

HUNTER : THE VIGIL

# DARK AND LIGHT

**DARK  
PACK**



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*Princess the Hopeful* is an idea from *The Kings Raven* and Micheal Brazier



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"I don't like this place."

"Shut the fuck up, Luigi."

"I'm just telling you, man, we shouldn't have gone that far. At least wait for back-up."

The others sighed. Of course, they all knew he was right. But did they really have the choice? It had been months now. Months since they started tracking down the insane cult that had been rising in the area. These maniacs had been capturing and torturing living beings to fuel their unholy sorcery. They had begun small, with pets and errant cats; but they had soon grown daring and moved to homeless men and women. When they started kidnapping children, the Cell had become more determined than ever to take them down.

Eventually, after several weeks of investigation, they had managed to locate their hideout, and led an assault against it. They had been prepared for a fight, but when they arrived, someone had apparently preceded them; all the cultists at the entrance were either dead or unconscious. They had ended up following the trail of bodies to the cave below the building. And this was how they ended up here, in the dark, walking through something wet and they really didn't want to identify. "We still don't know who took down these witches up there," Vera answered. "And we need to see if we can find escapees." "We saw what they do with their prisoners", Luigi protested. "You guys really think they suddenly kept the last ones alive for some reason?" "It's worth checking," Jack answered. "If we could bring back just one kid safe, then our effort won't have been in vain..." "Wait!" Vera suddenly said, causing her comrades to stop with an interrogative look. "I think I saw something move."

The three of them raised their flashlight in the direction she pointed at. Eventually, they did reveal someone sitting against the corner.

It was a child, a girl who looked barely older than thirteen. Jack noticed with surprise how she seemed in fairly good shape for a prisoner. Not perfect, of course; her clothes were still ripped, her hair wet, and her face marked with bruises. But considering where they had found her, he had expected her to have worse.

"See? We told you it'd pay off!" Vera triumphantly told Luigi, before bringing her attention back to the girl. "It's okay, sweetie. We're here to help you."

The girl stood up, and Jack couldn't help but be unsettled by how calm she appeared. He had expected to find someone crying, or terrorized. But the way she stared at them...this wasn't the look of a scared kidnapped child. In fact, if she had been taken by them, why was she even free?

"You shouldn't be here," she suddenly said.

"What?"

"You shouldn't be here," she repeated. "It's dangerous. Leave while you still can."

Before they could answer anything, she turned her back to them and ran deeper into the cave.

"Eh! Wait!" Vera yelled.

They rushed after her. However, she ran fast, and they could barely see her in the dark. After a few minutes, they had lost her.

"Well, that's just great," Jack groaned. "How are we supposed to save her if she runs away?"

"Maybe she is with them," Luigi suggested.

"Maybe she's a monster in disguise."

"If she is, we will deal with her," Vera answered. "Right now, let's focus on..."

A strange noise interrupted her, and the three hunters froze. They had been doing this for a few years now, and experience had taught them to immediately identify the meaning behind

a few specific sounds. And in that case, the meaning clearly was "something ugly is lurking in the dark".

"Stay together", Vera whispered to them. As she was talking, a snarl was heard, and creatures emerged from the dark. At first, Jack thought they were human, as the shape was roughly the same; but as they got closer, he saw differences; their skin was grey and dirty, their arms disturbingly long with claws and blades on the elbows; their eyes were glowing and hungry; and they opened their mouths, revealing several sharp, broken teeth.

The three hunters opened fire. Several of the monsters fell, hit by the bullets as they were rushing at them with beastly shrieks. But they outnumbered them two to one; eventually one of them reached Luigi. The poor man screamed in terror as the thing threw him onto the ground and prepared to sink its teeth into him.

That was when, out of nowhere, a ray of light hit the monster in the head. Its horrible, now half-burnt maw let out a disgusting noise before the thing collapsed, allowing Luigi to get up. Monsters and hunters alike stopped their fight and turned around to look where the ray had come from.

Then someone stepped out of the darkness. It was a teenage girl again. Not the same, it seemed; she looked slightly older, with a slender body shape, darker skin, and a brighter, slightly long hair, with a red tint to it. Her blue eyes also glowed in the dark. But the strangest part about her was her outfit; she wore something that looked like a strange mix between a pink dress and a golden samurai armor, with a kimono, plate shoulderpads, a form-fitting breastplate and a big bow in the back. And finally, she was wielding a spear-like weapon with a strange, glowing gem in the middle of the blade.

Her arrival appeared to enrage the monsters;

shrieking, they all rushed toward her with the clear intention of ripping her apart. With an agility that seemed absurd for someone that small wearing armor, the girl stepped aside and stabbed one of them in the flank, killing it instantly. She then immediately removed her weapon from the corpse with surreal ease and used it to block an assault from another of the beasts, before striking back, cutting the creature's head in half. Three of them tried to attack her simultaneously, only to be obliterated by another ray of light she somehow generated from her spear. Another tried to bite her arm, only to be stopped by some strange glowing barrier before she grabbed it, threw it onto the ground and pierced its heart.

Then suddenly there was a disgusting tearing sound, and she screamed in pain. The last monster standing had just reached her, and its arm had turned into a blade, catching her by surprise and stabbing through her lower back. The girl spat some blood, then raised her spear at the creature's head. The gem glowed, and a fireball emerged from it, turning the repulsive creature to ashes.

Her last opponent gone, the girl almost collapsed, only barely clinging to the closest wall. The three hunters could hear her cough as she started vomiting blood. They couldn't help but stand and look at this strange kid who had just single-handedly slaughtered an entire group of monsters. Eventually, she got up and looked at them.

"The children you are looking for are a bit further to the right," she told them. "You should reach them soon. Please make sure they get back home. Don't worry about the other monsters, I took care of them. Good night."

She then walked back into the shadow, disappearing in the tunnel. Once she was gone, Jack finally managed to articulate something: "... The fuck was that?!".

If there is one thing any Hunter knows, it's that the world is filled with the enemies of humanity. Whether it's monsters crawling in the darkness, sorcerers practicing horrible sacrifices in their basements or spirits haunting abandoned houses and possessing people, the world is filled with dangerous, malevolent beings; all these things are just part of life in the Vigil.

But then, what should Hunters do when they meet supernatural beings who claim to be a force for good?

Sure, creatures who pretend to be good - even genuinely believe that they are so - aren't something unusual. Ghostwalkers and shapeshifters will both occasionally insist that the violence and destruction they cause are actually meant to work toward a greater good. Fae will sometimes put on a nice façade to better attract their unfortunate victims. Beasts try to justify the harm they cause as "lessons" to help humanity improve. But sometimes, Hunters meet supernatural beings who seem entirely genuine in their desire to help humanity. Reports from various Cells tell tales of young women, girls and sometimes even boys in strange, bright-colored outfits showing up out of nowhere to rescue them from swarming monsters, blasting apart the fiends with magic powers and weapons, wandering around haunted and cursed places to banish their evil with ceremonies, or even just helping average people in need while asking nothing in return.

Many might mistake them for witches who just happened to appear benevolent, but in-depth studies reveal other common features -- lack of legal identity, the ability to project a sort of forcefield to protect themselves from harm, magic seemingly fueled by emotions rather than knowledge -- allowing Hunters to classify them as an entirely separate category of supernatural creatures. Nowadays, many terms are used to identify them -- paladins, maidens, guardian angels, child-witches, Sensitives, Lightbearers, empaths, or even Magical Girls -- but they usually refer to themselves either as Princesses, or Nobles.

## Themes

### A Thousand Fractious Points of Light

People who join the Vigil almost always have a reason for doing so. Some honestly want to make a better world. Others seek redemption, profit, or pleasure. But a cause is very easy to lose sight of. They fall into the background, becoming the justification for whatever a person feels they need (or want) to do, no matter how monstrous. People can come to feel small in the shadow of a cause; the more certain about it they are, the more certain they become that they themselves will never bring it about. They grind their lives down until there is nothing left in their life but service to a cause because

# THE VIGIL

## Introduction

Quote goes here

## A brief note about nomenclature.

"Princess: the Hopeful" usually speaks of the Hopeful as female, mainly because nearly all of our inspirations have girls as their protagonists, and the genre's very name is "magical girl". We would like to emphasize, therefore, that you are not required to play a female PC. By default Blossoming has no connection with gender, and a new Noble is just as likely to be a boy as a girl."

***-Princess: the Hopeful, Vocation version, p. 47***

As noted above, Hunters have many different terms they use to refer to Princesses. For the purposes of clarity, this supplement will mostly refer to them as Princesses and Nobles. Just remember not all hunters will refer to them as such.

Both versions of Princess: the Hopeful use "Princess" and "Noble" more or less interchangeably. This supplement follows that practice as well.

it's all they have left. When such people speak of their cause, it's nothing but lip service.

Nobles are different. They carry hope in their hearts and their hearts on their sleeves. They are beings of magic charged by their Queens to build a better world, and they are willing to fight their fears and stare down their nightmares to do it. To some, Nobles exemplify light in shadows as well as any Hunter, perhaps even better. Nobles may break, but their causes do not.

To Hunters, this can be an inspiration and a threat. As the Nobles fight for their causes it forces others to re-examine their Vigils, to ask if their own causes are worth fighting for. And most do, renewing their faith in the cause; some because they draw strength from the example the Nobles set, others because they will never cede the rightness of their cause, much less to supernatural beings. When Hunters and Nobles collide, it's not just lives at stake, it's worldviews. If Hunters and Nobles can come together despite their differences, perhaps their shared efforts can truly make a better world. If they can't, the clash of perspectives can lead to wounds deeper than a knife or gun could ever leave.

## The Duality of Light

The theme of Hunter: the Vigil is Light in Shadows. This refers to the lights of action and knowledge, of single points seeking their way or multiple lights coming together to form great fires, of the Hunter's knowledge that their Vigil will burn them out in time. But perhaps there is an additional meaning in play. Even though the Hunters see themselves as the light against the shadows, they must keep their Vigil in the shadows. They know if they come into the open they expose themselves to the retribution of monsters and the ostracization of mundane humanity, and so they keep to their secrecy. As time goes on, many find themselves sacrificing their humanity to keep their sanity and their Hunt going a little longer.

This situation is complicated with the entrance of Nobles. Like Hunters, the lives of Nobles have both human and supernatural aspects. Unlike most Hunters, a Noble tends to see both aspects of their lives as important. Many Nobles see their fight against human evils and human suffering as vital a mission as their war against the Darkness, and will fight on both fronts even to the point of exhaustion. Thus groups who seek to cooperate or contend with a Noble often find themselves dragged back into the public sphere,

either by the Noble themselves or by their own attempts to find opportunity. The conjunction and disjunction between what a Hunter does in private and what they do in public become as drawn into sharp relief as it is for the Noble, and mundane matters take on a new importance they often didn't before. Can a Hunter keep the candle burning at both ends, or will find themselves burnt out all the faster?

## Fragile Hope and Ready Distrust

Hunters have heard it before. Nobles are by no means the first supernatural beings who have claimed to work for the betterment of the world; some have even spoken of the betterment of mankind. Sometimes alliances form, but all too often it ends in betrayal when the differences can no longer be overlooked or the monsters' instincts and desires can no longer be ignored.

To Hunters, Nobles are no different. They may claim a higher calling, but how can a Hunter trust someone who couples a power they can barely understand with a morality they can't afford to match? Especially one who can hide their human self so deeply and who claims a mandate from otherworldly beings? It becomes so easy for a Hunter to construe a Noble's worldview and actions as monstrous, or at least detached from proper humanity.

Nobles who work with Hunters find themselves grappling with similar questions. They see what mundane humans will resort to doing to fend off the supernatural. They flinch from Hunters who see other supernatural beings as monsters to be slain, unworthy of respect or recognition. It becomes so easy for a Noble to construe a Hunter's worldview and actions as monstrous,

or at least detached from proper humanity.

Nobles and Hunters who work together combine their hopes for a better world, a world where lives can come together and respect each other's differences, even those they don't understand. They must defend that hope not just from external dangers but the threat of internal distrust and exploitation. Can Hunters find common ground with these strange supernatural beings? Or will this source of hope be reduced to ashes as too often occurs for those who carry the Vigil?

## How to use this book

Each of this chapter covers a different aspect of how Hunters interact with Princesses:

**Chapter 1:** Rebels and Royals elaborates on how Hunters see the Hopeful, what they know about them, and the reason they would have to fight- or work- with them.

**Chapter 2:** A Kingdom's Laws provides simplified rules allowing you to include Princesses- or the minions of their enemy, the All-Consuming Darkness - in a Hunter the Vigil game.

**Chapter 3:** The Response describes in detail what the various Compacts and Conspiracies think of the Hopeful. It also introduces three new Compacts and three new

**Appendix:** Athens of America explores how hunters have dealt with the arrival of the princesses on their doorsteps in Philadelphia, and their effect on the local struggles between both groups.

## Vigil and Hopeful

"This fanbook is not meant to be a replacement for either version of Princess: the Hopeful, nor do you need them to understand what is in this book. However, if you have a copy of either the Dream or Vocation version of Hopeful, there's some flexibility in what you can do.

You can certainly use the groups described here as antagonists or supporting characters in a Hopeful story; the People's Guard and the Magisters, for example, can make for great villains in a Princess game, while the Light Company and #Ammit can make valuable allies. Alternatively, you can mix and match what you feel fits best in both.





Overall, Princesses have only recently been identified as something distinct from witches, and plenty of Hunter organizations don't see any difference beyond which tactics they recommend; after all, what else would you call a person who appears human in every way, but has occult powers? Still, over time, several features have allowed Hunters to distinguish them:

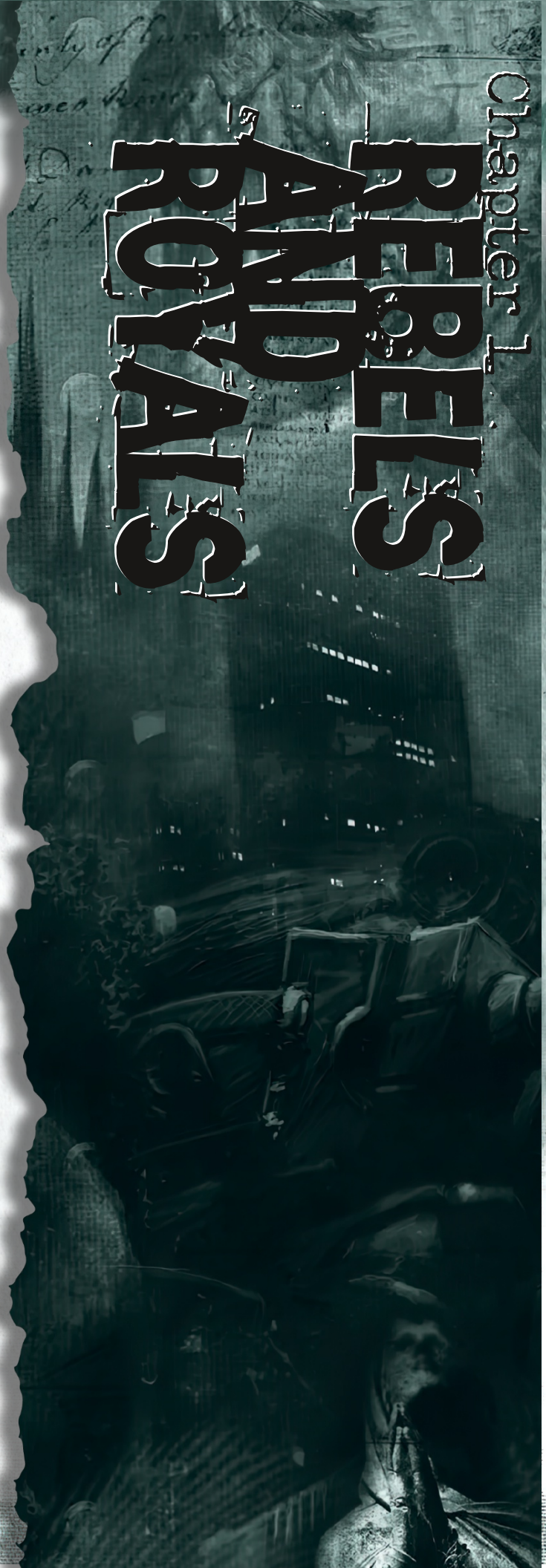
First of all, they are frequently very young. The most common age seen is between 15 and 20, but some Hunters have sworn that they've witnessed prepubescent kids too. Warlocks and sorcerers are usually adults, or at the very least young adults, since all the occult knowledge they study to gain their power requires some experience and practice. But Princesses do not seem to have such a limitation, and while they do include some full-grown men and women, a disturbing amount of them are underaged. Even worse, it seems many of the adult ones actually have had their powers since childhood, and just happened to survive long enough to grow up.using, and while Princesses occasionally do use incantations and rituals -- most commonly when abjuring haunted and cursed places -- usually, their "spells" seem to be activated as instinctively as a werewolf shapeshifting or a vampire using his enhanced strength. With some exceptions, their powers also tend to have a shiny, "holy " feel to them: they can raise luminous shields around themselves, summon weapons that shoot beams of light, or simulate an aura that makes them look like an angel. In addition, they do not seem to have any trouble using their magic in front of regular humans like some mages do, as Division Six painfully found out when they once tried to confront one in San Francisco.

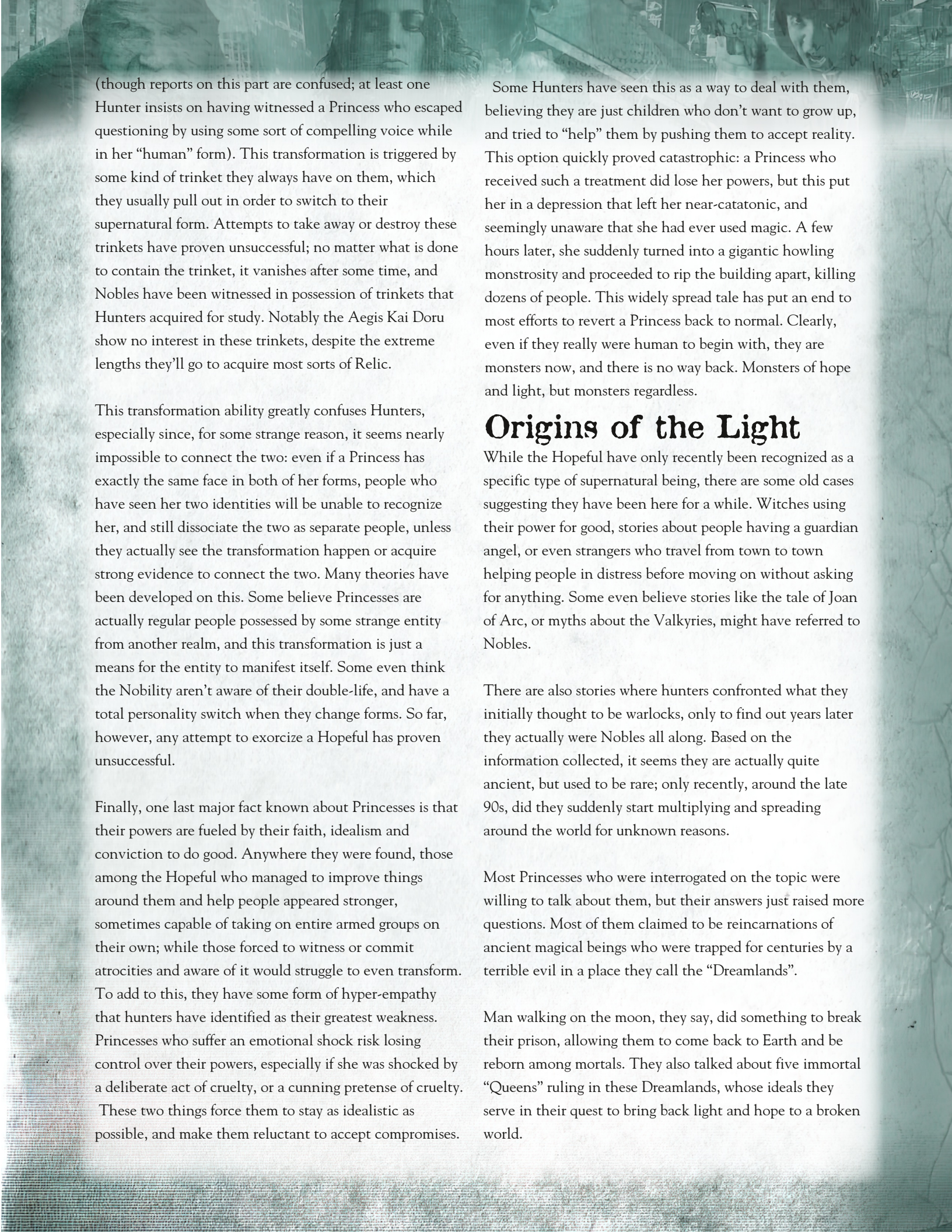
Second, while they are biologically human, their magic appears to be an integral part of their being, rather than something acquired through deals with mystical entities or the study of occult practices. Analysis using technology or supernatural powers reveals that they are partially made up of the magic they are.

Thirdly, they possess a strange ability to "transform", albeit in a different way than shapeshifters (though there have been reports of Nobles with the ability to shift into animals). The strange costumes they wear aren't the uniforms of cults or superhero disguises used by fantasizing children as initially thought: they are a part of their being, which they manifest whenever they are in their supernatural form.

The rest of the time, they revert back to a "mundane" state, where they are indistinguishable from human beings even when going through deeper analysis, and don't seem to possess any supernatural abilities

# Chapter 1 REBELS AND ROYALS





(though reports on this part are confused; at least one Hunter insists on having witnessed a Princess who escaped questioning by using some sort of compelling voice while in her “human” form). This transformation is triggered by some kind of trinket they always have on them, which they usually pull out in order to switch to their supernatural form. Attempts to take away or destroy these trinkets have proven unsuccessful; no matter what is done to contain the trinket, it vanishes after some time, and Nobles have been witnessed in possession of trinkets that Hunters acquired for study. Notably the Aegis Kai Doru show no interest in these trinkets, despite the extreme lengths they’ll go to acquire most sorts of Relic.

This transformation ability greatly confuses Hunters, especially since, for some strange reason, it seems nearly impossible to connect the two: even if a Princess has exactly the same face in both of her forms, people who have seen her two identities will be unable to recognize her, and still dissociate the two as separate people, unless they actually see the transformation happen or acquire strong evidence to connect the two. Many theories have been developed on this. Some believe Princesses are actually regular people possessed by some strange entity from another realm, and this transformation is just a means for the entity to manifest itself. Some even think the Nobility aren’t aware of their double-life, and have a total personality switch when they change forms. So far, however, any attempt to exorcize a Hopeful has proven unsuccessful.

Finally, one last major fact known about Princesses is that their powers are fueled by their faith, idealism and conviction to do good. Anywhere they were found, those among the Hopeful who managed to improve things around them and help people appeared stronger, sometimes capable of taking on entire armed groups on their own; while those forced to witness or commit atrocities and aware of it would struggle to even transform. To add to this, they have some form of hyper-empathy that hunters have identified as their greatest weakness. Princesses who suffer an emotional shock risk losing control over their powers, especially if she was shocked by a deliberate act of cruelty, or a cunning pretense of cruelty. These two things force them to stay as idealistic as possible, and make them reluctant to accept compromises.

Some Hunters have seen this as a way to deal with them, believing they are just children who don’t want to grow up, and tried to “help” them by pushing them to accept reality. This option quickly proved catastrophic: a Princess who received such a treatment did lose her powers, but this put her in a depression that left her near-catatonic, and seemingly unaware that she had ever used magic. A few hours later, she suddenly turned into a gigantic howling monstrosity and proceeded to rip the building apart, killing dozens of people. This widely spread tale has put an end to most efforts to revert a Princess back to normal. Clearly, even if they really were human to begin with, they are monsters now, and there is no way back. Monsters of hope and light, but monsters regardless.

## Origins of the Light

While the Hopeful have only recently been recognized as a specific type of supernatural being, there are some old cases suggesting they have been here for a while. Witches using their power for good, stories about people having a guardian angel, or even strangers who travel from town to town helping people in distress before moving on without asking for anything. Some even believe stories like the tale of Joan of Arc, or myths about the Valkyries, might have referred to Nobles.

There are also stories where hunters confronted what they initially thought to be warlocks, only to find out years later they actually were Nobles all along. Based on the information collected, it seems they are actually quite ancient, but used to be rare; only recently, around the late 90s, did they suddenly start multiplying and spreading around the world for unknown reasons.

Most Princesses who were interrogated on the topic were willing to talk about them, but their answers just raised more questions. Most of them claimed to be reincarnations of ancient magical beings who were trapped for centuries by a terrible evil in a place they call the “Dreamlands”.

Man walking on the moon, they say, did something to break their prison, allowing them to come back to Earth and be reborn among mortals. They also talked about five immortal “Queens” ruling in these Dreamlands, whose ideals they serve in their quest to bring back light and hope to a broken world.

If anything, these affirmations only serve to raise more suspicions for the Vigil. The idea of ancient immortal Queens from an otherworldly kingdom who send their agents to influence the fate of humanity isn't too dissimilar to some other creatures of the night, like the Fae or the Beasts. Many see the Hopeful as invaders, mysterious dream creatures who take root in our reality by possessing the bodies of young people so they can take over the human nations and prepare them for the coming of their all-powerful monarchs. Sure, they say they are doing this for the good of mankind, but can we really trust them on this? And even if they are genuine, who's to say their definition of good matches our own?

Some evidence supporting this is older intel noting how they used to not be quite as benevolent; many of their earlier appearances are actually quite sinister, describing groups in green and white armor unleashing their magic and wrath on monsters with no concern for the collateral damage in their wake;

or strange noblewomen in purple and dark blue veils who came to harvest something from countries in the name of some mysterious empress, eventually causing monsters to show up and bring misery. Nobody really knows for sure what caused them to change so much, but while Nobles with this attitude still exist nowadays, the more idealistic ones seem to be growing in number. When interrogated about these darker peers, most of them seem very insistent on dissociating themselves from them, describing these "Twilight Princesses" as dissident factions who forgot what their actual goal was. Not everyone in the Vigil buys this story, but interactions have been witnessed between the so-called "Radiant" with their "Twilight" counterparts suggesting they are indeed hostile to each other.

## Courts

From what Hunters have been able to collect on Noble society, they appear to divide themselves between factions called Courts. Each Court owes its allegiance to one of these ageless Queens, and follows her belief and vision of what "good" is. This also gives them a distinct clothing style

**Task Force: VALKYRIE**

**File: 319-G3-EJ2**

**Operation Codename: GALE**

In coordination with in-place DoD assets, task force domestic agents have for the past several months been tracking a threat that is believed to be emerging after a period of either enforced hibernation or coordinated rising (Related file; MARIANAS) in operations against national interests. Information to be expanded in the following report.

Initial contact with a new confirmed class of P/S-ENE, calling themselves "princesses", "nobles", and various like titles, demonstrated that they have begun cropping up heavily in the San Francisco area since roughly 1982, and have continued to grow in number as time has gone on. Individuals are proactive in activities according to several reports from MRU 10-8 and from Agilaz Group on what was once thought to be an upswing in P/S-ENE activity related to what was presumed to be VOLVA incidents. Further inquiry required several interviews and suborning of local resources to discern the reality of the situation.

Aforementioned P/S-ENEs given temporary designation of "Brynhildr"; rough psychological profiling in the field suggests individuals are primarily concerned with what would be considered "traditional" ideals of morality, good and evil, right and

wrong. Have been noted as unwilling to resort to extreme measures when faced with adversity, though have also been noted as being skilled in influencing others to do what P/S-ENE desires. Situation compounded by apparent ages of targets; oldest to date encountered claimed to be 19 years old. Claims from subject ENEs suspect and require confirmation from command.

Individuals believed to be responsible for hindering task force operations in San Francisco, Glasgow, Milan, and Tokyo. Commonality is their belief that task force personnel are enthralled to a "darkness" and must be willing to work "with the light" to "restore the kingdom". Believed to be barely disguised attempts to coerce task force personnel and seconded personnel to become traitorous and turn allegiances. Claims of a "kingdom" taken to imply massive socio-political upheaval and revelation of highly classified incidents.

Further information has revealed rough factional differences between subjects, although the details are being determined in the field. Recommend personnel do all they can, if possible, to secure one subject over the age of 18 alive for questioning.

**PRIORITY CODE: RAENAROK**

and unique powers, frequently related to their Queen's philosophy. This variety played a great part in why it took so long for Hunters to realize these weren't just different kinds of witches.

While most courts seem to relatively get along with each other on a whole, there appears to be a clear division between the "Radiant" Courts, whose Queens hail from the mysterious Dreamlands, and the "Twilight" Courts, whose origins are less clear. Overall, Radiant Nobles usually are better-adjusted and more willing to cooperate, while their Twilight Court counterparts have a stronger inclination toward extremism and are frequently more aggressive. However, one should not immediately classify the Radiant as the "good" guys and the Twilight as the "bad" guys - sometimes things just aren't that simple.

Below are descriptions of the various Courts, and how to depict them as antagonists or supporting characters in a Hunter game. Of course, Hunters won't necessarily know that many details about them, and depending on the context might not even identify them as princesses. For these reasons, potential nicknames cells could use to describe them have been added.

## **Radiant Courts**

**Druids, Hippies, Rangers:** The ones who believe in living in harmony with the world and nature. Pacifists, they dislike starting a fight and prefer to try peaceful options first - though

they can be devastating when you actually get them to fight. Thankfully, this attitude tends to make them somewhat less troublesome. Their powers tend to focus on protection, healing or control over nature and animals.

**Spies, Voyeurs, Brains:** The ones who believe in knowledge and study. Frequently the most tech-savvy and intelligent, they try to analyze and study everything, making them always one step ahead of you. They are the most likely to be well-versed in science and occult lore... including, sometimes, darker secrets. Their powers tend to focus on learning, strategy and control over water and ice.

**Monarchs, Knights, Rulers:** The ones who believe in tradition, good leadership, and changing the system from the inside. Hunters are particularly wary of these ones, as they try to infiltrate political institutions so they can gain power over them and carry the plans of their Queen. Fortunately, they also tend to be very strict about playing by the rules, making them honorable and unlikely to commit illegal activities. Their powers focus on reinforcing their charisma so they can get people to follow them, as well as control over stone and jewels.

**Tricksters, Sylphs, Phantom Thieves:** The ones who believe in freedom over all. Cunning and unpredictable, these Nobles can be recognized by their distinct sense of humor and their out-of-the-box thinking. Many of them are rebels, anarchists or former thieves, uncaring about laws and jurisdiction in their quest to improve the world. Their powers focus a lot on speed, trickery

and control over air, but they're most infamous among Hunters for their ability to always escape the authorities, effectively making them near-impossible to catch.

**Djinn, Adventurers, Drifters:** The ones who believe in passion and love. Hot-blooded, adventurous and implacable, they stop at nothing to protect their loved ones, and fight fiercely for what they believe in, literally drawing strength from their affection. They are the most likely among Nobles to travel, constantly in search of new adventures, people to meet or places to discover, meaning many of them know people all over the world. Hunters fear them particularly for their ability to overcome almost any obstacle and their dominance over fire.

## Twilight Courts

**Necromancers, Shades, Maidens of Misery:** One of the most mysterious Courts, Shades are enigmatic Nobles who sometimes appear on Earth to claim areas in the name of their Queen, the "Ever-Flowing One". They then proceed to harvest some sort of energy from the area, eventually causing creatures of the Darkness to appear and wreak misery. Recognizable by their dark blue or purple clothes and, frequently, their veils, they have power over shadows and ghosts, as well as the ability to drain you of your will.

**Furies, Seraphim, Soldiers:** Perhaps the most feared of the Hopeful, they are motivated by nothing but their implacable hatred of the Darkness and all that spread it. Surprisingly more violent than their peers, they seek and destroy Darkness everywhere they can, completely apathetic towards all the collateral damage and innocents who get caught in the crossfire.

Strangely, they seem to have a similar animosity toward the Necromancers. They are almost always dressed in white and green, and their very destructive powers typically manifest in the form of a green, poisonous fire.

**Succubi, Seers, Idols:** The most disproportionately young among the Hopeful, they are childish, narcissistic and self-absorbed, utterly convinced they are the only ones who can make things better. Unfortunately, they also happen to have powers oriented toward reinforcing their skills and convincing everyone through seduction that they are right, in addition to possessing control over light and mirrors.

Hunters have noted that they are the easiest to find due to rarely assuming their "mundane" identities, but this isn't that helpful, as they seem to lack the common knowledge that other Courts take for granted.

People who live in the same area as an Idol often devolve into a cult of personality, cheering and relying on her for everything. Fortunately, they rarely work in teams, as they seem to hate each other.

## Friend or Foe?

Unlike many other supernatural creatures, Princesses do not appear to have anything blatantly evil in their nature. They don't suffer a hunger to kill or hurt people, they aren't prone to outbursts of devastating rage (at least not more than humans), and the services they offer do not come at any known sinister cost. They genuinely seem dedicated to helping mankind, and in fact this appears to be a vital part of their nature: their magic grows stronger when they successfully accomplish something good, and is disturbed when they witness atrocities. They also tend to be less enigmatic, and most of them will eagerly work

## Other Courts

The Radiant and Twilight Courts described above are the best-known Courts, and the ones whose existence has been confirmed by Hunters and Princesses alike, but there is no way to know for sure if they are the only ones. Rumors exist among Cells about other Courts of Nobles with even stranger powers. Some hunters, for example, have talked about Hopeful dressed like desert nomads with an ability to control music and sounds; even crazier stories involve ones who fight half-naked, with the ability to dismantle armors with a single touch and uncover hidden truths. Hunters are far from knowing everything about the world they live in, and Princesses are no exception; you never know what you might discover about them.

together with hunters towards a common cause if the opportunity presents itself. Judging by all of this, you would think them nothing but valuable allies to the Vigil, in a world where practically everything supernatural is an enemy. And sometimes, they are.

Unfortunately, things aren't always quite that simple. The Nobles might mean well, but the reality is, their own definition of good doesn't necessarily sit well with the Hunters' vision. Some are willing to make compromises when needed, but many Compacts and Conspiracies employ methods they just cannot accept. Moreover, when humans fight primarily to protect mankind and their loved ones, Nobles fight to do good, and humans are just as capable of doing bad things as any supernatural being, making them potential targets of their ire. Princesses might, for example, play vigilante, wandering the streets at night to beat up completely human criminals, or employ their magic to ruin the business of a corrupt corporation. These might seem like good things to do on paper, but from a hunter's point of view, it frequently looks like just another case of a supernatural being lording their unnatural power over a human. Or, other times, the Princess' actions might unintentionally harm employees just doing their job. There have also been cases where they attacked seemingly innocent humans, insisting these people were somehow "tainted" or "Darkened".

At the end of the day, the Hopeful are idealists who care about doing the right thing before any form of allegiance, and that makes them a wild card; one Noble will help the local Union cell exorcise the nearby abandoned warehouse from its bloodthirsty ghost, another will attack a Malleus Maleficarum torture hideout and release all their prisoners. Concepts such as "necessary evil" or "dirty work for the greater good" are as likely to attract a Princess' ire as her sympathy; acts of cruelty on others literally hurt them, and many Princesses just barely tolerate them, be it from hunters or creatures of the night.

Not only that, but they will sometimes also try to help monsters as much as humans, in the hope the two can live together peacefully; several cells, in particular, ran into Princesses actively supporting vampires, using their magic to help them feed without hurting people while defending them against aggressive humans. An admittedly admirable endeavor, but frequently judged risky and naive from a hunter's usually pragmatic point of view.

Then, there is the mere issue that, even if they mean well, Princesses are still part of the supernatural, a force any hunter worth his name has learned not to trust. One of the first things you learn when working in the Vigil is that, when it comes to monsters, things aren't always what they seem, and not everyone is convinced these so-called Nobles actually are a force for good. Sure, their powers seem like they come from something holy ~ but who's to say they aren't thieves, stealing the light of heaven for their own ends?

And finally, you have the ones who fall. Princesses, as idealistic and as pure as they might seem, aren't impervious to what the dark, cruel truth of the world can do to your mind. Their belief can be broken, and when this does happen, they tend to fall hard. At best, they stick to their fight, but become zealots who hunt "evil" without any care for the collateral damage, or self-righteous vigilantes who desperately stick to their utopian convictions no matter how inappropriate it is. At worst, they succumb to despair and let the monster inside them take over, turning them into mindless abominations on par with the nightmares they fight. Many feel all of them are doomed to fall in either of these categories eventually; the world isn't a place for angels, and you cannot hope to stay one in it. To these people, the Hopeful are just time bombs waiting to happen, and should be taken care of while they are still ticking.



**Millstone13**

Member



Join Date: DEC 2008  
Posts: 194

Today, 05:53 PM

*"It was a nightmare, I'm telling you. Just three days ago, the park was normal. Then the next day, all of a sudden, it started being infected with monsters. Hideous beasts who kidnapped people, vanished out of thin air only to appear somewhere else, ambushing our cellmates. We lost many people before we finally managed to make it to the main building. But once we arrived... There, we saw the cause of all this mess. A group of veiled witches in purple dress were assembled here, doing some crazy ritual. Oh, nothing explicitly horrible- they weren't sacrificing children or anything... but I could just feel something happening while they sang their unholy incantations. They were draining the park of something, and whatever they left missing was causing the monsters to come. We attacked, but they just raised some strange shield to protect themselves from the bullets. One of them spoke in a weird language I didn't know, and they suddenly all turned into shadows before disappearing. It took us years to purge the park from the monsters, and even today it still hasn't fully recovered from the damages. And this, my friends, is why I don't trust the Empaths."*

Tags: Empaths

Quote Flag

## Fighting Nobles

Despite their idealism, the Hopeful are in no way weak, and can prove just as much of a threat as any vampire or werewolf. They can raise magic fields allowing them to shrug off bullets with only a few bruises. Their silly-looking costumes can actually turn out to be near-impenetrable armors, and they can summon magic weapons of impressive might out of thin air. Some of them can dodge attacks at incredible speed, and knock out in one punch a man twice their size. Others yet have familiars who look like harmless plushies, but can suddenly transform into dangerous mythical beasts. Hunters who make the mistake of underestimating Nobles because of their cheesy superhero look and idealism might suffer the humiliating experience of being easily defeated by a small girl dressed like an anime cosplayer. They might not look as threatening or scary as a savage beast man or a creepy knife-wielding doll, but they are still supernatural creatures, and their powers are very real.

Another problem with fighting Nobles is that their appearance and nature makes it really uncomfortable for hunters to kill them. Slaying a witch, who is identical to a human aside from some weird powers and will become a human corpse upon death, is one thing; slaying someone just like this, only if they happen to look like a little girl and genuinely believe they are doing the right thing, is another entirely. Any hunter with some amount of humanity left is horrified by the prospect of killing children, and even when they aren't, to everyone else they will look like child murderers.

And of course, there is the issue of a Princess' dual identity. Unless you actually witness her transforming with your own eyes, it is nearly impossible to make the connection between a Hopeful's "normal" and supernatural forms, and their normal one is human enough that there is currently no way to identify them by any scientific or supernatural means. Would-be Noble hunters must be careful to never let their target get out of sight, or she will turn back to mundane form while they aren't looking and disappear in the crowd of mortals, ruining all chances of finding her. In fact, a strangely high number of pursuits end with the target escaping after the pursuers round a corner, find the Noble had suddenly vanished, and then get directions from a nearby pedestrian.

For all these reasons, hunters who confront the Hopeful usually learn pretty fast to not underestimate how tricky fighting such beings can be. Many actually prefer to use diplomacy whenever possible, both for moral and pragmatic reasons, but when a fight becomes unavoidable, they make sure to prepare for a devastating confrontation.

**“What? You think this assignment is going to be easy, greenhorn? I've fought these witches before, and let me tell you who else wore a stupid outfit. Superman, with his underwear outside his tights. This is not a cakewalk, and if you don't shape up you won't be coming home. I've seen skilled veterans empty entire clips and hit nothing but air. I've seen little girls walk off bullets at point blank range. And rookie, you will never ever laugh at a Barbie magic wand that shoots rainbows once you've seen those rainbows melt the flesh off a man's bones. Oh god, I can still smell it...”**

## Attack them while they transform?

Magical Girl stories (which many Hunters believe might have been inspired by the Hopeful) have a reputation of using elaborate, overly long transformation sequences, which should give plenty of time for the villains to attack them. While Hunters are too pragmatic to ignore a weakness like this, they have been disappointed to discover this doesn't apply to the Nobility, whose Transformation requires mere seconds. Unless a Hunter is already aiming at her before she can switch forms, a Princess will be ready to fight as quickly as a Hunter can swing his weapon to the flash. And if a Hunter is completely sure about which seemingly normal girl he needs to aim his weapon at, he'd be better off taking her out before she starts to Transform...

You know, many people I met thought these so-called "Nobles" were a joke. I get it, I really do. In fact, I used to think like this. After all, when you have faced blood-sucking corpses, men who turn into cannibalistic wolf-men, or walking nightmares disguised as people, how are you supposed to take sparkly little girls in superhero suits seriously? That just doesn't sound as scary...But then I actually met one of them. It all started like any other day, as we were interrogating some guy about one of his friends we suspected of being a vampire. Our leader was in a bad mood, and getting paranoid, so he started beating him up.

And then, she showed up.

She looked young, barely more than seventeen. She was wearing a flashy red and pink dress with laces, and her hair was dyed to look like flames. At first, the others thought she was just some kid who got lost, and tried to make her leave nicely. They completely changed their attitude when she raised her hand, and a longsword appeared out of nowhere between her fingers.

The guys panicked, and started to shoot. She started moving so fast we could barely see her, dodging the bullets without breaking a sweat. When a few lucky shots actually got her, she deflected them with some sort of shiny barrier. Then she lit that friggin' sword on fire and started slashing through us. None of us died, somehow, but it barely took her more than a few seconds to make all of us bite the dust. Twelve trained men with guns and kevlar vests, taken down by a teenage girl in a mini-dress with an oversized knife.

When we woke up, we found our leader beaten to a pulp with severe burns, and the prisoner was gone. All she left behind was a message, written on the wall of our safehouse with the edge of her blade: "Stay away from my friends". We went to check on everyone in the guy's inner circle, his girlfriend, his sister, anyone in the neighborhood, but we couldn't find who she was.

That was how I learnt to not underestimate Nobles. They might look all rainbows and sunshine, but that Light they keep rambling about? Yeah, it really gives them power. And when you give them reason to unleash that power on you, they are fuckin' terrifying.

-Form the Accounts of Samuel Stone

## Sworn

While Princesses themselves clearly are supernatural beings, and their powers are part of them, it still appears they are capable of sharing it. Much like vampires occasionally grant a portion of their power to humans by infecting them with a small amount of their blood, the Hopeful can use a ritual to impregnate a mortal with part of their light. The mortal then becomes what they call a "Sworn", gifted with a weaker version of their abilities, as well as magic weapons and other items, in order to fight by their side.

These Sworn are a major problem for many members of the Vigil. It's bad enough that Princesses throw themselves in a war against everything they see as evil, but they can also grant powers to average joes and drag them in their little crusade. Fortunately, they cannot seem to recruit Sworn without consent, though many Nobles are charismatic, and can convince anyone to willingly join their cause with the right words. Moreover, unlike vampires, it seems like only some of the strongest Princesses have access to this ritual.

That said, for all the problems hunters have with this practice, it can also prove a valuable asset when forming alliances with Nobles; the average hunter is in constant disadvantage against the supernatural, and not all of them can afford the Endowments provided by Conspiracies; being granted some amount of power, however small, can sometimes even the odds. The Hopeful, for their parts, usually are more than happy to give already experienced humans the proper weapons to fight the Darkness, and frequently seek out Hunter Cells as candidates for new Sworn - something they actually accept quite often. At least one Compact, the Light Company, maintains good relationships with Princesses and has a good chunk of their recruits turned into Sworn on a regular basis. Some of their peers frown upon this practice, seeing this as collaboration with the supernatural, but they don't care; as far as they are concerned, the more people this allows them to save, the better.

### Bezerker Cells

While Sworn can be a problem, they usually aren't that numerous: as noted above, only the strongest Nobles have the ability to share their power, and they tend to be very careful when choosing their allies in the first place.

A Radiant Princess rarely has more than one or two of them, usually close friends or relatives she seeks to protect from her enemies. The Necromancers tend to have a lot more, and in fact frequently have their Nobles outnumbered by them, but even they usually just use them as foot soldiers or bodyguards. And a Sworn is mostly dependent on his Princess to maintain his power, limiting their autonomy.

There is however, one exception regarding the ones from the Furies.

For some strange reasons, the Furies seem to have much less restriction when it comes to their Sworn: not only do they exist in much bigger numbers, but they also appear to be more autonomous, and can operate separately from Princesses. Some say they don't even need to receive their powers from the Hopeful, instead being granted them by the Queen herself, though most hunters pray this is an exaggeration. But perhaps the worst part is, they are organized; many of them assemble in cells like hunters to fight against the Darkness.

Unfortunately these "Berserker" cells, as they are commonly called in the Vigil, happen to follow the most violent and ruthless of the Queens, and this is reflected in their attitude: like the Princesses they share Court with, they want to see the Darkness and other evils burn, and they don't care if they have to destroy entire streets or kill innocent people to succeed. They are frequently mistaken for a variety of slashers, and in fact, much like slashers, a large part of them start out as hunters. Meaning not only do people in the Vigil have to worry about cells of maniacs shooting at random people in the hope of taking down monsters, but also about the possibility of berserkers infiltrating their own cells.

## Becoming a Noble

Anyone who stays long enough in the Vigil ends up learning that the Supernatural tends to be contagious; vampires, werewolves, mages and plenty of other creatures have the ability, willingly or not, to turn mundane humans into more of them. Which raises the obvious question: does this apply to the Hopeful? Is it possible for a mortal to turn into a Noble? For the most part, the answer seems to be yes; Princesses who were interrogated about it did mention having a normal life once before waking up one day with magic powers, and reports have been made of previously ordinary people who suddenly turned.

## Stormwracked as Berserker Cells

Anyone familiar with *Princess: the Hopeful* probably recognized the Berserker Cells as the Stormwracked, a faction of Sworn serving the Queen of Storms in this book. This faction was always designed with the idea they were hunters in mind, with the book merely avoiding actual hunter mechanics and names because the book was supposed to be about the Princesses. This supplement, on the other hand, is about hunters, meaning you have the opportunity to play them as members of the Vigil- albeit most likely as antagonists, due to their fanatic tendencies.

In terms of game system, treat Berserker Cells (or Stormwracked, depending on how you intend to call them) as Tier 2 Hunters with a Compact; they have access to all the mechanics traditionally associated with hunters, such as risking Willpower and Tactics. Their Compact Status counts as a Mystery Cult Initiation merit, whose first dot grants the Sworn Merit at a rating equal to his Compact Status, along with the Queen of Storms' Ideal. Customize the other benefits offered by the Status as you wish; Berserker Cells are not unified, and each Cell provides different benefits to its members.

The reason behind such transformations, however, is mostly unknown; they obviously don't turn people via bite, nor can their abilities be taught to someone, and no clear pattern has been discerned to give any form of explanation. All most hunters have is theories, blind guessing, and speculations; it once was a popular theory that only Sworn could become Nobles, with their status being an intermediary state, but this has since been discarded. Other suggested explanations include entities from the Dreamlands young girls, or Nobles being named by Queens, the same way a Princess can make a human into a Sworn.

Whatever the cause of such transformations is, hunters don't appear to be immune to it; there have been instances of cells whose members turned into Nobles, though they are for the most part rare and difficult to locate, since most subjects prefer to hide such information from their cellmates. The attitudes vary considerably on the topic depending on the Cells, Compacts and Conspiracies; the Light Company consider it a blessing, while anyone caught being a Noble in the People's Guard will immediately be declared a traitor, possibly executed on the spot.

## Outer Darkness

The emergence of Nobles in large numbers is a relatively new occurrence, but the monsters they fight are better known to the Hunters. Some places around them are haunted, not by ghosts or spirits, but by... something else. It's like these areas have a curse reinforcing the evil inside them, urging their visitors to act on their darkest impulses and punishing them when they try to do good. Usually, this influence is subtle, nothing blatant - you just feel like something is wrong, without actually witnessing any obvious supernatural phenomenon.

But when you leave such places abandoned for too long, this influence takes root, and its effects become obvious: they become hideouts for cults trying to summon dark powers, or nests for hideous monsters who feed on people's misery and despair. People who stay too long in these places start to suffer unholy mutations, eventually dying to resurrect as more of these abominations.

Nobody is really sure of the connection between the Hopeful and these things, but some hunters believe they are actually responsible for creating them.

In the past, the appearance of the harvesting veiled princesses would frequently cause the birth of such places. However, the ones who were questioned about it vehemently denied this theory, insisting they are, in fact, trying to destroy such places. They indeed seem quite dedicated to eradicate "The Darkness", as they call this phenomenon, actively seeking out these areas to purge them and mercilessly slaughtering the monsters growing inside them. They are sometimes willing to give other supernatural creatures the benefit of the doubt, but when it comes to these "Darkspawn", they seem to have no problem exterminating them.

The phenomenon known as "the Darkness" is a particularly nasty one worthy of its name. Those unfortunate enough to be affected experience mutagenic symptoms and more worryingly, there is a noticeable effect upon the subjects' brain, reducing empathy and increasing sociopathic tendencies.

My team investigated several sites reported to be vectors of infection and we noticed that all of the sites were dark and damp compared to the surrounding environs. Unsurprisingly, we found an abundance of mold and spores, most of which exhibited mutations similar to infected humans. Now it is possible that even molds are affected by the same process, but Occam's Razor suggests that this mold is the source of the symptoms.

Of course this raises further questions. Where does the mold come from? Folk tales say "the Darkness" appears at the sites of atrocities, but it would be obviously unethical to commit an atrocity to test that possibility. I believe that this mold causes people to behave in atrocious ways before the more visible symptoms occur, leading to its association with evil itself; but unless we are lucky enough to stumble upon a mold colony before anyone is infected, I cannot see any practical experiments in our labs' future.

# Uneasy Cooperation

Regardless of how much truth there is to what the Hopeful claim, there is no denying that these creatures of darkness are indeed malevolent. They make little attempt to hide it, and in fact, the ones who aren't mindless monsters usually seem to revel in their depravity. No one in his right mind would try to defend them, and everybody in the Vigil agrees that they should be destroyed without a second thought whenever met. Unfortunately, this is no easy task. The Darkness festers anywhere something violent or horrible happens, and spending your life hunting creatures of the night makes you very likely to find yourself in places like this. Its influence is a nightmare to deal with: hunters with honest-to-God good intentions, who are here to protect their families and friends, will feel the entire area eroding their skills and trying everything to make them fail; the ones with selfish intentions or cruel methods will expose themselves to the taint, and risk joining the ranks of the enemy. No matter who they are, visiting these areas represents a risk.

This usually is when Princesses come in. Unlike Hunters, the Hopeful seem immune to the Darkness' corruption. They sure don't feel comfortable in its presence, but it cannot corrupt and warp them like it does with humans. They also display a lot more experience when fighting it. They know its strengths, its weaknesses, how to purify the areas touched by its influence, and how to treat it before it grows out of control. And perhaps more importantly, they are as dedicated to ending it as hunters are. On the other hand, they are still vastly overpowered by it despite their growing numbers; for every Noble active in a town, there are frequently at least ten places tainted by the Darkness. Princesses might have magic powers, but they typically lack the manpower and resources to accomplish their tasks. Both things Compacts and Conspiracies are capable of offering them.

As a result, though neither of the two would like to admit it, the Vigil and the Hopeful tend to somewhat depend on each other whenever the Darkness is involved. Whether they like it or not, they have to collaborate on this, because Nobles need allies (or pawns, depending on your point of view), and Hunters need to know what they are dealing with.

Whenever they can find each other, the two will try to get in touch, form an agreement and join forces to locate and take care of all the tainted areas in the sector. How such alliances turn out depend entirely on the region and cells. Some are actually eager to have supernatural creatures fight on their side, and put genuine effort in making this work. Others still distrust the "witches", and only accept their assistance reluctantly. Others just flat-out refuse, not wanting to involve themselves with the supernatural.

Fortunately, with or without the Hopeful's help, the Darkness does have one weakness Hunters have learnt to exploit. Much like vampires fear sunlight and werewolves silver, creatures of Darkness have proven vulnerable to jade, which can be used both to harm them as weapons and to protect yourself from their powers. This discovery hasn't fallen on deaf ears, and to date, whenever hunters go to hunt creatures of the Darkness, veterans usually advise them to carry bits of jade with them.

"What the hell are you talking about?"

Nathan reloaded his shotgun while talking. Camille was sitting in a corner, attending to her own wounds. She could barely look him in the face. The monster had left some nasty scars on her leg, but she seemed like she would still be able to walk as long as the injury didn't get infected. Unfortunately, the same could not be said about Nathan's right eye; the creature's claw had managed to reach the hunter's face, digging through his orbit. He would survive, but unless they could find some sort of magic cure, he would never see from this eye ever again.

"I am saying I am sorry," she repeated, still avoiding his face. "It's my fault you got dragged into this."

"Cut that crap. I would probably be dead if not for you."

"But I could have left it at that!" she protested. "I could have just walked away instead of getting you involved, and you..."

"I would have probably gone to fight these things anyway," he cut in. "Except even less prepared and not knowing what I was about to face. Pretty sure I am better off this way." The girl lowered her head.

"I just never wanted these creatures to attack your family. Or to hurt you. Or..."

"Camille."

Approaching her, Nathan carefully raised her face to make her look him in the eye.

"It's alright. I know your empathy thing is hitting again, but trust me: I regret nothing."

He then stood up and cocked his shotgun.

"Now get your shit together and make some magic so we can at least get out of this alive."

The girl hesitated for a few seconds, then, with a little smile, nodded. Standing up, she grabbed her wristband and made a small gesture. In a flash of light, she found herself in blue-and-silver armor with a wand in her hand. Satisfied, Nathan focused, and his shotgun transformed as well, turning into some strange, elongated weapon.

"That's more like it," he said. "Now, let us show that thing what we can really do..."

## Spawns of the Darkness

Compared to Nobles, Creatures of Darkness are much harder to classify. These monsters exist in a large variety, some of them even being unique, and don't appear to have clear-cut factions; they seem more like many different monsters and cults who just happen to get their powers from a common source. Still, there are some categories of creatures, of "Spawn" as hunters call them, that are commonly recognized in the Vigil:

**Lurkers:** Horribly twisted and loathsome creatures that seem to almost feed on the suffering they cause to humanity. While most instances report that they are entirely bestial, some appear to possess a dangerous cunning when it comes to spreading misery and chaos. These are the most common kinds of Spawn, and while monstrous, they are also the easiest to eliminate: most can be taken down with enough firepower, and jade tends to harm them even more than other Spawns. Sadly though, these creatures are just the symptom of a much greater problem that Hunters are faced with, something very few Hunters are aware of, and thus miss critical opportunities to eliminate the problem wholesale.

**Infiltrators:** A far more advanced and dangerous Spawn than a Lurker. Infiltrators are dangerous because they're completely indistinguishable from an ordinary human. They still appear to feed off misery and chaos, but they possess enough intelligence (although many argue whether or not they are sentient or just cunning enough to fake it) to be subtle in their predation and careful enough to avoid outright detection like their Lurker cousins. In fact, some Compacts and Conspiracies theorize Infiltrators to have once been humans themselves before being infected and transformed into something...else. Whatever the case, they are definitely not human anymore (if they ever were), and often naive Hunters underestimate their danger and powers compared to their Lurker cousins. Those who do usually don't survive the confrontation.

**Dark Nests:** Often confused for haunted locations or the equally rare Institutional Demon, Dark Nests are the true threat that all Hunters must inevitably face when Spawn are involved. They are physical locations where tragedy or atrocities took place that seem to take on a life of their own, actively gestating and birthing Spawns into the world to act as worker drones to collect the misery and suffering it needs in order to grow and expand.

**Darkness is a pretty tame term to describe what it really is.**

**It's a virus, a sickness. It festers in places you left to abandon and stopped cleaning.**

**Then, when you get exposed to it, it looks for signs of weakness, openings that can be used to bypass your defenses.**

**When it does find one, it infects your soul, and starts spreading inside it like a plague would inside your body.**

**It warps you until you are nothing but a grotesque parody of yourself. And then, once its job is done, it tries to get out so it can go do the same to other people.**

**You are not just fighting monsters when you fight the Darkness; you are fighting an epidemic.**

Unlike spirit haunted locations or Institutional Demons, Nests are definitely not sentient, and act with an almost animalistic instinct when spreading and creating Spawns. If Lurkers or Infiltrators are present, then without question a Nest is nearby, and must be taken care of if the Spawn problem is to ever be completely solved. Luckily for Hunters and Mortal Mediums, Nests seem to be affected by exorcisms and other purification rituals. Unfortunately, humans who enter a Nest are beset by traumatic flashbacks and mental assaults by the Nest itself, as well as having to confront any Spawn that are at the Nest or rush back to defend it. The most curious part about Nests, though, is that they are exceedingly rare, and seem to generally appear (or are "birthed") when the supernatural creatures known as Nobles are within the general region. Many Hunters debate to this day whether or not Nobles are just numerous where there are Nests because they are creatures who universally oppose the Spawn, or if the Nest and Spawn themselves are drawn to areas with high Noble activity and seed themselves nearby in order to feed off the misery they bring to the Empaths themselves.

That being said, many Cells, Compacts, and Conspiracies don't even acknowledge the existence of Spawns, and simply see other supernatural monsters that just share similar characteristics. Truly, how many monsters exist in the world who were once human but are now beasts that feed upon their former friends and family? How many "cursed" locations reach out and twist a population against itself? And why should thousands of years of history and research be put aside for some fable that Nobles tell amongst themselves to easily explain why they are good and every other creature of the night is evil? These are questions all Hunters must face sooner or later.

## Touched by darkness

One would think that it ends there, but the Darkness is a tricky thing, and even some of the more Astute hunters can fail to realize that the Darkness is a sticky thing.

Form those that Dwell in the places where Dark Nests Form, to those that have tried to hide there dark deeds, to those whose actions Birthed a Dark Nest and whatever Else, People get tainted, it poisons their minds, Causes them to Inverdaly feed the taint, and sometimes become a monster themselves.

However, other than a slight Allergenic reaction to Jade, they seem like Normal people, and even if they are Tainted, they could be Innocent victims, Pushed there by either their Circumstances or outside Factors bring A Dark Nest to their Door.

However, while carrying the Taint in their Soul they become the Worst Versions of themselves, from Petty Assholes will make everyone hate you more than they hate them, to Rash Murders who slash Throats with Blades made out of pure shadow.

Infiltrators also oftentimes try to hide themselves as them, there only Tell being that Jade burns them like a Brand. To a hunter who has only just been scouting out those who have possibly been tainted only to find one of there Observed to have been decapitated bring more conflict into nobles, which is not helped by the Furies, who murder those tainted by the Darkness with an Hatred that scares even the most Loathsome of hunters.

Another school of thought is if those touched by darkness can be saved, why not try to drag those stepped in the stuff?

What's stopping them?

To some hunters, the fact that all princesses, Radiant and Twilight say it isnt possible throws there ideas into Question, as more accepting hunters try to find a way to Bring the Lurkers back to humanity.

But in this World of Darkness, even the easy answers are anything but.

## Two Sides of the Same Coin?

Hunters who acknowledge the existence of both the Darkness and the Hopeful rarely take long to realize the two appear to be connected in some way, despite practically being antithetic to each other. As noted above, Nests are rarely far from wherever Nobles are, and vice-versa. Nobles relentlessly hunt beings of the Darkness, and Lurkers usually target them first. And of course, nobody can forget the Shades, who cause Nests and Lurkers to appear wherever they practice their sinister rituals.

Which always leads to the inevitable question: are Nobles the cause of the Darkness?

There are arguments for both sides of the debate, but many fear it might be the case. Even Nobles rarely give very clear answers on the topic: typically, they deny being responsible for its existence, but do recognize they are responsible for how powerful it is nowadays. The infamous incident revealing what happened to the ones who broke also caused many to believe they weren't that different from the things they fought.

Still, there isn't enough proof to be sure this theory is true, and many are willing to oppose it; The Nobles have been working hard to protect mortals for decades now, and many areas are genuinely safer because of them. Plenty of people owe them their lives, including among the Vigil, and have a really hard time believing they're the cause of the danger. After all, if that was indeed the case, then surely they wouldn't be able to make things better, right?

Regardless of the truth, Nobles and Spawns are very likely linked to each other. Hunters just have yet to figure out what this link is.

It's been known that the ones who call themselves Nobles and the creatures they refer to as the Darkness are often found in close proximity to each other. We're aware that correlation is not causation, but rumors claim that Nobles can actually undergo catastrophic mutations and become said monstrous creatures. If true, this would be a cause of great concern, and it has already fueled much speculation and hypothesizing. The other day, a colleague floated a troubling hypothesis regarding the connection between the Darkness infection and these "Princesses" - the latter are carriers. She hypothesized that they possessed some biological (or technological?) method of suppressing the infection, spreading it to others while remaining asymptomatic themselves until it became unmanageable, resulting in rapid symptoms and a greatly magnified onset of the infection. There are still too many variables left unknown to be certain, but the thought of these individuals, frequently only mere teenagers, acting as "Typhoid Marys" to the very people they claim to protect is... unnerving..





The following section provides rules to build and use the Hopeful and Creatures of the Darkness as antagonists or supporting characters in your Hunter: the Vigil Chronicles. These rules are not meant to replace the ones from Princess: the Hopeful; if you have either version of this book, go for it and use the mechanics from there. The mechanics depicted here are meant for players who do not have or do not wish to use it, and want to stay focused on Hunters while still involving Nobles and creatures of the Darkness in their Chronicle.

## Creating a Princess

Though Princesses are a bit of a unique case among the creatures of the Night, and have a more ambiguous place in the Vigil than other monsters, they still are considered as “monsters” as far as rules are concerned for simplicity’s sake. Build a Princess the same way you’d build any monsters according to the rules from the corebook (**Hunter the Vigil 2E, p162**), but with the adjustments described below:

- **Attributes and Skills:** Princesses have their Attributes and Skills distributed between two forms according to the Dual Form Dread Power (see below).
- **Dread Powers:** In addition to usual, all Princesses get the following Dread Powers for free: Invoking, Dual Form.
- **Advantages:** Princesses usually have a size between 4 and 6, depending on their age, though Dread Powers might allow them to grow or shrink further. They do have Integrity.
- **Weakness:** Princesses suffer from the Bane of Hyper-Empathy. Whenever they suffer emotional shock, commit or witness an act of emotional cruelty, they must roll their Potency; on a success, they lose 1 Willpower and cannot apply their Defense nor act this turn..

## Dread Powers

When Transformed, Princesses can have any form of Dread Powers, their powers being as varied as mages; most of the fight-oriented ones have the ability to summon weapons (often wands or swords), which can be represented either by Dread Attack (**Hunter the Vigil 2E, p. 167**) or Numen: Blast (**Hunter the Vigil 2E, p. 169**). Based on the various Court, some of their other abilities are more recurrent than others:

♣ **The Rangers** favors abilities focused on healing, defense, or nature. Animal Shift (**Hunter the Vigil 2E p166**) can be used to represent their ability to shapeshift into animals. They usually dislike killing or hurting their opponents, so abilities meant to neutralize without harm are common.

# Chapter 2 A KINGSDOM'S LAWMS

◆ **The Brains** favors powers focused on enhanced intelligence, learning about their opponents and control over ice and water. Know Soul (**Hunter the Vigil 2E p168**) is one of their most common abilities.

♥ **The Monarchs** prefers abilities enhancing their ability to act as leader, win trust and enhance their social skills. Hypnotic Gaze (**CofD 145**) is a frequent choice. The most powerful ones may have the Numen Rapture (**CofD 145**).

♠ The **Tricksters** tend toward abilities that enhance speed, help in trickery or allow them to go unnoticed. They almost always have Unnatural Step (**HTV 2e 176**). Weathervane (**HTV 2e 176**) is also common among them.

✂ **The Drifters** tend to have a good balance of abilities, but their powers frequently involve fire manipulation. This can be represented by Dread Powers such as Hometurf(something they Love ,**HTV 2e 127** ) and Fire Elemental (**CofD 145**).

◆ **The Shades** tend to have the darkest powers, focused on shadows, ghosts and exploiting mortals. They almost always have the Willpower variant of Drain (**HTV 2e 184**) and Emontial Aura (**HTV 2e 184-185**). Shadows Attraction (**HTV 2e 174**) and Black out (**HTV 2e 170**) are also frequent with them.

☠ The **Furies**, being the berserkers they are, have the most destructive powers. They practically always have Agonize (**HTV 2e 172**), Infernal and Last Gasp(**Both HTV 2e 172**).

👑 **The Idols** primarily focuses on abilities enhancing their own skills and causing people to admire and idolize them. These include Rapture (**CofD 145**), Dement and Aggersive Meme ( **both HTV 2e 184** ) .

In addition, all Princesses have access to the following new Dread Powers:, with Dual form and Invoking being free for Nobles.

## Dual Form

Perhaps the best-known ability of Princesses is their power to switch between two forms with different identities: one mortal, and another supernatural.

When choosing the number of dots for Attributes and Skills while building the Princess, distribute them between “mundane” and “transformed” dots.

Mundane dots are used first to build the “human form”, which is treated as a mortal; it registers as human when exposed to any supernatural detection, has no overtly supernatural features, and cannot raise any of its Attributes and Skills above 5 regardless of the Potency. It also usually doesn’t have access to Dread Powers,

though exceptions aren’t unheard of.

Transformed dots are then added to the Princess’ stats when she assumes her Noble form, giving her an addition of both dots as her new stats; when Transformed, the Princess is now openly supernatural, and gets access to her Potency and full Dread Powers. Switching from one form to another takes an Instant action, or a Reflexive one if they spend 1 Willpower.

The primary advantage that comes with this Dread Powers is that it allows to have two separate identities that are difficult to connect; regardless of how much the Princess’ appearance changes between forms, Hunters cannot recognize her as the same person in both forms, nor can they easily connect the two based on coincidences; they will just shrug it off and go on. Should more blatant evidence begin to pile up, uncovering the connection requires an Investigation with five Clues. If Hunters attempt to use the Profiling Tactic against them to figure out their human identity, Princesses get 8-Again on rolls to contest.

Werewolves and other shapeshifters may also have this dreadpower.

## Invoking

Princesses are beings of emotions and convictions; they literally are powered by their beliefs, and as such are at their strongest whenever they follow it. By channeling her ideals, a princess can raise her abilities to spectacular levels.

This Dread Power is reflexive and doesn’t require a roll. Pick one of the Princess’ Aspiration; said Aspiration should preferably relate to her ideals or how she wishes to change the world. Whenever she follows that Aspiration, she may risk Willpower to add a bonus equal to her Potency or 5 (whichever is lower) to the pool of a Dread Power used while pursuing it. If used on Dread Attack or Blast, the bonus is added to the attack roll (not the Damage Modifier)..

Cult leaders, Demons angels, and Claimed may also have this Dreadpower.

## Knighting

An ability particularly well-known, this Dread Power allows a Princess to share part of her power with a mortal, usually through some form of grandiose Ceremony. The Hopeful

have been known to use this frequently to empower their allies, including sometimes Hunters - with the Light Company being no doubt the best-known example.

The Princess must spend 1 Willpower to activate this power, and the target must be a consenting mortal or hunter who fully understands the implications. On a success, the target gets the Sworn merit for free with one of the Princess' Dread Powers attached to it.

Princesses may not use this power on evil individuals or people with the Vice-Ridden Beautiful Elitemerit, but should this Dread Power be used by other monsters (a wizard granting powers to his cult, for example), such limitation wouldn't apply. Knighting can be modified to be used by Slashers, Dream monsters, Dragons, and other Things of power.

## Beautiful Elite

Idols are well-known to be self-imbued when it comes to their own beauty, convinced that being pretty makes them somehow superior to everyone. But some of them put it even further, using their magic to force this logic on reality and effectively making themselves faster and stronger just based on their attractiveness.

Only Princesses or Monsters with the Striking Looks merit may take this Dread Power; upon a success, it allows them to benefit from the bonus granted by Striking Looks on any action instead of just social rolls using appearance. The effect lasts for a number of turns equal to the activation successes.

## Cleanse the Soul

An ability particularly envied by Hunters, this power allows Princesses to "cure" a recently corrupt mortal from the sickness that is the Darkness, effectively turning them back into regular humans. Obviously, it has its limits; Lurkers are beyond salvation, and even Infiltrators can prove a challenge to purify if they have been in the Darkness' grasp for too long. But it's still a cure, and in the Vigil, you have to take what you can.

Regardless of the chosen pool, this Dread Power costs 2 Willpower to activate, is an extended action, and requires success equal to the targeted Monster's Resolve + Potency. Said Monster may resist with his resolve if he is unwilling, and must have at least 1 Integrity left; he must also be unable to fight back. Each time the target number of success is reached, the Princess may remove 1 of the Monster's Dread Powers; if the target has no Dread Power left, reaching the target number of success one more time reverts it back to a normal human.

Normally, this Dread Power only works on the Darkness, but should you wish for it, you may adjust it to work on other types of Monsters should you use it for a different creature.



## Blessing

Given they primarily focus on helping people, it's no surprise many Princesses share the ability to cast blessings upon mortals, granting them uncanny luck or skills for a time. Of course, nothing prevents them from using it on their allies or themselves as well.

When taking this Dread Power, pick one category of action (attack, mental, social, domain...). By spending 1 Willpower, the Princess may bless a target, granting it a +3 bonus for a number of actions of the chosen category equal to her Potency. This effect cannot be stacked with itself.

## Merciful

Princesses typically dislike killing their opponents, but still need to be able to do so when needed. For this reason, many have weapons allowing them to switch between a lethal and nonlethal mode.

Even if the Princess is fighting with a sword or shooting at people with a gun, the weapon will somehow merely knock the enemies out rather than actually slaying them, unless their owner really *has* a killing intent.

This Dread Power is reflexive and requires no roll to activate, but must be applied on either Dread Attack or Blast (from the Numen Dread Power). The Princess can reflexively will said Dread Power to inflict bashing instead of lethal whenever she wishes.

# Noble Aspirations

The system regarding Ideal Aspirations is willingly left looser and less fleshed out than the Invocation system from **Princess: the Hopeful**; Though hunters are aware of the existence of Courts, they do not fully understand how Invocations work, and do not get the concept beyond "Princesses channel their goals and convictions into power". It is also meant to allow players to come up with Princesses fitting in no specific courts for the sake of a good plot. If you wish to integrate the Courts within the story, though, here are suggested Ideal Aspirations to represent them:

- **Clubs:** Ensure harmony with the world, solve conflicts peacefully, never start a fight.
- **Diamonds:** Spread knowledge among people, solve problems through tactics and analysis, never lie or deceive people.
- **Hearts:** Enter the system to improve it from the inside, uphold and improve traditions, never be willingly rude to someone.
- **Spades:** Subvert the law when it gets in the way of good, solve problems by thinking outside the box, never impose your authority on anyone.
- **Swords:** Protect the ones you love, fight with passion, never hurt your loved ones.
- **Tears:** Protect your loved ones, relatives and nation at all cost. Never let your morals get in the way of this.
- **Storms:** Destroy the Darkness whenever and wherever you find it. Never show mercy to your enemies.
- **Mirrors:** Wait for destiny to hand you victory on a platter, prove to everyone that you alone are the best. Never let anything or anyone belittle you..

# Wandering Monsters

## Cheryl Wilson, the Monster Keeper

*"I don't care if he is a monster. That doesn't give you the right to kill him."*

An unfortunate truth many Hunters aren't comfortable with, but usually end up learning, is that not all monsters are pure evil. While many of them certainly are irredeemable fiends, there are just as many who really just want to be left alone, or even are trying to do good. These are the ones the Noble known as the Monster Keeper makes her duty of protecting.

Originally a young girl named Cheryl Wilson, this particular Princess grew up in a small, but reasonably happy family, with loving parents and a little brother named Lee. She was a good-hearted kid, and got along pretty fine with him, often acting protective; they had their arguments, like any sibling, but overall they were rather close.

At some point when they were teenagers, however, something changed with Lee. It's not clear what exactly happened to him, but the boy went through a transformation, and became a monster. Cheryl and her parents were confused about what happened to him, but they still tried to take care of him and live with his curse, as he would wake up crying at night and insisting he did not want to hurt anyone.

Then came the day where a man came to the home and tried to murder Lee, insisting the boy was a monster. When she saw this lunatic trying to kill her beloved little brother she had seen crying for weeks, something inside Cheryl snapped, and she went through a transformation of her own, becoming a Noble.

With her newfound power, she was able to defeat the man and save her brother. Having herself gone through a supernatural transformation of her own, she grew even closer to him, and swore she would never let anyone ever hurt him for what he was.

Ever since, the two siblings have become even more inseparable than they already were, and regularly travel, looking for other supernatural beings like them who get hunted down like animals.

Whenever they find one, they observe from a distance, trying to figure out if they are dealing with a real monster who needs to be stopped,

or a victim of the consequences. If he proves the former, they let the local hunters do their job, and might even give them tips in the case of a really bad seed. If the latter, however, the Princess does everything in her power to defend the creature. She will usually try diplomacy first, but should the hunters prove impossible to reason with, or worse, not care, she will unleash all her power on them.

Unfortunately for the two siblings, they often find out things aren't quite as simple and clear-cut as they wish it was. Lastly, Cheryl has found herself faced with a lot of situations where there was no clear innocent to defend: monsters who didn't mean to cause any harm but still were a threat to people despite their best efforts, or who did harm people but still had families they were trying to protect. As more and more cases like this show up, she finds it harder to pick a side. Moreover, there are some supernaturals who feel she is a bad influence among their kind; Beasts who see her as tempting them away from their duty to teach mortals lessons, werewolves who accuse her and her brother of indoctrinating their packmates, and Prometheans who see her as a spiritual dead end, making them dependent on her light rather than striving to undergo the Pilgrimage to gain their own. She isn't without her enemies, and one day this might catch up with her...

**Description:** In her mundane form, Cheryl is a teenager of Asian descent, going toward her late seventeenth. She looks attractive enough for her age, though unkempt, as she travels too often to concern herself with cosmetics. She usually dresses in male clothes, with preference for jeans and hoodies.

In her Transformed state, the Monster Keeper gains a slight tan to her skin, and her body becomes considerably more athletic. She wears light armor reminiscent of an amazon, with red and gold colors and a flame motif. She is armed with a distinctive spear.

**Storytelling Hints:** Cheryl is designed to push hunter players to question themselves, to realize that some monsters are people and not just devilish abominations. Depending on the choices you make, she can play different roles, either as a supporting character or an antagonist. One should, however, avoid playing her as "stupid good" or naive- she does realize monsters can be dangerous, and understands the need for people to protect their family against them.

Ideally, she is intended less as a physical opponent and more as one raising moral dilemmas for the players: she could, for example, take the defense of a monster who genuinely wishes to atone,

but against whom the players have a personal vendetta due to him killing a loved one.

Alternatively, if you do not wish to raise such questions, there is another use to the character; thanks to her history of helping supernaturals over her travels, Cheryl has a lot of contacts and allies among them, making her the ideal source of information if the players need something... as long as she is sure of their intentions.

## Regarding Lee

Lee's nature as a supernatural was intentionally left ambiguous in the story above, so the Storyteller could adapt him to what he wants for his story. He could be a vampire, a Beast, a werewolf, or even another unknown type of supernatural being that hasn't been identified yet. You should build him as whatever fits with the normal rules for creating a Monster in Hunter the Vigil; the key part of his character is that he is a creature of the night usually fought by hunters, who happen to have a very protective Noble for a sibling. Design him with a Potency of 2.

**Virtue:** *Just*- Cheryl is aware many supernatural creatures are monsters and deserve to die, but she would rather preserve the ones who genuinely aspire to be better because she feels they deserve a second chance.

**Vice:** *Wrathful*- while she is overall well-intentioned and nice, she is very hard to calm down once she actually gets angry. Abusing her trust in particular is something she will have a hard time forgiving; should you bring her proof a supernatural being has been using her kindness to deceive her, she will happily join hunters in slaughtering him.

**Court:** Drifter

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2(3), Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Investigation 3 (4), Medicine 1, Occult 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletic 3, Stealth 3, Survival 2 (Cities), Weaponry 3 (5)

**Social Skills:** Empathy 2 (Sense motives), Persuasion 2 (3), Socialize 1 (Supernaturals), Streetwise 2

**Merits:** Contacts 5 (Vampires, Beasts, Prometheans, Werewolves, Sin-Eaters), Allies 2 (Changelings), Fast Reflexes 3

**Health:** 8

**Dread Powers:** Duel form, Invoking (Dread Attack (Firey Spear) 2, Merciful, Fire Elemental, Armored Hide 1 (WTF 2e 210)), Influence (passion) 2

**Inner Light/Potency:** 3

**Asperiations:** Protect innocent monsters, defend her loved ones.

**Integrity:** 7

**Willpower:** 7

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 9 (10)

**Defense:** 5

**Initiative:** 7

**Armor:** (1/0)

Type	Dmg	Range	Dice Pool
Firey Spear	+2L	Melee	8

## Carlin Sanders, the Green Knight

*[Stoic silence]*

Task Force VALKYRIE is infamously known for putting special efforts in hunting down the Hopeful compared to most Conspiracies, but one thing not quite as well-known is that they have themselves become the target of a Noble. A member of the Court of Storm, the ENE known as the Green Knight has been hunting down several high-ranking members of the organization ever since their first appearance in Washington DC, a few years ago. The few who managed to get a good look at them describe an individual of unknown gender, fully dressed in green and silver armor, taking down their target with military accuracy and collateral damage worthy of a terrorist attack. While they have so far yet to inflict lasting damages to TFV, their actions have still proven problematic, and several squads have been sent to take them down, in vain so far; to this day, the Green Knight's true identity remains a mystery, as does how they have access to restricted areas and information that most people couldn't possibly even know about.

Of course, the truth, which many people in Project Twilight have started to suspect but cannot prove yet, is that the Green Knight knows all this information about TFV because they are- or rather she is- working for them. Her real name is Carlin Sanders, and she is one of the main experts in charge of collecting information for field agents through the Eye of Odin. Problem is, she did her job a little too well, and started making research on members of the Conspiracy itself. This led her to realize just how corrupt its hierarchy was; she discovered the majority of their budget was provided by Monsters, and identified many Infiltrators among the higher ranks of the government. Initially, this left her in dismay and depression; she knew she couldn't just warn her superiors, as this would only get her in trouble. However, she refused to give up, and tried her best to figure out a solution. She personally believes it was this refusal to give in to despair that triggered her transformation into a Noble, granting her the power she needed to accomplish her goal.

She immediately started using her free time to practice self-defense, get in shape and learn military Tactics, meticulously preparing herself for her quest. Once she thought herself ready, she started making a list. She knew she couldn't kill the vampires yet- not without crippling the entire Conspiracy, but the Infiltrators could still be dealt with.

And so, she started tracking down and assassinating the Infiltrators hidden among TFV's higher ranks, building the reputation she got today.

To this date, thanks to Dual Identity and careful preparation on Carlin's part, nobody has yet been able to figure out she is the Green Knight. However, she knows any error on her part could burn her cover, and more than likely people will find out eventually. But she doesn't care; all that matters is how much she can purify her group before this is found out.

**Description:** In her mundane form, Carlin is an Indian woman in her thirties, with black hair she keeps into a bun. She wears glasses and dresses in clothes too big for her, using them to hide the muscles she gained through her training and work-out; seemingly, she keeps the facade of a meek, introverted employee to hide the rage burning inside her mind.

As the Green Knight, she gets slightly taller, and wears a full-body green and silver armor hiding all her features; the breastplate isn't even form-fitting, making it impossible to figure out her true gender, and the helmet covers the entirety of her face, with a visor for the eyes. She avoids speaking while in this form, focusing on killing her quarries as fast as possible, but should she still say something, her voice would come out as distorted, as if she was using a voice synthesizer. She is armed with a strange, spear-like gun, which she can use to shoot devastating bolts of green flames.

**Storytelling Hints:** Make no mistake, Carlin might stick to her hope that Task Force VALKYRIE can be brought back on track, but she is still a Princess of Storms at heart; at the end of the day, she cares more about purifying it than about redeeming it. She has no problem slaughtering bystanders and field agents who get in her way to the Infiltrators, seeing them as necessary sacrifices, nor would she think twice before burning down TFV bases which have become Nests, even if this might cripple the entire Conspiracy. Part of her still would rather avoid useless victims, but she won't stop if she thinks it's necessary, because she knows her power will get weaker otherwise. She can still be reasoned with if the players are sufficiently good at social maneuvering and somehow find a way to discover her true identity (she definitely isn't open to discussion on the battlefield), but this wouldn't be easy, and definitely would make her lose her Court. That said, trying to defeat her in combat isn't easy either- aside from her obvious powers and fighting skills, she is a cunning opponent who plays smart and knows most of the tactics used by Task Force VALKYRIE, including the ones employed against Nobles.



**Virtue:** Faithful- Carlin does believe in what Task Force VALKYRIE is doing, but feels the organization has to be purified in order to be brought back on track. She kills out of fanatical devotion more than anything else.

**Vice:** Violent- she is good at hiding it behind her “shy scientist” persona, but Carlin has a lot of repressed aggression caused by her frustration over the corruption of her group, and she tends to express it as the Green Knight.

**Court:** Furies

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2(3), Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Computer 3, Investigation 3, Occult 3(4), Politics 2 (Task Force VALKYRIE)

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Stealth 3

**Social Skills:** Subterfuge 4

**Merits:** Status 2 (Task Force VALKYRIE), Danger Sense 2, Fast Reflexes 3, Eidetic Memory 2, Area of Expertise (Task Force VALKYRIE)

**Health:** 8

**Dread Powers:** Duel Form, Invoking (Blast 2 (Spear Gun), Infernal(Green Flame), Agonize, Armored Hide 3(WTF 2e 210))

**Inner Light/Potency:** 3

**Asperations:** Preserve her secret identity, Destroy the Darkness wherever it is.

**Integrity:** 5

**Willpower:** 5

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 10(11)

**Defense:** 6

**Initiative:** 9

**Armor:** (3/0)

• **Note:** Despite technically being part of Task Force VALKYRIE, Carlin Sanders is in charge of collecting information, not a field agent, and did not get a chip in her brain. As such, her status does not give her access to Advanced Armory.

Type	Dmg	Range	Dice Pool
Acid Spear Gun	+2L	30,60,120	6

# Story Hooks

## Prison Break!

**Summary:** A group of Nobles has assaulted a base of operations for a group of Hunters and freed several prisoners, including both humans and suspected supernatural beings. The player's cell seeks to track down the escapees and (depending on their goals), assist, recapture, or destroy them. Of course, they'll also probably want to figure out what could have motivated the Hopeful into acting like this...

**Setup:** The prisoners the Nobles freed were innocent (or at least as innocent as a supernatural creature can be), and may even include friends of them they have been trying to help deal with their dark urges. Will the hunters place the priority on the mission and fight the Nobles to decide the fate of the monsters themselves? Or sympathize with them and let the Nobles handle things, at the risk of endangering the community or attracting themselves the ire of their superiors?

**Tier One:** The characters know one of the captives personally, and the Nobles' assault may very well occur while the Hunters are planning their own breakout attempt. The attempts of the Hunters to bring the freed supernaturals under control are likely to be complicated by the reaction of their freed ally; are they grateful to the Nobles who freed them, concerned about the freed monsters, or even supportive of the methods used to hold the monsters in the first place? The Hunters who took the humans and monsters prisoner in the first place are a local cell themselves, and the damages they sustained in the Nobles' assault will likely drive them to desperate measures in an attempt to recapture their prisoners and regain control.

**Tier Two:** The characters are experienced enough and know the area well enough to notice when supernatural beings start disappearing. Once the Nobles' breakout goes down, the cell is likely to encounter at least one supernatural among the captives that is new to them, and the Nobles, captives, and captors are likely a convergence of the supernatural on a scale that the characters are unused to. The base is well-equipped, a tempting target to compact members who want to enhance the power of their compact (or at least their place in it), and the characters will have to deal with the base's original owners and members of their own compact who want a cut of the spoils.

**Tier Three:** The characters are sent by their superiors to investigate the gradual dip followed by a sudden spike in supernatural activity. As they take down one escaped (and enraged) threat after another, they run into both the Nobles and reinforcements for the group that imprisoned the monsters in the first place, with each side trying to recruit them in their war against the other (unless the characters themselves are the reinforcements). The base itself is a major base of operations for the group running it, and its resources and equipment may be as much the Nobles' and characters' target as the captives themselves. The captives themselves come from far and wide; the breakout was the first, but it won't be the last if the Nobles are not stopped.

## Safe Haven?

**Summary:** An infestation of supernatural creatures has already caused several fatalities. At first it seems a contact of the cell is among them when they seemingly drop off the earth. But further investigation reveals that the contact was gathering supplies for some purpose. When the PCs spy a young person they don't know fighting the monsters and promising to take people to a place called Alhambra, "where they can be safe," the cell wonders if their contact is still alive, and if they can still be found.

**Setup:** Alhambra is a city in the Dark World where the Queen of the Shades reigns. It is a sunless, hidebound medieval-Japan-style city where lamps keep away a darkness that destroys what it envelops and spawns monsters. The people who live here eke out a miserable existence subsisting on rainwater, seaweed, and fish, all of which taste like tears. Even their ghosts remain rather than admit that a better existence could be held elsewhere. Some come for safety, others to serve the last living Queen of an otherwise-lost Kingdom, but few if any have ever left. Most people would be forced to write off any mundane person who enters Alhambra as lost to the world, but then the characters are not most people...

**Tier One:** The characters in a local cell consider the area their home. They'll have to handle the double-duty of dealing with the monsters while maintaining the hope of the local community before the Noble can lead more of them astray. The job will be complicated by the fact that they may need the Noble's help to handle the incursion - what happens when they demand the right to spread the news of Alhambra to others? It's too late to save their contact, but can the characters save other people from making the same mistake?

**Tier Two:** The cell has come to handle monsters, but they stay to deal with the Noble. Once they learn that their contact has been taken away, the characters may decide to take their revenge on the Noble. Depending on the compact, they may try to interrogate the Noble to learn about Alhambra, attempt to force the Noble to retrieve their contact, or put the Noble down before they can spirit anyone away. The ability of the Noble to reach such an area at all is likely to be of interest, with the characters seeking to prevent, document, or even replicate the ability for themselves.

**Tier Three:** The contact was ordered to take the offer. The task was to get into this "Alhambra," do reconnaissance, and get out. But they never returned, and the cell is tasked by their superiors with the contact's extraction. They can handle the supernatural monsters, but will that cause the Noble to stop making the offer? How can they make themselves enticing enough to be offered safety in Alhambra without coming off as too dangerous? And if they do get into Alhambra, how do they get themselves and their contact out? What if their contact doesn't want to leave?

## Lightbringer Cult.

**Summary:** A new cult is spreading in town around a self-proclaimed goddess. They don't seem particularly dangerous so far, in that they don't practice any form of human sacrifice or unholy rites, but they still resort to a particularly impressive form of brainwashing that makes them obsessed with their leader and rely entirely on her for everything. Moreover, said leader and her inner circle definitely do have supernatural powers. It isn't long before the PCs get involved to figure out what is going on.

**Setup:** The cult leader is a Noble, one from the Court of Mirrors to be specific; She is genuinely trying to protect the people around her, but her ego has gotten the better of her, and she has used her power to enhance her charisma to such a level people are forming a cult around her; her inner circle are Sworn, whom she granted part of her powers. She has no nefarious intentions, but as she grows more and more self-imbued, the characters are concerned that she might abuse her worshippers, forming her own harem and urging them to give up their life to serve her. How will the PCs handle her? Will they try to bring her to reason, or take her down before she becomes dangerous?

# The Ghosts of Alhambra

"Those aware of how ghosts behave on Earth will be surprised by Alhambra's departed. For one, while they usually prefer to remain near the places or people they knew in life, they aren't bound to them as Earthly ghosts are to anchors. They do not, in fact, have anchors at all; Alhambra's departed regain Essence only from being remembered by the living. Being remembered, fortunately, is much easier for the venerable, as they need not take time or effort to manifest - they are always Materialized, and even tangible as long as they have even 1 point of Essence. (There is no such thing as Twilight in Alhambra, and thus no way for a ghost not to manifest....) Finally, the departed never have the Manifestations that allow a ghost to take over a living person (e.g. Fetter and Possess) and there is good reason to believe that those Manifestations don't work inside the city.

-Princess: The Hopeful, Vocation Version, Pages 282-283

Further information on Alhambra can be found in either version of Princess: The Hopeful.

**Tier One:** One of the cult members is a friend or family of the characters, who have come to free them. The cult member refuses to leave, citing the goodness of their leader. How can the characters convince someone so wrapped up in the Noble's charisma to leave before the Noble is corrupted by their own power? Or worse, how can the characters convince them to leave when nothing of the sort happens?

**Tier Two:** A supernatural disaster is about to occur in the area, and the characters have come to deal with it. They find the cult unprepared and unconcerned, convinced that their Noble can easily handle it. One look at the Noble and the characters know that's not the case, but trying to take control of the situation will draw the ire of the Noble and their cult. The characters will have to try to either turn the cult to their side or at least get them to evacuate before their complacency gets them killed.

**Tier Three:** The Noble has converted an entire community to her cause. They've created a utopia of kindness and interconnectedness, and in doing so have made it the target of every supernatural (and some natural) conspiracy for miles around. The characters are part of this, sent by their superiors to see how this can benefit them. The community soon becomes a hive of intrigue as different groups seek to assist, exploit, or bring down the community before it can spread. Led by their powerful Noble, the community themselves may be good-natured saps that make for easy targets or scarily efficient devotees that can go up against any of the outside groups.

## The Darkness

### Creating The spawns of Darkness

Though Spawns of the Darkness comes in all shapes and sizes, these rules are meant to use them as npc. Build them as Monsters, with the following alterations:

- **Potency:** Potency functions as normal, but has the ability to be increased (see The Darkness Grows below)
- **anchors:** Spawns invert the way their Anchors works; fulfilling their Virtue only allows them to recover 1 Willpower, while fulfilling their Vice refills their entire Willpower.
- **Dread Powers:** In addition to the usual Dread Powers, all Dark beings get the following following Dread Powers for free: Predator's Sense (Light-Touched), Unnatural Step (Corrupted Places)
- **Advantages:** Dark Beings may be of any Size, though Infiltrators usually stay human in shape and Size.

Lurkers use the highest of Wits of Dexterity to calculate their defense, and have no Integrity traits. Some Infiltrators may have Integrity left if they aren't too far gone, but automatically lose 1 Integrity per Dread Powers they have.

- **Weakness:** All Dark Beings, regardless of their type, share a weakness to Jade, and treat it as their Bane. Infiltrators are slightly less hurt by it than Lurkers, as such only suffers lethal damage from its contact.

### The Darkness Grows

The Power of the Darkness comes from everything bad and dark inside the human mind: hatred, cruelty, sadness, pain and madness. The more these things grow, the more its Spawns grow in power. Creatures of the Darkness grow stronger in hostile, cruel environments, while safe, peaceful and happy places make it hard for them to fester.

This is both a good and bad thing for hunters: on the one hand, it means that areas where people are happy and living well will be relatively protected merely by being so, as Lurkers, if there are any, will be weak and relatively easy to deal with; on the other hand, if you take too long to actually take care of the infection, they grow in power much faster than, say, a vampire, and before you know it the small rat-like creatures who were devouring the neighborhood's pets have evolved into hulking monsters who now prey on bums and children.

Whenever a Dark being (be it an Infiltrator or Lurker) causes a mortal, hunter or Princess to lose Integrity by failing a Breaking point, roll 10 - victim's new Integrity. If you get more successes than the Dark being's current Potency, its Potency immediately is increased by 1, and all the Storyteller may adjust its stats and Dread Powers accordingly.

### Dread Powers

Spawns of the Darkness frequently grow in power as their morality decays, causing hideous mutations and warping their body. The more their moral integrity decays, the more they will start to turn into monsters. That said, this doesn't mean the more human-looking ones are weaker- many make up for their lack of mutations by using some form of dark magic against their opponents.

Infiltrators cannot have more Dread powers involving a physical deformation or enhancement (such as some variants of Dread Attack) than 10 - Integrity. If their Integrity drops over the course of the Chronicle, they can immediately gain one such Dread Power at no cost.

Powers not involving such changes do not suffer from this restriction, but using them causes a breaking point as an additional cost to the Willpower spent.

Lurkers do not have any restrictions regarding how many physical Dread Powers they can have; whatever humanity they had is far gone, and they count as having no Integrity Trait at all whenever that would be relevant.

Regarding their abilities in general, Spawns tend to focus on harming people, often through grotesque mutations, manipulating the mind or other creative ways. Dread Attack and Drain are almost always present, especially for Lurkers. Infiltrators' abilities tend to be a bit more subtle, such as Damnation or Agonize, though some of them do have more overt supernatural powers. Black Gate is also frequent, usually connected to a Dark Nest. Should you give them any element-related ability, they should have ice-based powers; the Darkness tends to be cold and drains the warmth around it.

Spawns of the Darkness also have access to the following new Dread Powers:

## Contagion

Everyone is familiar with the concept of zombies and vampires capable of turning their victims into more of them. Unfortunately, some Spawns display a similar ability, sacrificing a bit of their power to cause their victim to rise as servants.

This Dread Power doesn't require a roll and is reflexive; Whenever a monster with this ability kills someone, he immediately loses a dot of Potency, and the mortal he kills rises as a mindless servant with the same template as him. This risen creature retains all the Attributes and Skills he had while alive, and gains 2 dots of Dread Powers his creator had. Should the monster's potency fall to 0 as a result of this Dread Powers, it dies.

## Infectious Speech

Infiltrators are named this way for a reason: they look more human so they can go undercover in human society, corrupting it from the inside to create more of them. Usually, this involves luring people into Nests, where they can be more easily corrupted;



Unfortunately, some don't even need to do that; with nothing but a few words, and by sacrificing a small part of their power, they are capable of infecting people even outside of Nests, creating more of their kind on the spot. This ability is pretty rare, but hunters who find a being capable of such a thing usually waste no time getting rid of it.

This Dread Power costs 1 Willpower to activate, should preferably be a social roll, and is penalized by the target's Integrity. Activate it before or after a mortal character lost Integrity as a result of a Breaking point; if successful, the mortal gains the Infected Condition (see the Dark Nest section)

## Monster Lord

Only owned by some Infiltrators and the most powerful Lurkers, this ability grants a Spawn the ability to control his peers. Creatures gifted with this ability usually are smarter than most, making them particularly dangerous as they can organize the monsters.

This Dread Power is reflexive and usually doesn't require a roll, though some weaker infiltrators have been known to require a ritual to activate it.

Whenever the monster encounters beings of the same type as his (typically Dark beings, but the Dread Power may be applied to another type) but with lower Potency, he is recognized as their Apex, and they obey him regardless of how long they have known one another. He may control them telepathically, and organize them as he wishes.

The control is permanent as long as the Spawn keeps his servants close by; should they get separated from him for more than his Potency in hours, they will forget about their master and return to their usual feral state. To the Storyteller's description, some very powerful Spawns might be able to maintain control for a Week instead.

## Poisonous Blood

Some Spawns are corrupted down to their very blood, making their bodily fluids filled with something necrotic and revolutive. This makes them terribly dangerous, as they can poison you with their mere touch.

This Dread Power's effects are permanent and do not require a roll. Whenever the Spawn touches someone barehanded, he automatically inflicts him a moderate Sick Tilt.

If he somehow injures someone with his natural weapons (even bashing damages), he inflicts a grave Sick Tilt.

## Corrupted Places

Compared to other monsters, the Darkness has a special relation with Tainted Places; they seem to be drawn to such places, often building their nests here and festering within its shadows like grotesque bugs. Sometimes, though, they do more than just live there; their corruption seems to grow outward, spreading in the area and warping it. The place becomes beyond Tainted; it's now Corrupted, becoming just as nightmarish as its inhabitants, producing more of them and expanding into some sort of nightmarish realm. They often are filled with Infiltrators practicing their horrible sacrifices and rites, or Lurkers eager to drag more people into their sinister lair.

### Building a Corrupted Place

Corrupted Places essentially are an "evolution" of a Tainted Places, the emotions and tragedies in them magnified and mutated by the Darkness into a presence, something making it even more dangerous.

Mechanically, build a Corrupted Place the same way you would a Tainted Place, with the following adjustments:

- **Triggers:** Corrupted Places do not have Triggers; instead, they get between 1 and 3 Aspirations (up to the Storyteller), reflecting the horrors that happened in that place (killing someone, committing cannibalism, ritualistic sacrifice...), and which would always trigger Breaking Points. Characters entering the Corrupt Places automatically treat these Aspirations as additional Aspirations for themselves.

- **Dread Powers:** In addition to the usual Dread Powers, Corrupted Places gets the Dread Powers Corrupting Presence and Darkspace (see below). With the exception of Darkspace, all their Dread Powers use the Corrupted Place's Aspiration as triggers, activating whenever they would help the visitors fulfill the place's Aspirations or prevent them from going against them.

- **Other Threats:** Corrupted Places always are populated by Spawns of the Darkness, either Infiltrator Cultists, Lurkers, or both. These inhabitants always get the Home Ground Dread Power related to the Corrupted Place for free.

## Corrupting Presence

For all the horrible things you can be confronted with when visiting Dark Nests, there is a danger even more insidious. People who spend too much time in Nests, or let themselves

go to their dark desires like it encourages them to, are at risk of getting infected and joining the ranks of the enemy. This Dread Power may only be assigned to a Tainted or Corrupted Place, and doesn't require a roll to activate. Whenever a visitor does an action that would either fulfill the Place's Aspiration or activate a Trigger, he gets a bonus equal to the Place's Potency or 5 (whichever is lower) on his roll. However, doing so causes him to gain the Tainted Condition. If said action causes him a Breaking Point, he suffers a penalty equal to the bonus on his action, and a failure on the roll results in gaining the Darkened Condition. Princesses, along with people with the Sworn Condition or the Beacon merits, are immune to this infection, though staying inside Corrupted Places still isn't healthy for them. Mere exposure to a Nest can trigger a Hyper-Empathy roll. Infiltrators and Lurkers obviously aren't affected either, being already corrupted by the Darkness. Other supernatural creatures, such as vampires, mages, werewolves or Beasts, merely gain Conditions when they get a success on an Infection roll; hunters are divided on whether this immunity comes from the fact they already have ties to the Darkness, or because the unholy power they get their abilities from just doesn't like to share.

## **Darkscape**

Areas tainted by the supernatural are horrifying enough as they are, but some push it even further, containing doors that lead to even more warped, disturbing versions of themselves - usually some sort of hellish landscape populated with monsters.

This Dread Power may only be used by Corrupt and Tainted Places, and doesn't require a roll to be activated. Select a particular spot in the Place, usually a door or a similar entrance, which serves as the "Door" to the Darkscape, which can be identified through the Investigation rules. Said door can be crossed whenever its assigned Trigger is activated, or, if identified, by visitors spending 1 Willpower; inhabitants of the place may cross it without spending Willpower. Regardless, whoever crosses it immediately find themselves in a mirror, darker and blatantly supernatural version of the original place. What exactly this results into is up to the Storytellers; the Darkscape could have more inhabitants, more Dread Powers, and so on.

## **Cleanseing a Tainted Place**

Corrupted Place for the most part can be destroyed the same way you would any Tainted Place. However, there exist some other methods:

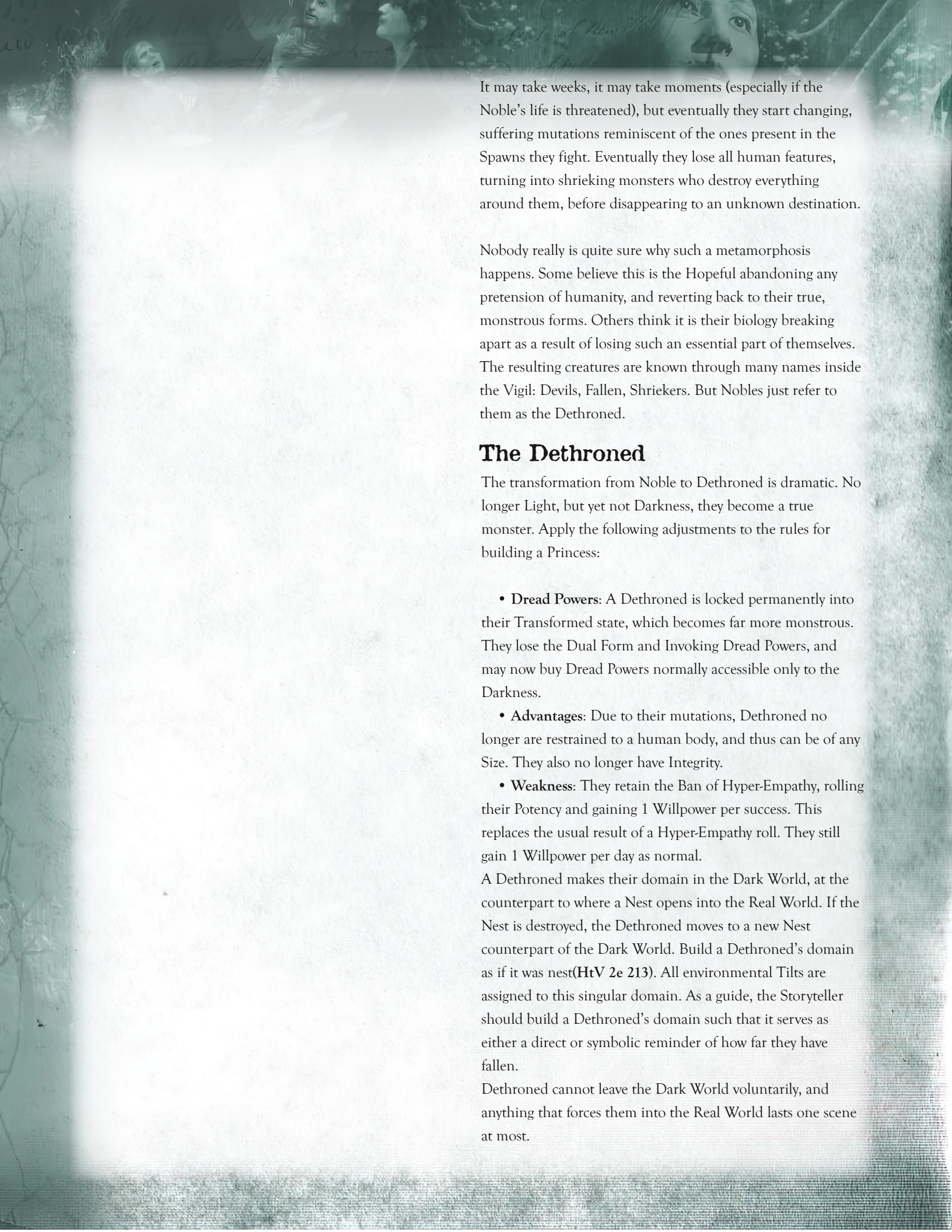
- Some Corrupted Places have a monster within their Darkscape who holds the place together; should that monster be killed, the place reverts back to normal;
- Virtuous actions meant to do good, surprisingly, seem to fight back the Corruption: organizing a charity event, a particularly successful party, or a play defending positive values can all help. Regardless of the type, this is an extended action with the Place's Potency as the target number; once the threshold is reached, the Corrupted Place reverts to normal. Though favored by Princesses, this method usually is nigh impossible to apply, as the Spawns in the area will do everything in their powers to sabotage the event.

## **The Broken**

Nobles are far more than just very idealistic people. Their idealism, their belief, is part of their soul. It's where they get, not just their powers, but also their reason to live; it's what allows them to endure the suffering of everyone around them, and try to end it. To a Princess, it's as vital and integral to their being as their heart or their brain. As such, whenever they do snap, and give up all of their convictions, the results are far more devastating than for regular mortals.

A Noble at Integrity 1 who fails a breaking point roll returns to their mundane form, loses their Transformation item, and becomes near-catatonic. They cannot transform or even act, except to respond to the outside world in the barest of ways. By themselves, they can only waste away.

It is actually possible to get a Noble out of this state, though reports of how effective this is vary. In game terms, any close friend to a Noble can try to bring back some semblance of hope into her through Social Maneuvering, with Doors equal to the lowest of the Noble's Resolve and Composure, plus the penalty inflicted by a Shadows condition (if any). If successful, the Noble can be restored to Integrity 1 at the cost of 1 Willpower dot and regain her Transformation item. Hunters are unsure of what happens after that; some say the Noble dies peacefully in their sleep, their soul redeemed. Others say they can then proceed to rebuild their conviction and start over. Which one of these options is true is up to the Storyteller. One thing hunters do know, however, is what happens when nobody is there to restore their hope, as they painfully found out when they first tried to exploit this weakness. As it turns out, Nobles who lose such a fundamental part of themselves, unable to be part of the Hopeful anymore, become... something else..



It may take weeks, it may take moments (especially if the Noble's life is threatened), but eventually they start changing, suffering mutations reminiscent of the ones present in the Spawns they fight. Eventually they lose all human features, turning into shrieking monsters who destroy everything around them, before disappearing to an unknown destination.

Nobody really is quite sure why such a metamorphosis happens. Some believe this is the Hopeful abandoning any pretension of humanity, and reverting back to their true, monstrous forms. Others think it is their biology breaking apart as a result of losing such an essential part of themselves. The resulting creatures are known through many names inside the Vigil: Devils, Fallen, Shriekers. But Nobles just refer to them as the Dethroned.

## The Dethroned

The transformation from Noble to Dethroned is dramatic. No longer Light, but yet not Darkness, they become a true monster. Apply the following adjustments to the rules for building a Princess:

- **Dread Powers:** A Dethroned is locked permanently into their Transformed state, which becomes far more monstrous. They lose the Dual Form and Invoking Dread Powers, and may now buy Dread Powers normally accessible only to the Darkness.

- **Advantages:** Due to their mutations, Dethroned no longer are restrained to a human body, and thus can be of any Size. They also no longer have Integrity.

- **Weakness:** They retain the Ban of Hyper-Empathy, rolling their Potency and gaining 1 Willpower per success. This replaces the usual result of a Hyper-Empathy roll. They still gain 1 Willpower per day as normal.

A Dethroned makes their domain in the Dark World, at the counterpart to where a Nest opens into the Real World. If the Nest is destroyed, the Dethroned moves to a new Nest counterpart of the Dark World. Build a Dethroned's domain as if it was nest(**HtV 2e 213**). All environmental Tilts are assigned to this singular domain. As a guide, the Storyteller should build a Dethroned's domain such that it serves as either a direct or symbolic reminder of how far they have fallen.

Dethroned cannot leave the Dark World voluntarily, and anything that forces them into the Real World lasts one scene at most.

As impossible as it seems a Dethroned can be redeemed, but only by a Noble. A Dethroned whose health boxes are filled with Lethal or Aggravated Damage is susceptible to being reasoned with by a Noble. This is an extended Integrity roll with a threshold of the Dethroned's Inner Light and no limit to the number of rolls that can be made. The Noble gains the Shadows Condition when starting the process, and the penalty increases by one for each roll made. If the threshold is reached, the Dethroned's soul escapes the Dark World and takes residence in the Noble's soul.

To redeem a Dethroned, the Noble must resolve the Shadows Condition completely; forcing the Dethroned from the Noble's body or trying to shed the Condition without properly resolving it only causes the Dethroned to eject back into the Dark World. Each time the Shadows Condition would be resolved by a Noble with a Dethroned in their soul, instead reduce the Condition's penalty by 1. Once the penalty is reduced to zero the Condition is resolved, and the Dethroned's soul successfully passes on to the afterlife. The Noble finds their own hope restored by the process, gaining two dots in Integrity and regaining full Willpower if successful.

## Wandering Monsters

### Ben Vold, the Delaware Draug

*"You face the rage of the betrayed, little candle. Let my ship through, or be trawled in the dark seas it sails, as your body joins its crew."*


Hunters in Philly's ports, for the past two years, have increasingly three bits of advice for any peer nearby the two rivers-if you happen to be sailing the Delaware at night, keep an eye out for a towboat, painted black and blue with rusted paint, with two lights on either side, one flickering white, one solid blue, on each side, lighting the river like four eyes. If you see no boats, keep at least one buddy on watch at all times, because that's when it sneaks up on you, not emerging from the gap between the living world and the dead until it's nearly too late-if not completely too late, because you were stupid enough to not rig your boat for speed. This contemporary ghost ship, the Ran, is from the modern day, but her captain certainly isn't, nor is her crew.

## What about the Dark World?

*"The worst images of a post-nuclear apocalypse Earth do not equal this place of rot and cold and damp and decay, but they do at least provide some fuel to the imagination."*  
-Princess: the Hopeful, Dream 245, Vocation 230

In Princess: the Hopeful, the Dark World is a place where monsters come from, not where heroes or Hunters go to. Mechanics - the Dark World should always be an Extreme Environment of Level 1 or higher - and monster generation alone cannot convey the danger this area represents. Even when there are no monsters the world itself menaces unwelcome visitors with crumbling buildings, air that rots and freezes, and even more disturbing phenomena. The Dark World is a deathtrap, and even going in is a process that often tears away at one's soul and Integrity, to say nothing of coming back out. Anything stolen by creatures of Darkness into the Dark World is all but lost.

(Or is it? See "The Queens and the Darkness," pp. XX)



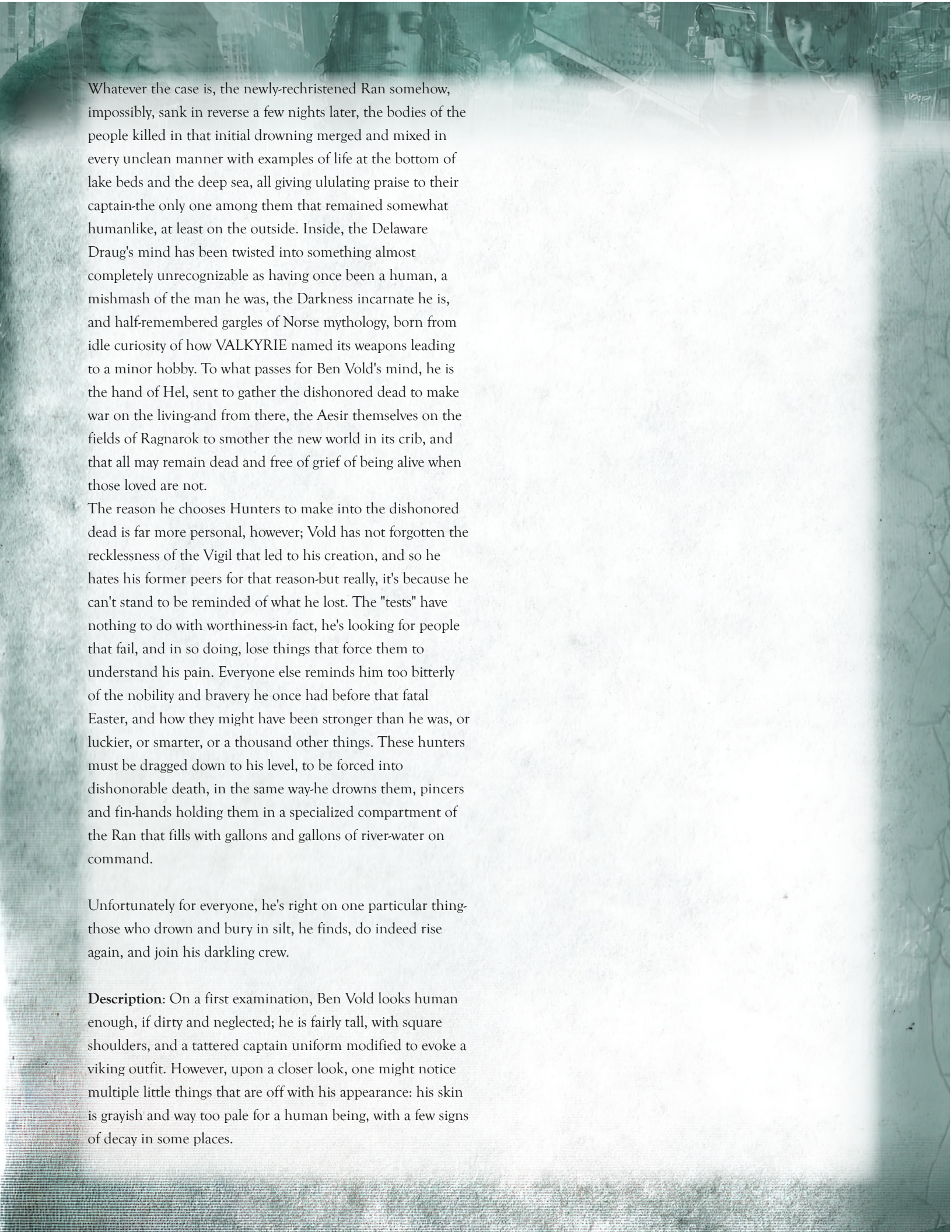
They say that a cell of amateur hunters, high on cocaine and too many pirate movies, got it into their heads to be Vigilant pirates, cutting the seas in search of monsters and various treasures the sea-going beasts had to have. Their first target was a fossilized longship with a ghostly Viking spirit attached that they were sure had to be the source of several sea-based nightmares around its native museum, and so when it was being transported for demonstration on a cargo ship, the brave, stupid crew of the Ran struck, using speedboats launched from their houseboat/base to strike at a poor ship filled with people who had no fucking clue why all these pirates were ransacking something from a university. As one might imagine, they killed the crew to cover their tracks-which ended up awakening the formerly sleeping spirit of an ancient Norse nobleman who was peacefully dozing the eons away-as well as his entire cohort of warriors. Enraged at the dishonorable curs who dared call themselves warriors of justice, he and his men possessed the bodies of the cargo tanker's crew and slaughtered the hunters to a man, before commandeering their ship and sailing back to their home to ensure no kin of those cowards would disgrace the name of bravery again. If they catch you, say the hunters, they won't listen to your protestations of bravery, thinking it just a cowardly attempt at pleading for your life; if you're very stalwart, and very lucky, they might instead merely test you, letting you go free with merely a warning to never sail again and blaspheme the gods with your presence on the sea. If you fail, or you're not, well there aren't any stories from those survivors, shall we say.

As one might imagine, this takes a real thing and attaches a story which is complete and total dreck, and the fact that people are alive to tell it is probably proof of its bullshit, given how it makes several assumptions about Old Icelandic culture the undead jarl would probably find very offensive. There is a rusty old towboat sailing the Delaware, but it's not Twilight it dips in and out of-it's the Dark World. And its captain is indeed a monstrous warrior of the sea, but he's just as modern as the Ran itself, and he was the original hunter captain. And while he did fall to his own recklessness, it wasn't some irate medieval warrior which did him in, but his own grief.

Before he became the Delaware Draug, Ben Vold (which is itself an alias-he neither remembers nor cares for his original name) was a captain in a more terrestrial sense, the CO of several Task Force VALKYRIE cells near Philadelphia.

He was, by all accounts, a stand-up, brave, and competent officer who his subordinates respected, though not to the point of love. Really, he was more a specialist in logistics than anything, making sure all the Advanced Armory requests arrived reasonably late and that all the ammo was stocked. Still, he was no coward, and he could fight on the frontlines as well as any of his subordinates. But it wasn't his first choice, not the least because unlike far too many hunters, he had a happy home life, and his family was aware of him working on dangerous, long-term missions for the government that he couldn't really talk about. His children were fine sorts too, all very involved with the world and with their father's boundless idealism well-represented.

The story of how the future Vold ended up killing his family is heavily classified and spun as far as VALKYRIE can while still not verging on total lies. The basic gist though, is that Vold was assigned to the grim duty of neutralizing a Noble in service to their well-intentioned invasion, this one a Hearts witch attempting to enforce her Queen's decrees on local politics. Due to a series of tragic mistakes, misadventures, a broken cell phone and sheer laziness from unrelated building inspectors, the college dorm where said Princess was staying was completely destroyed in a fireball as Vold looked on in horror as his wife and other two children sat down with his eldest daughter for Easter dinner. VALKYRIE's legion of shrinks tried all they could to put the captain's mind back together, but by that point, he had lost all faith in his comrades, his country, or himself. While he seemed to recover some will to live, this was an illusion-what the psychologists thought was him becoming functional was really just the fires of hate giving him enough will to snap himself out of catatonia long enough to lure every one of his men and the support apparatus for said mission onto a then-normal towboat, before blowing the boiler and locking all of them inside the flooding cabins. The last person to meet the churning waves was himself, a sound that could have been laughter, screaming, or sobbing escaping his throat as the waters of the Delaware washed in. Something came with the waters. The researchers into the Dark Spawn's origins, should they find out about his origin, would be divided as to whether this was raw Dark drawn by his despair and madness to swamp what little remained of sanity in his soul and weaponize his rage, an alien parasite born of the same and performing one last indignity on his corpse, or something in between.



Whatever the case is, the newly-rechristened Ran somehow, impossibly, sank in reverse a few nights later, the bodies of the people killed in that initial drowning merged and mixed in every unclean manner with examples of life at the bottom of lake beds and the deep sea, all giving ululating praise to their captain-the only one among them that remained somewhat humanlike, at least on the outside. Inside, the Delaware Draug's mind has been twisted into something almost completely unrecognizable as having once been a human, a mishmash of the man he was, the Darkness incarnate he is, and half-remembered gargles of Norse mythology, born from idle curiosity of how VALKYRIE named its weapons leading to a minor hobby. To what passes for Ben Vold's mind, he is the hand of Hel, sent to gather the dishonored dead to make war on the living-and from there, the Aesir themselves on the fields of Ragnarok to smother the new world in its crib, and that all may remain dead and free of grief of being alive when those loved are not.

The reason he chooses Hunters to make into the dishonored dead is far more personal, however; Vold has not forgotten the recklessness of the Vigil that led to his creation, and so he hates his former peers for that reason-but really, it's because he can't stand to be reminded of what he lost. The "tests" have nothing to do with worthiness-in fact, he's looking for people that fail, and in so doing, lose things that force them to understand his pain. Everyone else reminds him too bitterly of the nobility and bravery he once had before that fatal Easter, and how they might have been stronger than he was, or luckier, or smarter, or a thousand other things. These hunters must be dragged down to his level, to be forced into dishonorable death, in the same way-he drowns them, pincers and fin-hands holding them in a specialized compartment of the Ran that fills with gallons and gallons of river-water on command.

Unfortunately for everyone, he's right on one particular thing-those who drown and bury in silt, he finds, do indeed rise again, and join his darkling crew.

**Description:** On a first examination, Ben Vold looks human enough, if dirty and neglected; he is fairly tall, with square shoulders, and a tattered captain uniform modified to evoke a viking outfit. However, upon a closer look, one might notice multiple little things that are off with his appearance: his skin is grayish and way too pale for a human being, with a few signs of decay in some places.

His eyes, if stared at for long enough, have slithering pupils, as if something was trying to get out. Similarly, while he dresses and behaves like the ghost viking he pretends to be, people paying attention might notice clues about his true origins: he is familiar with modern technology, in particular the Advanced Armory (if someone tries to throw him an Equalizer Grenade while in Strange Form, he will immediately recognize it and retreat in another part of the Ran), his crew fight in a manner very reminiscent of tactics typically used by TFV forces, and he actually wears a TFV badge below his coat.

All pretenses of humanity, however, disappear when Vold merges with his boat. His body warps into a tentacled monstrosity, which spreads all around the Ran, fusing to its ground and walls.

**Storyteller Hint:** Ben Vold is a tragic figure, who was turned into the abomination he now is by all the horror he went through while alive. Make no mistake, however, he cannot be cured or redeemed; the good man he once was is gone now, and all that remains is a warped memory of him, twisted by the Darkness and his resentment toward hunters. If confronted with his real identity, he is likely to react violently.

**Vice:** Envy- as noted above, Ben Vold hates hunters because they remind him of what he lost.

**Virtue:** Dutiful- Vold was a responsible man in his life, even though his ideas of serving the Aesir are little more than delusion, he still takes this task seriously.

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2(5), Dexterity 3 (4), Stamina 2(6)

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 1

**Mental Skills:** Academics 2, Computer 2, Investigation 3, Occult 2, Politics 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletic 2, Brawl 3, Drive 3 (the Ran), Firearms 2, Survival 2 (Sea)

**Social Skills:** Empathy 4, Intimidation 4, Persuasion 2 (Break Spirit), Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Small Unit Tactics, Good Time Management, Fast Reflexes 2, Safe Place 3 (the Ran)

**Dread Powers:** Predator's Sense (Light-Touched, Hunters), Unnatural Step (Corrupted Places)Duel form, Maze, Home turf 5, Know soul, (Contagien), Innocuous (Weathervane (storms) 2), (Dread attack 2 (Lashing Tendials )

**Potency/Shadow:** 6

**Aspirations:** Recruit more people in his crew, break hunters, defend his boat

**Willpower:** 10

**Health:** 7(29)

**Size:** 5(23)

**Speed:** 10 (14)

**Defense:** 5 (6)

**Initiative:** 4 (5)

**Notes:**

- The Ran is a modified Houseboat (Modiefer -3,Durability 2, Size 23, Sturctor 25, Speed 60) with the Modfractions Anathema(Nobles), Home Security System, and Concealed.

The Ran is also Curropted place with a potency of 2, with the Aspiation "Find the weakest among the hunters" and "have Following orders lead to doom", with the Dreadpowers Madness and Terror, Emontial Aura(Submissiveness), and Blackout.

The Dark Nest Darkscape is Connected with the Heart in the Boiler room, the centerplace of Void's Grand Plan.

- Vold is rarely seen without his crew, which mostly consists of Lurkers, with possibly a few Infiltrators as his most faithful lieutenants. The Storyteller should build them himself, ideally with at least Armored Hide and Dread Attack, but they can have any other Dread Power; number-wise, they should be between 6 and 12, and should be separated everywhere in the Ran rather than in the same place all at once. While in Strange Form, Vold can sacrifice any member of his crew to recover from wounds, healing lethal damages equal to the sacrificed crew member's health boxes. This takes 1 Instant action per crew member.

- While in his Other Form, Ben Vold merges with the Ran, becoming a monstrous fusion between a boat and a kraken. In term of game, this means he cannot be killed nor knocked out while in this state unless the boat itself is destroyed; The players can still attack him and inflict him damages, but should they fill his last health box with lethal or Aggravated damages, He will travel to the dark world where he can heal. He cannot, however, return to harass the players until his health boxes have been fully healed, giving them some delay to act. If out of crew members, his wounds will heal naturally at the same rate than a human. Should the Ran be destroyed or purified, he would die.

Type	Damage	Range	DicePool
Shot Gun	+3L, Two-handed, 9-Again	20, 40, 80	5
Lashing Tendrils	+2L, Bleeding	Melee	8

## Renato Stablum, the Shadow Butcher

*"Yes, scream. Bring them running into my lair. I haven't had enough fun yet."*

The thing that is now called the Shadow Butcher was once born a man by the name of Renato Stablum. Raised by an impoverished single mother, Renato had a shortage of parental attention. His mother was a firm believer in "spare the rod, spoil the child", though so she made up for her absence with an abundance of discipline. This only seemed to teach her son to become better at not getting caught torturing the neighborhood animals. Frustrated at his behavior, she sent him off to a local church youth group to "straighten him out". It ended with both the church and her home going up in flames and Renato living off the streets.

Always bigger than the rest of the kids his age, Renato grew into a giant of a young man. Between that and him already being acclimated to violence, led to him quickly being brought into and rising amongst the local organized criminal element as a thug and enforcer. He developed a reputation amongst his bosses men as utterly ruthless and effective at cowering opposition. Perhaps too well, as Renato picked up a taste for the rush of power that intimidation and murder gave him. Eventually even his peers and superiors grew afraid of him, and tried to hang him out to dry. Pieces of them and their families' bodies are still turning up washed ashore or found in basements to this day.

Renato began traveling Europe, funding his hobby as a serial killer with jobs as a hitman. All the while, a darkness began to fester in his heart. He ended up dodging Interpol by smuggling himself to the United States. It wasn't long before his Slasher behavior put him in the sights of VASCU. After a string of bodies, victim and agent alike, he was finally captured and set for trial. Something happened in the transport vehicle, and everyone ended up dead.

But, somehow, a monstrous thing looking similar to the Slasher and operating under a similar MO has been spotted again plaguing the shadows. It seems to be preying on Hunters now, and its body count is growing.

**Description:** A monstrous hulking brute with deformed proportions and too-wide, fang-filled grin. Despite its size, it moves with eerie grace and precision. When it speaks, its voice is deceptively quiet before bursting out into an intimidating roar.

**Storyteller Hint:** The Shadow Butcher is a primarily combat threat - it prefers to set up a trap-filled lair, using hit-and-run tactics to goad its foes into entering. It will find choice locations with easy access, and commit enough minor atrocities to turn them into Nests. Then it start fortifying them with traps and torture chambers, kidnapping victims close to its targets to use as bait (and entertainment). If its targets play it cautious, it pits its captives against each other in sadistic games, hoping to corrupt them into other Lurkers or Infiltrators to throw against opponents. If the fight turns against it, it will flee to the nearest Nest and travel elsewhere to recover and plot revenge.

**Vice:** Sadism - The Shadow Butcher delights in making others suffer.

**Virtue:** Methodical - Renato was thorough in life, and ruthlessly precise even as a Lurker.

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 7, Dexterity 6, Stamina 7

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Crafts 3 (Traps), Investigation 1, Occult 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 4, Brawl 3, Firearms 3, Larceny 2 (Breaking and Entering), Stealth 4, Survival 1, Weaponry 4

**Social Skills:** Empathy 1, Intimidation 4 (Torture), Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Danger Sense, Fast Reflexes 3, Cheap Shot 2, Choke Hold 2, Street Fighting 3

**Health:** 13

**Dread Powers:** Poisonous Blood, Dread attack 2(Shadowy Machete), Home Ground, Home Turf 5, Glitch 3, Chameleon Horror, Black Gate, Regenerate 3, Snare

**Potency/Shadows:** 7

**Aspirations:** Inflict Despair, Murder those who slighted it (and their families), Eat a Princess

**Willpower:** 14

**Size:** 6  
**Speed:** 19  
**Defense:** 10  
**Initiative:** 12

### Happenings:

- There have been a string of disappearances in the area, with strange biblical passages left where the victims were last seen. Before long dark creatures resembling those taken begin to resurface and attack the kidnapped peoples' families and friends. There are rumors that a dark cult and demons are responsible - the real culprit may not be too far off, if less organized.

- An ally among VASCU has asked the Cell for help. Some killer seems to be stalking them and anyone they've been close to. The problem is, it seems just like a criminal who by all evidence ended up dead. Their ally doesn't believe in ghosts, so they want you to shadow their shadower and find out what is going on.

Type	Dmg	Range	Dice Pool
Shadow Machete	+2L, Stunned	Melee	11

## Story Hooks

### Redeem the Castle

**Summary:** Following a recent team-up with a group of Nobles, the players have set up their new safehouse in a Nest. Using their magic, the Hopeful have made the Corruption temporarily dormant, leaving the place relatively safe.

According to them, however, the Nest will eventually awaken again, reverting the place to its nightmarish state...unless it is taken care of in the meantime. The players have a month (this time is flexible depending on the Storyteller) to put the place to good use and accomplish good actions with it; if they do enough, they should be able to eradicate the corruption and make the safe house their once and for all.

**Setup:** The Princesses were genuine; the players really can purify the Nest if they do enough good with it. This would include things such as helping and saving civilians, arranging peaceful solutions with supernatural creatures who can be reasoned with, offering shelter to the poor, or even showing genuine friendship and camaraderie to each other. Even healthy romance can help. Conversely, things like torture, brutal murder, rape and unhealthy experimentation might reinforce

the corruption if they aren't careful.

As such, this story hook is primarily a test of the hunters' morality, since it depends on them being at least somewhat good despite all the horrible things they fight everyday. Of course, that's not to say the dormant corruption is all they have to worry about; Infiltrators and Lurkers probably are outside the Safe house, and ready to do anything to recover their home before it's lost to them...


**Tier One:** Beggars can't be choosers. It's likely that the cell stumbled on the area and claimed it because it was abandoned or otherwise unfit, only learning its true nature when they came upon the Nobles. Already ill-equipped, the characters will have to both defend the area from the Darkness and do enough good to redeem the area. The Nobles may be willing to assist, but that will put the characters deeper in their debt. Can the characters keep their claim on the area on their own?

**Tier Two:** Performing good acts requires others to be the recipients of such benevolence, and the characters may be unwilling to reveal themselves just yet. The characters must decide how to redeem the area without exposing the fact that yes, this is a base for people who kill monsters. If the characters decide to use the base as a front to help the mundane population, they'll have to hide their true purpose from the very people they're helping and protect said people from any monsters that come to attack the area. And once they've redeemed the area, can they find a way to shoo out all the people they've been helping, or will their charity lead to ongoing complications for their safe house?

**Tier Three:** At this rank the characters could easily burn down the area and find somewhere else, but their superiors have told them to stay. The higher-ups may doubt the Nobles' claim and seek to discredit them, or believe this to be a chance to better understand the properties of a Nest while it's dormant. The characters have orders to run out the clock, kill (or capture) any monsters lured to the area, and study the area to data that can hopefully be used to discern any changes that occur once the Nobles' magic on the area has faded. At this level, the challenge will be in convincing the Nobles that good is being done (and learning what the Nobles consider to be good) while not actually redeeming the area. Once the Nest reasserts itself, can the characters destroy it without tipping their hand to the Nobles?

### In Darkness grasp

**Summary:** One of the players' loved ones, relatives or contacts has been dragged by Lurkers to the nearby Nest. Either because they want to save someone they care about,



or because the contact has vital information for them, the players are now on a rescue mission to enter the Nest and get the abductee back, hopefully before it's too late...

**Set up:** These abductions actually are a pretty standard practice for Spawns of the Darkness; the people they bring back to the Nest are sequestered, tortured, and actively exposed to the corruption until they get infected. Depending on how much time the players take to get to their relative or contact, he might or might not already be infected and in the process of joining the enemy. Can the hunters still save him? Or will they have to give him a mercy kill before he fully turns into a monster?

**Tier One:** Once the people are freed, the hunters will need to deal with the Nest itself. The Nest is home to local criminal elements, which is how it became a Nest in the first place. They may help kill the Lurkers, but they'll refuse to clean up their act. How the Hunters handle the people tainting the area and clear out the nest will carry repercussions in their entire community.

**Tier Two:** The Nest is an area of some significance, and the tasks of clearing the Nest and rescuing the victims is compounded by a group of rival hunters seeking to claim the area for themselves. A pitched battle between the two groups would likely taint the area even further. Can the characters find a peaceful resolution with the other group, or will they choose to force out the other hunters through violence and take on a strengthened Darkness?

**Tier Three:** Once the victim is rescued, the characters are contacted by their superiors. They're ordered to turn the person (and any other kidnapped people) over. Depending on the group, this may be for treatment, experimentation, or execution. If the characters go along with it, they'll have to find a way to extract everyone involved without attracting the attention of local authorities. If they disagree they'll have to face the consequences of their insubordination, both from other members of the group sent to extract the targets and from the targets themselves should they fall to the darkness.

## Enemy at City Hall

**Summary:** An Infiltrator has successfully got into a position of power. He is now using his newfound influence to help the Darkness spread, distracting the authorities away from Nests and Dark Cults while turning them against Nobles and Hunters alike.

Now it's up to the players to take the twice corrupt politician down, by all means necessary.

**Set up:** A good start for this one is to define what position the Infiltrator was able to acquire.

Becoming mayor seems like the most logical option (hence the Story hook's name), but he could also have become a police chief, a high-ranking member of a church, a senator, or any other position where he would have influence. Consider as well if the Infiltrator has any ulterior motives. Does he hope to accomplish something beyond corrupting the entire city?

**Tier One:** The area is relatively small, but it's still home to the characters. To successfully depose the Infiltrator (or to handle the aftermath if they try to simply assassinate them), the characters will have to gain the trust of their local community. And when they succeed, they'll have to work to make sure the replacement has their best interests, or at least the best interests of the community, at heart.

**Tier Two:** The Infiltrator wasn't born in a vacuum. The characters discover that the Infiltrator is but one of a small group of Darkness-infested humans, forming an up-and-coming power base. The characters must find a way to smother this group before it grows in power, and find out how the group came to be in the first place.

**Tier Three:** The Infiltrator isn't intentionally covering for other monsters, but the environment they've created has made it much easier for said monsters to operate. Still, even other monsters are uneasy with having an Infiltrator at the helm. The area gains an undercurrent of intrigue as multiple supernatural groups prepare to wrest control from the Darkness and take it for themselves. It's up to the Hunters to cut through the morass and return control of the area to human hands..

## The Dreamlands

Most Nobles who were willing to talk about their origins insist the Queens they serve rule in a mysterious, alien dimension which they can only access while sleeping, and which they call the Dreamlands. They describe it as a strange land filled with magic and creatures that seem to come right out of Lewis Carroll's imagination. For a long time, hunters, unable to visit such a place, scoffed at these stories. But these last years, with more and more discoveries about dream realms and creatures, these stories have gone through a regain of interest. The Ascending Ones and the Merrick Institute have both started figuring out ways to explore it, and even other Conspiracies like the Cheiron Group and Task Force VALKYRIE have begun exploring this new option.

## Entering the Dreamlands

Characters who have the Dream Travel Merit and Nobles who are aware of the Dreamlands may enter the Dreamlands when they sleep with a successful roll of Resolve + Composure + Dream Travel (use Inner Light instead of Dream Travel for Nobles). The first time that a character gains the Shadows condition, they subconsciously continue attempting this roll until successful.

## Entering the Dreamlands

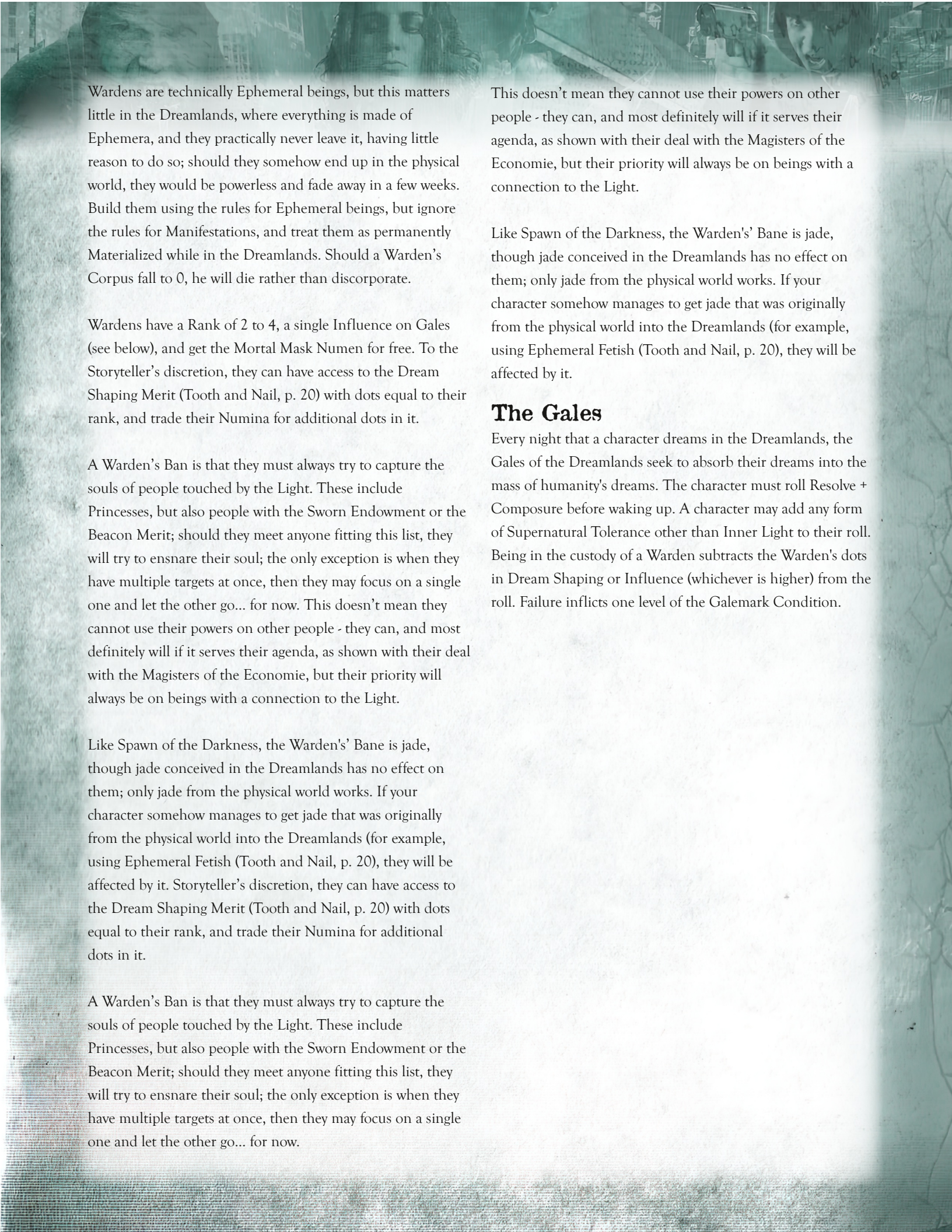
The Dreamlands is a strange conglomeration of humanity's shared dreams. Use the rules for Illogical Dream Logic and Rules for the Dream World (H:tV Tooth and Nail p.10). The Dreamlands contain areas with some resemblance to settlements or civilizations, populated by beings resembling humans or supernatural beings (mostly Sworn and Nobles). You may build these beings using normal rules and then converting their attributes as per the Dream Form Rules, or using the Brief Nightmares rules (CofD p.143). Keep in mind, however, that unlike many other places in the world of Darkness, the inhabitants of the Dreamlands aren't all hostile, and some of them might even prove helpful in the right conditions (though admittedly, hunters might very well see this as trickery). While some of them will very likely attack a visitor on sight, restrain from doing it all the time if possible unless your players are actively trying to invade the Dreamlands- which admittedly would make for a great Chronicle.

The Dreamlands contain two additional dangers:

### The Wardens

Unfortunately for hunters trying to visit the Dreamlands, the Queens and their subjects are far from being the only creatures living here. In the most hostile regions of this realm, reside strange, enigmatic beings who call themselves Wardens. These creatures usually aren't a danger to most hunters, as they tend to ignore regular humans, even the more supernatural ones like the Lucifuge. What they do prey on, however, are those touched by the Light, such as Nobles, Sworn and Beacons, and they have no qualms about using their abilities against mortals who get in the way of their quarries. One should not underestimate the danger they represent however, as they have the ability to manipulate the very fabric of the Dreamlands... including your own memories. While they don't actually kill their prey, they are skilled illusionists, capable of trapping your soul in the Dreamlands by crafting a fake reality to convince you this is the real world, and keeping you there until your real body dies from starvation, thus trapping your soul in this strange place...





Wardens are technically Ephemeral beings, but this matters little in the Dreamlands, where everything is made of Ephemera, and they practically never leave it, having little reason to do so; should they somehow end up in the physical world, they would be powerless and fade away in a few weeks. Build them using the rules for Ephemeral beings, but ignore the rules for Manifestations, and treat them as permanently Materialized while in the Dreamlands. Should a Warden's Corpus fall to 0, he will die rather than disincorporate.

Wardens have a Rank of 2 to 4, a single Influence on Gales (see below), and get the Mortal Mask Numen for free. To the Storyteller's discretion, they can have access to the Dream Shaping Merit (Tooth and Nail, p. 20) with dots equal to their rank, and trade their Numina for additional dots in it.

A Warden's Ban is that they must always try to capture the souls of people touched by the Light. These include Princesses, but also people with the Sworn Endowment or the Beacon Merit; should they meet anyone fitting this list, they will try to ensnare their soul; the only exception is when they have multiple targets at once, then they may focus on a single one and let the other go... for now. This doesn't mean they cannot use their powers on other people - they can, and most definitely will if it serves their agenda, as shown with their deal with the Magisters of the Economie, but their priority will always be on beings with a connection to the Light.

Like Spawn of the Darkness, the Warden's Bane is jade, though jade conceived in the Dreamlands has no effect on them; only jade from the physical world works. If your character somehow manages to get jade that was originally from the physical world into the Dreamlands (for example, using Ephemeral Fetish (Tooth and Nail, p. 20), they will be affected by it. Storyteller's discretion, they can have access to the Dream Shaping Merit (Tooth and Nail, p. 20) with dots equal to their rank, and trade their Numina for additional dots in it.

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## The Gales

Every night that a character dreams in the Dreamlands, the Gales of the Dreamlands seek to absorb their dreams into the mass of humanity's dreams. The character must roll Resolve + Composure before waking up. A character may add any form of Supernatural Tolerance other than Inner Light to their roll. Being in the custody of a Warden subtracts the Warden's dots in Dream Shaping or Influence (whichever is higher) from the roll. Failure inflicts one level of the Galemark Condition.

""As a rule Jayan Kallupurakal did not sweat. She'd kept her professionalism when representing The Cheiron Group against the NHS splashed her face across all the tabloids as the most hated woman in the United Kingdom. When a Voyeur had an emotional breakdown and stormed her office she remained calm and recorded everything that could be admitted in court.

But now, as she watched an 11.5 inch plastic woman in a Savile Row suit with matching glasses and briefcase being carried into the courtroom on a designer cushion by a color coordinated paralegal, Jayan's life flashed before her eyes. This wasn't a Mattel brand "Be A Lawyer" Barbie doll. This was the real Barbie. A gestalt intelligence from humanity's collective unconscious. Sixty years of society's "You Go Girl!" attitudes and a mind that had mastered two hundred careers and counting packed into a pound of plastic.

Barbie had gotten legal sharks disbarred, shattered precedents, and redesigned the official bailiff uniform for the Californian legal system. The whole legal world had sighed in relief when she retired to start a medical school for magical pre-teens. And now she was back, and speaking for the defense.

At that moment, Jayan really wished she had a doll to comfort her."



# THE RESPONSES

Much like the Nobles, Hunters are split in more ways than one. Where nobles Separate themselves by Queens, Courts, and Nations, Hunters have thousands of groups that all bicker. Some call for a closer alliance of for the hopeful, some call for a harsher measurements, while some Organizations Pull themselves apart on approach.

The following section Goes over the Response of Hunter Groups towards the hopeful, for both inspiration for how to add Nobles to games where you are already running said Groups, use it on how other hunters in the area react to nobles or Ideas for your own Hunter groups.

## Compacts

Compacts don't have the same enforced Dogma as Conspecies, which allows for different areas to have varying levels of interpretation.

One city might have the compact have a hardline Princess Stance, while others might work openly with them.

However, this not also increases the difficulty of different cells working together, but also different Nobles, one fleeing a city of a hostile arm of the Compact, only to land and be discovered by Hunters again is not going to try to talk again, but try to run off or even fight them, which might sours that Areas Compact Relations with Nobles.

the only thing that seems to untie them is the Encouraging darkness, and even then, Methods on how to deal with that vary....

## Ashwood Abby

*Henri was bored.*

*It had been several weeks now since he and the others had started this hunt, but to date, nothing of value had happened. John had assured them this teenage girl was a powerful and fight-capable witch, but so far he had yet to see her do such things. And now they were waiting at the entry of this old abandoned house she had just entered for no apparent reason. He really hoped there was no mistake; stalking teenagers was for slashers, not the Abbey.*

*As he was thinking to himself, however, he noticed something glowing from the house. Green flames; the building was burning, and not in a mundane way. He felt his interest coming back; maybe there was something worth his time after all.*

*As he and the others approached the entrance, a girl emerged. She appeared slightly taller than the one who had entered, and was wearing a form-fitting white and green suit with a hood. More interestingly, her eyes and hands were glowing with a similarly*

green light.

*“Get the fuck out of my way,” she merely said menacingly. Henri cocked his gun, smiling. “Now that’s what I’m talking about!”*

Princesses are simultaneously a source of unease and fantasy for the Ashwood Abbey. On one hand, they aren’t comfortable with a lot of the implications they raise: much like Prometheans being able to become humans, the fact Nobles are capable of assuming a human form, to look like innocent children and claim to be benevolent beings really clashes with the Abbey’s idea that monsters are fine to torture, murder and rape due to being inhuman. After all, if one kind of supernatural being has the ability to be good, who’s to say the vampires and shapeshifters can’t as well? And in that case, how are Ashwood members justified in hunting them?

At the same time, a lot of things about the Hopeful makes members of the Compact dream. After all, what’s not to like about women who use magic trinkets to transform into scantily clad knights and fight nightmarish creatures? Princesses of Mirrors, especially, attract their interest, and the few ones over eighteen are frequently invited to their parties, with many people eager to hang around with them (which typically means snorting cocaine off their body). Princesses of Storms are also heavily looked for, albeit for different reasons: their fiery reputation makes it sound like they would be fun to hunt for young hunters. In general, it’s not uncommon for hunters from the Ashwood Abbey to wander close to areas tainted by the Darkness, hoping to find Nobles who would be willing to “play” with them.

What many of them don’t know, however, is that the Hopeful are also hunting them. Most Nobles loath the Ashwood Abbey; their depraved attitude disgusts them, and the horrible acts they commit during their hunts are likely to create more of the Darkness’ taint. In fact, many Princesses are convinced their abbey itself already has plenty of Dark Nests (though in practice, the Hellfire Club is meticulous about cleaning up their club houses after the party; they could hardly have their fun for decades without realizing what creates a Nest). Because of this, Princesses frequently try to oppose the Ashwood Abbey, either sabotaging their parties, destroying their hideouts or just taking part in social events to legally weaken the elder members. Activists leading protests against companies, reporters investigating possible cases of corruption, lawyers pursuing them for sexual harassment all include some Nobles who are trying everything they can to take down the Hellfire Club. There are even rumors of them joining forces with things form Nightmares~ who they usually loathe ~ in their shared hatred of the Compact, though that one might be an exaggeration...

## The Long Night

*When Reverend Andrew heard one of the choir boy’s claims, he dismissed them as some sort of prank. True, the Father did use His Angels to do His work, but to be the reincarnation of one? Such childishness! But when the boy claimed that he could provide proof, he was intrigued. After Mass one Sunday, the two met in his office. “Will you swear to not tell a soul who I really am?” It was such an odd request. But considering the works of the Enemy’s servants... “As God as my witness,*

# Sterotpyes

**#Ammit:** I’ve got nothing to be ashamed of. Taking on you and your friends could be fun.

**Character Risk Analysis:** Stuffed suits pretending to be Hunters herding the sheep pretending to be people. Pay their bills and keep them off the invite list.

**The Star of Bethlehem:** You bleeding hearts with your gilded cages are no fun. Let them out and we’re sure someone will enjoy it. Might even be them.

**Sanitation Workers Collective:** Stick to your day jobs. No one needs a garbage man who knows tricks, and no one wants a garbage man willing to rob them blind.

**The Light Company:** Losers chauffeur. Real people drive.

**People’s Guard:** Security!

**Magisters of the Economie:** There are a million soul-sucking jobs out there. Who the Hell do you think you are, trying to make the Hunt one of them?!

*I will not." The boy took a Rosary out of his pocket. Its beads were blue, a color for hope. Before Andrew's eyes, a burst of golden light surrounded the boy- and instantly, in his place, was a glowing figure draped in white robes. That day stuck forever in Andrew's memory. It was the day he met his first Angel.*

Originally, the Long Night adamantly categorized Princesses as witches, and treated them accordingly; however, these last years, especially with the recent spreading of the Radiants, they had to reconsider their stance, and start to acknowledge them as something else entirely. Ever since, they have been subject to heavy debate among members. The official stand of the Compact is that the Apocalypse is coming, and monsters are the Devil's agents in the last war. But where do the Hopeful fit in this? They are clearly supernatural beings, using powers no human is capable of, much like warlocks. But these powers, according to them, draw from a force of Light and good, and they wish to use them to help and protect mankind rather than prey on it. Where does that leave them?

The opinions are all over the place. Some cells believe the Hopeful are the one exception to the rule, that they are angels sent by God to help humanity during their last battle with the forces of Hell, or virgin souls who received holy powers from him for the same purpose. Others see them as blasphemous witch-whores who wield power stolen from heaven in a vain attempt to redeem their damned souls, or more cunning demons who take the form of angels luring people into following them away from the true path of Jesus; after all, don't they reveal their true, hideous demon forms when you break their pretensions of idealism? Others yet believe these beings really are angels,

but see them as misguided, manipulated by these mysterious demonic queens from an infernal realm. Not a single cell in the Compact shares the same opinion on them, and confrontations with Nobles tend to be on a case-by-case basis.

One part they all agree on, however, is their stance toward creatures of the Darkness: clearly these things are demons, and possibly the worst of them all: they are the Devil's corruption made flesh, trying to infect and warp what remains of God's creation in a last ditch effort to win the battle. The Darkness is the curse laid on the earth by the fall of Eden, still manifesting to this day. Does this mean the compact should leave it to wreak judgment, or fight it as an aspect of sin? Opinions vary. Of course, an alternate reading is it's not the curse, but the Serpent- that is, Satan. The implications of the adversary manifesting and turning people into monsters are... worrying, to say the least..

## Loyalists of Thule

*Irving was tired.*

*This was around the third file he went through. Groaning, he began going through the names he had found. Alhambra.*

*Danann. Andarta. Atzallan. So many names given, none of which really matched any known culture in the world. No clear geographic indication, And descriptions sounded like something out of fantasy novels. He didn't know what to make of this. If that Kingdom the Empaths kept mentioning was real, then where the heck had it been? And what had happened to it?*

*For a moment, he wondered if his research was pointless. Maybe that Kingdom wasn't real. Maybe it was some made-up mythology, like the stories that had been behind the creation of*

## Sterotypes

**#Ammit:** They hunt down those sinful of soul but not those monstrous of flesh. The Devil has led them to be distracted by these smaller iniquities, and we must not allow the same weakness in our own hearts.

**Character Risk Analysis:** They can shepherd a flock against the darkness as well as any preacher, but can the Lord's work truly be done by such secular men?

**Star of Bethlehem:** Beware them, for they may be raising the Antichrist./Teach them to not block the angels of God from their duty but to join them in their glorious war.

**Sanitation Workers Collective:** A spiritualist sect too rooted in earthly concerns. Let them work until the day comes when they are swept away alongside all the other disbelievers.

**The Light Company:** Whose work are they truly doing?

**People's Guard:** They may appear to be destroying Sodom, but they have no love for the new Jerusalem that awaits.

**Magisters of the Economic:** They would take the Lord's work and make it a den of thieves!

the Thule Society once. For a moment, he considered giving up on what might be a wild goose chase.

*But then he remembered his previous missions, All the information provided by cooperative Nobles, how it had been crucial multiple times in saving many lives. How a lot of this had been possible through his research.*

*Then, with a smile, he got back to work.*

The Loyalists do not give much credit to the Nobles' story. They are somewhat skeptical regarding their desire to bring a Utopia to the world; after all, their predecessors made these mistakes themselves once, and it resulted in the Third Reich. Still, to date, the Hopeful haven't proved to be a threat in their eyes, so they aren't particularly hostile to them. At the moment, they are more focused on finding answers: who are these Nobles, and where do they come from?

Exploring the lore at their disposal, some erudites in the compacts have come up with a theory. Princesses' claim to be reincarnations of people who once were part of a powerful kingdom remind them a lot of the stories about Thule, Atlantis and other lost civilizations. Many of them suspect the Kingdom they are referring to might have been this civilization.

Because of this, many Loyalists have tried interviewing Princesses on their previous incarnations and how life was back then, hoping to acquire new, useful lore. While there have been some successes, they are so far rare; most Nobles seem to only have vague memories of their alleged previous

lives, and remember them only like a dream. And what they described of the Dreamlands is more reminiscent of a fairy tale than anything else. Despite this, the Compact doesn't give up. Every now and then, they do find a Princess with clearer memory, and willing to share what she knows.

As for the Darkness, well, to put it bluntly, the Loyalists hate them. Lurkers, Infiltrators, Nests- they all need to go. They say this is because of its danger and evil, and that's certainly true. But there is a deeper reason for their hatred- they are bothered by the implications its corruption raises. The idea that the worst among men might not have committed their crimes alone, then responsibility might lie in the hands of some shadowy alien force rather than the human heart-and to the Indebted, it's both psychologically and ideologically horrific. Better to destroy the darkness before people get ideas.

## Network Zero

*Zane was an avid member of the Secret Frequency, readily posting drone-caught photos of his latest pet project on his facebook page. His newest evidence of the supernatural was what others on the frequency called Paladins, and he was inclined to agree with them. He was a very handsome man (no, he wasn't jealous!) with blonde hair, blue eyes, and the biggest frickin' sword Zane had ever seen. Not to mention the giant armor and blue cape- not that it seemed to hinder the man from fighting what the others called Darkspawn. He had termed the guy the Blue Knight for lack of a better name. However, today all he could do was blankly stare at his facebook page. His best friend, John, had just died in a gas explosion with his entire family. They did everything together, and all he had left of John was the photos he had posted. He stared into the deep blue eyes of his grinning*

## Sterotpyes

**#Ammit:** You seek to redeem your predecessors and fight the same hatreds we do. Don't lose yourself and your mission in the thrill of it.

**Character Risk Analysis:** They understand that a monster's weakness is in its secrets, but they use those secrets to protect monsters all too human.

**Star of Bethlehem:** They have taken on a responsibility and burden not their own and shoulder it admirably.

**Sanitation Workers Collective:** They have more strength and knowledge than most would care to admit. Underestimate them at your own risk.

**The Light Company:** Think hard about what you're building, and who you're building it for.

**People's Guard:** Don't you find it curious that you know nothing about the power you hold?

**Magisters of the Economic:** We will find the secrets behind what you're building and bring the whole rotten structure down.

friend- that sunny grin he would never see again. "You know, I must really thank you, Zane." That snobbish voice sent a jolt up Zane's spine. He whirled his chair around, and there standing in his room was Laurie, the self-proclaimed Alpha Bitch of the campus' main sorority. And she was grinning like a cat that just caught a mouse. "Laurie?!" How did she get in here?! His exclamation only made her grin wider. "If you hadn't posted both their photos I would never have figured out their connection." Her grin grew bigger and bigger- and soon her mouth engulfed her face like some kind of grotesque leech. The Darkspawn that was Laurie launched herself at him. And it was then that Zane suddenly realized: The Blue Knight's secret identity was- Ironically enough considering how young they are, Network Zero was one of the first Compacts to figure out the existence of the Hopeful. They started collecting videos and pictures as soon as they noticed recurring stories of "real life superheroes" and girls in weird outfits fighting crime and evil with magic powers. As they collected more and more cases with similarities, they started to notice patterns, and eventually put together these weren't young mages playing vigilante as initially believed, but a different kind of magic user entirely.

However, their reaction has actually been really positive. A lot of people in the Secret Frequency became huge fans of the Radiant, eagerly defending them in internet comments. This came to the Princesses' attention, and eventually, a contact was established; nowadays, the two communicate a lot, with Network Zero frequently providing useful information on the "Darkness" Nobles claim to fight, warning them about their movements whenever asked.

However, for all the collaboration between the two, there is still a point where the two oppose: the Noble's secret

identities. For their own safety, the Hopeful avoid divulging their human identity, as this would allow all their enemies to track them down. Unfortunately for them, this is an aspect where Network Zero won't take "no" for an answer; the view counts for a Noble's secret is too tempting, the Frequency's curiosity is too strong, and they are always on the lookout for information regarding this, making them a terrible (if well-meaning) threat. In a slice of hypocrisy, they still try to protect the Princesses at the same time; whenever someone else brings anything that threatens a Noble's secret identity, they will criticize it harshly, even though they usually are the first to upload or watch it.

And regarding the Darkness? Well, as much as they'd hate to admit it, Lurkers are really useful for the Secret Frequency. They're obviously supernatural, leave behind huge amounts of evidence and barely try to hide. Finding one in the area is usually cause to try and get as much footage as possible before someone smashes it.

This, however, leads to another thought- unlike most supernatural creatures, you can make a Lurker. Not with complex rituals or rare cosmic coincidences, but just by hurting people. You can do it by accident. Of course, almost everyone in the compact finds the idea abhorrent... but the thought keeps coming up in the more extreme fringes. Final and undeniable proof of the supernatural, at the cost of one person's soul. Might that not be worth it?

## **Null Mysteries** "Facistating"

*Clairice Turner was jotting down notes as a Frustristic Boy began a series of incants mixed with worries, quickly patching up a nasty Gash with but a slight tingle.*

# Sterotpyes

**#Ammit:** They're the new breed of "journalists," the ones who'll tear lives apart for clicks and giggles. Salvage what they know about the supernatural and make real stories out of that

**Character Risk Analysis:** Start off with the scraps of info they make public and trace them to the real story.

**Star of Bethlehem:** You have no idea how frustrating it is to see them sitting on a goldmine and doing nothing with it.

**Sanitation Workers Collective:** They're so concerned with their day-to-day needs that they won't bother with the bigger picture. Let them clean up the mess so we can do the real work.

**The Light Company:** Here is your proof that people are ready to know.

**People's Guard:** I thought I could get along with them, but then they brought this teen to get beheaded...

**Magisters of the Economie:** They're black holes. Let's shed some light on them.

*"Madam, I would suggest that you do not try to capture monsters...Again."*

*This was not the first warning that Clarice got from the boy, She has had a habit of wandering into the dark and dangerous places, and taking monsters back to her Lab, where they usually escaped or were more trouble than they were worth. But she had some valuable data from it all, though she was a little careless with the Vivisection of a hound like monster, which was also called the Futuristic Boy, who hadn't ever told Her His name, to break in to deal with the monster. Since then he's helped her out, if begrudgingly.*

*After the slight tingle and the notes of the healing process done, Ms. Turner stood up, ready to get into the now dead beast's guts.*

Null Mysteriis completely disregards the tales delivered by Princesses of an ancient utopian kingdom ruled by immortal queens; after all, such a civilization surely would have left behind some archeological evidence right? Most of them don't place too much stock in stories about the Dreamlands either. The existence of an "astral plane" accessible by sorcerers and psychics is well documented, but as a realm of dreams and symbology the Null Mysteriis believe evidence sourced from the Dreamlands is as likely to reflect the discoverer's biases as reality. It is anecdotal at best. Still, they cannot deny Princesses do have powers, which are pretty real, despite how out of place they seem. So, how do they explain this?

For the most part, members of the Compact believe that the Hopeful are something similar to the so-called Beasts: poor souls with latent psychic or preternatural potential, who in an effort to understand their abilities delude themselves in fantasies of being fictional characters, shaping their powers in accordance to an easy acceptable mythos. However, while Beasts fashion themselves after monsters and dragons, Nobles chose to reimagine themselves as princesses and knights, heroes who slay monsters and save the day; a common fantasy, and much easier to understand for a child. And since these powers come with a hyper-developed empathy, making the suffering of others unbearable to them, they become obsessed with playing heroes.

Other members, on the other hand, believe the power doesn't actually come from the girls themselves. They have noticed that, whenever they transform, Nobles seem to rely on a small physical object as a trigger for their transformation. This has led them to believe these trinkets might be some form of

unknown technology they use as the source of their power, and as such a new opportunity for them, since it could be taken apart, studied, and maybe even reverse engineered. So far, however, this has proved unsuccessful, thanks to the Princesses' ability to remotely summon these trinkets.

The creatures of Darkness are a bit more complicated to explain however. They could either be unrelated creatures Princesses just happen to target, or maybe another part of their fantasy, subconsciously created by the Princesses - every hero needs a monster of the week, after all. However, serious studies into the Darkness are running into problems. Not because it defies accepted scientific theories - at this point the scientists of the compact are pretty used to that - but because of the ethical difficulties studying it. Pretty much any serious investigation into the Darkness violates every experimental ethics guideline at best and is outright scientific atrocity at worst. Even leaving a lurker alone while passively observing it makes one guilty by inaction.

Among those members of the compact who know of the Darkness, two sides are forming. One argues they should stick to assisting more combative hunters and writing papers on what tactics work and what powers must be overcome - knowledge isn't worth your humanity. Others say that the need to study this potentially apocalyptic force justifies overriding some normal restraints. The debate is rapidly getting less academic, and if left to grow may soon spill out into the wider compact.

## **The Union**

*"You're sure she'll come?"*

*"She always does."*

*Sharon lit her cigarette. "I still hope you know what you're doing, Sheriff. Don't really feel comfortable asking for help from a friggin' witch."*

*"She prefers 'Noble'", Garth answered.*

*"You know what I mean," the deputy answered. "She's got magic powers. She's closer to them than us."*

*"I understand your apprehension about her, but Star Lily never messed with the neighborhood. And she always was very helpful when handling these damn monsters. Trust me, she's clean."*

*Sharon nodded, though it was obvious she was still skeptical. They waited a few more minutes, and finally they saw a light in the sky. Eventually, a young woman with silver hair, in a dark blue dress and a crystal wand, landed in front of the flag they had placed.*

*"Good evening, Sheriff," she told Garth with a smile. "I got your call. Do you need my help?"*



## Sterotpyes

**#Ammit:** Their handling of the Darkness phenomenon is tangential at best. I don't see what we can learn from them.

**Character Risk Analysis:** They distort the truth for their own aims, and I'm not convinced that their "niche" isn't a gimmick they've made up for their own benefit.

**Star of Bethlehem:** At least let us interview those children.

**Sanitation Workers Collective:** They help keep things clean, but at the end of the day we're the ones seeking the higher truths.

**The Light Company:** They're either just another deluded movement or the vanguard of a massive paradigm shift. Study them closely.

**People's Guard:** Their only use for our knowledge is destruction.

**Magisters of the Economic:** You're either brainwashing people with psychic abilities or you're doing it mundanely. Either way, you're a despicable human being.

The Union has had a few conflicts with the Twilight Princesses. On several occasions, cults of strange veiled magic users tried to take over their street so they could practice dark rituals bringing nothing but misery and monsters, or vigilante women in green and white wrought havoc in their street trying to hunt these same monsters. They were never welcome, and treated accordingly.

The Radiant learnt from this when they started spreading on the same scale as their Twilight counterparts; nowadays, when they have to operate in Union territory, one of the first things they do is contact the local members and see how they can work with them peacefully. They realize the Union is only dangerous if they feel you are a threat to them, and as such they do their best to have good relations with them; they help with their magic, or with advice on how to fight the Darkness whenever it shows up. In many towns, this has resulted in good partnerships, with the Union and the Hopeful working in concert to make the neighborhood safer. On occasion Radiant and Union cells have disagreed strongly on political issues, but both sides have done a good job of keeping the debate from turning violent.

Unfortunately, this isn't always the case. Some people just don't like having a super-powered vigilante running around on their street, even if said vigilante tries to play by the rules. They don't immediately try to hunt them, obviously - their resources can be better spent after all- but they will keep an eye on the Nobles in their streets, never really trusting them and preparing to get the weapons should they make a single mistake. After all, nobody can be that good and pure, especially in the supernatural.

They have to be up to something...

Overall, relationships between the Union and the Hopeful are fairly cordial, ranging from cautious neutrality to happy collaboration. But every now and then, there are events threatening to disturb this. Most infamously, there are rumors in the midwest of a cell going dark for reasons connected to a Princess: overnight, every hunter and their family suddenly vanished, never to be seen again. The only thing they left behind was a strange note, saying they were fine and would meet their friends in a place called Alhambra...



## Sterotpyes

**#Ammit:**They're crude sometimes, but you've got to respect their work..

**Character Risk Analysis:**They work for the people who step on the little guy, but at least they know how to expose monsters and open up wallets. Give them some incentive if need be.

**Star of Bethlehem:**Protecting children is among the best things one can do. But working with those kids? Let's hope you know what you're doing.

**Sanitation Workers Collective:**Good people doing honest work, but they need to be more active in the community if they don't want things going bad again.

**The Light Company:** We know what it's like to be desperate for a way to put food on the table. But we stuck to our communities that need us. Why should we trust you when you don't do the same?.

**People's Guard:**You'd better remember what happened to Robespierre.

**Magisters of the Economie:**They fight monsters for their sakes, not for ours. Don't trust them, and don't let your own near them.

# Conspiracies

Conspiracies are an Enigma to the hopeful.

They are large enough to enforce their Dogma but also large enough that it's possible to find friendly factions in even the most hostile of conspiracies.

At the same time Conspiracies are often connected to a status you, one that often times see more people harmed than helped. Many hopeful are wary of Conspiracies, with the power it brings and the Status they have sending many Nobles into hiding while they wait for things to die down.

Or try to strike a deal with a Devil...

## Aegis Kai Doru

*Months of digging, months of intel gathering, and interviews lead Theofilos off the coast of africa, where he was digging though the deep sea muck, with his team taking notes of where the items were found, both to gauge to power of the object and to trade the information to more scholarly hunters for just in case.*

*As he was sorting through ancient wood fragments, taking pictures along the way, he saw the glimmer of polished bronze, where in his eagerness he pulled out a small Bronze Mirror, edged with weaved copper and studded with some clear gemstone.*

*As he was admiring the find, he heard the sound of a water take rupturing, the sound blasting though the water, as the lights around the site were being smashed up by dark shapes.*

*One of the shapes swam in front of Him, holding out Her hand. "Give use what is ours and you may yet live."*

*With the Desire and pride in his heart, He threw his will into the artifact and activated it. "*

Ever since they first manifested millennia ago, the Hopeful have attracted the attention of the Aegis Kai Doru. When first confronted with these young girls wielding strange magic artifacts and magic, they initially presumed these were merely children who had gotten their hands on relics too dangerous for them. This belief was quickly discarded when they found out most of the Nobles' artifacts disintegrated upon death, making it impossible to recover or catalog them. They eventually came to realize these artifacts had not been merely found by these kids: they were a part of their being.

From there, the conspiracy has been trying for a while to figure out what these beings are.

They call them Custodi, and a common theory is that they actually are knights who were granted powers by the ancient monarch of Atlantis in an attempt to protect the ancient city. For this reason, they are frequently believed enemies, even though any Noble who was interrogated on the topic insisted she had no idea what the hunters were talking about, and didn't serve the Mages.

Regardless of the truth, there are three things the Guardians of the Labyrinths do know for sure. One, not all of their artifacts disintegrate upon death; some can survive them or even exist outside their proximity, albeit disguised as regular objects. Two, these independent artifacts can only be activated and reverted back to their real form by a Noble, or by some particularly nice, optimistic mortals. Three, the Court of Tears possesses these durable artifacts in abundance, making it well worth raiding their harvesting operations. The Aegis Kai Doru still isn't sure why these artifacts respond to optimists, but with the recent growth in the population of Princesses, they have stepped up their attempts to seek and recruit some of them in their ranks.

The Darkness, meanwhile, worries them. It might not be the foe who destroyed the Guardians' ancient paradise, but the Darkness is not a threat to take lightly.

## Sterotpyes

**#Ammit:**Ours is a sacred vow and an honored tradition. Yours is a crude campaign confused about who the true enemies are.

**Character Risk Analysis:**Let them cut off a monster's support, then move in for the kill and the spoils.

**Star of Bethlehem:**If you won't arm yourselves with the powers of the knights you capture, what do you arm yourselves with?

**Sanitation Workers Collective:**Just let them fight their war and don't leave your relics unguarded around them.

**The Light Company:**You're more like us than you are like them. We could put their relics to much greater use if you joined us.

**People's Guard:**They burn the relics of Alhambra as if they were waste. Show them their mistakes.

**Magisters of the Economie:**They treat other people the way we treat our relics: as objects to be taken, gathered, and used as they see fit. It's disturbing.

Whereas other groups might think of the Darkness as a few Lurkers hanging around the site of a murder or an infiltrator spreading fear and hatred, the Aegis Kai Doru remember the times when the Darkness reached a critical mass and grew exponentially, torturing and murdering entire cities or regions.

If the Aegis Kai Doru think it's likely to happen again they wouldn't hesitate to sterilize an entire region, and they know which Relics could do it.

## Ascending Ones

*Shifu was running through the street. He knew the areas like the back of his hands, every corner, every shortcut; usually, it was quite easy for him to escape any pursuer. But something was wrong with this one; no matter where he ran, no matter the obstacles, he seemed to always catch up, climbing and jumping between buildings with an agility that was anything but human. Eventually, as he was about to turn right, the pursuer caught up with him, and, with a ridiculously high jump, landed right in front of him. Shifu had only caught glimpses of him until this moment, but now that he could see him clearly, he was confused; what was standing in front of him was a man in a sleek, dark blue skin-tight suit, with a mask covering his whole face and glowing white eyes.*

*"There's nowhere to run," he said with an amused voice. "Care to listen now?"*

*"What the heck do you want?" Shifu asked. While talking, he sneakily passed his hand through his belt grabbing one of the Elixirs he always kept on him just in case.*

*"Your drug trade," the man in the suit answered. "I want it to end. Now."*

*"Can't do that."*

*"I wasn't asking."*

*"Figured. Look, I know this is bad, but I am not doing it out of greed. I am just trying to serve a greater cause. Money doesn't grow on trees, you know?"*

*"People are suffering because of this. I won't allow it."*

*"I see... then I guess I have no choice." Shifu pulled out the Elixir and promptly drank it. After a short pain, he felt energy going through his veins, invigorating him. Smiling, he took a fighting stance. "Now, bring it on, you vigilante wannabe!"*

Princesses frequently are in conflict with the Ascending Ones. The Jagged Crescent's drug traffic tends to spread misery as a side-effect, which according to the Hopeful allows Darkness to fester further in the world. Because of this, they rarely tolerate the presence of drug dealers from the Cult of the Phoenix, and will work hard to disband their business. They aren't quite as aggressive toward the ones they find hunting monsters, and might even help them, but when it comes to the drugs, they don't have much tolerance.

Ironically enough, the Ascended Ones themselves have very little animosity toward the Hopeful. They aren't sure what these empaths are, but they saw them fight monsters, sometimes including vampires, and with the exception of Twilight Princesses, they rarely harm humans. As a result, their policy toward the Nobility tends to be rather passive; if they meet a Princess whose goals align with them, they arrange diplomatic encounters and try to make friends. If not, they leave them be and focus on their own business. The Court of Tears, however, is an old foe to the Ascending Ones. Nobles taking advantage of the downtrodden who the Cult of the Phoenix have sworn to protect is nothing new, and the Court of Tears often targets their harvests at places mortal authorities will overlook. Fortunately for the Ascending Ones, shades tend to be extremely hierarchical, so there's usually only one person you need to bribe, bargain with, or assassinate.

The Darkness, on the other hand, frustrates them. Their role as diplomats fail before them- even the smartest Darkspawn refuses to cooperate or bargain except as a prelude to attack,

## Sterotpyes

**#Ammit:** They claim to be of and fight for our communities, but they have become a people unto themselves and the only voices they hear are their own.

**Character Risk Analysis:** Do not be fooled by their clean hands and pressed suits. Their venom corrodes lives and communities alike, and knives dance around them in wait.

**Star of Bethlehem:** You hold a blade in one hand and clutch a child in the other. A worthy stance, but is it one you can maintain?

**Sanitation Workers Collective:** They see stains that need to be wiped out where we see weaves that are part of a greater tapestry.

**The Light Company:** The causes you claim seem worthy, but your blind devotion risks disaster.

**People's Guard:** They are no friends of ours.

**Magisters of the Economie:** Your crusade is cruel, and your wealth serves no one but yourselves. You know nothing of ascension.

and their presence brings chaos to both mundane and supernatural communities.

The easiest answer is to wipe them out, of course, and most Ascending Ones do just that. After a century or so the Conspiracy stopped bothering to try diplomacy with the Darkness. But one faction has started trying to capture them, in the hope of redeeming them. The infected Condition is quite treatable with alchemy, so perhaps a greater application of the art could do more. If they can take even these monsters and make them good- or at least reasonable- that would be a significant practical and moral accomplishment. If it leads to anything but slaughter on both sides, that is.

## The Cheiron Group

*"You are sure it's dead?"*

*"For the last time, John, yes, we are. The agents made sure of it!"*  
*As if to confirm the point, the doctor sliced the monster's side with his scalpel, starting the dissection.*

*"R-right, right, sorry... it's just... I heard a story about one that wasn't quite dead being brought here, once. Apparently it woke and killed like five surgeons.*

*"Oh, yes, that was back when we didn't quite understand their anatomy. Nowadays, we make sure."*

*They continue taking the thing apart. Truly the Darkness was both fascinating and disgusting in how it mutated life: some of the organs here were completely alien, to the point John was unsure of what was what.*

*"How intriguing... that one seems to lack a digestive system entirely. That would explain its skeletal appearance. I wonder how it feeds..."*

*As they kept moving, the doctor opened the vestigial jaws, examining the tentacles escaping from it.*

*"... I think the higher ups are going to find something to do with this..."*

*"Standing orders, do not engage under any circumstances."*

This usually is the first order field agents of the Cheiron Group receive whenever they report having met a Princess.

Surprisingly, despite having usually no scruples kidnapping and experimenting on supernatural creatures, no matter how human they look, TCG seems to have a strict policy of never taking on the Nobles. The exact reason for this is unknown even inside most of the company; the closest there is to an explanation are persisting rumors of a document from the upper echelons, referred to as the "Alhambra Accord", which dictates hunters of Cheiron do not interfere with any beings matching the Hopeful's description and modus operandi. Nobody knows why such a document would have been signed, if it even exists in the first place, but members have been instructed to follow it to the letter.

Of course, in practice, they always find loopholes. While TCG never openly engages Princesses, they heavily incite their agents to monitor them; indeed, these beings frequently lead to areas infested by creatures of the Darkness, which are acceptable targets. Occasionally, they might recover and bring back a gravely injured, but still alive Princess if the company believes this would go unnoticed (dead Princesses are entirely mundane biologically and quite worthless to the Company). Assets willing to go that far are rare and always valued, though; even the most hardened retrieval agents are uneasy at the thought of kidnapping and bringing back young girls to torture.

As for what the Hopeful themselves bring to the table, the rare cases they can get their hands on samples, the potential applications are limitless- a Princess' biology incorporates magic directly, after all. Currently, Cheiron scientists are focusing on understanding how their transformative ability functions, and are working on tapping into it for easy cosmetic surgery. An

## Sterotypes

**#Ammit:** Don't underestimate them. They can tip off our targets at the worst times.

**Character Risk Analysis:** We like them. Not for what they do - we have an in-house team to handle this sort of stuff - but because they soften up monsters and then leave them for us to pick off.

**Star of Bethlehem:** Get the kids to work for you? Is that possible? More importantly, is that profitable?

**Sanitation Workers Collective:** Janitorial is one department, field agents is another. We're not concerned about an outfit so strapped that they have to combine the two.

**The Light Company:** Reliance on handmade is no way to go. We could take you into mass production if you turned over a few of those "Nobles" and the trinkets they make you.

**People's Guard:** Useful idiots who can be funneled away from our lobbies to actual problems.

**Magisters of the Economie:** They dispose of the monsters rather than harvest them. That's no way to run a business. Still, the ones they do keep...

earlier version of this has already been made accessible to some hunters in the form of a Thaumatechnologic implant, granting them a limited form of shapeshifting disguise. This has encouraged them to pursue their effort, hoping to refine the formula and find other beneficial applications.

As for the Darkness, what can be collected about them sadly isn't very useful. The implants recovered from them are easy to transplant; almost suspiciously so, some of the more paranoid surgeons say. The amounts of power they provide are modest, but with the ease of acquisition and surgery it's a bargain. However, the people with them tend to go weird. Then murderous. Then their skin falls off and they become knife-monsters. Analysis of the bodies isn't hugely useful- it seems most of the damage is more metaphysical than physical. Typically, implants from the Darkness are reserved for less valuable agents, the ones the Company doesn't expect to last long anyway.

## Luciferage.

*"You are sure it's dead?"*

*Charles looked down at the festering Corpse at his feet, a twisted shape that resembled a friend.*

*"I hope for his stake, he is."*

*He remember taking this kid in, he remembers the Joys and Sorrows. He felt the weight of failure upon his shoulders, unable to give him the support he needed during these dire times.*

*Charles then pricks his finger tips with a needle, and crouches down to the body, closing it's eyes.*

*"I hope he can find peace elsewhere..."*

*And a fire burns the Old Friend to ash.*

Ever since their kind was identified, the Hopeful have been a source of fascination for the Lucifuge. In many ways, they are very similar. Both suddenly awoken at some point in their life

with powers; and both are supernatural beings who fight to protect mortals from other creatures of the night, yet are willing to not see all of them as evil. But at the same time, they are complete opposites. The Lucifuge, for all their good intentions, are children of demons; their powers come from an evil place, and part of themselves pushes them toward this evil, even if they struggle against it. Princesses, on the other hand, are literally urged by their own powers to act for good; in fact, their own curse practically is the reverse, since failing to protect innocents actually harms them. Many Lucifuge used to feel bitter jealousy toward Nobles for having powers actually not trying to turn them into psychopaths- until they actually met the unlucky ones, broken by all the horrors they had witnessed and failed to prevent.

Because of all these similarities, the Lucifuge have come to believe the Hopeful are their counterparts: they believe them to be descendants of God's angels, much like they themselves are to the Devil. Based on what they told of their origins, they think these Nephilim, as they call them, once ruled over Humanity in the name of God, until they grew self-righteous and turned on each other, allowing demons to overthrow them. Now they are desperately trying to preserve their Light in a world dominated by beings who want them dead, and for this reason they must be preserved. As such, whenever the Lucifuge finds Nobles, they try their best to befriend and protect them. While they originally had a hard time gaining their trust, in recent years their efforts have paid off, and their relationship with the Hopeful is surprisingly one of the best among hunter organizations, preceded only by Network Zero. In fact, there are even rumors about one of their agents in France who is literally dating a Noble.

## Sterotpyes

**#Ammit:** Their past is a reminder that even angels can lose their way, and their present is proof that even fallen angels can be redeemed.

**Character Risk Analysis:** For all the good that they have done, their core is rotten with corruption and deceit.

**Star of Bethlehem:** We know where their power comes from, and it is good. Be at peace, and content yourselves with watching over them.

**Sanitation Workers Collective:** There is no shame in starting from the muck and working to make things better in spite of that.

**The Light Company:** Take care of them.

**People's Guard:** "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven", but what happens if they succeed?.

**Magisters of the Economie:** The angels disappear around them. No good can come of them.

Regarding the Darkness, the Lucifuge have a pretty simple opinion: they are sin. Sin leads to hell. Sin enough in one place, and hell draws closer. The Lucifuge know that the cold of the Outer Darkness and the burning fires of the Inferno aren't the same thing of course, but they recognise peers who feed through spreading sin and misery when they see it. The Darkness must be fought wherever it appears, it's as simple as that.

## **Malleus Maleficarum**

*"This congregation has come to a verdict."*

*Brother Ezekiel took no pleasure in this. No sane man should. She was a child. But she held the powers of Hell within her, no matter how much good she had done with it.*

*"The accused has been found guilty of being a witch!"*

*The Witch screamed behind her gags and thrashed, trying to break her chains. Tears welled up in her eyes as she stared directly at Ezekiel, but his Faith would not waver this day.*

*"Must she die?" David, a new convert to Ezekiel's right, whispered.*

*"The good book says, 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.'" He was young- David would learn in time.*

*And then the pyre underneath the witch was lit.*

*Ezekiel offered a prayer to the damned soul of his daughter as the flames engulfed her.*

*"Sister Rachel, what we did to that girl- it wasn't right."*

*"No, it wasn't. Tell me, Brother David, have you considered becoming a part of the Order of Phargos?"*

The Shadow Congregation is a bit at a loss when it comes to how they should handle Nobles. On one hand, many members, especially in the Brotherhood of St. Athanasius, just regard them as witches, who must confess and repent through death like all the others. After all, Mages who believed their powers came from God or Angels never got special treatment, why should they make an exception now? Every supernatural creature is a spawn of Satan, and should be treated as such.

On the other hand, some members aren't this convinced. It has been noted that many abilities displayed by the Hopeful are actually rather close to Benedictions. Like them, their magic seems fueled by faith, and there are reports of Nobles capable of healing through physical contact and resurrecting somebody who was freshly killed, abilities respectively reminiscent of the Hands of St. Luke and the Boon of Lazarus. Moreover, like the Congregation, they dedicate themselves to fighting monsters and protecting mortals. All of this has led many faithful to suspect these creatures might actually use blessed powers and really serve the will of God.

Some cells here and there in isolated areas, especially the ones from the Order of St Ambrose, have pushed these doubts even further. They actually started believing that, not only might the Hopeful actually get their powers from God, but they might even be true Angels, sent to mankind in its time of misery and fear to bring them hope. These hunters maintain peaceful relationships with their Noble neighbors, and even regularly work together with them to protect humans. Of course, they keep such collaborations a secret as much as possible; should anyone in the higher power learn about this, they would surely face violent ex-communication.

On the surface one would think Creatures from the Darkness are easier to deal with, being little more than demons to send back to Hell. Easy right? Well, no. Most demons, they need to tempt. They manipulate or lie or bribe, but they can't just make you sin. They can possess, yes, but that doesn't stain your soul. Not the Darkness. The Darkness just makes you a worse person, overrides your free will and makes you turn away from God. If some theories about what happens with Lurkers is correct, it might even destroy your soul outright. The idea of the devil being able to do that is horrifying on an almost unimaginable level to the Hammer of Witches.

Naturally, the higher ups write long theological papers explaining why that isn't the case- the victim must have subconsciously listened to the darkness, or only the body was controlled, or the soul goes straight to hell- but even the possibility is devastating to Catholicism. A good reason to kill the whole thing now just in case.



## Order of Phargos

One of the lesser-known factions in the Shadow Congregation, the Order of Phargos actually predates them, having formed back in Iran during Antiquity. Believed to have been founded by a man named Phargos, who they named themselves after (and who might have been a Noble himself), this sect believed the Hopeful to be “the Chosen Ones”, reincarnating among mortals to defend them and fight back against the Darkness. They dedicated themselves to serving and protecting them, hunting Spawns wherever they could find them and purifying Nests whenever they could. Despite their dangerous lifestyle, the group grew in power, expanding in Asia. When the Malleus Maleficarum came in contact with them, they were impressed by how knowledgeable these people were about the Darkness and ways to hunt them down. After negotiations, the Order agreed to Christianize themselves and be integrated in the Congregation, exchanging their skills and knowledge about Spawn-hunting for access to the Church’s resources and teaching of Benedictions.

Despite now being officially part of the Malleus Maleficarum, the Order of Phargos hasn’t abandoned its beliefs about Princesses, instead adapting them to fit the new canons; they associate them to Saints and Angels, and still actively try to cooperate with them. Obviously, this is seen as heresy by many of the higher ups, especially in the Brotherhood of St. Athanasius, but the Order of St. Ambrose has so far protected them from either execution or excommunication, arguing their expertise is far too precious to be wasted.

## Sterotpyes

**#Ammit:** They serve a false God and show mercy to monsters. They are a mockery of all we believe in.

**Character Risk Analysis:** You expose the sins of others, yes. But tell me, have your benefactors the right to cast the first stone?

**Star of Bethlehem:** With their compassion, perhaps they will reveal whether these children deserve a chance at conversion or death in the name of God.

**Sanitation Workers Collective:** Theirs are not the teachings of Christ. Give them the berth you would give to others not of the faith.

**The Light Company:** True peace and serenity comes from service to the one God. You offer only false hope with those you raise to false idols.

**People’s Guard:** They would tear down true faith along with false idols. Dangerous, but perhaps their zealotry can be reborn?

**Magisters of the Economie:** Your “good works” are nothing of the sort. Those like you shall never enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

## Merrick Institute

*"Derrick looked at the girl beside him.*

*They were the picture of Perfection, even out of their Higher form. Left leaning Mohawk, black wear with a bulky hoodie and a skirt. A plump body, and Eyes that shown like stars.*

*He thought about himself, how his right Eye goes too far into his head, how even when over grown, he head looked lumpy, how his Muscles here noticeably weaker, even after years of getting out, how he couldn't wear most Fabrics due to his Nervous system think that it felt like knives. The only thing he could say was better than Her's was his Natural black hair, compared to his Natural Blonde.*

*Still as both of them looked over to the sunrise after a stressful night, one where Derrick somehow became the nightmare king, He felt the gaps grow larger than ever. She was an Angel, a being whose power was born of Hope, while he was born though fear and pain.*

*All Derrick could bring himself to do was look onto the sunset and try to feel what warmth he could."*

At first, it would seem as if the members of the Merrick Institute and the Hopeful have much in common. Both groups tend to get their abilities as children and teenagers. Both groups exhibit great powers as they travel through dreams. Both groups have dedicated themselves to fighting nightmarish creatures.

And therein lies the problem. The children of the Merrick Institute were promised high-end educations and promising futures and were instead subjected to imprisonment and torture to awaken their abilities.

When they hear a Noble speak of following powerful beings far

greater than they, the members of the Merrick Institute are deeply sympathetic - and deeply suspicious. Many believe that the powers behind these "bearers of light" are analogous to their former captors; heartless overseers drafting children into becoming weapons of war for the sake of their own agendas. Nobles who deny these charges are then suggested to be deluding themselves so as to not have to face what's been done to them and by whom. Of course, such suggestions are not at all well-received among the Hopeful, and many meetings have ended in hurt feelings, harsh words and even violence. The members of the Merrick Institute see this not as vindication, but tragedy. They hold out hope that they can one day free these children as they free their own, but until then the Hopeful are to be given a wide berth, regarded as dangerous child soldiers who wield magic and defend their supernatural superiors.

Such divisions have only been widened by Merrick Institute exploration into the Dreamlands. Some members hope that the "settled areas" of the Dreamlands can be a safe haven for those among them unable to wake or a staging ground for attacks on the Primordial Dream, while others plan attacks on what they see as the propaganda facilities brainwashing the Hopeful. As the Queens and those under them begin defending themselves against such intrusions, what common ground exists between the Nobles and the children of Merrick Institute threatens to be swallowed up into a chasm of mutual misunderstanding.

Those in the Merrick Institute see the Darkness the way they see other monsters; they're evil, they cause suffering, and they must be fought when the opportunities are there. The Merrick

## Sterotpyes

**#Ammit:** We can't afford being as brash as you, but your work can do a lot of good.

**Character Risk Analysis:** Why don't you pick on someone your own size?

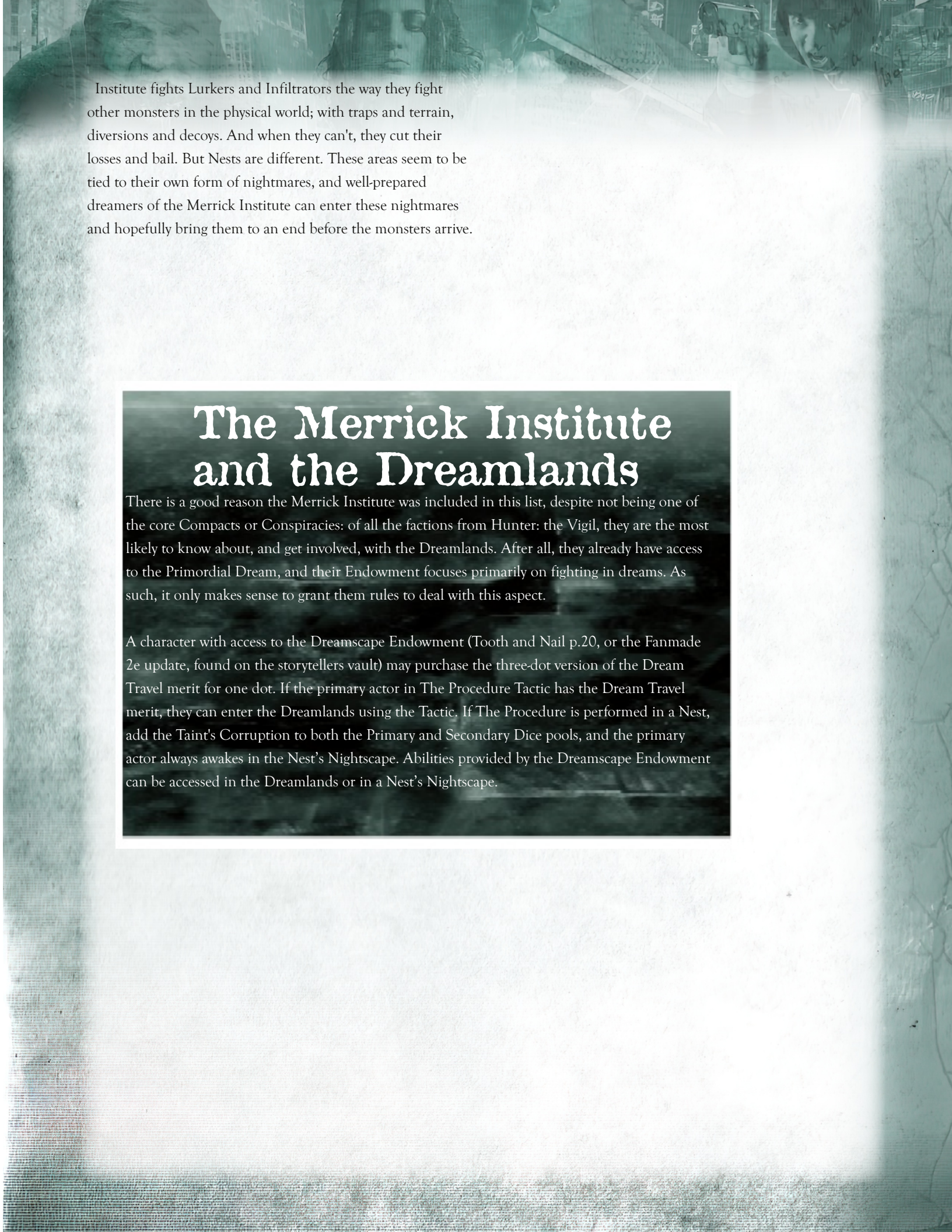
**Star of Bethlehem:** We appreciate your compassion, but you have to understand. This is as much our fight as it is yours, if not more.

**Sanitation Workers Collective:** They do what they can with what they have. They'll make something of themselves in time.

**The Light Company:** Building like the bottom-up, just like we're doing. Maybe in time we can work together against those who try to control us.

**People's Guard:** We hate abuses of power as much as you do, but you guys go way too far

**Magisters of the Economie:** Bastards like you are the reason we're here.



Institute fights Lurkers and Infiltrators the way they fight other monsters in the physical world; with traps and terrain, diversions and decoys. And when they can't, they cut their losses and bail. But Nests are different. These areas seem to be tied to their own form of nightmares, and well-prepared dreamers of the Merrick Institute can enter these nightmares and hopefully bring them to an end before the monsters arrive.

## The Merrick Institute and the Dreamlands

There is a good reason the Merrick Institute was included in this list, despite not being one of the core Compacts or Conspiracies: of all the factions from Hunter: the Vigil, they are the most likely to know about, and get involved, with the Dreamlands. After all, they already have access to the Primordial Dream, and their Endowment focuses primarily on fighting in dreams. As such, it only makes sense to grant them rules to deal with this aspect.

A character with access to the Dreamscape Endowment (Tooth and Nail p.20, or the Fanmade 2e update, found on the storytellers vault) may purchase the three-dot version of the Dream Travel merit for one dot. If the primary actor in The Procedure Tactic has the Dream Travel merit, they can enter the Dreamlands using the Tactic. If The Procedure is performed in a Nest, add the Taint's Corruption to both the Primary and Secondary Dice pools, and the primary actor always awakes in the Nest's Nightscape. Abilities provided by the Dreamscape Endowment can be accessed in the Dreamlands or in a Nest's Nightscape.

