than normal. For mundane crafting this means the item is crafted in 1/10th the ordinary time, which stacks with the x2 for rolling 6+ successes to 1/12th the time. For Items of Power you instead multiply the successes rolled each Interval by 10. For instance if you rolled 6 successes in an Interval, it would count as 60 successes.

**Wisdom of the Elder** [\*]: Prerequisite Craft Mystic Artifact OR Craft Device, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Vampire immediately learns how many other Vampire Type Monsters within [Rank x100] miles radius possess one of this Gift's prerequisites. He may reflexively initiate telepathic contact to any such Vampire who is willing, and may explicitly learn Schematics through voluntary teaching through this channel.

**Secrets of the Whelp** [\*]: Prerequisite Wisdom of the Elders; Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Vampire immediately learns how many other Vampire Type Monsters within [Rank x100] miles radius possess one of this Gift's prerequisites AND a Rank lower than the Vampire's Rank. Once per Day per target the Vampire may roll Mystic Lore opposed by Integrity of one such Vampire Type Monster. Upon success the Vampire learns all Schematics the target knows that the Vampire possesses the applicable Gift for.

**Vitae Harvest** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Craft Mystic Artifact OR Craft Device, Extended; as an Extended Action requiring one hour a vampire may sacrifice a number of incapacitated, bound or corralled sapient intelligent beings to produce a Universal Exotic Component in the form of distilled or solidified blood known as Vitae. The quality of the resulting Vitae is set by the quantity of slain sacrifices contributing blood. Size 1 or 2 is Lesser, Size 3 or 4 is Greater, and Size 5 is a Universal Legendary Exotic Component.

**Genius Lasts Forever** [\*\*]: Permanent; Anything the Vampire crafts becomes completely immune to the ravages of time. It will not rust, decay, or cease to function due to the mere passage of time or lack of maintenance.

**Ride with the Night** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. For the next twenty-four hours or until the Vampire uses this Gift again the Vampire summons a personalized Mystic Artifact Vehicle with a Rank of 1 that is not subject to Mystic Collapse designed when this Gift is purchased. This Gift may be purchased up to [Rank] times allowing the Vampire to completely redesign the Vehicle summoned by this Gift as a Rank 2, 3, 4, etc Vehicle. Each time this Vehicle is called it appears as undamaged, pristine and new.

**Unbreakable Dark Lord's Coach** [\*\*]: Perfect, Reflexive; Once per Scene whenever a Vehicle the Vampire is traveling in would take damage [after any defenses are rolled but before damage is applied].

The damage is negated

**Phantom Riders [\*\*\*]:** Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. A completely mundane and fully fueled Land or Water Vehicle with a Rank of [Vampire's Rank or 3, whichever is lower, Vehicle type selected upon activating this Gift] appears before the Vampire in the nearest unoccupied spot and persists for the next twenty-four hours or until the Vampire uses this Gift again. While completely mundane in Traits and lacking Evocations it may look as fantastical as desired, from a sailing ship with a spectral crew representing a Rank 3 ship or a chariot of flaming horses as a Rank 1 car.

**Castle of the Dark Lord [\*\*\*]:** Prerequisite Rank 3, Permanent; Upon purchasing of this Gift the vampire may create a palace, castle, or other large structure at most a half-mile in diameter and height, with any degree of architectural complexity and any mundane amenities or technologies the Vampire is personally aware of. At any point thereafter, the Vampire may commit 2 Effort for the Day as an Extended Action taking five minutes to cause his Castle [which need not literally be a castle] to arise from the ground before him. The Castle may only be called up in places where its appearance will not damage or overtake existing structures [non-structures such as roads or developed land does not prevent its use. The Castle is unstaffed and unmanned when summoned in this way. The Castle may be ordered back into the ground as an Extended Action taking five minutes with no cost wherein the Vampire must be present, in which event anyone inside the castle has that long to escape or be buried alive. Lastly, if the Castle is summoned up in a new place, it first sinks back into the ground at the former location as described above, lengthening the entire process of sinking and reemergence to ten minutes. The Castle, once summoned, lasts indefinitely if not dismissed.

**Red Moon Blades [\*\*\*]:** Reflexive; Select and activate one of the following effects.

Effect 1: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene to summon any handheld personal weapon including Light Explosives but not other types of Explosives. The weapon adds two to its Damage.

Effect 2: Commit 1 Effort for the Day to summon enough handheld personal weapons per Effect 1 to arm a Battlegroup with a Size of the Vampire's Rank or lower. All weapons produced by this Gift are broadly useless as anything except weapons and fade from existence at the end of the Scene

## Magic Gifts

**Form of the Bat [\*]:** Form, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The Vampire may assume the form of a Bat. He gains the Small, Tiny, and Keen Senses Aspects while in this form. He may return to his normal state as a Simple Action. This otherwise has an indefinite duration.

**Form of the Wolf [\*]:** Form, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The Vampire may assume the form of a Wolf. He gains the Swift Stride, Natural Weapon,, and Keen Senses Aspects while in this form. He may return to his normal state as a Simple Action. This otherwise has an indefinite duration.

**Expert Thaumaturge [\*]:** Prerequisite Mystic Lore or Science 4, Permanent; the Vampire immediately learns two dots of Thaumaturgy. This Gift may be purchased up to [Rank] times. If multiple instances of this Gift are purchased at once, the dots gained are pooled allowing for the potential purchase of 3-dot Thaumaturgy powers.

**Versatile Blood Magic [\*]:** Prerequisite Blood Magic, Permanent; whenever the Vampire uses Blood Magic he may inflict its Health cost upon a willing target with a Rank of at least the Vampire's [Rank-

2, minimum 0].

**Movement of the Mind** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the vampire can move objects in his vicinity with an invisible telekinetic force. The telekinetic force has an effective Might equal to the Vampire's Mystic Lore+2 for all purposes. The telekinetic force counts as a Might-based Attack using the Ranged Skill, and is compatible with all Fighting Styles, Gifts, and Combat Maneuvers compatible with such. The vampire can hold as many objects within his telekinesis as the force's place on the Might Chart permits. The vampire may not use this Gift to fly or levitate himself in any way.

**Mist Form** [\*\*]: Form, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The vampire transforms his body into a cloud of mist for the Scene, gaining the Wings and Fluid Body Aspects. Moreover, the vampire cannot take any physical actions or interact physically with his environment using his body [he may still effect the world around him using Gifts such as Movement of the Mind, or indirect means such as Dominate]. The vampire gains [Rank+5] Soak against Physical damage. All other damage effects the vampire normally. This Form may be ended early as a Simple Action.

**Animate Shadow Puppet** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Vampire may select one humanoid he is aware of. The shadow of the humanoid at that instant rises from the ground as an amorphous homunculus. The shadow has six dice in Melee, Ranged, Martial Arts, Might, and Agility, and Endurance and 3 dice in all other Skills, possess seven health, and will faithfully obey any commands by the vampire. The servant lasts a full lunar month or until destroyed, and while it lasts the target will not cast a shadow. The shadow possesses none of the Aspects of the target nor any supernatural abilities. If copied while the target was armed, the puppet appears with a mundane version of any weapon the target was using.

**Raise the Revenant** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The vampire may transform one willing or Incapacitated character into a Revenant for the next lunar month. The Revenant gains the Mighty Aspect, and his normal healing rate is replaced by the Slow Regeneration innate power unmodified by any Gifts the Vampire possesses. Revenants suffer a -5 Penalty to all rolls to Resist Social Influence by the vampire if they are Rank 1 or higher, or if they are Rank 0, all the vampire's social actions upon them automatically succeed without rolling. Moreover, Revenants must commit 1 Effort for the Scene any time they wish to harm the vampire, directly or indirectly.

**Expert Mage** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Mystic Lore or Science 6, Permanent; the Vampire immediately learns four dots of Magecraft. This Gift may only be purchased once.

**Blood Magic** [\*\*]: Permanent; whenever the Vampire attempts to cast Magic which requires Effort by committed for the Scene or for the Day, he may substitute the Effort cost. Instead of whatever Effort is demanded, he loses 1 current and maximum Health for the rest of the Day per Effort demanded.

**Potent Magic** [\*\*]: Permanent; whenever the Vampire uses magic of any kind, Thaumaturgy, Magecraft, or Theurgy as applicable. They add their Rank to their Mystic Lore for all purposes relating to the casting or resolution of said magic.

**Overwhelming Magic** [\*\*]: Permanent; whenever the Vampire uses magic of any kind, Thaumaturgy,

Magecraft, or Theurgy as applicable. Any unwilling target of their magic suffers a Penalty on all opposed rolls to resist or counter the magic [including their Defense Pool] equal to the Vampire's Rank.

**Diablerie** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Permanent; any target the Vampire personally slays he may choose to absorb the soul of into himself. The Vampire functions as a Soul Jar [per the Theurgy magic] for all purposes and may render hostage souls conscious or unconscious on a whim, and converse with them internally or block such communication likewise. Moreover, any target the Vampire personally slays has all Immortality-tag powers negated.

**Abyss Mysticism** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 4 and Astral Projection; the Vampire may form a Far Shore using the rules on page [XX]. He has 50 points to spend building his Far Shore.

**Spread the Curse** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Story as an Extended Action requiring one hour to perform. The vampire transforms one willing or Incapacitated Rank 0 character into a Rank 1 Vampire. They retain all existing General Gifts and Thaumaturgy Spells, and gain eight dots of Vampire Gifts selected by the Storyteller. The vampire is under no inherent compulsion to obey their sire, though many Vampire Gifts have greater effects upon things created by themselves.

**The World of Temporis** [\*\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene on your turn. Until the end of the Vampire's turn, time freezes around him. This has the following effects: Firstly, beings with a Rank of at least [Lower of the Vampire's Rank or 3] while still aware of the world around them in frozen time, seem to move in ultra-slow motion. The vampire's attacks against them are Unavoidable, and any theft attempts are resisted with a -5 Penalty. Those without at least such Rank are completely frozen and unaware of time freezing. Attacks against them are Unavoidable, and any theft attempts automatically succeed, as do attempts to sneak past them and any other action where resistance would be impossible as decided by the Storyteller.

# Shifters

*Dr. Blair: "You see, what we're talkin' about here is an organism that imitates other life-forms, and it imitates 'em perfectly. When this thing attacked our dogs it tried to digest them... absorb them, and in the process shape its own cells to imitate them. This for instance. That's not dog. It's imitation.*

*We got to it before it had time to finish."*

*Vance Norris: "Finish what?"*

*Dr. Blair: "Finish imitating these dogs."*

*-The Thing [1982]*

*"I saw a werewolf drinking a piña colada at Trader Vic's! His hair was perfect."*

*-Werewolves of London*

*What would you do if no one could stop you? If on a whim you could trade soft skin and fragile bone for rugged hide, carapace like steel, teeth that rip and claws that tear? If you could disappear, don a face that isn't yours, walk into the night and never come back? If you could be anyone, or anything? How would you live if you knew there was no consequences? To be a Shifter is to know the exhilarating feeling of such absolute freedom, of being the apex predator, the parasite, the eyes peering through the trees at the unwary traveler. Few people survive the experience unchanged, and whether produced through lycanthropic curses or cutting edge genetic science, most Shifters eventually come to see themselves as something different than the small frightened apes cowering in their cities. They begin to see humans as prey, as prizes, or something to be parasitized or assimilated, as something to be pulled into themselves. Blessed with both freedom from society's mores and independence from its necessities many Shifters travel through the world like wolves among sheep, devouring one here, carrying away another there, living in crags and mountains as great wild beasts only to return to civilization to carry away the spoils. Others insulate themselves well into the world like a tick upon humanity's throat, drinking it's lifeblood with a fervor a Vampire would recognize and admire. While not always wicked, few Shifters outside the Skinwalkers see themselves as members of human tribes, as fellow to their comings and goings. When a Shifter helps Man it is as a stranger helping a neighbor, it is as a hunter seeing prey caught in a trap and pitying it by letting it go, of one large animal chasing off another. Of all the Monsters in the world it is Shifters who possess the greatest indifference to the perils that the world now faces. Few threats are fierce enough to threaten them, and the 'end of the world' would be to them as but the opening of the earth to some great feast, of hunting and taking and devouring, of carrying away into captivity, or making one's own.*

## Shifters in the Shrouded Earth

Of all the supernatural beings that inhabit the Shrouded Earth, Shifters are those most likely to be monsters in the traditional sense: beings who devour human beings for sustenance or pleasure, steal whatever they like, kill and replace loved ones, and generally prowl as terrifying things crawling through the dark with far too many rows of razor sharp teeth. They exist to tell the traditional horror story, the antagonists of monster movies [or even kaiju films at higher Rank]. All Shifters are at least as strong as large terrestrial animals through their War Form and can utilize the form as a very convenient disguise. Their Gifts can make them tremendously hard to kill, and even harder to find or recognize. While not always hostile to humanity, and even more rarely entirely savage or primal, the Shifter is most often a destructive presence. He enters the area of a Conspiracy and he destroys the Conspiracy, and the Conspiracy it was opposing, and the closest Conspiracy operating nearby on principle. When they build their own Conspiracies, they typically revolve around utilizing shapeshifting to get what they want. They become John Carpenter's *The Thing* or *Invasion of the Body-Snatchers* instead of Ridley Scott's *Alien*. When they are benevolent, which isn't too uncommon, this simply changes the target of these strategies, and instead of innocent scientists in the Arctic it is a vampiric patriciate seeing what they thought was their most faithful Revenant's chest split open revealing jagged teeth and slithering tendrils ready to pull them inside.

**Werecreatures:** Victims of a terrible curse, traditional werecreatures are the most abundant form of Shifter on the Shrouded Earth. There are as many different variety of werecreature as there are creature, from wereturtles to weresharks, werespiders and werelocusts to give only a tiny sampling. Each werecreature is afflicted with a different curse spread via a mystical contagion requiring a certain Gift, all of which involve the target gaining the ability to transform into some kind of hybrid of human and a particular animal. Shifters of the same werecreature variety can look wildly different based on the proportion of man to beast. A werewolf which looks like a gigantic wolf can produce one who looks like a silver screen wolf-man, another who looks like a nine foot tall hulkish man-wolf, and yet another whose war form simply resembles a wolf. Most such curses involve strong negative side-effects such a wild temper or a tendency to go mad during the full moon. Werecreatures are often solitary creatures, traveling alone or in small groups of the same curse, most famously the 'packs' werewolves travel in. Many Shifter conspiracies take the form of Shifters defying these tendencies to build large tribes of a single or even multiple Werecreatures, usually built on a strict and violent pecking order. The werewolf is the most common variety of werecreature.

**Mutants:** Born of twisted and misused science, or the result of freak accidents during scientific experiments, mutants are technically the result of Anomalous forces acting upon a certain convergence of scientific apparatuses, powerful natural forces and strong emotional energy. Mutation is caused when a creature in such a condition subconsciously wants or needs to mutate, to become something horrible for some grimly personal reason. A scientist mocked by his peers desperate to prove his theories, the

forced victim of an unnatural experiment desperate to survive and escape, creatures subjected to copious amounts of radioactive waste, all possess a small chance of channeling forces beyond this world to bring about mutation. Mutant's War Forms [and sometimes their base forms] are generally hideous, or at least brutish and simple, and these unfortunates usually find themselves pulled into struggles surrounding their births or motivated to kill those who had previously wronged them. Mutants often advance in Rank quickly, continuing to grow and mutate further and further into forms grotesque and odious.

**Aliens:** The truth is out there, and it is our enemy. Pilgrims from the stars with sinister or at least self-serving intentions, there are several alien races in our side of space known to possess shapeshifting abilities. Possessing of advanced technology usually in the form of Devices and a vast knowledge of the cosmos, such visitors seek our enslavement more often than universal brotherhood or the advancement of consciousness. Most notable of these are the Reptilians, whose War Forms take the form of humanoid lizards between four and eight feet tall, and whose base form is in fact a cleverly formed human disguise. These Shifters operate as outposts or vanguards to much more powerful forces beyond our planet, who seek always to weaken us for invasion or plunder us for resources.

**Skinwalkers:** Shamanism is in many ways the most straightforward path to spiritual or mystical advancement in the world. All one needs to do is practice thaumaturgy until one learns to traverse the Dreamscape, petition a sympathetic great spirit [usually a Power], and take the gift of initiation in exchange for the duties of serving the spirits. In traditional animistic cultures, this process is even easier. An advanced shaman may simply journey into the Dreamscape on behalf of a worthy supplicant and petition the Power on your behalf. Some such petitioners, usually those with greater inherent spiritual strength to begin with, become Magicians. Most however are transformed into servants of the Powers in a far more literal sense. Skinwalkers are mortal servants of a given Power or similar functionary, using their power protect and guide their communities [or themselves] in exchange for doing the work of the spirits on Earth. For noble spirits such as the Primeval Sun, this is often a joyous and heroic calling. For the Mother of Monsters or the Nothing, such shamans are messengers of nothing but death, guarding their people from evil spirits by placating them and sicking their evil on another. For whatever reason the Adversary rarely makes Skinwalkers, most petitioners foolish enough to make a deal with the Devil become Infernalist Magicians or Nephilim Demons [if strong of will] or Possessed [if not].

**Spiritblooded:** When a Royal Avatar beds a mortal woman, his children are often Heroes. But they are not the only semidivine beings in the world. When a more primal spirit, or a more bestial Royal Avatar, gives birth such children are often not men of supernal talent but beasts who wear the face of men. Such beings are often not only powerful in their own right, but unlike other demigods their blood breeds true producing an entire race of beings like themselves. Such Spiritblooded are the Shifters who

more than any other form except perhaps Skinwalkers an exception to the animosity most experience with normal humanity. Growing up among ordinary humans, but with a family who shares one's abilities, grounds these shifters in their surrounding cultures even as it lifts them above it. Such Spiritblooded families and clans are similar to Faeries in that they are an alien culture of beings who see themselves as inhuman, but are not intrinsically hostile to humankind. The Children of Kaguya represent one such group, a race of long-lived beings born of an ancient Japanese moon goddess with unusually humanlike war forms. Spiritblooded races most often get their start through shamanistic behavior, especially Shaman Magicians summoning Royal Avatars and romancing them.

## **Lifespan**

The lifespan of Shifters varies to a greater degree than any Type except perhaps Faeries. Werereatures live as long as ordinary men, or sometimes up to half or twice as long based on the nature of their curse. A werewolf may perish at the tender age of forty while a weretortoise may live to see past his two hundredth birthday. Mutants either suffer mayfly existences, burning their candle at both ends mere years or even months after mutation or are biologically immortal, with very little inbetween. Alien races can have almost any lifespan. Reptilians live just under three hundred years. Skinwalkers live up to one hundred and fifty years, sometimes far longer if their guiding Power wishes it or they are exceedingly high Rank. Spiritblooded often possess long lives of at least several centuries. The Children of Kaguya, a very extreme example, live 2000-3000 years if accident or violence doesn't end them first. All Shifters possess the ability to achieve true immortality through their shapeshifting abilities alone, becoming immune to death not only by age but by most normal means.

## **Template Benefits**

**War Form;** Form; All Shifters possess a War Form, a terrible inhuman organic form of tremendous power. The Shifter may assume the War Form at any time as a Simple Action for no cost, or reflexively by committing 1 Effort for the Scene. In either case, the duration is indefinite and lasts until the Shifter dismisses the War Form as a reflexive action or shapeshifts into another form. The War Form may look however the Shifter desires, though very small or large War Forms require the appropriate Aspects, and War Forms are always eye-catching and inhuman in appearance. Most War Forms take the form of gigantic animals, or human-animal hybrids of some form. The most human-looking War Forms resemble humans with a few obvious animal features, such as unusual hair color, or the ears, eyes, or tail of an animal. War Forms need not resemble animals, but are always organic in nature. The Shifter builds his War Form at character creation and always transforms into the same War Form. Select one of the following stat bonuses. While in War Form, the Shifter benefits from the listed bonuses, which are explicitly dice bonuses and not the Shifter's unmodified human Skill total. The Shifter also gains the provided Aspects for each selection.



**Standard:** +4 Might, +1 Agility, +3 Endurance, 3 Aspects

**Behemoth:** +5 Might, +0 Agility, +5 Endurance, 2 Aspects

**Agile:** +1 Might, +4 Agility, +3 Endurance, 3 Aspects

**Ferocious:** +3 Might, +2 Agility, +3 Endurance, 3 Aspects

**Balanced:** +2 Might, +2 Agility, +2 Endurance, 4 Aspects

**Protean Excellence of [Skill] [\*]:** Reflexive, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and apply one of the following effects. Effect 1: For the rest of the Turn the Monster may add his unmodified [Skill/2] to all rolls using that Skill. If this Gift is activated during the Monster's Turn, it ends at the start of the Monster's next Turn. If it is activated during another character's Turn, it ends at the end of the Monster's next Turn. Effect 2: The Monster may add his unmodified [Skill/2] to a single roll [usually Extended] regardless of how many turns it takes to perform. At Rank 5, the Duration of this Excellence becomes one Scene

## Combat Gifts

**Steel Fur [\*]:** Mastery, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, the Shifter adds [Rank+2] to his Soak.

**Predator Instincts [\*]:** Permanent; the Shifter adds [Rank] to all Attack rolls, but not to Combat Maneuvers.

**Chimerical Ascension [\*]:** Permanent; the Shifter's War Form gains one additional Aspect selected upon purchasing this Gift. This Gift can be purchased up to [Rank] times.

**Mutation [\*]:** Simple; Select one Aspect upon purchasing this Gift. As a Simple Action the Shifter may adopt the given Aspect in any form he wears, or adopt any or all Aspects purchased by this Gift. These Aspects last indefinitely or until they are dismissed as a reflexive action. They may be dismissed individually as desired. This Gift may be purchased up to [Rank] times.

**Adaptation [\*]:** Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. Select one form of environment or environmental hazard, such as a harsh desert, inhospitable tundra, a house fire, deep space, or the surface of the sun. The Shifter suffers no damage or Penalties from any corresponding Environmental Hazards. The Shifter must still breathe, eat, drink water, etc unless other Gifts grant him the means not to. This does not protect the Shifter from Environmental Hazards, damage, or penalties produced by Gifts, Spells, or other supernatural effects.

**Self-Sufficient [\*]:** Permanent; the Shifter gains the Breathless Aspect.

**Razor Claws [\*]:** Mastery, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Shifter adds [Rank+2] to the damage of all Martial Arts attacks.

**True Form Mastery [\*]:** Permanent; the Shifter gains access to the Trait bonuses [but not the Aspects] of his War Form in his base form and any other ordinary humanoid forms he possesses.

**Relentless Fury [\*]:** Prerequisite Rank 5 and Gore with Tusks, Permanent; When using Gore with Tusks one may choose to worsen the Injury. The Injury's associated Penalty becomes -5 and does not

heal merely from magically returning to full health. It only heals when the Shifter voluntarily ends this effect as a Reflexive Action or a Rank 5 character uses an effect that specifically removes Injuries upon the target. Furthermore, effects that negate Penalties do not negate this Injury's Penalty unless the bearer of the Injury is Rank 5.

**Frog's Bound** [\*]: Prerequisite Race the Hare, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Shifter may leap up to [Rank x5] miles through the air in a single bound that takes only a Turn to complete. This may not be used while the Shifter is in combat or otherwise under duress.

**Recursive Design** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Shifter gains half his unmodified Endurance pool in 'temporary Health Levels'. These Health Levels are expended before any other Health, cannot be healed, and disappear at the end of the Scene. Subsequent uses replace prior uses, they do not stack.

**King of Beasts Charge** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 4, Reflexive; Once per Scene at no cost the Shifter may immediately travel to the location of any target who has attacked or otherwise targetted the Shifter with a negative effect during the present Scene regardless of distance. This is not teleportation, the Shifter is physically propelled to his destination. Any Shifter stupid enough to use this in response to distance Sympathetic Magic will find reports of a freak 'shooting star' in the following day's news. This never damages the Shifter.

**Gore With Tusks** [\*\*]: Supplemental, Reflexive; Once per Scene before rolling an Attack the Shifter may declare it to be Aggravated. Moreover, if the attack deals even a single Health Level, the target suffers an Injury from the Injury Chart selected by the Shifter.

**Apex Predator** [\*\*]: Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene while rolling an attack roll against a target with a Rank lower than the Shifter. The attack is Aggravated.

**Thin the Herd** [\*\*]: Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene while rolling an attack roll against a Battlegroup with a [Size+Rank] lower than the Shifter's Rank. The attack is aggravated.

**Gazelle Steps** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Shifter triples all of his movement speeds and doubles the result of all his Initiative rolls.

**Race the Hare** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Shifter doubles all his movement speeds and doubles his jumping height and distance. Reflexively commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene speed and jumping are instead quadrupled.

**Raging Defiance** [\*\*]: Reflexive: Commit 1 Effort for the Day whenever the Shifter must roll Integrity for the purposes of resisting a Gift, Spell, Social Influence, or other delirious effect. He automatically succeeds the roll in place of rolling. This Gift must be declared before and in place of rolling Integrity.

**Phases of the Moon** [\*\*]: Permanent; The Shifter's body cannot be transformed against their will, whether into another being or into an inanimate object.

**Octopus and Spider Barrage** [\*\*]: Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene before rolling an Attack. The attack is Unavoidable.

**Serpent's Evasion** [\*\*]: Reflexive, Supplemental: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene when targetted by an Unavoidable Attack. The attack is instead not Unavoidable. This must be declared the attack is

resolved. Upon so doing the Shifter may immediately and reflexively adopt his War Form at no cost OR reroll his next attack roll and take the preferred result.

**Puny Divinities** [\*\*]: Permanent; whenever the Shifter Incapacitates or kills a target with a Rank equal or lower than her own, she may negate any Immortality-tag Gifts or effects.

**Bestial Hunger** [\*\*]: Permanent; the first time in a Scene that a Shifter defeats an Enemy, whether through killing or through Incapacitation, the Shifter reclaims [Rank] Effort.

**Tarnished Silver** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Substance Weakness or Damage Type Weakness, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Turn the Shifter cannot be harmed by anything made of or incorporating his Weakness. Rather than being vulnerable to it, he is instead immune.

**Regeneration** [\*\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Shifter heals one Health Level at the start of each of his turns, even while out of combat. If he is incapacitated or killed this power automatically ends.

**Beast King Strength** [\*\*\*]: Permanent; the Shifter's Might Chart placement for the purposes of breaking or destroying objects [but not for lifting or throwing] becomes 21. The Shifter's claws may tear through any mundane substance, break through walls of any material, dig slowly through any material, and any object not indestructible is destroyed upon a successful Sunder Attempt. If the Shifter's Might Chart placement would be 21 without this Gift, the Shifter's Might instead becomes 30 if it is not already. If the Shifter's Might is 30 already, successful Sunder attempts may destroy Indestructible objects.

**Survivor** [\*\*\*]: Reflexive, Supplemental: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene when targetted by an Aggravated Attack. The attack is instead not Aggravated. This must be declared before rolling Defense. Moreover; Once per Scene, at no cost, after suffering damage from any source. Negate the damage before it is applied. This may explicitly be activated after rolling Defense and failing to completely negate the damage. The Shifter need not be aware of the attack.

**Perfect Anatomy** [\*\*\*]: Permanent; the Shifter is immune to all diseases, poisons, and Poison Damage.

**Relentless Survivalist** [\*\*\*]: Reflexive; Once per Scene when the Shifter would be Incapacitated or killed, the Shifter instead survives at one Health.

**Master of Form** [\*\*\*]: Permanent; the Shifter gains a second War Form, designed in exactly the same way as the first. Any Gifts increasing the War Form [such as Chimerical Ascension] apply their benefits to both forms, applying the same benefit. The Shifter can assume either War Form when adopting the War Form. This Gift may be purchased up to [Rank] times.

**Uncaged Beast** [\*\*\*]: Reflexive; Once per Scene when the Shifter fails an Integrity roll to resist Social Influence or some kind of mind-effecting or mind control power, the Shifter may instead succeed and negate the influence or effect. The Shifter must immediately attack or otherwise seek the harm of the target, though he need not kill him. Moreover, the Shifter is automatically immune to all Social Influence or mind-effecting or mind control powers from that character for the rest of the Scene.

**Bull of Heaven** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5, Simple; Commit 2 Effort for the Day. The Shifter gains the

following Aspects: Giant, Titanic, Kaiju, Collosol. If the Shifter already possesses any of these in her current Form, add +1 die to her Might and Endurance per Aspect already possessed. This lasts until the Shifter assumes another form or ends it as a Reflexive Action.

**World Serpent** [\*\*\*] Prerequisite Rank 5 and Bull of Heaven, World-Altering, Permanent; when activating Bull of Heaven the Shifter can choose to also grant herself the Cosmic Size Aspect.

**Cloud Summersaught** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisites Rank 5 and Frog's Bound, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Shifter may immediately run, fly, or jump to any location within the same planetary system. If the location is within 500 miles he arrives immediately. If it is further he arrives by the end of the Scene [or hour, whichever is shorter]. This is not teleportation, the Shifter flashes by at Mach speeds, a blur as he rushes past other characters or soars through the sky. This Gift never harms the Shifter, other characters or other structures. If the Shifter is damaged enroute this Gift immediately ends. Moreover all of the Shifter's movement speeds are multiplied by five. This letter effect is Permanent.

## Social Gifts

**Language of Birds** [\*]: Permanent; the Shifter may speak to and communicate with unintelligent animals. Moreover the Shifter adds his Rank to all Animal Ken rolls.

**Wearing Their Face** [\*]: Permanent; the Shifter adds [Rank+2] to all Social Influence rolls made to convince others [whether individually or in a group] that one is someone one is impersonating [whether through mundane disguises, shapeshifting, or some other method] or collaborate the same.

**Delirium** [\*]: Permanent; whenever the Shifter is in their War Form, Rank 0 characters react with a blind, unreasoning panic upon witnessing him. Any Rank 0 character who sees the Shifter in their War Form will either blindly attack him or flee for their lives. Moreover, at the end of the Scene any Rank 0 character who had seen the Shifter in their War Form will rationalize the encounter as something more mundane [such as insisting a Werewolf was merely a large bear] or forget the encounter altogether. The Shifter may suppress this effect for a Scene by reflexively Committing 1 Effort for the Scene.

**Fearful Aura** [\*]: Prerequisite Delirium, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, the Shifter gains the benefits of Delirium in any form she is in, not just her War Form.

**Primal Delirium** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Delirium; Permanent; the Shifter's Delirium now effects all characters with a Rank less then the Shifter's Rank [min: Rank 1]. Characters with a Rank of 1+ may ignore the effects of the Delirium for the Scene by Committing 1 Effort for the Story reflexively. Whenever the Shifter suppresses their Delirium, this effect is suppressed too. This permanently upgrades Delirium.

**The First Fear** [\*\*] Prerequisites Rank 5 and Primal Delirium, Permanent; Rank 3 or lower characters, including Battlegroups, effect by Primal Delirium will always flee for their lives, and not engage the Shifter. They may still commit Effort for the Story to ignore the effect altogether. Furthermore all Rank 3 or lower NPCs who are exposed to the Delirium who do not so commit Effort develop a new Defining Intimacy of “Crippling Fear of the Shifter” which lasts indefinitely.

**The True Imitation** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Wearing Their Face and Rank 3; Perfect, Permanent; whenever

the Shifter is disguised as another character, whether through mundane disguises or shapeshifting, all characters with a Rank of [Shifter's Rank-2] or less will believe the Shifter is in fact who they are disguised to be and any apparent others are imposters. This is a supernatural illusion that overrides all Gifts lacking the Perfect tag. Characters presented with irrefutable proof to the contrary will simply rationalize it away as seems prudent and carry on.

**Knowledge of the Real** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene while using shapeshifting to assume the specific form of another character with a Rank equal or lower than the Shifter's Rank. The Shifter immediately learns one fact or piece of information the character the Shifter is disguised as knows. Through this Gift a Shifter can evade even the most relentless interrogation, rattling off childhood memories, pet names and deep dark secrets to preserve their disguise.

**Assimilation** [\*\*]: Simple; the Shifter must target an Incapacitated character or a character killed within the current Scene in his presence. The Shifter may read as many memories from the target as desired, up to twenty-four full hours of 'footage' with a single Simple Action, which need not be cumulative. The most common use of this Gift is to gain a full understanding of a target to better imitate them through other Gifts such as Many Faced Hero.

**Den of the Beast** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and designate an area not exceeding one mile in diameter and roll Intimidate. For the rest of the Day, any character who goes to enter the area is overcome with a feeling of trepidation, as though some terrifying beast is going to lurch from the shadows and strike them. Any character wishing to voluntarily enter the area must roll opposed Integrity against the initial activation Intimidation roll. Characters who fail must either turn back, or commit 1 Effort for the Story to gird themselves and press on. Characters forcibly brought into the area suffer no ill effect but given the opportunity must either flee the area or commit the Effort.

**School Becomes Shark Formation** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Story and select a Battlegroup loyal to the Shifter. For the rest of the Story that Battlegroup's effective Size for all purposes except determining Health is increased to the Shifter's Rank or by 1, whichever is higher [max Size 5]. This explicitly grants access to the Overwhelm or Focus Fire Tactic if applicable.

**Savage Horde** [\*\*]: Permanent; whenever the Shifter is serving as Commanding Officer of a Battlegroup with a Size+Rank equal to or lower than his Rank, that Battlegroup counts as possessing Drill 5.

**School in the Reeds Technique** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day when serving as Commanding Officer of a Battlegroup with whom the Shifter is physically present and whose Size+Rank is equal or lower than the Shifter's Rank. For the rest of the Scene the Battlegroup uses the Shifter's Stealth pool in place of its own and does not suffer Penalties for Size. As normal, if 6+ successes are rolled Stealth succeeds regardless of lack of cover, allowing a Battlegroup to seemingly appear out of nowhere.

**Beast-Master** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 4, Permanent; whenever the Shifter is personally present and serving as Commanding Officer of a Battlegroup composed primarily of unintelligent Rank 0 or Rank

1 animals the resulting Battlegroup always benefits from Overwhelm regardless of the Rank of opposition. The ability to communicate with Animals, usually required to form such a Battlegroup in the first place, is not provided by this Gift.

**Animal Magnetism** [\*\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene increase the Shifter's Persuasion, Intimidation, and Deception by her Rank.

**Viral Horror** [\*\*]: Prerequisites Rank 5 and Parasite Invasion, Permanent; any Rank 0 character who ingests a piece of the Shifter or is exposed to blood or body fluid contact with the Shifter will transform per Parasite Invasion after twenty four hours have passed. This may be prevented by a character rolling 6+ successes on a Medicine roll to treat the character or utilizing any Gift to cure diseases upon them before twenty four hours are up. It has no effect upon characters immune to disease. There is no limit to potential abuses of this effect, and even trivial applications can result in national pandemics of shapeshifting mutants.

**Be of Me** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5 and Viral Horror, Permanent; All characters produced by Parasite Invasion share knowledge and senses. They may communicate telepathically across any distance, see what each other see, know what each other know. The mere appearance of a Shifter who knows this Gift on a world is nearly enough to doom it to extinction by assimilation.

**McReady's Bane** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5 and Viral Horror, Immortality, Permanent; if a character produced by Parasite Invasion is slain by Physical Damage, immediately produce a Flesh Fragment. Flesh Fragments are Rank 0 mindless and violent characters with a Skill Rating of 3 in all Skills and 7 Health. If a Flesh Fragment kills a Rank 0 character it is transformed per Parasite Invasion. If part of the Flesh Fragment is ingested or has fluid contact, the target is infected per Viral Horror. If fighting a Battlegroup primarily consisting of Flesh Fragments or characters produced by Parasite Invasion/Viral Horror, instead treat the Battlegroup as healing 1 Health per Turn at the start of its Turn to represent replenishing losses.

**Parasite Invasion** [\*\*\*] Prerequisite Rank 5, Permanent; the Shifter may choose to apply the following effects whenever desired at no cost.

Effect 1: Any Rank 0 character killed by the Shifter returns to life as an exact mental copy of the Shifter at the moment he killed them. This character gains none of the Shifter's Rank or Gifts but will think and act exactly like the Shifter while looking like an uninjured version of their original form. The new Shifter is completely independent and doesn't share senses or knowledge with the original, but will never intentionally act against the original. He possesses the unmodified original Skills of the Shifter for all purposes and 7 Health. If they are an Animal with Aspects they retain them.

Effect 2: Any Rank 0 character killed by a character altered per Effect 1 is also transformed mentally per Effect 1.

Effect 3: If the Shifter possesses the Infection Gift, all those transformed by Effect 1 or 2 may manifest any or all of the Aspects granted by the Mutation Gift as though they possessed all of the Shifter's purchases of said Gift.

## Stealth Gifts

**Eye of the Tiger** [\*]: Permanent; the Shifter never suffers Penalties relating to Perception nor suffers Penalties to other Skills for reasons of Perception [such as fighting in pitch darkness or attacking a target in stealth]. Moreover the Shifter gains the Keen Senses Aspect in all forms he does not ordinarily possess it.

**Lunar Shapeshifting** [\*]: Form, Permanent; the Shifter gains a 'library' of stolen forms. Whenever the Shifter devours a piece of a completely mundane Rank 0-2 unintelligent animal whose death she had a part in, that animal is added to the Shifter's 'form library'. At any time the Shifter can assume a Form from her library as a Simple Action, or reflexively by committing 1 Effort for the Scene. This lasts until the Shifter dismisses the Form as a Simple Action or assumes another Form-tag Gift. When in the form of a mundane animal in her form library, the Shifter gains all the Aspects that Animal possessed.

**Prey Skin Disguise** [\*]: Prerequisite Lunar Shapeshifting, Permanent; the Shifter may add Rank 0 living humanoids to her form library using the same method with which she adds Animals. While assuming such a Form, the Shifter assumes their exact appearance and gains all Aspects [if any, most Rank 0 humanoids lack Aspects] the Form possessed. This permanently upgrades Lunar Shapeshifting.

**Predator By Nature** [\*]: Prerequisite Prey Skin Disguise, Permanent; the Shifter may add characters to her Form Library by a means other than devouring their dead bodies. The Shifter defines a specific condition when purchasing this Gift, such as 'defeating the target in a game' or 'having sexual relations with the target'. Fulfilling this condition adds the target to the form library if they would be applicable to be added. This condition must in some way require preying upon or winning over the target. This does not prevent the Shifter from obtaining forms by devouring their foes. This Gift may be purchased repeatedly to add more and more methods of form acquisition, up to [Rank] times.

**Hunter-Hiding Musk** [\*]: Permanent; the Shifter may choose to not manifest a Tell in any Gift that would require one. Moreover, he adds his Rank to all Survival rolls.

**Shifting Sights** [\*]: Permanent; Characters with a Rank of [Shifter's Rank-2 or less, min: 0] always fail to notice or recognize the Shifter shapeshifting or changing form in any way. If the transformation is such the Shifter is still recognizable as himself [such as growing wings or claws] effected characters will assume the Shifter always possessed the trait and they simply failed to notice before. If the transformation is unrecognizable, they simply draw no connection between the two characters [for instance, a Shifter adopting his War Form would cause them to wonder where the Shifter ran off too, and to react to the sudden inexplicable appearance of a monster]. This Shifter may suppress this for a Scene reflexively at no cost.

**Hidden by the Herd** [\*]: Perfect, Permanent; whenever the Shifter is subject to an effect that would reveal their Rank or Type, the Shifter immediately learns of the effect and its source and may choose to return either their true Rank and Type, the Rank and Type of any character they are currently shapeshifted into, or Rank 0 and mundane. This Gift is Perfect and overrides all opposition lacking a Perfect tag.

**Skinchanger** [\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and roll Larceny. Select one willing character

the Shifter is aware of, which can include the Shifter themselves. For each success, the Shifter may alter one discrete element of a character's appearance [such as height, eye color, skin color, face shape, hair length, apparent sex, etc]. This cannot change a character's size to levels represented by Aspects they lack. This lasts indefinitely, until the Shifter uses this Gift again to return the target to normal. The result need not be recognizably 'human' but must retain the same general body plan of the original target.

**Laughing Trickster** [\*]: Prerequisite Skinchanger, Permanent; Skinchanger may be used on unwilling targets. The target must roll Mystic Lore opposed to the initial Larceny activation. Upon failure to beat the Shifter's successes, Skinchanger takes effect. Note Skinchanger is purely aesthetic, it cannot induce Penalties or harm characters.

**Laughing Face-Stealer** [\*]: Prerequisite Lunar Shapeshifting, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select one target. For the rest of the Day the target assumes a Form from the Shifter's Form Library of the Shifter's choice. If the target is unwilling the Shifter must roll Larceny opposed by the target's Mystic Lore. Upon failure to beat the Shifter's successes, this Gift takes effect. The Shifter may choose to rob the target of the ability to speak if this is used unwillingly, but it otherwise inflicts no Penalties or negative effects upon the target. If the effect was not unwilling, the target may end the transformation early as a Simple Action.

**Two-Faced Hero** [\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The Shifter's current form becomes a version of that form in the opposite sex. Alternatively, the Shifter may adopt some hybridation of sexual characteristics. Regardless, the Shifter becomes fully capable of siring or bearing young as appropriate to that form. This transformation lasts indefinitely until the Shifter dismisses it as a reflexive action. Even changing to another form does not necessarily dismiss it, as the Shifter may choose to retain the new sex into his new form.

**Many Faced Hero** [\*\*]: Simple; Roll Larceny. The Shifter may take the form of any humanoid he can imagine. This only alters his appearance, it does not alter his Traits nor grant him any abilities. As this only effects his external anatomy, it does not grant a Shifter in the form of the opposite sex the ability to so reproduce. This transformation lasts until the Shifter dismisses it as a reflexive action. The form possesses a Tell, some small abnormality such as a monkey's tail or an unusual odor, that may be noticed with a successful Perception roll opposing the initial activation roll. Upon success, those who see it know the person is not exactly what he appears to be.

**Camouflage** [\*\*]: Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Shifter adds his Rank to all Stealth rolls. Moreover all targets attempting to notice the Shifter suffer a -4 Penalty to their Perception rolls. Moreover, all photographs and recordings of the Shifter are invariable blurry, from poor angles, or otherwise distorted such that the Shifter may not be recognized as himself.

**Ratskin** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Shifter gains the Fluid Body Aspect and adds his Rank to all Larceny rolls.

**Illusionary Aspects** [\*\*] Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and roll Deception or Larceny while in disguise as another character through mundane means or shapeshifting. For the rest of the Scene the



Shifter may reflexively produce complex illusions in the minds of characters who can see him. These illusions may mimic the appearance of any uncanny ability, Magic, or Gift his disguise would be capable of. For example if the Shifter was disguised as a Magician known for fire spells the Shifter could produce mental illusions to give the impression he is creating fire. If the Shifter was disguised as a Vampire who burnt in the sun, the Shifter could cause himself to seem to burn while standing in the sun. Any character with a Rank of 1 or higher may reflexively roll Integrity the first time in a Scene they are exposed to such an illusion opposed to the activation roll. Upon success, they no longer see or perceive the illusions in their minds. These illusions are very fragile and will not fool a character into believing he has been damaged by fire or effected by a fake Gift, and characters so effected immediately realize the illusion for what it is as though they had succeeded a resistance roll.

**Bestial Shift** [\*\*\*]: Form, Simple; Roll Larceny or Animal Ken. The Shifter may take the form of any mundane animal found on Earth, gaining 2-4 Aspects to represent the change in form. This transformation lasts until the Shifter dismisses it as a reflexive action. The form possesses a Tell, some small abnormality such as a monkey's tail in a non-simian form, that may be noticed with a successful Perception roll opposing the initial activation roll. Upon success, those who see it know the animal is not a natural one of its kind.

**Many-Faced Stranger** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Prey's Skin Disguise, Rank 3, Permanent; the Shifter may add any character with a Rank equal to or lower than her own to her form library. When assuming such a form she takes its exact appearance and any Aspects it possessed. When adding a fellow Shifter to her Form Library, she adds both their base form and their War Form. When adding a fellow Shifter who also had a form library, they add that Shifter's Form library contents to their own Form library. This Gift specifically does not add additional Forms a target accessed through Gifts.

**Moon and Earth Song** [\*\*] Prerequisite Rank 5, Form, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Story, the Shifter either melds with or turns into a large geographical feature such as a river, mountain, giant tree, lake, or forest, which can be at most fifty miles in diameter and ten miles tall. If the Shifter transforms into a geographical feature the new feature arises in the way least destructive to existing structures and habitation over the course of one full day. While in this form, the Shifter cannot take any actions except thinking, perceiving her surroundings and speaking. She perceives everything occurring within, upon, or around her natural features out to the maximum effect radius and can speak from any part of it. The Shifter cannot take damage or be effected by Gifts, though her landscape body may take cosmetic damage from anything large enough to accomplish such. The Shifter may not end this effect except as a slow process of consolidation, an Extended Action requiring a full lunar month to accomplish as the Shifter pulls her vast nature back into a single form and removes her essence from the landscape [and causing the feature itself to retract if one was produced, again in the way least destructive to habitation and existing structures]. Destroying the celestial body upon which the Shifter is set causes this effect to immediately end, but the rapid consolidation lowers the Shifter's Health to 1.

**Mother Gaia** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisites Rank 5 and Moon and Earth Song, Permanent; the Shifter disappears from the world entirely, reappearing in the form of a star, moon or planet somewhere in the

same solar system. They gain the following effects.

Effect 1: This celestial body possesses 30 Soak and 30 Health and an Axis Mundi [per the Thaumaturgy Magic] somewhere upon its surface. The Shifter can perceive everything occurring in the same planetary system as her celestial body. The appearance of this planet forms a natural equilibrium with existing bodies, never appearing in such a place as to destroy or harm existing worlds. Unorthodox placements such as giving the Earth a second moon simply fail to manifest destructive changes like tidal effects or altering gravity.

Effect 2: The Shifter may decide if her planet is barren and lifeless, a verdant oasis or something inbetween, populating it with as many or few Rank 0-2 Animals as desired with whatever Aspects or unusual anatomies. She may also choose to populate it with Rank 0 intelligent beings, though such creatures always appear in small numbers of at most five million in primitive conditions and levels of understanding. Many Shifters choose not to produce intelligent life through this Gift but instead to create it later upon their surface by other means.

Effect 3: The Shifter may project her old self from her new planetary body as a Simple Action, or cause it to meld back into it as the same if not in combat or under duress. While projected the Shifter senses both thorough her world-body and her ordinary senses regardless of distance.

Effect 4: Destroying the planet with a World-Altering attacks immediately kills the Shifter whether she is projected or not, with all Immortality effects negated.

Effect 4: Killing the Shifter [in spite of any immortality effects] causes the planet or star to explode catastrophically. This manifests as a World-Altering Attack upon all nearby worlds rolling the Shifter's Integrity against any Thaumaturgical Planetary Wards and dealing 40 Damage before Soak to any bodies nearby not protected by such Wards or by Axis Mundi.

## Craft Gifts

**Clay Wetting Practice** [\*]: Permanent; the Shifter can craft and perform Artifice actions without tools, bending, twisting, modifying and shaping the raw material with his bare hands. Moreover he crafts five times faster than normal. For mundane crafting this means the item is crafted in 1/5th the ordinary time, which stacks with the x2 for rolling 6+ successes to 1/7th the time. For Items of Power you instead multiply the successes rolled each Interval by 5. For instance if you rolled 6 successes in an Interval, it would count as 30 successes.

**Dog Demon's Fang** [\*] Prerequisite Craft Mystic Artifact or Craft Device, Permanent; the Shifter immediately produces from his own body a Universal Lesser Exotic Component. This Gift may be repurchased at Rank 3+ to produce a Universal Greater Exotic Component and again at Rank 5 to produce a Universal Legendary Exotic Component. This this Gift mighty Shifters have wielded blades forged with the power of their own claws and fangs.

**Many Pockets Meditation** [\*] Permanent; the Shifter gains access to a small pocket dimension, a 'hammerspace' in which he can deposit or withdraw items. As a Simple Action the Shifter may deposit one unattended inanimate item into his hammerspace, and he may withdraw or don an item as a

Reflexive Action. The Shifter may store up to [Rank x200 pounds] in his hammerspace.

**Prowler of Possibilities** [\*]: Prerequisite Craft Mystic Artifact OR Craft Device, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene while thinking about a specific Exotic Material noted in one of the Shifter's Schematics. The Shifter immediately develops a flawless internal compass pointing the Shifter in the direction of the nearest possible source of that Component for the rest of the Day or until the object is found. Multiple actions of this Gift replace prior activations

**Silkworm** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The Shifter creates, from nothing or from his own flesh, an outfit of any seeming material, design, or complexity, from elaborate gowns to detailed gothic plate armor, from tuxedos to the finery of an Ottoman Sultan decked in jewels. This garb lasts for a full day before dissolving into nothing or some mundane bodily excretion such as mystical silk, and may be donned by either the Shifter or any other character. The garb may be produced directly upon a character, but as this Gift does not hide, remove, or store anything else the character is wearing or carrying it is advised against. If the Shifter produces attire upon an unwilling target, he must roll Larceny or Mystic Lore opposed by Agility. Upon success, the target is unwilling clothed, and if desired by the Shifter, suffers a Penalty up to the Shifter's Rank to all Agility rolls for the cumbersome nature of the attire.

**Drinker of Secrets** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Craft Mystic Artifact OR Craft Device, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day while in the presence of a character who is willing, Incapacitated or died in the present scene. The Shifter learns all Schematics the Shifter possessed the appropriate Gift to learn from that target.

**Thousand-Arms of the Great Maker** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5 and Clay-Wetting Practice; Perfect Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Story before attempting an Artifice Action of any kind. The Action succeeds perfectly, producing flawless craftsmanship. If the object is mundane, it adds two dice to whatever its primary function is [A gun adding +2 to Ranged, a sword adding +2 to Melee, etc] or +1 to its Armor Rating if mundane armor. If the object is an Item of Power, the Item is flawlessly completed upon the current Interval. This cannot reduce the crafting time below one interval.

**Harmony with Reality Technique** [\*\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene, Day, or Story. For the rest of the Scene, Day, or Story one willing or unattended character or Item of Power that would ordinarily be subject to Mystic Collapse or Havoc is instead not subjected to it.

**Creation-Emulating Matrice** [\*\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Story while selecting one mundane item in the Dreamscape, the Astral Plane or a Far Shore, other not entirely real place. The object must be Vehicle-sized or smaller, and immediately and forever after becomes real. If its an object in a dream or dreamland, then when the Shifter awakens it will be with her. If it is something in the Astral Plane, the Shifter carries it with her. If she is astral projecting, the item appears when she returns to her body. If she is physically in the astral plane, it exits when she materializes. This may explicitly be used in the search for Exotic Materials. Many are the Shifters who prowl the Dreamscape for powerful Components found nowhere else. This Gift may not make real the products of Dreamsculpting. Those things made real must be the unfiltered fruit of dream, not the intentional

products of the imagination.

## **Magic Gifts**

**Eyes of the Cat** [\*]: Permanent; the Shifter is always aware of the Rank of all characters and Items of Power he is aware of. For Weapon, Armor, and Vehicle type Items of Power he also learns the nature of all their Evocations.

**True Lineage** [\*]: Permanent; any offspring the Shifter possesses will themselves be Shifters, either being born as Rank 1 Shifters, or becoming so at some point in their lives. Their Gifts and other Traits are selected by the Storyteller.

**Expert Thaumaturge** [\*]: Prerequisite Mystic Lore or Science 4, Permanent; the Shifter immediately learns two dots of Thaumaturgy. This Gift may be purchased up to [Rank] times. If multiple instances of this Gift are purchased at once, the dots gained are pooled allowing for the potential purchase of 3-dot Thaumaturgy powers.

**Expert Mage** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Mystic Lore or Science 6, Permanent; the Shifter immediately learns four dots of Magecraft. This Gift may only be purchased once.

**Counterspell** [\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene when a character the Shifter is aware of activates a Spell tag power. Roll Mystic Lore opposed by Mystic Lore. Upon success the Spell is dispelled, it is not resolved and has no effect. Upon success the Shifter loses the Simple Action on their next Turn as they busy themselves with Counterspelling.

**Sympathetic Magic** [\*]: Permanent; once per Scene [or Hour] the Shifter may perform any magic upon a distant target as though they were present in front of them, provided they possess one of the following: a piece of the target's body such as a nail, drop of blood, or lock of hair; a prized possession sufficient to count as a Major or Defining Intimacy, or if the target possesses some object tied to a Weakness such as a Fetter or True Name, such will also suffice.

**Knit the Flesh** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and roll Medicine. The Shifter or one willing target he is aware of immediately heals his successes in Health Levels. This Gift may only benefit a given target once per Scene.

**Infection** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Mutation; Simple: Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select one willing target. The target gains any number of the Aspects granted by Mutation. If the target is Rank 0, this lasts indefinitely until the Shifter removes them as a Simple Action. If the target is Rank 1+, this lasts for the Scene.

**Shaman's Walk** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene he adds his Rank to all Mystic Lore rolls. Moreover once a Scene, at no cost, the Shifter may reroll a Mystic Lore roll and use the preferred result.

**Subtle Magic** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Shifter no longer requires a Catalyst or the spoken word in order to cast Spells. He may do so by force of will alone. This has no effect on Rituals.

**One With All Flesh** [\*\*] Prerequisite Rank 5, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select a Rank 0 character the Shifter is aware of within five hundred miles of her location. The Shifter disappears and

the target transforms into the Shifter in her current form. This is effectively an unusual form of teleportation.

**The Unity** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Shifter may reflexively 'ride' the senses of any Rank 0 character within the same planetary system as herself. She may see what they see, taste what they taste, hear what they hear. This does not count as Scrying and does not distract the Shifter in any way from her ordinary actions or perceptions. Using this Gift again in the same Scene allows for the Shifter to sense through more and more proxies.

**Lycanthropy** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Reflexive: After successfully damaging a Rank 0 target with a Martial Arts attack commit 1 Effort for the Story. After [6-Shifter's Rank] days the character will transform into a Rank 1 Shifter. They retain all existing General Gifts and Thaumaturgy Spells, and gain eight dots of Shifter Gifts selected by the Storyteller. This Gift has no effect upon targets immune to disease and the use of certain spells or Gifts upon the target before the completion of the transformation can delay or even prevent the transformation. Transformation into a different Rank 1 or higher being in the meantime also prevents this.

**Sacred Land** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Bounded Field, Permanent; the Shifter may perform magic within the area of any Bounded Fields they possess as though they were physically present, causing magic to pour from the rafters or fly from the walls at irritating trespassers.

**Vandal Savage** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Permanent: the Shifter may not die of Complications, nor from any other means by that matter. Upon being Incapacitated the Shifter always remains Incapacitated until the end of the Scene in addition to the effects of any other Complications, but they may not die. Their body may be damaged, desecrated, brutalized, or beaten, but will invariably regenerate into a usable form at 1 Health at the end of the Scene. The Shifter must design with the Storyteller some method of permanently slaying them, such as 'if they are killed on a New Moon' or 'if they are slain by the seventh son of a seventh son'. This Gift has no effect upon and does not help the Shifter avoid fates such as being permanently turned to stone, having their conscious mind erased, being buried alive, or cast adrift into the darkness of space.

**Copycat** [\*\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Shifter gains the ability to be in two places at once, producing an exact copy of himself. This has the following effects:

Effect 1: The clone and the Shifter share a mind. Anything one sees or hears, the other is aware of. Both are controlled by the Shifter's Player and can coordinate regardless of distance.

Effect 2: Both have independent actions. Each has a single Simple Action per Turn and as many Reflexive Actions as they possess Effort to support.

Effect 3: They both possess the same Health, Effort, Effort/Turn, and Traits. Any effect upon one of them [other than Environmental Penalties] effects both. If one activates Steel Fur, both receive the benefit. If one is incapacitated or killed, they both are. If one is magically turned into a duck, both turn into ducks. If one uses Effort, the other loses it also and has less to use for its Turn.

Effect 4: If both are in combat together, both use and act upon the same initiative.

This lasts indefinitely until the Shifter ends it as a Simple Action, in which he decides which copy

disappears and which he remains. The Shifter may not use this Gift to Attack or deliriously effect the same character more than once in the same Turn.

**Duplikate** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 4 and Copycat, Immortality, Permanent; the Shifter may produce a total number of copies with Copycat equal to his [Rank-1] for a number of total bodies equal to his Rank. Each Copycat must be created individually. Moreover, if one of the bodies is slain all of the others are merely Incapacitated. Through this Gift one could scatter oneself so thin that finding all of the versions of the Shifter to slay is borderline impossible. Negating this Gift while killing one still slays all versions of the Shifter.

**Monkey King** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5 and Duplikate, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Story. The Shifter becomes a pseudo-Battlegroup with a maximum Size of her Rank, with the following benefits, for the rest of the Scene.

Effect 1: The Shifter may attack up to her Size+1 Enemies with a single Simple Action. Attacking a fellow Battlegroup only counts as one of these regardless of Size.

Effect 2: The Shifter may reflectively apply a Tactic to herself, including Overwhelm on targets with a Rank lower than her Rank+Size.

Effect 3: Outside of combat, the Shifter may utilize her army of bodies in any way the Storyteller deems reasonable, providing mundane labor for crafting projects, surrounding and guarding a building, or so on. Per Duplikate, all versions of the Shifter share a mind and sense what they all sense.

The Shifter counts as a Battlegroup for the purposes of all relevant Gifts and Magic. The Shifter does not gain any further benefits nor use any other Battlegroup rules beyond those listed here. Her Traits remain unaltered, she never rolls Morale, Etc. The Shifter Battlegroup lacks the comparative versatility of its prerequisite, the Battlegroup always travels as a mass, members who split off disappear into smoke or otherwise stop existing, and only functions as a Battlegroup and generic labor force. Shifters desiring a more flexible clone are advised to continue using Duplikate, the use of which stacks with this Gift for all purposes. A Shifter who uses this Gift with the Titanic, Kaiju, Collosol, or Cosmic Size Aspects becomes a single giant and an army of ordinary sized foes, not an entire army of planet sized monsters.

**Swallowing the Lotus** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5; all of the Shifter's Protean Excellences now have an Indefinite Duration and are impossible to dispel per the Mastery tag.

# Faeries

*"Up the airy mountain,  
Down the rushy glen,  
We daren't go a-hunting  
For fear of little men"*

*-The Faeries by William Allingham*

*"Who says our time is done? With Hellboy gone let us make the earth ours again!"*

*-Gruagach*

*Once upon a time, when Thule*

*was not yet a dream in the eyes of King Pudra, and Lemuria's sorceries weren't even whispers upon the wind, when Man lived in trees inside of in skyrisers, there was the Good People, the Noble Folk. They came, so legend said, from the land of dreams riding boats of white cranes eastward till they crashed upon the cold shores of matter, and wherever they saw stars they set down their roots. For a long time, longer now than common man may imagine, the people ruled this world, warring with the devils of outer dark and the scattered clump-like remnants of the Deep Exiles and the race of Ysrith which had come down from the sky. They built cities of living crystal and planted trees which shone with the light of star and moon, they shackled hurricanes and earthquakes and taught them to be gentlemen, they made their clothes from the morning dew and grew young with each dawn. That was so very long ago. The great lords of Faerie were humbled and scattered long before the founding of our civilization, beaten down by a series of great catastrophes but surviving as a noble remnant held aloft by a proud legacy. Though they walked as gods to our ancestors, taking names like Zeus or Amun-Ra, or Amaterasu or Indra, they underestimated the fledging race. Guided by powerful magicians and shielded by bearers of divine blood, humanity would encroach upon their remaining domains until by the end of the Renaissance all but the most stubborn or bitter of their kind had sailed beyond the west, to Territories carved into the underside of the world, refuges in Reality Marbles or the Dreamlands where they might live on as their ancestors did. For most Faeries, this was enough, to peacefully leave the stage of history and leave the earth to the next cycle. This was not you. To be a Faerie on Earth today is to belong to the Diaspora. Perhaps you are an exile, banished from the Faerielands for a heinous crime. Maybe you are an entrepreneur, seeking what can still be gained in the ancient heartlands of your people. Or an idealistic princess, determined to regain the world for your kin no matter the cost to these primitive magic-fearing primates who despoil your planet. As the tides of history turn and the hold of man grows tenuous with threats of environmental calamity, atomic war and the outbreak of open conflict between supernatural forces, the safety of the Faerielands is put in question, facing the People with a choice. Do they continue sequestering themselves from the coming storm, hoping it shall pass them by, or now again at the long turn of centuries return and rejoin the common Earth?*

## Origins of Faerie

So what exactly is a 'Faerie'? Where did these disjointed and odd collections of magical beings come from? That is a difficult question, for while the general truth is firmly established the specifics are long since lost to time. What is known is this, intelligence on planet earth developed naturally by

evolutionary processes that eventually led early hominids like Homo Habilis and Homo Erectus to developing higher brain function and eventually evolving into Homo Sapiens and most recently into Homo Superior. But the world is home to strange other vectors for intelligence. Sometimes spirits get pulled into the physical world by Anomalies and trapped there. If their bodies can breed true, what happens next? Or what happens when a Homo Erectus encounters an artifact that fell from another world, or encounters a traveler from another time? The result, most theorize, is the Faeries. Faeries are a collection of magical, pre-human races that formed earlier in the planet's evolutionary history due to magical accidents and managed to take root. As creatures of strange origins, they often had strange psychologies and anatomies. As beings of magic, they did not produce Mystic Collapse and came to utilize Mystic Artifacts as their primary form of technology. And as the world was no safer then then now, their civilizations were prone to dysfunctions, calamities and occasional resets upon their progress.

## **Faeries in the Shrouded Earth**

Faeries are a dispossessed people. Long ago they existed in strongholds throughout the world reenacting their glory days and dreaming of their return. Long before that, they ruled the planet as the dominant species, a title hard won against demonic and alien intrusion. Now all that is passed and most of their race lives in the Faerielands, Territories created by powerful Faerie to hide from Man and his hated iron. Those who stayed on Earth are akin to a Roman living in Rome after the Visigoths took over. It is watching what was and ought to be yours become something else, something uncanny and somewhat vulgar. It is living in the shadows and gathering into small outposts, Faerie ghettos and Goblin Markets where you can take refuge amongst your own kind. Faerie Conspiracies tend to be either attempts at reasserting their influence in the normal world, possibly with the long term goal of taking back the planet, or ventures for profit of things to be seized or taken back to the new homelands beyond the world.

**Sidhe:** Known to man as Elves but to themselves more often as Sidhe, they are tall, fair in appearance, muscular and broad with chiseled faces and long silk-like hair. Renowned for the might of their passions as much as their skill in craft, these long-lived warrior-artists formed the center of the last great Faerie civilization. Rising to their apex just over one million years ago, they would eventually be destroyed when their hated enemies the Bar-Og-Tog, a race of fiery Demons, managed to open portals at both the north and south poles from which poured endless Demons from the dream-throne of the Adversary. Determined to protect this world from the forces of Hell the Sidhe chose to stand and fight, pushing the legions back through their portals and casting down many Royal Avatars of the wicked one. Today none among humankind even remember this noble sacrifice that cost them their civilization, and many are the proud elven kings who would remind humanity of the debt they owe to the Good People.

**Trolls:** Brutish creatures with blue, blue-gray, greenish-grey or yellow-gray skin, with large noses and often wild hair, trolls are best described as inhospitable. Curmudgeonly and miserly by nature they value their privacy, often building homes under bridges or in clefts of rocks, anywhere big enough to house their bulk which can range from seven to fifteen feet. Known to devour men when angered, they actually rely primarily on the eating of bone to meet the high calcium demands of their metabolisms. The eating of meat is less for its nutritional value and more to season the taste of bone. For this reason trolls are occasionally recruited for use in the hunting down of necromancers and other users of skeletal undead.

**Wee Folk:** The Wee Folk are what most modern people think of when they hear the word fairy. Tiny



men who live happy lives in the wild away from human society. There are numerous varieties of these creatures, from Dwarves who live underground, grow mushrooms for food and from which to make alcohol, and have skill in craft to rival the Sidhe, to Gnomes who swim through the earth like a fish in water and produce powerful illusions, to Pixies and Sprites and their ilk, who sleep in flower petals, flutter through the air on gossamer wings and live the carefree lives of children. Regarded as a powerful component in the making of magical items and the weaving of enchantments, they are known for using emotion-bending magic to endear themselves to those they live among. Sorcerers and witches attempting to harvest pixies have less to fear from the minuscule creatures themselves and more whatever terrible protector they have pulled into their sway with their innocent laughter, happy singing and pretty faces. Pixies are known for having small souls, being capable of only feeling one feeling at a time, and usually not for long.

**Giants:** Descendants of mystically changed Neanderthals originally, giants are in many ways comical exaggerations of their ancestors. Possessed of large bodies ranging from seven to over three hundred feet, with square simple faces, small eyes, dressed most often in sewn skins or leather, with prodigious appetites and very powerful magic. The size of a giant is a function of his lineage and his magical potency, with the strongest giants often as feared for their conjurations as for their size. As a general thing, if one ever sees a giant in civilized and proper clothes, living in a castle in the clouds instead of a cave or carved stone hall, eating his meat on plates sized to himself, one should flee for one's life. Such a giant has produced these wonders from his magic and not by acquiring them. Giants' personalities are exaggerated, whatever their nature. Noble giants would tempt a saint to repentance in shame, while vicious ones are astoundingly vicious and angry ones are terrifying in anger and sorrowful ones may drown a town in their tears. Today, most giants with any idea of going among men [which isn't many] learn to change their size to better fit in, an experience universally described by giants as being 'like trying to fit into a pair of pants several sizes too small'.

**Goblinkind:** Goblins, ogres, orcs, oni, these monstrous fiends are known for two things. Their love of the smell and taste of manflesh, and their love of song. As long as man or elf has lived few things have been as frightful or mystifying as the boom of goblin voices over the horizon. Most often, these artful primitives will sing about the disgraceful nature, the cowardice or weakness of their foes or of the terrible things they will do to them when they are caught. If forced into a situation where they must work with humans, most find them to be a race of surprising talents. Goblin women sew tapestries into their menfolk's clothing detailing their favorite things, they have interest in poetry of a blunt and often crude form they use to deride and test each other, and their love of song in war becomes the rarely shared bustle of goblin musical theatre in the recesses of their hidden strongholds.

**Merfolk:** Dwelling in palaces of glass and coral at the bottoms of the sea, the enigmatic merfolk are among the oldest of the faeriefolk. They arose just over four million years ago after a group of spirits became stranded in the physical world after a freak accident. Enigmatic, sorcerous, beautiful and xenophobic, they are known for drowning sailors for fun, calling up demons, their unnatural discourse with the dead, and their crippling fear of death. Beyond even other mortals, merfolk are loath to die, for by reasons of their ancient myth they say they owe their souls to the Nothing at death and no peaceful repose can await them. Their souls turn, they say, to seafoam and that is their end. Merfolk resemble human beings with long fishlike tails, and gills set upon their sides just below their arms. They eat primarily fish, hate humanity for its pollution of the seas and general stealing of the planet, and use illusions to hide their undersea cities from sight. Merfolk despise Territory-dwelling Faerie, viewing them as traitors and cowards and always endeavor to slay any they find. Once fast allies to the Sidhe, the Merfolk blame them for the decline of Faerie and war upon them given the chance. They possess

rustic kin known as river Merfolk, who dwell primarily in fresh water, tend to be gentler in spirit and are less hostile to humanity, often sending their children or youth to live among humans for a time before returning to them or remaining with their foster folk.

**Changlings:** Areas where faerie magic has been used in great abundance in too short a span can very rarely birth Anamolies, mystic pools and trees with forbidden fruit and stranger things. Those who dally with such forces risk becoming changed by their exposure. Such Changelings are humans or animals who have been profoundly altered by faerie magic and become infected by it. Such unfortunates are often pulled into faerie society by force, returning home weeks later when they've learned to control themselves [if they are lucky] or carried away as slaves to the Faerielands if they are not.

## **Faerielands**

Faerielands are Territories built or taken over by Faeries, usually reflecting the sensibilities of an idealized medieval time for the surrounding culture or reflecting some long past era in Faerie history. They are often rich sources for Mystic Artifacts which are the primary technology found there, and ruled by mighty Rank 3 or 4 Faeries who hold these worlds as their lords.

## **High Speech**

Most Faeries use Adamic as a form of court dialect, and addressing a Faerie noble in this language is an easy way to mark oneself as an educated person worthy of their attention.

## **Cold Iron**

Most Faeries possess a weakness to unalloyed iron, which cuts through their skin and mystical defenses with equal ease and for some weakens them simply for standing near it or burns their skin when they touch it. This iron is often erroneously referred to as cold iron, but in truth any relatively pure iron will do. It is unknown why exact Faeries have this vulnerability but fairy legend is replete with stories giving mythic origin to the fatal allergy, generally involving their ancient nemesis the Adversary or the wily trickery of Man.

## **Lifespan**

Sidhe live for hundreds of years, up to nine hundred in ideal conditions, though deep feelings of world weariness or despair can kill them long before this, a condition they refer to as soul sickness. Merfolk, Trolls, Giants, Gnomes, and Dwarves live between two and three centuries, while most other Wee Folk live for only ten or twenty years. Goblind and Changelings live as long as humans. All Faerie possess fairly easily achieved forms of immortality, shielding them from both age and death by violence, meaning that many members of all the above races are much older than their normal lifespans would permit.

## Template Benefits

**Faerie Mien:** The Faerie begins play with three Aspects of his choice to represent his unusual and inhuman anatomy. All Faeries look at least mildly inhuman, though this can be as extravagant as being an enormous blue-skinned giant or as subtle as pointed ears.

**Glamours:** The Faerie begins play with one of the following Gifts. Faeries may purchase the other Glamours using their starting Gift Dots or later using Experience Points if desired.

**Glamour of Mists [\*\*]:** Simple; until the Faerie ends this effect as a Simple Action, the Faerie is surrounded by an air of forgetfulness. Any Rank 0 being who sees the Faerie either perform an impossible action or visibly appear as something impossible will forget what he saw at the end of the Scene. If the Faerie's actions or appearance were brief, they will only forget those few seconds, if they were extensive the Rank 0 beings will forget the entire preceding Scene, remembering it only as dreamlike impressions. This only effects people who see the Faerie in person, not those viewing him through electronic or magical means.

**Glamour of Mirage [\*\*]:** Simple; until the Faerie ends this effect as a Simple Action, the Faerie becomes invisible to all sight. Any character attempting to notice the Faerie suffers a -4 Penalty to their Perception rolls to do so.

**Glamour of Incredulity [\*\*]:** Simple; until the Faerie ends this effect as a Simple Action, the Faerie appears perfectly normal. Any Rank 0 being who sees the Faerie will find nothing at all unusual or impossible about the Faerie or anything he does. The giant walking down the road or dragon flying through the city will be remarked upon if it seems threatening or dangerous, but not because its magical or absurd.

**Glamour of Mortal Seeming [\*\*]:** Form, Simple; until the Faerie ends this effect as a Simple Action, the Faerie transforms physically into an ordinary human. She loses all of her Aspects from Faerie Mien and is indistinguishable from a human to all mundane inspection.

**Glamour of Beastly Seeming [\*\*]:** Form, Simple; until the Faerie ends this effect as a Simple Action the Faerie transforms physically into a preselected animal. She loses all of her Aspects from Faerie Mien but gains four Aspects selected upon the purchase of this Gift to represent her animal form. This may be purchased multiple times to develop multiple animal forms.

**Glamour of Pixar [\*\*]:** Form, Simple; until the Faerie ends this effect as a Simple Action the Faerie transforms into a mobile version of an preselected mundane object such as a doll, an appliance, or a gun. She loses all of her Aspects from Faerie Mien but gains four Aspects selected upon the purchase of this Gift to represent her animal form. This may be purchased multiple times to develop multiple animal forms. The Faerie may substitute one of these Aspects to gain the ability to actually function as a mundane piece of technology, such as a phone or a gun. The Faerie is indistinguishable from an ordinary mundane object of the selected type when not moving. This may be purchased multiple times

to develop multiple inanimate object forms.

**Monster Excellence of [Skill] [\*]:** Mastery, Reflexive, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Monster adds [unmodified Skill/2] to all rolls using that Skill.

## Combat Gifts

**Forest King's Blessing [\*]:** Permanent; the Faerie adds [Rank] to his Defense pool for all purposes.

**Elvish Steel [\*]:** Permanent; the Faerie adds [Rank] to all Attack rolls, but not to Combat Maneuvers.

**Trollskin [\*]:** Mastery, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, the Faerie adds [Rank] to his Soak.

**Ogreskin [\*]:** Permanent; the Faerie gains the Tough Skin Aspect. As a Simple Action the Faerie may commit 1 Effort for the Scene to also grant the Tough Skin Aspect to [Rank+2] willing characters.

Activating this Gift again dismisses previous activations.

**Metamorphosis [\*]:** Simple; Select one Aspect upon purchasing this Gift. As a Simple Action the Faerie may adopt the given Aspect in any form he wears, or adopt any or all Aspects purchased by this Gift. These Aspects last indefinitely or until they are dismissed as a reflexive action. They may be dismissed individually as desired. This Gift may be purchased up to [Rank] times.

**Beautify the Mien [\*]:** Permanent; the Faerie's normal unshapeshifted form gains one additional Aspect selected upon purchasing this Gift. This Gift can be purchased up to [Rank] times.

**Leaping Over the Moon [\*]:** Permanent; the Faerie multiplies his jumping height and distance by three. As a Simple Action, the Faerie may commit 1 Effort for the Scene to extend this benefit to up to [Rank+2] willing characters for the Scene. Activating this Gift again dismisses previous activations.

**Elemental Bolt of [Damage Type] [\*]:** Simple; As a Simple Action roll a Ranged Attack. This attack is Might-based, and uses the Faerie's [Mystic Lore+2] in place of their Might for calculating damage, and is compatible with any compatible Fighting Style. By committing 1 Effort for the Scene before rolling, this attack is Unavoidable. This is not one Gift but many purchased individually, one for each Damage Type.

**Anima Flux [\*]:** Prerequisite Elemental Bolt of [Damage Type], Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Faerie is surrounded by an elemental manifestation. This manifestation is an Environmental Hazard that forms an aura around the Faerie. Once per Turn per character, a character who attacks the Faerie with a Melee or Martial Arts Attack or is successfully hit by one from the Faerie, or is otherwise in bodily contact with the Faerie suffers a Hazard with a base Damage of 10. This cannot be avoided, simply subtract the target's Soak from 10 per the Hazard rules. This Hazard has the Damage Type of Elemental Bolt, or if the Faerie has multiple such bolts he may choose which applies. Only one such Anima Flux can be active at a time.

**Whirlwind Shield Form [\*]:** Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Faerie adds [Rank+5] to her Soak against all Attacks made using the Ranged Skills that do not possess the Spell tag.

**Strength of Trolls** [\*\*]: Mastery, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Faerie adds his Rank to his Damage with Might attacks and to his placement on the Might Chart.

**Eshu Perfect Aim** [\*\*]: Mastery, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Faerie adds [Rank] to the damage of all Ranged-based attacks and the base damage of any Ranged-based attack he uses becomes 6 before Fighting Style.

**Swift as a Song** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Faerie may use his Performance in place of his Agility for determining his Defense Pool. If the Faerie's unmodified Agility Pool and Performance pool are equal, he instead adds two dice to his Defense Pool. Moreover all the Faerie's movement speeds are doubled.

**Fleet as Fools** [\*\*]: Permanent; all the Faerie's movement speeds are doubled. As a Simple Action the Faerie may commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, up to [Rank+2] willing characters of the Faerie's choice may also double their respective speeds. This Gift may be used successively to allow more and more characters to move faster.

**Mist Step** [\*\*]: Permanent; all of the Faerie's movement speeds are doubled. Moreover, while moving they do not need to cross the intervening space. They may teleport any distance, provided they have not run out of available movement for the Turn. A Faerie may not teleport further in one 'jump' than their maximum movement per Turn.

**Pixie Magic** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Faerie may fly at his speed. As a Simple Action the Faerie may commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, up to [Rank] willing characters of the Faerie's choice may also fly at their respective speeds. This Gift may be used successively to allow more and more characters to fly.

**Oakenshield** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Faerie gains his Rank in 'temporary Health Levels'. These Health Levels are expended before any other Health, cannot be healed, and disappear at the end of the Scene. Subsequent uses replace prior uses, they do not stack.

**Sword Dance** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene after an attack has been declared against the Faerie but before defense is rolled. After rolling defense, if the attack failed to harm the Faerie, the Faerie may select another target and have the attack target them. Keep the original Attack result and apply it to the second target. This may not force the attacker to target themself.

**Dissolving Dreams** [\*\*]: Perfect, Reflexive; Once per Scene, at no cost, when targeted by an attack, turn long damage source, or offensive maneuver, negate that attack/maneuver. The Faerie need not be aware of the attack, but he must declare this Gift before and in place of rolling Defense.

**Reweaving Enchantments** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Turn, when targeted by a supernatural effect that the Faerie resists by rolling an opposed Mystic Lore or Integrity roll, the Faerie may add his [Rank] to the roll. Moreover, if the roll is successful the Faerie may cause the effect to 'redouble' and also effect one more target, which can be the initial user of the Gift. Resolve the new resistance roll against the initial activation roll. This Gift may be activated in response to being targeted by a supernatural effect, but must be declared before rolling to resist.

**Gingerbread Man Defense** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. For the rest of the Scene if the Faerie is targeted by an Unavoidable Attack, it is instead not Unavoidable. This effect activates up to

[Rank] times then the Gift activation ends.

**Brodingagian Defemse** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. For the rest of the Scene if the Faerie is targeted by an Aggravated Attack, it is instead not Aggravated. This effect activates up to [Rank] times then the Gift activation ends.

**Elemental Protection Form** [\*\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. For the rest of the Scene, the Faerie is immune to all damage from Environmental Hazards. The Faerie must still breath with this Gift active.

## Social Gifts

**Curse of Mordred** [\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Story and target a Social Group. That Social Group's Cohesion is reduced by the Faerie's Rank for the rest of the Story. Moreover they are wracked with maladies and difficulties relating to poor management for the same duration.

**Song of the Lark** [\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Faerie may conjure harmless supernatural effects to enhance a Performance, such as showers of sparks, visual flairs, holographic images or odd sounds or musical accompaniment. These effects are always obvious as illusionary. While active the Faerie adds her [Rank] to all Performance rolls.

**True Love's First Kiss** [\*]: Permanent; any character whom voluntarily romantically kisses or engages in sexual relations with the Faerie must commit 1 Effort for the Story or acquire an unceasing love and desire for the Faerie. If they are an NPC, they acquire a new Defining Intimacy of “The Faerie (Desperate Longing)” or similar which doesn’t count against their existing Intimacies.

**True Face Reveal** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and select up to [Rank] targets, and roll Mystic Lore opposed by Integrity for each, rolling Mystic Lore once. Any character who loses the opposed roll becomes incapable of lying or intentionally omitting relevant information to anyone for the rest of the Scene.

**Horrific Mien** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, all Rank 0 characters not allied with the Faerie will flee in terror at his approach. Battlegroups attempting to engage the Faerie may attempt to stand their ground and resist this effect by rolling their Morale in an opposed check against the Faerie's Intimidation before combat begins. Moreover, for the rest of the Scene the Faerie adds his [Rank] to his Intimidation.

**Binding Oath** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day after witnessing two or more characters, which can include the Faerie, make or sign a formal agreement. If at any time in the future any character violates the oath, they will suffer a Perfect and unavoidable curse at the Storyteller’s choice. A few example curses follow-

Curse 1: A successful roll by the oathbreaker becomes 0 successes instead.

Curse 2: For the rest of the Story, the oathbreaker cannot reclaim Effort.

Curse 3: A loved one of the oathbreaker suffers a horrible accident or develops a deadly illness. This can infallibly kill Rank 0 characters but there is always a chance to save Rank 1+ characters.

This Gift cannot bind more than the Faerie's [Rank] in Size of characters with one activation, and while characters need not know the Faerie can consecrate oaths they must agree to the terms themselves completely willingly and without mind control.

**Heart's Truest Desire** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and select a target. The Faerie immediately learns the target's Defining Intimacies [if an NPC] and what is most important to the character generally [if a PC]. They also learn what they would need to offer the target in the present to get them to agree to do a particular request or action chosen at the Gift's activation.

**Unyielding Faerie King** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Faerie adds two dice to his Integrity. As a Simple Action the Faerie may commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene up to [Rank] characters of his choice may use his Integrity in place of their own for all purposes. This Gift may not be recast to increase effected targets, successive uses annul previous uses.

**Court of Camelot** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Faerie reduces all Penalties to Bueracracy rolls by her Rank and add her Rank to all Bueracracy rolls.

**The Wyld Hunt** [\*\*]: Permanent; If the Faerie is serving as the Commanding Officer of a Battlegroup composed primarily of Faerie Type Monsters, that Battlegroup always counts as having Drill 5.

**Hosts of the Noldor** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Once per Turn when the Faerie is serving as the Commanding Officer of a Battlegroup composed primarily of Faerie Type Monsters and that Battlegroup must roll Morale, commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The Morale roll automatically succeeds.

**Revenge of Feanor** [\*\*]: Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene before a Battlegroup primarily composed of Faerie Type Monsters of which one is the Commanding Officer attacks. That Attack adds [Rank] to its Damage.

**Fifteen Birds** [\*\*]: Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene before a Battlegroup primarily composed of Faerie Type Monsters of which one is the Commanding Officer attacks. That Attack is Unavoidable.

**What Funny Little Things** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3 and Fifteen Birds; Permanent; Once per Scene when activating Fifteen Birds, the Attack is also Aggravated.

**Glamorous Demeanor** [\*\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Faerie adds his [Rank] to all Persuasion, Deception, and Empathy rolls.

**Wearing the False Face** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select one target in one's presence. Roll Mystic Lore or Performance opposed by Integrity. Upon success, for Faerie may inflict a major alteration upon the target, a strong new attachment or interest. If they are an NPC, they gain a new Defining Intimacy of the Faerie's choice enshrining this new aspect to themselves. If the target is Rank 1+, this lasts for the rest of the Story. If the target has a higher Rank than the Faerie, they may end the Gift early at any time by committing 1 Effort for the Story as a Simple Action. If the target is Rank 0, this effect is permanent.

**Heart of Glass** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select one target in one's presence. If the target is unwilling, roll Mystic Lore or Performance opposed by Integrity.

Upon success or if willing, for Faerie may steal the target's emotions, hiding them in a small handheld object in the Faerie's possession. The target loses all emotional attachment gaining the following effects  
Effect 1: The target fails all Empathy rolls without rolling.

Effect 2: The target suffers a -4 Penalty to all Integrity rolls to resist Social Influence.

Effect 3: The target is immune to any magic or Gift which functions by manipulating the target's emotions.

This Gift lasts indefinitely, until the object is opened [if a box or similar] or destroyed [if not]. If the target's Rank is at least [Faerie's Rank-1], they may end this effect early without the object by committing 1 Effort for the Story as a Simple Action. Doing so immediately opens or destroys the object, wherever it is.

## Stealth Gifts

**What Do Your Elf Eyes See** [\*]: Permanent; the Faerie never suffers Penalties relating to Perception nor suffers Penalties to other Skills for reasons of Perception [such as fighting in pitch darkness or attacking a target in Stealth].

**Burglar Baggins** [\*]: Permanent; the Faerie increases his Stealth and Larceny by two dice, never suffer Penalties to either Skill, and once per Scene per Skill at no cost may reroll and take preferred result.

**Barrel Rider** [\*]: Prerequisite Burglar Baggins, Permanent; the Faerie may commit 1 Effort for the Scene after rolling Stealth or Larceny to immediately reroll it and take preferred result. This may be activated repeated until the Faerie reaches a desired result or runs out of Effort or Effort per Turn.

**Lucky Number** [\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3 and Burglar Baggins, Permanent; the Faerie adds three dice to all Stealth and Larceny rolls and gains a second free reroll per Skill per Scene.

**Wisp of Glamours** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and roll Larceny or Mystic Lore. For the rest of the Scene, a character of the Faerie's choice is surrounded by an illusion of the Faerie's choice, which is purely visual. The character appears to be whatever the Faerie desires, provided it is not dramatically different in size to the target [it does not require new Aspects to represent it]. If the target is unwilling they may resist the application of the illusion by rolling Mystic Lore in opposition to the activation. Upon success the Gift has no effect. Any character who observes the illusion may roll Perception opposed to the activation roll to see through it and notice it as unreal. Extensive physical observation [such as touching the character to know their disguise as unreal] allows this without a roll.

**Walking Unseen** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and roll Larceny or Mystic Lore. For the rest of the Scene, a character of the Faerie's choice is completely invisible. Anyone attempting to notice the character suffers a -4 Penalty to do so. If the target is unwilling they may resist the application of the illusion by rolling Mystic Lore in opposition to the activation. Upon success the Gift has no effect.

**Gazing Into the West** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, as a Simple Action, the Faerie may see and hear anything at a given location within [Rank x1000] miles as though he was physically present, provided it is not warded against Scrying. The Faerie may choose to either see or hear or both, but can only scry one location at a time. While scrying the Faerie suffers a -4



Penalty to Perception rolls regarding his immediate surroundings. The Faerie may continue scrying on subsequent turns by spending more Simple Actions.

## Craft Gifts

**Weaving Wyck** [\*]: Permanent; the Faerie can craft and perform Artifice actions without tools, bending, twisting, modifying and shaping the raw material with his will alone. Moreover he crafts twice as fast as normal. For mundane crafting this means the item is crafted in 1/2th the ordinary time, which stacks with the x2 for rolling 6+ successes to 1/4th the time. For Items of Power you instead multiply the successes rolled each Interval by 2. For instance if you rolled 6 successes in an Interval, it would count as 12 successes.

**Treasury of the Dwarves** [\*] Permanent; the Faerie gains access to a small pocket dimension, a ‘hammerspace’ in which he can deposit or withdraw items. As a Simple Action the Faerie may deposit one unattended inanimate item into his hammerspace, and he may withdraw or don an item as a Reflexive Action. The Faerie may store up to [Rank x200 pounds] in his hammerspace.

**Questing for Reagents** [\*]: Prerequisite Craft Mystic Artifact OR Craft Device, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day while thinking of a material Exotic Component for a particular Schematic the Faerie knows. For the rest of the Day or until this Gift is used again, the Faerie gains an internal and infallible compass pointing him in the direction of the nearest possible source for that Exotic Component.

**Toymaker** [\*]: Permanent; upon purchasing this Gift select one reasonably narrow category of crafted items. Swords, beds, trucks, planes, trains, paintings, musical instruments, dolls, Etc. Whenever the Faerie is crafting such an item, whether mundane or an Item of Power, she adds her Rank to all Artifice rolls and she multiplies the speed at which she crafts by two. For mundane crafting this means the item is crafted in a fraction of the ordinary time, which stacks with the x2 for rolling 6+ successes. For Items of Power you instead multiply the successes rolled each Interval by the multiplier. This Gift may be repurchased for different item types up to [Rank] times.

**Spin Thread Into Gold** [\*]: Permanent; the Faerie adds two to her Soak while using any armor she made herself, whether through crafting or summoned through Gifts or Spells.

**Cobbler's Way** [\*]: Permanent; the Faerie may roll Artifice in place of Melee or Ranged for his Attack Pool when using any weapon he made himself, whether through crafting or summoned through Gifts or Spells. If the Faerie's unmodified Melee or Ranged pool equals their Artifice Pool, they instead add two dice to their Attack Pool.

**Chariots of Wind** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Craft Mystic Artifact OR Craft Device, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Story. The Faerie extracts from the esoterica of the cosmos a Universal Lesser Exotic Component. He could capture the sound of a cat’s footfall to forge a chain or bind the hopes of children to a blade.

**Adorning the Moonlit Pageant** [\*\*]: Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene as an Extended Action taking fifteen minutes. The Faerie may splendidly adorn his surroundings for up to a mile radius in any

way desired, from decorating an empty building to resemble a palace or giving a lonely street the appearance of a street fair. Anything created must be purely decorative, and fades to mist at the end of the Scene. This Gift may only be used once per Scene.

**Spreading the Endless Banquet** [\*\*]: Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Day as an Extended Action taking fifteen minutes. The Faerie may produce from nothing, or from his own magic, or from nearby materials, a feast of the finest ingredients capable of feeding up to [Rank x50] characters for one day. There is nothing preventing the Faerie from activating this Gift multiple times in succession to feed ever growing numbers of characters.

**Riches beyond Compare** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The Faerie may produce, in whatever quantity desired [up to enough to fill a five by five meter cube], wealth in the form of paper money, gold, silver, precious metals, gemstones, pearls, and similiar substances. This money is seemingly genuine to all mundane and supernatural inspection, but fades to useless materials such as lead or leaves after twenty-four hours have passed.

**Bending the Earth** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Faerie can move and manipulate earth in his vicinity [whether in the form of solid stone, loose sand or dirt, but not metal] with an invisible telekinetic force. This grants the following effects.

Effect 1: The telekinetic force has an effective Might equal to the Faerie's Mystic Lore+2 for all purposes. The telekinetic force counts as a Might-based Attack using the Ranged Skill, and is compatible with all Fighting Styles, Gifts, and Combat Maneuvers compatible with such. The Faerie can hold as many objects within his telekinesis as the force's place on the Might Chart permits. Furthermore this Gift may be used to sculpt, reform, or reshape stone for various purposes.

Effect 2: The Faerie may, as a Simple Action, produce from the stone any mundane item made of stone lacking complex moving parts, including a mundane Melee or Martial Arts weapon from the stone, or mundane Armor.

Effect 3: The Faerie may, as a Simple Action, produce a wall or barrier around himself or his allies. Any character making Ranged Attacks at those behind the barrier suffers a -3 Penalty to the Attack. The Storyteller may, at his descretion, allow for other applications of earth-control. The Faerie may not use this Gift to fly or levitate himself in any way.

**Bending the Water** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Faerie can move and manipulate water in his vicinity [whether in the form of liquid water, ice, or steam but not fluids other then water] with an invisible telekinetic force. This grants the following effects.

Effect 1: The Faerie may control all water within one hundred feet of herself. If used to attack, the telekinetic force has an effective Might equal to the Faerie's Mystic Lore+2 for Damaging purposes but she can lift or manipulate any weight in water provided it is in range. The telekinetic force counts as a Might-based Attack using the Ranged Skill, and is compatible with all Fighting Styles, Gifts, and Combat Maneuvers compatible with such. Furthermore this Gift may be used to alter water's state of matter for various purposes.

Effect 2: The Faerie may, as a Simple Action, turn any quantity of water in her control to steam. This

produces a thick mist inflicting a -2 Penalty to all characters nearby on Perception, Attack rolls and Defense rolls as well as any action the Storyteller deems would be effected by poor visibility.

Effect 3: The Faerie may, as a Simple Action, turn any quantity of the water in her control into ice. This can, amongst other things, instantly craft any mundane item from ice that lacks complex moving parts including a mundane Melee or Martial Arts Weapon or mundane Armor.

Effect 4: The Faerie may, as a Simple Action, turn any quantity of water in her control that is currently ice or steam back into liquid water.

The Storyteller may, at his descretion, allow for other applications of water-control. The Faerie may not use this Gift to fly or levitate herself in any way.

**Bending the Fire** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Elemental Bolt of Heat, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene.

For the rest of the Scene the Faerie can move and manipulate fire in his vicinity with an invisible telekinetic force. The Faerie may control all fire within one hundred feet of herself regardless of weight. This grants the following effects.

Effect 1: The Faerie may, as a Simple Action cause any or all flames under her control to go out, dim, flare up, expand, change direction, or so on. If this is used to capture enemies in an Environmental Hazard it counts as common Fire with a Damage of 5. Roll Ranged opposed by Agility of all characters within the relocated Hazard. Those who fail the roll are struck by the flames and suffer 5-Soak Damage per the Hazard rules.

Effect 2: The Faerie may, as a Reflexive Action before rolling Elemental Bolt of Heat, commit 1 Effort for the Scene to expand its targets. The Attack will be made against [Rank] additional targets.

The Storyteller may, at his descretion, allow for other applications of fire-control. The Faerie may not use this Gift to fly or levitate herself in any way.

**Bending the Air** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Faerie can move and manipulate air in his vicinity with an invisible telekinetic force. This grants the following effects.

Effect 1: The Faerie may control all air within one hundred feet of herself. If used to attack, the telekinetic force has an effective Might equal to the Faerie's Mystic Lore+2 for Damaging purposes but she can lift or manipulate any weight in air or wind provided it is in range. The telekinetic force counts as a Might-based Attack using the Ranged Skill, and is compatible with all Fighting Styles, Gifts, and Combat Maneuvers compatible with such. Furthermore this Gift may be used to alter the winds for various purposes.

Effect 2: The Faerie may, as a Simple Action, push wind at a given object. Sailing ships can have their masts pushed by this force while individual characters or vehicles instead increase their speed by 25 MPH each Turn the Faerie continues directing the wind behind them.

Effect 3: The Faerie may, as a Simple Action, push wind under a given object, causing it to levitate. The Faerie uses her Mystic Lore+2 as her effective Might for how much she can lift through this technique. The object may not fly more then a hundred feet from the Faerie or it will fall. Objects continue flying only each Turn the Faerie continues directing the wind behind them. The Faerie may

use this on herself, but cannot levitate more than a hundred feet off the ground.

Effect 4: The Faerie may, as a Simple Action, pull the wind from someone's lungs or surround them with swirling winds to asphyxiate them. If the character needs to breathe to survive they suffer a -3 Penalty to all Actions each Turn the Faerie continues directing the wind this way. In the extremely unlikely circumstance they are kept from air long enough, they will of course also asphyxiate and die. The Storyteller may, at his discretion, allow for other applications of air-control.

**Rally the Goblin Horde [\*\*\*]:** Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Story. From the Faerie's magic, or from thin air, or from the ground or nearby plants, emerges a Battlegroup of warriors to attend the Faerie. The Battlegroup has a Drill of 1, a Rank of 0, and a Size up to the Faerie's Rank. They possess a rating of 4 in Might, Endurance, Agility, Melee, Ranged, Martial Arts, and Perception and a rating of 3 in all other Skills. They possess [Size x7] Health. The Battlegroup lasts for the rest of the Scene, and will not willingly travel more than [Rank] miles from the Faerie, nor will they separate from each other or otherwise perform actions other than fighting as a Battlegroup. There must be sufficient space to summon a Battlegroup of a given Size to do so, otherwise a smaller group shall be summoned. This Gift can only be used once per Scene. The Battlegroup's members count as being Faerie Type.

**Calling the Golden Army [\*\*\*]:** Prerequisite Rally the Goblin Horde, Rank 3: This Gift permanently upgrades Rally the Goblin Horde. The summoned warriors possess a Drill of 4 and ratings of 8 in Might, Endurance, Agility, Melee, Ranged, Martial Arts, and Perception and ratings of 4 in all other Skills.

**Summoning the Glorious Host [\*\*\*]:** Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Day as an Extended Action requiring fifteen minutes. From the Faerie's magic, or from thin air, or from the ground or nearby plants, emerges [Rank x10] servants in glorious apparel to attend the Faerie for the following Day. These servants are seemingly intelligent, sophisticated, witty, and beautiful [they possess the Beautiful Aspect, not included in the below ratings] and can carry out orders of any degree of complexity. They possess four dice in all Skills except Melee, Martial Arts, and Ranged in which they possess 1 dot, and have 1 Health each. If attacked as a Battlegroup, they possess 1 Drill and Rank 0. They will, in any case, refuse to fight in all circumstances, instead fleeing or engaging in other actions the Faerie instructs. This Gift can only be used once per Day.

**Calling the Splendid Mansion [\*\*\*]:** Prerequisite Rank 3, Permanent; Upon purchasing of this Gift the Faerie may create a palace, castle, or other large structure at most a half-mile in diameter and height, with any degree of architectural complexity and any mundane amenities or technologies the Faerie is personally aware of. At any point thereafter, the Faerie may, as an Extended Action taking five minutes to cause his Castle [which need not literally be a castle] to arise before him. The Castle may only be called up in places where its appearance will not damage or overtake existing structures [non-structures such as roads or developed land does not prevent its use. If there is nowhere to summon the Castle, it will instead appear floating in the air in a fixed position up to [Rank] miles directly above the Faerie. The Castle is unstaffed and unmanned when summoned, and lasts until a condition set by the Faerie or until twenty-four hours have passed, whichever happens first, at which point the Castle

disappears into mist and anyone in an elevated position falls to the ground. Traditional dispellings include 'at the stroke of midnight' or 'at dawn's first light'.

**Extracting the Graces** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Craft Mystic Artifact OR Craft Device, Permanent; the Faerie works with the Storyteller to design a Rank 3 Mystic Artifact or Device which immediately comes into being. This item is considered an extension of the Faerie. If it is in his presence he may order it to come to him or fly into his hand as a Reflexive Action. If it is further away he may cause it to teleport to him as a Simple Action. This item does not suffer Mystic Collapse or Havoc when used by the Faerie. This item can only be wielded, worn, or piloted by the Faerie. This Gift may be taken up to [Rank] times.

**Wrought From Dreams** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3 and Weaving Wyck, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene, Day, or Story when crafting a mundane item up to the size of a cathedral. The craft is instantaneous, the item, vehicle, building or so on immediately forming from the crafting components. The item falls to pieces at the end of the Scene, Day, or Story as applicable. This duration may be extended by recommitting Effort for a given duration when the duration runs out.

**Workshop of the Giftgiver** [\*\*\*] Prerequisite Weaving Wyck; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select a willing number of characters with a maximum size equal to the Faerie's Rank. For the rest of the Day or until this Gift is used again select and activate one of the following effects.

Effect 1: The target characters all benefit from Weaving Wyck for the duration.

Effect 2: The multiplier from Weaving Wyck for the Faerie is increased by the Size of the group. For instance if aided by 200 tiny elves [a Size 3 Battlegroup] the Faerie's multiplier would increase from x2 to x5.

## Magic Gifts

**Hopscotch** [\*]: Simple; the Faerie may commit 1 Effort for the Scene to cause something to leap up to one mile through the air. This can be the Faerie, another character, or an inanimate object weighing 15,000 pounds or less, but must be broadly definable as a single object [for instance, four people could not be so thrown, but a car that happened to have four people within it could be]. Characters and objects fly in the direction the Faerie chooses, which must be a straight line or arc, and suffer fall damage upon descent. This power has no effect on characters or Vehicles capable of flying.

**Gremlins** [\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. All mundane electronic devices of the Faerie's choice within the Faerie's immediate presence [roughly Rank x100 meters] are shorted out and cease to work until at least the end of the Scene.

**Expert Thaumaturge** [\*]: Prerequisite Mystic Lore or Science 4, Permanent; the Faerie immediately learns two dots of Thaumaturgy. This Gift may be purchased up to [Rank] times. If multiple instances of this Gift are purchased at once, the dots gained are pooled allowing for the potential purchase of 3-dot Thaumaturgy powers.

**Zephyr's Gentle Rain** [\*\*]: Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Story as an Extended Action taking fifteen minutes. The Faerie may dictate the weather in his entire local region [at least Rank x10 miles

radius, though the Storyteller may decide to have it effect more] for the Faerie's Rank in Days. The weather dictated must be weather possible to the local climate and the time of year, and arises at a natural pace upon activation. If multiple characters attempt to direct the weather in the same location, the one with the higher Rank dictates. If all Ranks are equal, all activations of this Gift are annuled in favor of normal weather.

**Wrapping Up Winter** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Zephyr's Gentle Rain; this Gift permanently upgrades Zephyr's Gentle Rain, allowing it to produce wildly out of season weather from hurricane force winds or fierce snowstorms. The weather still arises at a natural pace and is subject to all other limitations of Zephyr's Gentle Rain. Moreover, the Faerie may command not only the weather, but may temporarily alter the very season, turning trees an autumn brown or livening them to a summer's greenery. The exact effects of this are in the control of the Storyteller, and fade upon the Gift's end.

**Subtle Magic** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Faerie no longer requires a Catalyst or the spoken word in order to cast Spells. He may do so by force of will alone. This has no effect on Rituals.

**Vast Magic** [\*\*]: Permanent; whenever the Faerie activates a Spell which only effects a single target, it instead targets two targets. Whenever a Spell targets [Rank] targets it instead targets [Rank+2], and whenever a Spell is cast which effects [Rank+2] targets the Spell instead effects 10 targets or Enemies. Lastly, for narrative purposes of effecting the environment the Faerie's Spells may effect up to a half-mile in diameter of area, or a narrow band thrice that. Resolve the Spells normally otherwise. This has no effect upon Spells which only target the caster.

**Call the Storm** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. Immediately, and supernaturally so, the weather for [Rank] miles radius centered on the Faerie alters dramatically, producing out of season weather such as hail, heavy rain, thunderstorms, howling winds, or scorching heat as desired. The mystical weather produces a Penalty on all Agility, Ranged, Martial Arts, Melee, and Perception rolls on all characters except the Faerie [including the Faerie's allies] equal to the Faerie's Rank and lasts until the end of the Scene.

**Wrath of Jove** [\*\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and roll a Ranged Attack. This attack is Might-based, and uses the Faerie's Mystic Lore in place of their Might for calculating damage, and is compatible with any compatible Fighting Style. This attack effects up to [Rank+2] Enemies, deals Electrical Damage, and is Aggravated against Battlegroups with a [Size] equal to or lower then the Faerie's Rank. If this Gift is activated outside during a thunderstorm, even one produced through other Gifts, it costs no Effort.

**Verdant Green** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. Immediately, and supernaturally so, natural vegetation of the Faerie's choice grows out centered upon the Faerie for up to [Rank] miles radius centered upon the Faerie. If the greenery is not indigeneous to the area is will quickly die over the following days. If the Faerie chooses, he may make the greenery thick and difficult to navigate, causing a -3 Penalty on all Perception and Survival rolls within the designated area. The greenery will grow over, around, and through existing structures but will never destroy them.

**Making Time Forget** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Extended; As an Extended Action requiring a full

day to perform the Faerie may select an unmoving land area at most [Rank] miles in radius and enchant it. Until this Gift is cast again, or the Faerie dies, the course of time seems to cease in many ways within the land. Characters cease visibly aging while within the land, and will not die of old age as long as they stay within it, nor will machines fail for lack of maintenance, nor will the seasons seem to change, nor will plants decay or die, nor will diseases progress. In short, all things will continue to operate day by day within the land as they were when they entered the land in regards to their basic nature. However the moment any character or object leaves, they will immediately age and experience the full passage of time they would have experienced for the duration of their stay. This has no effect on characters dying of injuries, whether sustained outside or within the land, nor to changes caused by action or Gifts rather than the passive effect of time.

**Body of Fingolfin [\*\*\*]:** Prerequisite Rank 3, Immortality, Permanent: the Faerie may not die of Complications, nor from any other means by that matter. Upon being Incapacitated the Faerie always remains Incapacitated until the end of the Scene in addition to the effects of any other Complications, but they may not die. Their body may be damaged, desecrated, brutalized, or beaten, but will invariably regenerate into a usable form at 1 Health at the end of the Scene. The Faerie must design with the Storyteller some method of permanently slaying them, such as 'if they are killed on a New Moon' or 'if they are slain by the seventh son of a seventh son'. This Gift has no effect upon and does not help the Faerie avoid fates such as being permanently turned to stone, having their conscious mind erased, being buried alive, or cast adrift into the darkness of space.

**Sacred Land [\*\*\*]:** Prerequisite Bounded Field, Permanent; the Faerie may perform magic within the area of any Bounded Fields they possess as though they were physically present, causing magic to pour from the rafters or fly from the walls at irritating trespassers.

**Contingent Magic [\*\*\*]:** Permanent; whenever the Faerie casts magic of any kind he may commit 1 additional Effort for the Day in addition to any other costs to cast the magic to delay the resolution of the magic until a certain condition is reached, as well as anchor the casting to a particular object or place. For instance they could bind a casting of Flame of Amaterasu to a doorway with the trigger 'cast upon the first person to open this door'. The Faerie rolls any necessary rolls for the casting and records their result to trigger upon the trigger, rolling any resistance or opposed rolls at the time. This Gift cannot be used to facilitate attacking or damaging the same target more than once in the same Turn.

**Improvised Magic [\*\*\*]:** Permanent; once per Story the Faerie may cast magic he is aware of the existence of but does not himself know. He must meet all prerequisites for the magic in question and be capable of purchasing it with Experience Points. The Storyteller may choose to rule that the Faerie is limited to powers in this book or already designed by the Storyteller to avoid slowing the session with the writing of a new spell or ritual.

**Art of Wayfare [\*\*\*]:** Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. At the start of the Faerie's next turn she and any inanimate possessions she is carrying or holding [up to 200 lbs per Rank] is teleported either up to [Rank x100 miles] or to any location the Faerie has personally been to before. If the Faerie takes damage after declaring his activation but before the start of his next turn the Gift is canceled and the

committed Effort wasted.



# Heroes

*“Sing, O muse, of the rage of Achilles, son of Peleus, that brought countless ills upon the Achaeans.”*

*-The Iliad*

*“No more terrible disaster could befall your people than for them to fall into the hands of a Hero.”*

*-Frank Herbert*

*The world is not what it was. There was a time, not very long past, when it was not the Hunter armed with his courage and knowledge that protected humanity from the predations of night-creatures and the most audacious schemes of Demons. A time of gods and demigods, of powerful magic and incredible Heroes. These Heroes embodied the best of humanity, born the children of the Powers themselves and wielding the blessings of the great gods. With mighty thews and the bronze spear they raised their thrones in defiance of eternal night and invented civilization. When the first cities of our cycle blossomed along the banks of the river Euphrates it was mighty Gilgamesh who tended them. When the giants rose up to destroy the fledging human race, it was Thor and Herakles who tossed them down. When the dawn of Kali Yug cast its shadow over an unsuspecting world it was the brothers Pandavas who stood against its coming. But pride is a long fall, and few are the men who can be trusted with the power of the gods. Herakles murdered his family and lied saying it was the gods who caused his rage. Gilgamesh took for himself the wives of the men of Uruk though they were his charge to guard and keep. Karna allowed his sense of loyalty to his king to blind him to his duty to righteousness. Again and again the sons and daughters of the Powers showed themselves unworthy of the Powers, and myths that began in promise ended in blood and terror, champions as vile as the monsters they opposed. Eventually people learned to live without heroes, and the mighty men of the Earth felt the world leave them behind. Humans learned to protect themselves from the night, without demigods, legendary weapons or the supreme martial arts. To be a Hero today, whether born of divine blood like the ancients or strong by one's own hand, is to carve a myth into a world that has forgotten myth. To rise like the sun against a world of darkness, that demands heroes, even as it scorns them as childish. For even now the hands of the Hunter fumbles, and the forces of night reassert themselves. The old evils of mythology rally with long-forgotten purpose, and if mankind is to survive it will demand not only bravery but might, not mere knowledge but power beyond reason. But only power corrupts only absolutely, if these modern demigods are to avoid the mistakes of the past and break the mythic cycle, of rising in promise, waxing mighty, building up great works only to see them burn in passion and fire and sin, they will need wisdom, divine to match the strength in a noble soul...*

## Heroes in the Shrouded Earth

The role of Heroes is to break things. They appear as disruptive presences in the world's status quo, and eventually as the centers of a new status quo built upon themselves. The typical Hero is more powerful than his direct peers of equal Rank, at least for a short time, encouraging them to a lifestyle of brief bursts of overwhelming might in which they cast back their foes and leave them reeling. Even if a Hero is more properly a scholar of arcane secrets or a cunning king of thieves, they rely on short, flashy shows of power to accomplish their goals. Nothing is more dangerous to a Hero than a drawn out engagement, or worse an organized group of enemies intentionally exploiting his limited stamina reserve. In the modern world, most Demigods, Incarnates, and Imbued arise alone with only the council of their parents and patrons. As a result, most Heroes get their start opposing an existing Conspiracy or organized group of Monsters of another Type. This leads them into the 'mythic cycle' that has plagued Heroes on their Journeys since the beginning of time, where a Hero fights against powerful foes, overcomes them and establishes his own power structure to replace theirs, only to eventually become a gilded tyrant or see his works come to naught from hubris or his own vices. For a Hero to truly triumph he must complete the Hero's Journey and come home again armed not only in the power to shake the heavens, but also the restraint to leave the heavens unshaken.

**Demigods:** The Powers are the closest things the Shrouded Earth knows to gods. They are vast archetypes who have taken their identities from the dreams of a million worlds. More than mere spirits, they are living ideals and walking narratives, which wear a thousand faces. What does it mean for such a being to bear a son? The birth of a human being is almost an afterthought, when one of the Royal Avatars creates progeny it is spirit begetting spirit. The immortal spirit of the Hero takes form in the Dreamscape, a minaturized Power bound to a human soul. Sparks to the roaring infernoes of the divine, these Demigods are often raised by their mortal parent or by foster parents with little knowledge of their true nature. In modern times there are at least a dozen Royal Avatars walking the world of men, and they continue to spread their seed without thought to the consequence. Some few demigods are born with great strength, like the mighty Herakles. For most however, it is with the dawning of adolescence that it becomes obvious the child lacks a Limiter, and can develop puissance no human can match.  
-Suggested Gifts/Aspects/Weaknesses/Background Merits

**Incarnates:** When a Hero dies for the first time, their body crumbling before the fate of all mortals, their human Soul rushes to meet their everlasting spirit. Some pass beyond the world, to meet what destiny lies beyond the gods of the Dreamscape. Most however find they cannot or will not do so. Their soul rests in the Dreamscape, and eventually returns to the world below. Those born with a returning Hero's Soul are often unusual in their youth. Though without memories of the past, most possess the personalities and desires of a forgotten life. It is not difficult to notice an Incarnate for one familiar with their original, as their mannerisms and sometimes even appearance gives them away. As with demigods, while some Incarnates are born with power most develop it only with the coming of age, and

without divine parents or hesitant mortal mothers or fathers to explain, those who return are left to rely only on occasional confusing and vivid dreams, odd feelings of déjà vu, and the sudden pangs of unexplained emotions to guide them to the truth.

-Suggested Gifts/Aspects/Weaknesses/Background Merits

**Remnants:** It was the Infernalist Magician Faustus who first invented the Ritual of Fate's Remnant, using it to return the Hero Helen of Troy to the world. The Ritual is an act of High Summoning relying upon the unique spiritual nature of the demigods. The children of the Powers persist in the Dreamscape whether alive or dead, what then is stopping someone from summoning an aspect or portion of a demigod in the same way one summons aspects of the Powers or other great spiritual functionaries? As the Remnant Ritual demonstrated, the answer is apparently 'nothing'. Through Theurgy a Magician can summon a Remnant, a representation of a given Hero at a particular point in her life, such as Herakles as a youth or Gilgamesh in the wisdom of old age, or to summon a Hero at the end of their story but with the appearance of their prime. The Ritual is not perfect, Remnants always appear slightly modified by the summoning of necessity, learning the local language and a basic understanding of the era into which they are being called, and appearing with only a fraction of their skill and ability. Remnants appear fully grown in most cases, are sustained through a mystical connection to a wielder of magecraft, and can persist in the world indefinitely so long as they maintain a contract. At death, the Remnant returns to the oversoul of his greater self, enriching it with the experiences he has had in the world below. Most Remnants find themselves bound to the interests of another, pawns in the powerplays of Magicians or allies brought forth by the desperate or the idealistic. In a way, Remnants are the most inspiring of Heroes. It is difficult to doubt yourself when a man who is almost literally Achilles is standing at your side, and humanity's finest have died deaths without number only to appear again and again, age by age.

-Suggested Gifts/Aspects/Weaknesses/Background Merits

**Imbued:** Of all the magics in the world, few are more glorious than those that exalt one above all others. In the Shrouded Earth, such Imbued are a very recent phenomenon appearing only in the last fifty years or so, and only in considerable numbers after the year 1999. They represent a series of desperation tactics sprung by various Conspiracies seeking to loose powers on the world mighty enough to ensure victory or survival against the forces of rival conspiracies and the growing threat of returning evils. Two such groups are highlighted, the Chosen of the Primeval Sun and the Pretty Soldiers. The Chosen of the Primeval Sun are the work of an unknown Conspiracy, brought across dimensions as a reckless gambit. In ancient times there was a Parallel World known as the Mythic Earth, a world which divulged from the Shrouded Earth in its very earliest geological beginnings. In this world, Royal Avatars almost as strong as true faces of the Powers walked openly. In order to win a war against unfathomable foes, the gods of that world chose mortals as their champions using pieces of their own divinity. These 'Chosen' delivered victory to the gods and eventually, the end of their world.

Of rumored hundreds of such shards, only a meager handful now choose hosts from among modern man. The Chosen are plagued by occasional glimpses of past lives in ways similar to an Incarnate, but unlike those the 'reincarnation' of the Chosen is into mature adults as the 'shard' finds a new host at the death of its wielder. The Pretty Soldiers are the foolish project of a mad Faerie queen, desperate to save the world no matter the impossibility. Imbued with the power of ancient Greek magic, her brave and beautiful child soldiers raise their fists against the night with smiling faces, even though death is certain and failure beyond doubt. For they have always Hope.

-Suggested Gifts/Aspects/Weaknesses/Background Merits

**Paragons:** Vainglorious though they be, it is actually not Demigods, Incarnates, or Remnants who form the majority of the Heroes active in the Shrouded Earth. Fundamentally what separates a Hero from an ordinary man is that they lack a Limiter, the physical, psychological, spiritual, and mystical growth ceiling that keeps someone from reaching their full potential. Divine blood, spiritual reincarnation and fancy magic may be the easiest way to open this path, but there is another way. Through the use of intense and rigorous training, and the practice of inconceivable discipline it is possible to tear down this barrier with willpower and inner strength alone. For thousands of years the martial artists and similar Paragons of Asia have dedicated themselves almost entirely to this endeavor. From the legendary monks of Shaolin to the vicious world of underground street fighting, the use of fist and blade to reach new degrees of power and enlightenment is knowledge deeply engrained into the minds of the great eastern civilizations. These Paragons are in fact the most common Heroes in the world and have been since at least the start of the Common Era; though this has as much to do with the knowledge related to achieving it being much more common in the most populated parts of the globe as anything else. It is technically possible to achieve the level of a Paragon and break one's Limiter without the use of martial arts, but as all known methods involve some combination of extreme physical or mental conditioning or refinement it is very rare for a mere academic or socialite to reach this level. To meet a Paragon Hero is in most cases to meet a man or woman who can kill you without using their hands, even if their primary talent is socialization or medicine. Never exclusive to Asia, the inhabitants of the underground Martial Arts World have found their way in recent decades to every corner of the globe and rare indeed is the nation without at least one city known to attract the greatest of fighters.

-Suggested Gifts/Aspects/Weaknesses/Background Merits

## **Relationship with the Powers**

The Powers are far too distant to be concerned with their offspring on a single solitary world. While many demigods cheerfully refer to themselves as children of the Powers, they are more accurately grandchildren, being spawned from a Royal Avatar. A Hero who journeys to the Dreamscape seeking council from his patron is often met with challenges, trials, and proofs of worth not by familial affection and promises of divine aid. Far more approachable and more often sought after is a demigod's parent or the parent of an Incarnate or Remnant's prior self. Royal Avatars are generally benevolent and

well-pleased with their children, but almost exclusively absentee parents. The attention of a god does not tarry long, and actually raising their sons is a burden too great for most of these mighty spirits. The lives of too many Heroes are spent seeking the favor and approval of their divine origins, wasting sweat, blood, and tears performing labors to earn their respect. More insidious are those Royal Avatars who seek out their daughter only as tools in the eternal conflicts and games between the Powers. More than one Royal Avatar has met their deaths at the hands of one of their misbegotten offspring.

## **The Limiter**

All material and sapient beings in the Shrouded Earth are composed of two parts. A physical body composed of blood, bones, nerves, tissues, and cells which functions through a miraculously interwoven system of biochemistry; and an immaterial soul that interacts with the physical through a 'shell' known as a Vehicle. This Vehicle acts as the liaison between the truly immaterial soul and the physical body, and is composed of a poorly understood Esoteric Anatomy of its own, a 'spiritual body' located 'inside' the physical body. Most beings possess the ability to strengthen their anatomies through various means of training, study, meditation, diet and exercise; but there are limits to what these things can achieve. Eventually one plateaus and reaches the limits of one's species. To go beyond this point, one must be capable of breaking through these barriers, to force one's body and mind to adapt to the new level. Someone who does this finds two things quickly: firstly, he is far less reliant on talent than before. Ordinary beings who try to become good at a new skill often become discouraged when effort applied to develop the skill doesn't lead to rapid advance, there is a compatibility problem between oneself and the skill. Those who break their limiters do not suffer this limit. Effort goes in, skill comes out. They still progress fastest in their natural talents, but lack of those talents is no longer an obstacle to development in the face of relentless determination. Secondly, while they can still plateau in their development, those plateaus will never stem from a purely physical limitation. Further development instead begins to stem from the quality of one's techniques or one's training, the purity of one's resolve, and the tearing down of self-imposed psychological limits through self-discovery. The Limiter thus is not a metaphysical transformation or mutation, but instead the imaginary line at which one steps beyond the limits of 'human' training and ability. So who can break one's Limiter, and how?

Creatures with wildly abnormal bodies such as true vampires, Werereatures, mummies, androids and the like have never been known to break this barrier generally due to never needing to. Such beings possess adaptive and powerful bodies fueled by naturally superior biology or the integration of mystical forces and have never had the need to break through this imaginary limit to one's adaptive response. Ordinary living beings, human or otherwise, are those who are consciously aware enough of their limits to break them. Specifically, all Heroes have broken their limiters by definition. Demigods, Incarnates, and Remnants never had any limits as their divine blood or spirits simply tear through the barriers to uplift their mortal flesh by default. Paragons are defined as limitless ones, and Imbued have theirs rent by the transformation into Imbued. Many Hunters have broken their limits, especially those of higher

Rank. A Hunter who can lift a truck with muscle alone may insist he's still human, but he's no longer an average human. Other human-like Types such as Magicians, Psychics, and Scientists have sometimes cultivated themselves this far but generally speaking have no need to. A Magician or Psychic martial artist is much more likely to be utilizing the manipulation of Fate or one's psychic power to increase their strength and skill than to have trained their muscles to that level. In terms of how, for those without divine blessings, the act of tearing down one's limits usually involves training normally all the way up to them, then using special martial arts techniques, hidden training regimes or eastern medicine to continue one's advance.

## Lifespan

The lifespan of a semidivine Hero varies immensely. Most Demigods and Incarnates have the lifespan of an ordinary human being, albeit an unusually hale and healthy one, lasting perhaps one hundred and twenty years. Paragons have a lifespan set by the degree and nature of their cultivation, and tend to last longer the higher Rank they achieve. Rank 1 and 2 Paragon Heroes live as long as demigods, while Rank 3-4 live centuries or even a single millennium and Rank 5 are said to be eternal Xian who can meet death only on the battlefield. Remnants are naturally 'immortal', on account of being permanently incarnated spirits, while the lives of Imbued are set by their empowerment. While none of the Chosen of the Primeval Sun yet know it, the solar Essence bound to their spirits will keep them alive for 2000-3000 years at least. Meanwhile it is theorized that the Pretty Soldiers lack a 'lifespan' at all, and instead their magic of eternal youth will simply fail after some predetermined but very long period estimated at one thousand years. Whether blessed with extreme longevity or not, Heroes are ultimately mortal and their drive to achieve immortality is legendary. Unlike in legend, some rare few actually succeed, through Mystic Artifacts, Anamolies, or powerful magic. In all cases actually reaching a natural death is almost unheard of, as any true Hero is likely to perish long before their time in the midst of some titanic struggle.

## Template Benefits

**Heroic Resolve:** Reflexive; Once per Scene the Hero may immediately reclaim [Rank+1] Effort.

**Supernal:** The Hero begins play with two additional Excellences of his choice.

**Supernal Excellence of [Skill] [\*]:** Reflexive, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and apply one of the following effects. Effect 1: For the rest of the Turn the Monster may add his unmodified [Skill] to all rolls using that Skill. If this Gift is activated during the Monster's Turn, it ends at the start of the Monster's next Turn. If it is activated during another character's Turn, it ends at the end of the Monster's next Turn. Effect 2: The Monster may add his unmodified [Skill] to a single roll [usually Extended] regardless of how many turns it takes to perform. At Rank 5, the Duration of this Excellence becomes one Scene

## Combat Gifts

**Iron Skin Concentration** [\*]: Mastery, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, the Hero adds [Rank+2] to his Soak.

**Fivefold Bulwark Stance** [\*]: Permanent; the Hero adds [Rank] to his Defense pool for all purposes.

**Hungry Tiger Technique** [\*]: Permanent; the Hero adds [Rank] to all Attack rolls, but not to Combat Maneuvers.

**Invincible Essence Reinforcement** [\*]: Permanent; the Hero gains the Tough Skin Aspect.

**Iron Kettle Body** [\*]: Prerequisite Invincible Essence Reinforcement, Permanent; when not wearing Armor of any kind increase the Hero's Soak by her Rank.

**Inner Fire Unleashed** [\*]: Permanent; the first time in a Scene when the Hero regains Health from any source, she may reclaim one Effort.

**Soaring Crane Leap** [\*]: Permanent; the Hero's jumping distance and height is permanently multiplied by 10, and he is immune to fall damage.

**Mountain Crossing Leap** [\*]: Prerequisite Soaring Crane Leap, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Hero may leap up to [Rank x5] miles through the air in a single bound that takes only a Turn to complete. This may not be used while the Hero is in combat or otherwise under duress.

**Eagle Wing Style** [\*]: Prerequisite Qing Gong, Permanent; the Hero doubles all of his movement speeds. The Hero may fly at his speed.

**Salty Dog Method** [\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. Increase the duration the Hero may hold his breath by [Rank] hours. This may be activated in sequence to extend the duration further and further. Moreover, the Hero may swim at his full movement speed. This latter effect is Permanent.

**Heaven-Thunder Hammer** [\*]: Reflexive, Supplemental; Before rolling an Attack Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The attack adds two successes to Damage, and if the attack does any damage at all the enemy is thrown back or up ten feet for every Health Level inflicted by the attack and suffers fall damage as though they had fallen that far. Moreover, the Hero may choose whether this Attack deals Physical or Explosive Damage before rolling.

**Destiny-Manifesting Method** [\*]: Permanent; the Hero adds two dice to all rolls to resist the effects of Gifts, Magic, Mystic Artifacts or Devices.

**Righteous Lion Defense** [\*]: Permanent; once per Scene when the Hero fails an Integrity roll he may reroll the roll and take preferred result.

**Spirit-Smiting Hammer** [\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Ghost-Eating Technique, Permanent; all of the Hero's attacks upon Immaterial beings are Aggravated. Moreover he never suffers Penalties, including Wound Penalties, when attacking Immaterial beings.

**Enlightened Mastery Kata** [\*]: Permanent; the Hero immediately gains 2 dots in Gifts which must be spent purchasing Advanced Fighting Styles. He must meet all prerequisites for the purchasing of these Styles. This Gift may be purchased up to [Rank] times.

**World-Defending Method** [\*]: Prerequisite Rank 4, Permanent; when the Hero is making attacks

using the Ranged Skill he always counts as being within range, regardless of the distance to his opponent, provided one of the following is true, the target attacked or deliriously effected the Hero within the last Turn, OR the target is within direct line of sight of the Hero [and are in the same planetary system]. Through this Gift Heroes may return fire to passing jets, sympathetic Magics, or strike blows in defense of their planet from astronomical colossi. Scrying and use of electronic assistance does not count as line of sight.

**Peony Blossom Attack** [\*\*]: Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene before rolling an Attack. The attack is Unavoidable.

**Arrow Storm Technique** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Supplemental: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene before rolling an Attack against a Battlegroup with a [Size+Rank] equal or lower then the Hero's Rank. The Attack is Aggravated. Despite the name of this Gift, it can be delivered through any Skill or Weapon, gun, blade, or fist.

**Nine Aeons Thews** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Hero gains the Mighty and Prodigious Strength Aspects.

**Titan Straightening Method** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Supplemental: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene before rolling an Attack against an Enemy with the Large or Titanic Aspect. The Attack is Aggravated.

Moreover, the Hero can lift, carry, or throw any character with the Large or Titanic Aspect as though they weighed 1/10th of the Hero's maximum lift. This latter effect is Permanent and costs no Effort.

**Edge of Holy Light** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Hero may choose before rolling to have any of his attacks deal Holy or Unholy [selected upon purchasing this Gift] damage instead of their normal damage type. Moreover, once per scene while so declaring, the modified attack is Aggravated.

**Heavenly Guardian Defense** [\*\*]: Perfect, Reflexive; Once per Scene, at no cost, when targeted by an attack, turn-long damage source, or offensive maneuver, negate that attack/maneuver. The Hero need not be aware of the attack, but he must declare this Gift before and in place of rolling Defense. If Heroic Resolve is activated or a combat ends, this Gift refreshes.

**Lightning Speed** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Hero triples all of his movement speeds and doubles the result of all his Initiative rolls.

**Speed of Light Approach** [\*\*]: Reflexive: Once per Turn during his Turn, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The Hero may immediately flash to one location he can see and reach within one mile of his location. This is not teleportation, the Hero must be able to reach his destination. Moreover, the Hero triples all his movement speeds. This latter effect is Permanent and has no cost.

**Unconquered Might** [\*\*]: Mastery, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Hero adds [Rank+2] to the damage of all Might-based Attacks and increases his place on the Might Chart by [Rank+2].

**Fire and Stones Strike** [\*\*]: Mastery, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Hero adds [Rank+2] to the damage of all Ranged-based attacks and the base damage of any Ranged-based attack he uses becomes 6 before Fighting Style.

**Integrity Protecting Prana** [\*\*]: Perfect, Reflexive: Commit 1 Effort for the Day whenever the Hero must roll Integrity for the purposes of resisting a Gift, Spell, Social Influence, or other delerious effect.



He automatically succeeds the roll in place of rolling. This Gift must be declared before and in place of rolling Integrity.

**Chaos Repelling Pattern** [\*\*]: Perfect, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Day whenever the Hero must roll Mystic Lore for the purposes of resisting a Gift, Spell, or other delerious effect. He automatically succeeds the roll in place of rolling. This Gift must be declared before and in place of rolling Mystic Lore.

**Phoenix Renewal Tactic** [\*\*]: Reflexive; once per Day the Hero may reclaim two Effort committed for the Scene or one Effort committed for the Day..

**Hero King Radiance** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Hero gains two dice to all Integrity rolls. As a Simple Action, the Hero may extend this benefit to up to [Rank] characters of his choosing until this effect is activated again.

**Ghost Eating Technique** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Permanent; the Hero, his Attacks, Gifts and his magic, may effect Immaterial beings as though they were Materialized. If he cannot see the Materialized being through some other means, all such actions suffer a -4 Penalty. Moreover, any target he personally slays has all Immortality-tag powers negated.

**Boundless Arrow of the Unconquered Hero** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5 and World-Defending Method, Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. Until the start of the Hero's next Turn any target within 50 miles in any direction of the Hero counts as being within range for all of the Hero's attacks. If the Hero is using a Ranged Attack he may fire it normally. If he is using a Melee or Martial Arts Attack, waves of force or impact fly from the Hero's weapon or fist towards his intended target. If the Hero does not know where his target is, this Attack suffers a -4 Penalty. Any mundane fortification or structure between the Hero and his target is damaged sufficiently to allow the Attack's passage.

**Defense of Creation Technique** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5, Perfect, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Story whenever a target in the same solar system as the Hero intends to use a Gift or Magic with the World-Altering tag. The Hero immediately teleports to the target's location and the Gift or Magic is 'suspended'. If the Hero is slain or Incapacitated in the current Scene the effect will take place as normal. Otherwise the effect is negated. This does not protect the Hero from any hazards associated with his destination, such as if he arrives in the vacuum of space. The Hero is always aware of where he would be traveling before utilizing this Gift.

**Horizon Hurling Method** [\*\*]: Prerequisites Rank 5 and Heaven-Thunder Hammer, Permanent; when activating Heaven-Thunder Hammer the Hero may instead choose to change its effect to the following: Before rolling an Attack Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The attack adds five successes to Damage, and if the attack does any damage at all the enemy is thrown back or up one mile for every Health Level inflicted by the attack and suffers fall damage as though they had fallen that far. Moreover, the Hero may choose whether this Attack deals Physical or Explosive Damage before rolling. If the target is slain by the attack [and not merely Incapacitated] the Hero may instead launch them to any destination

in the same solar system OR to any Reality Marble in that system the Hero knows of. He could kick the target to the moon, have his arrow knock him into the sun, bounce him off the top of Mount Everest, or have him fall out of the sky in a far distant Territory.

**Adamant Skin Technique** [\*\*]: Reflexive, Supplemental: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene when targeted by an Aggravated Attack. The attack is instead not Aggravated. This must be declared before rolling Defense. If the attack deals no damage the Hero may immediately reclaim the Effort.

**Seven Shadows Evasion** [\*\*]: Perfect, Reflexive, Supplemental: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene when targeted by an Unavoidable Attack. The attack is instead not Unavoidable. This must be declared the attack is resolved. If the attack deals no damage the Hero may immediately reclaim the Effort.

**Immunity to Everything Technique** [\*\*\*]: Permanent; the Hero is immune to all diseases, poisons, and Poison Damage.

**Harmony with Nature Method** [\*\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. For the rest of the Scene, the Hero is immune to all damage from Environmental Hazards. The Hero must still breath with this Gift active.

**Essence Reactor Core** [\*\*\*]: Permanent; the Hero's Effort Pool is permanently increased by her Rank.

**Final Ray of Light** [\*\*\*]: Reflexive: Once per Story when the Hero would be Incapacitated or Killed, the Hero may activate this Gift. The Hero is not incapacitated or killed. Instead, at the start of their next Turn, they immediately recover [Rank] Health and [Rank] Effort.

**Transcendent Hero's Meditation** [\*\*\*]: Perfect, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Story. The Hero immediately nullifies all mental alterations or mind-effecting Gifts, Spells, or other effects enacted upon him in the present Story. Lost memories are restored, artificial desires or feelings are purged, supernatural control is broken. Nothing can prevent a Hero from activating this Gift or incline him not to want to activate it.

**Surpass the Divinities** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and roll Mystic Lore opposed by Mystic Lore on a single target. Upon success the target gains the Holy Damage Type Weakness OR Unholy Damage Type Weakness for the rest of the Day [selected at the purchase of this Gift]. A target can only be targeted by this Gift once in the same Scene.

**Race the Sun** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisites Rank 5, Lightning Speed, and Speed of Light Approach, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Hero may immediately run, fly, or jump to any location within the same planetary system. If the location is within 500 miles he arrives immediately. If it is further he arrives by the end of the Scene [or hour, whichever is shorter]. This is not teleportation, the Hero flashes by at Mach speeds, a blur as he rushes past other characters or soars through the sky. This Gift never harms the Hero, other characters or other structures. If the Hero is damaged enroute this Gift immediately ends. Moreover all of the Hero's movement speeds are multiplied by five. This letter effect is Permanent.

**Immortal Armory of the Sun** [\*\*\*]: Reflexive; Select and activate one of the following effects.

Effect 1: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene to summon any handheld personal weapon including Light Explosives but not other types of Explosives. The weapon adds two to its Damage.

Effect 2: Commit 1 Effort for the Day to summon enough handheld personal weapons per Effect 1 to arm a Battlegroup with a Size of the Hero's Rank or lower.

All weapons produced by this Gift are broadly useless as anything except weapons and fade from existence at the end of the Scene.

**Sharp Light of Judgment Stance** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5 and Arrow Storm Technique, Reflexive, Supplemental; Before rolling an attack commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Attack deals two additional Damage and may target up to 10 Enemies and as many Civilians as desired, provided they are within one mile radius of the Hero's location OR could fit into any area in front of the Hero up to five miles long, fifty feet wide and half a mile tall. This deals Aggravated Damage to all Battlegroups. Use of this Gift may decimate any mundane objects or structures in range, and the Hero may choose to target as much or little of the target area as desired. With this Gift a Hero could cut the top off of a mountain, slice a metropolitan area in half, or drop arrows on every man, woman and child across city blocks.

**Creation-Slaying Oblivion Kick** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisites Rank 5 and Sharp Light of Judgment Stance, World-Altering, Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 2 Effort for the Story. The Hero may declare an attack against a celestial body using the rules on page [XX] and adds five to his Damage for the attack. This does not stack with the Damage bonus of Sharp Light of Judgment Stance.

## Social Gifts

**Rout-Stemming Gesture** [\*]: Reflexive, Once per Scene when a Battlegroup for which the Hero is the Commanding Officer would fail a Morale roll. Reroll Morale and take preferred result.

**Commanding the Ideal Celestial Army** [\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select a Battlegroup for which the Hero is the Commanding Officer. For the rest of the Day the Battlegroup is always aware of the Hero's desires for them and any orders he would convey if he knew their situation. This Gift does not, of itself, permit communication. It merely informs the Battlegroup their commander's wishes.

**Phantom Conjuring Performance** [\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Hero may conjure harmless supernatural effects to enhance a Performance, such as showers of sparks, visual flairs, holographic images or odd sounds or musical accompaniment. These effects are always obvious as illusionary. While active the Hero adds her [Rank] to all Performance rolls.

**Husband-Seducing Demon Dance** [\*]: Permanent; any character whom voluntarily romantically kisses or engages in sexual relations with the Hero must commit 1 Effort for the Story or acquire an unceasing love and desire for the Hero. If they are an NPC, they acquire a new Defining Intimacy of "The Hero (Desperate Longing)" or similar which doesn't count against their existing Intimacies.

**Judge's Ear Method** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, the Hero is always aware whenever someone speaking in his presence is intentionally telling a lie or omitting crucial information in their responses.

**Guarded Thoughts Meditation** [\*\*]: Permanent; Other characters cannot read the Hero's mind or emotions or enter her dreams involuntarily. The Hero may choose to reflexively suppress this for the Scene at no cost.

**Sagacious Reading of Intent** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, the Hero may read a target's surface thoughts by focusing upon them as a Simple Action. The Hero may continue activating this power in subsequent rounds by spending Simple Actions to continue reading the same subject.

**Speed the Wheels** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Hero never suffers Penalties when doing Bureaucracy rolls. Moreover, when interacting with Social Groups or bureaucracies of any form in an ordinary capacity the Hero obtains results supernaturally fast, making his way past officials and red tape in record time.

**Foul Air of Argument Technique** [\*\*]: Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Story as an Extended Action requiring at least an hour and target a Social Group. That Social Group's Cohesion is set to 0 for the rest of the Story. Moreover they are wracked with maladies and difficulties relating to poor management for the same duration.

**Authority Radiating Stance** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, any intelligent sapient character with a Rank of [Hero's Rank-2] or less [minimum Rank 0] the Hero interacts with is put under a supernatural illusion that the Hero is someone with legitimate authority over the person in question. The context of this illusion may be provided by the Hero or allowed to be formed by the victims [for instance a Hero may claim to represent a powerful state agency, or be an employee's boss's boss]. The claim need not be reasonable, the illusion fills in any gaps of logic until at least the end of the Scene. This is not true mind control, it is purely an illusion, characters will only obey the Hero to the extent they would obey the imagined authority in question and are under no supernatural compulsion otherwise.

**Hypnotic Tongue Technique** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Hero target's one intelligent sentient being and rolls Persuasion opposed by Integrity. Upon success the target will obey the Hero in spirit and in deed for the following lunar month, but will not obey any orders that cause them to intentionally harm themselves or would violate their Defining Intimacies. If the controlled subject is a Monster with a Rank of at least [Hero's Rank-2], once per Turn on their turn the target may reflexively Commit 1 Effort for the Day to reroll Integrity against the initial Persuasion roll used to activate the Gift. Success for the target ends this Gift. Characters who succeed on a roll to resist Hypnotic Tongue Technique, either initially or by breaking free later, cannot be targetted again by this Gift during the current Scene.

**Terrible Hero King Condemnation** [\*\*]: Simple, Commit 1 Effort for the Story and roll Persuasion or Deception opposed by a single target's Persuasion or Deception [this target need not be present]. Upon success, for the rest of the Story all Rank 0 beings who interacts with or hears about the target becomes

convinced they are a wicked, deceitful, unreliable or underhanded person who is not to be trusted and the target suffers a -5 Penalty on all Persuasion and Deception rolls. If the target succeeds on the initial opposed roll, this Gift cannot target them again during the current Story.

**General of the All-Seeing Eye** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Commanding the Ideal Celestial Army, Simple; the Hero may scry the location of a Battlegroup under his command that is effected by this Gift's prerequisite seeing and/or hearing all that transpires around the army provided it is not warded against Scrying.. While scrying the Hero suffers a -4 Penalty to Perception rolls regarding his immediate surroundings. The Hero may continue scrying on subsequent turns by spending more Simple Actions.

**Fury-Inciting Presence** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. By giving a short speech or inspiring gesture the Hero causes a number of present Rank 0 characters with a Size equal to the Hero's Rank or lower to immediately rally into a Battlegroup under the Hero's command with a Drill of 3. This Battlegroup will disband at the end of the Scene unless this Gift is used again.

**Behemoth-Slaying Attitude** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and the Hero may select a friendly Battlegroup with a Size equal to or lower then his Rank. For the rest of the Scene the Hero may use the Defend Other Maneuver upon the Battlegroup, despite this not ordinarily being possible.

**Mastery of Society Technique** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5, Speed the Wheels and Foul Air of Argument Technique, Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Story. The Hero may complete his next Bureaucracy Action as a Simple Action. All relevant actors immediately become aware of their intended jobs and will begin implementing the command over the following day, during which time relevant characters may attempt to interfere and roll opposed Bueracracy as normal. This Bureaucracy action ignores any and all logistical limitations on the Hero conveying his will and may, at the Hero's discretion, be impossible to trace back to him.

**Eclipse Oath** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day after witnessing two or more characters, which can include the Hero, make or sign a formal agreement. If at any time in the future any character violates the oath, they will suffer a Perfect and unavoidable curse at the Storyteller's choice. A few example curses follow-

Curse 1: A successful roll by the oathbreaker becomes 0 successes instead.

Curse 2: For the rest of the Story, the oathbreaker cannot reclaim Effort.

Curse 3: A loved one of the oathbreaker suffers a horrible accident or develops a deadly illness. This can infallibly kill Rank 0 characters but there is always a chance to save Rank 1+ characters.

This Gift cannot bind more then the Hero's [Rank] in Size of characters with one activation, and while characters need not know the Hero can consecrate oaths they must agree to the terms themselves completely willingly and without mind control.

**Know the Soul's Price** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and select a target. The Hero immediately learns the target's Defining Intimacies [if an NPC] and what is most important to the

character generally [if a PC]. They also learn what they would need to offer the target in the present to get them to agree to do a particular request or action chosen at the Gift's activation.

**Mob-Dispersing Rebuke** [\*\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and target a Battlegroup with a Size+Rank equal to or lower than the Hero's Rank and roll War opposed by the War+Drill of the Battlegroup's Commander. Upon success, the unit is immediately routed as though it had failed a Morale check. Upon failure this Gift may not be attempted again upon the same Battlegroup this Scene.

**Legendary Scholar Curriculum** [\*\*\*]: Extended; As an Extended Action requiring one week the Hero may train a number of intelligent Rank 0 beings to become masterful occult scholars. Commit 1 Effort for the Story and select a number of Rank 0 targets with a total Size equal or less than the Hero's Rank. The Hero must spend at least eight hours per day of the week teaching or overseeing the teaching of his pupils. At the end of the week the targets gain a rating of 8 in the following Skills: Academics, Science, Mystic Lore, Medicine and Animal Ken. Moreover, the targets immediately learn up to [Rank] in dots of Thaumaturgical Science. These dots must be Magic the Hero knows. Subsequent uses upon the same targets has no effect unless the Hero increased her Rank since her prior use, in which case a full week of study will grant them additional dots up to the Hero's new Rank. For instance if the Hero trained a pupil at Rank 3 and granted her 3 dots of Thaumaturgy then later used it again at Rank 5, the pupil would learn two dots.

**Tiger Warrior Training Method** [\*\*\*]: Extended; As an Extended Action requiring one week the Hero may train a number of intelligent Rank 0 beings to become perfect warriors. Commit 1 Effort for the Story and select a number of Rank 0 targets with a total Size equal or less than the Hero's Rank. The Hero must spend at least eight hours per day of the week teaching or overseeing the teaching of his pupils. At the end of the week the targets gain a rating of 8 in the following Skills: Might, Agility, Endurance, War, Perception, Riding, and the Hero's choice of Martial Arts, Ranged, or Melee. Moreover, the targets immediately learn up to [Rank] in dots of Advanced Fighting Styles. These dots must be Styles the Hero knows and for which the targets meet the prerequisites. Subsequent uses upon the same targets only grants them another choice in raising Ranged, Martial Arts or Melee unless the Hero increased her Rank since her prior use, in which case a full week of study will grant them additional dots up to the Hero's new Rank. For instance if the Hero trained a pupil at Rank 3 and granted her 3 dots of Advanced Fighting Styles then later used it again at Rank 5, the pupil would learn two dots.

**Horizon to Horizon Performance** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. Select and activate one of the following effects.

Effect 1: The Hero may project his voice across the world out to 250 miles radius centered on himself. For the rest of the Scene whenever the Hero speaks, all characters within the area will hear the Hero

speaking as though his words were coming from beyond the horizon, yet sounding clear and precise, not painfully booming.

Effect 2: Select a broad category of people such as “all the people in New York” or “all members of this Conspiracy”. For the rest of the Scene whenever the Hero speaks those characters hear you as though you were speaking into their heads. These characters cannot exceed a total number of 50 million and must all be in the same planetary system as the Hero.

When using either effect, whenever the Hero uses Mass Social Influence upon these targets ignore the ordinary chart. Instead, for each success past Basic Threshold the Influence effects a minimum of one million people.

## Stealth Gifts

**Door-Evading Technique** [\*]: Mastery, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Hero may pass through all closed portals, doors, windows, etc as though they were open and unsecured. The Hero could pass through an heavy bank vault door without opening it, or enter a locked car without triggering the alarm.

**Reversal of Fortune** [\*]: Permanent; the Hero adds her [Rank+2] to all opposed rolls made to notice or resist a character attempting to disarm or steal objects in her direct possession, things she is wearing or using.

**Sensory Acuity Prana** [\*]: Permanent; the Hero never suffers Penalties relating to Perception nor suffers Penalties to other Skills for reasons of Perception [such as fighting in pitch darkness or attacking a target in stealth].

**Inescapable Eye of the Sage** [\*]: Permanent; the Hero may choose to see through walls, barriers, or other obstructions with a maximum thickness of [Rank] yards.

**Eyes of Creation** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, as a Simple Action, the Hero may see and hear anything at a given location within [Rank x1000] miles as though he was physically present, provided it is not warded against Scrying. The Hero may choose to either see or hear or both, but can only scry one location at a time. While scrying the Hero suffers a -4 Penalty to Perception rolls regarding his immediate surroundings. The Hero may continue scrying on subsequent turns by spending more Simple Actions.

**Seasoned Criminal Method** [\*\*]: Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene before making a Larceny roll to steal, disarm, pick a lock, break into a safe or perform a similar action. The Larceny roll automatically succeeds. Moreover, the Hero never suffers Penalties for Larceny. This latter effect is Permanent and has no cost.

**Vanishing from Mind's Eye Method** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Supplemental: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the the Scene the Hero becomes invisible and impossible to notice except by those who successfully beat his Stealth. Even electronics and high-tech sensors fail to notice the Hero's presence. All those attempting to notice the Hero suffer a -4 Penalty to Perception to do so.

**Flawlessly Impenetrable Disguise** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Supplemental: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene.

Until the Hero dismisses it as a reflexive action, the Hero takes on the complete visual appearance of any person approximately his size [anything not requiring additional Aspects such as Small or Giant to represent unless one possesses such] with any mundane attire desired. The Hero's costume is completely perfect and cannot be noticed as such except by supernatural powers to see through disguises. This even mimics subtle supernatural elements, such as a vampire's apparent lack of the need to breath. Nonetheless this is only a disguise, just because the Hero looks like he isn't breathing to any mundane inspection doesn't change the fact he requires air.

**King of Thieves Spirit** [\*\*]: Permanent; whenever the Hero is not using a Larceny or Stealth Excellence he adds Rank+2 to all Larceny and Stealth rolls. At Rank 5, this Gift applies even when Excellences are applied.

**Omniscient Ears Approach** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Hero is always aware when someone is speaking of him aloud and may choose to immediately scry the location of those so speaking as a reflexive action, seeing and/or hearing all that transpires around the army provided it is not warded against Scrying. While scrying the Hero suffers a -4 Penalty to Perception rolls regarding his immediate surroundings. The Hero may continue scrying on subsequent turns by spending Simple Actions. This Gift applies to anyone referring to the Hero under any euphemism, they need not speak his name.

**Eyes of the Spiral** [\*\*]: Prerequisites Rank 5 and Eyes of Creation; Permanent; Eyes of Creation can now perceive at astronomical distances, allowing one to Scry up to [Rank x1000] Light Years away, subject to all the normal limitations. This permanently upgrades Eyes of Creation.

**Perfect Crime Method** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5 and Seasoned Criminal Method, Perfect, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Story while not under duress or in combat. The Hero may immediately teleport one inanimate object within 500 miles radius into his possession provided it is not a Mystic Artifact, Device, Anomaly or similarly not mundane. He does not need to know where the object is, or anything about it beyond a vague general idea of what it is he intends to steal. He must however have a specific item in mind, he cannot simply declare he means to steal 'a sword' to summon forth a blade.

## Craft Gifts

**Glorious Hero Visage** [\*]: Mastery, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, the Hero transforms into an iconic glorious form or outfit selected upon learning this Gift. This form need not be recognizable as the Hero. The Hero is treated as wearing a Rank 1 Mystic Artifact Armor which can be Light, Medium, or Heavy as desired selected upon purchase. The Visage has the Indestructible Evocation and one other Evocation of the Hero's choice. This Gift can be purchased additional times to increase the Rank of the Visage Armor by 1 and grant an additional Evocation. This Gift can be purchased up to [Rank] times. This Armor does not suffer Mystic Collapse.

**Glorious Hero Saber** [\*]: Mastery, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, the Hero summons from nothing a powerful magical weapon selected upon learning this Gift, which must be either Might-based or Ranged-based. This weapon counts as a Rank 1 Mystic Artifact



with the Indestructible Evocation and one additional Evocation of the Hero's choice. This Gift can be purchased additional times to increase the rank of the Hero Saber by 1 and grant an additional Evocation. This Gift can be purchased up to [Rank] times. This Weapon does not suffer Mystic Collapse.

**Anima-Attuning Panoply** [\*]: Simple; the Hero selects one Mystic Artifact or Device in his possession and 'attunes it' to himself. When being used or operated specifically by the Hero [a Weapon he is wielding, Armor he has donned, a Vehicle he is traveling in if not piloting]. That Item does not produce Mystic Collapse or Havoc. This effect lasts indefinitely, but the Hero may only 'attune' up to [Rank] Items of Power in this way at a time.

**Object-Strengthening Touch** [\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and select a single discrete object small enough to fit in a 10x10 foot cube, or a Vehicle of any size. The place on the Might Chart required to damage the object increases by the Hero's Rank for the rest of the Day. If the object is a Vehicle or Armor, also increase its Armor Rating by 1.

**Keen Understanding of the Design Limitation** [\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene while looking at a Mystic Artifact, Device, or piece of mundane technology. The Hero immediately gains a full understanding of its powers and workings as though they had rolled 10 successes on a Mystic Lore, Artifice, or Science check and if they possess the relevant Gift [Craft Mystic Artifact or Craft Device], they add the Item to their Schematic List.

**Craftsman Needs No Tools** [\*]: Permanent; the Hero can craft and perform Artifice actions without tools, bending, twisting, modifying and shaping the raw material with his bare hands. Moreover he crafts ten times faster than normal. For mundane crafting this means the item is crafted in 1/10th the ordinary time, which stacks with the x2 for rolling 6+ successes to 1/12th the time. For Items of Power you instead multiply the successes rolled each Interval by 10. For instance if you rolled 6 successes in an Interval, it would count as 60 successes.

**Wonder Forging Genius** [\*\*]: Permanent; Anything the Hero crafts becomes completely immune to the ravages of time. It will not rust, decay, or cease to function due to the mere passage of time or lack of maintenance.

**Sometimes Horses Fly** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select a Land or Water Vehicle the Hero can see OR a riding animal the Hero is presently riding. For the rest of the Day or until the Hero uses this Gift again the Vehicle or target can fly at its speed.

**Glorious Hero's Chariot** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. For the next twenty-four hours or until the Hero uses this Gift again the Hero summons a personalized Mystic Artifact Vehicle with a Rank of 1 that is not subject to Mystic Collapse designed when this Gift is purchased. This Gift may be purchased up to [Rank] times allowing the Hero to completely redesign the Vehicle summoned by this Gift as a Rank 2, 3, 4, etc Vehicle. Each time this Vehicle is called it appears as undamaged, pristine and new.

**Indestructible Hero's Chariot** [\*\*]: Perfect, Reflexive; Once per Scene whenever a Vehicle the Hero is traveling in would take damage [after any defenses are rolled but before damage is applied]. The

damage is negated.

**Age of Dreams Meditation** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 4 and Craft Mystic Artifact or Craft Device, Permanent; as long as the Hero is still alive, any Items of Power he has created do not suffer from Mystic Collapse or Havoc. Moreover, by committing 1 Effort for the Story as a Simple Action the Hero can completely and indiscriminately annul all examples of Mystic Collapse and Havoc for Items of Power [but not characters] within [Rank x5] miles radius for the next lunar month. This may be used repeatedly in different locations to widen the area.

**Phantom Steed** [\*\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. A completely mundane and fully fueled Land or Water Vehicle with a Rank of [Hero's Rank or 3, whichever is lower, Vehicle type selected upon activating this Gift] appears before the Hero in the nearest unoccupied spot and persists for the next twenty-four hours or until the Hero uses this Gift again. While completely mundane in Traits and lacking Evocations it may look as fantastical as desired, from a sailing ship with a spectral crew representing a Rank 3 ship or a chariot of flaming horses as a Rank 1 car.

**Thousand-Year Daiklave Mantra** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Craftsman Needs No Tools, and Craft Mystic Artifact OR Craft Mystic Device, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Story when creating a Weapon or Armor Item of Power. Do not roll an Extended Artifice Action to create the Item. Instead, provided the Hero possesses a Schematic and all necessary materials and Exotic Components, the item's creation is instantaneous.

**Factory-Cathedral Oversight** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 4, Craftsman Needs No Tools, and Craft Mystic Artifact OR Craft Device, Permanent; the Hero can work on up to [Rank] Extended Artifice Actions to create Items of Power at the same time, and may automate his manufacture such he need only spend one hour per Day of attention across all his projects to advance them.

**Wyld-Shaping Technique** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 4; the Hero may create a Reality Marble using the rule on page [XX]. He has 50 points to create his Reality Marble.

**Wyld-Forging Cauldron Technology** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5 and Craft Mystic Artifact OR Craft Device, Extended; As an Extended Action requiring five hours the Hero may commit 2 Effort for the Story to produce from nothing a single Lesser or Greater Exotic Component needed for a Schematic he possesses.

## Magic Gifts

**Lore-Unearthing Method** [\*]: Simple, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene while attempting to find a specific piece of information in a data source such as a book, library, or computer system. Provided the information is there, the Hero finds it immediately.

**Ailment-Rectifying Method** [\*]: Simple, Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The target is immediately cured of one Injury from the Injury Chart, is stabilized if in risk of dying, and is cured of one mundane illness. All of these are accomplished with one activation.

**Body Mending Meditation** [\*]: Permanent; the Hero's natural healing rate of [Rank per Day] is replaced by the following: the Hero heals 1 Health per Hour. Moreover, the Hero automatically

stabilizes upon becoming Incapacitated and cannot die from Complications.

**Instant Treatment Methodology** [\*]: Permanent; the Hero never suffers Penalties for the Medicine Skill and does not require medical tools for any kind of Medicine roll. Moreover, the Hero may complete any Medicine roll regardless of difficulty or complexity as a Simple Action. This explicitly allows the Hero to use Wound-Mending Care Technique as a Simple Action if he possesses it.

**All Encompassing Sorcerer Sight** [\*]: Permanent; the Hero is always aware if someone in his presence is a supernatural being, and if so their Rank. This Gift does not tell the Hero their Type [if any] or any further information.

**Clear Mind Discipline** [\*]: Permanent; the Hero can replace and gain the benefits of eight hours of sleep by spending 15 minutes in repose or meditation, during which time he is completely aware of his surroundings.

**Expert Thaumaturge** [\*]: Prerequisite Mystic Lore or Science 4, Permanent; the Hero immediately learns two dots of Thaumaturgy. This Gift may be purchased up to [Rank] times. If multiple instances of this Gift are purchased at once, the dots gained are pooled allowing for the potential purchase of 3-dot Thaumaturgy powers.

**Counterspell** [\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene when a character the Hero is aware of activates a Spell tag power. Roll Mystic Lore opposed by Mystic Lore. Upon success the Spell is dispelled, it is not resolved and has no effect. Upon success the Hero loses the Simple Action on their next Turn as they busy themselves with Counterspelling.

**Strange Tongue Understanding** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Hero may speak, read, and write any language he has been exposed to. Being exposed to a language causes the Hero to immediately grasp it in its entirety.

**Burning Eye of the Deliverer** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Hero is always aware if someone in his presence is wearing a disguise or possesses the ability to shapeshift, and may reflexively perceive the target's true or undisguised form.

**Wound Mending Care Technique** [\*\*]: Extended; Supplemental: Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Hero spends 1 hour attending to a character, which can include himself. At the end of the hour the Hero rolls Medicine, and the target heals one Health per success rolled. This Gift is not 'healing magic' but rather 'magic-enhanced medical care' and therefore requires the Hero to possess rudimentary supplies such as bandages, scalpels, etc if necessary. A character cannot benefit from this Gift more often than once per Scene.

**Expert Mage** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Mystic Lore or Science 6, Permanent; the Hero immediately learns four dots of Magecraft. This Gift may only be purchased once.

**Vast Magic** [\*\*]: Permanent; whenever the Hero activates a Spell which only effects a single target, it instead targets two targets. Whenever a Spell targets [Rank] targets it instead targets [Rank+2], and whenever a Spell is cast which effects [Rank+2] targets the Spell instead effects 10 targets or Enemies. Lastly, for narrative purposes of effecting the environment the Hero's Spells may effect up to a half-mile in diameter of area, or a narrow band thrice that. Resolve the Spells normally otherwise. This has

no effect upon Spells which only target the caster.

**Potent Magic** [\*\*]: Permanent; whenever the Hero uses magic of any kind, Thaumaturgy, Magecraft, or Theurgy as applicable. They add their Rank to their Mystic Lore for all purposes relating to the casting or resolution of said magic.

**Overwhelming Magic** [\*\*]: Permanent; whenever the Hero uses magic of any kind, Thaumaturgy, Magecraft, or Theurgy as applicable. Any unwilling target of their magic suffers a Penalty on all opposed rolls to resist or counter the magic [including their Defense Pool] equal to the Hero's Rank.

**Power-Awarding Prana** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select one Gift or Magic besides an Excellence or any Gift with the Perfect tag. For the rest of the Day, the Hero may 'loan' that Gift to a willing target. The Hero may not use the Gift, the target may. The Hero may end this loan at any time as a reflexive action. This may be activated repeatedly to loan out more and more Gifts.

**Eyes of the Savant** [\*\*\*]: Permanent; the Hero is always aware of all active Magic [Thaumaturgy, Magecraft, and Theurgy] within one mile of his location. He is aware the power is present, and what it does. He is not aware who is using it or where it is. This has no effect upon Mystic Artifacts or Devices, or upon Gifts.

**Swallowing the Lotus** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5; all of the Hero's Supernal Excellences now have an Indefinite Duration and are impossible to dispel per the Mastery tag.

**Adamant Circle Sorcery** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5, Permanent; the Hero immediately learns six dots of Theurgy which he must meet all prerequisites for. This Gift may only be purchased once.

**Inviolable Essence Bastion** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Simple; Commit 2 Effort for the Day as the Hero takes some form of relaxed meditative pose. Until the Hero ends the effect as a Simple Action, the Hero is surrounded by some kind of visible force field or protective barrier. While so encased the Hero cannot stand, move beyond the barrier, or take actions more complex than thinking and speaking. The Hero cannot effect anything outside the barrier, and nothing harmful outside the barrier can get in and effect him. All Attacks, Gifts, Magic and Environmental Hazards are stopped by the barrier. Falling asleep does not end the barrier, and indeed the Hero can choose to enter an unconscious state for any length of time while using the barrier. This barrier does not rid the Hero of the need to eat, drink, breath or sleep though coupled with such protections a Hero could spend his entire lifespan in this invincible protection.

**Imbuing the Holy Ripple** [\*\*\*] Prerequisite Rank 5, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Story and select one intelligent Rank 0 character in one's presence. The character immediately becomes a Rank 1 Hero, gaining 8 dots of General or Hero Gifts selected by the Storyteller.

# Demons

*“A devil from the Outer Dark,” he grunted. “Oh, they’re nothing uncommon. They lurk as thick as fleas outside the belt of light which surrounds this world. I’ve heard the wise men of Zamora talk of them. Some find their way to Earth, but when they do, they have to take on earthly form and flesh of some sort. A man like myself, with a sword, is a match for any amount of fangs and talons, infernal or terrestrial.”*

*-Conan the Barbarian*

*“It was—well, it was mostly a kind of force that doesn’t belong in our part of space; a kind of force that acts and grows and shapes itself by other laws than those of our sort of Nature. We have no business calling in such things from outside, and only very wicked people and very wicked cults ever try to.”*

*-The Dunwich Horror*

## Template Benefits

**Infernal Anatomy:** The Demon begins play with three Aspects of his choice to represent his unusual and inhuman anatomy.

**Skilled:** The Demon begins play with five additional Skill Dots [for a total of 80 Skill Dots]

**Prototypal Excellence of [Skill] [\*]:** Permanent; the Monster permanently adds five dice to all rolls using that Skill. The Monster must also select one other Skill in which his unmodified rating is at least 3. This Skill suffers a permanent -2 Penalty, which cannot be negated or annulled by any means. As with all Penalties, this cannot reduce the dice pool below 1. At Rank 5, this Excellence instead increases the Skill's dice pool by seven.

## Combat Gifts

**Malevolent Principle Embodiment of [Skill] [\*]:** Permanent; Select one Skill for which the Demon possesses a Prototypal Excellence of [Skill]. The Demon adds his Rank to that Skill, but the Skill which the Demon inflicted a Penalty upon for that Excellence increases its Penalty to -5. Unlike an ordinary Penalty, this Penalty can result in a Skill being reduced to 0. A Skill reduced to 0 in this way counts as 1 for all passive calculations [such as determining movement speed with Agility or how much you can lift with Might, or for perceiving one’s surroundings with Perception] but all rolls involving that Skill automatically fail. This Gift may be purchased additional times for each Prototypal Excellence the Demon possesses.

**Absolute Dominance of [Skill] [\*]:** Reflexive; Select one Skill for which the Demon possesses a Prototypal Excellence of [Skill]. Once per Turn the Demon may reflexively Commit 1 Effort for the

Scene to reroll a roll involving that Skill and take his preferred result. This Gift may be purchased additional times for each Prototypal Excellence the Demon possesses.

**Tyrant Devil Evolution** [\*]: Prerequisite Devil-Tyrant Shintai, Rank 2, Permanent; the Demon's War Form gains one additional Aspect selected upon purchasing this Gift. This Gift can be purchased up to [Rank] times.

**By Rage Recast** [\*]: Simple; Select one Aspect upon purchasing this Gift. As a Simple Action the Demon may adopt the given Aspect in any form he wears, or adopt any or all Aspects purchased by this Gift. These Aspects last indefinitely or until they are dismissed as a reflexive action. They may be dismissed individually as desired. This Gift may be purchased up to [Rank] times.

**Who Strikes the Wind** [\*]: Permanent; the Demon adds [Rank] to his Defense pool for all purposes.

**Rip and Tear Mantra** [\*]: Permanent; the Demon adds [Rank] to all Attack rolls, but not to Combat Maneuvers.

**City Building Orchestral** [\*]: Mastery, Reflexively Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Demon adds his Rank to Soak.

**Malfeas Unbound** [\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5 and City Building Orchestral, Mastery, Permanent; City Building Orchestral now increases the Demon's Soak by [Rank+5] instead of Rank.

**By Pain Reforged** [\*]: Permanent; the Demon never suffers Would Penalties for any reason.

**Running to Forever** [\*]: Permanent; the result of the Demon's Initiative rolls are doubled. Moreover the Demon has essentially infinite stamina. She automatically succeeds all Endure Fatigue rolls, and can continue moving, working, or fighting forever without slowing or tiring. She no longer needs to sleep.

**Screaming Devil Arrow** [\*]: Prerequisite Rank 4, Permanent; when the Demon is making attacks using the Ranged Skill he always counts as being within range, regardless of the distance to his opponent, provided one of the following is true, the target attacked or deliriously effected the Demon within the last Turn, OR the target is within direct line of sight of the Demon [and are in the same planetary system]. Through this Gift Demons may return fire to passing jets, sympathetic Magics, or strike blows in defense of their planet from astronomical collosi. Scrying and use of electronic assistance does not count as line of sight.

**Walking Apocalypse Prana** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5 and Screaming Devil Arrow, Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. Until the start of the Demon's next Turn any target within 50 miles in any direction of the Demon counts as being within range for all of the Demon's attacks. If the Demon is using a Ranged Attack he may fire it normally. If he is using a Melee or Martial Arts Attack, waves of force or impact fly from the Demon's weapon or fist towards his intended target. If the Demon does not know where his target is, this Attack suffers a -4 Penalty. Any mundane fortification or structure between the Demon and his target is damaged sufficiently to allow the Attack's passage.

**Strength of Legions Approach** [\*\*]: Mastery, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Demon adds his Rank to his Damage with Might attacks and to his placement on the

Might Chart.

**Infinite Power** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5 and Potence, Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Turn the Demon adds five Damage to all Might-based Attacks and his place on the Might Chart counts as 21+ if it did not already. Moreover he may select and activate one of the following Effects

Effect 1: When attacking the Demon may choose to strike the ground with his attack, causing an earthquake that stretches out to a one mile radius from the Demon's location, hitting all characters [Enemies, Civilians, and allied characters] indiscriminately with his attack roll. Even flying characters are somehow hit by the shockwave or falling debris. This effect destroys and decimates structures around its use. This Attack deals Aggravated to Battlegroups.

Effect 2: If the Demon damages a foe during this Turn he may launch that foe one mile through the air and cause them to suffer fall damage as though they had fallen that far.

**Unseen Force Application** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Demon doubles all of his movement speeds. The Demon may fly at his speed.

**Green Sun Nimbus Flare** [\*\*]: Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene before rolling an attack roll. The attack is Unavoidable.

**Hell Hath No Fury Method** [\*\*]: Mastery, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Demon adds [Rank] to the damage of all Ranged-based attacks and the base damage of any Ranged-based attack he uses becomes 6 before Fighting Style.

**Unfolding Nightmare Evolution** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Demon immediately receives 4 dots in Gifts which must be purchased from the Demon Gift list and cannot purchase General Gifts or Magic. The Demon receives a Lesser Weakness, in addition to those Weaknesses already possessed, which must be approved by the Storyteller.

**Devil Tyrant Shintai** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 2, Reflexive; when purchasing this Gift the Demon designs a War Form in the same fashion as a Shifter. By committing 2 Effort for the Story the Demon may assume his War Form for the rest of the Scene or until he dismisses it as a Simple Action. This War Form need not look anatomical or biological and may look however desired provided it is at least somewhat inhuman in appearance.

**Eschalon Transcendence Shintai** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Devil-Tyrant Shintai, Rank 4: Permanent; The Demon's Devil Tyrant Shintai becomes permanent. The Demon assumes his War Form at all times and can only dismiss it, for a Scene, by committing 1 Effort for the Day.

**Ego-Infused Primacy Pattern** [\*\*\*]: Perfect, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Day whenever the Demon must roll Mystic Lore for the purposes of resisting a Gift, Spell, or other delerious effect. He automatically succeeds the roll in place of rolling. This Gift must be declared before and in place of rolling Mystic Lore. Moreover, the Demon's natural healing rate of [Rank per Day] is replaced by the following: the Demon heals 1 Health per Hour and the Demon automatically stabilizes upon becoming Incapacitated and cannot die from Complications. This latter effect is Permanent.

**Counter-Conceptual Imposition** [\*\*\*]: Perfect, Reflexive; Select and activate one of use following

Effects.

Effect 1: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene when targeted by an Unavoidable Attack, before rolling defense. It is instead not Unavoidable.

Effect 2: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene when targeted by an Aggravated Attack, before rolling defense. It is instead not Aggravated.

Effect 3: Once per Scene, at no cost, when targeted by an attack, turn long damage source, or offensive maneuver, negate that attack/maneuver. The Demon need not be aware of the attack, but he must declare this Gift before and in place of rolling Defense.

The Demon must select one of the following Flaws, situations in which none of these Effects may be activated.

Flaw of Darkness: This Gift may not be used when the Demon is in direct Sunlight or against an attack with the Holy Damage Type.

Flaw of Metropoli: This Gift may only be used within an area cultivated for sapient inhabitation. A city, a town, even on a dirt road or outside of a hut. But outside this, in raw nature, it may not be used.

Flaw of Authority: This Gift may only be used if the Demon is in the presence of or otherwise being watched by [even through electronic broadcast] a number of supporting characters with a minimum Size of 3.

Flaw of Hierarchy: This Gift may only be used to defend the Demon from targets with a lower Rank [Size+Rank for Battlegroups] then himself.

Flaw of Devotion: This Gift may not be used against characters wearing or wielding religious iconography of a particular faith or within a site deemed holy to that faith.

Additional Flaws may be used subject to Storyteller approval. This Gift may only be taken once.

**Windborn Stride** [\*\*\*]: Permanent; the Demon triples all of her movement speeds. By reflexively committing 1 Effort for the Day the Demon can increase this multiplier to x10 for the rest of the Day. If the Demon stops moving for any reason or performs any action more complicated than changing direction or talking, the multiplier returns to x3 immediately and this effect ends.

**Screaming Wind Trance** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Windborn Stride, Rank 4, Permanent; all of the Demon's movement speeds are permanently multiplied by ten. This upgrades and replaces Windborn Stride, it does not stack with it.

**River of all Torments** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisites Rank 5 and Screaming Wind Trance, Permanent; the Demon's movement speed becomes 1000 MPH. If it is already 1000 MPH or higher, it increases by 500 MPH.

**Blasphemous Nightmare Evolution** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Unfolding Nightmare Evolution; Rank 4: Permanent; The Demon immediately receives 6 dots in Gifts which must be purchased from the Demon Gift list and cannot purchase General Gifts or Magic. The Demon loses the Lesser Weakness gained from Unfolding Nightmare Evolution and replaces it with a Greater Weakness, in addition to those Weaknesses already possessed, which must be approved by the Storyteller.

**Worldform Jotun** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisites Rank 5 and Manifesting the Worldform, Simple; Commit 2



Effort for the Day. The Demon melds with his manifested Reality Marble until he ends this effect as a Simple Action turning it into his enormous new body. This has the following effects.

Effect 1: If the Territory is Size 1 the Demon gains the Giant, Titanic and Kaiju Aspects. If it is Size 2 or 3 he also gains the Colossal Aspect. If it is Size 4 or 5 he gains the Cosmic Size Aspect and this Gift gains the World-Altering tag. If the Demon already possesses any of these Aspects he instead gains +1 Might and Endurance per Aspect already possessed.

Effect 2: The Territory is now mobile. Wherever the Demon goes it and it's inhabitants go. This process is very stable. Characters within the Territory-now-Worldform never fly off, nor objects rattle or move with the Demon's movement, nor suffer damage or hazards unless they are specifically targeting the inhabitants, terrain or structures rather than the Demon. Such attacks and actions count as ordinary effecting of terrain and not as attacks against the Demon.

Effect 3: The Demon may produce attacks from any part along his Territory body, such as manifesting a shadowy apparition of himself or projecting massive tendrils from the ground. Attacks to these count as attacks against the Demon.

Effect 4: If the Demon is permanently slain the Territory survives at its present location but suffers environmental hazards and damage.

When this Gift is ended the Demon manifests from his Territory retaining his present Health and Effort and losing all gained bonuses and Aspects. He appears in the Territory in any location. This Gift may only be ended in places appropriate for setting down the Territory per Manifesting the Worldform Jotun.

## Social Gifts

**Unshattered Tongue Perfection** [\*]: Prerequisite Adamic Script, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and select one target the Demon is aware of. For the rest of the Scene the target understands and may speak and read High Speech as though he possessed Adamic Script.

**Our Little Secret** [\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day while selecting a single target in the Demon's presence. Roll Deception or Persuasion opposed by Integrity. Upon success the Demon may demand the target hide certain information or avoid telling a given secret. For the rest of the Story, the target shall unfailingly hide that information to the best of his ability and will be physically incapable of speaking, writing, or otherwise conveying the secret. Target's mind controlled or magically compelled to speak or write are prevented by terrifying but ultimately harmless effects such as vomiting maggots or one's writing hands beginning to bleed profusely.

**Golden Years Tarnished Black** [\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day while selecting a single target in the Demon's presence. If the target is willing, the Demon causes them to become temporarily disgusted by or enraged about a certain person, object or concept dear to them. If they are an NPC, the Demon may select one Major or Defining Intimacy they possess. They count as not possessing it for the rest of the Story. If the target is unwilling, roll Deception opposed by Integrity. Upon success, the above effect takes hold. In either case if the target has a Rank of at least [Demon's Rank-2, minimum 1]

they may commit 1 Effort for the Story as a Simple Action to end this effect early. A given target can only be effected by one use of this Gift at a time. If the target of this effect is Rank 0, the Demon may choose to render this permanent.

**Broadcast Announcement Prana** [\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Reflexive; the Demon may commit one Effort for the Day and select any number of electronic devices capable of transmitting sound, video, or both within [Rank miles] radius of the Demon. For the rest of the Scene the Demon may project his voice through any audio speakers and if desired his image through any video screens, allowing him to communicate with and make Social Influence or Mass Social Influence. This communication is purely one way. As the communication has nothing to do with networks or normal broadcasts, it is impossible to cut the feed. The Demon could speak through an old Gameboy if desired. Cutting the power to a particular device or destroying it's speakers or screen will end the effect on that particular machine however.

**Solipsistic Rejection of Impossibilities** [\*]: Permanent; the Demon may Reject any Social Influence regardless of whether he possesses a relevant Intimacy, and may reflexively commit 1 Effort for the Day at any time to render himself Jaded for the rest of the Day.

**Counterpoint Inquisition Defense** [\*]: Prerequisite Analytical Modeling Intuition, Permanent; whenever a target attempts to use any Gift or Magic to read the Demon's mind, the Demon may automatically ask one question of the target per a successful use of Analytical Modeling Intuition.

**Memory Poison Mastery** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Golden Years Tarnished Black, Permanent; whenever the Demon successfully uses Golden Years Tarnished Black upon a target, he may choose to cause the target to instead forget all about the Intimacy or precious person or concept. As far as the target knows, they have never heard of and have no particular attraction to or interest in the relevant person or idea. Any memories involving the target are altered or filled in with the minimum amount of changes to substantiate forgetting the Intimacy. If the target of this effect is Rank 0, the Demon may choose to render this permanent.

**World Chains Geas** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 4 and Magnanimous Warning Glyph, Permanent; whenever the Demon Incapacitates an Enemy he may choose to reflexively commit 1 Effort for the Day to inflict them with an effect equivalent to Magnanimous Warning Glyph with one alteration. Failure to comply with the condition brings immediate and final death, which negates all Immortality-tag effects.

**Impervious Primacy Mantle** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Demon adds [Rank+2] to his Integrity to all rolls to resist or mitigate any Gift, Magic, or Social Influence that would influence his behavior or control his actions. Moreover when using such effects herself to attempt to influence a single character, that target suffers a Penalty on their own Integrity roll equal to the Demon's Rank.

**Legions of Tartarus Approach** [\*\*]: Permanent; If the Demon is serving as the Commanding Officer of a Battlegroup composed primarily of fellow Demons or characters called using Magic with the Summoning-tag that Battlegroup always counts as having Drill 5.

**Crowned with Fury** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Demon target's one intelligent

sentient being and rolls Intimidate opposed by Integrity. Upon success the target will obey the Demon in spirit and in deed for the following lunar month, but will not obey any orders that cause them to intentionally harm themselves or would violate their Defining Intimacies. If the controlled subject is a Monster with a Rank of at least [Demon's Rank-2], once per Turn on their turn the target may reflexively Commit 1 Effort for the Day to reroll Integrity against the initial Intimidate roll used to activate the Gift. Success for the target ends this Gift. Characters who succeed on a roll to resist Crowned with Fury, either initially or by breaking free later, cannot be targetted again by this Gift during the current Scene.

**Immolating Terror Technique** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, all Rank 0 characters not allied with the Demon will flee in terror at his approach. Battlegroups attempting to engage the Demon may attempt to stand their ground and resist this effect by rolling their Morale in an opposed check against the Demon's Intimidation before combat begins. Moreover, for the rest of the Scene the Demon adds his [Rank] to his Intimidation.

**Factual Determination Analysis** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, the Demon is always aware whenever someone speaking in his presence is intentionally telling a lie or omitting crucial information in their responses.

**Analytical Modeling Intuition** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select one target in the Demon's presence. Roll Intimidate or Persuasion opposed by Integrity. Upon success the Demon may ask one question of the target and receive from them an honest and complete answer.

**Magnanimous Warning Glyph** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Day after successfully attacking and damaging a foe but before damage is applied. The damage is not applied, instead the target is marked with some kind of visible symbol of the Demon's ire, such as a burning glyph or a mesh of tattoos detailing his hatred in High Speech. The Demon declares to the target a condition it is within the target's power to do or not do, such as “Journey to Asia this week and give my regards to your master.” or “Do not ever tell the others about me.” If the target violates the condition, the damage which has been withheld is immediately applied. A given target may only have one Warning Glyph upon them at a time, and are always aware of the threat that should occur from noncompliance. This Glyph lasts indefinitely until it has taken effect.

**Fealty Acknowledging Audience** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Magnanimous Warning Glyph, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select a number of characters with a Size up to the Demon's Rank. These characters must be willing or Incapacitated. The characters gain Warning Glyphs per Magnanimous Warning Glyph with a Damage of [Rank x2] with a condition set at activation which must be the same for all targets, generally something broad such as “Be loyal to be as your lord forever.” This damage is simply applied, it is not an attack and does not consider the target's Defense Pool or Soak.

**Sun-Salted Fields** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Story and designate an area governed by a single government, authority, or polity that does not extend further then [Rank x50] miles radius. The Demon addresses this government or polity through some means, making to them some form of demands they could reasonably carry out. “Kill every firstborn in the land” is

acceptable, as is “Make me your new ruler”, but “Tear down the sky” or “Bring me a Rank 5 Mystic Artifact” is not unless the target's could actually do so without tremendous effort. If the Demon's demands are not met, the designated land will suffer mundane maladies of the Storyteller's choosing for a year and a day. There may be famine or plague, or perhaps a neighboring land will invade or the local economy may crash. If the Demon is slain while this Gift is active its effects will gradually end or be broadly mitigated over the following week.

**Absolute Tyrant Exultant** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, any intelligent sapient character with a Rank of [Demon's Rank-2] or less [minimum Rank 0] the Demon interacts with is put under a supernatural illusion that the Demon is someone with legitimate authority over the person in question. The context of this illusion may be provided by the Demon or allowed to be formed by the victims [for instance a Demon may claim to represent a powerful state agency, or be an employee's boss's boss]. The claim need not be reasonable, the illusion fills in any gaps of logic until at least the end of the Scene. This is not true mind control, it is purely an illusion, characters will only obey the Demon to the extent they would obey the imagined authority in question and are under no supernatural compulsion otherwise.

**Demonic Primacy of Essence** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 4, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and designate an area with a maximum radius of [Rank miles] centered on the Demon's current location.. Any character in this area attempting to resist Social Influence with Integrity or notice deceptions with Empathy from a character with a higher Rank than themselves suffers a -5 Penalty to do so. This area remains designated until the end of the Story, and this Gift may be used in succession to create more areas or expand an existing area.

**Life-Denying Hate** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and roll Intimidate or Mystic Lore opposed by Integrity while selecting an intelligent, sapient target. Upon success, if the target is slain during the current Story he will not pass into whatever afterlife awaits beyond this world, nor shall he persist as a ghost. Instead he is shunted outside the universe, locked into his own mind subject to a mental hell of the Demon's devising, forever. More useful than this is the fact that successful use of this Gift leaves the target completely convinced of the truthfulness of this threat. As long as they are under this Gift's effect they gain a new Defining Intimacy [if an NPC] of “Avoid this horrible fate at all costs”. This fate will not take effect if the target is benefiting from any kind of Gift or Magic with the Immortality-tag.

**Do Not Adjust Your Television** [\*\*]: Prerequisites Rank 5 and Broadcast Announcement Prana, World-Altering Permanent; when activating Broadcast Announcement Prana the Demon may instead commit the Effort for the Story to gain the following effects. The Demon may effect any or all eligible receivers across the entire planetary system. Furthermore while doing so whenever the Demon uses Mass Social Influence upon these targets ignore the ordinary chart. Instead, for each success past Basic Threshold the Influence effects a minimum of one million people.

**Geas-Binding-Creation** [\*\*]: Prerequisites Rank 5 and Fealty Acknowledging Audience, World-Altering, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Story and select a celestial body. State a simple, easily

obeyed command like “Worship no one but me” or “Kill anyone who wears a hat”. For the next year and a day any character who thinks to violate the command will feel an intense desire not to and must commit 1 Effort for the Story to proceed the first time in a Scene they mean to do so. If the character is a sapient Rank 0 character and they go on to break the command, they will also immediately die in some horrible fashion devised by the Demon such as vomiting out their entrails or their skeleton violently climbing out of their skin or their blood turning into lava. The Demon may issue multiple commands to the same planet but these commands cannot be contradictory.

**Ascendancy Mantle of the Tyrant** [\*\*]: Permanent; whenever the Demon is personally and publically running a Social Group, he does not suffer Penalties to Bueracracy rolls concerning that organization and any character making Bueracracy rolls to influence that Social Group suffers a -5 Penalty. In order for this Gift to apply the Demon need not be open about his being a Demon but must occupy the highest apparent level or tier of the organization. Any attempts at humility, subterfuge or deciet in regard to his being in charge of the Social Group [or at least acting as part of its upper echelons] renders this Gift inapplicable.

**Ultimate Sovereign Fundament** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Absolute Tyrant Exultant, Permanent; whenever Absolute Tyrant Exultant is active even unintelligent animals, mindless undead and simple machines recognize the Demon as their master provided they possess the relevant low Rank. Moreover even inanimate nature regards him, the Demon does not suffer any Penalties caused by weather or his natural surroundings nor is he damaged by Environmental Hazards created by the same [Hazards caused by something other then weather or natural surroundings, such as a house fire or an electrical current in a puddle effect him normally]. Waves still to allow his ship safe passage, sandstorms clear to permit him clear sight, a black hole kindly withdraws its fierce gravity from the Demon, etc. The exact effects of this are determined by the Storyteller but should be limited to preventing Penalties and Environmental Hazards born of untamed nature from harming the Demon specifically.

**Unreasoning Prejudice Infliction** [\*\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select one target in the Demon's presence. Roll Deception or Mystic Lore opposed by Integrity. Upon success the Demon grants the target a new Major Intimacy of her choice, inflicting upon the target a sudden love or hatred for a particular person or idea. If the target is a PC, they instead simply develop the relevant emotional connection. The Demon may choose to have this seem to be a new and natural interest, or to have it appear as something the character always had an interest in, subtly altering memories the bare minimum to preserve the illusion. This can take effect even in the presence of a Defining Intimacy harshly against the new Major Intimacy, the target wrestling with inner conflict. This effect lasts for the rest of the Story. If the target is Rank 0, the Demon may declare this effect permanent. If the target has a Rank of at least [Demon's Rank-2, minimum 1] they may commit 1 Effort for the Story to end this effect early as a Simple Action.

## Stealth Gifts

**Endless Awareness Prana** [\*]: Permanent; the Demon never suffers Penalties relating to Perception nor suffers Penalties to other Skills for reasons of Perception [such as fighting in pitch darkness or attacking a target in stealth].

**Ripping Fate Stance** [\*]: Permanent; the Demon's location cannot ordinarily be traced by Gifts or Magic. The first time in a Scene a Monster attempts to use a Gift to locate the Demon, such as through World's Greatest Detective or Efficient Secretary Technique, they roll Perception or Survival opposed by the Demon's Stealth. If the Demon succeeds, the Gift fails to notice the Demon and the target cannot attempt to locate the Demon through Gifts or Magic for the next twenty four hours. This has no effect upon mundane investing or Scrying.

**Cornered Titan Desperation** [\*]: Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The Demon passes through any single wall or barrier as though it wasn't there. At the end of the Scene [or after one hour] the wall or barrier rots and crumbles into some manner of obviously unnatural state such as a pool of bubbling black tar or piles of human flesh. This Gift may also be used to escape any mundane chain or bind [but not a grapple] with similar results.

**Seeing is Blindness** [\*]: Reflexive, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene any Rank 0 character who sees the Demon is Blinded for the rest of the Scene. This Gift can only blind so many so fast, so Battlegroups instead merely suffer a -4 Penalty to all Attack rolls for the Scene as some portion of their rank is blinded. The target's must directly see the Demon, viewing the Demon through a mirror or television broadcast doesn't invoke the effect.

**Black Mirror Incarnation** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Supplemental: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. Until the Demon dismisses it as a reflexive action, the Demon takes on the complete visual appearance of any person approximately his size [anything not requiring additional Aspects such as Small or Giant to represent unless one possesses such] with any mundane attire desired. The Demon's costume is completely perfect and cannot be noticed as such except by supernatural powers to see through disguises. This even mimics subtle supernatural elements, such as a vampire's apparent lack of the need to breath. Nonetheless this is only a disguise, just because the Demon looks like he isn't breathing to any mundane inspection doesn't change the fact he requires air.

**Loom-Snarling Deception** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Black Mirror Incarnation, Permanent; whenever the Demon uses Black Mirror Incarnation he may reinforce his fake identity, declaring a Rank and a Monster Type [or lack thereof]. As long as he retains his disguise, any Gift or Magic to deduce the Demon's Rank or Type yields the false information.

**Eldritch Secrets Mastery** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3 and Loom-Snarling Deception, Perfect, Permanent; whenever the Demon is disguised with Black Mirror Incarnation any Gift or Magic that would expose him by any means besides Gifts that specifically see through disguises are somehow thwarted. Gifts to detect his Health or Skills yield traits consistent with his disguise, Divination to see into the Demon's future or Retrocognition to see his past reveal the false life of the disguise, reading his mind or memories yield convincing fakes of what the disguise could reasonably be thinking or remember, Etc. In short as far as any analytical Gift or Magic is concerned the Demon is in fact his disguise. This has no effect upon mundane deduction or suspicion.

**Unbound Freedom Infiltration** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Windborn Stride, Permanent; whenever the Demon is moving at least sixty miles per hour, she is invisible and inaudible. Characters attempting to notice

the Demon suffer a -4 Penalty to do so. Moreover while traveling this fast the Demon gains the Fluid Body Aspect. She and anything she is wearing or carrying turning briefly into a cloud of red mist or a membrane of living darkness or similar manifestation.

**Tear in the Tapestry** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. For the rest of the Day, any deeds or actions the commits will become difficult to draw attention to or make newsworthy. In short, a long series of coincidences will act to suppress any news story or attempt to spread awareness of the deeds done in that day by the Demon. Newspaper articles are suppressed, social media algorithms bury the story, conspiracy theories and competing false narratives drown out the truth, Etc. Any character attempting to draw the public's attention to the actions suffers a -5 Penalty to all Social Influence or Bueracracy actions to do so and all Rank 0 characters suffer a -5 Penalty to all Empathy rolls to see through lies about the day in question. This Gift is not infallible. It will suppress spread of a story entirely if at all reasonable, and will merely make it impossible to prove the Demon was involved if not, but sufficiently egregious acts by the Demon can override and negate this effect at the discretion of the Storyteller.

**Nightmare Beyond Description** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3 and Seeing is Blindness, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and select up to [Rank] Enemies. Roll Intimidation opposed by Integrity. Any target that fails is wracked with terror of the Demon. Rank 0 characters immediate faint, and when they awaken forget entirely about seeing the Demon, instead believing they somehow passed out. Rank 1+ characters do not lose consciousness or forget about the Demon, but completely forget the Demon's appearance and all details about it at the end of the Scene. If used upon a Battlegroup, the Battlegroup's members suffer the same effect as a Rank 1+ Monster.

**Eldritch Cult Prayer** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Demon is always aware when someone is praying to him whether aloud or silently and may reflexively hear the prayer or mentally 'record' it to be heard later. By reflexively committing 1 Effort for the Scene while being prayed to the Demon gains the following benefits. Firstly the Demon's may choose to immediately scry the location of those so praying as a reflexive action, seeing and/or hearing all that transpires around the area provided it is not warded against Scrying. While scrying the Demon suffers a -4 Penalty to Perception rolls regarding his immediate surroundings. The Demon may continue scrying on subsequent turns by spending Simple Actions. Secondly the Demon may communicate telepathically with his worshipper for the rest of the Scene as a Reflexive Action. This communication works regardless of distance, and only allows the Demon and the target to communicate. The Demon may not 'network' worshippers to allow them to communicate with each other except by directly conveying their words to each other.

## Craft Gifts

**Viridian Legend Exoskeleton** [\*]: Mastery, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, the Demon transforms into an iconic glorious form or outfit selected upon learning this Gift. This form need not be recognizable as the Demon. The Demon is treated as wearing a Rank 1 Mystic Artifact Armor which can be Light, Medium, or Heavy as desired selected upon purchase. The Viridian

has the Indestructible Evocation and one other Evocation of the Demon's choice. This Gift can be purchased additional times to increase the Rank of the Viridian Armor by 1 and grant an additional Evocation. This Gift can be purchased up to [Rank] times. This Armor does not suffer Mystic Collapse.

**Vitriolic Corona Endowment** [\*]: Mastery, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, the Demon summons from nothing a powerful magical weapon selected upon learning this Gift, which must be either Might-based or Ranged-based. This weapon counts as a Rank 1 Mystic Artifact with the Indestructible Evocation and one additional Evocation of the Demon's choice. This Gift can be purchased additional times to increase the rank of the Demon Endowment by 1 and grant an additional Evocation. This Gift can be purchased up to [Rank] times. This Weapon does not suffer Mystic Collapse.

**Tool-Transcending Constructs** [\*]: Prerequisite Mind Hand Manipulation, Permanent; the Demon can craft and perform Artifice actions without tools, bending, twisting, modifying and shaping the raw material with telekinetic force born of his mind. Moreover he crafts ten times faster than normal. For mundane crafting this means the item is crafted in 1/10th the ordinary time, which stacks with the x2 for rolling 6+ successes to 1/12th the time. For Items of Power you instead multiply the successes rolled each Interval by 10. For instance if you rolled 6 successes in an Interval, it would count as 60 successes.

**Essence Dissecting Stare** [\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene while looking at a Mystic Artifact, Device, or piece of mundane technology. The Demon immediately gains a full understanding of its powers and workings as though they had rolled 10 successes on a Mystic Lore, Artifice, or Science check and if they possess the relevant Gift [Craft Mystic Artifact or Craft Device], they add the Item to their Schematic List.

**Flames Lit Within** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Demon counts his Rank as being two higher than it is for the purposes of Creating Schematics and Reverse Engineering Schematics. At Rank 5, this Gift instead allows one to commit 1 Effort for the Scene to instantaneously design and create any Schematic without rolling, or immediately understand one Schematic one is studying also without rolling.

**Hellforging Meditation** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Soul-Stealing Pact, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Demon may expel a Soul from his being into an object. This object now functions as a Soul Jar for that soul indefinitely for all purposes. Moreover that Soul Jar counts as a Universal Lesser Exotic Material, and any item forged from it becomes the new Soul Jar for that soul.

**Ghost Rider** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. For the next twenty-four hours or until the Demon uses this Gift again the Demon summons a personalized Mystic Artifact Vehicle with a Rank of 1 that is not subject to Mystic Collapse designed when this Gift is purchased. This Gift may be purchased up to [Rank] times allowing the Demon to completely redesign the Vehicle summoned by this Gift as a Rank 2, 3, 4, etc Vehicle. Each time this Vehicle is called it appears as undamaged, pristine and new.

**Unbreakable Infernal Conveyance** [\*\*]: Perfect, Reflexive; Once per Scene whenever a Vehicle the



Demon is traveling in would take damage [after any defenses are rolled but before damage is applied]. The damage is negated.

**Calamities Crashing Down** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene while piloting a Vehicle to crash the Vehicle in a way that invariably ends in a massive explosion. Select up to [Vehicle Rank] Enemies and roll a Calamitous Explosive Attack, substituting the normal Attack roll for Riding. This Attack effects the [Vehicle Rank] Enemies as an Unavoidable Attack with a base damage of 17 [per Calamitous Explosive rules]. This Attack invariably destroys the Vehicle in question requiring a future Repair roll to fix it. The Demon never suffers damage from this Attack, though he is still vulnerable to possible fallout such as fall damage after crashing a plane.

**Wholeness Rightly Assumed** [\*\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select and activate one of the following effects.

Effect 1: One target in the Demon's presence is immediately cured of one Injury from the Injury Chart, is stabilized if in risk of dying, and is cured of one mundane illness. All of these are accomplished with one activation

Effect 2: Select a broken or destroyed object the size of bus or smaller in the Demon's presence. The object is miraculously repaired to pristine condition. If the object is an Item of Power, the Exotic Material requirement for its repair is waived. This has no effect on broken Rank 5 Mystic Artifacts or Devices.

**Constructive Convergence of Principles** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Tool-Transcending Constructs, Permanent; the Demon may use his Mystic Lore in place of his Artifice Skill for all purposes. If his unmodified Mystic Lore and unmodified Artifice are equal he instead adds two dice. Moreover by committing 1 Effort for the Story as a Simple Action the Demon may convert 1 Greater or Legendary Exotic Material into a Universal Exotic Material of the same level, Greater or Legendary. This usually takes the form of a heatless swirling ball of flame-like energy known as Quantum Foam.

**Experimental Acceleration Mastery** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisites Rank 3 and Constructive Convergence of Principles, Permanent; the Demon multiplies her crafting speed by her Rank. This stacks with the bonus provided by Tool-Transcending Construct. Moreover the Demon may commit 1 Effort for the Day as a Simple Action when working on any mundane crafting project smaller than a bus to instantaneously complete t her craft without rolling. The Demon must still possess all the relevant components and materials.

**Nightmare Steed** [\*\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. A completely mundane and fully fueled Land or Water Vehicle with a Rank of [Demon's Rank or 3, whichever is lower, Vehicle type selected upon activating this Gift] appears before the Demon in the nearest unoccupied spot and persists for the next twenty-four hours or until the Demon uses this Gift again. While completely mundane in Traits and lacking Evocations it may look as fantastical as desired, from a sailing ship with a demonic crew representing a Rank 3 ship or a chariot pulled by hellhounds as a Rank 1 car.

**The King and the Kingdom** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 4; the Demon may create a Reality Marble using the rule on page [XX]. He has 50 points to create his Reality Marble. His Anchor always counts as

himself.

**Opening the Gates of Pandemonium [\*\*\*]:** Prerequisite Rank 4 and The King and the Kingdom, Extended; Commit 2 Effort for the Day as an Extended Action requiring one minute. At the end of the minute the Demon may open an Iris at her current location that leads to a preset location in her Reality Marble. This location may be changed to a different location in the Reality Mare once per Story as an Extended Action requiring eight hours and no cost. Moreover the Demon may expand her Territory, gaining an addition 25 points to alter, expand, or rebuild it, and if the Territory is already maximum size she may choose to expand it to the size of a moon or planet. This latter effect is Permanent.

**Manifesting the Worldform [\*\*\*]:** Prerequisite Rank 5 and the King and the Kingdom, Permanent; the Demon's Reality Marble is no longer a Territory. It is moved to the Demon's world as a fixture. It is added in the way least obstructive to existing habitation. If it is Size 1-3, it may be added to a location, melding with and replacing the surrounding Terrain OR floating in the sky above it. If it is Size 4 or 5, it rises out of the ocean as a new island or continent, and if it is Size 5 modified by Opening the Gates of Pandemonium then the Territory becomes a new planet somewhere in the present solar system. The new planet or moon is not effected by nor does it effect the balance of gravity in the system. Adding a second moon to Earth in this way will not effect the tides. Moreover the new planet will retain its present climate regardless of its distance from or proximity to the local star[s]. If the Territory is Size 4 or 5 this Gift gains the World-Altering tag.

## **Magic Gifts**

**Hellscry Chakra [\*]:** Permanent; the Demon is always aware if someone in his presence is a supernatural being, and if so their Rank. This Gift does not tell the Demon their Type [if any] or any further information.

**Soul-Stealing Pact [\*]:** Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and select one willing target in one's presence. When the target dies, they do not pass onto whatever afterlife awaits beyond the world, nor do they linger as a ghost. Instead their Soul rushes to the Demon swift as a scream and is absorbed into her essence. The Demon functions as a Soul Jar [per the Theurgy magic] for all purposes and may render hostage souls conscious or unconscious on a whim, and converse with them internally or block such communication likewise. This does not take effect unless the victim truly dies, and is prevented by any Immortality-tag Gift. This Gift is usually used as part of a voluntary bargain where the Demon promises to perform a task or grant a request to the target in exchange for getting their soul at death.

**Nightmare Fugue Vigilance [\*]:** Permanent; the Demon gains the Restless Aspect and cannot be magically put to sleep or made to lose consciousness involuntarily by any means. Most Demons with this Gift are incapable of sleep or plagued by nightmares if they choose to sleep.

**Ritual Magic [\*]:** Permanent; the Demon may cast any magic she knows with a Reflexive or Simple tag as a Ritual requiring fifteen minutes. If they do so, the resulting magic costs no Effort to activate and suffers from no Penalties from any source. This cannot be used on magic which requires committing Effort for the Story.

**Cultic Magic** [\*]: Permanent; the Demon may substitute the Effort cost of magic with cultic supporters. The Demon must have in his company a group of intelligent beings with a Size of 2+ for Effort committed for the Scene and 3+ for Effort committed for the Day who are performing no notable actions besides ritual actions on his behalf such as waving staves or chanting in mystical languages. All magic the Demon casts requires no Effort be committed for the Scene or Day to perform. This has no effect upon magic that requires Effort be committed for the Story.

**Proxy Magic** [\*]: Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select a character or an inanimate object. For the rest of the Day the Demon may perform any magic [Thaumaturgy, Magecraft, or Theurgy] as though they and any Catalysts they possess were physically present, using the character or object as an origin. This effect immediately ends if the character is Incapacitated or Killed or if the object is broken. The Demon may choose to extend the duration of this effect by leaving the Effort committed with each new Day, regardless of the distance between themselves and the Proxy. The Demon may only sustain up to their [Rank] in Proxies at a time.

**Mind Hand Manipulation** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the demon can move objects in his vicinity with an invisible telekinetic force. The telekinetic force has an effective Might equal to the Demon's Mystic Lore+2 for all purposes. The telekinetic force counts as a Might-based Attack using the Ranged Skill, and is compatible with all Fighting Styles, Gifts, and Combat Maneuvers compatible with such. The demon can hold as many objects within his telekinesis as the force's place on the Might Chart permits. The demon may not use this Gift to fly or levitate himself in any way.

**Vast Magic** [\*\*]: Permanent; whenever the Demon activates a Spell which only effects a single target, it instead targets two targets. Whenever a Spell targets [Rank] targets it instead targets [Rank+2], and whenever a Spell is cast which effects [Rank+2] targets the Spell instead effects 10 targets or Enemies. Lastly, for narrative purposes of effecting the environment the Demon's Spells may effect up to a half-mile in diameter of area, or a narrow band thrice that. Resolve the Spells normally otherwise. This has no effect upon Spells which only target the caster.

**Potent Magic** [\*\*]: Permanent; whenever the Demon uses magic of any kind, Thaumaturgy, Magecraft, or Theurgy as applicable. They add their Rank to their Mystic Lore for all purposes relating to the casting or resolution of said magic.

**Devil's Due Method** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3 and Soul-Stealing Pact, Reflexive; whenever a target under the effect of Soul-Stealing Pact would be Incapacitated the Demon reflexively gain the following benefits at no cost. Firstly, the Demon may scry the location of the target's death, even if it is warded against scrying, seeing and hearing all transpiring.

Secondly, he immediately learns the immediately proceeding events and circumstances under which the target was incapacitated.

Thirdly, he may project some visage or hologram of himself to that location, usually a terrifying and exaggerated version of the Demon, and may speak and communicate with those present, even the Incapacitated target.

These effects last up to ten minutes or until the Demon is satisfied, whichever happens first. At the end of the duration the Demon may choose to reflexively revoke any Immortality-tag Gifts the target possesses [if any] and kill the target [if merely Incapacitated], calling his soul to the Demon.

**Overwhelming Magic [\*\*]:** Permanent; whenever the Demon uses magic of any kind, Thaumaturgy, Magecraft, or Theurgy as applicable. Any unwilling target of their magic suffers a Penalty on all opposed rolls to resist or counter the magic [including their Defense Pool] equal to the Demon's Rank.

**Sorcerous Enlightenment of the Demon City [\*\*]:** Permanent; whenever the Demon uses a Magic with the Spell tag to inflict damage by any means, increase its damage by 4. Moreover, whenever using a Spell whose Damage Type is something other than Unholy, the Demon may declare it Unholy instead before rolling it.

**Sorcerous Enlightenment of the Endless Desert [\*\*]:** Permanent; the Demon is a sublime master of the art of summoning. The Demon may learn Theurgy Magic with the High Summoning tag. At Rank 5 the Demon may learn Theurgy Magic using the Grand Summoning tag. The Demon uses the Experience Costs of Theurgy Magicians do for these purchases and must meet all other prerequisites.

**Sorcerous Enlightenment of the Infernal Hierarchy [\*\*]:** Permanent; whenever the Demon uses Magic upon a target with a Rank lower than himself, the Demon may choose to either add two to its Damage, two to any activation rolls OR inflict a -2 Penalty to any resistance rolls, as applicable to the Magic. Only one of these benefits can apply on a given activation of a Magic.

**Sorcerous Enlightenment of the Divine Wind [\*\*]:** Permanent; the Demon immediately learns the Theurgy Magic Step of Hermes and Seven-League Stride, regardless of whether he meets the prerequisites.

**Sorcerous Enlightenment of the Inner Sphere [\*\*]:** Permanent; the Demon selects one narrowly specific environment such as "While submerged in water", or "In a desert" or "In outer space". While in that environment, once per Turn at no cost when the Demon is targetted by Magic of any kind [but not by Type or General Gifts], that Magic has no effect upon the Demon.

**Sorcerous Enlightenment of the Eon Moths [\*\*]:** Permanent; the Demon is a master of the reflective magics of the cosmic destroyers. Once per Scene at no cost when targetted by a Magic of any kind, before any resistance rolls are made, the Demon may declare the target of the Magic to be another applicable character, which can be the caster. If the Magic targets multiple targets the Demon only reselects one, that which would have targetted himself. Resolve the Magic upon the new target normally.

**Shepherd the Unworthy [\*\*]:** Prerequisite Rank 4, Eldritch Cult Prayer, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Story while communicating with a worshipper with Eldritch Cult Prayer. The Demon immediately teleports to the worshipper's location. This Gift may not be used if the Demon is in combat or otherwise under duress.

**You Are Still Useful To Me [\*\*\*]:** Prerequisite Rank 4, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Story while in the presence of a character who died within the current Story [or Week]. The character immediately resurrects exactly as they were in life. This Gift has no effect if the target's Soul is trapped in a Soul Jar

or similar effect, or upon target's resurrected from the dead within the last Story by this Gift or other means.

**Hollow Mind Possession** [\*\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select one complex electronic device or thaumurgical equivalent. This can be a computer, a smart phone, a terminal for the Voice of Mercury magic, or a vehicle provided it has an onboard computer of some kind. For the rest of the Day the computer system comes alive and will serve the Demon. Vehicles will drive themselves, take orders, even speak if they possess speaker systems, computers will not move but will be able to perform or refuse to perform autonomously any action they are normally capable of. If the object in question is a Mystic Artifact or Device, this Gift only functions if the Demon has an equal or higher Rank than the Item. The created servant is counted as possessing 8 dice in Science, Academics, and Riding and 3 dice in all other actions. Vehicles always qualify as possessing Minimum Riding Skill sufficient to drive themselves.

# Scientists

*"Magic and technology  
Voodoo dolls and chants, electricity  
We're makin' weird science  
Fantasy and microchips  
Shooting from the hip, something different  
We're making weird science, ooh"  
-Weird Science by Oingo Boingo*

*"Look, if you have a clumsy child, you make him wear a helmet. If you have death-prone children, you keep a few clones of them in your lab."  
-Rusty Venture*

## Template Benefits

**Inspiration:** The Scientist begins play with the Craft Devices Gift, and the Science and Artifice Excellences at no cost.

**Mortal Excellence of [Skill] [\*]:** Mastery, Reflexive, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Monster adds [Rank] to all rolls using that Skill.

## Combat Gifts

## Social Gifts

## Stealth Gifts

## Craft Gifts

## Magic Gifts

Level 1 Gifts:

**Spark of Genius** [\*]: Permanent; the Scientist adds [Rank+2] to all Science and Artifice rolls.

**Science Hero** [\*]: Permanent; The Scientist receives a two die bonus on all Science, Persuasion, Endurance, Agility, and his choice of Firearms, Melee, or Martial Arts rolls.

**Johnny Questing** [\*]: Permanent; the Scientist adds two successes to all Damage rolls and to his Soak.

**Kitbash** [\*]: Permanent; When attempting to craft a mundane handheld item up to the size of a rifle, the Scientist may always complete the craft in a Simple Action. When attempting to craft a mundane item equal in size to a passenger aircraft or smaller the Scientist may always complete the craft in at

most fifteen minutes. This only alleviates the time of construction, the Scientist must still possess all the necessary components and tools to do the work.

**Monkey Wrench** [\*]: Permanent; the Scientist never suffers Penalties for using inferior or poor quality tools to craft, and may use anything lying around as tools for the purposes of crafting. Moreover the Scientist may use any object originally designed to aid in crafting as a weapon and utilize any appropriate Fighting Styles while doing so. While in the Scientist's hands the tool counts as a Rank 1 Device Weapon with the Indestructible Evocation.

**Appropriation** [\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene when attempting to learn blueprints from a physical source or instruction from another character. Do not roll Artifice, the Scientist automatically succeeds. Moreover the Scientist may, reflexively and at no cost, choose to inflict a -4 Penalty on all rolls to interpret blueprints or analyze items the Scientist creates.

**Progress Stops For Noone** [\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The Scientist immediately becomes aware of where the nearest location or person who could teach him a particular blueprint is. Moreover while creating one's own blueprints, the successes required becomes [Item Rank+3] instead of [Item Rank+5], This latter effect is permanent and has no cost.

**Coconut Phone** [\*\*]: Permanent; Whenever the Scientist is crafting mundane technology up to the size of a bus he may ignore the logic of the materials he is using. He may craft any mundane technology that a normal person in his era could reasonably purchase using any nearby materials, such as producing a phone from a coconuts or a functional firearm from a pipe and a AA-Battery, or even an aircraft from styrofoam. This Gift may not produce technologies futuristic from the standpoint of the Scientist or items not available to civilians such as a nuclear reactor or a missile.

**Industrial Captain** [\*\*]: Permanent; Whenever the Scientist rolls to create a Mystic Artifact or Device, he rolls twice at each Interval, adding his successes together for the Interval. Moreover the Scientist's Intervals are reduced: Intervals of 1 Season become 1 Month, those of 1 Week become 1 Day, and those of 1 Day become 1 Hour.

**I Expect You To Die** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The Scientist explains the workings of some weapon or source of damage that the Scientist crafted himself to a single Enemy the Scientist is aware of. At any time in the current Scene, if the target Enemy is attacked by the weapon or damage source, regardless of whether the Scientist is the one wielding it, the Damage is Aggravated. This Gift can only effect the same Enemy once per Scene.

**Igor Designation** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Scientist designates a willing character he is aware of in his presence as an 'Igor'. The 'Igor' does not suffer Havoc when using any Device the Scientist crafted himself. The Scientist may revoke this status as a Simple Action at no cost and it otherwise lasts indefinitely, and he may have up to [Rank+2] Igors at a time.

**Ripley Armored Core** [\*\*]: Reflexive, Supplemental: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene when targeted by an Aggravated Attack. The attack is instead not Aggravated. This must be declared before rolling Defense. The Scientist must be wearing Armor or piloting a Vehicle to activate this Gift and upon

activating it, their Armor is repaired [if previously Sundered], OR their Vehicle heals [Scientist's Rank] Health.

**Gadgeteer Defense [\*\*]:** Reflexive, Supplemental: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene when targeted by an Unavoidable Attack. The attack is instead not Unavoidable and he adds [Rank of the Highest Ranked Device or Mystic Artifact in his possession+2] to his Soak against the attack. The Scientist must have a Device or Mystic Artifact on hand to use this Gift.

Level 3 Gifts:

**Powered Armor Suit [\*\*\*]:** Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. Through a process requiring one hour and access to necessary equipment and supplies for armor making [barring the use of other Gifts] the Scientist may create a powered suit of armor possessing three Evocations preselected when this Gift is purchased along with any mundane technology he feels like incorporating. This powered suit otherwise counts and functions as a Rank 1 Device and is subject to Havoc. The Scientist may create up to [Rank] suits at the same time. Production of more past this limit causes a prior suit to inexplicably fail and fall apart.

**BFG [\*\*\*]:** Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. Through a process requiring one hour and access to necessary equipment and supplies for weapon making [barring the use of other Gifts] the Scientist may create a powerful high-tech weapon possessing three Evocations preselected when this Gift is purchased along with any mundane technology he feels like incorporating. The weapon otherwise counts and functions as a Rank 1 Device and is subject to Havoc. The Scientist may create up to [Rank] weapons at the same time. Production of more past this limit causes a prior weapon to inexplicably fail and fall apart.

**Rubberbands and Tape Collection [\*\*\*]:** Permanent; when crafting Mystic Artifacts or Devices the Scientist may count himself as possessing a number of free Lesser Components to incorporate into the design equal to his Rank.

**They Called Me Mad! [\*\*\*]:** Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Scientist may retroactively decide that he is carrying or has stored nearby any Device or Mystic Artifact he himself has created in the past, or any mundane item that he created or reasonably could create. The implausibility of the item being at this location is not a factor in the use of this Gift, nor is the size of the item provided there is a place the item could reasonably be. A Scientist pulling a F-16 out of the brush is entirely within the abilities of this Gift.

**Another Ultimate Weapon? [\*\*\*]:** Perfect, Reflexive; Once per Scene, at no cost, when targeted by an attack, turn-long damage source, or offensive maneuver, negate that attack/maneuver. The Scientist need not be aware of the attack, but he must declare this Gift before and in place of rolling Defense. Moreover his next attack in this Scene is Aggravated.

**Attack of the Fifty Foot Whatever [\*\*\*]:** Simple; Once per Scene at no cost, the Scientist may inject a willing target with an unusual concoction of 'something' [which the Scientist invariably has on his person, despite any logic involved]. The target gains the Mighty, Giant, and Titanic Aspects for the rest of the Scene. The Scientist may use this upon himself if desired.



## Ghost Gifts

**Ghost Anatomy:** The Ghost begins play with the Breathless, Construct, and Wings [Flight?] Aspects. All ghosts are in some way obviously inhuman in appearance, though the nature of this varies from ghost to ghost. Some possess an inherent luminosity, while others still bear the bleeding wounds of their deaths and still yet others are transparent. A few unfortunates are all three, or possess stranger appearances and marks of death upon them.

**Materialize/Dematerialize:** Simple; if the Ghost is Dematerialized they materialize in the physical world, exiting the Astral Plane and constructing a physical form of ghostly energies. While Materialized the Ghost is truly solid, and may interact with his environment as one of the living, though he remains his deathly appearance. If the Ghost is Materialized, they instead Dematerialize. Their physical form vanishes and they reside in the Astral Plane. Full rules on the Astral Plane are found on page [XX].

**Monster Excellence of [Skill] [\*]:** Mastery, Reflexive, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Monster adds [unmodified Skill/2] to all rolls using that Skill.

## Combat Gifts

**Strengthen Corpus [\*]:** Mastery, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The Ghost adds her Rank to her Soak for the Scene.

**Breaking the Bonds [\*]:** Permanent; The Ghost ignores all Penalties, including Wound Penalties, on Might, Agility, Endurance, Martial Arts, Melee, and Ranged rolls.

**The Quick and the Dead [\*]:** Permanent; the Ghost adds [Rank] to his Defense pool for all purposes.

**Risen to Slay [\*]:** Permanent; the Ghost adds [Rank] to all Attack rolls, but not to Combat Maneuvers.

**Moliate [\*]:** Simple; Select one Aspect upon purchasing this Gift. As a Simple Action the Ghost may adopt the given Aspect in any form he wears, or adopt any or all Aspects purchased by this Gift. These Aspects last indefinitely or until they are dismissed as a reflexive action. They may be dismissed individually as desired. This Gift may be purchased up to [Rank] times.

**Death is Freedom [\*\*]:** Permanent; all of the Ghost's movement speeds are doubled and the ghost may fly and move through water at her speed. Some ghosts manifest 'tails' while moving in this fashion.

**Slip the Grasp [\*\*]:** Reflexive; Once per Turn Commit 1 Effort for the Day. End any single supernatural or status effect upon the ghost, such as being Blinded, Grappled, mind-controlled or involuntarily shapeshifted. Nothing can prevent the Ghost from activating this Gift.

**Dissolve the Subtle Body [\*\*]:** Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene when targeted by an Unavoidable attack. The attack is instead not Unavoidable. If the Attack does no damage, the Ghost may choose to reflexively Dematerialize if Materialized at no cost.

**Reconstitute the Fallen [\*\*]:** Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene when targeted by an Aggravated attack. The attack is instead not Aggravated. If the Attack does no damage, the Ghost may

choose to reflexively Materialize if Dematerialized at no cost.

**Outrage [\*\*]:** Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the ghost can move objects in his vicinity with an invisible telekinetic force. The telekinetic force has an effective Might equal to the Ghost's Mystic Lore+2 for all purposes. The telekinetic force counts as a Might-based Attack using the Ranged Skill, and is compatible with all Fighting Styles, Gifts, and Combat Manuevers compaitble with such. The ghost can hold as many objects within his telekinesis as the force's place on the Might Chart permits.

**Reflect [\*\*]:** Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort when targetted by an Attack after the Attack is rolled but before Defense is rolled. If the attack fails to deal any damage, the attacker must immediately defend against his own attack successes.

**Astral Evasion [\*\*]:** Once per Scene, at no cost, when targeted by an attack or offensive maneuver, negate that attack/maneuver. The Ghost need not be aware of the attack, but he must declare this Gift before and in place of rolling Defense. Moreover, the Ghost may choose to immediately Materialize [if Dematerialized] or Dematerialize [if Materialized].

**Bound To This World [\*\*\*]:** Permanent, Immortality; Once per Story, when a Ghost would be killed or Incapacitated, she instead immediately reforms at a Fetter of her choice and regains [Rank] Health Levels.

## Social Gifts

**Whispers [\*]:** Permanent; The Ghost may communicate with physical reality while Immaterialized. She may do so by manifesting her voice in the empty air, or may manipulating ethereal phenomena such as drawing on a mist-coated mirror, speaking through a radio, or manipulating a Quiji Board.

**Phantom [\*]:** Simple; The Ghost may produce her image in physical reality while remaining Immaterialized, allowing herself to be seen but not effected. In combination with Whispers the Ghost may speak and be seen by physical beings while remaining completely immaterialized. This apparition may be dismissed as a reflexive action.

**Haunt the Living [\*]:** Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The Ghost manifests horrifying but ultimately harmless illusions in the material world nearby, such as bleeding walls, screaming faces, shortcircuiting electronics, or so on, and adds her unmodified [Intimidate/2] to her Intimidate pool for the Turn. This may be used while Immaterialized.

**Possession [\*\*]:** Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day while Immaterialized and select a single intelligent being and roll Integrity opposed by Integrity. Upon success the Ghost may control the target's actions for the following lunar month but may not order them to intentionally harm themselves. The Ghost remains Immaterialized immediately behind the possessed person for any effects and cannot become Materialized or take any actions besides controlling the host. All Skill rolls use the higher of the controlled target's or the Ghost's. If the controlled subject is a Monster, once per Turn on their Turn, they may reflexively commit 1 Effort for the Day to reroll Integrity vs Integrity to free themselves early

and end the Effect. Upon failure, either upon the initial roll or a subsequent reroll, the Ghost immediately and reflexively Materializes. A Monster cannot be subject to Possession by the same Ghost in the same Scene they escaped their Possession. In all cases the host remains aware of all actions they take while possessed.

**Inanimate Possession** [\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day while Immaterialized. The Ghost may take control of a corpse or other inanimate object. For the next lunar month the Ghost may control the corpse or inanimate objects in the form of a body. The Ghost is treated as materialized, but the resulting body has only seven health levels and if destroyed the Ghost simply escapes while Immaterialized to no ill effect. Throughout the possession the Ghost is treated as Immaterialized immediately behind the possessed corpse or objects for the duration.

## Stealth Gifts

**Mask the Scent** [\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The Ghost becomes the spitting image of her living self. She appears to all mundane examination as a living body and all attempts to detect she is a Ghost by supernatural means yield false information [for instance, a Gift to determine her Type would reveal her as Hunter, while one which reveals her Rank would still reveal that information]. This lasts until the Ghost ends the effect as a Simple Action.

## Craft Gifts

**Ectoplasmic Armory** [\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The Ghost produces any mundane weapon or armor [except Calamitous Explosives] out of an otherworldly substance for the Scene. The weapon becomes immaterial and useless in any hands except the Ghost's.

**Age Bears No Meaning** [\*]: Permanent; Anything the Ghost crafts becomes completely immune to the effects of the ravages of time. It will not decay, or cease to function due to the mere passage of time or lack of maintenance. It will however appear to have done so, objects rusting, cloth decaying, but never in a way that renders the object more fragile or disrupts function.

**Tools of the Dead** [\*]: Permanent; the Ghost can craft and perform Artifice actions without tools, bending, twisting, modifying and shaping the raw material with tools wrought from his dead limbs. Moreover he crafts five times faster than normal. For mundane crafting this means the item is crafted in 1/5th the ordinary time, which stacks with the x2 for rolling 6+ successes to 1/7th the time. For Items of Power you instead multiply the successes rolled each Interval by 5. For instance if you rolled 6 successes in an Interval, it would count as 30 successes.

**Binding Soulsteel** [\*]: Prerequisite Craft Mystic Artifact OR Craft Device, Permanent; whenever the Ghost is present for the death of a fellow Ghost, the Ghost may choose to reflexively transform the target into Soulsteel. Soulsteel is a Universal Exotic Component with a level set by the target's Rank. Rank 1-2 Ghosts are Lesser, Rank 3-4 are Greater, and Rank 5 are Universal Legendary Exotic Components. If the Ghost has an equal or higher Rank than his target, this effect negates any

Immortality-tag effects to take effect. Soulsteel may take any visible material solid form but may not exceed 10 pounds of material per ghost, is always Materialized by default, and is always in some fashion uncanny. Most Soulsteel takes the form of a greenish-blue or greenish-grey metal, plastic, or fabric with barely visible and sometimes microscopic faces on its surface silently screaming.

**Suffer Forever** [\*] Prerequisite Binding Soulsteel, Permanent; the Ghost may choose to render any character he turns into Soulsteel conscious. The Soulsteel counts as a Soul Jar [per the Theurgy Magic] for all purposes, as does any item crafted using the Soulsteel. The Ghost may release the target as a Simple Action, which does not nullify the efficaciousness of the Soulsteel or any resulting Item.

**Anya's Pockets** [\*] Permanent; the Ghost gains access to a small pocket dimension, a 'hammerspace' in which he can deposit or withdraw items. As a Simple Action the Ghost may deposit one unattended inanimate item into his hammerspace, and he may withdraw or don an item as a Reflexive Action. The Ghost may store up to [Rank x200 pounds] in his hammerspace.

**Suffering Distillation** [\*\*] Prerequisite Binding Soulsteel, Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Story as an Extended Action requiring four hours. The Ghost may purify a large quantity of Lesser Soulsteel into Greater or Legendary Soulsteel. Creating Greater Soulsteel requires the sacrifice of 100 Lesser Soulsteel. Creating Legendary Soulsteel requires the sacrifice of 100,000 Lesser Soulsteel or 1000 Greater Soulsteel.

**Currency of Souls** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Binding Soulsteel; the Ghost may choose to create Soulsteel from any sapient intelligent target to die in his presence, not just Ghosts. However this only negates the Immortality-tag effects of Ghosts. Other characters negate and escape this effect with Immortality effects unless they are negated through other means.

**Palaces of Pain** [\*\*]: Prerequisites Rank 3, Binding Soulsteel, Tools of the Dead, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and perform one of the following effects.

Effect 1: Sacrifice 1 Lesser Soulsteel to immediately produce, purely from that Soulsteel, any single mundane object smaller than a 5x5 cube without complex moving parts. This may not produce dangerous chemicals or Explosives.

Effect 2: Sacrifice 10 Lesser Soulsteel to immediately produce, purely from that Soulsteel, any single mundane object smaller than a bus regardless of complexity. This may explicitly produce mundane Vehicles up to Rank 2. This may not produce dangerous chemicals or Explosives.

Effect 3: Sacrifice 50 Lesser Soulsteel or 1 Greater Soulsteel to immediately produce any mundane object smaller than a cathedral. This may explicitly produce dangerous chemicals or Explosives. This effect could produce a hydrogen bomb or similar single use Calamitous Explosive.

**Terror Infusion** [\*\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene, Day, or Story. For the rest of the Scene, Day, or Story one willing or unattended character or Item of Power that would ordinarily be subject to Mystic Collapse or Havoc is instead not subjected to it. Instead all Rank 0 characters who encounter the item or character will be gripped with unreasonable terror of the person or item, either rushing to attack, cowering, or fleeing from the item's wielder or the character as appropriate. The character or the wielder of the item adds two dice to Intimidate rolls.

## Magic Gifts

**Ghost's Hand** [\*]: Permanent; While Immaterialized the Ghost may lift up to ten pounds of physical matter. This cannot be used to attack or use any offensive action. The object's lifted just seem to float in mid-air to those incapable of seeing Immaterial beings.

**Control Electronics** [\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and select an electronic or electrical device. The ghost may control the object for the rest of the Scene, commanding it to do anything it would ordinarily be capable of doing as a Simple Action including attack enemies if applicable. She may use this Gift while Immaterialized.

**Expert Thaumaturge** [\*]: Prerequisite Mystic Lore or Science 4, Permanent; the Ghost immediately learns two dots of Thaumaturgy. This Gift may be purchased up to [Rank] times. If multiple instances of this Gift are purchased at once, the dots gained are pooled allowing for the potential purchase of 3-dot Thaumaturgy powers.

**Proxy Magic** [\*]: Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select a character or an inanimate object. For the rest of the Day the Ghost may perform any magic [Thaumaturgy, Magecraft, or Theurgy] as though they and any Catalysts they possess were physically present, using the character or object as an origin. This effect immediately ends if the character is Incapacitated or Killed or if the object is broken. The Ghost may choose to extend the duration of this effect by leaving the Effort committed with each new Day, regardless of the distance between themselves and the Proxy. The Ghost may only sustain up to their [Rank] in Proxies at a time.

**Ties That Bind** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Fetters Weakness, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. At the start of the Ghost's next turn, she immediately teleport to one of her Fetter's of her choice. Taking any damage before then causes this Gift to fail and the Effort to be wasted.

**Expert Mage** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Mystic Lore or Science 6, Permanent; the Ghost immediately learns four dots of Magecraft. This Gift may only be purchased once.

**Subtle Magic** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Ghost no longer requires a Catalyst or the spoken word in order to cast Spells. He may do so by force of will alone. This has no effect on Rituals.

**Fetter Scrying** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Fetters Weakness; Simple; the Ghost may see and hear events in the vicinity of one of her Fetter's as though she was present. If she possesses Whispers or Phantom, she may also activate those Gifts in the vicinity of her Fetter as though she was present, though the resulting sounds and visuals cannot move more than one hundred feet from the Fetter. Once activated the Ghost continues **perceiving** the area around the Fetter until this Gift is activated again or until they end the effect as a reflexive action. While Scrying the Ghost suffers a -4 Penalty to Perception rolls pertaining to her actual surroundings.

**Death Isn't The End** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Fetters Weakness Extended; As an Extended Action taking one hour, the Ghost may declare an object or person a Fetter. Counting her original Fetters, the Ghost may possess a maximum of [Rank+3] Fetters.

**Sacred Land** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Bounded Field, Permanent; the Ghost may perform magic within the area of any Bounded Fields they possess as though they were physically present, causing magic to pour

from the rafters or fly from the walls at irritating trespassers.

**Improvised Magic [\*\*\*]:** Permanent; once per Story the Ghost may cast magic he is aware of the existence of but does not himself know. He must meet all prerequisites for the magic in question and be capable of purchasing it with Experience Points. The Storyteller may choose to rule that the Ghost is limited to powers in this book or already designed by the Storyteller to avoid slowing the session with the writing of a new spell or ritual.

## Psychic Gifts

**Overload:** Reflexive; Once per Scene the Psychic may immediately reclaim [Rank+1] Effort.

**Psi Potential:** The Psychic begins play with two free Gift dots which must be spent on Thaumaturgy.

**Supernal Excellence of [Skill] [\*]:** Reflexive, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and apply one of the following effects. Effect 1: For the rest of the Turn the Monster may add his unmodified [Skill] to all rolls using that Skill. If this Gift is activated during the Monster's Turn, it ends at the start of the Monster's next Turn. If it is activated during another character's Turn, it ends at the end of the Monster's next Turn. Effect 2: The Monster may add his unmodified [Skill] to a single roll [usually Extended] regardless of how many turns it takes to perform. At Rank 5, the Duration of this Excellence becomes one Scene.

## Combat Gifts

### Social Gifts

### Stealth Gifts

### Craft Gifts

### Magic Gifts

**Premonition [\*]:** Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. For the rest of the Scene when the Psychic must roll Perception, they may instead roll Integrity. Moreover while this is active they never suffer Penalties to said rolls. This may be activated in response to a Perception roll.

**Psychic Barrier [\*]:** Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, the Psychic adds [Rank+2] to his Soak.

**[Damage Type] Barrier [\*]:** Simple, Select a Damage Type when purchasing this Gift. Commit 1 Effort for the Scene to increase a given target's Soak by [Rank+5] for the Scene but only against Attacks of that Damage Type. The Psychic may cast this upon himself. This is not a single Gift but many Gift purchased individually covering each Type, such as Heat Barrier or Unholy Barrier.

**Expert Thaumaturge [\*]:** Prerequisite Mystic Lore or Science 4, Permanent; the Psychic immediately learns two dots of Thaumaturgy. This Gift may be purchased up to [Rank] times. If multiple instances of this Gift are purchased at once, the dots gained are pooled allowing for the potential purchase of 3-dot Thaumaturgy powers.

**Subtle Magic [\*]:** Permanent; the Psychic no longer requires a Catalyst or the spoken word in order to cast Spells. He may do so by force of will alone. This has no effect on Rituals.

**Counterspell [\*]:** Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene when a character the Psychic is aware of activates a Spell tag power. Roll Mystic Lore opposed by Mystic Lore. Upon success the Spell is dispelled, it is not resolved and has no effect. Upon success the Psychic loses the Simple Action on

their next Turn as they busy themselves with Counterspelling.

**Cultic Magic** [\*]: Permanent; the Psychic may substitute the Effort cost of magic with cultic supporters. The Psychic must have in his company a group of intelligent beings with a Size of 2+ for Effort committed for the Scene and 3+ for Effort committed for the Day who are performing no notable actions besides ritual actions on his behalf such as waving staves or chanting in mystical languages. All magic the Psychic casts requires no Effort be committed for the Scene or Day to perform. This has no effect upon magic that requires Effort be committed for the Story.

**Sympathetic Magic** [\*]: Permanent; once per Scene [or Hour] the Psychic may perform any magic upon a distant target as though they were present in front of them, provided they possess one of the following: a piece of the target's body such as a nail, drop of blood, or lock of hair; a prized possession sufficient to count as a Major or Defining Intimacy, or if the target possesses some object tied to a Weakness such as a Fetter or True Name, such will also suffice.

## Level 2 Gifts

**Telekinesis** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the psychic can move objects in his vicinity with an invisible telekinetic force. The telekinetic force has an effective Might equal to the Psychic's [Integrity+2] for all purposes. The telekinetic force counts as a Might-based Attack using the Ranged Skill, and is compatible with all Fighting Styles, Gifts, and Combat Maneuvers compatible with such. The Psychic can hold as many objects within his telekinesis as the force's place on the Might Chart permits. The Psychic may not use this Gift to levitate himself or fly in any way.

**Telekinetic Flight** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Psychic doubles all of his movement speeds. The Psychic may fly at his speed.

**Override** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. For the rest of the Scene when the Psychic must roll Mystic Lore or Endurance to resist a Gift, Spell, or other supernatural effect, they may instead roll Integrity. This may be activated in response to a Mystic Lore or Endurance roll.

**Nomad's Step** [\*\*]: Permanent; all of the Psychic's movement speeds are tripled. Moreover, while moving they do not need to cross the intervening space. They may teleport any distance, provided they have not run out of available movement for the Turn. A Psychic may not teleport further in one 'jump' than their maximum movement per Turn.

**Mark and Recall** [\*\*]: Simple; Select and activate one of the following Effects.

Effect 1: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and record the Psychic's current location. The location is Marked. Only one location may be so Marked at a time.

Effect 2: The Psychic attempts to teleport to their Marked location. At the start of the Psychic's next turn after attempting teleportation, the Psychic teleports to said location. Taking damage in the meantime negates this activation, but does not prevent the Psychic from reattempting the teleportation on subsequent turns.



**Establish Psychic Bond** [\*\*]: Simple; the Psychic may declare or revoke a given target in her presence as a Psychic Bond. The Psychic may reflexively communicate telepathically across any distance with her Psychic Bonds, and they may communicate with her in turn. The Psychic may possess up to [Rank+2] Psychic Bonds at once. Certain other Gifts allow for additional effects through Psychic Bonds. If a target does not wish to be a Psychic Bond, roll Integrity opposed by Integrity. If the resister succeeds, the target does not become a Psychic Bond and the same Psychic may not attempt this Gift again upon them for the rest of the Day.

**Psychic Rejuvenation** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and roll Integrity. The Psychic or one willing target he is aware of immediately heals his successes in Health Levels. This Gift may only benefit a given target once per Scene [or Hour].

**Empathic Leap** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Psychic and up to 200 lbs per Rank the Psychic possesses immediately teleports [Rank x10] miles to a destination of the Psychic's choosing. All characters brought must be willing, and this Gift may not be used while the caster is in combat or under duress of any form.

**Spacetime Rip** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Story. The Psychic creates an obvious rip in spacetime in the form of some kind of portal or gateway. At first entering this gateway simply immediately spits one back out, but at any time thereafter the Psychic may, as a Simple Action, rip open the other end of the portal or gateway at his new current location in an open and obstructed spot. The two gateways become linked for a year and a day, allowing anyone or anything to pass between them unfiltered.

### Level 3 Gifts

**Improvised Magic** [\*\*\*]: Permanent; once per Story the Psychic may cast magic he is aware of the existence of but does not himself know. He must meet all prerequisites for the magic in question and be capable of purchasing it with Experience Points. The Storyteller may choose to rule that the Psychic is limited to powers in this book or already designed by the Storyteller to avoid slowing the session with the writing of a new spell or ritual.

**Thought Shield** [\*\*\*]: Permanent; Other characters cannot read the Psychic's mind or emotions, enter her dreams involuntarily, or learn information about her through Gifts, Spells, or other supernatural effects. Powers that would reveal such information instead reveal information consistent with an ordinary human [for instance a power to read the Psychic's mind would seem to work, but would reveal false memories]. This may be suppressed for a Scene as a reflexive action.

**Travel Without Distance** [\*\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. At the start of the Psychic's next turn she and any inanimate possessions she is carrying or holding [up to 200 lbs per Rank] is teleported either up to [Rank x100 miles] or to any location the Psychic has personally been to before. If the Psychic takes damage after declaring his activation but before the start of his next turn the Gift is canceled and the committed Effort wasted.

# Magicians

*"These metaphysics of magicians,  
And necromantic books are heavenly;  
Lines, circles, scenes, letters, and characters;  
Ay, these are those that Faustus most desires.  
O, what a world of profit and delight,  
Of power, of honour, of omnipotence,  
Is promis'd to the studious artizan!  
All things that move between the quiet poles  
Shall be at my command: emperors and kings  
Are but obeyed in their several provinces,  
Nor can they raise the wind, or rend the clouds;  
But his dominion that exceeds in this,  
Stretcheth as far as doth the mind of man;  
A sound magician is a mighty god:  
Here, Faustus, tire thy brains to gain a deity."  
-The Tragedy of Doctor Faustus*

***"Do not meddle in the affairs of wizards, for they are subtle and quick to anger."***

***-JRR Tolkien***

*We enter the world ignorant and weak, dependent upon others for everything. The passing of time brings wisdom, but also prejudices. It engrains our virtues, but also our errors. We contend with each other, bandying pet theories and philosophical doctrines of God, the Universe, the Self. We strain to see the Truth, to gain an understanding behind all the phenomena that assaults our senses. We fail. Reality remains a puzzlebox unsolved, a riddle with neither an answer or even a question. Suffering stems from our ignorance and we leave the world ignorant and weak, dependent upon others for everything. There must be a reason. Each Soul enters the world knowing this deep within themselves, that there is a sense and order to things, a rationale for why things are the way they are, a Truth beyond truth that if found would enlighten a soul and ease their primordial anguish. For those who would seek the Mysteries, this Truth is not to be found in theory or speculation, but is tasted with the mouth, it is seen with the eye and heard with the ear, the genuine seeker will not take another's word. He will go up to heaven and ask, he will descend into hell and see. But the road of the Mysteries is perilous for body and soul, and legendary are the workings of wizards and the grand exploits and terrible misadventures that have followed the practioners of magic. Solomon, Merlin, Vainamoinon, Circe and Medea, Simon Magus and the Persian Magi, and the esteemed Doctor Faustus, all lived lives where the pursuit and application of the Mysteries changed them, tormented them, enlightened them, blessed and cursed them*

*and their works. To be a Magician is to steal Prometheus' fire, to grasp the serpent in the hand and ride the lightning lest you fall to your death. It is to journey to the Far Shores and seek where the Deathlords hide their precious dead, to fly on back of griffin to the farthest Dreamland petitioning the Powers themselves. For most the journey is too far, and it is deemed better to sink again into wakeless sleep, or suffer the horrid sleepwalking of another Type, to dream a dream better than waking up. But for the exceptional few, the spiritual adventurer, the real seeker after truth there can be no higher calling...or perhaps you simply wanted to throw lightning?*

## **The Nature of Magic**

What exactly is Magic? This is a question that is addressed in greater detail elsewhere but it is worth noting here to answer a more specific question, namely what exactly is a Magician? How does one become one? To briefly review: Thaumaturgy is a part of the natural workings of the universe, a science only separated from normal science by its subject matter. It tends to involve things like correspondences between seemingly unrelated things, or requiring that the user be in a particular mental state or be a particular kind of person with other skills in order for the reaction to take place. A chemical reaction will happen no matter who does it, or even if no one does it, but an alchemical reaction depends desperately on who is mixing the substances. Magecraft is the use of ritual behavior to harness or invoke a particular being, energy, or phenomena known as a Foundation, to bring about certain effects. The various systems seem to be different, unrelated metaphysical structures; though the fact all such systems share the same primary limitations implies there is some kind of connection between them. Theurgy is a form of Magecraft whose Foundation is a connection to the One and the Prime, the fount or origin or goal or basis for reality. A Magician then is strictly speaking, someone with a connection to the Prime. Only Man, that is, ordinary intelligent Rank 0 beings without another Template, has ever been known to be able to form a connection with the Prime. So if a Magician is simply a human being who has formed a connection to the source of reality, how does one become a Magician? The answer to that is 'in any order'.

The road followed by the various magical orders of wizards and witches of Europe and America is to proceed logically. They train pupils in Thaumaturgy first, helping them develop the powers of the soul, of seeing ghosts, practicing divination or retrocognition, they educate them in western esoteric philosophies of neoplatonism and ancient greek science, of Babylonian astrology and Egyptian spelllore and when they have achieved basic competence they move on to Magecraft, helping the student develop a Foundation and learn the proper techniques for utilizing magic, and then finally when the Magician is firmly established they teach them to form a connection to the Prime in the same fashion they formed a Foundation in Magecraft. The development is straightforward, steady, and reliable. Its also slow, starting with children the full education of western Magicians takes about as long as a full mundane education. For this reason, large institutions of magical learning form much of the heart of witch culture as noted further down.

The path paved by Shamans, Priests, and most Infernalists is less intuitive. A trained mentor travels in the Dreamscape on behalf of the initiate, where pacts are made or renewed that the student will be allowed with the spirits' help to form a Foundation in Magecraft. Now armed in basic magic, they begin picking up bits and pieces of thaumaturgical lore and living the lifestyle befitting their position as they journey and work under their mentor in a one-on-one, master-student relationship. Usually at some point in this process, the student will suffer an intense experience, sometimes marked with dreams and visions, sudden sicknesses and profound realizations about the nature of the cosmos and one's role in it. If they emerge from this intensity alive, they find they have formed a connection to the One and may now utilize theurgical magic. The advantage of such tutelage is the comparative speed and ease of mastery, but it suffers the drawbacks of losing students who cannot survive its harsh sink-or-swim tutelage, dangerous lifestyle, and of producing Magicians who lack as broad a foundation in lesser magic and occult knowledge.

The last path is better described as 'getting lost'. Roughly 2% of Magicians do not have any knowledge or experience of the occult, or any teachers or guides, when they form a connection to the Prime. Instead, the Prime forms a connection with them of its own volition. This usually follows what is a profound experience in the mundane world. A near-death experience, such as narrowly avoiding dying in a car accident or recovering from a seemingly terminal cancer diagnosis, or suffering through the death of those close to oneself, or a horrific encounter with the supernatural is, very rarely, enough to shock someone awake. Such persons often wander about, relying on spirits from the Dreamscape, visions and dreams, and whatever occult lore they can scarp together to figure out what they've become and begin developing the lesser magics. As most such Magicians are altogether ignorant, they most often fall victim to the deiets of the Adversary or similiar malevolent forces and fall into the practice of dark magic and the service of demons. For all three paths, there is a common thread. Forming a connection to the Prime always involves the Magician having some kind of realization about their understanding of themselves, the universe, and their place in it. For traditional wizards, this realization is often gradual and soft, merely the crystalization of a long education into a definitive statement. For the rest, it is often transformative, resulting in people who are noticeably changed in personality or manner afterwards compared to before.

## **Magicians in the Shrouded Earth**

Magicians exist primarily in two mileus. In the first, there is Magicians as they have always existed and will hopefully always exist, as seekers of truth and explorers of the uncanny. The Magician exists to seek out that which shouldn't be sought out, uncover the deep secrets of the world and use them to transform the world in his own image. They exist to find out things, and they are very, very good at it. It is very difficult to keep a secret from a group of determined Magicians, and their Gifts exist to ruin the plots of the unwary Storyteller. In the second, there is Magicians as they exist in the modern Shrouded Earth; which is to say as has-beens. While magic as a force of nature is no weaker then it

ever was, magic as a social force has cratered since the Middle Ages or even Antiquity. No longer do the largest faiths fawn over them. No longer do Emperors and Kings seek out their services. No longer do they possess near exclusive access to the powers of rapid transit and city-destroying unleasings of the elements. Existing in competition with modern technology, which can rival or exceed the skill of the average Magician in many categories, threatened by organized Hunter groups, and ruled by backwards, rear-facing cultures which increasingly neglect the search for Truth for their own powerplays and personal gains, Magic today is on the bottom half of a long decline centuries in the making. If Magic is to regain its former prominence, or even survive the next century as a powerful force in the world, it will require much of those who would master it. Willpower, intelligence, wisdom, understanding and above all a heart open to the deep lessons of the cosmos. Or perhaps you will just shoot lightning at every plebian who insists on meddling in your affairs despite Tolkein's good warning.

**Shamans:** The practice of magic is older than the human species, and as long as there have been humanlike homids on Earth there have been theurges. It has been speculated that it was contact with spirits in dreams that aided our ancestors homo erectus and homo habilis in developing the higher functions of abstract thinking, and the utilization of primitive magic by these beings that paved the way for future advances. Today Shamans live to preserve their cultures and magical traditions in the face of a changing and increasingly uncertain world, and to continue pursuing the mysteries in search of the fabled second awakening that will lead them towards a true and full understanding of the Prime. Unlike other practionioners of shamanistic magecraft, shamanistic Magicians often do not worship or serve spirits, instead seeing them as spiritual guides leading them onwards on their journey to the truth.

**Priests:** Religion and Magic have a long and colorful history. On one hand, the earliest civilized Magicians were almost always priests, worshipping gods who respected and esteemed [or at least tolerated] the benevolent practice of magic. On the other, pre-Christian law codes dating back to Babylon and Rome prescribe death sentences for diviners, necromancers and the users of curses and the early modern era saw magic users of all varieties burned at the stake by magic-suppressing witchhunters and large mobs rallied by religious authorities. To this day many clergymen, imams, gurus, Shinto shrine priestesses and Buddhist monks practice what they imagine to be approved forms of magic, using their 'white magic' to benefit their flocks and guide them on the way to salvation. More practically, they also serve to initiate their lessers in any rituals of the faith that, while seemingly mundane, actually contain thaumaturgical principles.

**Wizards and Witches:** Born with the emergence of the first systems of writing of our cycle of civilizations was the existence of urbane, organized and academic orders of Magicians. Starting in Babylon and Egypt as priestly orders and proto-scientists, these magical groups splintered off from their religious origins to become increasingly secular or heterodox wonder-workers. These orders, usually small and local, flourished throughout antiquity, offering services in basic enchantments and

blessings in return for payment and learning in the academies of Plato and the schools of Confucius. In emergencies, these Magicians would use their powers in defense of the local polity, tossing down lightning upon the enemies of Rome or unleashing hordes of oni in service to the Emperor. The reigns of great Magicians such as King Solomon and Caliph al-Rashid brought about golden ages of magic, and the writing of prolific quantities of spell-lore, and the infusion of new ideas from foreign lands brought about increasingly sophisticated and less limited systems of magecraft. In the middle ages these small orders would see themselves replaced, both in the East and the West, by large, powerful families of related Magicians who would breed for greater magical ability [for most forms of magic rely on the strength of a subject's Esoteric Anatomy, which like physical anatomy is at least partially determined by lineage] and surrounding these families, powerful institutions of mystical learning capable of teaching hundreds of students at once and magical orders dedicated to various avenues of research and sacred tasks. The fires of inquisition and the rise of the Hunters, combined with neglect, insular focus, and a refusal to adapt to the changing world brought about the decline of all that. Today most wizards and witches devote themselves to protecting or exploiting the old system of pedigree, privilege, and old world academia, leveraging their tremendous but increasingly irrelevant powers for worldly purposes while neglecting the understanding of the Prime.

**Infernalists:** Emerging from the shamanistic tradition very early on and rising from the other groups as they appeared, Infernalists are Magicians who have 'excessive ties' with with demonic entities in the Dreamscape or embodied Demons of the known Type. The word 'excessive' there produces no end of dispute over what precisely counts as infernalism and every magical order and group has their own opinion on what constitutes it. In the west, most magical academies and orders surrounding the great Magician families interpret Infernalism as the worship and service of demons, or the bargain with demons as equals. Commanding or enslaving demons is an honorable profession dating back to King Solomon, serving them is a disgraceful humiliation of the dignity of the human soul. In contrast most priestly and religious groups are far more strict, forbidding any degree of contact with 'demons' unless conducting exorcisms or interrogations. Shamanistic groups tend to be even more liberal than witches, considering Infernalism to consist only in service, with bargaining and trading being entirely acceptable. Some small groups, deemed extremist by most but who consider themselves 'reformers', do not consider a Magician an Infernalist unless the Foundation of his Magecraft involves demons.

## **Reaching the Prime**

Magicians of all philosophies put a great emphasis on 'reaching the Prime', of gaining a full understanding of whoever or whatever serves as the Foundation for Theurgy. As the object of the highest magic is a complete mystery, it is the goal of most Magicians at least in theory to develop their knowledge of the supreme Art to the point they can pass through the veil and learn the source behind existence. However there is no end of argument over what exactly is supposed to happen when one learns this truth. Religious Magicians identify reaching the Prime with religious salvation and believe

that learning the full Truth will allow one knowledge of the afterlife and communion with the Divine. They teach that the saints of their faiths achieved this through enlightenment or that reaching the Prime is a way for a devotee to achieve by effort what they reached by divine grace. Shamanistic Magicians speak of it as a 'second awakening' where they will achieve total identification with their higher selves and become peers to the Powers, and rumors abound of these supreme spiritual guides who live on the mountains of China, by the river Ganges, in the shadow of Jerusalem, or in a distant Territory. To Witches and Wizards it means a full and complete knowledge of the Art and a comprehensive understanding of the Platonic Forms. The soul who achieves the Prime fulfills the Great Work and returns to the divine, arriving in a realm as high above the Dreamscape as it is above the material. Infernalists too speak of reaching the Prime, identifying it through various morbid, life-denying and nihilistic philosophies with a dark abyss from which all worlds sprung and to which they will inevitably return. Evidence in support of any position is more rumor than hard fact, and to this day whether it is even possible to develop a true understanding of the great mystery remains an article of faith among Magicians.

## **The Tide of Fate**

Fate can be thought of as an aspect of material reality that guides things along a certain course barring the intervention of intelligent beings. Just as a falling object will hit the ground if no one catches it, and a man in a boat will go wherever the current takes him unless he paddles away, fate serves to gently [and sometimes not so gently] push the general tendency of things a certain way. Divination works by the perception of fate's course and many of the Gifts of Magician's function through the subtle manipulation of fate. By altering the state of what should be a Magician can alter what is in a way indistinguishable from altering what was. Confused? I'll provide an example. Through Gifts like Cease to Exist Approach a Magician can alter fate in such a way that for things to come out as they're now 'supposed to', the present has to be different. Think of it as a director altering a script halfway through filming. The Magician has written a new character into the movie and for the movie to turn out as it should the plot needs to change to accommodate the new role. But for the role to exist in the present and not seem out of place, the present has to change to reflect the past of the character who didn't exist until this point. So it does. Thus many Magician Gifts function in ways that look like they alter the past, but actually merely alter the present so thoroughly it appears the past was changed. As this process isn't perfect, most such Gifts are seen through by higher Rank beings or have holes in their stories. The fact all Magicians possess an innate ability to command fate in addition to and separate from their use of magic leads most to accept as an article of faith that Fate and the Prime are somehow connected, and by extension leads to many Magicians putting great value on the concept of destiny. As to its unfolding, from an outside perspective Fate seems utterly random with three altering trends that usually apply. Fate much more often promotes the spread of life and civilization than it's destruction, much more often opposes the Adversary than supports him, and has a flair for the dramatic. The power of Fate is

finite, and even the most powerful destinies can be broken by the application of an even greater force against it.

## Lifespan

With very few exceptions, Magicians live as long as normal humans barring the use of magic. However as simple thaumaturgy can extend one's life and theurgy can render a determined Magician immortal this is seldom a relevant limitation.

## Template Benefits:

**Master of the Art:** Magicians may practice Theurgy, may purchase Magecraft for the same Experience Cost as Thaumaturgy, and begin play with three free Gift Dots which must be spent on Thaumaturgy.

**Mortal Excellence of [Skill] [\*]:** Mastery, Reflexive, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Monster adds [Rank] to all rolls using that Skill.

## Combat Gifts

**Auspicious Mastery of Excellence [\*]:** Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene after rolling a Skill in which the Magician possesses Mortal Excellence of [Skill]. Reroll that roll and take the preferred result. This can only be used once per Turn per Skill.

**Lift Gets Worse Approach [\*]:** Reflexive, Supplemental: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene before rolling an Attack. The attack adds two to its Damage and if the Attack succeeds in doing at least one Health Level, the target suffers a -2 Penalty to their Defense Rolls for the rest of the Scene. This Penalty stacks with itself to a maximum of -5.

**Optimistic Security Practice [\*]:** Mastery, Reflexive, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Magician adds two to her Soak and any Rank 0 being that wishes to attack, defy, or otherwise harm the Magician must commit 1 Effort for the Day to do so. Rank 0 Battlegroups instead suffer a -4 Penalty to all rolls to attack, defy, or otherwise harm the Magician.

**Any Direction Arrow [\*]:** Permanent; the Magician's attacks and combat maneuvers ignore all Penalties except Wound Penalties. Moreover, her attacks may travel along impossible trajectories, bouncing around or bending around cover.

**Holistic Bullet Methodology [\*]:** Permanent, the Magician may use any Fighting Style except Explosive-type styles with any weapon, or even with no weapon and may choose to make her attacks deal Esoteric Damage.

**Forgotten Earth [\*]:** Permanent, the Magician's jumping distance is multiplied by ten and he is immune to fall damage.

**Heartless Maiden Trance [\*\*]:** Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. For the rest of the Day the Magician may not be rendered unconscious by any means, does not suffer Penalties for Wounds, Injuries, Disease, or Poison, and she gains the Breathless Aspect. As long as this effect lasts the



Magician automatically fails all Empathy rolls. She may still be Incapacitated or Killed, she simply cannot lose consciousness while Incapacitated or through magical compulsion to sleep.

**Unswerving Juggernaut Principle** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. For the rest of the Day, as long as the Magician is moving forward without stopping she gains two Soak, never becomes tired, automatically passes all Endure Fatigue rolls, needs no sleep, and if driving a vehicle or riding an animal it needs no fuel and/or also never tires [though animals gain none of the other benefits of this Gift].

**Harmony of Blows** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Magician doubles the result of all of her Initiative rolls. By reflexively committing 1 Effort for the Scene on her Turn, she may perform a normal Attack action upon an Enemy. She may not by any means attack or attempt to damage the same Enemy twice in one Turn.

**Impeding the Flow** [\*\*]: Reflexive, once per Scene per Enemy after being attacked by an Unavoidable Attack. Roll Mystic Lore or Martial Arts opposed by the Mystic Lore or Martial Arts of the attacker. If successful the attack is not Unavoidable, and any Unavoidable attacks from that same target are also not Unavoidable for the rest of the Scene.

**Shield of Mars** [\*\*]: Reflexive, once per Scene per Enemy when attacked by an Aggravated Attack. Roll Mystic Lore or Martial Arts opposed by the Mystic Lore or Martial Arts of the attacker. If successful the attack is not Aggravated, and any Aggravated attacks from that same target are also not Aggravated for the rest of the Scene.

**Creation Smuggling Procedure** [\*\*]: Reflexive, once per Scene after being targeted by a Gift or Spell requiring one roll Mystic Lore or Integrity as a resistance roll. If one successfully resists the Gift or Spell in question one cannot be targeted or effected by Gifts or Spells requiring such a resistance roll from that Enemy for the rest of the Scene.

**Burn Life** [\*\*]: Reflexive, Supplemental: Commit 1 Effort for the Scene as a reflexive action on your turn. Until the start of your next Turn, add [Rank+2] to your damage with Might-based attacks and to your place on the Might Chart.

**Citrine Poxes of Contagion** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select one Disease or Poison the Magician is aware of and roll Mystic Lore or Martial Arts. For the rest of the Day, the first time in a Scene any character comes within one mile radius of the Magician they must roll Endurance opposed to the initial activation roll or contract the Disease or be effected by the Poison. Any character damaged by the Magician must remake this check. Further spreading of the disease follows standard rules for resistance and contraction, and poisons do not spread at all. This has no effect on characters with the appropriate immunity to Disease or Poison.

**Flare of Invulnerability Method** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene at the start of your Turn. The Magician's Soak counts as 30 until the start of your next Turn. His Soak counts as it's ordinary value against Esoteric Damage.

**Essence-Shattering Typhoon** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5, Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Day before rolling an Attack. The Attack may target up to 10 Enemies. If the Magician possesses

Vast Magic, she may instead choose to target any or all characters within one mile radius of herself with the attack, or any or all characters within a narrow band in front of her five miles long, fifty feet wide and half a mile tall. This latter effect causes the Attack to be Aggravated to all Battlegroups.

**You Shall Not Pass** [\*\*]: Rank 5, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and select up to five targets. For the rest of the Scene, the Magician counts as always using the Defend Other action on those targets.

**Maw of Dripping Venom** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5, Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Day before rolling an Attack. If the Attack deals even one Health Level all targets of the Attack immediately commit their Rank in Effort for the Day. This does not count against their Effort per Turn. A character can only suffer this effect once per Scene.

**Charcoal March of Spiders** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5 and Harmony of Blows, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene on your Turn. The Magician gains an extra Simple Action this Turn. The Magician may not attack or deliriously effect the same character in the same Turn by any means.

**Kaleidoscopic Disrecognition Atemi** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, any character attempting to Attack the Magician or negatively effect him with a Gift or Magic suffers a -10 Penalty to his attempt to do so. If this reduces the dice pool to zero the action automatically fails. This explicitly violates the universal rule capping Penalties at 5, in fact additional Penalties stack with this Gift to a maximum of -15. This does not effect Rank 5 characters.

**Combat Training** [\*\*\*]: Permanent; increase the Magician's Attack Pools, Defense Pools, Damage, and Soak rolls by two. Attack Pools are increased only for attack rolls not combat maneuvers.

**Perfection in Life** [\*\*\*]: Reflexive; Once per Day the Magician and up to [Rank] allies immediately Reclaim the Magician's Rank in Effort.

**Defense of Shining Joy** [\*\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Magician may use her Mystic Lore in place of her Agility for calculating her Defense Pool. If her unmodified human Mystic Lore is equal to her Agility, she instead adds two dice. Moreover she is completely immune to all attacks by Rank 0 beings, including Rank 0 Battlegroups regardless of Size. This latter effect has no effect upon Calamitous Explosives.

**Horrific Wreath** [\*\*\*]: Reflexive, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The Magician's attacks and any Spells which naturally possess a Damage Type change their type to another of the Magician's choosing. Moreover once per Scene at no cost, after declaring an attack but before rolling it the Magician may declare that attack to be Aggravated.

**Terminal Sanction** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Permanent: Whenever the Magician is present at the death or Incapacitation of a being possessing one or more Gifts or Spells with the Immortal tag, he may completely negate those powers and instead imprison the immortal character into a mundane object of the Magician's choice. As long as the object remains in tact, the imprisoned immortal is trapped, helpless, and at the discretion of the Magician, unconscious.

**Duck Fate** [\*\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Story and select one of the following effects.

Effect 1: Once per Scene when targeted by an attack or offensive maneuver, negate that attack/maneuver. The Magician need not be aware of the attack, but he must declare this effect before and in place of rolling Defense.

Effect 2: When the Magician must roll a resistance roll to resist a Gift or Spell, do not roll. The Magician instead succeeds. This must be declared before and in place of rolling.

Effect 3: Select one Environmental Hazard, such as a roaring wildfire surrounding the Magician or a sea of acid into which she is plunging. For the rest of the Scene the Magician is immune to that single, particular Hazard. This has no effect on similar hazards such as a different fire encountered later.

**Star-Chosen Martial Arts** [\*\*\*]: Permanent; the Magician immediately learns two Advanced Fighting Styles of her choice which must both be of the same Skill and for which she must meet the prerequisites. She also immediately learns the General Gifts Be Water My Friend and Supernatural Martial Arts, which must target one of the newly purchased Advanced Fighting Styles. This Gift may only be taken once.

## Social Gifts

**Blue Vervain Binding** [\*]: Simple, Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select two characters. Forever after, those two characters may communicate regardless of language barriers, physical or mental disabilities [such as being unconscious or brain damaged] or even magically compulsion or memory erasure. Regardless of any mitigating factor, the two characters may reflexively converse and make clear their true desire to each other. This Gift only works as long as the two characters are in each other's presence, it does not function across telecommunication or magical communication.

**Auspicious Recruitment Drive** [\*]: Perfect, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day when attempting to recruit men for the formation of a Battlegroup. A number of Rank 0 characters with a minimum Size of the Magician's Rank will join and agree to fight for the Magician's cause, provided at least that many Rank 0 characters are present. This Gift may not be used in combat or while under duress. The Battlegroup's Drill and Skills are determined by the quality of men recruited, this Gift does not train or improve the mobs pulled.

**Favorable Inflection Procedure** [\*]: Simple, Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select one target, rolling Mystic Lore opposed by Integrity. Upon success, for the rest of the Story the Magician may address the character as a Simple Action. Doing so automatically causes the character to calm, become lucid, and reasonable regardless of present emotion or mystical effects upon them for the rest of the Turn. They will not and cannot attack or harm other characters except those that still mean to harm them. The target may end this Gift's effect early by committing 1 Effort for the Story and spending a Simple Action.

**Wearing Red to a Wedding** [\*]: Simple, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, the Magician's appearance and behavior will seem completely innocuous to all Rank 0 beings except those she is actively attacking, threatening, or otherwise maliciously effecting. Police will ignore her as she

walks through a street in blood-soaked garb holding a gun, and even when she murders someone in the street. They will however react to the scene once the Magician has moved on.

**Force Decision** [\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Day as a reflexive action once per Turn. Select one target on the verge of a decision, such as what to do in a fight or how to react to a proposal. Roll Mystic Lore opposed by Integrity, upon success the target makes the choice as the Magician would dictate. This Gift cannot cause the target to harm themselves, and if the target has a Rank of [lower of the Magician's Rank or 3] they may ignore this Gift by committing 1 Effort for the Day.

**Cash and Murder Games** [\*\*]: Simple, Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select two targets, rolling Mystic Lore once opposed by the Mystic Lore of each. Upon success, for rest of the Story the two characters become entangled in a relationship of master and servant, with a context formed as appropriate in the minds of the targets as to seem natural and normal. The first time in a Scene that the serving character wishes to defy the master they must reflexively commit 1 Effort for the Day to do so. They may thereafter act normally without respect to this Gift. If this Gift only succeeds upon one target, the Gift has no effect at all. If a target is willing do not have them roll resistance. The Magician may designate herself as a target for this Gift.

**Red Haze** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Story and select a Battlegroup loyal to the Magician. For the rest of the Story that Battlegroup adds [Magician's Rank] to Damage rolls and adds +1 to their Drill to a maximum of 5.

**Training Mandate of Auspicious Battle** [\*\*]: Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Story when performing a Train Battlegroup Action. The roll counts as possessing 10 successes and the training will complete within twenty-four hours.

**Predestined Triumph Practice** [\*\*]: Permanent; whenever the Magician is serving as the Commanding Officer of a Battlegroup, he adds his Rank to all War rolls for determining Morale.

**Subordinate Inspiration Technique** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Walking Outside Fate, Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort while using Walking Outside Fate. Target one character in the Magician's presence and roll a Social Influence action of some kind against the target. Whether the roll succeeds or fails, the target will interpret the influence as his own idea that came to him independently. This specifically does not end Walking Outside Fate, and may only target the same target once per Scene.

**Avoiding the Truth Technique** [\*\*]: Simple, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the scene, all Rank 0 characters will unfailingly believe every statement the Magician says is a lie, no matter how outlandish or unreasonable. If the Magician addresses more than ten thousand people at once, only the first ten thousand shall be unfailingly convinced he is lying.

**Icy Hand** [\*\*]: Simple, Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select a character operating in some kind of official or professional capacity, such as as a lawyer, businessman, craftsman or politician. For the rest of the Story, if the character acts in a way the Magician would disapprove, such as by engaging in corruption, taking bribes, or breaking promises to the Magician the Magician is immediately made aware of both the breach of trust and the broad details of the breach.

**Severing the Past Method** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and roll Persuasion, Mystic Lore or Martial Arts. Select one target, who must be Rank 4 or less, that target rolls Integrity opposed to the initial activation. Upon success the target develops severe short term memory loss. They remember everything that happened up until this Gift was used upon them, but at the start of each new Scene [or every few hours] the target seems to ‘wake up’ as though no time passed between being hit by this Gift and the start of the Scene. This Gift’s duration is indefinite unless dispelled. A character who successfully resists this Gift cannot be targeted by it in the current Story.

**Shun the Smiling Lady** [\*\*\*]: Simple, Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select 1 target rolling Mystic Lore opposed by Mystic Lore. Upon success, for the rest of the Story the target suffers the Hideous Forbearance Weakness. Their visible appearance does not change, but anyone who interacts with the target views them as hideous and revolting. If the target possesses at a Rank at least equal to that of the Magician, they may end this Gift’s effect early by committing 1 Effort for the Story as a Simple Action.

**Training Mandate of Celestial Empowerment** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3 and Training Mandate of Auspicious Battle, Permanent; whenever the Magician uses Training Mandate of Auspicious Battle to train a Battlegroup, every member of the Battlegroup counts as Rank 1 for Battlegroup calculations only.

**Hogwarts-Founding Method** [\*\*\*]: Extended; As an Extended Action requiring one week the Magician may train a number of intelligent Rank 0 beings to become masterful occult scholars. Commit 1 Effort for the Story and select a number of Rank 0 targets with a total Size equal or less than the Magician's Rank. The Magician must spend at least eight hours per day of the week teaching or overseeing the teaching of his pupils. At the end of the week the targets gain a rating of 8 in the following Skills: Academics, Science, Mystic Lore, Medicine and Animal Ken. Moreover, the targets immediately learn up to [Rank] in dots of Thaumaturgical Science. These dots must be Magic the Magician knows. Subsequent uses upon the same targets has no effect unless the Magician increased her Rank since her prior use, in which case a full week of study will grant them additional dots up to the Magician's new Rank. For instance if the Magician trained a pupil at Rank 3 and granted her 3 dots of Thaumaturgy then later used it again at Rank 5, the pupil would learn two dots.

## Stealth Gifts

**Soft Presence Practice** [\*]: Prerequisite Mortal Excellence of Stealth, Permanent; the Magician counts as Rank 5 for the value, duration, and effect of this Gift. That is, he permanently adds five to his Stealth. At Rank 5 this instead adds two dice to Stealth.

**Name Pilfering Practice** [\*]: Simple, Commit 1 Effort for the Day and roll Larceny or Mystic Lore opposed by Mystic Lore. If successful the Magician steals the target’s name. For the rest of the Story no Rank 0 character can seem to recall, remember, or speak the target’s name [though they recall the target themselves just fine].

**Arcane Fate** [\*]: Permanent; any Rank 0 character who interacts with the Magician finds it very

difficult to recall details about the Magician and any encounters with him except when in his presence. This manifests as a kind of selective amnesia, where the target forgets the details of the Magician's appearance and any encounters when he is away but distinctly remembers them when he returns. This amnesia always comes off as perfectly natural, as though the Magician were simply very forgettable or it had merely slipped the target's mind. Moreover, public records regarding the Magician have an odd habit of getting lost or stolen. The Magician by suppress this effect for a Day by committing 1 Effort for the Day as a Simple Action.

**Masque of the Uncanny** [\*]: Simple, Commit 1 Effort for the Day. Until the Magician ends this effect as a Simple Action, the Magician appears to be a member of another Type [besides Hunter]. The Magician detects as that Type to all Gifts or Magic that determines Type, and her appearance changes subtly to reflect the change in Type. For instance she may grow horns to appear more demonic, or grow elven ears. In all cases, the Magician remains recognizable as herself.

**Underlying Invisibility Practice** [\*]: Simple, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene The Magician becomes seemingly forgettable, petty, minor, and unimportant. Any powers that detect his Rank read it as 0, any powers to read his Type read it as lacking one, he appears to all mundane or supernatural inspection as an ordinary person. Moreover while attempting to lie and pass himself off as unimportant, all Empathy rolls in resistance to his lies suffer a -4 Penalty.

**Thought-Swiping Distraction** [\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and select a target the Magician can see. Roll Larceny opposed by Integrity. Upon success the target completely forgets what they were doing, losing their train of thought. The Magician meanwhile learns whatever it was the target was thinking about or what they were doing when this Gift was activated. This Gift may only target the same target once per Scene.

**Walking Outside Fate** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, the Magician is inaudible, invisible, and otherwise impossible to notice by characters with a lower Rank than herself. Moreover, recording or camera technology of any form fails to record or notice the Magician. This Gift automatically ends early if the Magician takes any actions besides speaking and moving.

**Gift of a Broken Mask** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Arcane Fate, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select one character. If the target is willing, they gain the Gift Arcane Fate for the rest of the Story. If they are unwilling, roll Mystic Lore opposed by Mystic Lore. Upon success, the target gains the Gift Arcane Fate for the rest of the Story and cannot commit Effort to suppress the effect. Upon failure the Magician may not target the target again with this Gift during the current Story.

**Avoidance Kata** [\*\*]: Simple, Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Magician immediately disappears and reappears somewhere he could plausibly have been if he'd chosen to go somewhere else five minutes before. For instance if the Magician was walking down the street five minutes ago, but chose to walk into a building where he met a deadly ambush, but he could have chosen to instead enter another building or continue down the street, he may appear in that new location he could have chosen to go. Rank 0 beings at his new location remember a false version of events where he arrived by normal

means rather than teleportation and at the appropriate time in the past.

**Magician's Shell Games** [\*\*]: Simple, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and select a target. Roll Larceny or Mystic Lore opposed by Mystic Lore. and select one Skill of the Enemy's. For every success by which the Magician beats the roll of the target, the Magician may inflict a Penalty of -1 to the Skill [max: -5] and give himself the same number of bonus dice in that pool. The Magician may only increase a given pool once with this Gift, subsequent boosts replace prior boosts.

**Ceasing to Exist Approach** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Simple, Commit 1 Effort for the Story. The Magician, such as he is, ceases to exist. All Rank 0 characters forget he exists, all mundane records cease to record him or else state he disappeared or died, and evidence of his prior life becomes scarce. The Magician instead declares the existence of some new identity and manifests it into the world. Rank 0 characters become pulled into the narrative being spun and mundane records come into existence supporting the new life. This Gift produces a new identity from scratch, and while the Magician could use it to declare herself a wealthy heiress and tie herself into the backstory of a wealthy person, it cannot be used to replace an existing person and declare oneself President of the United States. This Gift is seen through by all Rank 1+ Monsters, who clearly recall and recognize who the Magician was before. This Gift lasts indefinitely or until the Magician dismisses it as a Simple Action. Doing so causes the new identity to be forgotten by all in the same fashion as activating this Gift does to one's original persona, and causes the world to 'remember' the old identity. Repeated uses of this Gift over too short a time frame is known to occasionally birth Anamolies.

## Craft Gifts

**Excellent Implementation of Objectives** [\*]: Prerequisites Rank 2, Permanent; the Magician crafts many times faster than normal. Multiply the speed at which the Magician crafts by her Rank. For mundane crafting this means the item is crafted in a fraction of the ordinary time, which stacks with the x2 for rolling 6+ successes. For Items of Power you instead multiply the successes rolled each Interval by the multiplier. For instance if you rolled 6 successes in an Interval, it would multiply by the Magician's Rank.

**Of the Shape of the World** [\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select one Mystic Artifact or Device with a Rank equal or lower than the Magician's Rank. For the rest of the Day the Item produces Mystic Collapse or Havoc regardless of how many people are watching [even zero] or who is using it. This has no effect upon Items noted as not suffering Mystic Collapse or Havoc or which are immunized by another effect.

**Starmetal Guidance Mantra** [\*]: Prerequisite Craft Mystic Artifact or Craft Device, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Story and select one Lesser or Greater Exotic Component required by a Schematic the Magician possesses. For the rest of the Story, the Magician acquired a flawless internal compass telling him which direction to go to find the nearest example of that Component.

**Falling Stars Recovery** [\*]: Prerequisite Craft Mystic Artifact or Craft Device, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and declare one item, mundane or an Item of Power, created by the Magician. For

the rest of the Day, Magician acquires a flawless internal compass telling him which direction to go to find the item.

**World-Shaping Artistic Vision** [\*]: Permanent; upon purchasing this Gift select one reasonably narrow category of crafted items. Swords, beds, trucks, planes, trains, paintings, musical instruments, dolls, Etc. Whenever the Magician is crafting such an item, whether mundane or an Item of Power, she adds her Rank to all Artifice rolls and she multiplies the speed at which she crafts by two. For mundane crafting this means the item is crafted in a fraction of the ordinary time, which stacks with the x2 for rolling 6+ successes. For Items of Power you instead multiply the successes rolled each Interval by the multiplier. This Gift may be repurchased for different item types up to [Rank] times.

**Destiny-Knitting Entanglement** [\*\*]: Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Day as an Extended Action requiring one hour. The Magician handles or examines an object smaller than a bus for one hour, binding it to herself. At any point thereafter the Magician may activate one of the following Effects by committing 1 Effort for the Scene as a Simple Action.

Effect 1: The Magician learns the general location and state of the object. Where it is, who has it, what they're doing with it, if it's damaged or broken. This is not Scrying, the Magician only learns information pertaining to the object.

Effect 2: The Magician causes coincidence and fate to bring the object back to him. The object may be stolen, or lost, or accidentally thrown away. Through whatever chain of unlikely events the item will find it's way back to the Magician by the end of the current Story [or one week]. If it somehow fails to do so, at the end of the Story [or week] the object will simply disappear and teleport into the Magician's possession as a Perfect-tag effect.

A Magician may only 'entangle' up to [Rank+2] objects at a time.

**Predestined Delivery Shaping** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Destiny-Knitting Entanglement, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select an object in one's possession that is entangled per Destiny-Knitting Entanglement. Select one character the Magician is aware of. Through whatever means of delivery, accident or circumstances the object will reach the stated character by the end of the Story [or within one week]. If all else fails the object will simply disappear while enroute and teleport to the target if it still hasn't arrived by the end of the duration.

**Mending Warped Designs** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and select a broken or destroyed object the size of bus or smaller. The object is miraculously repaired to pristine condition. If the object is an Item of Power, the Exotic Material requirement for its repair is waived. This has no effect on broken Rank 5 Mystic Artifacts or Devices.

**Glory Path** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The Magician selects one riding animal or vehicle he is riding in [he need not be piloting it]. The craft automatically succeeds all Riding rolls to avoid perils and dangers, can ride or drive up vehicle obstacles such as walls or straight inclines [if a land craft] or waterfalls or rapids [if water], and its speed is increased by 100 miles per hour to a maximum of one thousand miles per hour. This Gift has no effect on aerial craft.

**Implicit Construction Methodology** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 4, Craft Mystic Artifact or Craft Mystic



Device, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Story and select one Schematic the Magician knows.

Someone, somewhere, will begin the work of creating that Schematic. He will discover the Schematic somehow through accident, study, or dream, seek out Exotic Components, and begin putting the work together. Thereafter the Magician may as a Simple Action immediately learn the crafter's identity, his current actions and location, and the state and location of the project. This Gift is very unreliable, as it does not guarantee success in the effort the Magician has led his target down in creating an object presumably for his own benefit. This Gift ends if the target chooses to abandon the project or the item is not completed within a year and a day.

**Of Weapons Best Unused [\*\*\*]:** Once per Story this Gift may be activated as a Simple Action. At some point in the next Day the Magician will stumble upon an Item of Power with a Rank equal or lower to his own Rank of the Storyteller's choosing. This item will be in some way useful to the circumstances in which the Magician is current engaged in the present Story. At the end of the current Story the Item will somehow be lost, stolen, forgotten or otherwise come to leave the Magician's possession. There is no way to prevent this, if all else fails the object will simply disappear and teleport elsewhere as a Perfect-tag effect, perhaps the victim of another Magician invoking this Gift.

## **Magic Gifts**

**Master of Mystic Arts [\*]:** Permanent; The Magician adds [Rank+2] to all Mystic Lore and Academics rolls.

**Never An Empty Alley Technique [\*]:** Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The Magician may reveal from his immediate surroundings a riding animal or vehicle he owns from any unobserved location large enough to reasonably hide or contain it, and finds any necessary keys or passcodes are on his person.

**Mark of Exaltation [\*]:** Simple, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. All Immaterialized beings within one mile of the Magician become visible to the naked eye for the rest of the Scene. They are still Immaterialized and treated as such for all purposes. This continues effecting Immaterialized beings who leave the Magician's presence and has no effect upon those who enter the effect radius after activation.

**Wise Choice [\*]:** Reflexive, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene when faced with some manner of decision. The Magician immediately learns which choice will yield the best short term outcome. This Gift only reveals outcomes in regard to the short term, and is biased towards 'safe but sure' over 'risky but profitable'. It will tell you whether to bet or not in poker or which tunnel to take when lost underground, but is fairly useless in plotting out one's long term goals.

**Terminate Illness [\*]:** Simple, Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The target is immediately cured of one Injury from the Injury Chart, is stabilized if in risk of dying, and is cured of one mundane illness. All of these are accomplished with one activation.

**Spirit and Body Purification Touch [\*]:** Prerequisites Rank 5 and Terminate Illness, Permanent; when

activating Terminate Illness the Magician may choose to extend its effect to all willing characters within five miles radius at no cost.

**Sympathetic Magic** [\*]: Permanent; once per Scene [or Hour] the Magician may perform any magic upon a distant target as though they were present in front of them, provided they possess one of the following: a piece of the target's body such as a nail, drop of blood, or lock of hair; a prized possession sufficient to count as a Major or Defining Intimacy, or if the target possesses some object tied to a Weakness such as a Fetter or True Name, such will also suffice.

**Swift Spell** [\*]: Permanent; once per Scene the Magician may cast a Spell with the Simple tag as a Reflexive Action. This may not be used to attack or damage the same target twice in one turn by any means.

**Ritual Magic** [\*]: Permanent; the Magician may cast any magic she knows with a Reflexive or Simple tag as a Ritual requiring fifteen minutes. If they do so, the resulting magic costs no Effort to activate and suffers from no Penalties from any source. This cannot be used on magic which requires committing Effort for the Story.

**Cultic Magic** [\*]: Permanent; the Magician may substitute the Effort cost of magic with cultic supporters. The Magician must have in his company a group of intelligent beings with a Size of 2+ for Effort committed for the Scene and 3+ for Effort committed for the Day who are performing no notable actions besides ritual actions on his behalf such as waving staves or chanting in mystical languages. All magic the Magician casts requires no Effort be committed for the Scene or Day to perform. This has no effect upon magic that requires Effort be committed for the Story.

**Proxy Magic** [\*]: Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select a character or an inanimate object. For the rest of the Day the Magician may perform any magic [Thaumaturgy, Magecraft, or Theurgy] as though they and any Catalysts they possess were physically present, using the character or object as an origin. This effect immediately ends if the character is Incapacitated or Killed or if the object is broken. The Magician may choose to extend the duration of this effect by leaving the Effort committed with each new Day, regardless of the distance between themselves and the Proxy. The Magician may only sustain up to their [Rank] in Proxies at a time.

**Counterspell** [\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene when a character the Magician is aware of activates a Spell tag power. Roll Mystic Lore opposed by Mystic Lore. Upon success the Spell is dispelled, it is not resolved and has no effect. Upon success the Magician loses the Simple Action on their next Turn as they busy themselves with Counterspelling.

**Spell-Shattering Palm** [\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5 and Counterspell, Perfect, Permanent; whenever the Magician uses Counterspell he does not lose his following Turn. Moreover he automatically wins the opposed roll against characters Rank 3 and lower.

**Versatile Blood Magic** [\*]: Prerequisite Blood Magic, Permanent; whenever the Magician uses Blood Magic he may inflict its Health cost upon a willing target with a Rank of at least the Magician's [Rank-2, minimum 0].

**Expert Thaumaturge** [\*]: Prerequisite Mystic Lore or Science 4, Permanent; the Magician

immediately learns two dots of Thaumaturgy. This Gift may be purchased up to [Rank] times. If multiple instances of this Gift are purchased at once, the dots gained are pooled allowing for the potential purchase of 3-dot Thaumaturgy powers.

**Yellow Path** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene The Magician declares some manner of pressing business, meeting, or rendezvous he had previously arranged at least an hour before. The Magician and up to [Rank+2] allies are guaranteed to arrive on time to the meeting with time to spare. This Gift manipulates the world to yield this outcome, using the most unimpressive means possible. Under ordinary circumstances it may mean the group only encounters green lights and faces no traffic enroute, a series of odd coincidences guaranteeing punctuality, while under more extravagant circumstances the Magician may stumble upon an ally with means to rapidly ferry the party to their destination, and if all else fails a hole will tear open in space and unceremoniously drop the group to their destination.

**Rain and Sky Mantra** [\*\*]: Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Story as an Extended Action taking fifteen minutes. The Magician may dictate the weather in his entire local region [at least Rank x10 miles radius, though the Storyteller may decide to have it effect more] for the Magician's Rank in Days. The weather dictated must be weather possible to the local climate and the time of year, and arises at a natural pace upon activation. If multiple characters attempt to direct the weather in the same location, the one with the higher Rank dictates. If all Ranks are equal, all activations of this Gift are annulled in favor of normal weather.

**Efficient Secretary Technique** [\*\*]: Simple, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The Magician immediately learns the answer to a single question, provided the answer to that question is known to at least twenty people. Questions whose answers are known to less than that, which is to say that which is secretive, obscure, or lost cannot be answered by this Gift.

**Prior Warning** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene, for the rest of the Scene the Magician is always aware if someone or something is going to attack or otherwise harm him within the next minute. That is, he receives a full minute's warning before any potential ambushes or traps and may react or change course accordingly. This manifests as a 'danger sense', telling him only that he will be in peril and a one word description of the threat such as 'Vampire!' or 'Fall!' or 'Lava!' but nothing specific or direct.

**Inevitable Pursuit** [\*\*]: Permanent; as long as the Magician has some trail to follow [generally defined as knowing a place the target definitely was within the previous month] she may unfailingly track them. This manifests as a kind of internal compass pointing her to the general direction to follow to reach the target.

**Blood Magic** [\*\*]: Permanent; whenever the Magician attempts to cast Magic which requires Effort by committed for the Scene or for the Day, he may substitute the Effort cost. Instead of whatever Effort is demanded, he loses 1 current and maximum Health for the rest of the Day per Effort demanded.

**Subtle Magic** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Magician no longer requires a Catalyst or the spoken word in order

to cast Spells. He may do so by force of will alone. This has no effect on Rituals.

**Vast Magic** [\*\*]: Permanent; whenever the Magician activates a Spell which only effects a single target, it instead targets two targets. Whenever a Spell targets [Rank] targets it instead targets [Rank+2], and whenever a Spell is cast which effects [Rank+2] targets the Spell instead effects 10 targets or Enemies. Lastly, for narrative purposes of effecting the environment the Magician's Spells may effect up to a half-mile in diameter of area, or a narrow band thrice that. Resolve the Spells normally otherwise. This has no effect upon Spells which only target the caster.

**Potent Magic** [\*\*]: Permanent; whenever the Magician uses magic of any kind, Thaumaturgy, Magecraft, or Theurgy as applicable. They add their Rank to their Mystic Lore for all purposes relating to the casting or resolution of said magic.

**Overwhelming Magic** [\*\*]: Permanent; whenever the Magician uses magic of any kind, Thaumaturgy, Magecraft, or Theurgy as applicable. Any unwilling target of their magic suffers a Penalty on all opposed rolls to resist or counter the magic [including their Defense Pool] equal to the Magician's Rank.

**True Magick** [\*\*]: Prerequisites Rank 5 and Improvised Magic; Reflexive, Commit 1 Effort for the Story. The Magician may activate Improvised Magic even if he's activated it within the current Story.

**Expert Mage** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Mystic Lore or Science 6, Permanent; the Magician immediately learns four dots of Magecraft. This Gift may only be purchased once.

**Expert Theurge** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Mystic Lore or Science 6, Permanent; the Magician immediately learns four dots of Theurgy. This Gift may only be purchased once.

**Tell-Tale Symphony** [\*\*\*]: Permanent, the Magician is always aware if characters he is aware of are supernatural beings and if so their Monster Type and Rank.

**Of Truths Best Unspoken** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Efficient Secretary Technique; Permanent: by instead Committing the Effort for the Story while using Efficient Secretary Technique, one may learn the answer to a single question regardless of how many characters know the truth. This Gift provides contradictory and meaningless answers for deep mysteries of the setting, such as 'What is the meaning of life?', 'What happens after death?' or 'What is the Prime?' but may at the Storyteller's discretion yield hints from which the Magician may proceed.

**Contingent Magic** [\*\*\*]: Permanent; whenever the Magician casts magic of any kind he may commit 1 additional Effort for the Day in addition to any other costs to cast the magic to delay the resolution of the magic until a certain condition is reached, as well as anchor the casting to a particular object or place. For instance they could bind a casting of Flame of Amaterasu to a doorway with the trigger 'cast upon the first person to open this door'. The Magician rolls any necessary rolls for the casting and records their result to trigger upon the trigger, rolling any resistance or opposed rolls at the time. This Gift cannot be used to facilitate attacking or damaging the same target more than once in the same Turn.

**Improvised Magic** [\*\*\*]: Permanent; once per Story the Magician may cast magic he is aware of the existence of but does not himself know. He must meet all prerequisites for the magic in question and be

capable of purchasing it with Experience Points. The Storyteller may choose to rule that the Magician is limited to powers in this book or already designed by the Storyteller to avoid slowing the session with the writing of a new spell or ritual.

**Sacred Land** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Bounded Field, Permanent; the Magician may perform magic within the area of any Bounded Fields they possess as though they were physically present, causing magic to pour from the rafters or fly from the walls at irritating trespassers.

**Guiding to the Watchtower** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5, Extended; As an Extended Action requiring eight hours of study or initiation, Commit 1 Effort for the Story to train a single Rank 0 sapient intelligent being to become a Magician. The target becomes a Magician and gains 8 dots of Magician Gifts selected by the Storyteller, keeping any General Gifts.

**Grand Triskellion** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisites Rank 5, Guiding to the Watch Tower; World-Altering, Extended; As an Extended Action requiring fifteen minutes that may only be performed on a single day each year selected when purchasing this Gift, the Magician begins a new Age of Magic. All Rank 0 beings currently alive on the Magician's planet will never count as Rank 0 witnesses for Mystic Collapse or cause a Device to wreak havoc. All Rank 0 beings born within the following year will inherit this blessing. Moreover, while no hard mechanics are given for this the ease with which these people becomes Magicians will greatly increase. Given a few decades of continuous use of this Gift the world's population of Magicians will become at least 10% Magician with the possibility of growing to nearly 100% with the proper world-scale educational efforts. This essentially turns the world in question into one where the average inhabitant is a Rank 1 Magician. This does not effect the relative frequency of Rank 2+ beings [see the Demographics section in the setting chapter for details on worlds whose average inhabitant is a Monster]. Lastly, all Prodigies capable of reproducing become unusually fertile while this Gift is active, increasing the population of magical beasts.

**Breathing on the Black Mirror** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5, Simple; Commit 2 Effort for the Story. The Magician declares a being or Structure-sized or smaller object that exists anywhere he is aware of. If the being is willing or the object unattended, it steps forth a portal of shimmering glass into the Magician's presence with a vague knowledge of the current Scene. There is almost no limit to the possibility of what can be drawn forth. The Magician could summon a Rank 5 ally from the other side of the Spiral or from a Parallel World, call a Mystic Artifact lost millennia ago, even draw out a Royal Avatar of one of the Powers [see Theurgical Invocation of Royal Avatar] from the Dreamscape or temporarily resurrect someone from the dead. At the end of the Scene whatever was summoned harmlessly disappears back whence it came. This cannot be prevented by any means. This Gift may only be used once per Scene.

# Hunters

*"On the rainy, stormy, foggy nights. When the sinister forces of evil are a-prowl, Hoss Delgado rides into town to clean up. I've been been bitten by ghosts, haunted by momerats and slapped by vampires. I think I've earned a free hot dog."*

*-Hoss Delgado*

*"In the name of God, impure souls of the living dead shall be banished into eternal damnation. Amen."*

*-Alexander Anderson*

*She was dead this morning. You should know, you attended her funeral. Your daughter was like most girls her age, outgoing, smart, couldn't wait to go off for college. Your wife couldn't stop talking up emptying the nest and finally having the house to yourselves again, but you know she was going to miss her as much as you were. That was before the accident. Some drugged up, doped up asshole hopped a curb and in the blink of an eye your world had come crashing down. But there she was at your door. The thrill of terror, the shock of confusion, the trill feeling of hope caught in your chest. Had it all been a dream? Or is this one now, nothing but a hallucination brought on by the two sleeping pills and half-bottle of Jack you had when you got home? Your breath is heavy, and you feverishly debate whether or not to open the door. She lets herself in, using the key under the mat, making you stumble backwards as she rushed to catch you with more than human swiftness. Her flesh is warm, and you feel her heart beating against your chest as she steadied you, but her green eyes are now a dull amber and her blond hair has lightened to a bleached pale off-white. When you compose yourself, which isn't easy, your daughter tells you she has become what is called a Reclaimer, that she was given a second chance in exchange for a terrible duty. What follows is a whirlwind, joy, horror, wonder, despair, a sickly feeling of the unnaturalness of it all. You tell everyone she simply came home, crawled out of a shallow grave after being buried alive. It happened all the time in the 1800s you say, a yarn you know is bullshit for modern graves and embalming practices, but what can they say when she is standing right there? Life returns to some form of normalcy, and talk again turns to college, to boys and to getting the house back. But your feeling of uneasiness does not abate, not when your princess is flying out the second story window each night, not when her laundry begins to show signs of dried blood. When the local news begins reporting a string of ghastly homocides, no one has to tell you what to do. You wait till she falls asleep, and bind her hands and feet in steel cabling, then carry her to the bath you've drawn. She struggles of course, swearing and cursing, then pleading, making long occult explanations about dream worlds, gods, immortality and the like. To her it was but the beginning of some great adventure, one you were cutting short with the grim reality she had killed six people including two children, all because God only knows what told her she didn't have to die. It takes unnaturally long to drown her,*

*but eventually she stops thrashing. Another story for the neighbors, a tragedy to follow a tragedy. You finish the other half of the bottle and go up to the roof, capping it off just as your wife's screams shake the house. You would spend years wondering just what had happened to your daughter that day, of this brush with the unknown. But when another string of murders erupts in the town over, you know what you have to do. You go find more steel cable...*

## **Hunters in the Shrouded Earth**

For most supernatural beings, being 'cursed' is a blessing. To be given amazing power, endless life, to know the deep secrets of the world, it's the unfolding of a wonderful fantasy. For all their talk of their damnation, no Vampire is in a hurry to go to Heaven. For all their talk of the pain of being dead, no Ghost wants to leave the world on any terms but their own. Faeries commit atrocities and act as though whimsy and dull tragic faces is enough to cover for their crimes. To the ordinary people they step on, these black fantasies are horrific and blood-stained realities, realities filled not with magical Territories, semesters at a magic school or romantically sweeping people off their feet as a vampire; but with court room cases, crime scenes, funerals, and therapy sessions for broken down victims. The buck has to stop somewhere. Some Hunters are trained extensively in large Conspiracies with nuanced views and precise knowledge of the supernatural. They have equipment, intelligence, and expansive support staffs. Most however are simply normal people who saw something they shouldn't have, and found they couldn't look away. Hunters exist to contrast with the ordinary world of Shrouded Earth, a world where Monsters tend to glide over the damage they leave in their wake no matter how benevolent or well-meaning. They are delayed repercussions caused by looking at these things not from the gleeful eyes of a Monster but the frightened eyes of a Man. In simple terms Hunters hunt, though their choice in prey and the ideologies with which they approach the unknown varies greatly. Some kill any supernatural manifestation they find, others are on a mission to find a particular bane on humanity. Some make fine distinctions between good and evil in their prey, others believe the mere act of being inhuman disqualifies one from such considerations. Whether a solitary amateur armed only with liquor, old books and a shotgun or a professional working in a government agency, all Hunters bear the burden of the status quo. If Vampires are the reason the world is gothic and Ghosts are the reason it is scary, Hunters are the reason it is normal. They are the reason this is a world of conspiracy, intrigue, and hidden power-plays rather than open confrontation among supernatural forces as it was before the fall of Rome. Relying on their supernatural knowledge, Hunters are very powerful against those Monsters they have trained to kill and are much weaker against others. As there are Hunters for every Type, few Monsters can be too open without risking their attention. On the other hand, Hunters opposing Conspiracies find these factions learn to trade rogue galleries quite quickly, and Vampire Hunters are next to useless against Magicians.

**Slayers:** Many Hunters have very simple philosophies. They hate vampires, or witches, or werewolves and think they should all die. Maybe some can be let off for good behavior, but to be honest if they kept

their nose down the Hunter wouldn't be here right now would she? Slayers exist to purge the night of a particular type of supernatural force, whether pursued with restraint and moral consideration or simply driven to purify the undead at all costs. The Malleus Malificarum represent a typical side of Slayers, groups of blue collar occultists who believe magic is an abomination used by evil people for the devil's purposes and that even seemingly good or young Magicians are at playing with demonic forces they cannot hope to control. For many Slayers this lack of compromise is one drilled into them by repeated contact with malevolent supernatural forces who think nothing of feigning ignorance or innocence to get away and continue their crimes.

**Guardians:** There is a place for the supernatural in the world, but that place isn't at the top. Human beings are not pets or prey, and those beings unwilling to coexist will become prey themselves. Such is the ethos of Guardian Conspiracies such as Unwise who seek to use the supernatural to advance the interests of the United States and protect their country from volatile Monsters. Utilizing the more human-like Monsters as allies, such as Scientists, Psychics, Magicians and Heroes this group is nonetheless primarily composed of Hunters, elite agents with the manner of super-spies investigating the occult, negotiating with powerful Monsters in good faith, and unraveling rival Conspiracies who aren't willing to treat on equal terms.

**Investigators:** The urge to understand is often stronger in a Hunter than the urge to kill. For many, it is the desire to contextualize the strange things they've seen that drives them again and again back into the night, not the bloody stake-wielding heart of a fanatic. Some get their start as small time 'paranormal investigators' or as 'ghost-hunters'. Others seek out psychic or magical phenomena to 'debunk' while searching in truth for genuine articles. Over time and with sufficient networking these experts and truth-seekers form into organized groups, their disparate wanderings and isolated encounters with the impossible beginning to form a sketching of the supernatural landscape. The FINDers are one such group, composed primarily of amateurs but advancing quickly due to their mastery of social networking and devotion to the open sharing of information and backed by occasional members claiming to possess legitimate supernatural abilities. The Spanedosians are a more extreme example, Hunters driven by a desire to harness their prey in ways other Hunters would regard as grim and unwholesome. They utilize special surgeries to graft pieces of their prey unto themselves, making literal what is said of he who fights monsters.

**Daredevils:** In this world there are people better than you think possible. Usain Bolt isn't the fastest man, my cousin says he knows a guy who can break thirty miles an hour. Eddie Haul isn't the strongest, someone who went to my gym once hefted a sedan over his head. Beyond the top universities and Olympic athletes and sports stars are the people whose dedication doesn't allow for such distractions. They get pulled into the murky underground world that touches at its bottom with the world of night-creatures. The underground world of elite martial artists, ex-black-ops and under the



table arms dealers. A world filled with criminal elements and drug lords who sometimes hint that ‘things’ more than human are pulling their strings. In this world, it’s only a small step towards an uncovering of the truth. When that happens, the daredevils are thrust headlong into a place where being the strongest or the fastest human isn’t a high bar, where beasts walk like men and sorcerers command the heavens themselves. It is there that humanity’s finest are truly tested, and to the horror of their enemies, not all break.

## **Measure of a Man**

A trained Hunter can fight through a dozen vampires, pick up a mid-size car, outrace an Olympic track star and outstrategize a world class chess player. This raises the million dollar question. Are Hunters human? This question is at the heart of what it means to be a Hunter, with most Hunters defining themselves with the premise that they are human and the other Types are generally not. It is a question that will receive no clear answer in this section, but a few observations will be made. Most Hunters at the very least start off human, with nothing but an old hunting rifle and a human’s strength and spirit to oppose the night. For most Rank 1 Monsters, this is enough. Such creatures are formidable, but woolly mammoths were formidable too and human beings drove them to extinction. But as Monsters grow in power and might, Hunters find they must improve themselves to continue to face them. They begin studying copious amounts of thaumaturgical science, but that is okay isn’t it? After all it is merely science, and no one would say a chemist isn’t human. They begin training their bodies, some even breaking through their Limiter and achieving superhuman feats. That doesn’t make them inhuman does it, after all athletes are human, does there fact the ceiling is higher then people think really change that much? What about when a Hunter masters Magecraft or Theurgy? Or they start using surgical alterations or cybernetic enhancement? If a Hunter uses a magic blade is he human? What if he binds himself to magical armor? If he inserts nanites into his blood to give himself regeneration or learns to open his chakras from a wise man in India? Every Hunter and Conspiracy of Hunters chooses their own place to draw the line, always with themselves behind it, and the nature of this question shapes everything from how Hunters view other Types to how they view other groups of Hunters.

## **The Veil**

The idea itself dates back to the earliest times. Since the beginnings of civilization at the least, human beings have instinctively feared those things that look human but are not. When a being was benevolent and lacked obvious signs of deviation, this fear was set aside and such creatures were hailed as heroes or accepted into society as their guides, their wise men, their lords. There has really never been a place for the walking dead, the hideous beast, or anything that eats people in human society and only the exercise of Social Gifts ever allowed for exceptions to this to develop. So from the earliest times it was common for those monsters of unsavory appearances and habits to hide these aspects from themselves, and if they could not then to live away, apart from the villages of man. It was with the end of Rome that

the concept first truly took root however, an invention of Vampires as part of their budding patriciate system. By the end of the Middle Ages, more and more Conspiracies had taken the hint and grown insular, hiding their activities [if not their existence yet] from mortal eyes. It was the rise of the Hunter that would bring the Veil as we know it into existence however. Starting originally in Europe as an uprising against the abuses of Magician families and academic institutions, their abuses of the public, humiliations of monarchs, unwholesome traffic with seemingly demonic and at least unChristian forces, it quickly spread throughout the Muslim world and from there took root in Asia. Backed by religious and public authorities in many places, men and women started utilizing thaumaturgical knowledge, massed mobs and armies, grit and might to toss down their oppressors. Through their charisma and occult knowledge, Social Gifts that maintained human support was shattered. Through their Combat Gifts Hunters exploited every weakness they had, or if necessary imposed new ones. A feedback loop formed in which public displays of the unusual attracted Hunters, pushing their members into hiding or fleeing to more accepting areas, which eventually led to less encounters with the supernatural and in time, less knowledge and ultimately less belief. By the time of the late seven hundreds when the idea of actively hiding the existence of supernatural forces was first proposed among prominent Hunter groups, it had already been the defacto status quo for almost three centuries. Today it holds primarily for these same reasons. Hunters maintain the Veil because it prevents Monsters from openly reigning over society as they did in Antiquity, while Monsters maintain it to hide from Hunters and the increasingly well-armed mortal herd. But as the system grows more complex and possible breakage points increase, lapses are occurring more and more often. Current rates of exposure are already straining the great Conspiracies abilities to suppress the truth and supplies of Amnestics are increasingly not enough to meet demand. It is only a matter of time before there will be a major incident that slips past the radar and reveals the Shrouded Earth's true nature to an unprepared public, if simple accumulation of incidents doesn't eventually break that dam on its own. Even among Hunters there is increasingly debate on whether accepting some part of the weird into the public eye might be prudent, or even to tear it down completely and have humanity help them finish off what they foolishly regard as haggard survivors. One thing is certain, when the Veil does finally come asunder, there can be no guarantee of the outcome.

## **Human Relations**

Despite their belief in their own humanity, many Hunters possess abilities every bit as abnormal as their prey, and most Conspiracies consider their open use violations of the Veil. Stepping slightly past human limits like picking up a two thousand pound brick wall and running with it probably won't attract a backlash and might even make the rounds on social media, but a Hunter with a suit of powered armor is just as much a breach as a Scientist in one. Moreover while often possessing influence in modern governments, the premise of the Shrouded Earth is such influence is almost always contested. Despite the fantasies of certain Slayers to the contrary, tearing down the Veil to unleash the masses upon Monsters is far more likely to simply push the fight between Hunter and Monster into public

view, with human nations as their proxies.

## Lifespan

Hunters are human and rarely live longer than others of their kind. Those with extensive cybernetics or magical alteration form a marketable exception to this rule, some even stealing the immortality of their hated prey.

## Template Benefits

**Nothing Mere About This Mortal:** The Hunter starts play with 10 more Skill Dots and 2 more Gift dots than other characters [for a total of 85 Skill Dots and 10 Gift Dots].

**Mortal Excellence of [Skill] [\*]:** Mastery, Reflexive, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Monster adds [Rank] to all rolls using that Skill.

## Combat Gifts

**[Monster Type] Slayer [\*]:** Reinforcement, Mastery, Reflexive; Select one Monster Type when purchasing this Gift. Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Hunter increases his Damage with all Attacks by [Rank+2] when attacking Enemies of that Type including Battlegroups. This is not one Gift but many and is purchased and activated separately for each Monster Type.

**[Monster Type] Tactics [\*]:** Reinforcement, Mastery, Reflexive; Select one Monster Type when purchasing this Gift. Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Hunter increases his Soak by [Rank+5] against all attacks, spells, or Gifts from Enemies of that Type including Battlegroups. This Gift has no effect against indirect Environmental Hazards such as a Vampire knocking the Hunter off a roof. This is not one Gift but many and is purchased and activated separately for each Monster Type.

**[Monster Type] Expert [\*]:** Permanent; Select one Monster Type when purchasing this Gift. The Hunter is always aware if a character he is aware of is a Monster of that Type, and if so their Rank, all Weaknesses they possess, and any information regarding the particular variety of the Type they are that could be obtained with 10 successes on a Mystic Lore, Academics, or Animal Ken roll. This is not one Gift but many and is purchased separately for each Monster Type.

**Paramilitary Training [\*]:** Permanent; the Hunter immediately gains 2 dots in Gifts which must be spent purchasing Advanced Fighting Styles. He must meet all prerequisites for the purchasing of these Styles. This Gift may be purchased up to [Rank] times.

**Holy Water Shampoo[\*]:** Permanent; the Hunter's body parts such as hair, skin, or blood [or his possessions] cannot be used against him. All unwanted Gifts or Spells such as the Sympathetic Magic Gift that benefit from possessing a piece of the Hunter or beloved objects do not so benefit. In short, he is entirely immune to "sympathetic" effects of all kinds.

**Rub Salt In It [\*]:** Permanent; the Hunter's normal healing rate of 1 Health Level per Day is replaced

by the following: the Hunter heals [Rank+2] Health Levels per day. Moreover he automatically stabilizes upon being Incapacitated and cannot die of Complications.

**Trenchcoat and Katana** [\*]: Permanent; when wearing mundane armor of any kind the armor counts as possessing Armor Rating 6 and gives no Penalty to Enduring Fatigue. While wearing Mystic Artifact or Device Armor the Armor's soak is increased by 2 and it gives no Penalty to Enduring Fatigue.

**Hey Ugly!** [\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and select a Rank 1+ character. For the rest of the Scene the target suffers a -4 Penalty on all Attacks except those targeting the Hunter. If an Attack targets multiple characters including the Hunter it does not suffer this Penalty. This Gift ends early if the Hunter dies or is Incapacitated.

**To Err is Human** [\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene after rolling a Skill in which the Hunter possesses Mortal Excellence of [Skill]. Reroll that roll and take the preferred result. This can only be used once per Turn per Skill.

**Tough as Nails** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Hunter gains the Tough Skin Aspect. Moreover he never suffers Wound Penalties.

**Combat Training** [\*\*]: Permanent; increase the Hunter's Attack Pools, Defense Pools, Damage, and Soak rolls by two. Attack Pools are increased only for attack rolls not combat maneuvers.

**Blow It Out Your Ass** [\*\*]: Reinforcement, Perfect, Permanent; the Hunter is completely immune to any Gift or Spell that is resisted with an Integrity roll, as well as all Social Influence. The Hunter may Reject Influence at no cost without rolling, even if lacking a Defining Intimacy in the case of NPCs.

**Magick Shamagick** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Hunter adds his [Rank+2] to all Mystic Lore rolls made in resistance to a Gift or a Spell to prevent its taking effect upon him. Once per Scene he may, at no cost, reroll a Mystic Lore roll made in resistance to an effect and take preferred result.

**Peak Human** [\*\*]: Permanent; Hunter gains the Mighty, Agile, and Enduring Aspects.

**Between You and Me!** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and select a Rank 1+ being and roll Intimidation, Persuasion, or Deception opposed by Integrity. Upon success the target must commit 1 Effort for the Day every time they wish to attack or deliriously affect a character besides the Hunter. This Gift ends early if the Hunter dies or is Incapacitated, or declares an Attack that doesn't include the target as a target. This Gift can only target a single target at a time.

**Bloody Tears** [\*\*]: Reinforcement, Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene before declaring an attack against a Vampire. The Attack is Aggravated and if it does at least one Health Level the Vampire cannot heal or regain Health Levels by any means until the end of the Scene.

**Show Yourself Beast!** [\*\*]: Reinforcement, Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene before declaring an attack against a Shifter. The Attack is Aggravated and if it does at least one Health Level all Form-type Gifts upon the Shifter immediately end and the Shifter cannot activate Form-type Gifts until the end of the Hunter's next Turn.

**Hunting the Hunter** [\*\*]: Permanent; Whenever the Hunter deals damage to a Shifter, for the rest of the Story the Hunter may track the Shifter perfectly. This manifests as a kind of internal compass,

telling him exactly which way to head to find his quarry.

**Shooting the Heel** [\*\*]: Reinforcement, Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene before declaring an attack against a Hero. The Attack is Aggravated and if it does at least one Health Level any active Excellences the Hero has active immediately end and no further Excellences can be activated until the end of the Hunter's next Turn.

**Killing Patroclus** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene, select a Hero Type Monster the Hunter is aware of and roll Deception opposed by Integrity . The Hunter tells a lie that upon success throws the Hero into a frightening rage, sobbing wreck, or other emotional extreme. The Hero suffers a -5 Penalty to all dice pools and actions that aren't attacking or deliriously effecting the Hunter or fleeing from him. The Hero may realize the deception and end this effect early by committing 1 Effort for the Story as a Simple Action.

**Suffer Not the Witch** [\*\*]: Reinforcement, Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene before declaring an Attack. If the target is a Magician, the Attack is Aggravated. Moreover, if the Attack does at least one Health Level the target [regardless of Type] cannot activate Spell-tag Magic until the end of the Hunter's next Turn.

**Shortcircuit** [\*\*]: Reinforcement, Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene before rolling an attack against a Construct-Type character. The Attack is Aggravated, and if it deals at least one Health Level then the Construct suffers a -4 Penalty on one Skill of the Hunter's choice for the rest of the Scene.

**Buford's Bullying Baljeet** [\*\*]: Reinforcement, Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene before rolling an attack against a Scientist-Type character. The Attack is Aggravated, and if it deals at least one health level the Hunter may immediately Disarm any object the Scientist is holding, wearing, or using as though he'd made a successful Disarm attempt.

**Iron is Strong** [\*\*]: Reinforcement, Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene before rolling an attack against a Faerie-Type character. The Attack is Aggravated, and if the Faerie has a lower Rank than the Hunter then for the rest of the Scene any Faerie Gift the Faerie would use that permits for its use on more than then one target per activation may only target one target per activation. This does not effect Attack rolls which target multiple foes or Gifts that are more effectively against Battlegroups.

**Unspeaking the Spell of Life** [\*\*\*]: Reinforcement, Prerequisite Rank 4, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select a character in the Hunter's presence. For the rest of the Story, if that character dies [not merely is Incapacitated] that character is forever afterwards ineligible for effects that resurrect the dead or return them in body or soul from the afterlife. The target is truly slain and condemned to death, forever. This Gift does not itself nullify Immortality-tag effects.

**Slaying Imhotep** [\*\*]: Reinforcement, Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene before rolling an attack against a Mummy-Type character. The Attack is Aggravated, and if the Mummy is incapacitated or slain by this attack the Hunter may negate any Immortality-tag Gifts or effects the Mummy possesses.

**Who You Gonna Call?** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, the Hunter may touch, attack and effect Immaterialized beings and objects as though they were Material. Moreover any of his attacks against Immaterial beings are Aggravated. If he cannot see or perceive immaterial things these attacks are made at a -4 Penalty.

**Crossing the Streams** [\*\*]: Reinforcement, Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene before rolling an attack against a Ghost-Type character. The Attack is Aggravated, and if the Ghost is incapacitated or slain by this attack the Hunter may negate any Immortality-tag Gifts the Ghost possesses to instead seal the ghost inside a nearby object. This counts as a Soul Jar per the Theurgy Magic for all purposes.

**But it Failed!** [\*\*]: Reinforcement, Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene before rolling an attack against a Psychic-Type character. The Attack is Aggravated, and if it deals at least one damage then the target, regardless of Type, may not teleport for the rest of the Scene. Any effect that involves movement without crossing the intermediate space fails automatically.

**Man is Born Free** [\*\*]: Reinforcement, Reflexive, Perfect; Commit 1 Effort for the Day after attacking and damaging a target. Select one Gift or Magic activation the target activated within the last Story that controlled or influenced the behavior or emotions of another character and negate the activation. This only effects mind control or alteration, not superhuman charisma or social influence.

**I Don't Believe in Faeries** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. For the rest of the Scene the Hunter, alone, counts as though he were a sufficiently large crowd of Rank 0 beings to induce Mystic Collapse in Mystic Artifacts and characters with the Lesser or Greater Mystic Collapse Weakness.

**Strong As They Come** [\*\*\*]: Mastery, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Hunter adds his [Rank] to all Might, Agility, and Endurance rolls.

**Never Be Better Than Commander Shepard** [\*\*\*]: Permanent; Select five Skills. The Hunter gains two dice when rolling any of them and once per Scene can reroll one of the Skills at no cost. Moreover, he never suffers Penalties to those Skills. This Gift can only be taken once.

**Yeah Fuck You Too!** [\*\*]: Permanent; Once per Scene when declaring an Attack the Hunter may declare the Attack Aggravated and if the target would be slain by the resulting Attack all Immortality-tag Gifts or Spels are negated.

**Grotesque Surgery** [\*\*\*]: Permanent; the Hunter gains access to two Aspects of his choice. This Gift may only be purchased once.

**Buffy the Vampire Slayer** [\*\*\*]: Reinforcement, Permanent; the Hunter gains the benefit of the following effects.

Effect 1: When attacked by an Unavoidable Attack by a Monster Type for whom you possess [Monster Type] Slayer or [Monster Type] Tactics. The Attack is instead not Unavoidable.

Effect 2: When attacked by an Aggravated Attack by a Monster Type for whom you possess [Monster Type] Slayer or [Monster Type] Tactics. The Attack is instead not Aggravated.

Effect 3: Once per Scene, at no cost, when targeted by an attack or offensive maneuver, negate that attack/maneuver. The Hunter need not be aware of the attack, but he must declare this Gift before and

in place of rolling Defense.

**The Bigger They Are** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and select a target with the Large, Titanic, Kaiju, Colossal, or Cosmic Size Aspects. For the rest of the Scene or until this Gift is used again, the target cannot escape the Hunter. The Hunter may cling to, hold onto, chain himself to, or otherwise keep up with the target without rolling. Even if the target teleports, the Hunter somehow follows. Moreover the Hunter cannot be grappled by the target [all such efforts automatically fail] and target suffers a -5 Penalty on all Attack rolls against the Hunter.

**Banish** [\*\*\*]: Reinforcement, Prerequisite Rank 4; Perfect, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene while selecting a Rank 1+ Monster in the Hunter's presence with a Rank equal or lower than the Hunter [which cannot be a Hunter]. Select 1 Gift or Magic the Monster possesses. They are treated as not possessing it for the rest of the Scene. If it is active, it ends. The Hunter must be vaguely aware the targetted power is one the target possesses. Subsequent uses upon the same target replace former uses. This has no effect upon Gifts with the Immortality tag.

**Doomslayer** [\*\*\*]: Reinforcement, Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. For the rest of the Day all of the Hunter's Attacks against Demon-Type Enemies are Aggravated. However if at any point the Hunter ends his Turn without declaring an Attack against a Demon-Type Enemy, this Gift immediately ends.

**Prep Time** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 5, Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Story as an Extended Action requiring four hours during which one studies a particular character. For the rest of the Story gain the following benefits.

Effect 1: The Hunter may always reflexively reveal on his person or from hidden nearby any object, provided it is something he could reasonably possess and it is in some way relevant to killing, defeating, or thwarting the character in question.

Effect 2: All of the Hunter's Attacks against the studied character are Aggravated.

Effect 3: If the studied character kills or Incapacitates the Hunter, the Hunter may reveal his apparent defeat was only part of his plan. If the target possesses five Health or less, the Hunter is not killed or Incapacitated, instead recovering to five Health, and the target suffers five health. This damage cannot be avoided or mitigated by any effect lacking the Perfect tag.

**Imitation of the Founder** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisites Rank 5 and He Who Fights Monsters. The Hunter may purchase all Type Gifts from the Type whose Template Benefits he took using He Who Fights Monsters, except for those with Rank 4 or Rank 5 as prerequisites. Moreover he immediately learns 6 dots of Gifts from the relevant Type. This Gift may only be taken once.

## Social Gifts

**Bond Girl Name** [\*]: Permanent; the Hunter gains the Beautiful Aspect.

**Guardian of the Flock** [\*]: Permanent; the Hunter is always aware if someone in his presence he is aware of is a Monster, but nothing further. Moreover he also is always aware if someone in his presence, Monster or not, is under any kind of mind controlling or altering effect, or has had his

memories altered within the last Story [or Week].

**Whose Hunting Who?** [\*]: Permanent; the Hunter adds [Rank] to all Intimidate rolls. If the target of an Intimidate roll is a lower Rank [Size+Rank for Battlegroups] then the Hunter, this is instead [Rank+2].

**Memorizing the Penguins** [\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene while thinking of two characters the Hunter knows of. He immediately becomes aware of the basic nature of their relationship expressed in a simple one sentence statement, such as “They are brothers who fight often.” or “They are divorced but still have feelings for each other” or even “He is his sire, who made him a vampire centuries ago”.

**Brand of Truth** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene and select one Rank 1+ Monster [besides Hunters] in the Hunter's presence and roll Integrity or Intimidate opposed by Integrity. Upon success, the Monster is prohibited from intentionally lying or hiding important information for the rest of the Day. He may still choose to do so, but doing so immediately causes the target to become obviously inhuman in appearance for the rest of the Day, often to the effect of exaggerations befitting his Type. Shifters may appear bestial and rabid, Vampire's fangs may grow protruded or their skin appear pale, grey or yellow like a corpse. In all cases the result is the same, anyone who sees the target is aware they are not human and no illusion, shapeshifting, or deception can obscure the obviousness of this fact. Targets are aware of this fact before they choose to lie.

**Torches And Pitchforks** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Story and select a loyal Battlegroup composed primarily of Rank 0 beings. The Battlegroup gains Drill 5 and is immune to all Social Influence from Monsters [except Hunters] for the rest of the Story.

**Leader of Men** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Hunter never suffers Penalties on Social rolls when interacting with Rank 0 beings or fellow Hunters. Moreover whenever making an opposed Social Roll or Bureaucracy roll against a Rank 1+ Monster [except Hunters] all such characters suffer a -4 Penalty.

**Snap Out of It!** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select a target under the effect of some kind of mind controlling or memory-altering Gift or Spell. The Gift or Spell ends, the target regains full control of their actions and any memories erased within the last Story. If the origin of the Gift or Spell has a Rank of at least [Hunter's Rank+2] this Gift has no effect.

**Studying the Subject** [\*\*]: Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. As an Extended Action taking at least fifteen minutes and at most several hours the Hunter studies a particular character. Regardless of the scarcity of information, the Hunter immediately learns the target's Defining Intimacies and Major Intimacies [if an NPC] or what is important to them generally [if a Player Character].

**Elementary My Dear Watson** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The Hunter may ask a single question of the Storyteller concerning a character in the Hunter's presence whose Rank is equal or lower than the Hunter's own Rank, and learn its answer. This Gift could be used to learn where a character grew up, why they're in town, what their mother's maiden name is, or any other factoid specific to the target. This Gift most commonly takes the form of some preposterous deduction the Hunter makes regarding the target's physical appearance or behavior.



**A Coin For Your Witcher** [\*\*]: Prerequisite [Monster Type] Expert, Perfect, Permanent; whenever the Hunter presents himself as an expert or professional hunter of a Monster for whom she possesses [Monster Type] Tactics, Rank 0 beings will invariably believe her and trust her expertise. By committing 1 Effort for the Day as a Simple Action she may without rolling convince a number of Rank 0 beings with a Size equal to her Rank of the necessity of undertaking a certain action [such as extermination] specifically regarding the Monster Type in question as though she had succeeded upon a Mass Social Influence roll. This grants automatic victory over all opposed rolls against said Mass Social Influence roll.

**Something's Going On** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3 and The World's Greatest Detective, Permanent; whenever a Rank 1+ Monster [besides Hunters] makes a Mass Social Influence or Bureaucracy roll within [Rank Miles] radius of his location the Hunter immediately becomes aware of it. Moreover by committing 1 Effort for the Day as a Reflexive Action he develops an infallible mental 'compass' pointing him in the direction of the Monster who made the roll. This lasts for the rest of the Day, but may be renewed by recommitting the Effort with each new Day. The Hunter may only have one such 'compass' active at once.

**No One Like Gaston** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 4, Perfect, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Story while selecting one Rank 1+ Monster [besides Hunters] the Hunter is aware of. They need not be in his presence. Roll Persuasion or Integrity opposed by Integrity. Upon success the target is marked mystically and socially as 'a monster, not-human, Other'. For the rest of the Story, all Rank 0 beings who encounter the target will instinctively recognize the Monster as a dangerous, irrational, inhuman presence to be fled from, killed, or driven away from human civilization. All of the target's Social Influence, Mass Social Influence, or Bureaucracy rolls involving Rank 0 beings automatically fail regardless of result. This overrides all Gifts lacking the Perfect tag. Upon failure the target cannot be targeted by this Gift again during the same story.

**Black Gate Speech** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 4 and [Monster Type] Expert, Supplemental, Reflexive; while the Hunter is acting as the Commanding Officer of a Battlegroup. As a reflexive action after the Battlegroup has declared an Attack [and before defense is rolled] against a Rank 1+ Monster for whom the Hunter has [Monster Type] Tactics or a Battlegroup composed primarily of the same commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Attack is Unavoidable and Aggravated.

**Showing Them The Ropes** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Story as an Extended Action requiring one week and select one Rank 0 intelligent sapient character. The Hunter trains the character in the ways of the Hunt, spending at least four hours per day doing so. At the end of the week the character becomes a Rank 1 Hunter with 8 dots of Hunter Gifts selected by the Storyteller. They retain any General Gifts or Thaumaturgy.

**Age of Man** [\*\*\*] Prerequisite Rank 5 and No One Like Gaston, Reinforcement, Perfect, Extended, World-Altering; Commit 1 Effort for the Story as an Extended Action requiring eight hours and select a celestial body within the same solar system as the Hunter. For the next year and a day, all Monsters of Rank 3 or lower on that celestial body, besides Hunters, are subject to the effect of No One Like

Gaston.

## Stealth Gifts

**The Dark Knight** [\*]: Permanent; the Hunter adds [Rank+2] dice to all Stealth and Larceny rolls.

**Peering Through Spotlights** [\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Hunter may pass through all closed portals, doors, windows, etc as though they were open and unsecured. The Hunter could pass through an heavy bank vault door without opening it, or enter a locked car without triggering the alarm.

**Mild-Mannered** [\*]: Permanent; the Hunter appears as a Rank 0 ordinary human being to all supernatural inspection. Any Gift that would reveal the Hunter's Rank reveals it erroneously as 0, any that would reveal his Type reveals him as lacking one. This has no effect against Hunter Expert.

**Billionaire Playboy** [\*]: Simple; the Hunter may at no cost and without rolling create the impression he belongs at a certain declared location, regardless of any lack of logic or lack of certification involved. He could get into a fancy party by declaring himself a mild-mannered businessman whose invitation was lost in the mail, or stride into a top secret government meeting as the secretary of an unspecified official. Any rolls made to by any means see through the Hunter's lies on this topic or otherwise reveal him as not belonging suffer a -4 Penalty.

**The World's Greatest Detective** [\*]: Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene as an Extended Action taking at least fifteen minutes and at most several hours. The Hunter declares a single intelligent being. If any other intelligent being has seen the declared being within the last lunar month, the Hunter learns of the initial being's exact location per the time of the ending of the research or intel search.

**Misdirection** [\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The Hunter somehow distracts or draws attention away from himself, or makes himself unnoticable. Any Perception roll to notice the Hunter suffers a -4 Penalty for the rest of the Scene.

**Leaving Mid-Sentence** [\*\*]: Perfect, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day on your Turn. The Hunter slips away, escaping all pursuit. Provided he himself is not bound he may, without rolling, leave any room or building he is in [even if locked, sealed, or otherwise impossible to escape] and flee to the nearest safe location within one mile. This Gift is only useful for escaping and leaving places, not breaking into them.

**I'm Batman** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and roll Stealth The Hunter becomes completely impossible to notice by characters with a lower Rank than himself by any means. Through skill, luck, cleverness, and if all else fails thaumaturgical knowhow, the Hunter is not seen. Even high tech sensors fail to notice the Hunter if not staffed by high enough Rank characters. This Gift ends if the Hunter takes any actions besides moving under his own power, or talking. If the Hunter passes near a character with a Rank equal or higher than his own, they may roll opposed Perception against the initial Stealth. Upon success this Gift also ends.

**Forge Your Own Fate** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 4, Permanent; the Hunter is immune to all Scrying,

Divination, and other information gathering effects about his person. Gifts to learn about his personal details [as opposed to his Rank, Skills, Health, etc] such as The World's Greatest Detective or Efficient Secretary Technique yield 'no return' as an answer. Gifts to see his future or past show 'no return' also. Scrying his location reveals the Scene around the Hunter, but the Hunter himself is not shown, instead appearing invisible.

**Innocent** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 4, Perfect, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Hunter cannot be seen or noticed by beings with a Rank of 1+ [except Hunters]. He is invisible, inaudible and beyond all supernatural senses. High tech sensors show the Hunter, but Rank 1+ beings analyzing such still cannot perceive his presence. If a Rank 0 being points out the Hunter, he nonetheless doesn't appear to their senses. This Gift immediately ends if the Hunter takes any action besides moving or talking.

## Craft Gifts

**Stunt Driving** [\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene while selecting a Vehicle the Hunter is piloting. The Hunter automatically counts as possessing the Minimal Riding Skill for the Vehicle and flawlessly understands how to pilot it, he never suffers Penalties to Riding in that Vehicle, and if the Vehicle was damaged when the Hunter took the controls it is immediately fully healed. The Vehicle does not seem to repair itself, it is simply revealed that all apparent damage was merely cosmetic and doesn't actually impair its function. This Gift may only effect the same Vehicle once per Scene.

**Sufficiently Analyzed Magic** [\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day while examining a Mystic Artifact or Device. For the rest of the Day that Artifact or Device will not suffer Mystic Collapse or Havoc.

**Cybernetics** [\*]: Permanent; the Hunter is forever treated as wearing a Rank 1 Device Armor which can be Light, Medium, or Heavy as desired selected upon purchase. The Armor has the Indestructible Evocation and one other Evocation of the Hunter's choice. This Gift can be purchased additional times to increase the Rank of the Device Armor by 1 and grant an additional Evocation. This Gift can be purchased up to [Rank] times. This Armor does not suffer Havoc. The Hunter may choose to wear other armor while possessing this Gift, but must choose upon donning it which Armor to benefit from, the new set for that provided by this Gift. They do not stack.

**Call Me Beep Me** [\*]: Permanent; any form of communication the Hunter uses, such as mundane technology such as cell phones or thaumaturgical magics, cannot be disrupted, intercepted, spied upon through interception, or prevented. If he is carrying a phone, magics to short out the electronics fail to effect it. If a government wants to tap his phone, they fail. If an EMP knocks out cell service for the entire continent, the Hunter still somehow has bars.

**Calling Alfred** [\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. If it is at all reasonable or consistent with the current Scene, a Vehicle the Hunter owns or otherwise has access to arrives immediately piloted by a reasonable character of the Hunter's choice whose whereabouts were not currently established. For instance, this Gift could be used to retroactively declare that the Hunter had arranged a helicopter to

pick up the party, resulting in his faithful butler landing to fetch them but could not be used if the party was a mile underground, nor reveal that the pilot was the Mash's Magician's long lost missing daughter who was a captive of AVALON. The primary benefit of this Gift is that it is a retroactive action, allowing the Hunter to foresee and plan for things their player did not.

**Hunter Net** [\*]: Prerequisite Craft Mystic Artifact or Craft Device, Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Day as an Extended Action requiring one hour. The Hunter immediately learns the names and general identities of all characters with an equal or lower Rank to himself who also possess either the Craft Mystic Artifact or Craft Device Gift within [Rank x100] miles radius of himself.

**Monster Hunter** [\*]: Prerequisite Craft Mystic Artifact or Craft Device, Permanent; whenever the Hunter extracts a piece of a Monster to serve as an Exotic Component he may designate it as a Universal Exotic Component of equivalent Rank.

**Highway to the Danger Zone** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene while piloting a Vehicle to crash the Vehicle in a way that invariably ends in a massive explosion. Select up to [Vehicle Rank] Enemies and roll a Calamitous Explosive Attack, substituting the normal Attack roll for Riding. This Attack effects the [Vehicle Rank] Enemies as an Unavoidable Attack with a base damage of 17 [per Calamitous Explosive rules]. This Attack invariably destroys the Vehicle in question requiring a future Repair roll to fix it. The Hunter never suffers damage from this Attack, though he is still vulnerable to possible fallout such as fall damage after crashing a plane.

**Wonderful Toys** [\*\*]: Permanent; Any mundane items [not Mystic Artifacts or Devices] that the Hunter crafts are of exceptional quality. They last ten times as long as ordinary items of their type before breaking down from lack of maintenance, they do not suffer wear and tear from any use short of intentional destruction, never suffer Penalties relating to their use, and add two dice to whatever Skill is appropriate [high end computers add 2 to Science, high end guns add 2 to Ranged, high end Vehicles add two dice to Riding, and so forth].

**Bat-Shark Repellent** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Hunter reveals, from the nearest place capable of hiding such a thing, anything of the Hunter's choice that he crafted himself of Personal Scale [whether mundane technology, a Mystic Artifact, or a Device]. Any lack of logic of how he was storing the item on his person or how he stashed it ahead of time in his surroundings is ignored.

**Sun Grenade** [\*\*]: Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Day as an Extended Action requiring 1 Hour. The Hunter, using a combination of thaumaturgy and primitive technology, creates a Rank 1 Mystic Artifact or Device with the following effect. As a Simple Action, any character using the item may cause it to shed bright sunlight up to 100 yards around it for up to a Scene. In addition to illumination of dark places, this counts as true sunlight for all relevant Weaknesses. This object most commonly takes the form of lanterns, tossable 'grenades' or handheld 'flash-light cannons'. The Hunter may only create up to [Rank] Sun Grenades, creation of more past this causes an existing Grenade to fail.

**Mass Production** [\*\*\*]: Permanent; whenever the Hunter is crafting a Mystic Artifact or Device, if he is assisted by a number of Rank 0 beings [who need not possess the relevant Gift] with a Size equal to the Rank of the Item to be created, he adds two dice to all Artifice rolls and may roll twice per Interval,

using his total successes for advancing the project.

**Muggles Do It Better** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3; Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. All Mystic Artifacts and Devices with a Rank equal or lower than the Hunter's Rank [except those being used, piloted, or worn by Hunters] cease to function and become glorified paperweights for one mile radius centered on the Hunter and moving with her, for the rest of the Scene. Gifts that summon Mystic Artifacts or Devices such as Glorious Hero Visage instead immediately end and are dispelled if of low enough Rank.

**Spanedosian Arsenal** [\*\*\*]: Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Day before rolling an attack against a Monster besides a Hunter with a Rank of 1+. If the attack deals even one Health Level, the target suffers an Injury from the Injury Chart of the Hunter's choice. More importantly, the removed body part counts as a Mystic Artifact Weapon in the Hunter's possession with a Rank equal to the Monster's Rank and Evocations selected by the Storyteller. This item does not suffer Mystic Collapse and loses its potency at the end of the Scene. This Gift may only successfully produce one item per target per Scene.

**Spanedosian Patchwork Genius** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisites Rank 4 and Monster Hunter, Permanent; whenever the Hunter uses Monster Hunter he may harvest two Universal Exotic Components rather than just one. This explicitly violates the rule barring harvesting more than one Exotic Component per felled Monster.

## Magic Gifts

**Struggling Awake** [\*]: Permanent; the Hunter learns a single Magecraft Magic which must lack prerequisites and the Perfect tag and be only one dot. This Gift may be taken up to [Rank] times.

**Cheap Tricks and Mirrors** [\*]: Permanent; the Hunter can always recognize illusions he is aware of as being such and is always aware if a character he is aware of is using Gifts or Spells to look otherwise than they should. This Gift does not show the Hunter what the character in question actually looks like when not using illusions or shapeshifting to hide its true face.

**Expert Thaumaturge** [\*]: Prerequisite Mystic Lore or Science 4, Permanent; the Hunter immediately learns two dots of Thaumaturgy. This Gift may be purchased up to [Rank] times. If multiple instances of this Gift are purchased at once, the dots gained are pooled allowing for the potential purchase of 3-dot Thaumaturgy powers.

**Counterspell** [\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene when a character the Hunter is aware of activates a Spell tag power. Roll Mystic Lore opposed by Mystic Lore. Upon success the Spell is dispelled, it is not resolved and has no effect. Upon success the Hunter loses the Simple Action on their next Turn as they busy themselves with Counterspelling.

**Cultic Magic** [\*]: Permanent; the Demon may substitute the Effort cost of magic with cultic supporters. The Demon must have in his company a group of intelligent beings with a Size of 2+ for Effort committed for the Scene and 3+ for Effort committed for the Day who are performing no notable actions besides ritual actions on his behalf such as waving staves or chanting in mystical languages. All

magic the Demon casts requires no Effort be committed for the Scene or Day to perform. This has no effect upon magic that requires Effort be committed for the Story.

**Ritual Magic** [\*]: Permanent; the Hunter may cast any magic she knows with a Reflexive or Simple tag as a Ritual requiring fifteen minutes. If they do so, the resulting magic costs no Effort to activate and suffers from no Penalties from any source. This cannot be used on magic which requires committing Effort for the Story.

**Evil Never Sleeps** [\*]: Permanent; the Hunter can stay awake for up to two weeks without lasting consequences. Moreover, he cannot be magically put to sleep by any means.

**Awesome by Analysis** [\*]: Reflexive, Supplemental; Once per Scene at no cost the Hunter may roll Academics in place of any other roll. This must be declared before the roll is made. This cannot replace static values such as movement speed or one's Might contributing to Damage on a Might-based Attack.

**Improvised Magic** [\*\*]: Permanent; once per Story the Hunter may cast magic he is aware of the existence of but does not himself know. He must meet all prerequisites for the magic in question and be capable of purchasing it with Experience Points. The Storyteller may choose to rule that the Hunter is limited to powers in this book or already designed by the Storyteller to avoid slowing the session with the writing of a new spell or ritual.

**Brendan Fraisering** [\*]: Permanent; whenever the Hunter perceives a Mummy he immediately learns the 'flaw' in the Mummy's Immortality, the condition in which it is negated. By reflexively committing 1 Effort for the Day while perceiving a non-Mummy with an Immortality-tag effect they may immediately learn how that Gift or Magic works and how it can be negated. If this is used on a character without an Immortality tag effect the Effort is wasted.

**Blood Magic** [\*\*]: Permanent; whenever the Hunter attempts to cast Magic which requires Effort by committed for the Scene or for the Day, he may substitute the Effort cost. Instead of whatever Effort is demanded, he loses 1 current and maximum Health for the rest of the Day per Effort demanded.

**Sleep No Longer** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Permanent; the Hunter learns a single Magecraft Magic which must lack prerequisites and the Perfect tag and be two dots or less. This Gift may be taken up to [Rank] times.

**Samuel Haight** [\*\*]: Permanent; the Hunter learns a single Gift from another Type's Type Gift list, which must lack prerequisites and the Perfect tag and be only one dot. This Gift may be taken up to [Rank] times and need not be taken from the same list each time.

**Blur the Lines** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Permanent; the Hunter learns a single Gift from another Type's Type Gift list, which must lack prerequisites and the Perfect tag and be two dots or less. This Gift may be taken only once.

**Thaumaturgical Theft** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Reflexive; once per Scene when a character the Hunter is aware of activates a Gift or Magic of any kind except those with the Permanent or Perfect Tag or a Prerequisite, roll Mystic Lore opposed by Mystic Lore. Upon success, the activation fails and the target loses access to that power. The Hunter then designates a mundane object in his possession. Whosoever holds that object may use and access the stole Gift or Magic within it as though they knew

the power. This item and its power lasts for the rest of the Story [even if the original owner dies] or until this Gift is used again, whichever happens first.

**He Who Fights Monsters [\*\*\*]:** Prerequisite Rank 3, Permanent; the Hunter gains the Template effects of another Type selected upon purchase of this Gift. For instance a Hunter who selected Shifter would develop a War Form as though he was a starting Shifter, while one who selected Mummy would gain the immortality provided by the Rite of Return. All choices relevant to a Template such as Aspects provided by Vampiric Anatomy are chosen upon purchase and cannot be changed. This Gift does not allow one access to the Type's Excellences or version of Ox-Body Technique. This Gift may only be purchased once.

**The Awakening [\*\*\*]:** Prerequisite Rank 4; Permanent; the Hunter learns three dots of Magecraft of her choice. She may purchase Magecraft for the normal Experience Cost from now on subject to the normal requirement of Mystic Lore or Science 6+.

**End the Curse [\*\*\*]:** Prerequisite Rank 5, Simple, Reinforcement, Perfect; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and target one Incapacitated character in your presence who is a Rank 1+ Monster besides a Hunter. That character becomes a Rank 0 character. They lose their Type and become whatever is most appropriate to a natural version of whatever they are. Most characters become human beings, but beings more like animals or inanimate objects may become those instead. Undead characters are generally resurrected. They retain their Skills but lose access to Template Benefits, Excellences, Type Gifts, Magecraft and Theurgy. They do not lose access to any other General Gifts such as Advanced Fighting Styles or purchases of Ox-Body Technique. When this Gift takes the effect the Storyteller devises a condition or situation whose fulfillment reverses this Gift and restores a Monster's powers. A Hero may need to perform a dangerous trial to release his sealed power while a revived Ghost may need to reenact their tragic death precisely as it happened the first time.

**Incarnating Physical Law [\*\*\*]:** Prerequisite Rank 5, Extended, Reinforcement, World-Altering; Commit 1 Effort for the Story as an Extended Action requiring eight hours and select a celestial body within the same solar system as the Hunter. For the next year and a day, all Mystic Artifacts and all Devices will completely fail to function on the given celestial body, counting as effective paperweights for all purposes. This does not count as Mystic Collapse or Havoc so effects that mitigate these things do not mitigate this effect. Killing the Hunter ends this effect early. If the Item is being used, worn, or piloted by a Rank 5 character this Gift does not apply.

**The Magic Goes Away [\*\*\*]:** Prerequisite Rank 5, Extended, Reinforcement, World-Altering; Commit 1 Effort for the Story as an Extended Action requiring eight hours and select a celestial body within the same solar system as the Hunter. For the next year and a day, all Magecraft and Theurgy automatically fails and is completely negated upon the given celestial body unless used by a Rank 4 or 5 character. Killing the Hunter ends this effect early.

**Time of Thin Blood [\*\*\*]:** Prerequisite Rank 5, Extended, Reinforcement, World-Altering; Commit 1 Effort for the Story as an Extended Action requiring eight hours and select a celestial body within the same solar system as the Hunter. For the next year and a day on this celestial body, Rank 0 characters

cannot become Rank 1+ Monsters except Hunters by any means nor will Rank 1+ Monsters come into being by any means. Vampires and Werewolves find their curse cannot spread, the children of gods are mere mortals, ghosts do not arise from horrible deaths, Magic and Science find they cannot birth artificial men and no amount of study turns a thaumaturge into a Magician. Killing the Hunter ends this effect early. Through this Gift a Hunter makes his world mundane, ending the replenishment of his enemy's ranks.

**Sealing the Golden Land [\*\*\*]:** Prerequisite Rank 5, Extended, Reinforcement, World-Altering; Commit 1 Effort for the Story as an Extended Action requiring eight hours and select a celestial body within the same solar system as the Hunter. For the next year and a day, seal all Irises on the given celestial body which lead to Reality Marbles or Far Shore Territories. It becomes impossible to reach the otherworlds by means of the typical gateways, or to return from them through the same. Killing the Hunter ends this effect early.

**Reaching Archmastery [\*\*\*]:** Prerequisite Rank 5, Permanent; the Hunter immediately learns six dots of Theurgy which he must meet all prerequisites for. This Gift may only be purchased once.



# Mummies

*"All these people thought of was death and the dead. They conceived of a literal resurrection of the body which made them mummify it with desperate care, and preserve all the vital organs in canopic jars near the corpse; whilst besides the body they believed in two other elements, the soul, which after its weighing and approval by Osiris dwelt in the land of the blest, and the obscure and portentous ka or life-principle which wandered about the upper and lower worlds in a horrible way, demanding occasional access to the preserved body, consuming the food offerings brought by priests and pious relatives to the mortuary chapel, and sometimes—as men whispered—taking its body or the wooden double always buried beside it and stalking noxiously abroad on errands peculiarly repellent. For thousands of years those bodies rested gorgeously encased and staring glassily upward when not visited by the ka, awaiting the day when Osiris should restore both ka and soul, and lead forth the stiff legions of the dead from their sunken houses of sleep. It was to have been a glorious rebirth—but not all souls were approved, nor were all tombs inviolate, so that certain grotesque mistakes and fiendish abnormalities were to be looked for. Even today the Arabs murmur of unsanctified convocations and unwholesome worship in forgotten nether abysses, which only winged invisible kas and soulless mummies may visit and return unscathed."*

*-Imprisoned with the Pharaohs*

## Template Benefits:

**Rite of Return:** Permanent, Immortality; the Mummy may not die of Complications, nor from any other means by that matter. Upon being Incapacitated the Mummy always remains Incapacitated until the end of the Scene in addition to the effects of any other Complications, but they may not die. Their body may be damaged, desecrated, brutalized, or beaten, but will invariably regenerate into a usable form at 1 Health at the end of the Scene. The Mummy must design with the Storyteller some method of permanently slaying them, such as 'if my tomb is desecrated I cannot return' or 'if my canopic jars are shattered' or 'If I am addressed by my True Name by my would be killer, my immortality fades for the Scene'. This power has no effect upon and does not help the Mummy avoid fates such as being permanently turned to stone, having their conscious mind erased, being buried alive, or cast adrift into the darkness of space.

**Cult [\*]:** Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day while laying one's hand upon a willing intelligent sapient character. That character counts as a Cultist. Many Mummy Gifts benefit from the number of Cultists a Mummy possesses. With Background Merits such as Backing or Wealth a Mummy may justify possessing up to a Size 5 Battlegroup of Cultists. He otherwise starts with Size 1, or up to nine Cultists.

**Monster Excellence of [Skill] [\*]:** Mastery, Reflexive, Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of

the Scene the Monster adds [unmodified Skill/2] to all rolls using that Skill.

## Combat Gifts

**Aegis of Ra** [\*]: Permanent; the Mummy adds [Cult Size-2, Min 1] to his Defense pool for all purposes. If the Cultists are traveling with him, he instead adds [Cult Size].

**Hand of Horus** [\*]: Permanent; the Mummy adds [Cult Size-2, Min 1] to all Attack rolls, but not to Combat Maneuvers. If the Cultists are traveling with him, he instead adds [Cult Size].

**Hekau of Might** [\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Mummy may count his Mystic Lore as his Might for all purposes.

**Hekau of Agility** [\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Mummy may count his Mystic Lore as his Agility for all purposes.

**Hekau of Endurance** [\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Mummy may count his Mystic Lore as his Endurance for all purposes.

**Hekau of Integrity** [\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Mummy may count his Mystic Lore as his Integrity for all purposes.

**Immortal Fortitude** [\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Mummy adds his Rank to Soak.

**Preserved Forever** [\*]: Permanent; the Mummy never suffers Would Penalties for any reason.

**Undying Flesh** [\*]: Permanent; the Mummy gains the Tough Skin Aspect.

**What A Grand And Intoxicating Innocence!** [\*]: Prerequisite Regeneration, Permanent; if the Mummy is Incapacitated by Environmental Hazards or by a character with a lower Rank or by a Battlegroup with a lower [Size+Rank] than his own Rank, the Mummy is instead not Incapacitated and recovers one Health per Regeneration at the start of his next Turn.

**Immortal Potence** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Mummy adds his Rank to his Damage with Might attacks and to his placement on the Might Chart.

This explicitly applies while using Hekau of Might

**Immortal Celerity** [\*\*]: Permanent; The Mummy doubles all of his movement speeds. Moreover, he may reflexively Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Turn the Mummy's speed is instead multiplied by [Cult Size+2] and he may attack up to [Cult Size] Enemies with his Attack Action.

**Protected by Quetzalcoatl** [\*\*]: Perfect, Reflexive; Once per Scene, at no cost, when targeted by an attack, turn-long damage source, or offensive maneuver, negate that attack/maneuver. The Mummy need not be aware of the attack, but he must declare this Gift before and in place of rolling Defense. If the Mummy is Incapacitated or a combat ends, this Gift refreshes. The Mummy must truly be Incapacitated to refresh this Gift, Gifts such as What A Grand And Intoxicating Innocence! thwart this effect.

**Tai Chi Deflection** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. For the rest of the Scene if the Mummy is targeted by an Unavoidable Attack, it is instead not Unavoidable. This effect activates up to [Cult

Size] times then the Gift activation ends.

**Jaguar Defense** [\*\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. For the rest of the Scene if the Mummy is targeted by an Aggravated Attack, it is instead not Aggravated. This effect activates up to [Cult Size] times then the Gift activation ends.

**Regeneration** [\*\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Mummy heals one Health Level at the start of each of his turns, even while out of combat. If he is incapacitated or permanently killed this power automatically ends.

## Social Gifts

**End of Legalism** [\*]: Permanent; whenever the Mummy would suffer a Penalty to Bureaucracy or Social Influence rolls of any kind, reduce the Penalty by [Cult Size].

**Ozymandias** [\*\*]: Prerequisites Ranj 3 and All The Light Touches; Permanent; when used against Rank 0 characters the Mummy's influence with All The Light Touches is overwhelming. They will treat the Mummy as divine, obeying his every whim. They will fight to the death for his amusement, rush into battle at his behest or throw themselves to their deaths if he should but desire it. It should be noted this Gift only effects characters the Mummy's personally and directly interacts with, in person. It does not function through electronics or proxies. If the Rank 0 characters are a Battlegroup the first time in a Scene they would interact with the Mummy their Commanding Officer may roll Morale opposed by the Mummy's Persuasion or Mystic Lore. Upon success they may ignore this effect for the Scene.

**Reign of the Yellow Emperor** [\*\*\*]: Permanent; the Mummy adds [Cult Size] to all Persuasion, Intimidation, and Deception rolls.

**All The Light Touches** [\*\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene, any intelligent sapient character with a Rank of [Mummy's Rank-2] or less [minimum Rank 0] the Demon interacts with is put under a supernatural illusion that the Mummy is someone with legitimate authority over the person in question. The context of this illusion may be provided by the Mummy or allowed to be formed by the victims [for instance a Mummy may claim to represent an ancient returning king, or be a god]. The claim need not be reasonable, the illusion fills in any gaps of logic until at least the end of the Scene. This is not true mind control, it is purely an illusion, characters will only obey the Mummy to the extent they would obey the imagined authority in question and are under no supernatural compulsion otherwise.

## Stealth Gifts

**Heightened Senses** [\*]: Permanent; the Mummy never suffers Penalties relating to Perception nor suffers Penalties to other Skills for reasons of Perception [such as fighting in pitch darkness or

attacking a target in stealth].

**Hekau of Perception** [\*]: Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Mummy may count his Mystic Lore as his Perception for all purposes.

## Craft Gifts

**Stone Tablets** [\*]: Permanent; Anything the Mummy crafts becomes completely immune to the ravages of time. It will not rust, decay, or cease to function due to the mere passage of time or lack of maintenance.

**For the Glory of the Pharaoh** [\*]: Permanent; when utilizing vast amounts of additional laborers a Mummy may craft much quicker. The Mummy multiplies the speed by which he crafted by twice the Size of the group helping him. For instance if a Mummy was being aided by 200 laborers [a Size 3 Battlegroup] he would multiply his crafting speed by 6. For mundane crafting this means the item is crafted in a fraction of the ordinary time, which stacks with the x2 for rolling 6+ successes. For Items of Power you instead multiply the successes rolled each Interval by the multiplier. For instance if you rolled 6 successes in an Interval, it would multiply it by twice the Size helping you. This Gift applies even in projects where additional labor would not logically help, their mere presence bolstering and encouraging the Mummy as he works.

**Slaves to a Higher Purpose** [\*]: Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select a group of willing characters with a Size equal or lower than the Mummy's Rank. For the rest of the Day or until this Gift is used again, those characters may craft objects with only the simplest of tools, or even no tools at all. Through manual labor alone a Mummy could have his men erect a pyramid or weld together a starship.

**Memories of Ancient Days** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Craft Mystic Artifact OR Craft Device, Permanent; Once per Story the Mummy may reflexively create a Schematic automatically without rolling and regardless of his Rank. For many Mummies this takes the form of suddenly remembering a Schematic from his past or remembering where another character has one, from which he speedily retracts it.

**Look Upon My Works and Despair** [\*\*]: Prerequisite Rank 3, Simple; Once per Story designate a single structure at least one hundred feet tall the Mummy constructed himself or which was constructed primarily by his Cultists. As long as the Structure endures, the Mummy counts as possessing a Size 5 Cult no matter how few Cultists he possesses. This lasts until this Gift is used again.

**Monument to Eternity** [\*\*\*]: Prerequisites Rank 3, For the Glory of the Pharaoh; Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select a group of characters aiding in one's construction per For the Glory of the Pharaoh. If the object to be created, whether mundane or Item of Power is a Structure or otherwise the Size of a house or larger, it will be completed by the end of the Scene [between fifteen minutes and eight hours]. For Items of Power do not roll Artifice, this Gift pushes the Item to completion. This does not negate the need for adequate tools or materials for the workers.

## Magic Gifts

**Soul Jar** [\*]: Reflexive, Immortality; Commit 1 Effort and select one character in the Mummy's presence. If the character is slain during the current Scene their soul is transferred into an inanimate object of the Mummy's choosing. They cannot use Gifts or take actions, though at the Mummy's discretion they may retain consciousness and/or speak. Unless otherwise stated, beings trapped in soul jars cannot be resurrected from the dead. Soul Jars are utilized in a number of other Mummy Gifts.

**Enochian Vessel** [\*]: Prerequisite Rank 2, Soul Jar, Extended; as an Extended Action requiring fifteen minutes the Mummy may commit 1 Effort for the Day to call back any dead soul to inhabit an inanimate object, subject to all the limitations of Soul Jar. The target soul must be willing and in the afterlife, they may not be undead, already in a Soul Jar or otherwise about in the world.

**Book of the Dead** [\*]: Prerequisite Impure Ankh Invocation, Permanent; when activating Impure Ankh Invocation one may revive up to [Rank+5] characters with a single activation.

**Impure World Art** [\*]: Prerequisite Lesser or Greater Gate of Osiris, Permanent; a Soul Jar with the target's soul within it counts as the target's intact corpse for the purposes of activating these Gifts. Moreover the target can be revived after any amount of time, not merely after a Chapter [Month]

**Expert Thaumaturge** [\*]: Prerequisite Mystic Lore or Science 4, Permanent; the Mummy immediately learns two dots of Thaumaturgy. This Gift may be purchased up to [Rank] times. If multiple instances of this Gift are purchased at once, the dots gained are pooled allowing for the potential purchase of 3-dot Thaumaturgy powers.

**Ritual Magic** [\*]: Permanent; the Mummy may cast any magic she knows with a Reflexive or Simple tag as a Ritual requiring fifteen minutes. If they do so, the resulting magic costs no Effort to activate and suffers from no Penalties from any source. This cannot be used on magic which requires committing Effort for the Story.

**Cultic Magic** [\*]: Permanent; the Mummy may substitute the Effort cost of magic with cultic supporters. The Mummy must have in his company a group of intelligent beings with a Size of 2+ for Effort committed for the Scene and 3+ for Effort committed for the Day who are performing no notable actions besides ritual actions on his behalf such as waving staves or chanting in mystical languages. All magic the Mummy casts requires no Effort be committed for the Scene or Day to perform. This has no effect upon magic that requires Effort be committed for the Story.

**Proxy Magic** [\*]: Extended; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and select a character or an inanimate object. For the rest of the Day the Mummy may perform any magic [Thaumaturgy, Magecraft, or Theurgy] as though they and any Catalysts they possess were physically present, using the character or object as an origin. This effect immediately ends if the character is Incapacitated or Killed or if the object is broken. The Mummy may choose to extend the duration of this effect by leaving the Effort committed with each new Day, regardless of the distance between themselves and the Proxy. The Mummy may only sustain up to their [Rank] in Proxies at a time.

**Vast Magic** [\*\*]: Permanent; whenever the Mummy activates a Spell which only effects a single target, it instead targets two targets. Whenever a Spell targets [Rank] targets it instead targets [Rank+2], and

whenever a Spell is cast which effects [Rank+2] targets the Spell instead effects 10 targets or Enemies. Lastly, for narrative purposes of effecting the environment the Mummy's Spells may effect up to a half-mile in diameter of area, or a narrow band thrice that. Resolve the Spells normally otherwise. This has no effect upon Spells which only target the caster.

**Overwhelming Magic [\*\*]:** Permanent; whenever the Mummy uses magic of any kind, Thaumaturgy, Magecraft, or Theurgy as applicable. Any unwilling target of their magic suffers a Penalty on all opposed rolls to resist or counter the magic [including their Defense Pool] equal to the Mummy's Rank.

**Expert Mage [\*\*]:** Prerequisite Mystic Lore or Science 6, Permanent; the Mummy immediately learns four dots of Magecraft. This Gift may only be purchased once.

**Striding the Desert [\*\*]:** Simple, Spell: Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Mummy and up to 200 lbs per Rank the caster possesses immediately teleports [Rank x50] miles to a destination of the caster's choosing. All characters brought must be willing, and this Gift may not be cast while the Mummy is in combat or under duress of any form. When this Gift is purchased the Mummy must select a type of environment or location such as "the jungle", or "the desert" or "In China". This Gift may only be activated while inside this environment unless the Mummy is teleporting to the current location of a Cultist.

**Return to the Tomb [\*\*]:** Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day to designate the Mummy's current location. At any point thereafter, if the Mummy is Incapacitated he may optionally choose to immediately teleport himself and any inanimate objects he is wearing or carrying to the designated location. This has no effect if the Mummy is permanently slain by any means.

**Impure Ankh Invocation [\*\*]:** Prerequisite Lesser Gate of Osiris, Simple; by committing one Effort for the Day as a Simple Action the Mummy may resurrect a single Rank 0 being from the dead under all the restrictions of Gate of Osiris, except that the target's corpse is not needed.

**Lesser Gate of Osiris [\*\*\*]:** Extended, Prerequisite Rank 2; as an Extended Action requiring eight hours the Mummy may commit 1 Effort for the Story to resurrect a dead character exactly as they were in life. In order to cast this spell the Mummy must possess the target's mostly intact corpse or equivalent, and the target must have died within the previous Chapter [or Month]. This Gift has no effect upon undead beings such as ghosts or zombies, but operates normally upon the 'corpses' of undead beings.

**Greater Gate of Osiris [\*\*\*]:** Extended, Prerequisite Rank 3; as an Extended Action requiring eight hours the Mummy may commit 1 Effort for the Story to resurrect a dead character as one of the immortals. The target returns to life as a member of the Mummy Type. If they were Rank 0, they become Rank 1 and acquire 8 dots of Mummy Gifts selected by the Storyteller. If they were Rank 1+ they instead return as a Mummy of their Rank. If the resulting Mummy is an NPC their Gifts are selected by the Storyteller, if they're a PC they refund all dots in Type Gifts and purchase an equivalent

number of dots in Mummy Gifts. In order to activate this Gift the Mummy must possess the target's mostly intact corpse or equivalent. This Gift has no effect upon undead beings such as ghosts or zombies, but operates normally upon the 'corpses' of undead beings. This Gift can explicitly be used to resurrect permanently slain Mummies and if it does so it instead raises the Mummy as they were immediately prior their last death, ignoring the above effect.

# Constructs

*"Hateful day when I received life!" I exclaimed in agony. 'Accursed creator! Why did you form a monster so hideous that even you turned from me in disgust? God, in pity, made man beautiful and alluring, after his own image; but my form is a filthy type of yours, more horrid even from the very resemblance. Satan had his companions, fellow-devils, to admire and encourage him; but I am solitary and abhorred."*

*-Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*

*"I'm real!" [Last words of a female robot being stripped and beaten to death by a mob]*

*-Animatrix [2003]*

## Template Benefits:

**Construct Traits:** Extended, Ritual: The Construct begins play with any two Aspects. As an Extended Action requiring one hour, the Construct may switch out these Aspects for any other aspects the Construct qualifies for. To do this the Construct must be in some form of workshop or laboratory setting with raw materials suitable to the form of Construct he is [EG: Technological constructs need electronics and welding equipment, zombies or skeletons requiring dead bodies, bone saws, sewing equipment, etc].

**Construct Repair:** Extended, Ritual: Commit 1 Effort for the Day, the Construct may roll his choice of Mystic Lore, Artifice, or Science as an Extended Action requiring ten minutes. The Construct regains his successes in Health Levels. The Construct must be in a laboratory or workshop setting per Construct Traits or at least possess relevant tools or materials to make repairs to use this power.

**Prototypal Excellence of [Skill] [\*]:** Permanent; the Monster permanently adds five dice to all rolls using that Skill. The Monster must also select one other Skill in which his unmodified rating is at least 3. This Skill suffers a permanent -2 Penalty, which cannot be negated or annulled by any means. As with all Penalties, this cannot reduce the dice pool below 1. At Rank 5, this Excellence instead increases the Skill's dice pool by seven.

## Combat Gifts

**Upgrade [\*]:** Permanent; the Construct gains one additional Aspect from Construct Traits. This Gift may be purchased up to [Rank] times.

**Becoming Human [\*]:** Permanent; select one Skill for which the Construct possesses a Prototypal Excellence of Skill. That Excellence no longer inflicts a Penalty. This Gift may be purchased separately for each Excellence the Construct possesses.

**True Automaton [\*]:** Permanent; the Construct gains the Breathless and Construct Aspects. These are



not treated as Construct Traits.

**Modify [\*\*]:** Extended; As an Extended Action taking one hour, commit 1 Effort for the Story. For the rest of the Story the Construct may replace one Prototypal Excellence for another. The Penalized Skill does not change. For instance if the Construct possessed Prototypal Excellence of Melee, with Deception penalized, they could use this Gift to replace it with Prototypal Excellence of Ranged, still with Deception penalized.

**Combat Training [\*\*]:** Permanent; increase the Construct's Attack Pools, Defense Pools, Damage, and Soak rolls by two. Attack Pools are increased only for attack rolls not combat maneuvers.

**Resew the Flesh [\*\*]:** Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day and roll the highest of Mystic Lore, Science, or Artifice and select one Construct the Construct is aware of, which can include himself. The target heals a number of health levels equal to the successes rolled. This Gift may only effect a given target once per Scene.

**Body of Frankenstein [\*\*]:** Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Construct gains half his unmodified Endurance pool in 'temporary Health Levels'. These Health Levels are expended before any other Health, cannot be healed, and disappear at the end of the Scene. Subsequent uses replace prior uses, they do not stack.

**Nanomachine Repair [\*\*\*]:** Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. For the rest of the Scene the Construct heals one Health Level at the start of each of his turns, even while out of combat. If he is incapacitated or killed this power automatically ends.

**Overclocking [\*\*\*]:** Reflexive; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. For the rest of the Scene the Construct's Prototypal Excellences add seven dice [nine if Rank Five].

## Social Gifts

### Stealth Gifts

**Awareness of the Qliphoth [\*]:** Permanent; the Construct never suffers Penalties relating to Perception nor suffers Penalties to other Skills for reasons of Perception [such as fighting in pitch darkness or attacking a target in stealth]. Moreover the Construct gains the ability to see in infrared, detecting and noticing heat signatures.

### Craft Gifts

**Made of Stone [\*]:** Permanent; the Construct is forever treated as wearing a Rank 1 Device Armor which can be Light, Medium, or Heavy as desired selected upon purchase. The Armor has the Indestructible Evocation and one other Evocation of the Construct's choice. This Gift can be purchased additional times to increase the Rank of the Device Armor by 1 and grant an additional Evocation. This Gift can be purchased up to [Rank] times. This Armor does not suffer Havoc. The Construct may choose to wear other armor while possessing this Gift, but must choose upon donning it which Armor

to benefit from, the new set for that provided by this Gift. They do not stack.

## **Magic Gifts**

## Aspects

Many Monsters possess unusual and uncanny characteristics. A Faerie Giant's enormous size. A werefrog's ability to dive deep into the lake where he makes his home. The haunting beauty of a long dead ghost. Aspects are physical characteristics that modify a character's abilities to mark that their anatomy is different from that of an ordinary human, either because they are a Monster, or because they are some kind of animal. Aspects are conferred to certain Monster Types by default, and to others by the use of Gifts or Spells, and they are generally permanent except when temporarily conferred by such sources. The names of Aspects are just that, and can be freely ignored for alternate interpretations. Just because Gills is named such doesn't mean those who have it possess gills, they could have some other means of breathing water, even a mystical one. Unless otherwise stated, only the rules themselves of an Aspect are necessary, the narrative explanation for how it achieves that result is up to the Monster and its nature.

**Amphibious:** The creature may swim at its movement speed. If it also possesses Aquatic Adaptation, increase that Aspect's speed increase to 'triples its swimming speed'.

**Aquatic Adaptation:** The creature may swim at twice its movement speed, but moves at  $[Agility/2]+1$  MPH while walking on land unless it also possesses Amphibious.

**Beautiful:** The creature is especially beautiful. It gains two extra dice in Persuasion.

**Breathless:** The creature does not need to breath. This Aspect may only be selected if a power specifically grants it.

**Camouflage:** The creature possesses two extra dice in Stealth.

**Construct:** The creature does not need to eat or drink to survive, and may be incapable of it.

**Deadly Breath:** The creature possesses a deadly breath weapon dealing damage of a predetermined type from the Damage Type list, selected when this Gift is purchased. The attack is Ranged-based and is compatible with any Fighting Style compatible with such.

**Enduring:** The character gains two additional dice in Endurance.

**Extra Limbs:** The creature has many limbs and once per turn, on its turn, may perform a single non-combat related action as a Reflexive Action. For example they could fire a gun at an Enemy with their Simple Action, while attempting to hack a computer or open a locked door with this Reflexive Action. They could not however use this action to Stealth or to pickpocket an Enemy engaged in combat.

**Flexible:** The creature gains two additional dice in Agility.

**Fluid Body:** The creature can pass through small openings and cracks at least one square inch in diameter, squeezing and forcing its body through through extreme flexibility or a liquid-like bodily structure.

**Giant:** The creature is between ten and twenty feet tall. They gain two extra dice in Might and Endurance and reduce their Agility by two dice. This cannot reduce their Agility below one die.

**Gills:** The creature may breathe in water as easily as air.

**Hardiness:** Select one type of extreme terrestrial environment, such as a desert or tundra. The creature never suffers Penalties relating to that environment and is perfectly adapted to it. Moreover, the creature receives two extra dice in Survival.

**Keen Sense:** The Monster has particularly adept senses. It gains two additional dice in Perception.

**Mighty:** The creature possesses two extra dice in Might.

**Natural Weapon:** The creature's body contains or produces a weapon mimicking a mundane weapon of some form. It may use all basic Fighting Styles [Offensive, Defensive, Balanced, Rapid, or Accurate] with its natural attacks.

**Nightvision:** The creature can see perfectly in pitch darkness, and never suffers Penalties to vision based on darkness or obscuring conditions.

**Predator Kings:** The creature's Might-based attacks add two successes to their Damage.

**Restless:** The creature does not need to sleep to survive, and may be incapable of it.

**Tough Skin:** The creature adds two to its Soak.

**Small:** The creature is between one and four feet tall. It adds two dice to its Stealth and Agility and subtracts two dice from its Might. This cannot reduce its Might below one die.

**Swift Stride:** The creature's speed and jumping distances are doubled.

**Tiny:** Prerequisite; Small: The creature is between four inches and eleven inches tall. It adds an additional two dice to its Stealth and Agility and subtracts another two dice from its Might. This also cannot reduce its Might below one die.

**Titanic:** Prerequisite; Giant Aspect: The creature is between twenty and one hundred feet tall. The creature adds another two dice to its Might and Endurance and subtracts four dice from its Stealth. This cannot reduce Stealth below one die.

**Wall Crawler:** The creature can scale sheer surfaces, walls, and ceilings and climb at its movement speed.

**Wings:** The creature can fly at its speed.

**Body Spikes:**

**Horrid Odor:**

**Kaiju:**

**Prodigious Strength:**

**Sickening Slime:**

**Tentacles:**

**Terrible Grasp:**

**Venomous:**

**Webbing:**

**Collosol:**

**Cosmic Size:**

**Iron Stomach:**

**Tremorsense:**

## Background Merits

Monsters do not stride into the night alone, and the very word Conspiracy implies one who possesses resources and backing from others. All Monsters possess 15 points of Background Merits, representing wealth, contacts, allies, artifacts, or additional training they possessed when they first awakened to their supernatural potential, or took for themselves after. Background Merits represent those resources a character begins play with and which are relatively stable. A character with the Wealthy merit begins play with riches, but nothing stops his comrade without that merit from using Mass Social Influence or Bueracracy later on to acquire similiar or greater riches. Moreover nothing prevents the events of the Chronicle from stripping the former of his riches. However while Merits are inherently malleable, merit points are not. If a character loses a Merit during play the plot should contrive eventually to return it, or to recieve a new Merit of equal value. For example, a character who begins play with a Rank 3 Mystic Artifact but has it destroyed during play might eventually find a way to repair the Artifact, or recieve another Rank 3 Artifact from a fallen enemy, at the discretion of the Storyteller. Merits are listed by cost in the same fashion as Gifts, but possess variable costs based on degree or number of purchases, and cost between one and six merit points. The following are example merits available to any character, though the Storyteller may choose to write new ones, or Players may request that a merit be made to help create his Monster. Storytellers possess absolute authority to decide which merits are appropriate to his Chronicle and inform a player he may not in fact begin play as the Pope.

**Contact** [\* to \*\*\*\*\*]: The Monster possesses a Contact, someone who serves as a reliable source of information that is relevant to the plot of the Chronicle or otherwise helpful. Monsters do not require Contacts to know other characters who might only provide useful intel once, but consistently informative sources require a Contact. Contacts will not generally agree to aid the Mash in ways greater then providing information, and therefore their Rank is irrelevant to the cost. Contacts require 1 Merit Point per Contact possessed and Players may begin with up to five Contacts. With the Storyteller's permission, players may choose to start with unspecified Contacts, and decide during the Chronicle that they possess a Contact at this or that location, or that an introduced NPC is someone they knew already. All such imprompto selections must be approved by the Storyteller.

**Ally** [\* to \*\*\*\*\*]: The Monster possesses an Ally, someone who serves as a companion to the player willing to render their services in combat, crafting, social influence, or other categories. In short the Ally will agree to accompany the player on adventures and act as a Storyteller controlled additional character in the Mash. Allies who only occasionally accompany the Mash or which help indirectly [such as by crafting items or providing medical attention on occasion] have a cost equal to the Monster's Rank. Allies who always accompany the player possess a cost of [the Ally's Rank-2]. For example a Rank 0 detective who followed the Mash always would cost 2 Merit points, while a Rank 3 Vampire Elder who did the same would cost 5. This Merit may be taken multiple times to begin play with multiple Allies, though the Storyterller may choose to limit the total number of Allies the Mash

possesses.

**Mentor** [\* to \*\*\*]: The Monster possesses a Mentor among his kind, someone who can provide him with intel, aid, and occasional protection. The Mentor can be of any Rank, and is typically between Rank 3 and 5. The cost of the merit represents not the cost, but the degree of investment of the Mentor. For 1 merit point the Monster is one student among many, or an apprentice the Mentor has little investment in. He will help the Monster in indirect ways such as providing intel or shelter, but only until it becomes costly or dangerous to himself. For 2 merit points the Monster is a chosen apprentice or favored student, for whom the Mentor will risk resources but generally not his life. For 3 merit points the Monster is beloved of his mentor, who puts great stock in his success and likely has a personal investment in seeing him succeed. He will provide intel, shelter, counsel, and aid and if necessary will put his own life or livelihood on the line in defense of his pupil. Mentors generally do not follow the Monster into battle, but may appear occasionally to rescue them from peril as a 3-dot Merit. For a 'mentor' who accompanies their disciple, see Ally. This Merit may be purchased multiple times.

**Wealthy** [\*\* or \*\*\*\*]: The Monster possesses great wealth beyond the typical citizen of his era and location. For 2 merit points, the Monster is wealthy, part of the top 1% of earners in his land. In the modern west, such a Monster is a multi-millionaire, able to afford many luxuries. For 4 merit points, the Monster is wealthy beyond all reason, able to spend almost any amount of money throughout the chronicle with no regard for his doing so. In the modern west, such a Monster is a multibillionaire capable of incalculable decadence. He likely owns a yacht, a private plane, and many properties around the world. Monsters may assume they can hire small numbers [Size 2 or lower, Rank 0] security to guard their property, but any character with a sizable personal army that travels with them should purchase Command also.

**Command** [\* to \*\*\*\*\*]: The Monster possesses a loyal army of devoted followers, taking the form of a Battlegroup under his command. This merit's cost is the Size of the Battlegroup plus the Battlegroup's Rank, and cannot include Rank 1+ Monsters, meaning only Rank 0 characters, or Rank 1-2 military equipment, animals, or certain Prodigies can be selected. For instance a player with an army of five thousand sentient tigers [Size 4, Rank 1] would pay 5 merit points. This merit may only be purchased once, and includes any relevant equipment or infrastructure. If the player is not also Wealthy, it is likely the Battlegroup is being funded by the Monster's Conspiracy on his behalf or by the army itself out of loyalty. Battlegroups may accompany the player, but bringing the fullness of their forces to a location is likely to call down the wrath of law enforcement or the local military, if not Conspiracies defending the Veil.

**Backing** [\* to \*\*\*\*\*] The Monster possesses the backing of a large organization, of which he is likely the leader or otherwise possessing a high rank. The organization can be either a powerful mundane institution such as a local police department or the military, or a Conspiracy of extensive reach. The cost of this merit is equal to the Size of the organization as a Bueracratic Organization. The Backing

merit requires the greatest care from the Storyteller. It should be kept in mind to what exact degree a player's authority in a large organization can be leveraged to the task at hand. Most large Conspiracies have many agents and vast resources, but those resources are often distributed across many different interests. As a rule it should be assumed that the primary advantage of Backing is as a tool for Bueracracy and for political manuevering, as a deterrent against his enemies and subtle aid in the background. If the player's Backing includes vast armies of warriors at his beck and call, tremendous wealth, or large arsensals of Mystic Artifacts, he should also purchase those Merits to represent such.

**Fame** [\* or \*\*\*]: The Monster is very famous, almost always in a human capacity and not as a supernatural being. For 1 merit point the Monster is a minor celebrity, perhaps known of by many people around the world but not thought much of, or very famous and well-liked within a single country or region. He might be a famous actor or writer, a businessman or government official, or a professional athlete. For 3 merit points the Monster is known world-wide as an extremely important person, such a world-leader or religious authority. He might be the President of the United States, or the latest incarnatino of the Dalai Lama.

**Mystic Artifact or Device** [\* to \*\*\*\*\*]: The Monster begins play with a Mystic Artifact or Device. The cost of this merit is the Rank of the item to begin play with, and this merit may be taken multiple times.

**Mighty** [\*\*]: The Monster is unusually strong for a creature of his type, or perhaps he is simply very tall. He begins play with the Mighty Aspect.

**Agile** [\*\*]: The Monster is unusually fast and nimble. He begins play with the Flexible Aspect.

**Enduring** [\*\*]: The Monster possesses truly supernatural stamina. He begins play with the Enduring Aspect.

**Small** [\*\*]: The Monster is unusually small for his kind, or perhaps is a young child. He begins play with the Small Aspect.

**Dashing Looks** [\*\*]: The Monster is stunningly beautiful, or maybe they're just really cute. They begin play with the Beautiful Aspect.

**Unusual Anatomy** [\*\*\* or \*\*\*\*\*]: The Monster has a very unusual anatomy for his Type. He begins play with additional Aspects of his choice. For 3 merit points he begins with one Aspect, for 6 merit points he begins play with two. This Merit may not be purchased more then twice.

**Lucky** [\*\*\*]: The Monster is favored by the gods, or perhaps he's just a born gambler. Either way, once per Day the Monster may reroll any roll and use his preferred result, OR force another character to reroll any roll and take the Monster's preferred result.

**Destiny** [\*\*\*]: The Monster is destined for greatness, or perhaps fated to die in a particular horrific



way. Until then, fate conspires to keep them alive. The Monster cannot die from Complications, and may always choose to roll on the Complication table and take his preferred result. If the Storyteller selected his Complication, he may select between the Storyteller's choice and his roll. If the Storyteller chose to roll, he may choose between his roll and the Storyteller's roll.

**Martial Artist** [\*\*\* or \*\*\*\*\*]: The Monster is an accomplished martial artist. He begins play with additional points of Gifts, which must be spent on Advanced Fighting Styles. For 3 merit points he gains one additional point of Fighting Styles, for 6 merit points he begins play with two. This Merit may only be taken twice.

**Thaumaturge** [\*\*\* or \*\*\*\*\*]: The Monster is a studied thaumaturge. He begins play with additional points of Gifts which must be spent on Thaumaturgy. For 3 merit points he gains one additional point of Thaumaturgy magic, for 6 merit points he begins play with two. This Merit may only be taken twice.

**Gifted** [\*\*\*]: The Monster is of a higher breed than others of his kind, or perhaps he is a quick learner. He begins play with one additional Gift point, which may be spent as desired. This Merit may only be taken once.

**Skilled** [\*\*\*]: The Monster is well-educated, or perhaps is a born Renaissance Man. He begins play with an additional five Skill points.

-Child of the Powers/Spirit Patron?

## Weaknesses

There is no power without a price, and for those who have been touched by inhuman forces this price comes in the form of Weaknesses, supernaturally imposed drawbacks on their great power. Myth and folklore is replete with examples of the weaknesses of Monsters, from the vampire's ever-present fear of the sun to the werewolf's legendary allergy to silver. All Monsters possess one Greater Weakness and either a second Greater Weakness or two Lesser Weaknesses. Greater Weaknesses are significantly crippling, exploitable, and potent while Lesser Weaknesses are comparative inconveniences that may be more easily ignored. The following is a long but not exhaustive list of the types of Weaknesses a Monster may possess. Some Weaknesses include the name of a Monster Type in their description, this indicates that the Weakness was made with a particular Type or variation of that Type in mind, but it does not mean other Types cannot take it. Any Monster can explicitly choose any Weakness. Weaknesses are listed as a generic weakness, below which are shown specific examples of that weakness. Players are free to create custom and unique variations for their characters.

**Damage Type Weakness** [Greater]: The Monster is vulnerable to a specific Damage Type. All attacks dealing that Damage Type are aggravated. Below are a few specific variations

**Heat Type Weakness** [Greater]: The Monster is vulnerable to Heat Type Damage and all such attacks are Aggravated. This Weakness is especially common among zombie-style Constructs and the Reptilian-style Shifter.

**Holy Type Weakness** [Greater]: The Monster is vulnerable to Holy Type Damage and all such attacks are Aggravated. This Weakness is extremely common among Demon Type Monsters.

**Substance Weakness** [Greater]: The Monster is vulnerable to a specific substance. All attacks made with or incorporating the substance is treated as Aggravated. Below are a few specific variations.

**Silver Weakness** [Greater]: The Monster is vulnerable to attacks made with silver, such as silver blades, bullets, knives, or even common jewelry. They treat any such attacks as aggravated. Such a weakness is legendary as that of the common werewolf.

**Cold Iron Weakness** [Greater]: The Monster is vulnerable to attacks made with mostly pure unalloyed iron, but not to attacks made with steel or similar alloys. They treat any such attacks as aggravated. This weakness is almost universal among the Faerie Type.

**Gold Weakness** [Greater]: The Monster is vulnerable to attacks made with gold, such as golden blades, bullets, knives, or even common jewelry. They treat any such attacks as aggravated. This Weakness is common among many other non-wolf werereatures, such as werelions, weretigers, and most werereptiles.

**Substance Sensitivity [Greater]:** The Monster is weakened by the mere presence of a particular substance, and especially so. If they are within a hundred feet of the substance they suffer a -5 Penalty on all dice rolls, which cannot reduce a dice pool below 1. This Weakness, or its Lesser variant, are common in werewolves in regard to wolfbane, and in vampires in regards to garlic.

**Substance Sensitivity [Lesser]:** The Monster is weakened by being touched or in contact with a particular substance. They suffer a -3 Penalty on all dice rolls, which cannot reduce a dice pool below 1, when in such contact.

**Sunstricken [Greater, Vampire]:** The Monster is harmed by standing in direct sunlight, and automatically loses 1 Health per Turn of exposure regardless of their Soak. This counts as a form of Environmental Hazard. In order to qualify and take damage the vampire must be exposed to direct sunlight. Ordinary clothing will not protect against this, but heavy winter clothing and a wide-brimmed hat will, along with sunglasses, will. The vampire cannot heal by any means while remaining in direct sunlight taking such damage.

**Lesser Sunstricken [Lesser, Vampire]:** This Weakness functions as Sunstricken but the vampire only takes damage if his completely bare skin is exposed to direct sunlight. The thinnest barrier of cloth, slimmest parasol and wispiest curtain will protect him from harm from the cursed daystar. Moreover, damage from the sun cannot kill him, upon Incapacitation the vampire ceases taking damage. The vampire can also freely heal in the sun.

**Time of Vulnerability Weakness [Greater or Lesser]:** The Monster is vulnerable at a particular time, incapable of committing Effort to power some selection of his powers or under some other negative effect. Below are a number of common variations.

**Light of Day [Greater, Vampire]:** The Monster may not commit Effort to power Type Gifts during daylight hours at his location. He retains the benefit of any Gifts that do not require him to commit Effort, and may commit Effort to power Spells or for other purposes as normal.

**New Moon Weakness [Lesser, Shifter]:** The Monster cannot access any Form powers during the new moon, at either day or night. If he begins the new moon with a Form active, it ends immediately. Moreover, the Monster cannot commit Effort for any reason except to resist Social Influence during the New Moon.

**Full Moon Weakness [Greater, Shifter]:** The Monster becomes a wild, thoughtless predator during the night of the full moon. As long as the moon remains in the sky, whether he can see it or not, the Monster remains a rampaging creature. He falls under the control of the Storyteller for the evening, at the conclusion of which the player awakens to find what the results of his actions were in this state. The player and Storyteller should work together to decide when taking this Weakness what the general behaviors the character may engage in while in such a state are, and the player may choose to take

precautions before the full moon to limit his ability to so engage.

**Deadly Secret** [Greater or Lesser]: The Monster possesses some kind of dangerous secret that can be used against him by those who know what to exploit. Below are a few common variations.

**True Name** [Greater, Mummy]: The Monster possesses a second, hidden name. Those who know the name may inflict one of the following curses upon the character [selected by the player when choosing the effect of this Weakness] as a Simple Action.

Variant 1: The Monster suffers [Rank] Health Levels, regardless of their Defense Pool or Soak. This may only be done once per Turn, regardless of how many characters know the name.

Variant 2: They may order the Monster to do whatever they desire. The first time in a Scene that the Monster wishes to disobey such an order they must commit 1 Effort for the Story to do so, they may thereafter act freely. This functions under the restrictions of Virtue Flaws. If multiple characters attempt to command the Monster, the most recent command is the one which takes effect.

Variant 3: They may weaken the Monster greatly, inflicting a -5 Penalty on all their actions for the rest of the Scene.

**Deadly Secret** [Lesser]: The Monster's secret is mundane, but has a mystical correspondence. Knowledge of some embarrassing or inconvenient truth about the Monster causes the Monster's actions against any character who knows it to suffer a -3 Penalty which as usual cannot reduce a pool below 1. This extends to attacks against the character, rolls to activate Gifts, opposed Skill rolls, and one's Defense Pool amongst other things.

**Virtue Flaw Weakness** [Greater or Lesser]: Virtue Flaws are weaknesses relating to the character's personality, such as possessing a superhuman wrath, endless valor in the face of the enemy, or boundless compassion. The Monster is bound by a certain behavioral restriction, which he must pay Effort to ignore, the first time in a Scene he does so. All Virtue Flaws obey the following restriction: If a Player Character does not possess any Effort remaining, the Effort cost to ignore the Virtue Flaw becomes nothing. For Heroes and Hunters, Virtue Flaws are the most common type of Weakness. The Effort cost to fuel these Weaknesses does not count against one's Effort per Turn.

**Greater Valor Flaw** [Greater]: The Monster is a fearless warrior. He may not willingly refuse a challenge to battle or retreat from a battle already in progress. The first time in a Scene that he wishes to do so he must Commit 1 Effort for the Story as a reflexive action, thereafter he may act freely for the rest of the Scene without regard to this Flaw.

**Lesser Valor Flaw** [Lesser]: This functions as the Greater Valor Flaw, except the Monster may refuse challenges against foes he is certain he cannot defeat and retreat from battles he's certain are hopeless, and he must only Commit 1 Effort for the Day to ignore the Flaw's effects.

**Greater Wrath Flaw** [Greater]: The Monster is a being of prodigious wrath. If the Monster, as

determined by his player, has become angered or offended by a certain character's actions he must avenge himself upon the character in some fashion, either violently or through some other method within the current Scene. The first time in a Scene the Monster wishes to avoid indulging his anger, he must reflexively commit 1 Effort for the Story. He may thereafter act freely for the rest of the Scene.

**Lesser Wrath Flaw** [Lesser]: This functions as the Greater Wrath Flaw except the Monster may choose to ignore sources of anger he considers his allies or his friends, and he must only Commit 1 Effort for the Day to ignore its effects.

**Greater Compassion Flaw** [Greater]: The Monster is a being of boundless benevolence. If a character the Monster would consider an 'innocent', or otherwise 'not his enemy' is in trouble, great need, or in danger, the Monster must take action to rescue or help them. The first time in a Scene the Monster wishes to ignore someone's plight or prioritize goals besides protecting and helping the innocent, he must reflexively commit 1 Effort for the Story.

**Lesser Compassion Flaw** [Lesser]: This functions as the Greater Compassion Flaw, except the Monster need only intervene if the innocents are in genuine danger, as opposed to simply needing aid, and the price to ignore this Flaw is only the committing of 1 Effort for the Day.

**Greater Conviction Flaw** [Greater]: The Monster has some philosophy, ideology, creed, or faith to which he is altogether devoted. The Monster may not go against the prescriptions of his philosophy, as determined by his player on whether he is going against them. The first time in a Scene he wishes to actively ignore the restrictions of his creed, he must reflexively commit 1 Effort for the Story.

**Lesser Conviction Flaw** [Lesser]: This functions as the Greater Conviction Flaw except the Monster must only commit 1 Effort for the Day to ignore its effects.

**Greater Fear Flaw** [Greater]: The Monster is a coward. Whenever he is subject to fear, as determined by the player, he must hide or flee from the source of his fear and may not actively take action against it. The first time in a Scene that the Monster desires to be brave and overcome his fear, he must reflexively commit 1 Effort for the Story.

**Lesser Fear Flaw** [Lesser]: This functions as the Greater Fear Flaw except the Monster may choose to act against the object of his fear in direct ways or while in the process of fleeing, and he must only reflexively commit 1 Effort for the Day to ignore its effects.

**Geas** [Greater]: The Monster is under some form of sworn taboo, a pledge to not engage in a particular behavior that he could conceivably be tricked or coerced into doing. If the Monster engages in his forbidden taboo, he suffers a curse for the rest of the Story selected from the below examples

Variant 1: The Monster may not reclaim or recover Effort by any means for the rest of the Story, and any Effort they commit is committed for the Story.

Variant 2: The Monster may not commit Effort to fuel their Type Gifts.

Variant 3: The Monster may not commit Effort to fuel any Magic. If the Monster does not use magic extensively as determined by the Storyteller, this is a Lesser Weakness.

Variant 4: The Monster suffers a -5 Penalty to all dice rolls, which cannot reduce the dice pools below 1.

Many Monsters possess variations of this Weakness, such as Faeries who cannot lie, Vampires who cannot enter homes uninvited or cross running water, and demons who cannot step foot onto holy ground.

**Mystical Fear** [Lesser]: The Monster is truly terrified of a particular thing, and must recoil and seek to escape from it per the Lesser Fear Flaw when subjected to it. Many monsters have this Weakness in regard to holy objects from the faiths of their homelands, and comically enough some ghosts have this for other ghosts.

**Absolute Forbearance** [Greater]: The Monster is completely incapable of taking a certain action, and any dice pool he generates to do so automatically becomes zero upon the attempt if magically coerced. In short he selects a Skill and his effective dice pool becomes 0 for all rolled pools and 1 for all other purposes. Alternatively, a broader selection of Skills may fail but only within a certain condition. Below are a few variations

**Hideous Forbearance** [Greater]: The Monster is unimaginably ugly. He automatically fails all Persuasion and Deception rolls with characters who can clearly make out his appearance.

**Mystical Outcast** [Greater]: The Monster is innately distrusted by ordinary beings. All Persuasion and Deception rolls against ordinary Rank 0 humans and animals automatically fail, even if performed by proxy or while unseen.

**Guarded by Faith** [Greater]: The Monster is incapable of striking characters who bear items of a particular faith. He gains no particular ability to divine this information, his rolls simply automatically fail upon being attempted. Many vampires and demons find their strength failing against the holiness of the faiths of their homelands.

**True Blindness** [Greater]: The Monster is completely blind. He automatically fails all Perception rolls that would rely upon sight, and suffers a -4 Penalty to all other Perception rolls as though in pitch darkness. Gifts may mitigate this latter Penalty but not the failing of sight-based rolls.

**Crippling Wounds** [Greater or Lesser]: The Monster has an incurable and permanent Injury. He selects one Injury for a Lesser Weakness and two for a Greater Weakness. These Injuries cannot be cured by any known magic and will never heal. Many zombie-style Constructs possess this weakness.

**Unearthly Eeriness** [Greater or Lesser]: Whenever the Monster utilizes his powers to a certain degree, strange supernatural phenomena follow in his wake. Below are a few example variants.

**Anima Banner** [Lesser]: If the Monster commits more than 3 Effort in the same Scene, for any reason, he is surrounded by some obvious supernatural display for the rest of the Scene, such as a towering aura of light surrounding him, wisps and tendrils of scattered shadows, or roaring winds or booming music emanating from him. This display must be purely cosmetic and have no more practical effect than the Mood Lighting descriptions for Gifts.

**Unearthly Display** [Greater]: This functions as Anima Banner except it is permanently active and may not be hidden or suppressed. Magics created for this purpose warp or fail, as to reveal the burning light or unusual and unnatural display.

**Lesser Overload** [Lesser]: Whenever the Monster activates a Gift, harmless visual or sensory effects accompany its activation. For instance a ghost may find that her Gifts cause the walls to bleed or mirrors to crack, a vampire may find that nearby crosses bend and break or statues to the Virgin weep blood, and a psychic may find that unearthly coincidences of good or bad luck follow in his wake.

**Greater Overload** [Greater]: This follows the same rules as Lesser Overload, except once per Scene the Storyteller may rule that a particular manifestation is actively harmful in some way to the Monster or her allies. Perhaps it causes a character to mutate, or forget something, or for fires to spawn around the party. These manifestations may be whatever the Storyteller desires, provided they are in some way curable, reversible, or temporary, and that any delirious effect upon someone other than the activator of the Gift permits some kind of resistance or opposed rolled under the standard rules [EG: mental effects resist with Integrity, mystical effects with Mystic Lore, hazards with Might or Agility, poisons with Endurance, etc].

**Spell Overload** [Lesser or Greater]: These Weaknesses function as Lesser and Greater Overload, however they apply to Spell activations rather than Gift activations]. Characters without Spells may not take this Weakness.

**Unusual Diet** [Lesser]: The Monster requires an unusual diet to survive that is either unsavory or unusual. In order to qualify for this Weakness the Monster must be incapable of long sustaining themselves without this diet and the diet must be fairly strict. A vampire who can drink blood, but also enjoy human food and derive sustenance from it for a time does not need to take this Weakness, but one which can only survive on human blood would. Keep in mind that what a Monster is capable of eating for pleasure is not relevant, only what they need to survive. A vampire who sustains himself only on human blood but can keep mortal food with no nutritional benefit could take this Weakness.

**Long Incapacitation** [Lesser]: The Monster may be subject to something which prevents him from regaining Effort or Health while Incapacitated. For instance the staking of a vampire while Incapacitated [or as part of the attack to Incapacitate him], or the holding of some special relic that

weakens a Magician when it is out of his possession while Incapacitated.

Remaining Weaknesses:

- Fetters
- Havoc/Haywire [Greater and Lesser]
- Mystic Collapse [Greater and Lesser]
- Item Dependency [Catalyst, Canoptic Jars, etc]
- Difficulty harming particular targets [faith, innocents, etc]
- Magic or Gifts tied to particular place
- Magic or Gifts tied to specific environments
- Obsession
- Hunter Complexes
- They called me mad
- Hacking a Construct [Robot]
- Lack of Senses [Ghost, Zombie Construct]
- Divine Favor Dependence [Magicians, Mummies]
- Capricious+Wild Magic or Gifts
- Ghost cannot materialize in sunlight/daytime
- Item or Equipment dependence
- Achilles Heel [Hero]
- Transformation Dependence [Form Gift or costume]
- Ennui/Depression/Seclusion Virtue Flaw
- Uncontrolled Power Manifestations
- Power Overload
- Limited Psychological Complexes [Hunters]



## Evocations

Weapon, Armor, and Vehicle type Mystic Artifacts and Devices derive their powers from their Evocations, enchantments, blessings and technical enhancements that permit them to operate and set them apart from others of their kind. Like Aspects, Evocations are simple, usually lacking requirements other than occasionally Rank unless directly related to a prior Evocation. Evocations are divided between those for Weapons, Armor, and Vehicles and can only be purchased for items of that type.

## Weapon Evocations

**Foecutter:** The Weapon adds +2 Damage to all Attacks.

**Indestructible:** The Weapon is completely invulnerable to harm, it cannot be destroyed by Sundering attempts or by anything else for that matter.

**Beamslash:** The weapon may declare attacks on foes up to [Rank] miles away, provided the user may see them, and even if the Weapon attacks with a Melee or Martial Arts attack such as an exceedingly long katana or flaming cestus. The Attacker may decide how this manifests, whether through a beam of light shining forth from the blade or strong winds flying from their slashes. As this increases maximum range it is also effective for traditional ranged weapons firing further, such as a high-tech sniper rifle.

**Finishing Move:** Once per Scene at no cost before declaring an Attack, the wielder may declare that Attack Aggravated.

**Finishing Move II:** Once per Scene at no cost before declaring an Attack, the wielder may declare that Attack Unavoidable.

**Enough Dakka:** Reflexive, Supplemental; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene before declaring an Attack with the Weapon. The Weapon may target an additional Enemy with its Attack. This may be activated multiple times during the same Turn, up to [Item Rank] times.

**[Damage Type] Blade:** The Weapon may inflict a Damage Type other than Physical, selected upon the purchase of this Evocation. This is not one Evocation but many such as Heat Blade or Holy Blade purchased individually. Despite the name, this Evocation covers everything from lightning cannons to spacial rending crossbows. If multiple such Evocations are taken, only one can apply mechanically to any given attacks, there is no such thing as 'dual-Type' Damage. Aesthetically however, all such Evocations can be applied as desired for effects such as flaming lightning arrows and the like, the wielder need only decide which is 'prominent' in a given Attack.

**Anti-[Monster Type] Blade:** The Weapon adds +4 Damage to all Attacks against a single Monster Type selected upon purchase of this Evocation. This is not one Evocation but many such as Antivampire Blade or Antihero Blade purchased individually.

**[Monster Type] Slayer:** Prerequisite Rank 3; all Attacks from the Weapon count as Aggravated against a single Monster Type selected upon purchase of this Evocation. This is not one Evocation but many such as Vampire Slayer or Faerie Slayer purchased individually.

**Immaterial Rounds:** This Weapon may harm Immaterial beings and objects while Materialized. If the

wielder cannot see or otherwise perceive Immaterial beings, but knows they are present, these Attacks are made with a -4 Penalty.

**Erudite:** the Weapon increases the value of one Skill other than Might, Agility, or Endurance by [Item Rank]. This Evocation may be taken multiple times to effect different Skills and does not stack with the Armor Evocation of the same name.

**Collapsible:** the Weapon may be shrunk or minimized into a very small size, or perhaps possesses an innate ability for the wearer to dismiss it into a pocket dimension. For instance a high tech plasma rifle may fold up into a handheld device or a massive buster sword may be summoned with a tattoo on the wearer's hand. In all cases the item must specify how it is accomplished and its switched between deployed and hidden as a Reflexive Action that can only be used once per Turn. This does not prevent disarming or theft, the item must be in the wielder's possession to recall it.

**Bound [Recall]:** This is one of several Evocation with very similar effects known as the Bound Evocation. While one is allowed to take multiple Bound Evocations, it is rarely useful. Bound [Recall] allows one to recall the Weapon from any distance as a Reflexive Action, even if it is in another person's possession, in effect making the user impossible to disarm. If the item is less than [Item Rank] miles away it will fly towards the user, evading obstacles as it goes to the extent possible and never harming characters. If it is more than [Item Rank] miles away from the wielder OR it is sufficiently sealed or contained the item cannot escape, it simply teleports into the wielder's hand. Ownership of this item and of this Evocation can only change hands willingly. If the wielder willingly hands over the item, even deceptively, the item will recognize the new hand as its new owner to return to.

**Bound [Chain]:** This is one of several Evocation with very similar effects known as the Bound Evocation. While one is allowed to take multiple Bound Evocations, it is rarely useful. Bound [Chain] makes one's Weapon somehow a part of one's body such as a cybernetic grafted wristblade or a cannon in one's chest, or attached to the user by some means such as a magical chain. In all cases the effect is the same, the user cannot be disarmed. The user may still remove this Item from their body if desired, but can only do so willingly.

**Bound [Rightful Wielder]:** This is one of several Evocation with very similar effects known as the Bound Evocation. While one is allowed to take multiple Bound Evocations, it is rarely useful. Bound [Rightful Wielder] makes the Weapon recognize a given user as its rightful wielder by some preset criteria which can amount to 'the person whose weapon this is is the only one who qualifies'. The wielder cannot be disarmed of the Weapon, and if someone else somehow takes hold of the Weapon they suffer a -5 Penalty to all actions so long as they carry it and benefit from none of its Evocations [the Weapon still benefits from Evocations to protect itself, such as Indestructible].

-Explosives/Artillery Effects?

## Armor Evocations

**Reinforced:** the Armor is very durable. Increase both its Armor Rating and the place on the Might Chart required to sunder it by [Item Rank]. If the Item is at least Rank 3, then once per Turn at no cost if the wearer would be targeted by an Aggravated Attack, he may declare it not Aggravated.

**Evasive:** the Armor increases the user's ability to evade attacks. Increase the wearer's Defense Pool by [Item Rank]. If the Item is at least Rank 3, then once per Turn at no cost if the wearer would be targeted by an Unavoidable Attack, he may declare it not Unavoidable..

**Anti-[Monster Type] Plating:** Select one Monster Type upon purchasing this Evocation. Increase the wearer's Soak against attacks by that Monster Type by [Item Rank]. This is not one evocation but many purchased individually such as Antivampire plating or Antimagician Plating.

**Anti-[Damage Type] Plating:** Select one Damage Type upon purchasing this Evocation. Increase the wearer's Soak against attacks of that type by 5. This is not one evocation but many purchased individually such as Antiholy Plating or Antiheat Plating.

**Barrier:** Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The wearer obtains [Item Rank] in 'temporary Health Levels'. These Health Levels are expended before any other Health, cannot be healed, and disappear at the end of the Scene. Subsequent uses replace prior uses, they do not stack. They also do not stack with temporary Health Levels from other sources.

**Regenerative:** Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Armor, if damaged, is completely repaired. Moreover the wearer immediately heals [Item Rank] Health Levels. A given wearer can only benefit from this effect once per Scene.

**Environmental Protection:** Select one extreme environment such as deep space, the ocean, the desert, or the inside of a volcano. The Armor is completely proof against that form of environment as is its wearer. They will not suffer damage from any Environmental Hazards related to that environment nor suffer Penalties directly arising from features of that environment. This does not remove the wearer's need to breath or protect them from unrelated things within that environment [such as meteors flying through space, or earthquakes occurring as a result of a volcanic eruption].

**Indestructible:** the Armor cannot be destroyed, sundered or disarmed. For certain characters this might represent the Armor being surgically attached to them, such as in the form of advanced cybernetics.

**Flexible:** the Armor is very lightweight. Reduce its Endure Fatigue Penalty to zero and its base Armor Rating before Evocations becomes 8 regardless of it being Light, Medium, or Heavy Armor.

**Collapsible:** the Armor may be shrunk or minimized into a very small size, or perhaps possesses an innate ability for the wearer to dismiss it into a pocket dimension. For instance a suit of power armor may fold up into a large briefcase, or a Titanic Suit mecha may be called from a subspace with a wristwatch. In all cases the item must specify how it is accomplished and it's switched between deployed and hidden as a Simple Action.

**Autopilot:** the Armor, when not worn, may pilot and act for itself. Select five primary Skills and five secondary Skills. The suit possesses Item Rank+5 in all primary Skills, Item Rank+3 in all secondary skills, and 3 in all others. It possesses seven health levels, which cannot be healed, only repaired as an

Extended Action in the same fashion as Vehicles. It possesses an effective Rank of [Item Rank-1] for the purposes of Battlegroup calculations and resisting relevant effects and counts as the Construct Type for the same but gains no Gifts or Template benefits. Naturally, it counts as being equipped with itself. Some such armors are simple programs, disposable automatons built for war. Others possess complex personalities and serve as companions to their wearer's.

**Sealed:** the Armor somehow provides its user with oxygen, usually through being encased though some magical armors simply remove the need for breathing in the first place. The wearer gains the Breathless Aspect.

**Velocity:** prerequisite Rank 2; the Armor increases the speed of its wearer. Multiply all of the wearer's movement speeds by [Item Rank].

**Propulsion:** the Armor permits for mystical or high tech flight. The wearer can fly at their speed.

**Aquatic:** the Armor adapts its user to aquatic environments. The wearer may swim at double their normal movement speed.

**Powered Suit:** the Armor acts to increase its wearer's physical strength. Add [Item Rank] to the wearer's Might.

**Giant Suit:** the Armor is enormous, either because it is made for a truly prodigious character or more often because it is some form of 'mech suit' much larger than the wearer's. The Armor is between 10 and 20 feet tall. Increase the target's Might and Armor Rating by 3 and decrease their Stealth by 2. Moreover the wearer counts as possessing a Might Chart placement of 10 or his normal place, which is higher. The wearer counts as possessing the Giant Aspect for any Gift or effect that involves such.

**Titanic Suit:** prerequisite Rank 3 and Giant Suit; the Armor is enormous, either because it is made for a truly gargantuan character or more often because it is some form of 'mech suit' much larger than the wearer's. The Armor is between 20 and 100 feet tall. Increase the target's Might and Armor Rating by 3 and decrease their Stealth by 2. Moreover the wearer counts as possessing a Might Chart placement of 15 or his normal place, which is higher. The wearer counts as possessing the Titanic Aspect for any Gift or effect that involves such.

**Kaiju Suit:** prerequisite Rank 4 and Titanic Suit; the Armor is a walking calamity, either because it is made for a truly immense character or more often because it is some form of 'mech suit' much larger than the wearer's. The Armor is between 100 and 350 feet tall. The wearer gains the following effects

Effect 1: Increase the wearer's Might and Soak by 2, or to 20, whichever is higher

Effect 2: Double the wearer's speed or increase it to 100 MPH, whichever is faster.

Effect 3: The wearer counts as possessing a Might Chart placement of 20 or his normal place, which is higher.

Effect 4: The wearer counts as possessing the Kaiju Aspect for any Gift or effect that involves such.

**Erudite:** the Armor increases the value of one Skill other than Might, Agility, or Endurance by [Item Rank]. This Evocation may be taken multiple times to effect different Skills and does not stack with the Weapon Evocation of the same name.

**Mystic Defenses:** The suit protects the user against all mystical forms of attack. Whenever the wearer

must roll Mystic Lore to resist the effects of a Gift or Magic, add [Item Rank] to the roll.

**PSI Defenses:** The suit protects the user against all assaults upon her mind. Whenever the wearer must roll Integrity to resist the effects of a Gift or Magic [but NOT Social Influence], add [Item Rank] to the roll.

**Toxin Defenses:** The suit filters out toxic substances such as poisons, diseases, and amnestics.

Whenever the user must roll Endurance to resist the effect of a Poison or Disease, add [Item Rank] to the roll.

## Vehicle Evocations

**Velocity:** Increase the speed of the Vehicle based on its base speed. Increase its effective Rank for the purposes of determining speed only by [Item Rank] even if this increases the item's Rank for this purpose above 5. For instance a Rank 3 small land Vehicle has a base speed of [Rank x100] MPH, or 300 MPH. This Evocation would, for this calculation only, increase its effective Rank to 6 giving it a speed of 600 MPH.

**Perpetual Motion:** The Vehicle does not require fuel, pulling, or other propulsion or outside forms of energy. It will move entirely under its own power indefinitely.

**Indestructible:** The Vehicle itself is impossible to truly destroy. It can still be damaged or even reduced to disfunction, but it never suffers Wound Penalties to its Riding and it automatically fully repairs itself at the start of each new Scene.

**Reinforced:** the Vehicle is very durable. Increase both its Armor Rating by [Item Rank]. If the Vehicle is at least Rank 3, then once per Turn at no cost if the Vehicle or anyone in it would be targeted by an Aggravated Attack, the pilot may declare it not Aggravated.

**Rugged Armor:** The Vehicle is very difficult to break down. Increase its maximum Health by 4.

**Evasive:** the Vehicle increases the pilot's ability to evade attacks. Increase the Vehicle's Defense Pool by [Item Rank]. If the Item is at least Rank 3, then once per Turn at no cost if the Vehicle or anyone in it would be targeted by an Unavoidable Attack, he may declare it not Unavoidable..

**Anti-[Monster Type] Plating:** Select one Monster Type upon purchasing this Evocation. Increase the Vehicle's Soak against attacks by that Monster Type by [Item Rank]. This is not one evocation but many purchased individually such as Antivampire plating or Antimagician Plating.

**Anti-[Damage Type] Plating:** Select one Damage Type upon purchasing this Evocation. Increase the Vehicle's Soak against attacks of that type by 5. This is not one evocation but many purchased individually such as Antiholy Plating or Antiheat Plating.

**Barrier:** Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Scene. The Vehicle obtains [Item Rank] in 'temporary Health Levels'. These Health Levels are expended before any other Health, cannot be healed, and disappear at the end of the Scene. Subsequent uses replace prior uses, they do not stack. They also do not stack with temporary Health Levels from other sources.

**Regenerative:** Simple; Commit 1 Effort for the Day. The Vehicle, if damaged, is completely repaired.

Moreover the wearer immediately heals [Item Rank] Health Levels.

**Environmental Protection:** Select one extreme environment such as deep space, the ocean, the desert, or the inside of a volcano. The Vehicle and all its occupants are completely proof against that form of environment. They will not suffer damage from any Environmental Hazards related to that environment nor suffer Penalties directly arising from features of that environment. This does not remove the occupants need to breath or protect them from unrelated things within that environment [such as meteors flying through space, or earthquakes occurring as a result of a volcanic eruption].

**Sealed:** the Vehicle somehow provides its pilot and occupants with oxygen, usually through being encased though some magical armors simply remove the need for breathing in the first place. A Vehicle with both this Evocation and Environmental Protection [the Ocean] functions as a submersible, capable of bearing the ocean depths. Its Top Speed underwater is equivalent to Aquatic Craft. It travels at a base top speed of [Rank x50] MPH if small, or [Rank x25] if carrying more then a meager handful.

**Autopilot:** the Vehicle, when not worn, may pilot and act for itself. Select five primary Skills and five secondary Skills. The Vehicle possesses Item Rank+5 in all primary Skills, Item Rank+3 in all secondary skills, and 3 in all others. It uses its Vehicle Traits for all other purposes. Some such Vehicle are simple programs, disposable automatons built for war. Others possess complex personalities and serve as companions to their wearer's.

**Flying:** the Vehicle is an Aerial Vehicle. The Top Speed of an Aerial Vehicle is [Rank x100] MPH if the Vehicle is small, able to hold up to four passengers [or 1000 lbs], or [Rank x50] MPH if its a large craft capable of carrying more people then that.

**Carrier:** the Vehicle uses the Top Speed calculations of a small Vehicle while possessing the size and capacity of a large Vehicle. This Evocation is useful for producing high speed buses, flying trains or airships as fast as passenger jets.

**Tunneling:** the Vehicle may burrow or drill through loose dirt or even solid stone. Its Top Speed while doing so is [Rank x10] MPH if it is a small vehicle capable of carrying a mere handful [or up to 1000 lbs] or [Rank x5] MPH if considerably larger then that.

-Space Flight

-Warp Drive

-Shrinking to microscopic size?

-Time Travel?

## Antagonists

### Ordinary Citizen Rank 0 Mortal

**Description:** The ordinary citizen of the Shrouded Earth. The below statblock can be modified to produce professionals such as teachers, lawyers, or politicians simply by raising a handful of Skills to the desired levels.

**Skills:** All [3 dice]

**Fighting Style:** Improvised or Unarmed

**Lift:** 80 lbs

**Move:** 17 MPH

**Jump:** 3/6 Feet Vertical/Horizontal

ATK 3d+1 [Improvised Weapon or Unarmed]

DEF 3d+1

HP 7

EF 4 [1/Turn]

### Police Officer Rank 0 Mortal

**Description:** A typical member of a modern law enforcement agency.

**Skills:** Ranged, Melee, Martial Arts, Might, Agility, Perception, Riding, Bureaucracy [4 dice]

Other: [3 dice]

**Fighting Style:** Defensive

**Lift:** 150 lbs

**Move:** 19 MPH

**Jump:** 6/12 Feet Vertical/Horizontal

ATK 4d+4 Pistol

ATK 4d+2 Unarmed

DEF 4d+4 [4d+2 if Unarmed]

HP 7

EF 4 [1/Turn]

**Military or SWAT Rank 0 Mortal**

**Description:** A soldier in a modern military, or an elite member of law enforcement.

**Skills:** Ranged, Melee, Martial Arts, Might, Agility, Perception, Riding, Bureaucracy [6 dice]

Other: [3 dice]

**Fighting Style:** Rapid or Defensive

**Lift:** 300 lbs

**Move:** 22 MPH

**Jump:** 9/18 Feet Vertical/Horizontal

ATK 6d+4 Machine Gun [Rapid]

ATK 6d+4 Machine Gun [Defensive]

ATK 6d+3 Unarmed

DEF 6d+5 [Rapid or Unarmed]

DEF 6d+7 [Defensive]

HP 7

EF 4 [1/Turn]

**Martial Artist Rank 0 Mortal**

**Description:** A world class fighting athlete, or comparable street fighter. This statblock represents not the common or average professional fighter, but those in the peak of their respective disciplines, just short of rising to the level of the supernatural; men and women pushing at their Limiter.



**Skills:** Martial Arts, Might, Agility, Endurance, Perception [8 dice], Other: [3 dice]

**Fighting Style:** Pugilist Fighting Style, Brutal Fighting Style, or Wrestling Fighting Style

**Lift:** 600 lbs

**Move:** 25 MPH

**Jump:** 12/24 Feel Vertical/Horizontal

ATK 8d+6 [Pugilist]

DEF 8d+6 [Pugilist]

ATK 8d+8 [Brutal]

DEF 8d+4 [Brutal]

ATK 8d+6 [Wrestling, Grapples Foe]

DEF 8d+4 [Wrestling]

HP 7

EF 4 [1/Turn]

**Thaumaturge Rank 0 Mortal**

**Description:** A practitioner of the lowest of the mystic arts, such as a first year student in the College La Fay, wielder of traditional magic practices passed down a family or culture, or a scholar of the occult.

**Skills:** Mystic Lore, Academics, Science, Animal Ken, Integrity [6 dice], Other [3 dice]

**Fighting Style:** Improvised or Unarmed

**Lift:** 80 lbs

**Move:** 17 MPH

**Jump:** 3/6 Feel Vertical/Horizontal

**Gifts:** Third Eye, Divination

ATK 3d+1 [Improvised Weapon or Unarmed]

DEF 3d+1

HP 7

EF 4 [1/Turn]

**Priest Rank 0 Mortal**

**Description:** A member of the clergy of a world religion. In the Shrouded Earth, many such faiths' rites contain thaumaturgical principles that protect one from evil and manifold are the priests who perform such rites; often without understanding their true nature.

**Skills:** Mystic Lore, Academics, Science, Persuasion, Empathy [6 dice], Other [3 dice]

**Fighting Style:** Improvised or Unarmed

**Lift:** 80 lbs

**Move:** 17 MPH

**Jump:** 3/6 Feet Vertical/Horizontal

**Gifts:** Warding Circle

ATK 3d+1 [Improvised Weapon or Unarmed]

DEF 3d+1

HP 7

EF 4 [1/Turn]

**Vampire Punk Rank 1 Vampire**

**Description:** The primary enforcers of many a T1 or T2 vampiric conspiracy, thuggish 'youths' often many decades old serving as raw muscle to their elders in the blood, the vampire punk is often clad in leather jackets and armed with crowbars, baseball bats, or similar 'barely qualifies as a melee weapon' blunt instruments.

**Skills:**

Might, Agility, Endurance, Riding, Intimidation [6 dice, 9 with Excellence]

Melee, Ranged, Martial Arts, Perception, Deception [4 dice]

Other [3 dice]

**Aspects:** Breathless, Nightvision, Natural Weapons

**Greater Weakness:** Sunstricken

**Lesser Weakness:** [Any Two]

**Fighting Style:** Balanced

**Lift:** 600 or 1200 lbs

**Move:** 44 or 52 MPH [66 or 81 MPH with Celerity attack effect]

**Jump:** 9/18 or 12/24 Feet Vertical/Horizontal

**Gifts:** Slow Regeneration, Combat Regeneration, Efficient Regeneration, Celerity

**No Gifts:**

ATK 4d+4 Claws/Fangs/Unarmed

ATK 4d+4 Crowbar/Baseball Bat/Melee Weapon

ATK 4d+4 Pistol

DEF 6d+4

**Excellences:**

ATK 4d+5 Claws/Fangs/Unarmed [with Might Excellence Active]

ATK 4d+5 Crowbar/Baseball Bat/Melee Weapon [with Might Excellence Active]

DEF 9d+5 [with Agility and Endurance Excellence Active]

HP 7

EF 6 [2/Turn]

## **Werewolf Rank 1 Shifter**

Description: The lycanthrope, or common werewolf, is among the most numerous Shifter races active in the Shrouded Earth; they are as a rule violent, impassioned, and bestial. Their war forms take the form of various combinations of man and wolf, from short silver-screen wolf-men, to gigantic prehistoric wolves, to nine foot tall bear-like hybrids of prehistoric nightmare. The below example is of the last variety.

### **Skills [Human Form]:**

Might, Agility, Endurance, Perception, Animal Ken [6 dice, 9 with Excellence]

Stealth, Survival, Martial Arts, Integrity, Mystic Lore [4 dice]

Other [3 dice]

### **Skills [War Form]:**

Might [12 dice, 15 with Excellence], Agility [7 dice, 10 with Excellence], Endurance [9 dice, 12 with Excellence]

**Template:** War Form [Standard, Mighty, Natural Weapons, Swift Stride]

**Greater Weakness:** Substance Weakness [Silver]

**Lesser Weakness:** [Any Two]

**Gifts:** Razor Claws, Steel Fur, Regeneration

**Fighting Style:** Offensive

**War Form Lift:** 2000 or 3000 lbs

**War Form Move:** 46 or 54 MPH

**War Form Jump:** 36/72 or 42/84 Feet Vertical/Horizontal

**Lift:** 600 or 2000 lbs

**Move:** 22 or 26 MPH

**Jump:** 9/18 or 12/24 Feet Vertical/Horizontal

### **No Gifts, Base Form**

ATK 3d+5 Knife

DEF 6d+3

### **No Gifts, War Form**

ATK 4d+8 Claws/Teeth/Unarmed

DEF 7d+4

### **Steel Fur, Razor Claws, War Form**

ATK 4d+12 Claws/Teeth/Unarmed [4d+13 with Might Excellence]

DEF 7d+8 [10d+8 with Agility Excellence, 10d+10 with Agility and Endurance Excellence]

HP 7

EF 6 [2/Turn]

### **Pretty Soldier Rank 1 Hero**

Description: The child soldiers employed by the mad Queen of Mirrors as part of her quixotic crusade against the Shrouded Earth itself to transform its mix of greys and blacks to light. The Soldiers fight primarily with summoned equipment they refer to collectively as their Regalia as well as the use of elemental Magecraft. This particular Soldier utilizes an oversized yellow hammer enchanted with explosive force.

#### **Skills:**

Might, Agility, Melee, Mystic Lore, Integrity, Persuasion, Performance [6 dice, 12 with Excellence]

War, Empathy, Perception, Stealth, Survival [4 dice]

Other [3 dice]

**Greater Weakness:** Unholy Damage Weakness

**Lesser Weakness:** [Any Two]

**Gifts:** Glorious Hero Visage [Indestructible, Lightweight], Glorious Hero Saber [Indestructible, Explosive Damage Type], Eagle Wing Style

**Fighting Style:** Balanced

**Lift:** 600 or 2000 lbs

**Move:** 44 or 60 MPH [Flight]

**Jump:** 9/18 or 18/36 Feet Vertical/Horizontal

**No Gifts [Out of Regalia]**

ATK 6d+4 Melee Weapon

DEF 6d+4

**Glorious Hero Visage+Glorious Hero Saber [In Regalia]**

ATK 6d+5 Hero Hammer [12d+5 with Melee Excellence, 12d+8 with Melee and Might Excellence]

DEF 6d+9 [12d+9 with Agility Excellence]

HP 7

EF 6 [2/Turn]

**Established Witch Rank 2 Magician**

**Description:** A learned Magician who has been practicing her Art for years, such as a prodigy upper form student of the College La Fay or a member of the faculty. This particular witch is oriented towards divination, relying on scrying and information gathering magic primarily. When forced to fight, she does so with small bombs made with the Science Skill or casting Curse of Io. She often carries a Witch's Broom Mystic Artifact.

**Skills:** Mystic Lore and Academics [11 dice, 13 with Excellence]

Science, Animal Ken, Integrity [7 dice, 9 with Excellence]

Agility, Riding, Performance, Ranged, Deception [5 dice]

Other [3 dice]

**Greater Weakness:** Deadly Secret [True Name]

**Lesser Weakness:** [Any Two]

**Fighting Style:** Light Explosive

**Lift:** 80 lbs

**Move:** 20 MPH

**Jump:** 3/6 Feet Vertical/Horizontal

**Gifts:** Master of Mystic Arts, Wise Choice, Orb of Pondering, Curse of Io, Duck Fate, Aura Sight, Divination

ATK 5d+4 [Explosive, Hits 2 Foes, deals Explosive Type Damage]

DEF 5d+1HP 7

EF 8 [3/Turn]

# *Codename: Pretty Soldier*

*“The Forces of Darkness scatter at the Light of Hope! My Codename is the Pretty Soldier!”*

## *Tilting at Windmills*

The Queen of Mirrors is a powerful ruler among the Faerie of Ireland, said to be a Fomorian who was so disgusted by her kindred she fought alongside the Tuatha De Danaan in their feuds. She is quixotic, heroic, lovely, fair to look upon, and a weaver of enchantments with deep knowledge of the spell-lore of both the old Faerie Houses of the Emerald Isle. She was imprisoned within a magic mirror by the Irish Hero Fionn Mac Cumhaill for reasons long since lost to history and which she chooses to keep to herself. The magic mirror was found buried under Knockma Hill in the tomb of some unknown prehistoric war-chieftain, from which it was moved to the University of Oxford for closer inspection. There the dust-laden mirror was inspected and cleaned, and no sooner did the light hit the mirror and cast its reflection upon its glass did appear the Queen of Mirrors before the horrified students and their professor. The Queen fled into the night, back to her long-ago fortress of Scathan in the Kingdom of Mirrors, a great forested Territory hidden in northern Ireland, at whose center is a great palace whose exterior is polished glass panes formed into towers and gleaming flying buttresses, and banners, flying in the breeze like beams of light hung in the sun. She called upon her servants the Mirajes, the horned rabbits, and sent them out like spies, to gather for her news of the world. The reports were not good. As in ancient times, Man still lived in fear of night-creatures like the Fomorians of old. The Queen decided that desperate times would call for desperate measures. The failures of the heroes of old and the apparent disappearance of her ancient allies the Tuatha meant she would have to take extreme measures. She would do that which, in days long past, she would not have considered to do. She descended the glass stairways in their endless rows, rowed over the rivers of light that flowed in the deep places of Scathan, and unspoke the spells that Faeries stronger than her had spoken long before. For in Scathan it was known, that she was not the first master of that house, but it had belonged [so stories say] to the titaness Rhea, who built it to escape the feuding of her son the thunderer, and taking with many treasures of her homeland had set a treasury in its deep of momentos and dangers and curious machines of strange and unknown purpose. Skulking quietly, and trailed only a few feet behind by her most trustworthy Miraje, brave Rutherford, she found what she sought. With trembling excitement she took the great clay jar from its pedestal in each hand. Pandora's Box. Here did the gods of old put every manner of evil and calamity of sickness and danger, and here did they hide in its bottom



the Light of Hope, which Pandora only too quickly had kept sealed. Her treasure in hand did she cross anew the rivers, and climb again the stairways into her realm's light of day and there reveal to her assembled her intent. She would wield the Light of Hope and pass it unto worthy and pretty soldiers to take back this planet from its dank evil.

The first few applicants were failures. The formula was simple, thought the Queen. She would simply give the gift of Hope to one of her Mirajes who would hunt down a worthy vessel, invariably a child between the ages of 6 and 14, observe them carefully, wait for them to fall into supernatural terror [or discretely work to pull them into it] then at the moment of trial the Miraje would confer upon the subject their reward. This first generation of recruits was an unmitigated disaster. Of over sixty applicants, only four survive to the present day and of those only two continue to serve as Pretty Soldiers. Unprepared for the realities of urban warfare, untrained in their powers, and isolated except from the guidance of a single Miraje, the Soldier would inevitably be subject to intense questioning by parents or law enforcement, miss great deals of school, struggle vainly against the horrors around her, and eventually succumb. Many towns were freed from this or that particular evil, but the cost was always high as was turnover. Eventually, even the brilliance of martyrdom for love and justice would not sway the Queen's advisors.

Rutherford offered a solution, which became the basis for the modern cadet system

The first change was simple. A much stricter screening of applicants. Only vessels who longed for more in life, usually in already troubled circumstances would be recruited. Happy, well-adjusted children would firstly be easier to notice missing, and be less willing to fight. The second was the end of the 'romantic' first combat. No more would Soldiers experience a trial by fire, they would be secreted to Scathan for months of off-and-on training both before and after the conferring of Hope. For this purpose, the area surrounding the castle was cleared and became an enormous training ground, and the guest quarters were expanded into what was best described as one part boarding school, one part boot camp. Pretty Soldiers were taught to transform, to harness the power of Hope, to fight with weapons and their fists, and the extensive spell-lore of Rhea and the Tuatha was opened and made accessible



to the Pretty Soldiers. They were subject to psychological screening, and inoculated daily into the glamorous future the world could have once the Darkness was defeated. Every evil from wars and famine to early bedtimes was placed at the nebulous shadows' feet. The results were a dramatic increase in survival rates. Pretty Soldiers began to survive long enough to master their powers, and with support from behind the scenes in the form of reconnaissance by the Mirajes they were able to slay many horrors, some of which had plagued the world since antiquity.

This was a call to expand operations. The Girl Scouts of America became a point of interest to Rutherford, who found in the organization all the qualities necessary for the production of Pretty Soldiers. A massive, largely young and female, recruitment base. A pre-existing culture of discipline and service. Abundant locations already available for use as safehouses and for deployment. It was subverted slowly, through the publication of the Pretty Soldier and the Ghosts of Albion, the first in what became a popular children's book series. The stories contained a largely dramatized and factious account of the life of a Pretty Soldier, from recruitment, to training, to glorious combat against the forces of evil. It was a tremendous success, within two years everyone in their desired age bracket had at least heard their name. From there Rutherford brought the two pieces together. The Girl Scouts subverted, and populace at large now aware of the fictional Soldier, it was easy to reveal to the Scouts the true existence of the Pretty Soldiers. Excitable and easily swayed, the girls were altogether willing to play the role the most cunning of the rabbits had set for them. The Pretty Soldiers would deploy to local Troupes, who would supply them with anything they needed. Food, water, intelligence, safehouses, transportation, public incredulity. Under the cover of scout activities, the Soldiers could travel unnoticed by the adult population. The operation extended from a few troupes to many, and before long every Troupe in America had at least heard rumors that the Pretty Soldier was real. Recruitment skyrocketed, and eligible trainees were shipped off to Scathan for training. Within six months going between home and the Territory, they were ready for the field.

The Queen of Mirrors, and her wily companion Rutherford, have used the light in Pandora's Box to empower over forty people with might rivaling that of the old heroes of Ireland or the mighty among the Faerie Courts, and forged them in the crucible of combat into a small army with extensive logistical support and intelligence. When it is ready, the Pretty Soldiers will tear down the ugly edifice covering this beautiful world and drag the monsters of the night out from their hiding places in closets and under beds screaming into the light of Hope's new Day. Until then they work in secret, taking out monster after monster, unraveling horror after horror. The Queen is idealistic, and this approach born of modern military tactics and urban warfare does not appeal to her sensibilities, but she cannot deny the results Rutherford has obtained, and the prospect of victory excites her.



## *Organizational Overview*

The Kingdom of Mirrors is centered on a heavily forested Territory in northern Ireland the size of a small country. It is inhabited primarily by the Mirajes, who number in the thousands; the illusion-making talking horned cat-rabbits having dwelled in the Kingdom of Mirrors since migrating from Arabia millennia ago at the behest of their chieftain Rutherford. At its northernmost point by a crystal sea stands a single vast complex encompassing both the historical palace and the haphazard and hasty expansions made recently. The Pretty Soldiers are composed of just over forty heroes ranging from age six to age fifteen, as well as over seventy still-human recruits within the same age bracket. Dozens

upon dozens of Mirajes roam the grounds, cleaning, cooking, and providing for their burgeoning force, as well as providing psychological screening and reconditioning for those returning from the field. There are no adults in Scathan besides the Queen of Mirrors herself, and she does not suffer any for admittance. The Kingdom has discretely publicized its existence through the writing of children's stories loosely inspired by their reality, and taken over through various means the leadership and organization of the Girl Scouts of America. They have then gone on to make the reading and discussing of the books common in these circles, and from there revealed in part or in full, the true existence of Pretty Soldiers to any non-adult within select Troupe. Thus was the existence of Pretty Soldiers used as propaganda to further recruit from the Scouts as noncombat personnel. From these three facts has further emerged recruitment from the ranks of support. Presently over 70% of new Pretty Soldiers were in the scouts and at least passingly aware of the existence of the Soldiers before their recruitment.

The rank and title of Cadet is passed to any Scout who has been made aware of the existence of the Soldiers, a fact subtly indicated by the wearing of the Pandora's Jar merit badge. It is common for entire troupes to be rewarded this badge upon the deployment of a Soldier to their region. The title of Cadet is also rewarded to anyone currently training in Scathan to become a Soldier. A cadet who is acting as the coordinator of all scouts for a deployed Soldier is referred to as that Soldier's Lieutenant, answering to the Soldier's Miraje. The title of Pretty Soldier is conferred to a recruit at graduation upon their transformation by the Light of Hope. Boys, who compose just over twenty percent of the force, are instead titled Handsome Soldier after the mysterious ally the Pretty Soldier acquires in book three, *The Pretty Soldier and the Wolves of the Old West*. The neutral is Soldier. All Soldiers travel with an assigned Miraje who follows them throughout their career and acts as their commanding officer. Soldiers are expected to obey all direct orders from their Miraje, who more often act in an advisory role. A Miraje assigned to a new recruit is assigned the title of Major, while those who have accompanied a Soldier on several successful missions are promoted to the rank of Colonel. In addition to serving as the partner of a Soldier, all Colonels work as part of the Top Brass who also direct the force overall.

The Top Brass is composed of all Colonels and by General Rutherford, who plan the future of the army as well as the broad details of training [the actual specifics of which are carried out by the Sergeant] and all matters of deployment. The Sergeant is the oldest and longest serving Pretty Soldier, Pretty Soldier Jennifer age 15, recruited age 8. She lived through the harsh early years of the force and saw its rise and its reforms. Her family and friends were not so fortunate. The Sergeant currently lives in Scathan, semi-retired from active duty to instead focus on the severe training of the cadets.

## *The Light of Hope*

Long ago the gods of Olympus, angered at Prometheus for stealing fire to give to Man, decided to punish both the titan and his precious humans. They created a being wonderful and fair in the image of the holy goddesses, which they called Woman, naming her Pandora. They gave her a clay jar filled with all manner of evils, and a curiosity that would be unable to resist one day opening it, and sent her to Prometheus and his brother. Unsurprisingly the ploy worked, and when Pandora opened the Jar the evils within spread out to corrupt the world with diseases and perils. But Zeus in his mercy had also sealed Hope in the jar, and Pandora in her swiftness managed to keep it there. Eventually Pandora would die, and the titaness Rhea would take the Jar to Scathan, just one more wonder in a treasury filled with wondrous curiosities. It would be the Queen of Mirrors who opened the Jar a second time to let Hope out.

The Light of Hope is an Anomalous Object [AO-367] classified as Euclid by the ARC Foundation. Its history and origin is unknown, even the degree to which its mythological background is related to the artifact itself. AO-367 takes the form of a small clay Grecian Jar, painted in black with images depicting numerous evils symbolized by serpents, scorpions and insects surrounding a dove representing hope. Inside the Jar with a bright blue light that upon being stared into deeply by a living human who meets the proper specifications permanently transforms that human into a Vessel for the Light. There appears to be no limit to the number of persons the Jar is ultimately able to transform, though it may be only capable of transforming so many hosts in a short span. These capabilities have never been tested. Humans transformed into Vessels for the Light undergo an immediate transformation with the following effects.

- The Vessel's hair and eye colors are permanently changed, usually to bright colors not found in humans. Bright blues, greens, pinks, purples, gold, silver, and white are especially common, as is orange and saffron.
- The Vessel's body, mind, and Esoteric Anatomy is streamlined and optimized. They obtain the capability to quickly develop great competence in any field of study or skillset they put effort into developing. Vessels may find they can achieve doctorate level understandings of medicine in a few months of study, reach the level of masters in fencing or of professional athletes, or become fully trained astronauts in similar timeframes. This process is most immediate and proceeds fastest in skills the Vessel would consider part of their nature, their innate potential.
- The Vessel's daily necessary sugar intake increases to several times that of an ordinary human.
- The Vessel undergoes profound psychological changes most of which can be interpreted as manifestations of idealism. The Vessel may become far more courageous, compassionate, or strong-willed. They may become more easily

enraptured by the world's natural wonder or the nuances of their friend's personalities. Often, they develop a great deal of 'emotional maturity', the ability to understand and interpret one's own feelings and desires and view them objectively. As these psychological effects are the result of the Light of Hope they diminish in the presence of feelings of strong fear or hopelessness.

- The Vessel becomes capable of summoning from nothing a costume representing their ideal self, referred to as Regalia. Many Vessels' Regalia also includes summoned weapons or other gear. This power is innate and nearly instantaneous, requiring no external catalyst, command phrase, or lengthy transformation.
- Other effects are also occasionally noted, such as supernatural powers relating to the Light or the ability to use the Light as a Foundation in Magecraft. As no Vessel has ever lived more than a few years or died of natural causes, both the lifespan of Vessels and any long-term effects can only be guessed at. It can be speculated they could develop along the paths of similar semi-divine heroes or martial artists and achieve greatly expanded lifespans and ever-growing puissance while remaining fundamentally human; but it is no less possible that the Light will continue to evolve its hosts as they reach maturity into truly alien visages of beauty.

The Pretty Soldiers are all Vessels of the Light in Pandora's Jar, transformed following a lengthy training process in Scathan then trained an even longer period to take advantage of their great potential growth to master the rudiments of combat, Magecraft, and their Regalia. They are also taught to handle their new mental states, which often includes passionate feelings of heroic impulse, unbearable compassion, and most commonly simply the unknown feelings of self-awareness and emotional maturity that comes with the Light. The Soldiers themselves believe that the true function of the Light of Hope is allowing children to chase their dreams before their potential is closed off by adulthood, that children do not possess a natural Limiter and that the Limiter develops in late adolescence in response to certain environmental effects related to accommodating the harsh demands of a world where one cannot reach one's dreams. Thus instead of a girl full of dreams of being a doctor or model or soccer star growing up and finding that by the time their strength has increased to the point its possible those same dreams have been crushed by life; the Light lets her reach that dream now when the hope, energy and lack of limits of youth remains. The great weakness of the Soldiers is that very few children dream of being great warriors, so they almost always must go outside a Vessel's natural potential to develop them as fighters. Thus far, the most successful Vessels have been those whose natural potential includes a disposition towards practicing magic. More often, they are stuck taking a boy destined to be a football star and adapting his skills to fighting or going outside his nature and forcing the Light to carry him down the roads of no-limits.

## *The Children's Crusade*

Soldiers are deployed at the command of the Brass with their Miraje most commonly as individuals. After early failures involving team tactics and the discovery Soldiers would go back into danger they had escaped to rescue a single fallen Soldier, it was decided Soldiers would travel alone or in pairs, or in rare instances in threes. Once deployed the Soldier will focus foremost on reconnaissance. Follow up on the initial lead that resulted in deployment using one's Scouts as spies and personally investigating and plotting stake outs. The target is studied at length, and once the Soldier has determined they know the enemy and their capabilities a plan of attack will be created by the Soldier and her Miraje. As Heroes, Soldiers focus primarily on alpha strike tactics. Show up, overwhelm the enemy, and if they prove resilient retreat rather than risk exhaustion or being beaten down. In the event of mission success the Soldier is taken home, with their absence explained by Scout activities. In rare instances Mirajes will hide mere fact of absence with illusions, or the after the fact use of amnestics. In the event of failure, the Soldier must decide with her Miraje if victory is likely upon another attack at a later date. In most cases, a successful retreat is taken as proof the mission is to be abandoned. Since Rutherford's reforms, the doctrine of the Soldiers has been focused around Rule 1. The Girls Come Home. Personal survival for the Soldier and her Scouts over all concerns including mission success or civilian casualties. The Soldiers do not care about the Veil and willingly abuse it to the extent they can get away with, relying on their enemies or third parties to clean up after their escapades.

All Soldiers are issued a Pretty Bonder, a communication device taking the form of a completely mundane satellite telephone. The pendant-like device flips open like a clamshell, revealing a make-up mirror on its top and clunky durable buttons on its bottom. The Pretty Bonder is intentionally extremely durable and simple in design, allowing calls only through numbers punched in and programmed favorite hotkeys. On its exterior is a quick call-back button, and it is both fireproof and waterproof. Top Brass decided on a dumb phone design for the sake of cost and to keep Soldiers from playing on them. Many Soldiers wear them as a brooch. It is compatible with commonly purchased ear pieces, which Soldier also often wear while transformed allowing communication with their Miraje and Scouts.

Soldiers are transported too and fro around the globe primarily through mundane transit under cover of scout activities, but when rapid travel is needed such as for moving cadets back and forth from Scathan for training or for extraction from dangerous missions or medical evac Freya Chariots are used instead. Originally modeled after the legendary chariot of the goddess Freya, said to be pulled by cats, modern Freya Chariots are carriages equipped with enclosed cabins with food, water, heating, and medical supplies similar to a modern ambulance. When pulled by a team of at least four and ideally eight Mirajes, who

do not naturally fly, the craft takes to the air and is capable of reaching cruising speeds in excess of 600 miles per hour, similar to a modern private jet. Freya Chariots used to resemble actual chariots, but after the medical evac of Pretty Soldier Cathy who nearly froze to death being removed from a snowy battlefield it was decided all chariots would be fitted with enclosed and heated cabins.

## *The Queen of Mirrors*

The Queen of Mirrors reflects the light that is in the world back upon it, in her silver sheen the world knows it is better than it thinks it is. She is a calm white light, serene, benevolent, kind, lenient, gentle, and beautiful. She is slow to speak, weighing her words carefully, and when she speaks she does so in the manner of an advisor or benefactor. She is untarnished idealism, unsullied by the world. People, she would tell you, start out beautiful and full of potential. Children believe they can become anything. Policemen, firemen, astronauts, doctors, lawyers, often all these things at once. The horizon stretches out forever, and the world is fair, just, and kind. As they grow older, life disabuses them of these notions. Their dreams wilt, and they face the facts of life. They will spend their lives working a job they probably dislike, or at best tolerate. They will never be the person they imagined when they were young. Age will always bring less opportunities, and dreams will be hedged in. As they absorb this lesson from their lives, they call it wisdom. The Queen of Mirrors has another name for it: Cynicism. They were correct as children, not even the sky is a limit. Men have walked upon the Moon. All that stands in the way of things being as they should be is the simple collective desire to make it so. One would imagine then, that the Queen of Mirrors is a saint, and that she is. But if she is a saint she is also a fool, for hers isn't the righteousness of the wise, but of the simple. Her understanding of the world is a naive understanding. She embodies positive emotions, and believes in the inherent power of these emotions. Truth, Love, Justice, Hope, Dreams must inherently overcome their opposites if only given the chance, and all her efforts in life are based upon this assumption. The realities of people's motivations, of why people make poor or wicked decisions, and the moral complexities of life's eternal problems she knows nothing at all. For the darkness came into the light, and the light understood it not.

The Queen of Mirrors does not and cannot understand Evil. She doesn't understand why anyone would ever exploit another person or abuse them or steal from them or do any other wicked thing. She understands, in a very abstract fashion, that they do it out of 'greed' or for 'personal gain' but it still doesn't make sense to her as she believes they could always gain more by working with others. Her inability to understand evil people means she also cannot predict them or plan around them very well, because when weighing her enemies reactions she is always assuming that the other person in some very roundabout way just wants what's best for everyone too and makes numerous miscalculations if left to



her own reasoning.

She believes that people are Good, and any misbehavior is just some mistake on their part. Insofar as she can conceive of malice at all, she thinks it purely irrational, and therefore random. She does not understand the reasons for cruelty, it is altogether senseless. In like fashion she is free of anger, hatred, and fear. She cannot feel these emotions, and never has. If magically compelled to feel them, she quickly forgets them afterwards. She does not hate or even dislike her enemies, she is only perplexed by them, of why they choose to do wrong. Of those who simply disagree with her without being evil, she often has difficulty understanding their reasoning if it is based at all on the way the world actually works. She can understand danger and avoid it, but she has never felt the thrill of terror, not even one time.

She knows something of sorrow, and feels it intensely, but cannot feel it for long for doing so is outside her nature. If one of her girls is slain in battle, she will be distraught and weep all night, but come morning she will be found asleep and upon waking will have completely forgotten what it was that so upset her, and if reminded will become only mildly disturbed in mind. Lasting sadness and despair are beyond her, she cannot feel them. She knows guilt, but can only conceive of herself as being ignorant or not trying hard enough, she doesn't believe herself capable of ill-will [and she is right to think so]. She is not a tyrant, a zealot, or an extremist. Her vision of goodness does not include lording over others, and she does not even understand the impulse to do so. The mere fact of her being a Queen is because she was born one and despite her only subjects being the Miraje, she doesn't view it as a limitation on that fact, which may explain the casualness with which she gives away titles to her Pretty Soldiers. Her great vice is foolishness and inhumanity. Because she does not know human frailties she cannot truly fight them, or even reason with them or plan around them. She also cannot sympathize with those who have them. When she sends her Pretty Soldiers into battle, she does not understand the fear and peril of what she asks. She only sees the chivalrous goodness of the Soldiers, and the cheerful necessity of helping others by defeating dark forces. She can empathize with their suffering when it is shown to her, but she has never felt it and her words of encouragement come from being distressed that the Soldier is sad, not truly grasping why. Moreover she has no understanding of complex moral problems, and thinks all of them can be dealt with by means of the most immediate answer. If there are poor people, feed them. If there are homeless people, house them. If there are sad people, comfort them. If there are people doing drugs, talk to them. Surely they can be made to understand how they're hurting themselves. The mad Queen of Mirrors walks the world cheerful as honeysuckle. Herds of Unicorn tread her lands, and when she sees them she knows the goodness of the world. She knows the magic in every smile, and that every laugh is a powerful incantation, for hers is the purview of the impossible dream and in her hand is

the unreachable star.

## *General Rutherford*

Rutherford is the chief of the Mirajes, gruff in demeanor, gleeful in battle, steady as an old oak, loyal as they come. In distant days he led his people across the highlands, cunning was he, shrewdest and most daring of all the rabbit-cats. Of him came great lineages of the Miraje, whose kin were the Jackalopes. Renowned is he among all the horned rabbits of the world, not for skill at arms, but for the making of daring escapes, of unlikely adventures, of snatching victory from the jaws of defeat. For it was Rutherford whose footfalls made the chain that bound great Fenrir, it was Rutherford who escaped the wrath of Chullain's Hound when he came to his house when it was said that none would enter it while he stood watch, it was Rutherford who has walked the world since ancient times making off with milk and carrot alike for as long as man has dreamed his dreams. He is the Queen's steadiest advisor, for he alone does she trust to translate her high ideals into practical realities. And since he could refuse her for nothing, and his loyalty was his greatest fault, when the Queen of Mirrors returned and swore she would open that which should not be opened, he could only laugh and grin and commit himself to her folly. His recent promotion to General has seen him as effective leader of the Pretty Soldiers, directing their deployment and the broad details of their training [while the Sergeant attends to the training itself]. His sincerest desire is to bring the Queen's dream of a fair world to pass, even though he has spent millennia in her absence exploring the Earth and learning it, and knows what she asks is impossible and ridiculous and what she means to use to do it is fragile and worthless. For he has faith in her, for in all the world he has known nothing so sweet as his master's voice and her grace. He attends his duties with the utmost gravitas and severity, and plans only far enough into the future to guarantee the plan does not immediately fall into ruin. His greatest fear is that some great defeat or loss of life will lead to the destruction of the Pretty Soldier's morale, and so maintaining a string of easy victories is his highest priority. He would sooner abandon a battlefield than see it strewn in blood and torn pink fabric. Distantly in his mind does he remember Cu Chullain, and what he could do even as a mere child when he walked upon the Earth, and wonders in secret if perhaps one will arise from among the Pretty Soldiers mighty enough to sweep away the Darkness as Ireland's Child of Light did so very long ago.

## *Military Doctrine*

*The following is the brief left on each girl's pillow as they arrive to their barracks following the Sergeant's speech welcoming them to Scathan. It contains the basic rules of being a Pretty Soldier, all of which but Rule 1 contain the clause of 'unless it would violate Rule 1'.*

Rule 1: The Girls Come Home. Prioritize your own safety and that of your Scouts above

everything else, even the safety of innocent civilians and the success of the mission. Always maintain an exit strategy.

Rule 2: There are no rules in a fight to the death. Use every tactic available to you, use ambushes and alpha strikes wherever possible, do not fight fair. Always confirm your own intelligence, do not engage without reliable intel on your enemy.

Rule 3: Unless it would serve to bewilder the enemy, do not transform in front of an enemy.

Rule 4: Unless it would serve to bewilder the enemy, do not give any speech longer than ten seconds. Do not attempt negotiations of any kind without an exit strategy.

Rule 5: It's better to retreat than proceed with an assault with less than one hundred percent odds of success.

Rule 6: Do not stand your ground. Attrition is the weakness of the Soldiers. If your initial strike fails to kill your enemy, fall back.

Rule 7: Kill your enemy. Anyone the Pretty Soldiers would engage should be considered irredeemable. Do not trust the enemy. Do not offer deals to the enemy. Do not attempt negotiations of any kind without absolute confidence in the trustworthiness of the person you're talking to.

Rule 8: Do not reveal your identity as a Pretty Soldier to anyone you do not trust completely. Do not tell your parents or friends you are a Pretty Soldier. Do not do anything that allow others to trace your Regalia back to your true identity. Do not reveal the location of Scathan in terms more specific than 'it is in Ireland'.

Rule 9: Obey all orders from Top Brass and from your Miraj. Do not talk back to your Miraj.

Rule 10: Do not tug on your Miraje's ears. Do not be mean to the Mirajes. Do not tell anyone you do not completely trust that your Miraj can talk.

Rule 11: Our enemies care about the Veil. We do not. Use this against them. Always retreat into public spaces. Always conduct negotiations, when necessary, in public places and out of Regalia. If pressed, discard Regalia and find an adult, then call the Scouts for extraction or discretely flee.

Rule 12: Calling the police on the enemy is an excellent distraction but should only be used in an emergency. Often our enemies own the police. You might merely be calling reinforcements for them. Calling Chris Hansen was only funny once *Susie*. Do not call Chris Hansen on your enemies.

Rule 13: Absolutely no social media posting about being a Pretty Soldier. This includes live-streaming missions.

Rule 14: Call your parents at least once a week.

Rule 15: All Soldiers who are available must report to Scathan to celebrate Christmas on the day of the Solstice; December 21st.

Rule 16: Rely upon your own Regalia and Magecraft over normal weapons if possible. The Soldiers do not train in the use of firearms. Rely upon Magecraft, it doesn't require reloading and we have millennia of spell lore to go off of.

Rule 17: Have fun. The Queen instructed me to include this rule.

Rule 18: Stay safe. The Queen told me this was covered by Rule 1, but I'm putting it here anyway. Stay safe. I know you're all here because you want to help people, or have an adventure, or get superpowers but this is dangerous. If you can't take it seriously you won't be a Pretty Soldier..

Rule 19: Bedtime is 9 PM sharp. 10 PM for those over 12 or older. If you can't sleep, tell a Miraj. If you need water, tell a Miraj. If you need a story to sleep, tell a Miraj. If it's an emergency they'll wake me or the General or the Queen.

Rule 20: All Soldiers must take at least one month completely off, at home, in every six months of active duty. That means no fighting AT ALL. You're a kid, go ride your bike. If I hear you saved a kitten from a tree when you're rotated out you'll be cleaning the stained glass with a toothbrush when you get back to Scathan.

Rule 21: Any Pretty Soldier responsible for the creation of a new rule will be spending the next six months at home. No exceptions.

