GLIMPSES of the UNKNOWN
The world is a dark and dangerous place.

It is filled with enigmas that do not fit neatly into boxes built by scientists or occultists. That doesn't stop us from trying to find an explanation for everything. It is human nature to compartmentalize, to label and identify the things that frighten them - a thing named is a thing neutered.

But some things refuse to be categorized neatly. Some mysteries evade explanation. Some monsters reject the classifications we attempt to brand them with.

These are the seeds of fear and wonder, the exceptions whose only proven rule is that there are no rules that cannot be broken. These are the unexpected plots, the stories which pull player and character alike into situations where their wits, skills and strengths will be challenged.

These are glimpses into the true potential of the World of Darkness.

This book includes:
- Story seeds and plotline ideas for every World of Darkness line (including Vampire, Werewolf, Mage, Promethean, Changeling, Hunter, and Geist).
- New rules, Merits, powers, and setting material for each game.
- Additional story ideas for the custom Worlds of Darkness presented in Innocents and Mirrors.
Three steps into the alley, and I knew I was screwed.

Sometimes I hate it when I'm right.

I've been on the team for almost ten years, and never felt anything like that. The shivers started inside rather than on my skin. By the time the hairs started standing up on the back of my neck, my heart was already beating triple-time and my stomach felt like I'd swallowed a block of ice. I didn't have a name for it then, although I've got one now.

I call it the Dread.

I froze in place. The alley smelled like rotted food and urine, just like any other alley in this part of the city. I couldn't sense any movement: no breathing, and no heartbeat. Not even that twitch you feel when someone's waiting for you to get close enough to put a knife in your back.

There was just the Dread.

I forced myself into the shadows. Annie'd been missing for over a week, and someone on the street said a woman who looked like her was headed this way. If my teammate was in trouble, no creepy feeling was going to stop me from helping her. But it took everything I had to put one foot in front of the other. Every inch I moved forward, the Dread got stronger.

And that's when I saw her.

There was no missing Annie's boots, with the tally marks she etched around the rim of the sole; one for each successful mission we'd gone on as a team. Her camo pants and wool trench were just as unmistakable, which was a good thing, because no one was going to recognize Annie from what was left of her face.

My first thought was that this was a trick. Even though her Ruger was still clenched in her hand, even though the entry wound was in the right place, I just couldn't imagine Annie – my Annie – shooting herself in the head. I'd lost team members to suicide before. You don't see what we see, do what we do, without it taking a toll on your spirit, and suicide took out almost as many of us as combat. But women usually use pills or booze... anything quiet and clean, rather than an explosion of gunsmoke and brains.

I wanted to be wrong. To have someone else to blame for Annie's death. But when I called in the rest of the team, they agreed: it was suicide.

We mourned her, like you do in this business. Quickly. Privately. You shove the pain down, use it to fuel what has to be done, and don't let yourself think too much about it.

This time was different, though. This time, it wouldn't go away. I didn't sleep for the first couple of nights after we buried Annie. Every time I shut my eyes, I saw what was left of her face, and jolted back awake, no matter how bone-weary I'd been seconds before.

Maybe it was guilt. I'd never lost a teammate who was also a lover before. Annie'd been growing distant, and something nagged me that I should have seen this coming, should have stopped it.

Maybe it was the note I'd found clenched in her other hand. Blood-drenched, brain-splattered, I could only pick out a few words, but it seemed more apology than explanation.

Or maybe it was just Annie, trying to keep me from following in her footsteps.

If so, she was no match for the Dread.

Eventually exhaustion won. I crashed in one of the walk-ups we use between jobs. But the minute I woke up, I knew something wasn't right. The room smelled bad. Not just the normal stench of garbage and ghetto. Over the decades-deep layer of cat piss and trash, there was something fresh. Something new.
Something wet.

The corpse sat in the only chair in the room, backpack beside him, like he was waiting to break out a video game or comic book. Crimson stained the front of his striped t-shirt. He was maybe six years old. He'd never see seven.

I scanned the room, looking for a clue to his killer. Someone was going to pay for this.

The trail of blood was easy to follow. It led right to the mattress where I'd woken up. My Bowie knife was clenched in my hand, so hard my fingers were pins and needles around the handle. The blood on the blade was still fresh.

And the air was thick with Dread.

I hid the body in a dumpster, wrapped in newspaper and a black trash bag. I didn't really believe that I'd done it, not then. I'd killed before, when necessary. That was what we did. Kill the bad guys, so the good guys could pretend they were safe.

But this was different.

I couldn't remember anything. It was like waking up in a puddle from a wet dream you couldn't remember having. The signs all pointed to the mess being your fault, but you couldn't quite believe it was really you that did it.

Only with wet dreams, nobody died.

Once the boy was gone, I tried to pretend it didn't happen. Met with the team. Went about my business. Kept busy. But that night, I chose a different building to flop in, a couple of miles from the brownstone I planned never to return to.

When I woke up, there were two bodies. The boy, looking even worse for the wear than he had when I found him the first time, and an old woman. They were sitting in the kitchen chairs, his backpack and her sweater wrapped around the chair backs to keep the bodies upright.

My knife was wet again, and the room was filled with Dread.

I tried not to think, to just get rid of them and pretend it never happened. I broke off ties with the team, tried to run, but no matter how far I got, every time I woke the boy and his family of corpses were there to greet me in my new sanctuary.

But mostly I tried not to sleep, because every time I woke up, there was a new addition.

There's five of us now. Four of them staring blankly at me. Five of us, and the Dread.

I haven't slept for days now, hopped up on espresso, energy drinks and some back-street speed that I'd normally never touch. But the rules are all gone now. Annie's gone. The team's gone. I'm not even sure I'm really here.

But the Dread is.

I don't know where she ran into it, or if she was the first. But everything makes sense now. Why she pulled back. Why she stopped sleeping. Why she shot herself.

The Dread got her.

Across the room, the boy and his family watch, silent and still. Every time I yawn, I think they smile, although I never quite catch them at it. They're waiting for me to fall asleep. Waiting for me to add to their number.

I can't stay awake forever. Eventually I'm going to give in, give out, give up.

Annie's Ruger is here, on the mattress beside me.

I think she found the only answer to the Dread.
Credits

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Glimpses of the unknown
Introduction

The world is a dark and dangerous place. It is filled with enigmas that do not fit neatly into boxes built by either scientists or occultists. That doesn’t stop us from trying. It is human nature to compartmentalize, to label and identify the things that frighten them – a thing named is a thing neutered.

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Inspiration and Tool

Glimpses of the Unknown is a two-part tool to help you – the Storyteller – deal with that challenge. It offers story seeds – miniature mysteries designed to spark your imagination and add extra elements of tension and intrigue to your games. You can add these seeds to an existing storyline, providing your players with supplemental challenges as they progress through the scenarios. Or, like any seed, they can be nurtured and developed into something far more vital and complicated than the form they currently bear. Any of these seeds can serve as the starting place for your own story; just combine or expand them until you’ve got something you think will suitably challenge your players.

And, for times when you want more than just a taste of inspiration, Glimpses also features plotlines – full story arcs presented in a compact form with a beginning, middle and end. These plotlines can be woven into an existing chronicle, or serve as the basis for an adventure for your players. A strong skeleton of information is provided, just waiting for you to flesh it out in the manner your players will most enjoy. How far you take them is up to you.

The Gang’s All Here

In the World of Darkness, games are organized by the protagonists their players represent: humans, vampires, werewolves, mages, Prometheans, changelings, hunters, and Sin-Eaters. Most game products focus their material on one particular character type, emphasizing the themes of that game over any of the others. While material from any World of Darkness game book can be transferred from its original game to one of the other game lines with a little effort, the primary focus remains on the original venue.

Glimpses breaks that mold. Because the World of Darkness is a complete game setting, there are no clear lines between the world of vampires and that of changelings. You’re encouraged to read over the seeds and plotlines offered and make use of them in your games regardless of what specific game setting they were originally intended for. After all, what better tool to add to the tension and intrigue of your Werewolf game than sneaking seeds featuring Promethean Pilgrim Marks or mage time travelers into the characters’ normally lycanthropic lives?

A silent man is easily reputed wise. A man who suffers none to see him in the common jostle and undress of life, easily gathers round him a mysterious veil of unknown sanctity, and men honor him for a saint. The unknown is always wonderful.

- Frederick William Robertson
World of Darkness

Seeds

Lights Out

The characters drive down a country road at night, far from any signs of civilization. Suddenly, the engine dies. The ignition doesn’t turn over, and all the lights go out. Personal electronics refuse to work. Balls of light flash through the sky. One hits the car, and everything goes white. The next thing the characters know, they’re still in the car, but it’s now daylight. If one of them has an old-fashioned clockwork watch—or they try the car radio—they’ll soon work out that they’ve lost two and a half days (see “Unnatural Phenomena,” p. 10). One of the characters has a fresh scar on the back of her neck, while another has bloody knuckles. Can the characters work out what happened to them?

The Guest

The characters are staying in a small-town hotel as part of another investigation. One of the guests at breakfast is odd, triggering Unseen Sense or the like regarding ghosts. But the staff and characters can see her plain as day, and she has no problem eating a big pile of pancakes. Nobody knows when she checked in, or even what her name is—the staff just make sure that nobody goes into Room 202 on general principle, and they make sure she’s got a stack of pancakes every morning. Newspaper archives show that a woman looking a lot like her was hit by a car and died ten years ago. She was on holiday, staying in the hotel. But why can the characters see her? And what happens when she beckons one of them back to her room after breakfast?

She Lives

Everyone the characters speak to slips the words “she lives” into the conversation. On the first day it’s hardly noticeable. On the second, people use the words at the start or end of sentences, going on convoluted tangents to get there. On the third day, people start slipping it in as a non-sequitur in response to the characters’ questions. This is when things start getting weird—crowds of people start flocking like birds, rather than moving like individuals. The first time characters check a newspaper, all of the headlines read “She Lives!”, though they scan normally the next time anyone looks. Who is She? Possibly more importantly, what is She? And is it a statement, or a warning?

The Correct Way to Worship

Ruth Baxter and Andrew Callahan want the power that cults in fiction often have—Ruth wants to be a Senator, while Andy would settle for being mayor. Currently, Ruth’s a debt management consultant and Andy’s a purchasing administrator, both on their way up but so very slowly. Digging through some books inherited from her grandmother, Ruth found a hand-written journal containing a half-dozen rituals. She showed them to Andy, and they both recruited ambitious friends from work to try one out. From what they could tell, it worked. And now the Brotherhood of the Lidded Eye (Andy’s choice of name) has kidnapped one of Ruth’s workmates—who happens to be one of the characters’ close friends. Are the cultists clumsy because they’re so new, or does their history of reading horror novels make them dangerously savvy?

Paging Mr. Grey

The characters are researching another mystery, or maybe they’re just sightseeing in a museum, when they see the painting. At first it doesn’t look like much of anything, but anyone who succeeds at a Perception roll notices something odd. An exceptional success tells them that the painting’s smile twisted into a grimace for just a moment before returning to its smile. Each time the characters look at the painting, a detail changes in the background. Initially, it’s hard to get anything other than a weird feeling from it—unless one of the characters has the Merit: Eidetic Memory — but every time they walk past something niggles about it. After a few times, the changes become more noticeable: the subject has a beard, or the hair color has changed. Soon after, the painting’s clearly of one of the characters, though in period garb. Where did the painting come from, and what happened to its previous owners?

Plotlines

Jailhouse Rock

Something’s rotten in the county penitentiary. The place already has a bad rep for violence, but now people claim that they’ve seen the walls bleed and the bars turn to jagged rust. Normally this’d just be chalked up to some of the more chemically-dependent prisoners denied access to their medication. Last week, two guards saw it too.

If you’re running this as a one-shot, you can decide why the characters are there. If you want to fold this plotline into a wider chronicle, you can come up with a few reasons for the characters to be sent to prison, based on events from previous stories. It’s worth discussing the idea of sending the characters to prison with your players, to make sure that nobody’s thrown for a loop.

Once introduced to general population, the characters don’t have long to transition into prison life: the next day, the walls in one of their cells start oozing blood. Slowly, the stone peels away, revealing blood-slicked obsidian underneath. The bars on the cell door grow thick with rust, and razor-wire creeps up, tangling up the doorway. The transformation takes no more than a couple of minutes. Other prisoners and the guards can see what’s going on just fine — and even if the guards have the presence of mind to cut the cellmates out, everyone involved cuts themselves on the rusty metal.

That’s just the first sign that something’s wrong. A prisoner in D-block spontaneously combests when he takes his first bite
of dinner. The inmates on either side of him don't even feel warm. Unfamiliar corridors loop back into one another, turning large sections of the prison into a maze. A-block goes into lockdown, and the only sound when guards try to radio their colleagues is that of a scared man asking for light.

Jon Morgan murdered his wife and his best friend when he came home drunk one night and caught them fucking in his bed. He gave himself up to the police, and was sentenced three years ago. His sister and her four-year-old son died in a house fire a month ago. Jon was denied compassionate leave to visit the funeral. He lashed out at a pair of guards, hospitalizing one, and was placed in solitary confinement a week before the characters enter the prison. A couple of guards thought it would be a good idea to keep him in the dark all the time. What they didn't know is that he's pathologically afraid of the dark, and his worsening fear that he's never going to see the light again is slowly turning the real prison into the institution of his nightmares.

**Grief**

Sometimes the best ghost story isn’t a bait-and-switch; it’s just a ghost story. Mary Westlake died of a heart attack six months ago, aged sixty-three. She left a husband and two kids, both of whom moved out-of-state twenty years ago. She wasn’t a bad person by any measure; lots of people liked her. She wasn’t a saint, just something that many people aspire to be — a decent human being.

Her husband, Eric, isn’t a violent man, but he always liked a drink. He’s a fixture in a bar the characters visit regularly. And one night when they’re around, he asks the world what to do about his wife. She won’t leave him alone, he says, and needs him to do everything when before she was such a capable woman. If someone shows interest, the barman will tell her that it’s a weird thing for Eric to say, seeing as how Mary’s dead.

Eric knows his wife’s passed away, but he gets confused easily these days — a combination of whisky and old age conspiring to rot his memory. He’s a little wary of introducing her to anyone new, but he will if they press the matter. He won’t introduce anyone in the evening, instead suggesting that the characters head to his apartment the next afternoon. It’s a nice enough place, if dusty. Eric invites them in, gets them sat down, and not five minutes later his wife walks through from the kitchen.

Something’s not right about her: she’s fuzzy around the edges, like a camera-phone video blown up on a full-HD screen. She doesn’t act like a ghost — she’s not an echo of someone who was. In death, she’s just how she was in life: a smart woman with a keen sense of humor (assume relevant dice pools in the 5-7 range). Asking about her death will make her upset. She’s willing to admit is that she had a bit of a nasty turn, but she insists that she’s fine now. If the characters press the matter, or if they outright tell her she’s dead, Mary gets very upset and tells them to leave. Her husband will back her up, but he’s back in the bar later that night — and every night until the characters find some way to help.
Eric doesn’t know it, but he’s a channel to the dead. His dead wife lives on in his memories, and her ghost can draw on his connection. That’s why she’s so real compared to other ghosts: he’s making her real. One side effect of their relationship is that if she ever fully accepts that she’s dead, she won’t be able to draw power from him again. In her mind, Mary’s trapped in her old apartment and desperate for Eric to stay there because she feels so lonely without him. She doesn’t know that she’s dead, just that some very rude people have suggested that she might have had something terrible happen, and she’s not having that sort of talk. Eric tried telling her once, but she broke down in tears and started to fade away. He’s pushed the whole affair to the back of his mind and won’t talk about it when she’s around, but Mary’s constant need for attention is slowly draining him and he’s drinking himself to death worrying about the whole thing. Do the characters have what it takes to step in and help a thoroughly unconventional relationship?

New Setting Material: Unnatural Phenomena

The World of Darkness is a profoundly weird place. Beyond the werewolves, vampires, and ghosts lurking in the shadows, you’ve got a wealth of creatures and events to throw at your players. Outsiders (see p. 43) offer a way to use all manner of creatures, and Unnatural Phenomena cover events. “Lights Out” and “Jailhouse Rock” both make use of Unnatural Phenomena to provide the situation that the characters must deal with. In these stories the weird shit just happens, without any direction or control.

It’s worth pointing out that a lot of possibilities for Unnatural Phenomena can come from looking at the effects of supernatural powers, but watch out for players who’ve read all the books and assume they know what’s going on. If the walls start leaking blood, it’s easy to see a Sin-Eater’s Manifestation as the cause. Missing time could be the result of a Changeling’s Contract or the Time Arcanum. But the thing is: it’s not. When you’re using Unnatural Phenomena in a story, the characters aren’t anyone’s targets. Nobody’s set out to fuck with them, and they’re not caught up in the side effects of a supernatural battle. Fundamentally, the world’s a little bit broken and sometimes, weird shit happens without anyone wanting it to. That’s just what happens in a world where secret knowledge can bring apotheosis and patchwork men strive to become human.

Just because Unnatural Phenomena don’t have a direct cause doesn’t mean they can’t be symptoms of a deeper layer of strangeness understood only by those able to see. A technological malfunction could flare up at a site where the Firstborn killed a powerful spirit of the Wheel, in the time before. Tactile sensations can indicate the presence of objects in another realm that don’t correspond to physical objects. Ball lightning marks a spot where the first mages captured a dragon to learn its deepest secrets. If you include some Unnatural Phenomena that tie in to the deep mythic history of the setting (usually uncovered by talking to the right person), you’ve only got to wait until one of your players jumps at the idea. Then, run with it. In so doing, you can hint at the much larger scope of your story without making it the focus.

Sample Unnatural Phenomena

Most of these phenomena don’t last for more than a few minutes, up to perhaps an hour — they might stick around
into the next scene if you need them to, but it’s rare for them to do more than that. Use these as they are, or as inspiration to invent your own.

- **Ball Lightning**: A glowing ball of light moves through the air close to the characters. It changes direction repeatedly (sometimes making very sharp turns), and doesn’t appear to be going to anywhere specific. It can go from a slow walking pace to sixty miles per hour in a single turn. Anyone who touches it suffers three points of lethal damage and must make a reflexive Stamina roll or lose consciousness — and suffer strange and terrible dreams.

- **Cold Spot**: A cold spot is a stable area a few feet across that’s between 10 and 20 degrees Fahrenheit (5-10 degrees C) colder than the surrounding temperature. It’s not just a weird feeling: thermometers detect the lowered temperature, and in some places a cold spot is enough to cause frost or ice to form on the ground.

- **Hallucination**: This is the catch-all for weird things that the characters see or hear but that doesn’t show up on recordings. It can range from hearing strange thudding noises or rattling chains to seeing bloody footprints appear and disappear. Larger scale hallucinations can include hearing disembodied voices, a sense that space is stretching or contracting, and the belief that one of the characters is a construct of hydraulics and clockwork (often right after that character has sustained a significant injury that reveals some “proof”).

- **Missing Time**: Everyone present in the scene loses a period of time, from fifteen minutes to several days. In that time they’re simply gone, though supernatural powers used to track people who have vanished may reveal an unlikely (and very dangerous) destination. This phenomenon cannot occur if anyone else is watching, or if a recording device is monitoring the characters.

- **Spontaneous Moisture**: Water (fresh or stagnant), blood or ectoplasm manifests in a small area, either on a surface or flowing from a specific point: a painting that weeps, a statue that bleeds from stigmata, or footprints in seawater on the deck of a boat.

- **Tactile Sensation**: A prickling sensation akin to pins and needles that occurs in any body part that enters a well-defined space, usually no more than three feet on any one side. The space doesn’t have to be a simple shape, and careful experimentation can reveal the outline of complex objects, but with no real indication of how to interact with them.

- **Technological Malfunction**: Every device that relies on electricity stops working in a defined area (often a room or an entire house, sometimes a rough sphere of similar size). This includes car sparkplugs and headlights, cellphones and flashlights.

- **Telekinesis**: Books fly off shelves, plates and glasses smash in a kitchen, and stones whip through the air like small bullets. Anything that can be comfortably lifted with Strength ••• goes flying. Any character in the affected area is attacked with a pool of five dice each turn, doing bashing damage on any success (though Defense applies).
Vampire:
The Requiem

Seeds

Who’s Your Daddy?

One of the characters is approached by a vampire who claims to be their childe from before their last torpor. They give details about the Embrace, and accuse the character of having abandoned them without completing their training — but the supposed sire has no memory of having ever met their “childe” before. Is it just a case of the Fog of Eternity impairing the sire’s memory, or is there more to the new “childe” than meets the eye?

Gift Horse

A mysterious benefactor gifts one of the characters with a highly valuable treasure: an incredibly well-crafted weapon, perhaps, or a unique and priceless piece of jewelry. However, from the moment they accept possession of it, the item seems to summon bad luck and negative attention to them. At first it seems minor. In a group, they are the first to be targeted by their enemies. If the waiter drops a glass, it will spill in their direction. Tires go flat, guns misfire, police drive by at exactly the wrong moment. But the longer they keep the item, the more severe the misfortune that befalls them. None of it seems directly tied to the gift, but eventually they may figure out the timing is just a little too exact to be coincidental.

In order to make the choice of whether to endure the misfortune for the sake of retaining possession of the item, it must be particularly useful. As a Storyteller, be sure that the item offers not only material value, but significant intangible benefit as well. Maybe the sword ignores armor, or does more damage than anything available to the recipient. Jewelry might make the recipient more charismatic (mechanically speaking, bestowing successes to social challenges when worn or boosting social traits above their normal maximum).

Clumsy

Someone’s watching the characters — and they’re not doing a very good job of it. Amateur surveillance devices begin turning up attached to the characters’ cars, left in the pockets of their coats, or hidden under their favorite table at the club. Not-particularly-well-hidden telephoto cameras snap pictures when they’re out on the street, and their cars are trailed by hard-to-miss sedans with black-tinted windows.

Maybe the inept spy is just a wannabe hunter who can’t believe he’s stumbled onto “the real thing.” Maybe he’s a horror fetishist who wants to be “made into one of you.” Or maybe the lame surveillance is a clever ploy to convince the targets not to look any deeper. After all, once one’s found a bug in plain sight in their car, they’re not likely to continue looking for the one that’s well-hidden in the upholstery or the ventilation system.

Stolen Time

One of the characters begins to experience short blackout periods. She seems fine to others, but will suddenly blink and “come back” and not remember anything that’s happened in the last few minutes. After a week, the blackouts stop — but another member of the group begins to experience them. This cycles around the group, and then stops after each member has experienced it.

A few days later, someone approaches the characters with a journal dating back several hundred years. Each entry covers a week-long period and is titled with a different individual’s name. The most recent names belong to the characters in the group, and the entries detail things they experienced but don’t remember during their blackouts.

A Bloody Waste

With the discovery of his fourth exsanguinated victim, the police have officially named the murder as a serial killer. The media are calling him “The Village Vampire.” But no one in the local domain admits to having perpetrated the murders. Investigation of the corpses reveals their killer did not drink from the victims, but instead removed the blood using some mechanical means. So why is the murderer leaving bloodless bodies all around the city? Is it just a crazed human with delusions of vampirism? Hunters out to turn the world’s attention on the city’s vampire population? Or another predator horning in on Kindred territory?

The Con

One of the characters’ retainers falls prey to a financial con man who manages to swindle him out of millions of dollars in the character’s assets. The retainer then commits suicide to avoid having to admit his mistake and pay the price for losing his regent’s resources. Word gets back to the character, and investigation leaves a clear path back to the con man. This leaves the character with a couple of choices. Does he work to get his money back? Get revenge on the adept financial criminal? Or bring the con man over to his side, and recruit the unethical financier for his own purposes?

Infection

Everyone knows normal human diseases no longer affect those who have undergone the Embrace. Vampires can spend blood to heal injury, but they haven’t needed to be able to do so to recover from ailments, because they’re not affected by them any longer. Colds, flu, chicken pox, Ebola, STDs — all a thing of the past. Only they’re not any more.

Maybe it’s just one illness, a super-strain that’s somehow managed to make the leap from human to inhuman hosts, and is now being spread from vampire to victim and back across the world. Or maybe it’s a localized effect, with all the
bloodsuckers in a city suddenly finding themselves vulnerable to the most mundane of maladies. Or up the ante and have a torpored Kindred waken with a fully developed case of a contagious disease thought long gone. Smallpox. Polio. The Black Death. Can the Kindred find the cause (or the cure) before it’s too late?

Plotlines

Lucky 13

There’s a new energy drink on the market: Lucky 13. Like most, it promises five hours of alertness and energy, without jitters or dangerous side effects. Unlike many of its competitors, however, Lucky 13 is all-natural, provides a full day’s supply of thirteen important vitamins and minerals, and it actually tastes good. Entrepreneurial journals claim that Lucentia, the company behind the drink, is in line to rival the “big two” although the start-up has only been on the scene for less than a year. But in the few months since the super-drink has hit the scene, it’s become the drink of choice for those in the know, and many stores are limiting sales to avoid running out immediately after shipments arrive.

However, Lucky 13 also has an unexpected side effect, one that most of its fans aren’t aware of. After drinking enough of it (at least 32 ounces per day for at least 14 days in a row), people’s blood gradually becomes useless to vampires as sustenance. Initially, the Vitae provides half the normal blood traits that an unaffected victim would provide, but for each week afterwards that the victim continues to consume at least 32 ounces of Lucky 13 per day, every day, the effectiveness again halves. After two months straight of drinking significant amounts of Lucky 13, a victim would not provide a vampire with a single trait of sustenance, even if they were drained completely dry.

The effects wear off equally gradually. Victims will eventually retain their “food value,” but only if they abstain from Lucky 13 for weeks at a time. And really, who would want to do that?

Initial investigation into the background of the parent company reveals nothing supernatural. They seem to be nothing more than a beverage company with a hit on their hands. Their public relations campaign certainly doesn’t mention the supernatural side effect, and if any of the face-men of the company are aware of its properties, they’re hiding it well.

Lucentia obviously has money to burn. The company guards their secrets with a tenacity (and budget) rivaling Fort Knox; not only are the recipe and creation process protected with state-of-the-art technology, but the design team of this amazing new product live full time in a luxury corporate “condominiums” on the headquarters site, and inquiries reveal they’ve not been seen by non-company personnel since before the product’s release. And to make things more mysterious, investigations into Lucentia’s finances reveal layer upon layer of shell companies without
a clear line to proprietorship or control. Even the board of directors’ identities are hidden from the public. But someone powerful is obviously protecting their interests. Lucentia employees who reveal even the tiniest bit of information (or even admit to there being anything to hide) end up on the evening news in mysterious accidents. Those who dig around in the company’s record through technological means find their own electronic resources being attacked by a plethora of hackers and adroit identity thieves. Physical investigations bring the local authorities down on intruders far too quickly for there not to be something suspicious going on. Continued investigation brings more proactive retaliation: surveillance, threats, blackmail, sabotage – all from behind Lucentia’s carefully woven screen of anonymity.

Whoever the forces behind Lucentia are, it’s clear they are malevolent — at least to Kindred interests. And they don’t appreciate attempts to look behind the facade they’ve settled themselves behind.

The decision about who’s really at the heart of Lucentia is up to you as a Storyteller. A hunter organization with enough wealth to cover their tracks as they try to starve out the bloodsuckers? A group of magic-wielders with a vendetta and enough power to create this insidious attack against vampiric society? Or is it an inside job? Vampires who feed from those too high or low on the social scale to imbibe Lucky 13 may be hoping to starve out the competition, or maybe someone hopes to get the monopoly on non-weakened blood and create a demand-heavy market for normal vitae.

**Strange Bedfellows**

It comes to the characters’ attention that the local prince is receiving a great deal of company of late. While it’s not unusual for someone at the top of the political food chain to be inundated with petitions for favors and meetings with subordinates, not all of the prince’s purported visitors are vampiric. The first tenet of the Traditions orders vampires not to reveal their true nature to those not of the Blood – and sets a clear consequence for those who break it. So why is the prince meeting with other supernaturals (and apparently normal humans)? And why have these strange visits been kept so hush-hush? Domain officers have apparently been given orders not to speak of them (although, of course, that hasn’t truly stopped them) and rumors are beginning to stir about why exactly he’s got a parade of other beings visiting.

If characters assume that the prince is maintaining discretion about the existence of vampires, they can be approached by seemingly normal humans who are seeking audience with the prince and obviously know more than a human should be allowed to. These creatures might be changelings, Prometheans or mages. Or they might be fetches, wolf-blooded, Sleepwalkers, skinthieves, or any one of the countless other creatures that share the World of Darkness with the Kindred. Or maybe the prince really has lost it, and he’s allying himself with hunters or run-of-the-mill humans.

Checking in with the local harpy reveals that the prince has also been collecting boons on many of the local
domain members, especially those with positions of political power. Resources, wealth and favors such as feeding grounds, personal territories or the right to progeny are being traded out, as the prince gathers up boons on as many members of the local Kindred population as possible.

The prince's true motivation can be altered to fit the constraints of your specific chronicle. Maybe he's a forward-thinking individual who sees alliances with other supernaturals as a way to ensure peace in his domain. Maybe he's been warned about a potential plot to overthrow his rule, and realizing he's outnumbered in Kindred society, seeks strength from outside the Blood to cement his position on the throne. Or maybe he’s selling out the domain in a bid for something even more desirable than control of a city — world domination? Godhood? A return to mortal existence? Golconda?

Regardless of what end-goal you choose to give the prince for this plotline, the careful investigation of a powerful NPC is likely to provide the characters with opportunities to step outside of their Kindred-focused world and realize that they're not the only powerful folk around. As well, it may thrust them even deeper into local politics, as they attempt to navigate the always-treacherous waters of kindred machinations.

(Note: if one of the characters is playing the local prince, the focus of this entire plotline can be shifted over to one of the city’s prisci or primogen, the prince’s seneschal, or any other individual in the domain with sufficient political clout to provide concern and challenge to the character group.)

New Merit: Supernatural Lore (● to ●●●●●)

Effect: While the Occult ability provides information about both the mundane occult world and very basic supernatural matters, there are some secrets so tightly held that those outside of the involved groups have very little chance of ever stumbling across the information. A human high priestess may know about the beliefs and practices of 13th century Celtic Druids, or even about what herbs are high priestess may know about the beliefs and practices of chance of ever stumbling across the information. A human that those outside of the involved groups have very little supernatural matters, there are some secrets so tightly held about both the mundane occult world and very basic inherited a book of lore once possessed by their grandfather misfortune) to interview a vampire directly. Perhaps they used for cleansing an area of a poltergeist, but no amount of Occult ability will tell her about the in-clan Discipline spread of the Daeva vampire, or the history of the Ordo Dracul. That sort of specialized information is simply not the purview of even the most skilled mundane researcher.

The information exists, however, and despite the first Tradition, it will eventually fall into the hands of those who seek it.

The Supernatural Lore Merit represents the sorts of in-depth, obscure or protected information that goes above and beyond what can be obtained through the Occult Ability. Perhaps the character had the fortune (or misfortune) to interview a vampire directly. Perhaps they inherited a book of lore once possessed by their grandfather who hunted werewolves in the 1800s. Perhaps they are a member of another supernatural group and have developed a connection of exchanged information for mutual protection. Regardless of the exact form it takes, the Supernatural Lore Merit represents in-depth information about one particular Supernatural field. Higher dot levels represent more specific or off-limits information.

Players must choose a specific focus for their Supernatural Lore when purchasing it. No more than one type of Supernatural Lore may apply to any particular challenge. A player may purchase multiple instances of Supernatural Lore with different specific focuses. For example, she may have Supernatural Lore (Werewolves) ●, Supernatural Lore (Bloodlines) ●●, and Supernatural Lore (Fetches) ●●●. Ultimately the decision about what specific focuses are permissible for a given player to purchase is yours.

Supernaturals do not need Supernatural Lore to learn basic information about their own creature type. Certain truths just resonate, and it doesn’t take Occult or Supernatural Lore to figure out, as a vampire, that you have to drink blood or that you want to avoid sunlight and flames. Nor is it necessary for a player to have Supernatural Lore to justify knowing information he has encountered directly in game. However, if he’s trying to learn about a certain Bloodline’s weakness, Supernatural Lore: Vampires (general knowledge about all bloodsucking creatures), Kindred (specifically covering Kindred vampires), Clans (in general, or specializing in a certain Clan) or Bloodlines (in general or focusing on a certain Bloodline) may be necessary to uncover this well-hidden information.

You as a Storyteller, have final say over what information a certain Lore can cover, and which Lore specialties apply to a given situation.

This Merit can be used in two ways: Remembering or Researching.

The Remembering mechanic is used when a character wants to dredge his memory for a pertinent fact that relates to the situation at hand (essentially like Encyclopedic Knowledge, but for secret supernatural information.) The player rolls Intelligence + the appropriate Supernatural Lore Merit to determine if they are able to remember a pertinent fact based on their current situation. With a single success, the information remembered may be quite trivial. Additional successes indicate the information is more pertinent or useful. A failure indicates no pertinent supernatural information is garnered, and a dramatic failure results in false (and potentially dangerous) information being brought to mind.

Researching can be done aided by the Supernatural Lore Merit as well. In any situation where a character is doing an extended Research challenge about a supernatural topic in which he has Supernatural Lore, he may add the levels of his Merit to each dice roll he makes for the purposes of gathering information on the topic.

VAMPIRE: THE REQUIEM
Werewolf: The Forsaken

Seeds

Earworm

Everyone the characters talk to has the same song stuck in their heads. At first this is nothing more than curious or, at worst, annoying. But then the characters find that even spirits, not usually up on popular culture, can’t shake the song. Is this a local problem (meaning it’s probably traceable to a radio station), or worldwide (and therefore intrinsic to the song itself)? Or is the song just something that a particular street musician has been repeating — is she this phenomenon’s “patient zero”? And what, if any, are the long-term effects?

Under the Ice

It’s springtime, and the characters find a body under the ice at a local pond or lake. Normally this wouldn’t necessarily be something for a pack of werewolves to worry about, but this body has a hunk of fur clutched in its dead hand — fur that obviously came from a black wolf. The unfortunate person was chased into the water earlier in the season and froze to death. Did the victim grab the fur in self-defense? From a werewolf’s dying body (meaning that the body might be somewhere nearby — even in the same lake)? Is the person’s ghost haunting the lake?

Buried Fetish

The characters discover a fetish in the course of unrelated events. It might be buried in the earth, tossed into a landfill or hidden in the basement of an abandoned house. The fetish is obviously old and hasn’t been used in years, and the spirit inside is deep in slumber. The characters can wake it up (Rouse Spirit, p. 161 of Werewolf: The Forsaken). Is the fetish a relatively weak trinket, or a powerful weapon? Is it cursed? What happened to the original owner?

Eclipse

Given the importance of the moon to the Forsaken, it makes sense that they would pay close attention to lunar eclipses. An eclipse can set players on edge even if you don’t intend to do anything with it. Consider: A soft news story about “Mercury being in retrograde” generally has people blaming the heavenly bodies for everything from misunderstandings with co-workers to traffic jams. Why should werewolves be immune to this sort of bad logic? And besides, the eclipse might actually affect something. Maybe a werewolf’s Essence pool is halved while the eclipse is in effect, or maybe Lunes are “blind” (and so nothing the werewolves do will earn them Renown).

Exposed

The Rite of Talisman Dedication exists to prevent werewolves from having to deal with being naked every time they shapeshift. The notion of werewolves losing their clothes in the middle of the session is one that has some potential, but it gets old fast. That said, having the pack stuck in the middle of a populated area with clothes shredded or missing entirely has some mileage for a session. What happens when the Rite malfunctions? Do the characters steal clothes from street vendors? Break into the back of a thrift store? They might simply find a locus and step sideways, bypassing any problems with normal humans, but then they’re in the Shadow, which carries its own dangers.

Quarries Crossed

The pack is hunting down a target — a spirit as part of a sacred hunt, an enemy that they intend to kill, or maybe one of their packmates as part of an exercise or a bet. As they hunt, they hear another pack closing in on its quarry, and a man leaps in front of them, looks at them in terror, and then dashes off at a speed much higher than a normal human could manage. Why is the other pack hunting this person? And what is their target? A vampire or mage? A man Ridden by a quick-running spirit? Should the players’ pack be concerned about this? And what if the other pack has already found (and perhaps slain) their quarry?

Plotlines

Fearful Fire

Somewhere in the city, a fire blazes to life. The building is abandoned, and the block surrounding it is mostly devoid of human traffic. But as the flames consume the building, and the smoke blots out the stars, people gather on the street. They watch the firefighters work and silently thank whatever gods they believe in that it wasn’t their house that caught.

And in the back of the crowd, a young man and a powerful spirit watch the blaze with the same set of eyes. The young man’s name is Emilio Rodriguez. Emilio has always been fascinated by fire, and in fact his friends jokingly call him a “pyro.” It’s not really true (at least, it wasn’t until recently). He doesn’t get a sexual thrill from fire; he just gets lost watching it. He likes bonfires and campfires and candle flames, but he’s a generally good-hearted guy and he’d never hurt anyone.

The spirit is called Nithar Izi (“Fearful Fire”). It’s not a fire-spirit per se, but rather a reflection of fire as a cleansing agent or a renewer. It latched on to Emilio precisely because he’s a good man with a fascination for flames. The spirit is riding Emilio, Urging him to set fires in places where renewal is needed.

Why is renewal or cleansing so important? That’s up to you as Storyteller. Emilio and Nithar Izi are a good way to introduce a larger threat to the territory, something that
the pack (and any other Uratha in the area) has missed for whatever reason. Nithar Izi knows about the danger and is trying to fix it before it gets out of control, but an overzealous pack might kill Emilio and drive the spirit away before learning what’s really going on. If that’s the case, make sure that the truth is revealed later — the pack should know that by acting rashly, it lost the chance to nip the problem in the bud. Likewise, if they take the time to learn what’s happening to Emilio and why, they should be able to head off the larger issue (whatever it is) before it becomes untenable.

**Silver, Inc.**

The characters discover someone — to all appearances a normal human — with the tribal glyph for the Iron Masters tattooed on her shoulder. If questioned, she says that she saw it on the wall of a tattoo parlor. The characters can find the parlor in question, called Silver, Inc. The proprietor is a wolf-blood, and the shop is heavily warded (see the Warding Gifts, pp. 144-146 of *Werewolf: The Forsaken*). On the wall, sandwiched between Japanese kanji and unlicensed cartoon characters is a display of First Tongue glyphs — all of the Tribes of the Moon, plus symbols for “moon,” “warrior,” “danger” and whatever else you want to include.

The proprietor, a woman named Kelly Laurent, has no idea about the origins of those symbols, nor of her own wolf-blooded status. She received the designs from her cousin, but she isn’t willing to divulge that information to the characters. Kelly is tough, smart and not easily intimidated (Resolve + Composure dice pool 8). If the characters bully her, she’ll call the police and report them, and then call her cousin.

Her cousin is an Ivory Claw named Jonah Laurent. Jonah is using the glyphs to troll for Forsaken packs. He won’t just attack them, however. He intends to pick off the weaker packs in the area, or play them off against each other (one clue that the characters have here is that the glyphs on the wall do not mention or relate the Pure Tribes in any way).

Jonah and his larger plan to kill off the Forsaken are problematic, but the fact that a tattoo artist is offering to mark any random person with the language of spirits might be worse. Spirits might notice and take such tattoos as invitations. A person with the glyph for “warrior” tattooed on his arm might become Urged or, worse, Ridden by a spirit of violence, murder, war or nobility. If the characters don’t rein this problem in quickly, they might face an epidemic of spirit-Urgings. In addition, if the symbols become too recognizable, they expose the Uratha to scrutiny.

**The Gardener**

During the course of the chronicle, the pack runs across a man tending a garden. The garden can be located anywhere...
convenient to the chronicle. It might be part of a large farm, a patch of a suburban yard, or even a plot of a shared garden in the heart of the city. The gardener looks at the werewolves and greets them in First Tongue, but is polite and cheerful. He does not smell like Uratha, and Gifts such as Two-World Eyes and Scent of Taint don’t reveal anything conclusive about him other than obvious supernatural heritage.

If the characters have an immediate problem, the gardener helps them solve it. They might simply need a place to hide out for a while if they are being pursued. They might need a hint to help them solve whatever problem is currently vexing them. The gardener is well-versed in spiritual matters, and he has a great deal of useful, though general, knowledge about other supernatural beings (that is, he knows that vampires burn in sunlight but don’t fear crosses, though he does not know the names of their “clans”). If the characters out-and-out ask him what he is, he responds that he is “a gardener,” and leaves it at that. If the pack has a totem, the totem is terrified and deferential, much as a spirit would be toward a more powerful member of its choir (that is, a spirit that could eat it easily).

Uses of identification Gifts on the gardener are always inconclusive; the gardener is clearly a spiritual or magical being, but is apparently outside of the spirits’ purview to identify. The characters don’t have to trust the gardener, but over the course of the chronicle, they might find themselves using him as a contact or ally. He’s happy to provide help for whatever the characters are presently involved with, and he asks only that they help him with weeding, planting and harvesting (during the appropriate seasons). If the area in which the chronicle is set has a winter season during which nothing grows, the gardener vanishes during this time, returning when the ground warms again in spring.

However, the gardener is dangerous. In the very center of the garden are several plants, one per packmate. The only bits of them visible from above the ground are the leaves, green with white-silver accents. Underneath, they resemble root vegetables like celery root or parsnips, but they are humanoid shaped, complete with arms, legs and faces. If uprooted before they are finished growing, they shriek horribly, but if they are allowed to mature fully, they erupt from the earth and shed their leaves, taking on the exact likeness of the characters. At this point, the gardener sends his creations out to kill and consume their doubles.

(More information on the gardener is available in the sidebar entitled “Outsiders,” p. 43)

New Rite: Silent Hunt (••)

This rite is meant to be something that can be introduced to the characters as a new creation — an ally, contact or rival has developed it recently and is willing to teach it to the pack, for a price. The Silent Hunt allows a pack of Uratha in a populated area to stalk and learn about
their prey without giving themselves away. As long as they are surveying or hunting their target, they do not leave footprints, hair or claw marks, and any normal people that see them ignore them. Any violent action — and any change out of Urhan form — discontinues the rite.

**Performing the Rite:** The pack focuses on the quarry or task at hand (often performing Shared Scent first — see p. 150 of *Werewolf: The Forsaken*). The ritemaster then whispers the name of each packmate, followed by a First Tongue phrase that translates to “silence.” The werewolves change to Urhan form in turn, and afterwards begin their hunt.

**Dice Pool:** Harmony

**Action:** Extended (successes equal to the number of packmates, each roll represents one turn of concentration)

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The werewolf fails to complete the rite and the pack is locked in Urhan form until the next moonrise.

**Failure:** No successes are garnered.

**Success:** Progress is made toward the goal. When the player accrues successes equal to the number of packmates, the werewolves begin their hunt. They can track down their target, observe it, follow it and even get close enough to sniff it, but if any packmate changes shape, attacks the target, or allows himself to be seen, the rite’s effects end. While the rite is in effect, though, all players receive a bonus to Stealth rolls equal to the highest Cunning Renown in the pack. In addition, all ties on opposed Stealth rolls go to the pack. Finally, while the rite is in effect, all members can spend a point of Essence to make any Stealth roll a teamwork action (p. 134 of the *World of Darkness Rulebook*).

**Exceptional Success:** Significant progress is made toward the goal. If the rite concludes with successes equal to the number of packmates + 5, the point of Essence allows for a Stealth action to automatically succeed rather than use a teamwork action.

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<tr>
<th>Suggested Modifier</th>
<th>Situation</th>
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<tr>
<td>-1</td>
<td>Any participant has entered Death Rage in the last week</td>
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<td>-1</td>
<td>Rite is enacted on the crescent moon</td>
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<td>-3</td>
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<td>Rite is enacted on the full moon</td>
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<td>+1</td>
<td>Rite is enacted on the new moon</td>
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Mage: The Awakening

Seeds

Postcognition Witness

One of the characters uses the Time 2 spell: Postcognition (p. 260 of Mage: The Awakening) in the course of a story. As the mage watches, she sees a boy of about 12 walk through the scene, look directly at the character, cock his head and ask, “Who are you?” If the character answers, the boy converses until the spell ends, and it is clear by the tone of the conversation that he is directly communicating with the mage — which means that, from his perspective, he is seeing the future. Do the mages wish to track this boy down? Is he a nascent mage, or is his temporal ability simply an anomaly? Does he understand that he’s seeing the future, or does he think he is seeing ghosts or having hallucinations?

Eyes Wide Open

The characters are involved in a tense situation — a chase, a negotiation, sneaking up on a target, etc. — when they feel a powerful burst of magic. It fades almost immediately, and doesn’t last long enough for the characters to get any sense of what kind of magic was used. Likewise, no physical evidence exists that anything changed (no fire damage, for instance). What happened, as the characters might guess, is that someone just Awakened. Does that have any bearing on what they’re currently involved with? Is it something they can immediately go and investigate, or are they willing to risk Seers or Banishers finding the new mage first?

Teenage Rebellion

The Hierarch of the Consilium has a teenage son, also Awakened. The Hierarch frequently uses the fact that magic seems to run in her family as a bragging point, and in fact respect for that seems to have helped propel her into power. Her son, however, wants none of it. Rather, he loves being a mage, and he’s interested in joining one of the orders (he’s leaning toward the Adamantine Arrow — they teach magical kung fu, after all, and he’s 17), but he doesn’t want to follow in his mother’s Silver Ladder footsteps. He wants to learn to use his power, and his mother continually places restrictions on him. He comes to the characters for help and training. He asks for lessons in casting spells that are flashy and cool, but the characters should see that what he really needs is some moral guidance. Why shouldn’t he use Emotional Urging to get laid, or Reading the Outmost Eddies to continually win quick cash? If someone doesn’t start treating him like a mage, rather than a kid with some magic, he’s going to do something demonstrative.
The cabal is at a municipal building — a library, courthouse or something similar — and they feel a twinge of magic from a plaque on the wall. The lettering itself doesn’t reveal anything (no hidden Atlantean glyphs), but something is definitely odd. A spell like Find the Hidden Hoard (p. 195 of Mage: The Awakening) reveals a hollow behind the plaque, but spells designed to look through the plaque or wall fail. If you’re uncomfortable with saying “the spell fails” flat-out, impose a heavy penalty on the spells instead. If the characters manage to successfully cast, they’ll still know that something was trying to keep them out. What’s behind the plaque? Who put it there? It might be a message to the characters specifically. It might be a trap, laid by Banishers banking on the curiosity of the Awakened to do them in. Indeed, what if the trap has already claimed other mages, perhaps by making use of Time or Space magic to make them simply disappear?

**Time Skips**

Use this seed when a character takes a Paradox as backlash (see p. 124 of Mage: The Awakening). The Paradox seemingly inflicts no damage, and the mage probably thinks the spell didn’t go as awry as he thought. Over the next few days, though, he starts noticing that he’s missing time — just an hour here or there, on no noticeable schedule. At first the missing time is just annoying, as the character skips by meals and TV shows that he enjoys, but then the character “skips” while driving or performing some other task that demands his full attention. Why is this happening? Why that particular Paradox? Or did the Paradox simply provide a vector for a more potent magical intrusion?

**The Dead Walk**

One of the characters uses Mage Sight, activated via the Death Arcanum. In addition to whatever information she might get by simply casting the spell, she sees something disturbing — one of the passers-by on the street is dead. This walking corpse might be a vampire, a zombie, a ghost that has somehow given itself a physical form or some other exotic undead creature (note that Prometheans are not undead). The corpse has no interest in the characters, and is just going about its business (which might be of concern to the characters, depending on their interests). But if they want to follow it, they need to deal with whatever’s currently on their plates and get moving — the corpse is leaving the area quickly.

**Note:** This seed works equally well with any of the other Arcana, you just need to change “walking corpse” to “being composed of pure energy” (Forces), “person made from living marble” (Matter), “young woman who is actually a thousand years old” (Time), etc.

**The Faceless**

One of the characters is knocked out (or at least knocked down and stunned) while alone. As he lies there composing himself, he sees four people standing over him. They seem to be wearing black or grey suits, but he cannot see their faces. He hears snatches of conversations. “Now?” “No, too soon.” “But we’re here. Why not get it over with?” “Against the rules.” “How long?” “Four days, six hours, twenty-eight minutes, fourteen seconds.” And then they’re gone, with no trace. Magical detection reveals nothing, and no one claims to have seen these people coming or going.

What just happened? A visitation from Supernal Beings? A Seer plot to make the mage paranoid? Hallucination brought on by head trauma? Whatever it was, the character has just about four days to figure it out, before the Faceless return for him.

(More information on the Faceless can be found in the sidebar entitled “Outsiders,” p. 43)

**Plotlines**

**Justice**

A young member of the characters’ Consilium turns up dead, ripped to pieces as if by wild beasts. The characters’ cabal investigates and learns that a pack of werewolves is responsible. The characters can find the werewolves without too much trouble — they don’t advertise, but they don’t have any way of hiding from Awakened magic, either.

The pack, however, stands by its actions. The mage that the pack killed had drained all of the Essence from a nadhar (a holy site, or a locus in the context of Werewolf), or so the werewolves say. The characters know or can easily learn that the dead mage wasn’t nearly powerful enough to accomplish this task, but circumstantial evidence suggests that she was at least at the locus near the time it “died.”

The cabal has a few choices at this point, of course. They can exact revenge on the werewolves, and depending on the strength of the Consilium and the cabal’s position within it, they might be able to do so in spectacular fashion. But the mages probably don’t know how big the pack really is or what werewolves are truly capable of doing, and starting a war with relentless, near-invincible hunters isn’t a wise choice. They might be able to get the pack to agree to make restitution somehow, depending on how they present their case. Either way, though, other loci in the area start dying as well, and the werewolves of the area believe that the mages are doing it for revenge. The situation is dangerous, both because the werewolves might go on the hunt, and because something is sucking up spiritual energy at an alarming rate. The cabal needs to find out what, and doing that probably means finding a werewolf willing to help them investigate.
And what is destroying loci? The mage who was murdered in the first place did not deserve her fate — she didn’t destroy the first locus. The entity that destroyed it was an Abyssal spirit, summoned by a careless mage, or perhaps one of the players’ characters during a Manifestation Paradox. Every locus since her death, though, was destroyed by her restless spirit, a ghost mage.

**Dragon Tracks**

Mages occasionally refer to ley lines, the paths of power that connect Hallows, as “dragon tracks.” Many mages educated within the Atlantean paradigm believe, in an abstract way, that dragons once lived on Earth and may have guided the first Awakened to Atlantis, but for the most part it’s just a colorful title. No one believes that dragons are likely to show up and start using those tracks again.

Of course, what people believe is largely irrelevant to the way things actually are.

The characters follow a dragon track to the remains of a small town. The town is isolated, separated from larger cities by desert, mountains, or other topography. The town has been burned to cinders and picking through it is dangerous, and at first blush it might appear that a fire simply ran wild. But as the characters investigate, they realize that the fire came from concentrated bursts from above. They also find bodies bitten in half. If you want to be really clinical about it, the mages might even find huge piles of dragon droppings, with complete human skeletons (this scene can be played for visceral horror to great effect, but if your troupe is going to get the giggles, skip it).

The dragon is entirely biological. That is, it isn’t a materialized spirit or a magical construct. Where did it come from? Someone in the town unleashed it. Maybe it was chained or magically bound in a nearby cave. Maybe it was suspended in time (see the Faerie Glade spell on p. 265 of *Mage: The Awakening*), or locked in the Shadow or Twilight. In any event, the creature is (or was) hungry and is clearly capable of wreaking great destruction on the Fallen World.

Although this story might appear to be a fairly routine “kill the monster” setup, it’s more complicated than that. Even if it’s possible to kill the dragon through conventional or magical means, is that the tactic the characters should be taking? This is a being of pure magic, and it’s probably intelligent. Supposedly, dragons led mages to Awakening to begin with — is this dragon here to lead the Awakening to greater revelations? Does the dragon understand what it did in destroying the town, or was it acting out of primal hunger? Did something external drive it into a rage? And if the characters manage to talk to the beast, to come to terms with it and make it understand the nature of the world…then what? Reveal it to the world? Will the Seers allow that to happen?

**Murder is Contagious**

One of the characters receives a call that someone of his acquaintance has been taken hostage at a local rec center. A scout troop is having a “lock-in” there, and one of the boys brought a gun, shot one of the counselors, and is holding the
rest at gunpoint. The police, of course, have the building surrounded and are taking all of the usual precautions, and the character is advised of what is happening but told to stay back from the building.

Incidentally, this initial salvo into the story can open up a good discussion among the players about what the responsibility is for mages. Yes, they don’t have to do anything at all in this situation, and some among the Awakened (notably the Guardians of the Veil) would say that absent evidence of magical interference, they shouldn’t. But then, other mages would argue that since they can do something about it, they should. It’s not about being heroes, it’s about being human. In any case, if the characters don’t do anything, the boy eventually shoots several more people, a number of his classmates among them, before being shot down by the police.

What made him do it? If the characters investigate, they soon learn that the boy had a needle stuck into the skin on the back of his neck. The needle carries a strong psychic charge — basically, it pushed the boy toward murder. Who enchanted the needle and who put it there? The characters need to find out, because other such needles starting showing up, stuck into the necks of other unfortunate citizens. The citizens (including the boy, if he survives the ordeal) have no memory of what happened, which is unfortunately not much of a legal defense.

If the characters did not attempt to save the people, mages in the Consilium condemn them as cowards and hold them complicit, since they could have stopped it. If they did stop the boy, some voices in the Consilium say that they should have stayed out of it (of course, those voices grow quieter when the needle is discovered, but as anyone who has ever had a political discussion knows, opinions don’t easily shrink in the face of facts). In either case, this story is not only about the characters’ search for the murder-needles, but also about how their actions frame a question that continually dogs the Awakened: What is the Awakened responsibility to Sleepers and the Fallen World?

New Spell: Telekinetic Push (Forces ••)

Sometimes a mage needs to make her point magically, but without causing any real bodily harm. In such instances, the power to gesture or nod and toss an opponent backwards is useful.

Practice: Ruling
Action: Instant
Duration: Lasting
Aspect: Vulgar
Cost: None

If the player succeeds on the casting roll, the target suffers a Knockdown effect (see p. 168 of the World of Darkness Rulebook). The target still gets the reflexive Dexterity + Athletics roll to keep his feet, but subtracts the spell’s Potency from the dice pool.

Adamantine Arrow Rote: Step Off

Dice Pool: Presence + Intimidation + Forces

While mages of the Arrow are generally quite capable of knocking their foes down through conventional means, there’s something undeniably scary about doing it through sheer magical force.
Promethean: The Created

Seeds

Dead Doppelganger

The characters discover a dead body that looks identical to one of them. The person was beaten to death, apparently by an angry mob, which is probably a familiar concept to the Prometheans. But who is this person? The Promethean's twin, or the twin of the person used to create the Promethean? Was this corpse a Promethean itself, and if so, will it be returning to life soon?

If you want to plant this seed ahead of time, consider having Disquiet stop affecting the character for a week before discovering the body. When the characters find the body, beaten by a group of furious people, they should realize that this unfortunate person was somehow taking on the Promethean's Disquiet. Some people say everyone has an exact double somewhere — is it true? If so, how did the Promethean's double manage to synch up with her to this point?

Note: The notion of doppelgangers is explored in the sourcebook World of Darkness: Urban Legends. While that presentation doesn't have anything to do with Prometheans, it's definitely worth a look if you want to expand this seed out into a longer story.

Letters

The characters find Pilgrim Marks indicating a stashed package. If they seek it out, they find letters from several Prometheans to one named "Josiah," though they do not see any of his responses (since he's long since sent them on). If the characters read the letters carefully, they can get hints and musings on the Refinements, the Pilgrimage in general, strange creatures that the letter-writers have encountered — in short, anything that you wish to introduce to the players. The letters can be used to introduce new stories, or they can be a focal point for their own story when Josiah comes for them.

Pandorans

Because Pandorans go dormant around mortals, they can show up in strange places. Most Pandorans look like debris or statues. As soon as a Promethean gets too close, though, the Pandorans awaken, hungry for Pyros-laden flesh. In this seed, as the characters arrive in a small town, they see that several houses in a small area have collapsed from the middle. The main load-bearing supports appear to have failed, but before the Prometheans have time to process this, a group of Pandorans attacks them. The Pandorans in their dormant forms were used as supports for the houses. Who would do something like that? Was the builder aware of what he was doing? And where did several similarly-shaped Pandorans come from, anyway?

Speeding Ticket

The characters are pulled over while driving. The reason for the stop isn't necessarily important. The driver might actually have been speeding or driving erratically, but maybe the police officer just felt the character looked suspicious (if the throng has been in the area for a while, Disquiet may play role). Even if the cop has never seen the characters before, Disquiet is likely to become an issue quickly. Does the driver have ID? What about insurance? Does the character know his rights (for instance, does he know he can refuse to let the cop search his car)? If the Promethean doesn't defuse the situation quickly, he might wind up in jail, and given the Wasteland effect that's a dangerous proposition.

Azoth Calls

Prometheans can sense one another over great distances. As the characters go about their Pilgrimages, they feel a blast of Azoth strong enough to cause them physical pain. An immensely powerful Promethean is apparently approaching, but from where? And how far away is it? Did the Created just appear out of nowhere, or did something happen to magnify the Azoth radiance of another Promethean, perhaps one the characters knew was in the area? Another possibility is that the blast is short-lived, perhaps indicating that the radiance was an Azoth flare — a formerly dead Promethean returning to life. If that's the case, what was special about this flare that made it so strong?

Survivors

The characters are involved in an accident or natural disaster that leaves many of the people around them dead or seriously injured. Perhaps they're riding a subway or a bus when it crashes, or maybe they're outside during a tornado. Either way, they are largely unharmed, while most of the people around them are mortally wounded. To make best use of this seed, involve electricity in some way. Perhaps a freak accident involving a water tower and a power line electrocutes a lot of people — and the Prometheans are not only uninjured, but in the peak of health (and displaying their disfigurements to boot). The characters might be blamed for the accident or worshipped as gods or heroes. Can they get out of the area before people start plastering their pictures all over the Internet? What if someone caught them on video?

A Night to Dismember

The characters awaken in their lair to find body parts strewn about and blood on the walls. It looks like someone ripped several people apart and the brought the remains here. Within the next evening, the characters find themselves in the crosshairs of every one of the supernatural factions in the
area. Who’s trying to frame them? Who died, and why were they so important to the local vampires (or werewolves, or changelings — if you feel really ambitious, what if all of the local night-folk come for the Created)? Who even knows enough about the Prometheans to blame them? And, of course, consider the question that someone is going to raise eventually — did one of the characters actually commit this crime?

**Plotlines**

**The Cat That Isn’t a Cat**

In a dusty, cluttered, yet still warm and inviting occult bookstore lives a black-and-white cat. It doesn’t have a name (the owner of the store, if asked, says that cat never told him its name), and it doesn’t wear a collar. It doesn’t leave the store, and spends most of its time nuzzling up against customers’ legs or perched on high shelves, looking down on people (and only rarely swiping at their hats). But the cat isn’t a cat.

It will “speak” to Prometheans that enter the store. It doesn’t necessarily know them specifically, unless a character has the Repute Merit, but it knows the supernatural situation of its city down the weakest minion of the youngest vampire. It also knows, with a moment of thought, any Promethean character’s milestones and how to fulfill them. It could, therefore, guide one of the Created straight to the New Dawn.

It could. Will it, though? The cat is willing to answer questions and provide advice, but if the questions get too direct, the cat looks at the questioner and asks, very seriously, if the character really wants that information directly. After
all, the cat explains, “if I tell you, then you take responsibility for knowing it before you’re supposed to find out. I don’t know what the consequences of that might be.”

Played correctly, the cat is a perfect information font. If the characters feel that taking too much information from the cat is “cheating” or likely to get them in trouble with destiny, then they’ll use the cat as a last resort or as a way to get help when they’re stumped. If they get too greedy and start using the cat like a walkthrough in a video game, then you can use that “violation” to introduce whatever consequences you want. Any run of bad luck, any bad die roll that leads to failure, any complication that the characters bring upon themselves can be attributable to the Cat-That-Isn’t-A-Cat.

Playing the cat correctly is delicate. Don’t simper or be coy. Answer questions honestly and straightforwardly, but don’t be afraid to refuse information outright (which is different than the standard trope of saying “you’re not ready to know that yet”). One of the questions that the cat refuses to answer honestly is, “What are you?” Asked that, it always says that it is a cat — but any truth detection powers that the characters have, or even a good Empathy roll, reveal that to be a lie.

So what is the cat? Clever players might guess it to be a qashmal, and Sense Pyros and Sense Flux both detect incredible levels of power coming from the cat. But spirit-detecting powers or other Transmutations that work with other sorts of magic (generally available to followers of the Refinement of Silver; see Magnum Opus) also reveal that the cat is a highly magical being. The cat isn’t a spirit, and it doesn’t behave like a qashmal, for the most part (for one thing, if it is a qashmal, its Mission is an extremely long one because it’s been around for years). What is the cat? The only thing the characters will probably ever know for sure is that it isn’t a cat.

(More on the cat is available in the sidebar entitled “Outsiders,” p. 43.)

The Agent

Early on in the chronicle, the characters become aware of a man in a dark suit watching them. He doesn’t interfere with them, and he doesn’t harm them or call attention to them. He’s only present when the characters are out in the open or among other people (that is, he’s there if the characters visit a shopping mall, but not if they’re alone in their lair). If they approach him, he leaves. If they corner him, he won’t interact with them. If the characters are willing to physically harm him, he screams for help (which probably brings swift retribution upon the characters). The goal in the early part of the chronicle is to establish his presence and make him an enigma and, perhaps, an annoyance.

As the chronicle progresses, he interacts with the characters occasionally. He shows up to ask them questions or make suggestions on how to avoid scrutiny. He might tip them off if the police are looking for them, for whatever
reason. The “agent” still won’t identify himself (and he graciously accepts whatever nickname the characters give him), but he is obviously not interested in hurting or hindering the characters. At some point, though, he gets caught in the crossfire when violence erupts (as it inevitably does in a Promethean chronicle). Maybe a Pandoran bites him, or maybe a Disquiet-crazed mob thinks he’s on the characters’ side. The agent dies, and the characters have to contend with having a dead body on hand, which probably isn’t a huge issue in itself. Let the throng play through losing their quirky, mysterious companion — are they sad? Relieved? Curious? Don’t let them try and investigate him, however. Hit them with a new, compelling story immediately and move the chronicle along.

And when they get to wherever they’re going or when the new story starts, the agent is right back where he belongs, watching them. He’s a clone (see p. 211 of Promethean: The Created). Why is he watching this throng of Prometheans? How many of “him” are there? Who is sending them after the characters? Is the agent actually working for the government?

New clones show up whenever one dies, and the replacements seem to know everything that the deceased ones did, up to the last sunrise before the clone’s death. Clearly the clones are being “updated” somehow. What the clones don’t know, however, is that they are clones. They assume that they are called “back to base” and then “reassigned,” which is how they account for any time lapse between appearances. If the characters make it known to a clone that he is one of a series of similar creations (perhaps by showing him the body of a predecessor), he might be willing to tell the characters who is pulling his strings and why (if he knows).

Backwards from Redemption

This isn’t a plotline so much as an alternate way to approach a Promethean chronicle. Start with the characters as Redeemed, playing through a day in their lives. Include a vivid image of an object, a sensation or a memory for each character. This might be a particular scent, a snatch of music, a specific object or a sound, but make it something concrete and relatable. If the player wishes, the character might make use of the Redeemed Boon of an Athanor.

Then play the scene in which the character became Redeemed. Let the players introduce plot points that have been “resolved” — at this point they don’t need to be anything more specific than, for instance, one character thanking another for “saving my life that day on the lake.” The goal here is to have each player come up with a scene that you can play out from earlier in the Pilgrimage.

Move backwards through the characters’ journeys, letting them retroactively explain comments or decisions they make. Possible iconic Promethean scenes include creating Athanors, creating new Prometheans, dealing with Disquiet and Torment, being attacked by Pandorans, committing or enduring lacuna and switching Refinements.

“End” the chronicle with the moment of the characters’ creations, and work in the memory or object that you used in the initial scene.

This approach isn’t for everyone, obviously. It takes a lot of creativity and work on the part of the whole troupe, and the players have to be willing to work together to craft the throng’s journey — backwards. Some players might feel that since everything is a foregone conclusion, there’s no payoff in examining the process, and that’s not an invalid way of looking at it. Other players might enjoy this kind of revelatory method of experiencing Promethean. It’s even possible for the starting point to be a character’s destruction, rather than redemption, if the player is interested in pursuing a tragic character.

(This plotline is inspired in part by Paul Tevis’ storytelling game A Penny For My Thoughts. If you find this method of play interesting, consider checking it out.)

New Athanor: The Scorpion

— Retaliation (Osiran)

The Scorpion is alert, ever at the ready to sting and poison those who dare attack it. Its tail curls back, its sharp claws are always just open enough to snap closed, and its many eyes watch for enemies.

Prometheans that develop the Scorpion Athanor don’t believe in letting a slight go unpunished and don’t believe that revenge is a dish best served cold. They would rather exact retribution for an injury immediately, and anyone who attacks such a Promethean is likely to regret it.

Trait Affinities: Dexterity, player’s choice of Brawl, Weaponry or Firearms

Promethean Boon: When the Promethean suffers two points of lethal damage from a single, direct attack, the player can immediately spend a point of Reagant to make a reflexive counterattack using that character’s chosen combat Skill (chosen when this Athanor is created). The initial attack much be directed at the character — if the Promethean suffers damage from a grenade thrown into his throng, that doesn’t count, though if the attack threw the grenade directly at the character, the Athanor would apply. When making the counterattack, the character uses the normal, full dice pool available for the character, even if the character has already acted that turn or take some action that would normally make the attack impossible (such as Dodging). The character must be physically capable of making the attack, of course — if the character pairs this Athanor with Firearms but has no guns (or no ammunition), the boon is useless.

Redeemed Boon: During any combat in which he is attacked (successfully or not), the player can spend a Willpower point to allow the character to take his action at the top of the Initiative order. This boon therefore works much like the Fresh Start Merit (p. 112 of the World of Darkness Rulebook), but does not require a full action.
Changeling: The Lost

Seeds

Pussy Cat. Pussy Cat

Kit, a feline Hedge Beast Companion, attaches herself to one of the characters. She's sneaky, cunning and 100% loyal to her newly chosen "master," lending aid to the full extent of her abilities without asking for anything in return. However, Kit is being used as a scrying device by someone else – someone who sees everything Kit sees and hears everything she hears. Investigating may reveal the spy to be nothing more than a nosey voyeur, living vicariously through the hedge-cat. Or maybe it's something far more sinister. A rival Lost faction gathering information for a political coup. Invading forces from the Hedge, looking for weakness in the local freehold's security. Or a former Keeper watching from Arcadia. Regardless of the person behind the scenes, Kit's intentions are good, and she'll be heartbroken if her new master tries to send her away.

The Cat Came Back

Coupled with "Pussy Cat, Pussy Cat," this seed involves what happens when the characters decide to deal with the "Kit problem" once and for all. Kit's dead. They know: they killed her themselves. But the next morning, she's on the doorstep, with no memory of her own murder at all. No matter how many times they kill her, she just keeps coming back.

A similar seed can be used with any antagonist the characters deal with in a lethal manner. There's nothing more confusing than an enemy who not only won't stay dead, but has no idea that they've been killed.

Lost Boys

The characters discover a troupe of young children (ranging from 6 to 12 years in age) living in the Hedge. The hedge-children do not have Seemings or Glamour; they appear to be wholly human. Subsisting on what they can forage, scrounge or capture, they navigate the Hedge around their Hollow with surprising ease. They've managed to adapt to their hostile environment quite well, albeit in a manner that is more "Lord of the Flies" than "Peter Pan." The children will resist being returned to their mundane homes (all have escaped from neglectful or abusive families) and have no interest in being "adopted" by Lost foster-parents. But can the Lost truly come to terms with leaving these youths to their own devices in the hostile territory of the Hedge? And what happens when something starts picking off these Lost Boys, one by one!

Welcome to My Parlor

Something is building web traps over the major Hedge-paths between the freehold and its most commonly used destinations. Some are massive sticky constructs that physically block travel and enslave those who try to take them down. Others are pit-traps, designed to capture those who walk along common roads through the Hedge. Are these the work of hungry Hedge-beasts, or is there a larger plot to isolate the freehold?

Marked Man

A newcomer to the freehold arrives bearing an almost-unbelievable amount of Violation Marks (see Violation Marks sidebar, p. 30). He claims to be the victim of some sort of freak accident, mistakenly punished for others' wrongdoings. His current demeanor is subdued, and he has skills and abilities which could aid the local freehold (feel free to customize the character to act as a key to whatever challenges face your current chronicle). But can the Lost really trust someone who bears that kind of history on his Mien?

Waste Not, Want Not

People are going missing — but only the bad ones. A woman, arrested for leaving her sleeping toddler locked in the car while she goes in for a drink, disappears from her jail cell. A man with a history of domestic abuse goes missing, and his son begs "the boogie man" to bring his daddy back. A rape victim is rescued by an unseen figure who drags her assailants into the shadows of a dead-end alley, never to be seen again. A priest, moved to a desk job to appease allegations of child molestation, vanishes from behind the locked doors of his new office.

Is it a Keeper with dark hungers or someone playing vigilante? More importantly, if they keep targeting the worst of humanity, should they be stopped or supported?

New Goblin Contract — Hospitality's Hold (•••)

The tradition of Hospitality is one that is longstanding among the Lost. Bartenders, hoteliers, innkeepers, restaurateurs, nightclub owners and sometimes even private individuals may mark a particular location as subject to the rules of Hospitality, and all who come there know that they have been promised sanctuary, at least for a limited period of time.

This social convention is one of the sole reasons why the wary Lost are willing to gather together in more than small and splintered groups – it encourages even the most cautious Changeling to be willing to meet face-to-face with others, knowing that centuries of tradition protect her.

In most cases, Hospitality is enforced solely as a social agreement. A place marked as under Hospitality
and any who violate it are looked down upon, shunned, or refused Hospitality in the future. However, this relies on social intercourse to be effective. Word of mouth can be an unreliable means of spreading news about such social indiscretions (especially if the violation was done in a stealthy manner, or caused so much damage that no one lived to tell the tale.) As well, a Changeling who violates Hospitality in one area, then travels to another, may find that he has travelled faster than his reputation and thus outstepped the consequences of his actions.

In order to thwart these weaknesses in the social constraint, some Lost take their commitment to Hospitality a step further. By enacting a Goblin Contract to aid in the enforcement, they make certain that violators (especially those who make a habit out of breaking this tradition) can be easily identified.

This Contract can only be activated in an area which is clearly marked as a place of Hospitality (see details on potential Hospitality marks on pp. 34-35 of Changeling: the Lost). Only one instance of Hospitality’s Hold may be active in any particular area at a time.

Cost: 1 Glamour per level of Enforcement

Dice Pool: Willpower + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling owns or is the primary resident of the building which the Contract affects. (Note: if the Catch is used, the changeling spends no Glamour to activate the Contract, but must still choose an enforcement level as this will determine the duration of the Violation Marks as well as the changeling’s weakness during the duration of the Contract.)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling host expends the Glamour, but the Contract does not take effect. In fact, it backfires on its originator, and she is wrongly marked by the Wyrd as a violator of Hospitality. The marks look and endure just as if the Contract had been successful and the changeling had violated Hospitality under her own Enforcement.

Failure: There is no effect, although the Glamour is still expended. The changeling host can tell the Contract has not been successfully activated, and may attempt to activate it again after 10 minutes’ time has passed.

Success: The tradition of Hospitality is bolstered by the changeling host’s intention to enforce it. The host determines what level of Enforcement she wants the area to be under, with a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 5, and spends that many points of Glamour while traveling around the perimeter of the area affected. Until the next dusk or dawn (whichever comes first) or until the host leaves the area of Hospitality, anyone who violates the traditions of Hospitality in that area is marked by the Wyrd for their crime. (For details on Hospitality, see pp. 34-35 of Changeling: the Lost; for more on Violation Marks, see the sidebar.) The area may be as large as an entire building, or as small as a single room.
For the duration of the Contract, the host is at a penalty equal to the level of Enforcement on any action not directly related to maintaining or enforcing the traditions of Hospitality, and at a bonus equal to the level of Enforcement for any actions that are directly related to protecting that Hospitality. This is a supernatural modifier and relates to any challenge, including the use of Contracts. The penalty does not apply in any actions taken against those currently bearing Violation Marks.

Breaking Hospitality does not break the Contract. A host protecting other visitors against someone who has already violated Hospitality does not mark the host.

**Exceptional Success:** As per Success; however, the contract does not enforce a penalty on the host’s non-Hospitality related actions as described above. The bonus remains in effect for actions directly pertaining to enforcing the Hospitality.

### Violation Marks

If a Changeling violates Hospitality in an area where Hospitality’s Hold is active, his Mien is marked in such a way that any Wyrd-associated creature (Lost, hedgebeast, hob, Fetch or Other) is made aware of the violation.

The Marks vary, depending on the nature of the host whose Hospitality was violated and the Mien of the violator. For example, a Lightingquick host’s Contract may leave a rippled scar in the shape of a bolt on those who violate his Hospitality, or a wolfish Hunterheart’s might leave a series of Wyrd-bestowed clawmarks. On a Flowering, the Marks may look like smudges of soot on his rose petals, or a tangle of ephemeral fog around the ankles of a Darkling. The Violation Marks cause no mechanical effect; they do not bestow physical damage or hamper the Hospitality-breaker’s abilities directly in any way. They are, however, a clear sign of their bearer’s violation for the entirety of their duration. They cannot be masked by any mundane or supernatural means, and although their bearer may explain them in any way he likes, any Wyrd-associated viewer will know instantly what their meaning is.

Violation Marks last for a number of months equal to the Enforcement level the host chose when activating Hospitality’s Hold. A changeling may bear any number of Violation Marks at a given time, although only one is bestowed for violating any given instance of Hospitality’s Hold.

### Plotlines

#### Turn, Turn, Turn

This plotline will resolve itself over a six-week period. It is designed to give players an opportunity to experience the strange and sometimes unknowable phenomenon that is the Wyrd, and to reiterate that sometimes there are no answers or easy solutions. It makes a good complement to other plotlines, especially those involving court tensions, but because it resolves itself over time rather than offering a concrete solution that the player’s characters can implement, it may be unsatisfactory to players as a solo story line.

It’s only mid-way through the Season, and the crown has moved on. It’s hard to tell who is more confused and surprised: the monarch who was dethroned six weeks early, or the one who had no idea her reign was going to start so soon.

The change sets the freehold into chaos. The “rightful” monarch’s court accuses the “usurper” court of somehow manipulating the Wyrd in order to extend their period of rule. The newly-crowned monarch protests innocence, and vows to expend every freehold resource possible to get to the bottom of the situation. The characters find themselves tasked with investigation of the matter.

Upon interviewing the local power players, however, there seems to be no one behind the untimely change. A low-Clarity member of the freehold claims responsibility, but it quickly becomes evident that while this individual may well believe they’ve found a new Clause of the Contract of Hours that allows them to manipulate the turning of the seasons, they really are just delusional.

To make things worse, unseasonable weather seems to be following the jump. If the new monarch is Summer, an early heat-wave dries up newly-sprouted greenery. Fall cuts summer’s heat wave short, and the leaves begin to turn color unseasonably early. If Winter wears the new crown, hail, ice or even snow hits the area long before it’s ever been recorded before. Or Spring’s thaw has crocus and daffodils popping up before the snow should have even fully melted.

Players attempting to use divination about the cause of the problem are struck down with visions of the seasons eternally spiraling into an increasingly tighter cycle, until eventually time folds in on itself altogether and reality stops in its tracks. Those who trade with the local market for information will find that in return for whatever the hobs bargain away from them, they receive only platitudes: “All things work out in their own good time” or “To everything, there is a season.”

Three weeks later, the crown jumps again, putting it now on the head of the season opposite the one it should be. Threats and theories fly freely through the local Lost
community. Ambassadors from nearby domains flock to the area, fearful that the phenomena may spread to their own home territories. Everyone seems ready to point fingers, but none can truly explain the changes.

The weather is crazed. Record high or low temperatures sweep through the area. Thunderstorms, lightening and tornados threaten, and while few actually manifest, the predictions of freakish local weather makes national news. Weather-related elements or those familiar with the Contracts of the Wild may be able to discern that this is no natural phenomenon, nor is it conjured in the same manner that the Wild Clauses do: it is as if, in this localized area, the natural season and the new weather patterns are at war with one another.

Ten days later, the crown jumps again. Every monarch in the freehold is up in arms, suspecting foul play from the other three. Non-seasonal court members are looked at with great suspicion – is this the beginning of some play for a break from the seasonal ways?

What's really happening here? Maybe the monarchs have been lazy in their care of the freehold, and the Wyrd is reminding them that it's a fickle and transitory thing. Maybe someone (Lost or otherwise) has been playing fast and loose with time magic or seasonal sorcery. It could be the sanction of a recently broken and poorly-worded Pledge that left one or more parties involved dead or injured. Or it might be the aftermath of an ill-constructed bargain between the local Goblin Market and one or more of the seasonal monarchs. If so, the affected royals are likely aware of the cause, but not admitting it, while the hobs may be gloating about "what happens when you don't pay up." The root cause is up to you as a Storyteller to decide, and if you're using this with an ongoing chronicle, your choice can act as a hook to connect this plotline with your ongoing story.

However, on the last day of the original season's rule, the crown returns to the original monarch's forehead, just in time for the traditional transfer to the new monarch. With the transfer, the seasons align correctly once more, and from that day forward, the crowns manifest normally.

The Hedge King

Just outside of the local Freehold's territory, a new Lost has begun setting up a domain for himself in the Hedge. A terrifying Autumn Darkling with the visage of a scarecrow, he carves a huge Hollow, which he names his "kingdom," and sets about establishing positive report with the local Lost. With a high Wyrd, The Hedge King seems not only to have an uncanny mastery over the Hedge itself, but quickly insinuates himself with the local Goblin Markets, the hob population, and a wide variety of the hedgebeasts in the area, including those which had previously been threatening the local Lost.

Despite his frightening appearance, the Hedge King is a charming and gracious individual, charismatic and welcoming to all he encounters. He welcomes members of the freehold to his Hedge-demesne, where he treats them graciously and with great hospitality. He also makes visits to the local freehold (accompanied by liveried guards who seem utterly devoted to their regent), where he adeptly discusses local issues of concern to "our joint lands" with the reigning and past monarchs. He also goes out of his way to meet and converse with other members of the freehold: the workers whose talents may not be as appreciated as they'd like, the loners who haven't found likeminded individuals to motley with. The courtless. The unpopular. The outcasts. All are approached with great concern and charisma, and offered a place of honor within his kingdom, if they are unhappy with their current lot.

His stated purpose is a simple one: to patrol the local Hedge, provide as much safety as possible for those who travel through it into and out of the local area, and ensure that no innocent humans wander in. A noble goal, and one he works hard to convince others to support through their resources, their ideas, and, if they're willing, their direct service in the form of patrols.

In exchange, he offers increased security, safety and a sense of purpose. To the unappreciated, he offers accolades. To the wrongdoer, redemption. To the unloved, affection.

And the Hedge King is nothing if not effective. As weeks pass the Hedge in the area begins to change. Briarwolves and other dangers are killed, driven off, or impressed into the Hedge King's service. Humans who have wandered into the Brambles through unprotected doorways or traps left for them by the Others are found quickly by the Hedge King's troops and returned shaken, but safe to their own world. Hedge bounty in the area increases, making Trifles and Goblin Fruit easier to harvest. Those with Hollows in the area even find their own sanctuaries are improved and their amenities are increased. In general, the presence of the Hedge King and his followers seems benevolent and beneficial.

However, in the guise of such a selfless act, the Hedge King is also building an army – one which soon grows to rival or exceed that which the local freehold could muster. How long will it be before he decides that the freehold's resources could be better served dedicated to his own purpose?

(For additional intrigue, this plotline can be run in conjunction with the seed "Waste Not, Want Not" on p. 28, with the kidnapped individuals Hedge-spun into more suitable forms and personalities and utilized for the Hedge King's army. This raises the additional concern of the Lost "monarch" taking humans for his own purposes, akin to how the Others prey on humanity. Will it matter to the local Lost that he's taking only bad people, or that he's using them to protect innocents from the Hedge? Only time will tell.)
Hunter: The Vigil

In both seeds and plotlines, you'll see that each idea is given a bit of extra meat in the form of “twists.” Given that the Hunter: The Vigil experience is sometimes broken out into very different tales depending on the tiers used in the story, we've taken a little space to talk about how use of those tiers might twist the seed accordingly.

Seeds

Rogue Hunter

The hunter’s life is often a life of constant tragedy punctuated with triumphs that could easily be categorized as pyrrhic victories instead of full-blown success stories. As such, hunters are pretty fucked up. What makes it worse is that these tragedies are often tragic in the truest sense: the pain a hunter lives is pain he has brought upon himself, if only because he has chosen to carry the Vigil. Here, a hunter goes off the deep end. Everything must be cleansed in fire. He becomes a firebug extraordinaire, and cares little who gets caught in his righteous conflagrations. Sure, he hits the monsters hard. But he also hits his servants, their families and anybody who has ever been “tainted.” Soon he turns his eyes to those hunters whom he views as compromised.

Tier 1 Twist: He’s a first-tier hunter who doesn’t realize that the hunter organizations even exist. The organizations can offer him community to temper his attacks, but soon he comes to realize that many of the compacts and conspiracies are just as corrupt as the monsters.

Tier 2 Twist: The hunter is capable, and the compacts start to band together in limited alliance to hunt him down. If the characters aren’t down with this alliance, they’re viewed as enemies.

Tier 3 Twist: The hunter is loaded up with a shitload of Endowments given to him by the conspiracy to which he once belonged. He has all their intel, too. This makes him a very dangerous man.

The Crypto-Vigil

The locals are reporting some off-the-charts weirdness: Red eyes in the darkness. Livestock bled out and beheaded. Weird sigils burned onto trees or painted on buildings. And it’s getting worse. Now it’s killed a child. One local says he’s seen it and his description defies belief: covered in hair, long tail, pair of hooves, and breath like the Devil’s own. What is this cryptozoological oddity? What happens when it starts attacking children? What if the characters discover it is not one creature, but many?

Tier 1 Twist: No other hunters are aware of this. It’s just the characters against the cryptid. But what happens is curious: other humans touched by this horror have the potential to become hunters, too. This is, after all, how the Vigil is born.

Tier 2 Twist: A cell of young brash Network Zero hunters — “the Netzo Ninjas” — are constantly fucking up the investigation. They don’t want this thing dead; they want it on YouTube.

Tier 3 Twist: The conspiracies have something more at stake here than the hunters understand. Why is Cheiron so interested in getting a blood sample? Why has the Malleus Maleficarum sent a team of heavily-armored exorcists? Are the rumors true that the Aegis Kai Doru are here because they want its skull?

On the Trail of the Vampyr

Every night, a new bloodless body with two pinpricks in the neck. The cops and the media are selling a pretty clear narrative: some whackaloons thinks he’s a vampire. The hunters suspect differently because they know what’s really out there. Still, is it possible that this isn’t really a vampire at all, but some nutjob pretending to be one?

Tier 1 Twist: The “Vampyr Killer” case is so tawdry and awful it reads like trashy fiction, and so the news media is on this like flies on shit. The public has become obsessed. This doesn’t do anything to help the lone hunter cell out there trying to uncover the truth — every time the hunters turn around it’s another false lead, and another news crew beating them to the punch.

Tier 2 Twist: Is it possible that the killer has escaped from one of Ashwood Abbey’s hellfire games and now he’s out there, driven mad? The Long Night claims this is true, and uses it to go to war — not with the killer but with the Abbey.

Tier 3 Twist: Uh-oh. The killer is a vampire. And not just any vampire, but a thousand-year-old super-predator who cannot go a single night without guzzling the blood of an adult human. Worse, the truth begins to out that this is the product of a conspiracy within a conspiracy: one of the conspiracies let the monster escape for reasons that remain unclear. Are they trying to frame another organization? Is there some possible good that can come from his existence? Or is this a very strange — and very bloody — science experiment gone awry?

The Betrayal

Hunters are forever in too-close proximity to monsters. Often it’s to hunt, yes, but it’s rarely that simple. Monsters are snitches and sources. They’re the enemy of enemies. They’re never friends, but they can make for tense allies. But that also means that hunters in such proximity can suffer corruption, and so it comes that one night the hunters find themselves betrayed, not by one of the monsters but by one of their own, another hunter who has gotten too deep. Was his betrayal somehow necessary? Does he deserve punishment? Can forgiveness come, or is his only future a cornfield grave with a switchblade stuck in the base of his brain-stem?

Tier 1 Twist: The hunter betrayed the others to save himself. His was not a callous machination but rather a desperate bid to keep himself safe. Can his actions still be excused and forgiven?
Tier 2 Twist: The hunter has truly manipulative motives: he wants to play the compacts against one another. But why? What does he stand to gain by doing so?

Tier 3 Twist: It was nothing personal. The hunter has something not against the characters or their cell, but rather their conspiracy. He believes that the conspiracy needs to be exposed and brought down, and any who belong to it are in some way culpable.

Plotlines

The Hunter of Hunters

It begins with a murder. Someone close to the characters. Another hunter, actually.

His death isn’t supernatural. This is murder, whether by bullet or by blade. And it is only the beginning.

Other hunters start dying. — hunters who were not public, hunters who carried the Vigil quietly, under the auspices of a normal life. They are executed in increasingly strange ways. First it’s a double-tap, then a slit throat. Never the same way twice. The way it’s done, with such skill and aplomb, makes it clear that these are the actions of another hunter. But the victims don’t appear to be connected in any meaningful way outside their grim professions.

Then it kicks up another notch: the murders grow more and more complex. It’s no longer about straight-up executions. Now the killer is setting up complex traps. It’s like something out of one of those movies: morality plays seem to unfold, and the murders become more like the hymns of a serial killer.

Finally, the murders jump the tracks. Now they’ve gone supernatural. The bodies show signs of harm that are not possible when committed by a normal human. A blade seems to have cleaved a skull as if it were made of butter. The body may stink of sulfur and have suffered supernatural burns. Maybe the bones have been rearranged inside the skin. Impossible horrors abound.

This is the birth of a slasher. A hunter starts slow and builds steam until he becomes a true horror, a killer with supernatural cachet.

Who is he? And why? The hunters must follow the clues and race against time before the next hunter is killed. Worse, it’s not like the Vigil just stops. Other monsters are still out there. Vampires stealing blood, changelings stealing dreams. If they catch a whiff that hunters are dying, they’re going to grow more brazen in their own acts of terror.

Finally, what happens when the hunters cease to be the predators and end up in the killer’s crosshairs? What happens when he comes for them?
Tier 1 Twist: This is someone they know. The tier one Vigil is an intensely personal and local one – this guy is already on their radar; they just don’t know it yet. He might be a friend, or he might be a tense ally or even an already-established competitor. What they don’t yet know is that he’s a slasher in the making.

Tier 2 Twist: Pick a compact; the killer belongs to one of them, and the kills exemplify that compact’s motives. If he belongs to the Long Night, then his “message” is expressly religious and apocalyptic. If he’s a Loyalist, this is a misguided message about guilt and atonement. Ashwood is about pleasure and chaos. And so on.

Tier 3 Twist: The conspiracies are shocked to learn that this slasher has been a member of most or all of their groups. He’s been learning about them, soaking up everything there is to know, and finding weaknesses and secrets. Given any chance, he’ll use it against them. He may even be some kind of experiment left over from one of the conspiracies: the product of some extreme Endowment that has never before been seen or used.

Mister Charisma

Maybe he comes out of nowhere, or maybe he rises from the ranks of known hunters. Wherever he comes from, it’s clear that the hunter-against-hunter action in the city has been getting worse, with too many fallen by one another’s hands. His message is simple: it is time, in his words, “to unite the hunters.”

He’s got a few things going for him. First, he’s charismatic as all get-out, with a honeyed tongue and a youthful politician’s smile. Second, he’s independently wealthy. We’re not talking “a couple fancy cars” but rather “like that guy who founded Facebook.” Third, he offers his money to those hunters who get behind him and get in line. He gives them money, resources, safe houses across the city — you name it, he’ll offer it. Provided, of course, they play ball.

His motives seem to be pure, or at least they are from the story he tells: his own family has a long legacy of hunters, and he’s seen too much in-fighting both within his family and outside of it. He points out that hunters seem to spend as much time fighting each other as they do the monsters they’re supposed to be opposing. Mister Charisma says that the turning point came when his young son was caught in the crossfire when a rival hunter cell firebombed his brother’s home. The son died in the burn unit three weeks later. (Consider here the variant options: what happens if the characters discover this story is a lie versus what happens when they discover it’s true — and is even more awful than what he shared?)

Of course, this bold proclamation of unity isn’t as helpful as anybody hopes. People are people and hunters are doubly troubled people, so the city tumbles into all-out civil war between the hunters. The characters should serve as pivot points, determining who might be allies and who might be enemies. Their alliance with him or against him is significant.

The story culminates in an attempt on his life. Not by the monsters (though they have little love for him) but, sadly, by other hunters.

Is he killed? In his death, can Mister Charisma become a martyr? Or do the characters protect him and preserve his legacy?

Is there something sinister behind that unswerving smile? Is this a complicated act of revenge? Is he really a puppet of the monsters, his attempt at unity serving as a cynical act of civil war?

Tier 1 Twist: Mister Charisma is a tier-two hunter in a tier-one world. He wants, in effect, to create a world where the hunters (local, at least) carry the Vigil together, not apart. The section “New Compact: Heritage House” represents what may come from this effort to unite the rag-tag hunter lot.

Tier 2 Twist: Heritage House shows the compact that might be the existing legacy of Mister Charisma. He has a very open view toward other compacts and allows for “dual membership” provided that it doesn’t incite further infighting.

Tier 3 Twist: Mister Charisma has an unfavorable view of the conspiracies. He believes, as their name suggests, that they are obscurers of truth rather than lights shining in dark spaces. As such, he has no interest in entertaining the interests of the bigger hunter organizations, and instead wants to pull members away. This puts him on the shit-list of, well, every conspiracy.

Big Guns and Bad Beasts

The shit has hit the fan.

Something happened amongst the denizens of darkness: their numbers have surged, and so too has their power. What is the root cause? Was there a sudden vacuum of power that needed to be filled? Did an earthquake halfway around the world rearrange ley lines or wake up something truly terrifying? Are the End Times truly on their way?

Whatever the reason, one thing is clear: everything is escalating. Vampire attacks are on the rise. Werewolves have colonized the city park and now the human herd knows not to go there at night. Demons stalk the high towers while bloated worm-like things crawl in the dark of the subways and sewers.

It’s bad.

And so the hunter response must be swift and equal. Right? Here’s the problem: to fight crazy, you have to get crazy. The hunters who take up the duty of pushing back this monstrous surge must themselves become extremists. Plus, it’s like blood in the water — other hunters from far-flung corners of the world start showing up like this is some kind of game, like they have something at stake. A handful of chaotic candle-carrying assassins appear, many of them with Endowments your city has never seen?

The hunters cause just as much chaos as they tamp down. They’re here for the guts and the glory, not for the safety of the people, for the sanctity of the city. Where do the characters fit in? Do they join forces with the hunter-assassins? Do they just fight the fight in their own way and
let the rest of the hunters do as they choose? Or do they try to in take down the assassins who are raining as much shit down on the city as the monsters?

**Tier 1 Twist:** Tier-one hunters in this fight are very small fish in a suddenly turbid and turbulent pond. For them, it’s quite likely about staying alive, and this story (rightly so) should take on the feel of a good zombie movie: you’re the lone family in the house trying to stave off a tide of undead.

**Tier 2 Twist:** The compacts see this as their time to shine. This is in many ways what they’ve been built for — they are expressly local organizations who know their city better than anybody. The assassins serve as either good allies or useful distractions.

**Tier 3 Twist:** The conspiracies are upset with the assassins above all others. Conspiracies can only endure if everything they do is secret. Making loud noises and causing all kinds of ruckus presents the same problem vampires have: it breaks their so-called Masquerade. The conspiracies don’t want their secrets exposed and so they go to war — not against the monsters but against the assassins who are stirring up so much shit.

**New Compact: Heritage House**

Heritage House has two precepts at its core: one, that hunter should not fight hunter, and two, the Vigil is something that should be passed down generation to generation. Up until recently, the compact has been very small, with hunters across a handful of families (family names include: Archer, O’Shea, Renquest, Plymouth, Wryzewski).

**The Enemy:** The hunters of Heritage House make it clear that the enemy is, well, the enemy. They devote resources toward hunting monsters. Any backlash against hunters is punished.

**Hunters:** The hunters of Heritage House are, frankly, a little cult-like. They’re not quite at the level of Jonestown (give them 10 years, and that may change), but they’re very clannish and often like to distill the hunt down to simple mottos and mantras.

**Factions:** The five founding families are somewhat factional, but ultimately the compact does not outwardly support separation of its hunters.

**Status •:** Everybody’s invited to join the Heritage. But not everybody gets to meet the big man in charge yet. You’re on a trial period, just to make sure you don’t make waves.

**Status ••:** You’re a trusted member of the compact. You’re family now. They are, by the way, encouraging you to breed. The Vigil continues with “our children,” they say. Add two dots to your Resources score.

**Status •••:** You’re part of the top Heritage members, and something of a celebrity. They all know you. That gets you more perks, but it also means you’re likely to earn enemies. You gain three Merit points to spend across Social Merits.
Glimpses of the unknown

Geist:
The Sin-Eaters

Seeds

Of Wine and Dead Men

One of the downsides to the Sin-Eaters’ lack of organization is that so many things slip through the cracks. Nobody noticed when the owners of the Studio nightclub opened up their basement to create a second floor. Nobody remembered the forgotten Avernian Gate in what the Studio turned into a DJ booth. Then a Sin-Eater took a wrong turn and came out of the Gate in the middle of a packed nightclub — and the Dead followed him. Since then, having had his eyes opened, the DJ has rebranded the incident as “Wine and Dead Men,” and is actively looking for people who can make it happen again. Now he’s asking the characters for their help.

Mistaken Identity

One of the archetypal Geist stories involves the krewe voyaging into the Underworld. Whether they want water from one of the Rivers, to find secrets long thought lost, or to kidnap a ghost from one of the Dead Dominions, they’re the freebooters and privateers who cross the boundaries. Not this time. A krewe broke the Old Laws somewhere down deep, and the Kerberos has agents all over looking for people who can make it happen again. This is important to the players’ krewe for one reason: they’re not guilty. Is another krewe trying to frame them? Or is the Kerberos using this opportunity to settle an old score? Whatever the case, how do the Sin-Eaters react when strange forces try to drag them off as soon as they step through an Avernian Gate to answer for crimes they didn’t commit?

Suffering

Ever since her mother died a slow death from a nasty disease, Victoria Green has always had a powerful fear of death. That phobia went further than most when the truck she was driving behind lost its load, right through her windshield. The moment before an I-beam turned her head to paste, she reached out for something — anything — that could save her. Something answered. Now she will never die, as long as she causes one fatal auto “accident” every year.

Victoria’s never had a problem with her deal, until now. Turns out that whatever made a deal with her has got a sense of irony, and Victoria’s got the same wasting disease that killed her mother. It’s one of those diseases without a cure, and she knows that within six months she’ll be unable to take care of herself — a prisoner inside her own body. Blinded with fear, she’s tracked the krewe down to ask their help. Do they try to help her accept death, or work desperately to find a cure?

The Quick and the Dead

Five years ago, Eddie Chong was a bad gambler — bad to the tune of a hundred grand. In debt to the mob, he needed an out, and his financier offered him one. All Eddie had to
do was kill his best friend, Daniel Lomax. At the lowest point in his life, Eddie shot his best friend in the back and has been running ever since. Daniel's ghost spent the intervening time searching for his murderer, and now he's tormenting Eddie. When Eddie arranges for a group of experts to exorcise Daniel's ghost (a typical World of Darkness or low-tier Hunter group), the dead man turns to the krewe for help. Does he want the little gods of death to ruin Eddie's plans, or does he just want to tell Eddie that he understands — and maybe share just why the mob wanted him dead?

The Pursuit of Happiness

A Bonepicker of the krewe's acquaintance has started going too far at the insistence of his geist. It started when he discovered that one of his childhood friends had made it big on the stock market and bought a real nice mansion. All it took was one visit — and one application of the Boneyard — to make everyone run, leaving the Bonepicker holding the keys. Since then, he's been more and more indiscriminate. He's never been the most well-adjusted of people, but he's started Cursing people who drive cars that he takes a fancy to and scaring people out of using their high-tech toys. Yesterday, his eyes glazed over and he unleashed a Boneyard in a bank, desperate to get the cash from the safe. The police now want him for grand larceny, but he's boasting on the Twilight Network of what he's going to do when they find him. Can the characters make it before he starts a televised riot? And can they remind him of his higher calling?

Midnight

The Twilight Network's abuzz about the Night of Shadows — a weird astrological confluence that's said to be a harbinger for the dead. What no Sin-Eater can predict is that the position of the stars in the sky will open Avernian Gates the world over, and keep them open until dawn. Not every gate, certainly, but enough that most krewes will have their time taken up. With the boundaries between living and dead burst wide open, can the characters keep both sides in their place? Do they want to? And can they do anything for the living souls trapped in the Underworld once the Gateways close once again?

Songs for Swinging Ghosts

The political musician Dan Turner has a new album out. This normally wouldn't be a momentous occasion, but the krewe knows that he died recently. Worse, listening to the songs (or making a Perception roll in an area that has a local independent radio station on in the background) shows that he didn't write the songs while still alive. His music has too many references to the Underworld — and to ghosts and even Kerberoi that the krewe have met first-hand — to be anything but the work of a dead man or a Sin-Eater. Some digging shows that it's a mixture of both. A Sin-Eater has captured Dan's ghost, and hopes to use his still-intact musical talent to bring knowledge of the worlds beyond death to everyone. Why's he doing it? Is Dan a willing participant? And do the characters really want him to stop?
**Plotlines**

**Doctor Bones**

Grace Macintyre was a doctor. She taught medicine at one of the largest, most expensive hospitals in the country. A disgruntled patient put two bullets in her chest, and she envisioned her treatment as her battle of wills against the myriad of conditions that threatened to kill her. She'd not have made it through were it not for thegeist that offered to help her — the nightmarish apparition that calls itself The Surgeon. Having seen what waits on the other side, she decided that medicine no longer held the same appeal as it once did, and she brought her more spiritual brand of healing to the streets under the name “Doctor Bones.”

Grace is a Pilgrim. She believes that the best way to prepare people for death is to ease them in gently, giving them time to settle their affairs and go out smoothly. She visited numerous Dominions looking for just the right Ceremony, and finally she found one (Ease the Path, p. 39). With it, she can heal the sick. While she hasn't yet made a paraplegic walk, she's successfully used the Ceremony to purge HIV and incurable genetic diseases. She then tells people to say their goodbyes: after one month, everyone she heals dies peacefully in their sleep.

Doctor Bones has quite a following. She uses whatever medical pseudoscience is popular in the area — she’s a particular fan of homeopathy and reflexology — mixed with the kind of Voodoo that New Orleans used to sell to the more gullible tourist, including wearing a top hat decorated with bones and painting her face with a white skull. She advertises her presence on cheap photocopied flyers, alongside posters advertising illegal club nights and multi-level-marketing scams.

How she reacts to the krewe will depend on how they react to her. She doesn’t give any notice that she’s showing up, and she doesn’t care about other Sin-Eaters. She’s on a mission, and it’s not up to them to stop her. While ostensibly good news for those she treats, Doctor Bones is far too willing to break out her Ceremony. She’ll use it to treat broken limbs, anxiety, and she’s even touting it as a cure for the common cold. Odds are that people the characters know will be attracted to what she offers, and the krewe will be left to pick up the pieces. When she meets the characters, play Grace as being just a little bit unstable — she doesn’t care that the perfect is the enemy of the good, as long as she can ensure that more souls pass peacefully.

**The War Below**

The krewe is in the Dominion of Those Lost to Self — a place inhabited by the ghosts of suicides, each of whom bears a mouth sewn shut with barbed wire. Maybe they’re hunting knowledge that the Silent Dead keep to themselves, or hunting the ghost of a man who took his own life. They’re quickly sidetracked when another Dominion declares war.

The inhabitants of Telas-Ahn live in a state of perpetual conflict, overseen by He Who Lives by the Sword — a Kerberos made entirely out of rusting, blood-stained blades in
the rough form of an angel. Normally, the warmongers fight among themselves, but every hundred years or so a leader claws his way to the top of the pile and unites everyone against a common enemy: the neighboring Dominion.

The ghosts of Those Lost to Self must be pushed to fight for their independence. Normally, they’re aided by the Black Madonna, Kerberos of their Dominion. Not this time. The Black Madonna is missing, and nobody’s enforcing the Old Laws of Those Lost to Self. The Silent Dead beg for the Sin-Eaters’ assistance — not to win the war, but to find their realm’s missing Kerberos. While the krewe probably could win the battle, and even push the invaders back, Those Lost to Self would need their constant attention, or fall. Were the ghosts of Telas-Ahn to win, they’d not look kindly on the Bound who helped their enemies. And what would happen to the Dominions? Presumably, He Who Lives by the Sword would become Kerberos of both realms, though that presents additional problems. As a Kerberos is no more than a manifestation of the Old Laws given form, would he adapt and change to the Old Laws of Those Lost to Self? Or, more likely, would he enforce the laws of Telas-Ahn across both Dominions? And how pleased would he be with the Sin-Eaters who tried to stop his conquest?

As mentioned, Kerberos aren’t fully separate from the Old Laws they enforce. So what’s happened to the Black Madonna? Turns out the characters aren’t the only krewe to come through Those Lost to Self recently, though they’re probably more respecting of the rules of silence. The other Sin-Eaters argued their case a little too well, and trapped the Black Madonna in a logical paradox. She’s retreated far below the world until she can resolve the inconsistency that’s at the core of her being. If the krewe can help, then they can gain a very powerful ally — as long as they deliver an educational beating to the tricky bastards who sprung the logical trap. Of course, they can instead take advantage of her confusion. If they’re too slow to act, the invasion of Telas-Ahn erases enough of the Old Laws of Those Lost to Self that the paradox no longer applies. By that point, the Black Madonna will have changed to reflect the diminished set of Laws. She will also be very angry. Best not to be on her bad side when that happens.

New Ceremony: Ease the Path

This Ceremony allows a Sin-Eater to give anyone a new lease on life. Broken bones knit together, and diseases from influenza to the common cold all vanish. Though missing limbs won’t regrow, a paraplegic will walk after this Ceremony. But with all things involving life and death, the world needs balance. For every life, a death. The healthy life granted by Ease the Path lasts for one month and a day longer — though the Sin-Eater’s under no compulsion to mention this condition. Once the subject’s time is up, she dies. She goes peacefully, in her sleep if at all possible, but the balance is paid. Hope that she’s used her last days to her advantage.

**Performing the Ceremony:** The Sin-Eater first has to prepare a space for the ceremony, sketching a circle with sigils at the cardinal points in chalk on the floor and burning some strong-smelling herbs or incense. She talks with the subject, finding out not just about his illness but about other areas of his life — his family, his home, his attitude towards living. With all that in mind, she must attempt some form of symbolic medical treatment for his ailment. She could mix a cure from esoteric ingredients (Shakespeare had the right idea with “eye of newt”), apply needles without regard to acupuncture points, or encourage the subject to chant to better focus her psychic healing abilities. Whatever the remedy, it must include a single drop of the Sin-Eater’s Plasm-infused blood. Once the treatment is complete, the Sin-Eater commands the subject to rise and make peace with his life.

- **Dice Pool:** Psyche + Manipulation
- **Action:** Extended (5 successes required)
- **Time Increment:** The Sin-Eater can roll for this ceremony once every ten minutes

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Sin-Eater’s remedy works, but only halfway. The victim gains none of the benefits of a success, but he does die a month after the ceremony. The Sin-Eater also suffers one point of Lethal damage immediately.

**Failure:** The Ceremony makes the subject feel better, but it’s no more than the placebo effect.

**Success:** The Sin-Eater heals the subject, infusing him with a small portion of her geist’s energy. If the subject’s suffering from a disease or from poisoning, the effects end immediately. Any lasting physical problems are fixed by the otherworldly energies. The subject also removes any Derangements, no matter the cause.

The subject of the Ceremony cannot die. Any lethal damage heals at a rate of one point every thirty minutes, and aggravated damage heals at a rate of one point every two hours; if she takes more Aggravated damage than her Health she remains unconscious until it’s all healed, but she does not die.

All these effects last for one month. The subject doesn’t get sick, and if she gets hurt, she heals at an alarming rate. Once that month is up, she dies peacefully in her sleep. Other Sin-Eaters can see the mark of death on the subject, and can work out how long she’s got left to live just by looking at her.

**Exceptional Success:** The subject is healed, but the mark of the Sin-Eater’s Plasm isn’t detectable to other Bound.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested Modifiers</th>
<th>Modifier</th>
<th>Situation</th>
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<tr>
<td>-1</td>
<td>The Sin-Eater doesn’t touch the subject at any point, such as with psychic healing</td>
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<tr>
<td>+1</td>
<td>The Sin-Eater knows everything that is wrong with the subject</td>
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World of Darkness: Innocents

Seeds

Who Bullies the Bullies?

The characters are at school or some other function where the local bully is around (summer camp, school dance, roller rink, etc.). They see the bully (feel free to use the stats for Charles, p. 190 of World of Darkness: Innocents) huddled off in a corner by himself, shaking and pale, with tears rolling down his face. If they approach him, he’s not very responsive, but he has odd black markings on the back of his neck, almost like jagged tattoos. He can’t provide specifics for how they got there, just that he walked “down there” (whereupon he indicates a hallway or another shadowy place) and says that something grabbed him. Going to an adult is fruitless, as the marks are already starting to fade. What’s back there? How do the characters respond to seeing someone they fear and detest so badly frightened? Was the bully attacked in retaliation for what he did to them or another child (maybe a child with the Guardian Angel Merit)?

Adult Interference

Parents, as the song says, just don’t understand. The characters are in the middle of an adventure, and someone’s mom or dad shows up to collect them. Depending on the circumstances, this could be annoying, a relief, or downright terrifying. But in an event, the kids need to decide what to do. Can they recruit the adult to their cause, or at least get some temporary help? Do they need to run away before the overprotective mom calls all their parents, or before the drunk father takes off his belt? Is what the kids are investigating so important that the characters will risk the retribution that will almost surely come if they refuse to go? Or, worse, do they risk leading a parent into mortal peril by not acquiescing, but leaving something dangerous unsolved by leaving?

Field Trip

Students go on class trips frequently. Most large cities have zoos and museums that offer school trip rates, allowing teachers to take their kids out of the classrooms and into the real world for a while. But with a large class, or a class of older students who don’t need constant attention, there’s always the possibility of kids wandering off somewhere dangerous.

What actually happens on a field trip depends highly on the trip itself. Here are three suggestions:

Zoo: The students enter the reptile house and see a man standing in front of the snake terrariums looking angry. They see a flicker of shiny scales from his sleeve, and when he touches the glass, the snake in the enclosure becomes active, as though searching for a way out.

Museum: One of the tour guides follows the characters, pointing out interesting facts about the artwork and the exhibits. The characters then meet up with a teacher,
Hey, Where's Jacob?

At the beginning of a story, mention that the characters' friend Jacob Wilson has gone missing. His parents are freaking out, and maybe the police have interviewed the kids, but no one's seen him in a few days and there has been no contact with a kidnapper.

The characters are hanging out at the local playground, and a strange dog approaches them. It doesn't have a collar, but it looks healthy, if a little freaked out. It doesn't lick them or sniff them, though. It starts pawing at the ground, tugging their clothes with its teeth, and barking excitedly. If they follow it, it leads them to a meadow where they find a set of boy's clothing. Written in marker on the clothes' tags is “JW.” Does this dog know where Jacob is? And why do the animal's eyes look so much like a human's?

Changes

Of the characters' close friends is acting weird. She's being distant, she's sitting with a new group of people at lunch (or eating with a teacher — and not even because she has lunch detention!), and she's started wearing this weird ring with a big white stone in it. Sometimes the characters catch her mumbling to herself in a language they don't understand, and if they ask her what's going on, she denies she ever said anything.

Any adults that the characters mention this to give them a song and dance about how sometimes we “drift apart” from our friends as we get older. But that's not it, because every so often the characters see their friend's reflection in a mirror. The reflection does what the girl does, but the eyes are different. They're wide in fear, in the reflection, and they stare right at the characters no matter what the body does.

Busted

The characters get a detention for no reason. Maybe it was guilt by association because they were all hanging out with or near a troublemaker, or maybe the new teacher just has it in for the characters. Whatever the reason, the characters have to stay after school and clean erasers or wash desks or just sit there, and of course they're going to catch heck from their parents. But then while on a bathroom run, the characters hear the teacher telling the custodian that they can “get to it,” because everyone's out of the building. What is it that the teacher and the custodian plan to do? Was this detention just to get the kids all in the same place?

(Note: Reading this seed, it's possible to draw some extremely unsavory conclusions about the adults' motives. The intent here is that they want to do something supernatural and fantastical, like use the kids breath to open a gateway to the Netherrealm or summon up the kids' worst nightmares to use like assassins. See the “Real Monsters” essay on p. 223 of World of Darkness: Innocents).

Lost

The characters are lost in some huge place with lots of people — an amusement park, a mall, a zoo or a fare. If they do the smart thing and look for an employee or another adult to help them, they find that the adults ignore them. Even physical contact gets a brush-off. The characters seem to be invisible to grown-ups. While this might seem fun at first (as the characters can steal from stores and otherwise make mischief), the amusement is short-lived. First of all, the characters can't get any attention at all. Second, they can't leave. If they try an exit, everything goes bright for a minute and then they're walking back in. Phones don't work for them, and they can't find a trace of any of the adults they came here with. How are they going to get home? Are other kids affected in the same way, or is it only the characters? Are any of the employees able to explain things?

Plotlines

Kids' Jail

The characters awaken on narrow, uncomfortable cots, with harsh lighting overhead and the sound of screaming and bars rattling in the background. They are in jail - and worse, they don't have any recollection of how or why they came to be here. The doors swing up, and they are shuffled down the hall to a cafeteria, where they each get a dollop of pasty, sludge-like porridge to eat and a glass of watery juice. The other children around them look familiar, but they cannot remember names. They think of the others by distinguishing characteristics: Scar, Mohawk, Red, One-Eye and so on.

The rest of their day consists of boring, repetitive tasks. Speaking out against the guards (men and women who aren't necessarily cruel, but are disinterested and completely untrusting of the children) earns the characters time in “the Room,” which is simply a dimly lit square area with a hard floor and no windows. Other children arrange themselves into gangs, and if the kids have anything worth taking or if they stand out in any way, they're targets.

An obvious early goal, of course, is to figure out what's happening and try to make contact with the outside world. This isn't so easy, though. None of the other inmates seem to know, nor do they share the characters' confusion.
One of the guards, though, seems troubled by the whole arrangement, and if the characters manage to get through to her, she confesses that she, too, doesn’t know where she is or how she came to be an employee here. She knows that she and the other guards sleep in their own dorm, and suspects they are as much prisoners of this place as the children.

What’s really going on here? The characters are in a shared dream. It might seem like days are passing, but time distorts in dreams. It’s really only been a few hours, the characters are fast asleep in their beds, and they are in no real danger from gangs or incarceration. You can reveal this truth early on, maybe at the end of a story, but then have the characters “wake up” in the prison again. Everything is how they left it; the dream “picks up” where they left off, meaning that enemies still want to hurt them and their friends still owe them favors.

Why is this happening? Maybe the characters angered a witch or some other supernatural being. Maybe it’s nothing to do with them personally, but the sympathetic guard who is somehow causing it. The characters will need to do some research both in the dream and in the waking world to get their own dreams “pardoned.” Maybe the other kids in the dream are “real” as well, and the characters need to learn their real names and use them, in prison, to bring those kids back to lucidity. Once all of the inmates are aware of the dream-nature of the prison, will it collapse, or can the children collectively agree to change it to something a bit more pleasant? Again, this probably depends on the origin of the dream-prison, and whether or not this was done intentionally.

**Taken**

A friend of the characters goes missing from school. Everyone saw him come to class. He sat at his desk and did his work as usual, and then he got up, asked for permission to go to the bathroom, took the hall pass, and never returned. The police come to school, and interviewed everyone. Now the characters hear rumors that the boy’s shoe and a toy he was carrying in his pocket were found in the bathroom in front of the mirror.

The next day, as they are walking to the bus stop, the characters see the missing boy. If they call out to him, he runs, apparently attempting to lose the characters, and he winds up darting into traffic. The school bus hits him, but when the driver gets out to look, he finds only a dummy made from wax and wood, dressed in the boy’s clothes. Again, the characters get to talk to the authorities, but obviously their story doesn’t make any sense. Some sick individual made the dummy and pushed it into traffic, and if the characters think the dummy was running, well, they must be letting their imaginations run wild.

As the characters investigate, they discover that things weren’t going well for their friend at home. Depending on the resources available to the characters, they might learn that teachers had called the state child protection agency due to bruises on their friend’s neck and arms, and if they visit his house they find that it is dirty, cluttered and infested with vermin. Did their friend run away? If so, what was the “dummy” and how could it run from them?
The kids should eventually find their friend's journal (in his desk at school, in the teacher's desk, in their friend's room or in the principal's office, depending on how proactive and adventurous the kids want to be). It talks about how he'd seen a "beautiful lady wearing white" in his room at night. Sometimes she would in mirrors and ask him to come live with her. Sometimes he heard her voice when he's falling asleep. He says she scares him, but he thinks about agreeing. His teacher has marked these entries with "good job" and "very creative," but the last entry is unmarked (either because the teacher didn't know what to do about it or because she never saw it). It says that the "white lady" is getting angry and wants him to make up his mind, and he's afraid to say "no." The entry says she's going to "open the mirror" in the boys' bathroom, and that he once called her up by whispering "show me the white lady" to that mirror when it's fogged.

As you might guess, the boy has been taken away by the Fae. The children might still be able to save him, though, by going into Faerie through the mirror. What exactly lies beyond that mirror is up to you. If you own Changeling: The Lost, you have the game rules for the Hedge already, but they aren't really necessary. Just decide what kind of environment the "white lady" might live in — a magnificent castle? A snow-swept wasteland? An enchanted forest? Then decide what the characters need to do to find and save their friend, including, of course, whether he wants to be saved.

A Year in Holidays

This is less a specific plotline and more a way to present an Innocents chronicle so as to highlight a child's view of the calendar year: holiday by holiday. Start the chronicle at whatever holiday you want, and then run one story for each holiday that you choose to include. Some examples of American holidays follow:

Halloween: The characters might go trick-or-treating and contend with a haunted house that's a bit too real, a black cat that leads them into the clutches of its master, or just a plain old nutcase putting razors into apples.

Christmas: The day around which the entire kid year revolves, according to one source. The idea of a maniac in a Santa Claus suit is obvious, but you don't have to involve St. Nick directly. A foot of snow on the ground opens the door for monsters that steal body heat.

Independence Day: Fireworks, loud noises, and adults drinking beer and generally acting like idiots. The supernatural story here doesn't have to be nationalist in nature, but the fireworks might well provide a solution.

Outsiders

Aficionados of the World of Darkness at large might read entries such as the Gardener and the Cat-That-Isn't-A-Cat and wonder where in the scheme of things they fall. Are they spirits? Fae creatures? Beings escaped from the Supernal Realms? Demons?

The answer is: None of the above. These beings are, for want of a better word, "Outsiders." They are supernatural beings whose origins are left deliberately unclear. The Cat, for instance, may be an angel. The gardener may be some primal, quasi-spiritual being. The Faceless might be fragments of the Underworld in a human shape. It doesn't ultimately matter what they really are — only that they are.

These beings exist within the World of Darkness for two reasons. For one thing, as you become more experienced and well-versed within the various game lines, the temptation arises to pigeonhole any given supernatural phenomenon within those lines. Magic doesn't have to be presented within the context of Mage, for instance — not all magic is Supernal in nature. A being composed of animated dead flesh is not necessarily a Promethean (if you have access to World of Darkness: Antagonists, consider Doll — she resembles Prometheans in many ways, but is not animated by the Divine Fire).

The Outsiders are included in this book to serve as a reminder that despite the sheer amount of supernatural diversity currently in publication for the World of Darkness, there should always be something that defies classification.
**World of Darkness: Mirrors**

In *World of Darkness: Mirrors*, we put forth a handful of “shards” — setting hacks that break apart the traditional World of Darkness and reassembles it in new ways. Those shards are as follows:

- **World of Darkness Revealed**: In which humanity is made unerringly aware of the monsters that haunt the dark streets and labyrinthine forests.
- **World of Darkness Destroyed**: In which we look at the end of the world (Apocalypse, Armageddon, the End of Days) through the lens of the World of Darkness.
- **World of Dark Fantasy**: In which the World of Darkness is utterly rebuilt and reskinned with an emphasis on magic and dark fantasy.

This section takes another look at these three shards and adds additional content to them. If you don’t own *Mirrors*, that’s okay — these seeds and plots may still stand on their own given a rudimentary understanding of each shard’s theme. That said, reading *Mirrors* will give you a greater understanding of what we’re doing here.

### World of Darkness Revealed

**Seed: Civil Rights For Uncivil Monsters**

A war is brewing. Some folks say the monsters are human, that they didn’t want any part of what they are or what they’ve become — and then the monsters go and do something awful again. Another bloodless body. Another clawed-up corpse in the park. One bad apple, right? That gets people on the other side of the fence riled up. They won’t oblige the denizens of darkness. They shouldn’t only be kept from voting, they should be kept out of Wal-Mart. They should be hunted down by the government and experimented upon. Or, best of all, they should be wiped out from the face of the earth. A deep cultural rift is forming. Do monsters have rights? Or should they be quarantined or put down like rabid dogs? Violence rises in the cities as hate groups form. Where do the characters fall?

**Seed: Shadows Behind The Shadows**

It’s been years since the monsters have been exposed. Ten. Twenty. Hell, maybe it happened in the 1950s. Whatever the case, the denizens of darkness have long since been incorporated into society. Vampire FBI agents. Prometheans on the industrial line. Werewolves who hunt and kill Japanese whalers. Changeling computer programmers. Mage celebrities. Sure, they’re still not assimilated comfortably, not entirely — but they have become a part of regular life.

But darkness is persistent. You drag one monster into the light, it just means that other monsters lurk in the shadows darker than those already seen. What else is in the deepest dark? What hides unseen from humans and the monsters? Lovecraftian elder gods? Sentient mandalas? Living ideas and energy beings made of hate? If a human can become a vampire, what can a vampire become if his mind is taken over by a secret psychic parasite?
Plotline: On The Campaign Trail With The Magic Man

A mage decides he’s going to run for president.

He’s not a politician. He doesn’t come from that world, though one could perhaps argue that his life with other wizards has at times necessitated callous politicking.

Thing is, he says he knows how reality really works. He knows what makes people tick. And he’s here to bring his unique perspective to the most vaunted office in the United States.

This mage isn’t bringing a really strange perspective to the table. He’s not some radical Socialist or some right-wing goon. He’s a centrist, tending towards positions that are fiscally conservative and socially liberal.

He comes from the middle of the country’s farmland. He’s classic All-American: a running back for the football team class president, and worked the farm. He’s good-looking, and conservative and socially liberal.

But that doesn’t mean he’s going to just be able to walk into the Oval Office. Or steal it, as many of his opponents claim he’ll do. A mage — a “monster” — running for president? It doesn’t sit well. Even liberals are a little uncomfortable with it.

It’s like he represents a very clear rift. Many don’t want him in. But he’s winning people over. He’s got his fans. Hell, he’s even establishing an unwitting cult of personality — people who will, though he’d be horrified to discover it, kill in his name.

Then again, maybe he wouldn’t be shocked at all. Maybe he’s playing a long game, and as soon as the country puts the reins of power in his hand he’ll twist them into a noose and hang us all. What if getting into the highest office in the land unlocks some secret power and gives him command over reality like none has ever had — can you imagine the authority granted to him? It’s like votes become chits symbolizing people’s belief in his work, his message, and the man himself. What if he’s got the Abyss in his heart? What if he serves the void?

The campaign trail is going to be full of peril: assassination attempts, riots at town halls, attacks by rival mages and more. The list of dangers goes on and on.

The characters may just be bystanders watching it all unfold, but even better? Put them at the heart of the action. Make this a kind of magic-driven West Wing. Put them in the roles of various staffers: secret service, chief of staff, speechwriter, economic advisor. Perhaps the characters are themselves mages or monsters. They can watch him refuse to use magic to influence his candidacy… or witness him give into the temptation.

Give them a stake in his candidacy. And then watch it all unravel.

World of Darkness Destroyed

Seed: Reality Is Bleeding

The end of the world arrives in a way that nobody expected. It’s not just that the world is throttled by super-storms: it’s that these super-storms rain strange monsters from beyond time and space. Reality has been subverted, and its laws ruined. Concrete never dries. Water is flammable. Men begin to develop strange mutations. Plants gain sentience. Nothing makes sense anymore. Everything that one knows or expects about the world has changed — and worse, is continuing to change daily. Is there a way to save the world? Can magic be used to right the wrongs and stop reality from spinning wildly on its own axis? Or is this just the new normal, the thing that will eventually break it all down?

Reality Is Bleeding

Category: 1
Warning: Months (slow weirdness reveal itself)
Keywords: Invasion, Shifting
Description: Reality stops abiding by its own rules. Its new “laws” are fluid and dangerously unpredictable. Anything is possible: Flocks of carnivorous birds. Evolution at a fast-forward speed. Fog becomes acidic, stripping flesh from bones. Food becomes poison and poison becomes food.

Supernatural Complications: Vampires find their food source changed: blood never seems to confer the same supernatural benefits twice, and sometimes it doesn’t even satiate their hunger. Maybe now they must drink bile or eat pulverized bone to stay “alive.” Werewolves gain power not from the moon but from the sun, or from Sirius, the Dog Star. Paradox waxes and wanes for mages — spells go awry, create cataclysmic side effects. Changelings find themselves as the denizens of the Hedge while the True Fae are now the kings of the material world. Prometheans become suddenly human, as if their Pilgrimages never needed to happen.

Seed: The Unlikely Savior

When you think “chosen one,” you usually think someone suited for the role. Jesus. Neo. Neo-Jesus. But here the Apocalypse has come in a new flavor you have chosen as Storyteller and… nope, still no chosen one. Or maybe she’s out there, but she’s just not who we expected her to be: She’s some punk teenager, or a housewife on the run from dark forces. Maybe she can cleanse water with her touch. Maybe she can turn monsters to dust with just her touch — or cure them with a kiss. She doesn’t want the job. Doesn’t like her powers. But somehow, in a world where everything has gone to hell, she’s the one survivor who offers hope with her powers. She’s the chosen one who never wanted to be chosen at all.
Plotline: The Light at the End of Days

Every end-of-the-world scenario, lest it present only a nihilistic plotline, has to have a way out — a meaningful goal that delivers a much-needed but ultimately meager dose of hope.

The characters hear a rumor. Maybe they hear it from some cannibal they had to take down on one of the broken highways of America, or maybe it comes in over a radio that suddenly crackles to life. That rumor speaks of a place called Home.

While the details may change depending on the nature of your story, for now let’s say that Home is a place the Apocalypse has not touched. The meteor dust has not reached it. The nuclear fallout does not affect this area. The pathogen has been kept out. (Whatever your desired “end of days inciting incident” happens to be doesn’t affect this place, in other words.) Home has good food and clean water, and it needs healthy people who are willing to work. It’s a kind of commune, maybe.

Where is it? Somewhere far away. Maybe it’s in the Rocky Mountains or on the Big Island of Hawaii. Wherever it is, all the stories say the same thing: it is a safe place.

But because it isn’t exactly next door, that means the characters first have to get there. They have to follow the clues to discover its location — and that may mean hunting down the Quarantine King of Toronto or looking for a lost journal not far from one of the irradiated nests of the Uranium Vampires. And following the clues gets them closer and closer and puts them in worse and worse situations. Taking a long journey across an apocalyptic wasteland isn’t easy. What kind of transportation can they find? What about food or water? What awful things hunt in the tracts of doom and death?

Then comes the question, what happens when they arrive? If you want to confirm a nihilistic outlook, fine: the commune never existed. Or they get there and it’s under siege by zombies. Or they themselves bring the virulent contagion as unknowing carriers.

If you want a happy end to the game, they get to Home and it is all that they promised: it’s maybe 500 people, they have cows, wells, and gardens. It isn’t perfect, but compared to the rest of the shattered world it sure is.

If you want a more nuanced and complicated ending and are hoping to continue this story into a deeper chronicle, then yes, Home exists, and yes, it has all these things — but it’s far from perfect. Maybe it’s a kind of apocalyptic Jonestown. Maybe to keep things perfect they must commit atrocities: a terrible human lottery or cruelty against those who may be infected. Or, perhaps over time Home is put in danger by outsiders or monsters.

World of Dark Fantasy

Seed: Because Dragons Are Awesome. That’s Why

Here’s your story seed: dragons. They haven’t been seen in ages, and no one really think about them anymore. Maybe they’ve been dormant. Maybe they’ve never been seen and are merely myth. And then one appears, alighting upon one
of the spires of Quivira-Cibola. And every morning after, another dragon appears, their numbers growing one by one. They don’t attack, and they don’t seem to communicate, but they seem restless, like something is brewing.

That story seed not enough for you? Okay. Here’s what you do. Take one of the monster types of the World of Darkness, and smash it together with dragons. Vampire dragon drinks blood. Weredragon: either a shapeshifting dragon (a chimera) who can become many horrid beasts or is instead a human being who can shift his flesh and bones into draconic shape. What about a dragon who can use magic? Or a Reanimated dead dragon who is stitched together from other, fallen dragons? Or a Dragon who is made of dreams, with teeth of thorns and scale of sharpened leaves? What about a hunter organization that hunts dragons, or, instead, has one they worship at the center of their cult? Dragons can be part of the World of Darkness proper or can instead be merged into the Woundgate setting as appropriate.

**Seed: The Magic Infection**

A man staggers out of swirling fog and shadow. He doesn’t remember who he is, and no one seems to know him. He’s cut up, too — his flesh marred, and his body bruised. The characters move to help him, but soon they learn he possesses a strange new magic. Soon they begin to slowly manifest the same abilities — proving that his magic has infected them. It can’t be all good, though: new powers are great and all, but certainly there’s a downside. Are the wounds the result? Does this magic have a secret cabal of enemies that hunts its practitioners down?

This is a good time to confirm the idea that magic cannot be easily defined. As it stands, it exists in one form, but this is your chance as the Storyteller to dangle in front of them the possibility of something truly new and unexpected. (After all, your players may very well have read all the books and, whether they know it or not, likely hunger for a new look and some new “toys” to play with.) It also allows you as Storyteller to get creative with some of your own power design. Doesn’t matter whether you’re running a dark fantasy variant based on sword & sorcery or on “the new weird;” whatever path you choose, you’re free to invent a whole new variant of magic. Consider how in the *Mistborn* series by Brandon Sanderson, magic is based initially on the powers of various metals — magicians ingest the metals and can burn those metals inside their bodies for various supernatural effects. What about magic based on music? Different songs present different effects in the world (*Ocarina of Time*, anyone!). A number of pop culture properties present interesting magical variants for you to mine.
Consider how *Avatar: The Last Airbender* has powers based on the elements — firebending, waterbending, earthbending, and variants like “blood-bending.” Or conjure novelty from inside your own brain: magic based on strange potions, on art, on murder.

**Plotline: The Old Wound Heals**

It begins with a suicide tree. One of these awful trees — upon which vampires can sustain themselves, at least a little — grows in the middle of an apple orchard in the middle of New York state. Nobody knows what it is. It’s all over the news.

But it’s just the beginning.

The Wound — the split that separates our world (The Corpse) from the hidden interstitial world of magic (The Shatter) — is starting to heal. Before, it was necessary to step through a Woundgate to cross between realms. But the Woundgates are disappearing…or, rather, the world is simply becoming one big Woundgate.

After the suicide tree emerges, further crossover begins to manifest: dhampirs in this world. Glimpses of Quivira-Cibola seen from boats traveling the Mississippi. Winged beasts visible from airplanes. Pieces of Undergotham emerge in Central Park. Ancient ruins can be seen in the middle of whispering cornfields.

On the one hand, the denizens of darkness — specifically those monsters who haunt the Corpse — see the potential for empowerment. In this other world, they are free to be monsters. But therein lies a terrible downside: that side already has its denizens. It has Atlanteans and Wargaz and Dhampir. The world will not be easily shared.

Finally, the merge comes with a terrible storm that cascades across the country: the Wound heals. Their world is ours. Our world is theirs. Geography shifts with tectonic breaches. Buildings smash together. Many die, but just as many thrive.

It’s dragons versus F-16s. It’s New Yorkers with lead pipes trying to beat back equally desperate Shatterlanders. It’s the United States versus the Occult States. Both claim to be America.

It can be ended. As it is in many fantasy settings, a prophecy lurks that tells of a way to once more reopen the Wound. But it requires a powerful sacrifice. Of what kind? Perhaps a pure child must be sacrificed. Or a white two-headed lamb must be found and burned on a pyre. Or thousands must die in a single moment, burned by magical fire.

Does anyone want to split the worlds apart again? Do the characters want to keep it together? The battle for reality, the battle over the magic of worlds, is born. Who will emerge victorious?

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**The Dark Fantasy Destroyer, Revealed**

Here’s a weird story idea: combine all three shards into one.

It makes sense when you think about it. First, the Dark Fantasy shard is a hidden one. Revealing it is no small feat and will send ripples. Mankind on either side of the fence is not ready for the repercussions of such a revelation. And, of course, the word Apocalypse means revelation — revelations can go to great lengths to disrupt the norm or shatter the expected. So, revealing Woundgate would end the world as we know it.

Consider how the end of the world — nuclear, zombie, meteor, whatever — would affect the secret occult world of Woundgate. To survive, the worlds might need to be revealed to one another. Again, a combination of all three.

Why do this? Well, why not do it? The best thing we can do for our players is to keep them on their toes, and even if they own a copy of *World of Darkness: Mirrors*, they’re not going to expect you to take all three shards and smash them together.