


for EABA™

# Nocturne™

become the architects of surreality...

NEUE ZEIT  
Sozialismus  
FRIEDEN, WOHLSTAND UND GLÜCK FÜR ALLE

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 **BTRC**

greg porter

# Nocturne™ v1.0

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In memory of Tracy Perkins. Dream well.

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# INTRODUCTION

*If you open your mind for me;*

*You won't rely on open eyes to see.*

*The walls you built within;*

*Come tumbling down, and a new world will begin.*

*Living twice at once you learn,*

*You're safe from the pain in the dream domain,*

*A soul set free to fly.*

*A round trip journey in your head,*

*Master of illusion, can you realize;*

*Your dream's alive, you can be the guide but...*

*I will be watching over you...*

-Queensrÿche, *Silent Lucidity*

▼ **REALITY IS WHAT YOU IMAGINE IT TO BE** - There are a number of common themes in the legends and myths of mankind. Monsters and heroes, gods and devils, places of eternal reward and eternal punishment. Yet for all the obscure bits of history that have surfaced through archaeology, the vast number of people alive today and the information gathering tools at their disposal, despite all this, no hard evidence of the supernatural has ever been produced.

Yet, millions if not billions still believe, accepting on faith the existence of greater powers beyond the bounds of physical life, whether in the form of a "conventional" religion, "pagan" religion or feelings that the planet itself is somehow an aware entity.

*So...why do we still believe?*

Because these things *are* real. We have seen them in our dreams and forgotten them, only the barest hints tugging at the edge of our awareness and sparking our creativity. We know that there is *something* beyond the flesh, for we have gazed on it from a distance, and spoken to those who have gone before.

But the realm of dreams is as far as we may go and yet live. To reach the far side is to forever sunder the bond between awareness and the flesh. Likewise, those who have gone to what awaits them cannot return to the flesh, but can still manifest in the world of dreams.

## Nocturne ■

The majority of those who ponder the nature of the unconscious think that dreams are harmless but necessary, a way for the mind to sort through the things it has experienced while awake. And this is true to an extent. There is no danger in dreams for the **Sleepers**, those who dream and forget most of what they see. But for the **Dreamer**, it is a realm called **Nocturne**. And for Dreamers, Nocturne can be a hazardous place. A Dreamer remembers their dreams, and their heightened awareness while in Nocturne means that they can shape that reality. Since they are part of that reality, they can be shaped in turn. A Dreamer who is injured in Nocturne may suffer a stroke, heart attack or convulsions, and a Dreamer who is killed in Nocturne will not re-awaken, though this is not necessarily the end. A strong enough Dreamer can make the traumatic transition from this life to the next with some part of their psyche intact, and can enter the Nocturne from the other side of life.

Nocturne is full of Sleepers, Dreamers and other entities from diverse places. For generations it has been a largely peaceful place.

*It is peaceful no more.*

Events prophesied by Dreamers past are beginning to happen. Evils once weak now wax in power, pollute Nocturne with their presence, and corrupt the hearts of the Sleepers and Dreamers alike. They seek absolute power, for it is their nature. It is what they *must* do, even if it is not in their best interest. To gain this power they will go to any length, even to engineering the decline and possible extinction of humanity. No physical weapon can touch them, no army can assault the domain from which they come. They *cannot* be defeated. They never could, they never will be. But they *can* be beaten back, forced to retreat to whence they came, weakened so that they cannot return again in force for many generations.

Thus has it ever been.

*And you must be the ones to bring it to pass.*

▼ **UNCHARTED TERRITORY** - Nocturne is a creation of the collective psyche of everything that dreams and everything that has ever dreamed. Belief has made it real, and the nature of that belief reflects the nature of Nocturne. It is a slowly shifting landscape of deeply held beliefs, mountains and oceans anchored in memories, its surface features roiled and disturbed by squalls of popular culture. There are oases of serenity, deserts of desolation and whirlpools of dark emotion laid and overlaid on a dreamscape that mirrors the real world, or what some Dreamers call the **Materia**. When a person dies, their contribution to Nocturne slowly fades away, to be replaced by stronger and newer contributions by the living. Parts of Nocturne derived from the dreams of those who are not sentient fade almost as soon as the creature awakens, while the contributions of those strong in will and mind can be felt centuries later, if not longer.

Nocturne is a real place, but one which few can perceive while conscious. This dimension has its own rules, its own laws of nature. They are strange, but consistent, and all Dreamers will eventually learn them. The realms of existence a Dreamer is aware of are three-fold, a number that repeats many times in each realm.

The realms are the **Materia**, or the mundane world, the **Apocrypha**, those unknown regions which lie beyond life, and **Nocturne**, which reflects and is accessible from both **Materia** and the **Apocrypha**.

There are three main facets to Nocturne. Dreamers past have given them many names, but the most common are the **Pattern**, **Weave** and **Thread**. Purists may use the archaic Greek terms (**Eidos**(Idea), **Morphê**(Form), **Chrusolinon**(Golden Thread)), which was in turn derived from still older languages. Many groups still use the more recent Latin terms (**Exemplar**, **Texo**, **Ligamen**), though the implied religious associations are not to everyone's tastes. Some groups of younger Dreamers use terms more associated with the Internet (**Web**, **Node** and **Account**). Regardless of the terminology, the meanings are the same.

The **Pattern** is the whole of Nocturne. Nocturne is a combination of the **Materia** and the **Apocrypha**, and shares characteristics of both, depending on the strength of the beliefs that created it. The **Pattern** reflects the cumulative experience of all who have been to the places that make it up. That is, a Dreamer cannot go to a place in Nocturne that reflects a part of the real world that has never been explored. If there is a mountain that has never been climbed, a Dreamer cannot reach the summit of that mountain in Nocturne. Neil Armstrong was the first person to set foot on the Moon, but Dreamers followed soon after.

Similarly, the **Pattern** reflects the timeframe of the experiences that created it. The first explorer to reach the lost city of Macchu Picchu dreamt of an intact city and its last inhabitants, for its lingering **Pattern** was stronger than the dreams of that one explorer. As more and more people have seen this ruin, their dreams have shaped that part of the **Pattern** to reflect it as it is now, and its ghostly pattern of ages past is now all but lost.

The **Pattern** is the whole of Nocturne, which includes everything that has ever happened there. One can Dream of things past, and interact in ways that would seem to violate cause and effect, but the only change that can actually happen in the **Pattern** is to the **Thread** of *that* Dreamer. Since what is is far stronger than what was, true Dreaming of the past is difficult, and is limited to places and times in the **Pattern** of great change, great enough that their echoes can still be sensed, and that older part of the **Pattern** viewed and visited.

The **Pattern** also reflects the afterlife and beliefs about the afterlife. Heaven is somewhere above, unattainable even to a Dreamer with wings. Hell is somewhere below, deep in the fiery bowels of the Earth, far below the deepest mine. But both come close to Nocturne and **Materia** in specific places. Astronauts report feeling a closeness to God. They are closer to the Judeo-Christian Heaven, and can feel this in both dreams and even while awake. Though they are long deserted, visiting World War II concentration camps can give one nightmares. Hell has bubbled up close to the surface here, and this too can be felt by the sensitive.

Above all else, the Pattern *is*. It cannot be permanently altered by a Dreamer in Nocturne. If you pick up and throw a rock, the rock will stay where you threw it only so long as you stay in that place and will the rock to stay thrown. The rock in the Materia is the Pattern from which Nocturne is drawn, so when you leave, the rock will return to its proper place. You cannot change the Materia or Apocrypha from Nocturne. You can only alter the Nocturnal reflections and interpretation of these places.

The **Weave** is the local part of the Pattern where you are. The Weave *can* be affected by will alone. A person of sufficient will could dream a gun into their hands and shoot something in the Weave, temporarily destroying or damaging it. This *could* be another Dreamer. While one cannot affect the Pattern as a whole, one can *locally* affect the Weave, either by physical action or effort of will. By a long term effort, Dreamers can alter the Weave so that it has characteristics different from its Materia reflection. Just as the Materia affects the Pattern and locally, the Weave, an altered Weave *can* affect the Materia. A dark and foreboding Weave can give a Sleeper nightmares, and bring a chill even to a Waker who walks through that part of the Materia. A hostile Weave can make bad things happen more often, and similarly a beneficial Weave can bring peace to troubled parts of the Materia. While one can use Travelling skill to traverse great distances in the Pattern, one must move more conventionally within a Weave. You could fly, or run, but not simply will yourself to a spot without crossing the intervening distance. A Weave represents someone's will imposed on Nocturne, and while you may bypass a Weave, once in it, you are in a sense bound by its nature.

The **Thread** is who you are, a tiny part of the Weave and of the larger Pattern. Making changes to the Thread is a trivial task, and one that most Dreamers learn as a matter of course. Protecting your Thread from outside manipulation is a harder skill, but one that must be mastered if a Dreamer expects to encounter hostile Dreamers or other entities.

## Nocturne ■

The **Apocrypha** are all the areas that are beyond life, realms past Nocturne that only those who have completely shed the Materia can enter. That is, dying. All things that have an awareness of self can dream, and all things that dream will pass on to an Apocrypha. The Apocrypha one's essence is drawn to depends on one's belief system, and how one lives their life. *All* Apocrypha are equally valid. There *is* a Heaven, and a Hell. Also a Valhalla, an Elysian Fields, and so on. If you believe in Hell, and that you have done things that damn you to Hell, then bingo! *You're going to Hell!* If you believe that your soul will be stripped of identity, purified and sent back to Earth to inhabit a new body, then that's the Apocrypha that your soul will go to.

The transition from Materia to Apocrypha is traumatic, but those of strong will and power can make the transition and still retain their identity. Such rare individuals can enter Nocturne from "the other side". It is the nature of Apocrypha that anything you learn there stays there, so even those who return to Nocturne cannot reveal what their chosen afterlife is *truly* like. Once in Nocturne, they no longer know except in the vaguest sense.

Each Apocrypha has a primal force, a sort of super-Entity that both runs and *is* the Apocrypha. For instance, the Creator is not just in Heaven, the Creator in a sense *is* Heaven. For this reason, the Primal Apocrypha cannot leave their domains, and must forever remain separated from both Nocturne and Materia. A Primal Apocrypha is the embodiment of the nature of that place. As the embodiment of Hell, Lucifer *is* pain, regret and hatred.

Since a Primal Apocrypha cannot enter Nocturne, it must send agents or Entities to gather information and do its bidding. These Entities may be extremely powerful in Nocturne, but have no effect on the Materia. Angels and Devils literally exist only in our dreams.

▼ **DREAMERS, SLEEPERS AND WAKERS** - You already have some idea of what a Dreamer is. Anyone who can reliably Dream, remember their dreams and can locally shape the Pattern is a **Dreamer**. True Dreamers are quite rare. Only a handful in a million are Dreamers, and almost all adventurers in a Nocturne campaign will be among those rare individuals.

Many of history's influential figures have been Dreamers. The combination of will and intellect that makes a strong person also makes a strong Dreamer, and a person with these traits who can work, communicate and make coherent plans even while unconscious can have up to double the effective lifespan in terms of their ability to get things done. In primitive times, the ability to see and communicate with those in distant places was an invaluable asset, but also made one suspiciously wise to those who believed in witchcraft.

There are things out there, the Others, neither men nor beasts, but Dreamers none the less. They bear all of humanity a hatred so ancient and powerful it is written in our genes to know them and fear them on sight. They remain hidden, but they work against us when they can.

A **Sleeper** is someone who dreams, but does not Dream. A Sleeper's dreaming is the strange, sometimes fantastical sort that most of us are accustomed to. It has a "location" that Dreamers can visit at a temporary cost of 1 Fate, centered on the Materia location of the Sleeper. A Dreamer can enter these dreams and interact with them, and the Sleeper may remember some of this upon awaking, but it is not always certain. However, entering a Sleeper's dreams puts the Dreamer under partial control of the Dreamer's preconscious. By willingly becoming part of someone else's dream, your actions in that dream are bounded by the Sleeper. If it becomes a nightmare, then it becomes *your* nightmare as well. If the plot of their dream does not let you leave, you cannot leave until they awake or the dream reaches its end. Novice Dreamers are often voyeurs and would-be manipulators of people's dreams, but this usually ends after the first nightmare they get trapped in. Since a Dreamer can take actual damage from these dreams (and the Sleeper cannot), the Dreamer can be in a world of hurt when a dream goes horribly wrong.

Sleepers are visible to Dreamers, but cannot be interacted with save to try and enter their dreams.

**Wakers** are simply everyone in Materia who is not asleep and dreaming (or Dreaming). They are also sometimes called the Dreamless or the Pale. To anyone in Nocturne, Wakers are invisible or nearly so, at best faint representations of their self-image. They are inaudible and intangible, as are their immediate possessions and clothing (part of their self image). To a Dreamer, Wakers simply do not exist. The only exceptions are Waking Dreamers and Sensitives, both of whom can be seen and to some extent interacted with by Dreamers. A busy sidewalk in Materia is deserted for a Dreamer and a very faint swirling fog of Wakers. What would be a crowded freeway in Materia is in Nocturne a strange landscape of speeding but empty cars. Empty buses pull up to stops, open and close their doors, and move on. Dreamers can use and interact with devices controlled by unseen Wakers, but are limited by normal circumstance. A Dreamer could hop on a bus, get behind the wheel and drive somewhere faster than they could walk, but would also be limited by the normal flow of traffic. The Materia bus would continue on its normal rounds, and when the Dreamer relinquished mental control of the bus, the Nocturnal representation of the bus would merge with its Materia location again. There is a small cadre of Dreaming car enthusiasts who have pooled their money to buy some of the world's rarest and most powerful vehicles. These are garaged in pristine condition, and driven only in Nocturne.

Ironically, though they have no conscious power over Nocturne, it is the Wakers who shape it the most. The billions of Wakers generate what the Dreamer sees by their actions. A closed door is closed because a Waker closed it. A concentration camp exists because Wakers built it and a mass grave is filled because Wakers did the killing, and the site is emotionally poisoned because Wakers did the dying. Dreamers can have great power, but the Wakers have the numbers. The advantage a Dreamer has is that when they aren't Dreaming, they are a Waker as well. They operate in *both* realms, each with its advantages and limitations.



▼ **THE AWAKENING** - Something that influences the life and fate of every Dreamer is the Awakening. Though they know it not, it affects the Sleepers as well.

All Dreamers have an instinctual awareness of the Awakening, when all Sleepers of every kind suddenly become Dreamers or something more. It is an event that no Dreamer is ambivalent about. They either want it to happen as the next stage in the evolution of the soul, or dread it as an event that will corrupt, enslave or destroy us all. How it can be made to happen is unknown, though many have theories and plans to bring it about. How it can be prevented is equally unknown, but thwarting other people's plans to bring it about is a generally accepted tactic.

Those who fear or wish to prevent the Awakening are known as the Elite, while those who seek to bring it about are loosely known as the Redeemers. These two groups are far from monolithic blocks, because each group is composed of numerous factions, each with their own goals and beliefs about the Awakening.

Even the Primal Apocrypha do not know the true nature of the Awakening, only that it is a thing either destined to happen, or destined to be thwarted, depending on who you ask. Virtually all religions derive from the beliefs in and of a Primal Apocrypha, and virtually all these religions prophecy some great battle or cataclysm that is the cause, prevention, side effect or result of the Awakening, though all phrase it in allegory and symbolism. As a matter of public relations, each portrays its own side as the victors or good guys in the matter, and truly objective (or accurate) prophecies are nowhere to be found.

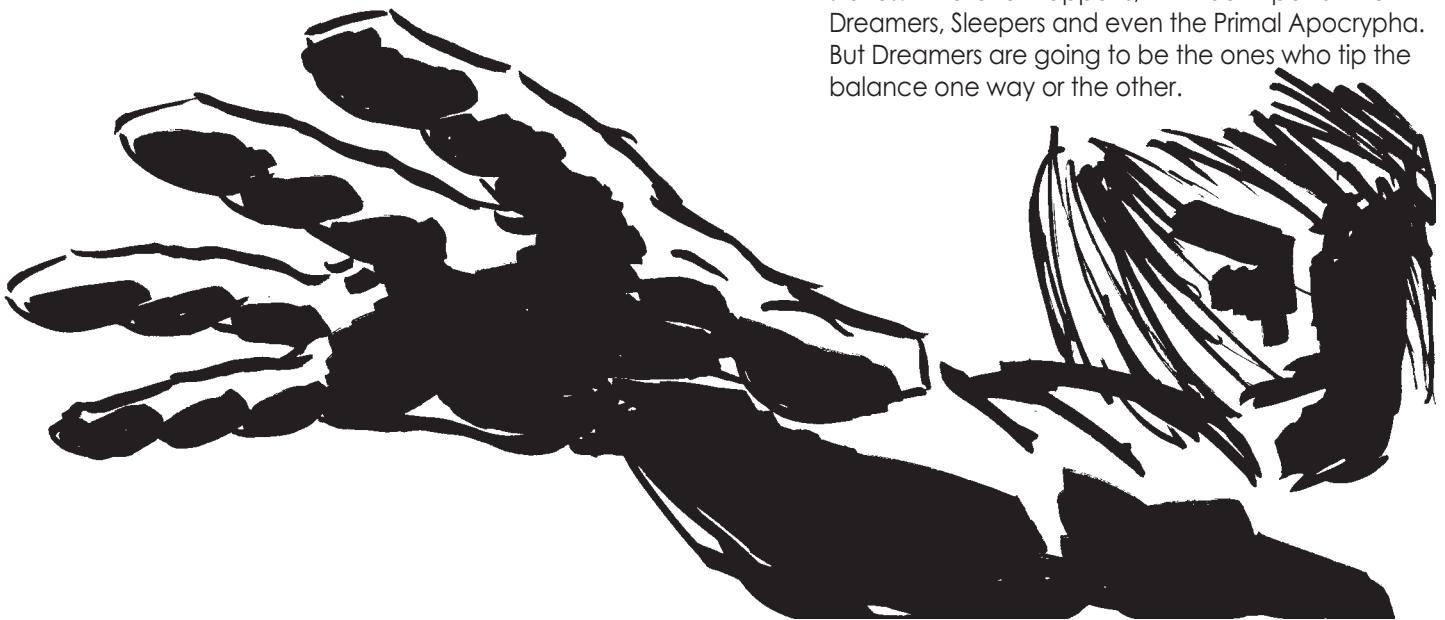
## Nocturne

The Book of Revelations predicts the Rapture of the believers, the seven years of tribulations on Earth and the final victory of the Creator over Lucifer. The Norse have the final battle of Ragnarok, preceded by three consecutive years of unrelenting winter and a complete societal breakdown. The world will be destroyed and a new world will begin. The Mayan calendar predicts the end of the Fifth Age in 2012CE, a collapse of time and the end of death. The Jewish faith has only a few splinter groups predicting end times, though one might argue they have had enough apocalypses already. Similarly, only a few Islamic sects preach an end time, a "Year of the Hajj" in year 1500 of the Islamic calendar (2076CE). By some interpretations of the Hindu calendar, the last avatar of Vishnu should make an appearance any day now to end the current dark age and bring about an age of righteousness. And the Buddhist calendar has cycles of decline and renewal, with the current decline due to turn around in 2018CE.

*Who is right?* We have no idea, but the fact that many of these prophecies point to something terrible, mysterious or overwhelming happening during *your* lifetime should have you worried...

The overwhelming backdrop of a **Nocturne** campaign is that Dreamers everywhere feel that things are finally happening and that the last days are upon us. Some might think this means within a year, while others do not see the final conflict as happening for another generation or more.

What does matter is that people are taking it a bit more seriously, and playing the game for higher stakes. Whatever happens, it will be important for Dreamers, Sleepers and even the Primal Apocrypha. But Dreamers are going to be the ones who tip the balance one way or the other.





# ADVENTURERS

*I took a walk  
around the world to  
ease my troubled mind;  
I left my body  
lying somewhere in  
the sands of time;  
I watched the world  
go through the  
dark side of the moon;  
I guess there's  
nothing I can do...*

- Three Doors Down, *Kryptonite*

▼ **INTRODUCTION** - Nocturne is set in the "real world", the 21st century Earth you have come to know and love as your home. The Materia trappings and historical background are the same. Nocturne just adds some hidden events and motivations behind the scenes. Adventurers will probably be Dreamers, individuals of above average will and intellect who are able to roam Nocturne by choice rather than by accident.

Before we get into the nuts and bolts of your **Nocturne** adventurers, let's spend a page or so talking about what makes a Dreamer a Dreamer. Not the level of their Fate attribute or their skills at manipulating Threads and Weaves, but to ask if there are characteristics common to all Dreamers, and if not, what sort of life backgrounds are appropriate, and how the traits of Dreamers shape the nature of the conflict in Nocturne.

For instance, if only meditative types were able to enter Nocturne, it would be a far different place than if only emotional intensity allowed one to enter.

## Nocturne

▼ **BACKGROUND** - Dreamers are by definition unusual for their world, whether it is the early 21st century, or some pseudo-medieval fantasy world. What made them Dreamers?

**Accident of Birth** - Perhaps Dreaming is tied to lineage, whether at a genetic or mystical level. If one of your parents or grandparents was a Dreamer, you might be one as well. It would be common for the talent to skip a generation, for you to have only heard about Dreaming from an elderly grandparent, half-remember Dreams of childhood that faded into the distance of time, until some event in your life shoved you into Nocturne. And now you wonder if you are crazy, or whether what you thought was a child's fancy is a real place. You dug out your old C.S. Lewis books, did some on-line searching, and it seems that maybe you aren't crazy after all. *No one will tell you so directly.* You'll have to find a way there on your own, and see if there is anyone there to meet you...

Or, maybe one (or both) of your parents are or were Dreamers, and from the earliest you can remember they were there for you, awake or asleep. They helped you fight off the bogeyman under your bed, and they beleived your story when you awoke, but they never showed you the bandages from the wounds they took in the fight. Raised in a household where the mystical was real, you learned quickly not to tell anyone, for your classmates gave you nothing but teasing and ridicule. But you held on to your legacy, and now that you are an adult, maybe with children of your own, the changes in Nocturne scare you. *Things are happening, and you want to know why.*

Maybe you were somewhere in between. Maybe one of your parents was a Dreamer, but the other was not, and what they saw in their spouse scared them, and you got conflicting signals as a child. Or worse, something in Nocturne got to one of your parents, driving them insane. Your childhood was a sad one, with visits to the care center to see a mother or father who was one moment tender, the next raving, intruding into your dreams and even sometimes while awake, until you learned not to Dream at all. And then there was that last terrible anguished nightmare, when they came to you, trying desperately to tell you something, begging for help that you would not give. And what you felt the next day, when they were found in their locked room, their throat torn out while they lay strapped helplessly to their bed. *Now, you have sworn to find vengeance, and pray you can find atonement...*

**Destiny** - Sometimes Dreamers are made, not born. And you are not sure if it was an accident of fate, or a plan set in motion before you were born. You were a Sleeper, until something happened that dragged you almost to the other side. *You nearly died.* Maybe it was a car accident, drowning, hypothermia or heart attack, but everyone was sure you were dead and gone. But not you. With an odd sense of detachment, you watched from *outside* your body. The desperate attempts to revive you, the words of the doctors, the tiniest details, down to the cufflink that fell out of the doctor's pocket and rolled under a piece of equipment in the corner.

And then there was a Presence. It pulled you away from the operating room, or maybe it just put something else in its place. It told you that you could return to an uncertain world, or come with it to a different place. You turned around, to look back at your life, and all you had never done, and those who waited for you. And you turned to face the Presence, and instead you saw all those you knew who had gone before you, ready to welcome you with open arms, and you decided. You turned to face Life, and the Presence was there instead. It placed a hand on your forehead, and there was a blinding light, terrible agony, and the gasp of breath into lungs that ached for oxygen. *You were alive.*

The doctors considered your survival a miracle, and so did you. They discounted your vision as the hallucinations of a dying brain. They were skeptical as you described in detail every procedure they did to you while unconscious, everything they said to the last word. And when you told your doctor where to find his cufflink, he didn't want to talk about your vision anymore, and the nurses spoke in hushed tones whenever you were wheeled by.

That was your first experience as a Dreamer, and your first experience at why Dreamers do not talk about what they do.

*Now you Dream.* Somewhere in your mind, where the Presence touched you, is why you were chosen, and what you are supposed to do when you Dream. *But you haven't figured that part out yet...*

**Man with a Mission** - Your being able to Dream is something you once thought simply as a very active imagination. Later, you considered yourself psychic, able to see distant places. You went through a mystic phase, experimented with mood-altering substances and chased UFO's. Then you ran into something in Nocturne that had claws and fangs, and awoke coughing up blood.

Suddenly, you became a lot more cautious, a little more deliberate, and took Dreaming more seriously. As you accepted that the realm of Nocturne was as real as anywhere else, you ran into others like yourself. You found there were organizations, support groups, alliances and enemies. You realized there was a sort of safety in numbers, a Nocturnal gang affiliation whose reputation could give you some protection and a sense of identity and purpose.

Now you *Believe*. In the Cause. Whatever that cause is. Your Dreams and your life have purpose. And even if real life sucks, you now know that there is a world that you can't touch, but which in its own way is more important.

Or maybe you're part of the Big Picture. One of those meaningless psych tests or experiments in college was actually funded by the government, and you scored high enough to merit someone's notice. Slowly, so as not to knock you off balance, forces beyond your sight began to influence you. New friends, odd dreams, life-altering coincidences, all designed to get you to accept your potential. And then the hook, the call from the government to serve your country in a way that few others could. To join with the elite few who Dreamt to preserve their country and their way of life. Not just a fight against the leader's bogeymen, but to prevent the espionage and sabotage of enemies both international and well, interdimensional. Dreaming was not something to be left to amateurs, whose unskilled perambulations could conceivably threaten national security.

It's a strange, lonely life, but not a boring one.

**Final** - There are more possible backgrounds than this, of course. But these should be colorful enough to spur your imagination, to get your mental gears spinning as you move onto the next section.

▼ **BUILDING AN ADVENTURER** - Nocturne can be overlaid onto any campaign, and would use the appropriate level and power of adventurers for that campaign, but for the "real world" version, adventurers will be "normal", having 80A and 80S to work with, plus any points for Traits. The average Sleeper is "low normal", being built on 60A and 60S, with few if any Traits to adjust this amount.

To enter Nocturne (to Dream) is an Average(7) Fate task. The average person only has a Fate roll of 1d+0 or less, so they do not Dream except under exceptional circumstances. Adventurers need to have a Fate high enough to Dream reliably (at least a 2d+0 roll), and they can always use Fate to increase their roll if needed.

Most Traits from **EABA** apply in a straightforward sense, but there are a few new ones or different interpretations specific to Nocturne. Likewise, there are a few new skills and some specific powers related to Dreaming. Purchasing these will take many of the extra points that differentiate Sleepers and Dreamers.

▼ **TRAITS** - These Traits can apply to some non-**Nocturne** campaigns, but not all. Players should check with the gamemaster before using any of the special ones in anything other than a **Nocturne** campaign.

In addition to the notes on Traits and the new skills for Nocturne, players should read the notes on the various power groups (page 4.3). Some of these groups convey benefits or match an adventurer concept such they might be worth meeting the entrance requirements for.

● **Age** - Adventurers can be of any age. If the oldest bracket is chosen, try to pick an age that will not have the adventurer exceed 100 years old before the campaign is over...

◆ **Blessing/Curse** - Unlikely for adventurers. Some figures or Entities may have this Trait, but only an exceptional adventurer concept should have one, and then only with gamemaster approval.

■ **Enemies** - An adventurer can have Enemies. These are handled straightforwardly, but an Enemy that is also a Dreamer is automatically a level more powerful in terms of the points gained. An Enemy that is a Nocturnal force such as an Entity (angel, devil, etc.) is two levels more powerful in terms of the points gained.

**EXAMPLE** - A powerful Enemy is normally worth 15A or 15S. This would make a powerful Entity worth 25A or 25S as an Enemy.

## Nocturne

■ **Experience** - Many sorts of experience are available to Dreamers or other Nocturnal Entities. Examples might be "maintaining self-image", the emotional equivalent of an environmental tolerance (e.g. ignoring location-based despair), carrying a *particular* item (page 3.5) and so on. Remember that this Trait never gives bonuses, it just offsets a particular type of penalty.

■ **Forte** - There are two Fortes that can relate directly to Dreaming:

**Catnapper:** An adventurer with this Forte can take a short nap almost any time they want. This is a good advantage for a Dreamer. This is a Forte on Will and costs 5A, giving the adventurer +1d on Will rolls to fall asleep whenever they want, even if not all that tired (which would be a Challenging(9) task). It also helps if the situation is physically uncomfortable or there is some emotional conflict that would make it more difficult to sleep.

In addition, the adventurer can pick one time during the day (a 1 hour interval) during which it is only an Average(7) task to fall asleep (a regular "nap time"). A nap typically lasts an hour and counts as two hours towards any sleep the adventurer needs to stay alert. Dreaming during a nap is just like any other Dreaming, except there is less than an hour to get things done.

**Dreamer:** This Forte is simply a +1d bonus to Fate to see if the adventurer can enter Nocturne upon falling asleep. It does not convey any extra power to abilities once in Nocturne. It is usually more cost-effective to purchase a higher Fate, and this Trait is usually for low-power Dreamers who require a boost simply to be able to enter Nocturne, such as Dreaming animals (see page 4.10).

■ **Friends** - Points would be under the same guidelines as Enemies. In addition to humans or Entities as Friends, adventurers can also count a Dreaming pet as a Friend by spending 5A or 5S. Such an animal companion is not intelligent and is limited by their low abilities and animal mindset, but they can be useful companions or guardians nonetheless. Typical cats and dogs are listed on page 4.10. A Dreaming animal companion that dies can eventually be replaced at no point cost, though this might take years.

◆ **Gifted** - There are two ways of being Gifted that are specific to a Nocturne campaign:

**Sensitive:** A sensitive might be considered a "psychic" in a world without any real paranormal powers. A Sensitive falls somewhere between and between being a Dreamer and a Waking Dreamer. They probably are a Dreamer, but do not have to be. What a Sensitive can do is sense the presence of Dreamers in their immediate vicinity *while they are still awake*. They cannot see the Dreamers, and probably cannot hear the Dreamer unless the Dreamer gets up close and shouts in their ear. But, simply being able to sense the presence of Dreamers can be useful at times. A sensitive has the Trait of being Gifted (costs 10A), and the ability to sense Dreamers is a paranormal power that the adventurer cannot control. The gamemaster can design it up as a paranormal ability if they want to quantify it precisely, but it is usually not necessary. At gamemaster option, a Sensitive can detect if a person is a Dreamer or potential Dreamer if they touch that person while awake.

**Waking Dreamer:** This is a form of being Gifted that is both superior and more socially limiting than simply being a Sensitive. A Waking Dreamer wanders through Nocturne while conscious and while asleep, *whether they like it or not*. They suffer the advantages and limits of both worlds. They cannot travel to the corners of the globe by thought alone, because their Dreaming does not transcend their Materia body, but they can also see and sense things that waking eyes cannot. An unfortunate side effect of being a Waking Dreamer is the near certainty of being diagnosed as hopelessly insane by any modern society. Primitive societies might see the adventurer as touched by the gods, a holy person or candidate for a priesthood of some type. It is possible that modern drugs can ameliorate the problem, but this prevents the character from entering Nocturne while asleep as well. Being a Waking Dreamer costs 10A, and is a paranormal power that the adventurer cannot control. The gamemaster can design it up as a paranormal ability if they want to quantify it precisely, but it is usually not necessary.

▼ **Note** - It seems quite reasonable that many (usually illegal or dangerous) drugs can temporarily grant abilities to Sleepers. These abilities can include being a Sensitive, a Waking Dreamer or a short-term boost to Fate that allows a Sleeper to reach the levels needed to Dream.

■ **Isolation** - This is a new Trait, and might only be appropriate for **Nocturne**. The adventurer is somehow isolated from the other adventurers. While common for adventurers in **Nocturne** to be in different cities, or even different time zones, an isolated adventurer is hard to reach in Materia. This makes it difficult for friends to visit, rescue or physically deliver items to that adventurer.

Geographic isolation is worth 5\$, and represents a simple geographic remoteness. The adventurer *can* be visited, it is just a real pain in the neck to do so. They live in the Amazon jungle, a cabin in Alaska, a whistle stop on the Trans-Siberian railway, or a mountaintop in southwest Virginia.

Social isolation is worth 5\$, and represents a barrier other than simple distance. It requires special preparation to visit the adventurer, but once the preparations are made, normal face-to-face interaction is not usually a problem. A powerful or wealthy person might be socially isolated. Even friends often have to make appointments or work around the adventurer's schedule. A traveling troubleshooter might be in a different city every week and be difficult to track down or meet with.

Social isolation can be combined with geographic isolation. An adventurer in Antarctica can only be visited when it is possible to travel there. If this is late in the travel season, the visit might require staying over the winter until travel back home becomes possible again.

Legal isolation is worth 5\$, and represents some law or stricture that restricts the adventurer's movement, schedule and possessions. A character in prison or a mental hospital would be in legal isolation. An adventurer in North Korea may not be able to leave the country, and it would be hard to visit them. This could be legal *and* geographical isolation. Legal isolation is usually but not always combined with social isolation. For instance, an adventurer under "house arrest" would be legally isolated. They might be prevented from owning certain things, and only be allowed to leave their home on a specific schedule for limited times, but this does not prevent them from having visitors.

Isolation can make it harder for Materia Enemies to get at an adventurer. If the isolation would tend to negate an Enemy, then the Enemy is worth fewer or even no points.

◆ **Larger than Life** - Not recommended for adventurers for reasons of play balance, though certain Entities may have the Trait. Especially heroic Nocturne campaigns might allow this Trait on one Attribute and its associated skill rolls.

● **Looks** - As normal under **EABA** rules. This only applies to Materia appearance. Most adventurers in Nocturne can adjust their looks as desired. Some Nocturnal denizens may have a Looks that cannot be altered (or which they never choose to alter), and for them, this would be worth a few points.

● **Motivation** - Highly recommended. See the power groups section in the **Friends & Foes** chapter for possible backgrounds and motivations.

◆ **Mythic Archetype** - Only if the gamemaster is up to the task of making adventures suited for this type of "Dream Team".

● **Pain Tolerance** - This Trait works both in Materia and Nocturne and can be useful for any Dreamer.

● **Personality** - There are a handful of personality Traits that directly or indirectly affect Dreaming:

**Limited imagination:** This is a personality Trait that reflects the adventurer's self-image. The adventurer cannot have more levels in this Trait than their full dice in Fate, and cannot generate any effect of the level of (Fate minus 1d for each level of this Trait) or more unless they first imagine a focus for that effect. That is, the adventurer needs to imagine "props" as a crutch to use abilities that other adventurers can use by will alone.

**EXAMPLE:** An adventurer whose Dreaming persona is a wizard might conjure up potions, wave a magic wand, and so forth. These things take time (at least one action to imagine the item into being or change an item's "powers"), and a Dreamer who operates by will alone will be faster and more flexible. On the other hand, the adventurer with this Trait has more points to spend on skills, and can thus be more effective once prepared for a situation.

If their Fate roll was 3d+1, they could have three levels of "limited imagination", and at this level could not generate or create any sort of Nocturnal effect of more than 0d+1 (Fate minus 3d) unless they can first imagine some wizardly focus for how to do it.

## Nocturne

**Limited mindset:** The adventurer believes in Nocturne, but only a portion of it. Things in Nocturne that are outside their set of beliefs have a less real existence. More accurately, the adventurer has a less real existence to everyone else. For instance, a devout follower of the traditional Christian ethos might only believe in two Apocrypha (Heaven and Hell). Anything in Nocturne that would come from or reflect *other* Apocrypha would have less existence as far as that person was concerned. They would be less able to affect these things because they do not truly believe in their existence, but likewise, these things would be less able to affect the person because the strength of their limited beliefs armors them against outside influences.

A player picks a limited set of beliefs that the gamemaster approves, and gains 5S for each level of this Trait. Each level is a 1d bonus against attempts by anything outside this belief system to influence the character. *It is also a penalty if the adventurer tries to perceive or influence things outside their belief system.* If the adventurer is aligned with part of a belief system, the opposing parts are affected half as much, rounding down.

**EXAMPLE:** A devout but not-quite fanatical believer in the Christian ethos might have two levels of "limited mindset". Dice rolled by any entity or force that appears to originate from outside this ethos loses 2d from its rolls. So, if the wizard from the previous example were seen as some sort of pagan, the wizard's "spells" would be have 2d less effect against the believer. If the wizard were seen as Lucifer's minion (within the Christian ethos), the wizard's spells would only be reduced by 1d.

Three levels in this Trait (15S) reflect a complete fanaticism about a belief system, and such a person literally *cannot* see anything outside their limited set of beliefs (-3d to their Awareness rolls to see them). This does not provide immunity to being influenced, but +3d protection is the next best thing. Note that this personality is often manifested in Materia in much the same way. The believer simply refuses to see or accept the reality of things that are counter to their core beliefs. Adventurers with limited beliefs can be just as annoying as real people with the same Trait.

▼ **Note!** - Since the world at large does not really believe in Nocturne, a strongly asserted belief in it could get one committed to an insane asylum (see **Isolation**, page 2.5). So, a Personality Trait of "delusional" reflects how the world sees you as much as it reflects how you see the world.

**Dependency:** An adventurer can be a Dreamer, but not reliably. Their personality might require a specific set of circumstances in order to reach Nocturne. What these circumstances are vary from person to person, but it has to be difficult to maintain, hazardous, debilitating, illegal or all of the above in order to gain points for the Trait. For instance, it might require a visit to an opium den or getting massively drunk. It might require a day with no emotional stress, or a day *with* intense emotional stress. None of these states need transfer over to Nocturne, but they would be pre-requisites to getting there in the first place. Adventurers with dependencies like this need to schedule their Materia lives carefully if they intend to meet with others in Nocturne.

Since this Trait can possibly prevent a player from playing at all in Nocturne, we suggest the Trait be bought as follows: Not having the dependency met still allows the adventurer to enter Nocturne, but they will take a one level shift (+2 difficulty) on all their rolls for each level of the Trait, and each level of this aspect of Personality is worth 5S. We recommend no more than two levels in this Trait.

**EXAMPLE:** A mundane computer programmer has one level of Dependency which requires them to have a stress-free day to Dream properly. On a weekend they were supposed to meet someone in Nocturne, they were instead called to work on an emergency server failure. *This caused a lot of stress.* So, when they finally get home and settle down to Dream, they take +2 difficulty on their rolls for any task they try in Nocturne (including getting there to begin with), because their emotional state is interfering with their mental clarity.

▼ **Note** - It is reasonable to assume that there are dangerous, addictive and/or illegal drugs which can temporarily boost a user's Fate to allow a Sleeper to Dream, or to become Sensitive or a Waking Dreamer. In particular, Ecstasy is known to grant the latter ability on occasion. Which drugs do what depends on the nature of the gameworld. A future campaign would have different drugs than a Victorian-era campaign, for instance (the latter would rely heavily on opium dens). In addition to short-term effects on perception and cognitive abilities, these drugs can be addictive and have negative long-term health effects, not to mention what happens if you get a bad batch...

■ **Secret** - Most Dreamers keep their true identities a secret. How much of a secret this is depends on who would cause them trouble if the secret was revealed. The most powerful Dreamer in the world can still be taken out with a simple bullet in Materia. The gamemaster should make known the nature of their particular campaign to the players, so that they can figure out whether they want to keep their Materia and Nocturnal identities separate.

■ **Status** - As people of above average ability, many adventurers (or their antagonists) will have some form of Status. This may be directly correlated with Wealth, or in the benefits that wealth brings (like easier access to powerful political figures). Too many levels of Status can cause an adventurer's Materia life to interfere with Nocturnal activities.

Status can be solely a Nocturnal phenomenon, and this should be approved by the gamemaster. For instance, if Entities or a Primal Apocrypha see the adventurer as a powerful agent for their cause, levels of Status might reflect ease of communication, getting information or assistance from that realm. This would be some form of limited Status, the cost depending on the usefulness of the Trait.

◆ **Unusual Background** - Dreamers by default have an unusual background, but buying a Fate roll high enough to enter Nocturne is the only cost to the adventurer. An unusual background would be something unusual even *for* a Dreamer, and whether it is allowed and what benefits it might convey are determined by the gamemaster. Being "on a path" (see below) is an unusual background.

◆ **Walker on the Path** - Dreamers can gain a long-term benefit through something called "walking a path" (see [page 3.25](#) for details). This will normally require a Hard(11) Will roll and may only be attempted once a month. An adventurer who spends 5S for this "unusual background" can already be on such a path at the start of the game, the 5S representing months of work cultivating the focus and determination needed for this potentially lonely lifestyle. This unusual background confers no other benefit, and if the adventurer strays from their path, they take as long to regain it as anyone else. If the gamemaster allows this for starting adventurers, they will let you know. An adventurer may have a Forte (or Weakness) on Will relating to finding their path.



■ **Weakness** - There is one new Weakness related to Dreaming:

**Insomnia:** An adventurer may want to Dream, or sleep, but has trouble doing so. They take penalties for not sleeping just like anyone else, but also have trouble falling asleep to begin with. This is in no sense an advantage. An insomniac does not make a good sentry. They are too tired to think or see straight, but are still technically awake and will still be taking lack of sleep penalties on the next day.

It is an Easy(5) Will roll to voluntarily go to sleep when tired. Physical discomfort or emotional distress may add to the difficulty of this roll. This is *not* an "I'm going to sleep now" roll, but simply making yourself comfortable enough that the body's natural tendencies take their course. Insomnia is a Weakness on Will (worth 10A), dropping the Will roll by -1d for purposes of being able to doze when tired. An adventurer can make one roll each hour for trying to sleep.

The non-pharmaceutical methods to overcome sleeplessness (warm milk, taking a hot bath two hours before bedtime, etc.) are good for a 2 point reduction in the difficulty of falling asleep, but also take up time that could be spent doing other things in Materia.

■ **Wealth** - As normal. It costs a lot of points to be absurdly wealthy, but it can be done. For reference, an adventurer with a 5d skill roll needs to spend 70S to have a million credits in the bank, or 50S to have a million credits in assets and a job that pays about a million credits a year. On the other hand, that same adventurer could be near the poverty line (in the United States) and get 20S for it. See the notes on [page 2.11](#) about mundane life for Dreamers.

## Nocturne

▼ **SKILLS** - The default **Nocturne** campaign will use the skills appropriate to the real world and the national or cultural background of the adventurer. For instance, a civilian adventurer could easily have experience with firearms if they came from the United States, but this would be much more unlikely if they were from England. What is particular to a **Nocturne** campaign are skills that *only* apply while Dreaming.

To cause effects in Nocturne will require a combination of will and power, or Will and Fate. It takes a strong or skilled Will to allow things to happen, and the level of Fate determines how powerful these effects are if they do happen. An analog would be the role of Agility and Strength in melee combat. One Attribute lets you hit, the other determines how hard you hit. Being strong in only one area will not prevent an adventurer from being effective, but it will influence their style.

**Cooperative skill use** - Most skills involved in Dreaming can be used cooperatively. Adventurers can use the exact same skill together. The way it works is that the adventurer with the highest skill gets to roll for the cooperative effort, and their skill is given a +2 for each assistant who has at least half that adventurer's skill (rounding up). The maximum bonus is half the best adventurer's total skill (round up), and the maximum number of useful assistants is the full dice in the leader's skill. Optionally, for any skill that has an effect based on the level of a Fate roll, the skill roll can be kept the same, but the Fate roll for the effect can be increased by +2 for each assistant. Last, *at gamemaster option*, a +6 bonus from cooperation can be traded for a level of Larger than Life on that skill roll.

**EXAMPLE:** An adventurer with a total Weaving skill of 5d+1 (including specializations) is assisted by adventurers with total skills of 3d+1 and 4d+0. This means that when they work together, only the adventurer with the skill of 5d+1 gets to roll, but they roll as if their skill were 5d+1 (theirs) + 4 (two assistants) = 5d+5 (which becomes 6d+2). This adventurer could use a maximum of 5 assistants (since they have a skill roll of 5d+1), and if they did have five useful assistants, they would roll as if their skill were 5d+1 (theirs) + 10 (five assistants) = 5d+11 (which becomes 9d+0).

Cooperative skill use can be used to increase effective skill, or as a way to keep a normal skill level but perform the skill in a smaller amount of time or get a more powerful effect from Fate-based abilities.

**New Skills** - The following are skills particular to Nocturne and Dreaming: Weaving, Threading, Creating, Invoking, Sensing, Projection, and Travelling. Dreamers have no paranormal powers aside from the ability to Dream, but these skills give a Dreamer a formidable array of talents within Nocturne. Full descriptions of how each skill is used will be in the **Nocturne** chapter, with only a brief overview here.

**Weaving (new skill):** This Awareness skill lets you modify a place in Nocturne, which in turn may affect the nature and probability of events in Materia. Weaving is an overall talent, but there are an endless array of specializations that can go with it. Any broad concept is a specialization. For instance, a malignant force might have:

Weaving	+2d
Decay & disease	+1d

For a total skill of +3d in influencing disease in an area. For purposes of Weaving skill, an "area" is something like a building or a parcel of land. The more complex the environment, the smaller the area that is affected, and the greater the Fate of the Dreamer, the larger the area. It would take a very powerful Dreamer (Fate of at least 4d) to affect a large building and the land surrounding it in a single Weaving. Since so much of Nocturne is subjective, don't worry too much about exact dimensions and boundaries. If it is a concern for some reason, figure the adventurer's average Fate roll is a Size/Distance result on the **EABA Universal Chart**.

The effects of a Weaving are seen and felt immediately, but vanish when the Dreamer leaves the area. Weaving can have long-term effects that exist beyond the Dreamer's presence, but this takes a long time to implement. A powerful enough Weaving can have effects that bleed over into the material world. See [page 3.7](#) for more details.

**Threading(new skill):** This Will skill is the ability to modify one's own Thread, or alter someone else's. A Dreamer's default appearance to themselves and others in Nocturne is based on their true vision of themselves. How you truly see yourself is how you normally appear to others unless you expend effort to appear otherwise. This self-image is almost always how you first appear in Materia, modified by any Traits. It is not necessarily what you wish to be, or how you might convince yourself that you are, but is a reflection of your *true* nature.

▼ **Note!** - It is always possible that a renowned or reviled public figure can have their default appearance in Nocturne modified by the vast numbers of Sleepers who feel strongly one way or the other. Similarly, since people generally do not believe in the Others (page 4.13), it is much easier for them to appear as human, because that is what Dreamers expect them to be.

Threading lets you change your true image while Dreaming, to appear more as you wish to be, to make a weapon or armor, or to disguise your true nature from others. Threading can also be used to disrupt or modify the Threadings of other Dreamers. To change someone else's displayed self-image to a clown is an offensive use of Threading, as would distintegrating a weapon or other visualized device created by Threading. Threading is the skill you would use to generate most forms of enhanced mobility or weaponry that is used against other Nocturnal entities. Note that it may require Projection skill ([page 2.10](#)) to use a Threaded item on someone else. That is, a Threaded armor is just a passive object, but to use a Threaded sword on someone else requires Projection skill rather than a mundane sword-wielding skill. The "sword" is a manifestation of your will, and the Projection skill would be your ability to force that will upon others.

Any broad category of effect would be a specialization. This can be for a specific type of Threading, or several types that have a common theme. A Dreamer that fancies themselves a knight might have:

Threading	+2d
Knightly accoutrements	+1d

This might let the "knight" generate a weapon (offensive use) and armor (defensive use). But the armor and weapons would be only of types appropriate to a knight. See [page 3.9](#) for more details on using this skill.

**Creating (new skill):** This Will skill allows the user to create a "shared illusion". While Weaving generates a change to the nature of an area, and Threading allows one to force their Will over another person's Nocturnal image, Creating makes an object that others can be invited to partake of and use. The nature of a Creation is that all who partake of it do so willingly, and therefore it is difficult to use it for any sort of coercive purpose.

The other difference in a Creation is that as long as one person partaking of it remains in Nocturne, it remains in existence, even if the original Dreamer awakes (or even if they die).

Creations form the backbone of a sort of Nocturnal community and economy, created villages of like-minded individuals maintaining each other's "summer homes", Nocturnal blimps carrying less-talented Dreamers around in exchange for real-world payments, and other things limited literally only by the imagination.

Creating skill can be specialized only for a *particular* Creation, though that Creation can be multifaceted and quite complex (like a cottage and all its furnishings). Like Weaving, the maximum size of a Creation is limited. The difficulty of creating something is based on its size from the **EABA Universal Chart**, plus modifiers for what is being created. However, once an item is created, it can be enlarged by the participation of others. See [page 3.10](#) for more details.

**Projection(new skill):** This Will skill is your ability to project your will onto other Dreamers. Threading lets you generate an effect on the *projections* of someone else's will, but Projection skill is the ability to use it directly on someone else. It serves the purpose of any melee or ranged combat skill, and may be specialized to work with different kinds of Threadings.

**EXAMPLE:** A Dreamer with a Will roll of 3d+0 has a skill of +2d in Projection, with a +1d Specialization skill in Melee attacks. If this Dreamer used Threading skill to manifest a sword, they would have a skill of 6d+0 when attacking someone within melee range. If they manifested a crossbow, they would only have a skill of 5d+0 for attacking someone at range.

Range and other penalties in Nocturne are the same as their Materia equivalents, with the oddity that Weavings and Threadings can alter the landscape and each other, at least in a temporary fashion. See [page 3.14](#) for more details.

**Invoking(new skill):** This Awareness skill allows a Dreamer to manifest an *independent* representation of the nature of a place. Such a being is called an Elemental, and Invocation is similar but not identical to Weaving skill. Elementals have various uses, but invoking the Elemental of a place does not in any way guarantee its cooperation or prevent it from being hostile. See [page 3.14](#) for more information on Elementals.

**Sensing(new skill):** To Sense something in Nocturne is a perception that goes beyond the mundane senses of sight, sound, touch, taste and smell that all Dreamers carry with them from Materia. This Awareness skill is normally used at touching range, though it can be used at range with a difficulty appropriate to the range. Using this skill takes about ten minutes. It is not like seeing or hearing. Rather, one slowly builds up an impression and feelings over time. Any use of Sensing skill is fairly obvious to observers because of the trance-like state of the Dreamer making the attempt.

In addition to range penalties, the normal Sensing roll is made against the skill or Attribute roll of whatever did the event being sensed.

While the effects of a Weaving may be obvious, Sensing skill lets the Dreamer see things that are hidden, such as *why* the Weaving was done, *who* did it, and so on. Each specific type of question is a specialization of the skill, and can usually be categorized as "who?", "what?", "why?", "when?" and "where?".

**EXAMPLE:** A Dreamer encounters a despoiled area of Nocturne, where a nasty Weaving is corrupting the nature of Materia. They have an Awareness roll of 3d+0, a +1d Sensing skill, with another +1d in "when?" If they want to know *when* the last Weaving was done here, they would roll 5d+0 against the Weaving skill roll of whoever did this. If they want to know *who* did it, they would only have a 4d+0 roll.

Sensing skill results are often muddled and subjective, even when rolls are successful. Getting a good reading on "who?" *might* show you something of that person's true image, which might be different than their displayed self-image. An answer to "when?" might not be a precisely defined increment of time, but might be "before A but after B", leaving the Dreamer to track down when A and B happened.

**Travelling(new skill):** Most movement in Nocturne is a simple matter of willing oneself to a place. If you have never been there before, you have to "physically" traverse the distance, either by walking, Threading some unusual means of transport like wings, Creating a vehicle to take you there, or hijacking the Nocturnal representation of a Materia item (like stealing a car). Note that the latter might require the Nocturnal use of a Materia skill to "hotwire" the car.

Once you have been to a place, you can go directly there from where you begin Dreaming just by spending a point of Fate. *Piff! You're there!* "Spending a point of Fate" simply means that your Fate is decreased by 1 for the remainder of that particular stay in Nocturne.

However, if a location has been obstructed by another's Weaving skill and the Dreamer cannot bypass the conventional barriers like locked doors, Travelling skill is needed. Travelling is a Will skill that lets a Dreamer overcome such obstructions. The Dreamer must roll their Travelling skill against the level of the Weaving, which is a 1d roll per point of effect in the Weaving. Success means the Dreamer still travels directly to where they intended. Failing the roll by exactly 1 places the Dreamer just outside the protected location. Failing by more than 1 means the Dreamer loses a point of Fate but goes nowhere.

Thresholds to Apocryphal locations can be considered locations that constantly Weave out intruders at an impossibly high level, so Dreamers just use the threshold as a location rather than the location inside the threshold. See [page 3.16](#) for more information on this skill.

**Sorcery(new skill):** Within Nocturne there is a vast reservoir of energy that the skilled can tap into, to generate effects far more powerful and subtle than the expressions of sheer will represented by Weaving and Threading. If someone meets the minimum requirements to tap into this power and has this skill, they can begin to manipulate the fabric of Nocturne. In addition to the overall "Sorcery" skill, each "spell" will be a separate specialization, so being able to do any "magic" in Nocturne will require at least a +0d in Sorcery (5S) and a +0d specialization (5S) for a spell. See [page 3.23](#) for more details.

▼ **MUNDANE LIFE** - Dreamers still have to pay the rent. Normal income and expenses rules for any given gameworld will apply, so the time it takes to make a living (and their job hours) will have a significant effect on a campaign. On the other hand, Dreaming is like a second job that doesn't (always) wear you out. Adventurers can have a normal day job and mundane life, and put on their superhero cape for Nocturnal adventuring.

Even so, players will still need to figure out for their adventurers is how they are going to get by in the real world.

Adventurers start off with more points than the average person, but not extraordinarily more. Certainly not enough to make two fully competent adventurers (one for Materia, one for Nocturne). Fortunately, some use of Attributes overlaps, but still, an adventurer optimized for Nocturne will be at a disadvantage in Materia. And Materia is where the credit card bills are sent...

In addition, there is the idea that the Materia locations of the adventurers may not be readily accessible to the other adventurers. Players may want to compare notes and design adventurers so that things like job schedules, time zones and the like make it fairly easy for all the members of a group to get together in Nocturne for an adventure. Anything else becomes a royal pain for the gamemaster.

Things that players should take into account for their adventurers, both as practical matters and because it gives the gamemaster some hooks to hang adventures off of:

**How do you pay the bills?** - What mundane skills does the adventurer use to meet the demands of food, shelter, transport, entertainment and possibly family? Do the adventurer's Nocturnal abilities enhance this income, detract from it, or are they unrelated to it? If an adventurer's Nocturnal talents affect their real-world income, then it is likely at some point that real-world influences will come around to affect the adventurer. That is, if you use Dreaming to case joints prior to robbing them, you might eventually find a real-world knee-breaker on your doorstep after robbing the wrong person. Your adventurer might have an **Enemy**.

If an adventurer's Nocturnal talents detract from their income, it often means the adventurer is Dreaming when they should be working or improving their Materia skills. Compare it to playing games when you should be studying or working. The adventurer might be relegated to low-skill professions or be passed by for promotions because their Dreaming makes them late for work, or they have been caught napping on the job one too many times. This case might be worth a negative level of Wealth (**EABA**, page 2.18). That is, the adventurer has the skills, but their past job record/performance keeps them from being compensated at the market level for those skills.

An adventurer's Nocturnal skills might be their day job! If you were an African witch doctor, you would be diagnosing ills by day, and battling their Nocturnal causes by night. This would require a background of extreme poverty (by Western terms), and a likely unfamiliarity with the exact working of much of modern technology, though you might have an unusual adeptness with its Nocturne analogs (like hotwiring a car by waving a chicken bone over it and invoking its spirit to help you).

If the adventurer's income and Nocturnal activities are unrelated, it is usually only a problem when urgent job or Nocturnal demands impinge upon the other. Usually, the needs of a mundane job can be skirted by means of vacation days or sick days, but these can run out, and injuries caused in Nocturne can exacerbate the problem. Especially when you consider that some people would be leery or hiring someone with a history of unexplained illnesses, and health care providers may not wish to carry the adventurer or will charge extra for health insurance coverage.

**Family concerns** - Adventurers can have families (amazing as it may seem). In game terms, this is some combination of Friends, Motivation, Personality and Wealth. Having to raise three kids might not reduce your earned income, but a negative level of Wealth could reflect the drain on your resources. Or, marrying into a rich family might provide a positive level. An extended, supportive family certainly qualifies as a **Friend**. The reason you work and Dream so hard could be a family-based Motivation, and parental love and protection is certainly a strong aspect of **Personality**.

## Nocturne

Do your closest friends and family know about Dreaming or that you are a Dreamer? If not, then you might have a Secret. If Dreaming is not widely believed in, those who claim to be Dreamers would suffer the stigma of mental illness, and how this is handled would depend on the society. Some cultures saw lunatics as touched by the gods, others locked them up in asylums, and some have seen them as defective and simply put them to death to avoid polluting future generations. It all depends on the time and the place.

**Other settings - Nocturne** is written with the modern world in mind, but the idea of Dreaming can apply to almost any campaign, from fantasy to science fiction. How common Dreaming is and how Dreamers are perceived will make a lot of difference in how adventurers are designed, and how they interact with each other. Are Dreamers a publically known phenomenon, or are they secretive? If Nocturne is public knowledge, how does this affect organized religion? Are Dreamers tested for by the government and whisked away to secret bases to do battle with enemy Dreamers? Are they used as tools and weapons by the powerful but kept under tight leash lest they turn on their masters? Do the Dreamers have to live in their own protected communities to shield them from a jealous or hostile populace? Do Dreamers die young, or live longer than other people? Does Dreaming bypass the speed of light, making Dreamers a form of FTL communication?

If you move the details of Nocturne to another game world, you'll have to work out the changes it will make on Dreamers, and the changes Dreamers will make on the gameworld. See the Trait of **Isolation (page 2.5)** for some other thoughts that might apply.



jeff ©

# NOCTURNE

*This is the book I've never read;*

*These are the words I've never said;*

*This is the path I'll never tread;*

*These are the dreams I'll dream instead.*

*This is the joy that is seldom spread;*

*These are the tears,*

*the tears we shed;*

*This is the fear,*

*this is the dread;*

*These are the*

*contents of my head...*

-Annie Lennox, *Why*

▼ **THE NATURE OF THINGS** - While by now you have a good idea of how Nocturne works, this chapter will tell you some specifics that have only been alluded to so far.

▼ **TO SLEEP, PERCHANCE TO DREAM** - For a Dreamer, it is as simple as falling asleep while desiring to Dream, and focusing on a particular location in Nocturne. For purposes of traveling, this destination counts as one leg of any potential travel or distance limitation unless it happens to be the spot where the adventurer's body lies in Materia.

An adventurer may have limits on their ability to Dream, or have difficulty falling asleep. For those without any Traits that modify it, one attempt to fall asleep can be made each hour, at Easy(5) difficulty on their Will. It does not represent concentration, but rather an ability to make yourself let go of Materia concerns, to let your mind go blank and slowly drift off to sleep. Once asleep, it is an Average(7) Fate task to begin Dreaming. As an aside, this means that it is impossible to Dream unless your Fate roll is at least 1d+1. A person may use their Fate in the normal **EABA** way to get an extra 1d to this roll.

## Nocturne

If an adventurer begins Dreaming without a location in mind, they begin at the location of their Materia body. If they have some other location in mind, they appear there unless it has been blocked by a Weaving. Appearing elsewhere does cost a point of Fate, just like any other travel that wills one directly to a spot. Groups of adventurers can live in disparate locations, but as long as they all go to sleep at about the same time, they can all meet and adventure from some central location they all know and can immediately travel to.

Once in Nocturne, time, movement and distance are as in Materia. It takes as long to walk across town in Nocturne as it does in Materia.

**Fate** - Fate is the Attribute that powers your Dreaming abilities. You use it to travel, alter your Nocturnal form, extend your Dreaming and enhance your skill at bending Nocturne to your will.

You normally only use Fate while Dreaming, but you only really recover it while awake. A Dreamer who simply awakes at the close of Dreaming usually recovers all the Fate spent, but runs the risk of forgetting things they learned and did while Dreaming. It is a Challenging(9) Awareness task to fully recall a Dreaming event. If you deliberately awake yourself from Dreaming in a more abrupt way so that you can record your Dreaming for later recollection, you recover all but 1 point of the Fate used. This point and any other lost Fate is not recovered until you spend a night sleeping and not Dreaming.

Note that a Dreamer who is involuntarily booted out of Nocturne will take penalties on their Awareness roll to recollect things equal to any penalties they suffered at the time. So, if one were injured in a Nocturnal battle, it is quite possible that you might not be able to remember how it happened (since you would take injury penalties to that Challenging(9) Awareness roll).

You can spend extra time to alter the difficulty of recollection rolls, but not more than a four point change. It just means that you have to spend several seconds to try to remember what should be "right there". Similarly, friends who were there may be able to jog your memory or help you recall important details.

**Waking** - A Dreamer is subject to the limits of their Materia body. Time passes in Materia and Nocturne at the same rate. If you normally sleep for eight hours, then anything you do in Nocturne needs to be accomplished in eight hours or less. When your Materia body would normally awake, your Dreaming ends, unless your consciousness is prevented from returning to your Materia self. A Dreamer usually has a little warning of this, so they have time to zip back to their Materia body before awaking (provided they have some points of Fate left).

Anything that causes a Dreamer to awaken while their awareness is away from their body will cause them actual damage. All damage taken this way is cumulative for the total dice rolled. This damage is half-lethal, so amounts of 1d+1 or less are only non-lethal (1d+2 would be 1d+1 non-lethal and 0d+1 lethal). Being away from your body when it awakens is 1d+0 of damage, as is using up all your Fate while Dreaming. So, a Dreamer who used up the last of their Fate while they were waking up (or being woken up) would take 2d+0 half-lethal damage.

Oddly enough, it is quite possible that waking up can knock you out. If this happens, it is like any other knockout. The adventurer uses their modified Health roll to try and make an Easy(5) task. If it takes the adventurer several hours to recover enough non-lethal hits to make the roll, then they are out of it for several hours.

A Dreamer can voluntarily postpone their body's natural awakening by using a point of Fate, which extends their normal sleep period by fifty percent. It will also cause an extra 1d+0 damage to their Materia body when they awake (so doing it twice or more will result in some degree of lethal tissue damage). When the Dreamer's Fate is used up, they will have to awaken regardless.

A Dreamer who is prevented from returning to their Materia body will have to spend Fate in this way whether they want to or not, and if their Fate goes to zero, they may awaken quite traumatized. In addition to any damage suffered, the Dreamer may gain a personality Trait that causes them to fear or be less effective in the presence of whatever trapped them in Nocturne. This Trait can be bought off with experience, or removed entirely if the adventurer can personally defeat or overcome whatever it was that trapped them.

▼ **CAUSE AND EFFECT** - Nocturne has normal laws of cause and effect, but the nature of the realm tends to adjust them a little. Things generally reflect the Apocrypha and the Materia, but not *exactly*. If you Dreamed an office and saw a stack of paperwork, that paperwork would reflect the actual documents in the Materia, *but only to the extent that they were known*. If many people had seen the documents, the text would be clearer than if they had just been typed and the recipient had only skimmed them. A sealed envelope on the desk of the *sender* could be opened and read, but that same sealed envelope on the desk of the *recipient* would have only blank pages inside. The sender knows what is in the letter, while the recipient does not. The order of a stack of papers would change each time you looked through the stack, and documents you put down in one place would keep reappearing in the stack unless you concentrated to keep this from happening. A computer would show only the contents of its memory that its user or users remember. If protected by Materia-style security like passwords or physical keys, these would be required in Nocturne in order to use the computer. The same applies for most other technological devices.

Things that change the Materia will change Nocturne, *as those who Dream become aware of the changes*. The earlier example of Macchu Picchu comes to mind. Changes to the Materia do not affect a Sleeper or Dreamer unless the change is rapid and extreme. Something that would be instantly fatal a thousand times over in the Materia might only put a Dreamer into a coma. Dreaming of Hiroshima on August 8, 1945 would be enough to cause a heart attack, stroke or long coma, but few other Materia events are intense enough to affect the Pattern in a way that a Dreamer would feel.

Likewise, Dreamers cannot *directly* affect the Materia, though they can see and interact with the components of it that are in the Pattern (powerful magicians are an exception to this). Dreamers can suggest changes to the Materia by acting on their counterparts in the Nocturne. *This is Weaving skill*. If a Dreamer were set a building afire, and stay to watch the building burn to ash, the building in the Materia would be unaffected, and the equivalent building in the Pattern would be restored when the Dreamer left. However, setting this fire creates the *idea* of a fire in the Materia. The Dreamer increases the likelihood of a fire happening, but cannot *force* it to happen.



If there were some overheated wiring, the Dreamer's actions might cause them to ignite that night instead of in the future. If there were a pyromaniac living in the building, that person might get the idea that setting a fire would be a good thing. A person smoking in bed might fall asleep and cause a fire. All of these already had the *possibility* of happening. The Dreamer just *increases the likelihood* of the event. Those who Dream ill of mankind often concentrate their efforts in this way, creating regions of despair and decay in both Materia and Nocturne from their continued efforts.

▼ **COMBAT IN NOCTURNE** - Combat is handled by all the standard rules, except that most actions are based on Will and Will skills rather than Agility or Agility-based skills. It is a realm of the mind, and mental adeptness is the equivalent of agility in Nocturne. Awareness and Awareness skills may be required to see things that are hidden, just as for any sort of Materia obscurement. Instead of Hits being based on Strength and Health, they would be based on Will and Fate, so if you use the optional Hit Brackets rule (**EABA**, page 2.19), then take this into account. Similarly, thresholds for unconsciousness and being stunned are based on Will instead of Health. Conventional movement is still based on Health, though this can be modified by Threading.



Projection skill is used for most types of hostile action or as a defense. For instance, a person making a melee attack would use this skill to attack with, and the defender would apply their Will roll or Projection skill roll as the target number to be hit. A ranged attack would use Projection skill against a difficulty based on the range and other modifiers.

Range is a very relative concept in Nocturne. While distances take time to traverse, measurements in meters seem less important than in the Materia. We recommend that you simply use the ranges of Short(7), Medium(11), Long(15) and Extreme(19) for any type of ranged attack, using the number in parentheses as the difficulty to get a hit. Adventurers with superior movement can eventually close or increase the range, and of course a Dreamer can often travel to another part of the Pattern by will alone, leaving the scene of combat entirely.

Damage from attacks in Nocturne is a level less than in Materia. What would be a lethal attack like a sword or gun is only half-lethal in Nocturne, and attacks with one's will alone (like fists) are non-lethal in nature. Injuries that would knock out or kill an adventurer simply force them awake. The attack that caused this injury is cumulative with the penalty for forced awakening and the result is applied to the Materia body of the Dreamer. A Dreamer who wakes with injuries will only rarely have *actual* injuries that match the nature of the wounds. This makes the physical damage no less real. Bruises, fatigue, temporary paralysis, strokes, organ damage, muscle strains and even broken bones are possible. All are self-inflicted by a body that believed or was forced to believe it suffered grievous hurt. The more powerful the Nocturnal force that inflicted the injury, the closer the real-world effects will mirror them. A *powerful enough Entity could leave you in several pieces in the real world*. Repeated Dreaming injuries can have long-term health effects just like any other repeated injury.

Any "killing" injury to a Dreamer has a chance of separating the Dreamer from their Materia body when they try to wake up. This would cause the body to fall into a coma, and the Dreamer to lose their identity in Nocturne and become a "lost soul". That is, they fall into a state of perpetual Dreaming, but with no memory of who they were. Without this self-awareness and self-image, lost souls are the "homeless" of Nocturne, unknown to themselves, unrecognizable to their friends, wandering aimlessly until their Materia body finally gives out and they transition to the Apocrypha appropriate to them. It is difficult but not impossible to track down a lost soul and return it to the Nocturne location that reflects its Materia body, a task that becomes more and more difficult as time passes.

Inanimate objects or other parts of Nocturne can be damaged by attacks made by Dreamers. These are temporary changes, an incidental form of Weaving, and will revert back to normal once Dreamers leave the area. You could break down a door to get into a locked Nocturnal building, and the door would repair itself once you left. A Nocturnal fireball could set fire to the scenery, and act as an incidental Weaving that could make a fire more likely in Materia. A Dreamer could use Sensing skill to detect that this happened, and also get a psychic fingerprint of who did it, if they got there soon enough after the event.

For purposes of combat, Nocturnal scenery acts just like it would in the real world. It can be hidden behind, broken, set afire or used as makeshift weaponry. The latter case is useful in that a Nocturnal item cannot be Threaded away from a Dreamer like their own mental creations might be. A Nocturne equivalent of a real gun will act like a real gun. The problem is that any item that is not a constant focus of attention will revert back to its original place in the Pattern. If you are in combat, that axe you grabbed off the woodpile is invested with a lot of emotional power. But when the combat is over and you go "Whew!", your concentration lapses and the axe goes back where it came from. Don't expect to be able to tote around a Nocturnal machinegun from home, or attack hostile Entities with a Nocturnal fighter jet. *You just can't maintain your concentration that long.* In game terms, it is normally a Will roll with difficulty of the time level, with a -1d penalty if you are not in a high stress situation. Normally, you would have to make a new roll every time the difficulty increases. When you fail, the object reverts back to where the Materia equivalent currently is.

▼ **Note!** - A physically secure location in Materia is thus harder to break into in Nocturne. A home with a deadbolt and bars on the windows will take a Nocturnal burglar longer to break into than one without these precautions. However, since there aren't any Nocturnal police, intruders do have the luxury of taking their time.

Some Dreamers have real-world sanctuaries that they and trusted friends have visited, and then permanently sealed up in Materia. An old bomb shelter, an abandoned mine or such. Once sealed, those who have been there before can project themselves there with little effort, but everyone else has to go to the trouble of breaking in the hard way. And if the sanctuary is designed right, it will take longer to break in than most Dreamers can stay asleep. That, and anyone willing to go to such efforts for privacy might have an Elemental (page 3.14) guarding the place as well.

▼ **DYING** - Death of the physical body and the separation of the soul is extremely traumatic. For most, the transition from life to afterlife strips away most of the psyche and memory, leaving only an outline of who and what that person was. In its purest form, this is the soul, and it goes to its proper eternity and there exists in a barely aware state forever and ever. Those of exceptional will can pass this transition with enough of their identity intact to take independent action. They are changed by the transition. They become or take on characteristics of the inhabitants of that afterlife, but beyond this, they are as free-willed as they were during life. They can even enter Nocturne by will alone, though few retain that level of strength after death. Subtract 2d from Fate, Will and Awareness to get an adventurer's "deceased" stats. These can be below zero. The physical stats of Strength, Agility and Health become those of the adventurer in their physical prime (they feel like a young man (or woman) again). Dead adventurers are generally called **Shadows**. They are not exactly who they were in life, but they are a pale reflection.

An adventurer who dies and passes to an Apocrypha can re-enter Nocturne of their own free will whenever they want unless the Primal Apocrypha prevents it, but only if their Will, Fate and Awareness were all greater than 2d+0. The new character has these Attributes reduced by 2d to get their new amounts, making them a pale shadow of their former self. These reduced Attributes will also give the new maximums for any skills based on those Attributes.

**EXAMPLE:** An adventurer who passes to an Apocrypha with a Will of 2d+1 and a Threading skill of +2d will be able to return, but with a Will of 0d+1 and a Threading skill of +0d.

A Sleeper or Dreamer who dreams of someone who has gone before can draw that entity out of their afterlife for a short while by Weaving that person into being. The person dreamt of can appear, but will be a combination of the Dreamer's memories, the dead person's contributions to the Pattern, and the essence that made the transition to the afterlife.

To dream of one's grandmother who died while you were a child would be to conjure an image of her as you remember her, adjusted by the things in Nocturne she surrounded herself with, and the essence of what she was as a person.

If she lost most of her psyche in the transition, she might be a smiling figure of reassurance who cannot string words together into sentences. If she was a strong-willed Dreamer in her own right, she might be a very solid presence that you could have long, heartfelt talks with. If exceptionally strong, she might appear in Nocturne to seek you out, even if you weren't thinking of her.

Weaving a deceased person into Nocturne is automatic, but the level of effect depends on the skill of the Dreamer. Subtract 4d from the Dreamer's Weaving skill roll. The remainder is the amount that is added to the Will, Fate and Awareness of the deceased, along with any levels the gamemaster might grant for a situational bonus like a place the deceased made a permanent Weaving at or if the Dreamer has a specialized skill in Weaving that applies to that particular person. If the amount gets the deceased's level in all these Attributes above zero, then they can be drawn from their Apocrypha into Nocturne, or one who can already return from their Apocrypha is made temporarily stronger by the Weaving (but not stronger than they were in life). As long as the Weaving lasts, that character can act like any other adventurer in Nocturne.

**EXAMPLE:** We'll say that the grandmother in the previous example was an experienced Dreamer and had the relevant Attributes at a level of  $2d+1$ . She could return to Nocturne, but only as a Shadow with an Awareness, Fate and Will of  $1(0d+1)$ . Simply using a point of Fate to travel to a distant location would cause her to disappear, and she wouldn't be very talkative anyway. If a grand-daughter with a Weaving skill roll of  $5d+1$  tried to invoke her grandmother's presence in the Nocturnal garden she loved to tend (say a 1 point Weaving), then grandmother's Shadow would have  $1d+2$  added to these abilities,  $1d+1$  for the granddaughter's Weaving skill greater than  $4d+0$  and  $0d+1$  more for the place the Weaving was done at. This gives grandmother's Shadow an Awareness, Will and Fate of  $6(2d+0)$ , close to what she had in life, but these would only last so long as the granddaughter stayed in Nocturne. And if grandmother's Shadow left the garden, that bonus would be lost and she would only have an Awareness, Will and Fate of  $5(1d+2)$ .

Shadows use Fate for the normal Dreaming purposes, but do not recover it until they return to their Apocrypha, the equivalent of "waking up". Shadows who do not want to return to their Apocrypha husband their Fate very carefully. For Shadows, Fate can be passively recovered while in Nocturne, it just takes a very long time (months or even years per point).

A dead adventurer obviously cannot die again, but if they take damage that would kill a Materia equivalent, they are violently knocked back into their Apocrypha and cannot return voluntarily or be summoned until whatever did the damage is effectively removed from existence. If this was a Dreamer, that Dreamer would have to die. If it was an Entity, that Entity would have to be "killed" and sent back to its own Apocrypha (it doesn't count if it returns to its Apocrypha for any reason other than fear for its life). If it was accomplished with an Icon (see page 3.19), that Entity or adventurer may be banished to their Apocrypha permanently, since Icons are forever.

When a Shadow makes the transition from Apocrypha to Nocturne, all knowledge that is inherent to that Apocrypha stays behind. *That is not entirely correct.* It is more correct to say that the transition from Apocrypha to Nocturne strips away a dimension of existence that is necessary in order to describe or comprehend the nature of that Apocrypha. *You can't understand it unless you are there, and you can't describe it if you can't understand it.* While the Shadow may retain some of the concepts and biases inherent to that Apocrypha, *actual* knowledge of what is beyond the curtain is lost. A Shadow *cannot* tell you the nature of Heaven, or even how well dearly departed Uncle Fred is faring. The Shadow literally no longer knows these things in any form that can be understood in Nocturne or Materia. Heaven would simply be "wonderful", and the nature of Heavenly existence means that dearly departed Uncle Fred simply "is". He cannot be described in human terms any more specific than that. Only if a Shadow is encountered just across the threshold of that Apocrypha can the truth of these things be revealed, and even then the adventurer will forget or be unable to understand when *they* cross back into Nocturne. Apocrypha are only meant for those who have passed beyond Materia. Even if you cannot recall or describe the information, exposure to too much Apocrypha may be hazardous to your sanity.

▼ **Note!** - If someone pushes too hard for some Apocryphal information or consorts too often or too closely to powerful Entities, the gamemaster may start assigning random personality Traits to represent the slow and subtle unhooking of the adventurer's mind. What you can't remember can be more dangerous to your sanity than what you can... Often, these Traits will have some direct or indirect link to the circumstances of these events or the nature of the Entities in question.

▼ **WEAVING** - We have mentioned Weaving a few times, but here we will go into it in detail. Weaving is the ability to make a part of Nocturne *not* represent the corresponding place in Materia. It can be made to look and feel different, with measureable effect on the skills and abilities of anyone who enters that area. This can be for good or ill. However, when the Dreamer stops their Weaving, the effect slowly dissipates, and it also fades away if they leave the area that is being affected.

Weaving is exerting your will over the area to change it in a general way. You cannot Weave an area so that it can be directly controlled. Think of it like pumping poison gas into a room, or locking a door. The gas affects *everyone*, and the door is locked for *everyone*. To extend the metaphor, you can't tell the door is locked until you try it, and the poison gas might be odorless. A Weave is a change to some or all of a place, but you might not see it until you step in it.

The Nocturnal effect of Weaving is an immediate change in the visual environment appropriate to the nature of the skill, and using the skill takes about an hour, which is spent doing things that typify the skill. An adventurer increasing the beauty and harmony of a place might spend an hour planting a flower garden or picking up litter. Someone defiling a place may set fires, cut down trees and generally vandalize it. The higher the person's Fate, the greater the symbolic effect. A Dreamer of low Fate planting a garden might be doing it one flower at a time. A powerful Dreamer might plant a vine that spreads quickly of its own accord, blooming beautifully all the while. While the adventurer is Dreaming *and* stays in one place Weaving, each full die of skill is a one point penalty or bonus to actions in that place appropriate to the nature of the skill. *This can influence the person using the skill!* A person Weaving disease has a higher chance of catching something nasty, and is *not* immune to their own machinations.

Adventurers entering an area with an active Weaving can resist the effect by making a Will or Weaving task equal to a die roll of the weaver's skill in the Weaving. If they fail, they become vulnerable to the nature of the Weaving and may have to complete a task appropriate to the nature of that Weave. If this is failed, they take the listed penalty on any roll that would be affected by the nature of the Weaving while in that place, *and* the results of this will apply to their Materia body when they awake.

**EXAMPLE:** Someone Weaves a disease infesting in an area with 4d+0 skill, rolling a 14. An adventurer visits there, not knowing that the area has been changed. If they make their Will or Weaving skill roll against a difficulty of 14, the area is a reflection of Materia, but obnoxious and unwholesome. But, the adventurer suffers no ill effects. If they fail the roll, they have to make a Health roll against the Weaving (the nature of the Weaving is disease, and disease is resisted by Health). If they make this roll, something unwholesome tries to enter their Nocturnal body, but does not succeed. If the adventurer fails their Health roll, something nasty takes up temporary residence and will cause a +4 difficulty on any task the adventurer does in this place (+4, since the weaving was done with 4d). In addition, the adventurer will catch some temporary illness when they wake up. The gamemaster decides the 4 point penalty will be a 1d+1 non-lethal attack to represent gut cramps or malaise that is quickly recovered from.

Note that the person who did this Weaving could have affected the whole area, but in *specific* ways, like creating festering pools of slime. These would be throughout the area, but you would be unaffected unless you stepped in one or got it splashed on you.

Only one Weaving may be attempted in a place at any given time. If multiple people attempt the same Weaving without using a cooperative skill, only the strongest will succeed. If opposing Weaves are involved, they will cancel each other's dice, leaving only the remainder of the strongest.

▼ **Note** - While Sleepers do not Dream or Weave, their sheer numbers can generate sustained effects in Nocturne just as though they had. A Victorian era sweatshop not only is a nasty place in Materia, it has an awful demeanor in Nocturne, powerful enough that even a casual visitor can feel the crushing oppression and destruction of hope. The building itself may become a partial caricature of itself, with windows peering down like evil yet inanimate eyes, and doors taking on the visage of gaping maws ready to consume the souls of all those who enter. These effects can linger, even after the source is gone. An apartment building constructed on the site of this long-gone sweatshop might have a long-term effect on the mental health of everyone who lives there. A Dreamer can un-Weave these effects if they choose to spend the time to do so, and some groups of Dreamers simply try to make the world a better place by reclaiming emotionally troubled areas.

A Weaving has no *direct* effect on Materia unless it is very strong. Each *full* 6d of skill in a Weaving will alter the difficulty of a related task in Materia by 1 point. In addition, each Weaving has a small but cumulative effect. Each 1000 dice of total skill used Weaving an area will alter the difficulty of a related task in Materia by 1 point, and this effect stays in place until another Weaving undoes it. Each time a Weaving skill is used in an area, the level of skill contributes towards this 1000 dice. So, a skill of 5d would have to be used 200 times to get 1000 dice. Affecting Materia more than a point doubles the number of dice required, and the maximum a region can be affected is the full dice the Weaver has in Fate.

**EXAMPLE:** If a Dreamer with a Weaving skill of 5d+0 used their skill 200 times, they would affect a 1 point alteration in the chance of an event would happen in Materia (skill of 5d x 200 uses = 1000). If they tried to make the weaving even stronger, they would require 2000 dice of effort, since the existing effect is harder to make stronger. The maximum that a Dreamer with a Fate roll of 2d+2 could influence things is a 2 point alteration. A permanent 2 point shift is quite significant, but it would also take this Dreamer about 600 sessions (a few years) to accomplish.

Using Weaving skill on an area only stays at full strength *while the Dreamer is in Nocturne*. When they awake, the influence fades at the rate of one point of effect per three hours. Only by repeated use over a long period can an area retain an "influence" that lasts beyond the Dreaming.

**EXAMPLE:** A weaving that had a local effect of +4 would fade to +3 after three hours, +2 after six hours, and +1 after nine hours. After twelve hours, the effects would be completely gone.

Weaving can also be used to "renew" the nature of an area in terms of who can travel directly there. Once a Dreamer has visited a place, they can usually travel directly there without spending the time needed to cross the intervening space. So, if someone broke into the Nocturnal representation of your house, they could Travel into your house at any time, even if the doors and windows were locked. However, you could Weave the intruders out of that piece of Nocturne so that they would have to break into your house again to gain entry. This is a single use of Weaving, and the skill roll of the Dreamer is a difficulty that the other Dreamer or Dreamers will have to beat with their Travelling skill in order to gain immediate access to the area.

**EXAMPLE:** Your home in Nocturne was broken into, and your possessions thoroughly searched. You find this intrusion emotionally troubling, and Weave things back to normal. If your Weaving skill result was 15, then if the intruders try to return, their attempt will require success on their Travelling skill at a difficulty of 15. If they fail the roll, they use up a point of Fate in the attempt and get nowhere.

This type of Weaving renewal blocks out everyone except those actually involved in the Weaving, both friend and foe.

Weaving is a subtle influencing of probabilities, and not all things are subject to Weaving. The fundamental nature of things is not subject to change. There is no probability involved in gravity, so you can't make things lighter or heavier. Nor can you change universal constants or other "fixed" aspects of Materia. Just about everything else that requires a random die roll, attribute task or an emotional state can be influenced. You could go to Las Vegas or Monte Carlo and try to influence the outcome of a roulette wheel. It probably would not work on blackjack, since the order of the cards is pre-determined and the actual decks are changed too fast for you to influence one of them. The rapid cycling of dice used would also make craps impossible to alter in the long term. A really powerful Dreamer (6d or more of skill) could Weave changes for a confederate, shifting the odds just enough to put them in the player's favor instead of the house's for a few hours.

**Weaving a trap** - Since most Weavings only last while the Dreamer is in the area, making a triggered effect is not normally possible. However, a created *permanent* Weaving can take the form of an attack or effect in Nocturne *instead of* an effect in Materia. This is limited only by the imagination of the Dreamer, and each point of effect that would affect Materia translates into 2d+0 of effect in Nocturne. This can take any form that a Threading could. It only has effects once per Dreamer that enters the area, but it affects all Dreamers and does so each time they enter.

**EXAMPLE:** A powerful spider-like Entity weaves a "web" in an area with an effect of 4d+0. Any Dreamer hapless enough to enter the area has 4d+0 subtracted from their movement. If this renders them incapable of escape, they are trapped in that Weaving. Naturally, they will awake eventually, but this will cause damage if they are not "in their body" at the time, and of course, the Entity could also return while the Dreamer is trapped and do all sorts of nasty things.

Unlike Threadings, the exact nature of a Weaving is not obvious until one enters the area that is affected. Without Sensing skill, one can only get the vaguest of impressions, like "beneficial", "hostile" or "other".

Weaving leaves a signature of the Dreamer on the area, regardless of how the Weaving was done. This also includes the small scale of incidental Weaving caused by combat damage. Even after Nocturne restores itself to a reflection of Materia, traces of the Weaving will remain. For any Weaving which has not generated a permanent effect, the traces last until the temporary effect has faded away. For incidental things like combat damage, the traces will last for three hours.

**EXAMPLE:** A group of Dreamers wonders why a friend did not show up at a designated rendezvous. When they Travel to that friend's house, everything appears in order, but there is a "feel" like something is amiss, like something bad happened. Someone who can Sense could find that there was a fight here, and that things were "broken" in the struggle, but everyone else just gets a vague negative vibe that slowly fades away as the incidental Weaving dissipates.

▼ **Note** - The guides for Weaving, Threading and such only apply to Nocturne and are not a substitute for the general EABA power system. The oddly defined "reality" of Nocturne is more suited for players doing things on the spur of the moment, rather than dealing with a fixed set of pre-defined "powers". You can use the power system to design your own "Nocturne framework" if you want, but we still recommend that the results simply be listed as a difficulty required to get a particular effect.

▼ **THREADING** - A Dreamer's default appearance to themselves and others in Nocturne is usually based on their true vision of themselves. How you truly see yourself is how you appear to others. This is almost always how you appear in Materia, modified by any Traits. It is not necessarily what you wish to be, or how you might convince yourself that you are, but is a reflection of your *true* nature.

Threading lets you change your true image while Dreaming, to appear more as you *wish* to be, to make a weapon or armor, or to disguise your true nature from others. Threading can also be used to disrupt or modify the Threadings of other Dreamers. To change someone else's displayed self-image to a clown is an offensive use of Threading, as would disintegrating a weapon or other visualized device created by Threading.

The form or nature of a Threading is limited only by a Dreamer's knowledge and psyche. An adventurer with the "Limited Imagination" Trait who styles themselves as a knight in shining armor would only be able to use Threading to generate effects that fit with that persona, like a sword, armor of medieval appearance, and so on. An undisturbed Threading lasts as long as the Dreamer remains in Nocturne. So, a Dreamer who manifests a "rifle" and one who manifests a "fireball" are in effect the same. Once the concept is threaded into being, it can be used at will later on. The "rifle" is always loaded and the "fireball" is ready to be hurled again and again. In both cases, other Dreamers can see the *nature* of the Threading. A Dreamer who had never seen a rifle before would still know that it was somehow an instrument of ranged damage. A Dreamer who saw a crimson glow around a "wizard" would know that it was the essence of a ranged attack as well.

Threading takes some of what the adventurer is in Nocturne and puts it into a more tangible form. Any attempt to Thread something into being (or out of being) reduces the Dreamer's Fate by 1, whether the attempt is successful or not.

Any total conceptual change in your self-image costs at least 1 point of Fate to implement, and is usually successful unless the attempt is being hindered by someone else, in which case your foe's Threading skill subtracts from yours. Failed attempts still cost 1 point of Fate. By "costs a point of Fate", we mean that the Dreamer's Fate is temporarily reduced by 1 and stays that way until they awake and recover it. *Remember that when your Fate goes to zero, you wake up.*

A particular conceptual change can be a Specialization of Threading skill. Likewise, offensive and defensive uses of the skill can be specialized. Changes to a Dreamer's self-image that are purely cosmetic (clothing or *minor* appearance alteration) do not cost any Fate to implement. These changes can at first glance appear to be something else, but closer scrutiny will reveal if they are real or not. A Dreamer might alter their appearance to include shining armor and a sword, but these will be completely useless in a fight unless their effects are threaded into being. An "appearance" change from the table below is sufficient to change height, weight, color, voice, clothing and accoutrements to a degree that it requires "unthreading them" to uncover the deception. Of course, even a change like this does not confer any new knowledge, so if you need a secret password to get into a secret location, it doesn't matter *who* you look like...

Use of Threading skill is normally a single action, and extra time can be spent to increase the chance of success if the Threading is resisted. In addition, each extra point of Fate expended in a Threading effort will decrease the difficulty by 2, and attempting to Thread without losing any Fate at all is done at 4 points increased difficulty.

Threading can also be used reactively, as a held action. The Dreamer waits and threads a defense against an attack once they see what its nature is. Extra time bonuses can also be used to alter the difficulty of a conceptual change.

To use Threading against something *someone else* has brought into being is simply your skill roll against theirs, but any difficulty in the task (or range penalties) subtracts from your total, while any positive modifiers add to it. An offensive Threading may be a partial effect. You might subtract *some* of the damage of an opponent's threaded "gun", for instance.

**EXAMPLE:** A range of 2 meters is a difficulty of 5, so if you wanted to make someone's Threaded "sword" disappear from outside of their striking range, you would roll your Threading skill and subtract 5, and compare this to what they roll on their Threading skill. You could spend extra time to "warm up" your whammy, or spend extra Fate to get a bonus on the roll, or they might spend extra Fate to get a bonus on *their* roll. In any case, if you win the roll, their sword disappears, and they will have to Thread it back into being if they want to use it.

## Nocturne

For Threading, the idea of "conceptual change" is nebulous, but generally means that the change has to have an overall theme, like "appearance", "weapons", "protection" or "movement". A table of what you can get for a given difficulty follows.

Category	Difficulty
Appearance	5 for minor changes, 11 for major changes
Melee damage	1 per point of damage (3 per 1d)
Ranged damage	2 per point of damage, 2 per point of Accuracy
Special effect	3 for small, 6 for medium, 9 for large
Unnatural ability	12 for easy, 18 for average, 24 for hard
Armor	1 per point of armor for "body" armor (3 per 1d), 2 per point of armor for full coverage (6 per 1d)
Mundane movement	2 per +1 or -1 to "running" speed (6 per 1d)
Special movement	7 to give/remove each equivalent of running speed
Protection	1 to negate 1 point of environmental or Woven effect

A Dreamer can always use their fists and feet as manifestations of their will, but these only do non-lethal damage (Strength or Will-based) and have no range. Damage from something that has been Threaded is half-lethal damage unless the Dreamer *wants* it to be non-lethal.

▼ **Note** - If you run the numbers, you will see that Dreamers can make themselves fairly formidable, and that it is just as easy to armor yourself as it is to do damage, except that melee damage gets the benefit of the Dreamer's Strength or Will, whichever of self-image or determination gives the best result. The scale is also slanted in favor of melee attacks, and you should stay on the good side of any Entity that has "Larger than Life" on Threading rolls.

"Special effects" are things that affect the way damage is dealt. A small effect might be the equivalent of armor-piercing damage, or autofire for a ranged attack. A medium effect would be like an explosive effect, and a large effect would be like filling an area with full damage (with one meter radius per die of Fate the Dreamer has). A Threading can have multiple special effects. The gamemaster is encouraged to come up with their own modifiers and quirks for different groups of Dreamers (schools of thought, as it were).

For instance, a member of the Vikings might have access to techniques that reduce the difficulty of Threading weapons, while the Others may find it easier to change their appearance.

**EXAMPLE:** A Dreamer with a Threading skill of  $4d+1$  wants to create a Nocturnal ranged weapon with a damage of 7 points ( $2d+1$ ) and an Accuracy of 1. This is a difficulty of 16 to accomplish. However, the Dreamer elects to spend a few seconds to shift the difficulty by a row (down to 14), which gives them a better than average chance of success. Rolling a 14, they make a Nocturnal facsimile of a pistol. This representation of hostile will would be used in Nocturne exactly like a pistol would be (using Projection skill), but with no ammunition limits, recoil or other real world constraints unless the Dreamer's own psyche puts these limits on the threading. For instance, a Dreamer might think their "bow" requires a few actions to get a new arrow, draw the bow and aim. And if that is what they think, then that is how it will act.

If this Dreamer shoots at an unarmored person with their "pistol" and hits, that person takes  $2d+1$  in half-lethal damage, which would be  $1d+1$  non-lethal and  $1d+0$  lethal. If this rendered the foe "unconscious", they would vanish from Nocturne and wake up, taking at least another  $1d+0$  in non-lethal hits for the rude awakening. Waking up with a total of  $2d+1$  non-lethal and  $1d+0$  lethal hits is going to put a crimp in your whole waking day.

A Dreamer can only have one of a given type of Threading active, and only one concept can be implemented with a given skill roll (and loss of Fate). If you tried to give yourself "armor" several times, only the *last* one Threaded would apply. You can have a Threading of your own and incidental ones of the same type. There is no problem in hiding behind a Nocturnal rock *and* having armor, for instance, or having a Threaded sword and picking up an incidental rifle.

Things given form or substance by Threading are extensions of the Dreamer's will. They *cannot* be transferred to other Dreamers, even temporarily. If dropped, lost, stolen or if the Dreamer's will is somehow broken, these manifestations vanish. Note that a Dreamer can modify *existing* Threadings belonging to other Dreamers, including the default appearance of that Dreamer. So, while a Dreamer could not "give" a gun to another Dreamer, they could make one that Dreamer possessed more or less effective. These changes will last only as long as both Dreamers remain together in the Pattern. Similarly, Dreamers with the same type of Threading skill can work together to Thread an object for one Dreamer using the cooperative skill rules. This type of Threaded object is considered to be brought into being by the adventurer making the roll, and behaves as such.

An "unnatural ability" is something not listed that an adventurer wants to do. Being able to see through darkness might be an easy ability. Making yourself flexible enough to do amazing contortions would be average, and turning yourself to water and flowing down a drain would be something hard. If dice end up being involved, assume  $4d$  for easy abilities,  $6d$  for average and  $8d$  for hard.

This is a catch-all, and again, being able to Thread some types of ability may be limited to certain groups of Dreamers. For instance, those initiated into the rites of the Mater Ecclesia might know how to place a shield on one's self (average ability) that does  $6d$  damage to any denizen of Hell that touches or is touched by that Dreamer. Or the various Pservices might have an easy ability that acts as a sign/countersign recognition symbol that is only visible to someone who has Threaded that same ability on themselves.



▼ **CREATION** - Creation is fundamentally different from Weaving and Threading in that one must be a *willing* participant in the shared illusion. Creating something is akin to Threading *and* Weaving. The parameters of what you create affect the difficulty of bringing it into being, and once this is successfully done, the Creation stays around as long as the Dreamer wants it to.

The difference is that *anyone* can be invited by *any* participant in the Creation to be included. This simply costs a point of Fate and allows the Dreamer to take advantage of the Creation as long as they remain in Nocturne. It is the nature of Creations that there is always room for "one more". This can get surreal at times, and the gamemaster will need to get used to it.

**EXAMPLE:** An adventurer Creates a flaming chariot pulled by winged horses to carry them around Nocturne. The Dreamer invites a friend on board, and that friend invites several other friends. Normally, there wouldn't be room, but the nature of the Creation is that it holds everyone comfortably. If you look at it from a distance, it may seem huge, but as you approach it seems more and more like its normal size, and when you get right next to it, it seems the same size its creator imagined it to be, no matter how many people are in it. In fact, it seems bigger on the inside than the outside.

If a Dreamer spends one or more extra points of Fate when joining the Creation, they can enlarge and personalize their own private corner of it, if that is in the nature of the Creation to begin with. The amount a Creation can be expanded is no more than double the capacity it originally had.

**EXAMPLE:** A Created "village" might have room for new dwellings, but a Created vehicle might be limited to more comfortable seats or the addition of a liquor cabinet. A vehicle with a resistance of 1d+0 could not be modified to more than 2d+0, or one with a speed of 40 meters could not be modified to a speed of more than 80 meters.

A Creation cannot be modified in a way that is beyond the original *intent* of its creator. A Creation lasts as long as *any* participant in it remains in Nocturne. So, the originator of the Creation may be awake or even dead, but the Creation can remain as long as it is sustained by the will of at least one Dreamer.

## Nocturne

The down side of joining a Creation is that as long as that Creation exists, you automatically lose a point of Fate when you enter Nocturne, regardless of how or where you enter Nocturne. You paid to make the illusion work for you, and as long as it is kept in existence, you are "taxed" to keep it going. You can always "opt out" of any Creation. There are two ways to do it.

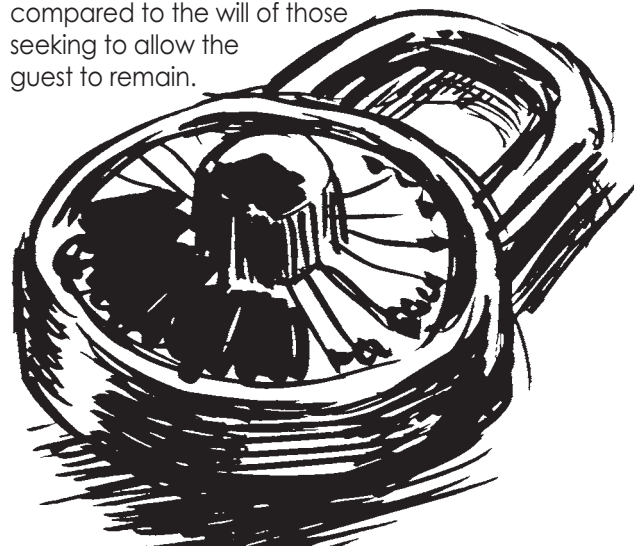
The first is simply to find someone to take your place. You make a mental "handoff", give them your seat or the keys to your Nocturnal summer home, and it's theirs.

The second is to simply wrench yourself free. This is a temporary subtraction from your Fate equal to the "kick damage" for the size of the Creation. Any amount this roll exceeds your Fate adds to damage you would take upon awaking.

**EXAMPLE:** To forcibly opt yourself out of a Created village that had a size of 12 (125 meters across), you would take a hit to your Fate of 4d+0. For all but the most powerful Dreamers, this would drop their Fate to below zero, forcing them back into *Materia* with varying amounts of residual damage. *Ouch!*

If someone offers you some Nocturnal property that seems too good to be true...it might be.

Creations are similar to Weaving, but have the characteristic that it cannot be entered without the consent of someone who is *already there*. One can enter it without being a participant, as an invited guest of someone involved in the Creation, but anyone involved in the Creation can also evict a guest, though if matters are pressed, it can end up as a "voting" matter, the will of those seeking eviction compared to the will of those seeking to allow the guest to remain.



# EABA

The general difficulty of Creating something starts with its Size level, and is modified as listed below.

Category	Difficulty
Dwelling	no change. The dwelling comes with decoration and facilities typical for its size.
Vehicle	+2, plus the level for the distance it can move each turn.
Special movement	+3 for an ability to fly, swim or do something aside from move along the ground.
Luxury	+2 for luxurious, +4 for opulent.
Resistance	+1 for each point of hostile effects it prevents, or +1 for each +2 "hits" it has.

"Resistance" is sort of like armor. Creations cannot be used offensively, but they can be attacked. Normally, they have as many "Hits" as their size level, and dissipate when hostile will has done this much damage to the shared illusion. Resistance acts like armor against attacks, adding to that of any Dreamers in the Creation, and also protects against the effects of hostile Weavings. Any Dreamer in a Creation can use their Projection skill and Fate to "block" hostile Threadings aimed at the Creation, and attacks do not remove hits from the Creation unless the Creation was the specific target of an attack. Creations regain one hit each time a Dreamer joins into the Creation or re-enters Nocturne after being away from the Creation.

**EXAMPLE:** A science-fiction oriented Dreamer wants to make a UFO. They decide to start small and see if others can help to enlarge it later. They want it to be 8 meters across, with the ability to fly 40 meters per turn, luxuriously appointed, and with 2d+0 resistance (6 points worth). This is a total difficulty of:

Size	4
Vehicle	+2
Movement	+9
Special movement	+3
Luxurious	+2
Resistance	+6
Total difficulty	26

*Ouch!* They aren't going to be rolling a difficulty of 26 any time soon. In fact, let's assume they will be hard-pressed to roll a 17. So, if we strip the luxury, half the resistance and drop the movement to a leisurely 11 meters a turn, we can get the difficulty down to 17.

Size	4
Vehicle	+2
Movement	+5
Special movement	+3
Resistance	+3
Total	17

This Creation is not much, but it is a start. If the Dreamer can get some friends to join in and share ownership to keep it going, the new "crew" can add their own Fate to enlarge the Creation and improve its abilities. As is, they have a reasonably appointed 8 meter silver disk that can move at a fast run, has an armor of 1d+0 and 4 hits.

There are rumors that people or reasonable facsimiles can be Created, either a doppelganger of yourself, or a Creation that is your imagined version of someone else. If done well, such a Creation would be seemingly intelligent, but would have no Nocturnal abilities or knowledge that its creator(s) did not. Its personality and knowledges would change, wax and wane with new people buying into the Creation and others leaving, so unless you were very careful about who was invited to partake, the Creation would quickly lose its verisimilitude to the original intent.

As with other Creations, such a Created intelligence could outlive its creators. Such are the legends that people have made Creations of themselves as a way to cheat death or provide advice from beyond, even if they did not have the potential to become a Shadow. As long as they have at least one participant in the Creation remaining in Nocturne, the existence of the doppelganger is maintained. *Elvis lives!*

▼ **Note** - Ever heard the legend that if you dream you're falling and you don't wake up before you hit the ground, you'll die? If you're in a flying Creation and it is destroyed, if you don't quickly learn to fly (Thread yourself a special movement), you will take damage when you hit the Nocturnal ground just like you would if it were the real thing. Enough damage, and you really won't wake up!

▼ **Note** - If you allow a Larger than Life application of cooperative skill, the maximum difficulty for a Creation you can accomplish is around 30 (a Dreamer with 6d skill with six assistants could have a 6d skill roll that keeps the "best five").

▼ **PROJECTION** - Threading lets you generate a tangible manifestation of your will or undo the manifestation of someone else's. Projection is using such a manifestation to affect something within Nocturne. Threading makes the sword, Projection is how you wield it. As we said in the adventurer creation notes, it serves the purpose of *any* melee or ranged combat skill, and may be specialized to work with different kinds of Threadings, or even with Nocturnal representations of Materia objects.

You don't *need* to have a variety of separate skills as you would for mundane things like firearms and melee weapons, since you are not actually shooting a gun or wielding a weapon. You may go through the motions as expressions of hostile intent, but in the end, it is your will against theirs, your desire to cause harm compared to their desire to avoid it.

You can pick up the Nocturne representation of a Materia object and use it in combat. It is a thing that was at one point created or willed into being by hard work, even if the creating was done by nature or the hard work was not yours. Projection skill would also be used with these, and the damage they items would do in Nocturne is comparable to their real-world damage. The difference is that it is difficult to use a Materia item like this for any length of time, and any break in your concentration or emotional intensity will cause the item to revert back to where it came from. You *do not* need to know how to use a Materia object to use it in Nocturne. A rocket launcher is a representation of hostile will. That is how it "feels" in Nocturne, so no matter how complex the weapon, you can use it...unless it has something like a trigger lock on it.

Projection as a combat skill can also be used to "block" with, even if you do not have a Threaded object to block with. You handle this like unarmed combat if your attacker does not have a Threaded weapon. If you have a Threaded "armor" or a "weapon", you have a bit of solidified will in place to negate or deflect part or all of someone else's attack. If you do not have this, you can *still* counter someone else's Threadings. It just costs you 1 Fate per round of combat in which you attempt it (no matter how many times in that round you try), and you have to be aware of the hostile Threading. You simply roll your Projection skill against theirs. If they win, the attack gets through normally. If not, you negate it. If you have to do this more than once in a turn, each roll after the first has a -1d penalty.

So yes, you *can* catch bullets with your bare hands, or stop fireballs with the force of thought. Think of it as a reactive counter-Threading. It is possible, but far less efficient than having a solid countermeasure already in place.

## Nocturne

▼ **INVOKING** - Nocturne is a living, changing place. Every part of it is shaped and reshaped by changes in the Materia and the impressions and emotions left by those who travel there. A skilled Dreamer can invoke the combined emotional and spiritual manifestation of a place in Nocturne. This is not an intelligent entity, and cannot be used to gain information that the Dreamer does not already possess, but the "elemental" can be used as an extension of the Dreamer's will while they are at that place and even if they are not.

An elemental *can* be used in combat. Once set to a task, it will continue until ordered to stop or disrupted by damage. Elementals can also be used as guardians or wards. They can prevent passage in or out of a place, or can hold messages. Not being very bright, the elemental will simply deliver the message to the next person it encounters or the next person to invoke the elemental of that place.

Elementals are not particularly easy to invoke, and a Dreamer may put themselves in some peril to do so. A Dreamer focuses their will and attempts to commune with the essence of a place. Their skill at invoking elementals, their personality and the nature of the place will affect the chance of success and the power of the elemental.

An elemental "knows" everything it needs to about the Dreamer that invoked it. This is not information it can store or pass on to others, but it is information that will affect how it reacts to the Dreamer. A place in Nocturne that has extreme emotional content will have the emotional content of those who *experienced* it, but the "personality" of those who *caused* it.

**EXAMPLE:** A concentration/death camp that slaughtered a particular ethnic group would be a place of great sorrow and grief, but it would also be filled with hatred for that ethnic group. A Dreamer of that ethnic group could safely visit there, but the emotion of the place would be stronger than for the average Dreamer. However, if they tried to invoke the elemental of the place, it would be absolutely hostile to that Dreamer and difficult to control.

An elemental appears as something that is representative of that which caused the emotional content of a place, *not* that which was the object of that content. The elemental is the tangible representation of the Invocation, that which acts to maintain the nature of the place and its effects on the Materia.

**EXAMPLE:** The emotional content of the concentration camp might be sorrow and grief, but the Elemental of that place might be a sullen-looking guard cradling a submachinegun. The guard is not sorrowful or grieving, but he is the one responsible for maintaining the sorrow and grief of the place.

Invoking an Elemental is a matter of using Invocation skill against the strength of any Weaving already there. Each point of strength in the Weaving is 2d of roll that has to be beaten. If the Weaving actually has an effect in Materia, add +2d for each point of Materia effect.

**EXAMPLE:** To continue with our concentration camp example, if we say this place has a Weaving powerful enough to cause a 3 point shift to die rolls in Nocturne (negative emotional moods), then to Invoke the elemental requires a Dreamer compare their "best three" Invoking skill roll to a "best three" of the 6d roll for the place (2d for each point of effect).

If the adventurer beats the roll of the existing Weaving or effect, they have summoned forth the Elemental of the place. Once summoned, the adventurer needs to control it. This is the same roll, but with any modifiers for Traits or conditions that would help or hinder the situation. For instance, being of the ethnic group persecuted would make it harder to control the Elemental of a concentration camp, while being the former commandant of that camp would be a significant bonus to control the Elemental. There might be certain Icons or Materia items whose representation could have an effect on a particular Elemental. For the concentration camp example, having on the correct military uniform might be worth a bonus. Both the invoking *and* controlling rolls might also be affected by the nature of the Weaving in the place.

If successful, the Dreamer can order the Elemental about at will, or give it a message. If failed, the elemental simply vanishes back into the Pattern, or attacks the Dreamer, depending on whether it was favorable, hostile or neutral. A favorable or neutral elemental will deliver any messages they have before vanishing, even if they are not controlled.

An Elemental has base Attribute or total skill rolls of 1d, plus 1d each time the number of dice in its summoning roll is doubled (assume it has +0d skill in everything).

Elemental's roll	Attribute/skill rolls
0d	1d+0
2d	2d+0
4d	3d+0
6d	3d+2
8d	4d+0
12d	4d+1
14d	4d+2
16d	5d+0
20d	5d+1
26d	5d+2
32d	6d+0

**EXAMPLE:** A Dreamer invokes the elemental of a place that is friendly to them (grandmother's herb garden). This place has a weak Weaving (effect of 1), so invoking its elemental is beating a roll of 2d+0 with their Invoking skill roll. If the roll was successful, the Elemental would have a strength of 2d+0. To control it would be another Invoking skill roll, beating the 2d+0 roll of the place, but with a +1 bonus because the place is favorable to that Dreamer. This Elemental could fight, but that is not its nature, so it would probably only do so in defense of the Dreamer that invoked it. The elemental appears as Grandmother's favorite cat, independent, aloof and playful, but fiercely defensive about "it's turf".

**Elementals in combat** - In a combat situation, an Elemental appears and acts as a physical and emotional manifestation of the place it represents. All its relevant abilities and skill rolls are equal to its strength, and it can change its movement, attack type and defense as the invoker orders it to, within the limits of the Elemental's Threading skill roll (which is its Will roll). These changes *do* cost the Elemental part of its "Fate", which is not recovered and thus limits how much it can modify itself. If the Elemental takes damage that would kill it or knock it out (usually 6 points per 1d in the summoning roll, plus any fractions), it dissipates back into the place it was formed from. However, Elementals draw their existence from the place they are bound to, and recover damage each turn equal to the strength of the Weaving in that place at the cost of 1 point of Fate. Elementals also suffer no penalties from taking damage, and can act at full effectiveness until dissipated. The main limits of Elementals are that they have no tactical flexibility unless their controller is constantly using actions to give it new orders.

**EXAMPLE:** The invoked Elemental of the concentration camp might *appear* to be a guard with a submachinegun, but the Elemental has no ranged combat ability until it Threads the gun from an appearance change into something with a Nocturnal effect. This will cost the Elemental a point of Fate, and will require an Threading skill roll based on the difficulty of the ranged attack that it is trying to create. If controlled, it would try to create what it was ordered to. If uncontrolled, it would tailor its changes to a level that it could reliably achieve with its Threading skill roll.

This elemental had a 6d roll to resist being summoned. Looking at the chart on the previous page, this means it has all Attributes and skill rolls at 3d+2 (a level of 11), though its knowledge is limited to the area in which it was summoned. It also can take 20 hits before dissipating (6 per die in its Attribute rolls, plus fractions), and can recover 3 hits (the strength of the Weaving in this place) each turn it spends 1 Fate, as it can draw from the nature of its place to restore itself.

Obviously, the Elementals of a highly charged place are fiendishly fearsome, and some regions of Nocturne are more or less off-limits to most Dreamers because there is a hostile Elemental there.

It is believed that most Entities are a form of Elemental, created from the very fabric of an Apocrypha, and that what we term devils and angels are actual fragments of the place from which they came, but somehow augmented so they can leave that place and operate with some degree of intelligence and autonomy.



▼ **TRAVELLING** - To go from one place in the Pattern to another can be virtually instantaneous and bypass any Materia barriers in the way, but there are limits and restrictions on how you do it and where you can go.

First, you can only travel instantly to someplace you have already been, and which has not been blocked by any sort of hostile Weaving. For instance, if you had never been inside the house next door, you could not Travel to there in Nocturne unless you walked the distance from where your body lay in the Materia to the Nocturne location of the house next door. Similarly, you could not go into that house until you opened the door, and if it was locked in Materia, it would be locked in Nocturne. However, once you had been inside the house, you could Dream yourself there in the future, even if the doors and windows were locked. The house is now a "place" you have visited. A "place" can be altered so you have to go through this process again, but this takes time.

Second, going anywhere in Nocturne costs Fate. This is not used up in any permanent sense, but is rather a reflection of the astral thread that connects your Nocturne self to your Materia self. The more you travel, the thinner it is stretched. Each time you shift locations by a means other than "walking" the distance, your Fate is reduced by 1. "Walking" refers to any Dreaming travel that isn't instant. If you decide to just Dream your way to the local library, that costs 1 Fate. If you walk or fly or swim from wherever your body lies to the Nocturne location of the library, it takes as long as if you did it in the Materia, but it costs no Fate.

When your Fate drops to 1, you can travel no further by instant means and the next instant destination is automatically your body, at which point you have the option of waking or remaining asleep. If you remain asleep, all the Fate spent in the traveling is recovered when you awake normally, but you run the risk of forgetting some of what you experienced. To fully recall an event that happened while Dreaming is a Challenging(9) Will task, otherwise you lose detail appropriate to the amount the roll was failed by. The gamemaster is the final arbiter of how much of the information the player knows is usable by the adventurer. If you awake to record your observations and then return to sleep, you recover all but 1 point of the Fate spent in traveling. That last point (or *all* lost points) can be recovered by a night spent without Dreaming.

Third, you cannot leave a Weave if your will is entangled with someone else who doesn't want to leave or doesn't want you to leave. Being under the effect of a hostile Threading, being in contact with, or being within melee range of that person is enough to prevent a Dreamer from exiting a Weave by will alone. The will holding you to that place must either be defeated, voluntarily release you or you have to spend at least a few seconds outside of its reach so that you can untangle your will from theirs and Dream yourself elsewhere.

**EXAMPLE:** A Dreamer encounters a bogeyman that threads a sticky web around the Dreamer, reducing their movement to zero. Until the Dreamer can negate this hostile threading with one of their own, they cannot leave this part of the Pattern. The bogeyman must also stay in this part of the Pattern, but does not have to be in contact with the Dreamer to maintain their threading.

Fourth, anyplace in Nocturne that is *not* a reflection of a location's Materia presence is a "threshold". The ruins of a death camp might be a threshold to Hell, for instance. This location is a "place", so crossing the threshold (even by "walking there" will reduce a Dreamer's Fate like any other traveling. To cross the threshold from Nocturne to Apocrypha is to step on the edges of eternity. A living Dreamer can get this far, but no farther. It allows one to address the presences that may lie within, but no more. If and how these presences respond is up to them and depends on their relationship with mankind.

Crossing a threshold from Nocturne to an Apocrypha will have a Fate cost that is based on the difficulty of getting there from here. It is *at least* 1, but can also be so high as to be impossible. Some Apocrypha don't want living visitors... Crossing from the Apocrypha back to Nocturne has no cost.

▼ **ENTITIES** - An Entity is anything that is aware, comes from an Apocrypha and isn't a Shadow. An angel or demon is an Entity. These are either some avatar or embodied concept of an Apocryphal power, or a Shadow of uncommon strength that has been somehow enhanced by the Apocryphal power.

Entities are very uncommon. There may only be a few hundred active Entities in all of Nocturne at any given moment. Making or releasing one seems to be a strain on an Apocryphal power, so they are typically sent into Nocturne for a specific purpose, for a limited time. Why things are this way is a matter of Apocryphal knowledge that Dreamers do not possess. Entities have the same limits and abilities as Dreamers. It costs them Fate to travel from one location to another, they can be injured, use magic if sufficiently talented, and so on. They do not however need to "wake up". While they do not heal damage or recover lost Fate while in Nocturne, they do not need to return from whence they came until their Fate is too low for them to do anything else. Even when they voluntarily return to the Apocrypha from whence they came, they do not seem to recover quickly, and a badly weakened Entity may be out of circulation for quite a while. It is theorized that Entities "recharge" from the energy of new souls entering their Apocrypha, but like so many theories about the Apocrypha, this one can neither be confirmed or denied.

Sometimes an Entity is simply a Shadow imbued with enough extra power to reach Nocturne and deliver a message, the Shadow usually having some strong emotional tie to the recipient. Sometimes an Entity is a force more powerful than any Dreamer, sent to wreak a violent Weaving or get revenge for a perceived wrong. Occasionally, opposing Entities will clash, causing widespread Nocturnal havoc. If a genuine Entity (not a Shadow) is "killed", its energy dissipates into Nocturne, and only some of it returns in diffuse form to the Apocrypha from which it came. The rest forms a permanent Weaving at the spot of its dissolution, with an effect equal to half its full Fate dice (rounding down) The nature of this Weaving is that of the Entity or the Apocryphal power it represents.

**EXAMPLE:** The Chernobyl reactor was the site of a clash between powerful Entities. The one whose nature was decay and destruction lost, causing a permanent Weaving in that area. This influenced the chance of a reactor incident, which eventually resulted in a similar decay and destruction at the Materia location of the battle.

▼ **BOGEMEN** - Bogeymen are similar to Entities, but come from the collective unconscious of the Sleepers. If enough people dream the same thing, it spawns a Nocturnal representation of that thing into being. Normally, they are made from fear and dread of a particular thing, but Bogeymen can be (but rarely are) beneficent. Once created, it roams Nocturne, doing whatever its nature compels it to do. Normally it does so by entering a random Sleeper's dream and working mischief, but if it encounters a Dreamer, it will try the same thing. Bogeymen can be quite powerful, but once vanquished, they are gone and do not return.

Bogeymen would be like mobile Elementals, but do not generally recover lost hits unless they can be "successful" at whatever is their bogey nature. However, Bogeymen may also have subjective characteristics that make them very hard to get rid of, like "only takes damage from thrown jellybeans". *Finding out the how to get rid of a bogeyman can be more of a challenge than actually doing it.*

In modern times, Dreamers can expect a few bogeymen to arise whenever a major horror movie is released or there is a disaster severe enough to cause mass nightmares in a particular area. Wars in particular have their own haunting type of bogeymen that can linger in an area for years. The bad dreams that bogeymen generate can spawn even more bogeymen, and in past centuries bogeymen have contributed to mass hysteria and outbreaks of violent and irrational behavior (such as the Inquisition). Bogeymen are not thought to be contributing factors in recent genocides, but these genocides have spawned numerous bogeymen from the nightmares of the survivors.

**Traditional Bogeyman:** Preys on small children, and finds those who have misbehaved especially tasty. It has hundreds of eyes and claws that go snicker-snack, but it can only see you if you see it. Hiding under a blanket is your best defense. If you close your eyes, it will wait for you to open them and then pounce on you and gobble you up. You can get rid of it in a fight if you have to, but the best way to drive it off is to sing the secret bogeyman song. If you know that, it won't come back and bother you ever again. Dreaming children often know how to handle this bogeyman, while adult Dreamers often get badly mauled and driven back to their Materia bodies by its attacks.



**Vampires:** Vampires might be Bogeymen, or possibly an Entity of some type (probably but not definitely from Hell). They prey on Sleepers, entering and subverting their dreams into nightmares. It is not known whether the collective interpretation of vampires comes from their nature, or their nature comes from the collective unconscious that believes in them.

In either case, they disturb the sleep and disrupt the health of those they prey upon, and draw power by sucking the Fate out of their victims during their nightmares. This is their only way of replenishing lost Fate and is the means by which they shapeshift and regenerate damage.

Contrary to popular belief, vampires apparently cannot turn Materia people into Nocturnal fiends. When killed, a vampire is simply banished like any other Entity, and can eventually return. The supply of vampires appears to be fairly constant and their predations minor, making them more of a nuisance than a threat. Dreamers refer to them as "roaches" (turn on the lights and they run away). Vampires would like to be taken seriously, to be feared and respected as embodiments of evil, but so far it just isn't happening.

In recent years, a number of younger Dreamers have taken on a vampire motif, which has both further degraded the reputation of the real thing and resulted in a number of accidental Nocturnal "stakings". Real vampires will beat up vampire posers if they get the chance.

**Death:** Death is perhaps the ultimate in bogeyman, but ultimately the most harmless. Virtually all cultures have a personification of Death, and most do not understand its role. Death does not actually take life, it is just a harbinger and escort, simply taking those were fated to perish to their ultimate destination, and making sure they get there in one spiritual piece. Not everyone gets visited by Death, only those whose souls may be in contention or who are not sure where they belong.

As far as anyone can tell, Death is a fully independent Entity, or many of them, or maybe independent manifestations of the universal nature of this concept. Death normally appears out of nowhere when it is needed, but may be seen wandering about as other Dreamers do. While imposing and frightening, Death can sometimes be sociable enough to have a conversation with, provided it is not needed elsewhere.

▼ **THE AFTERLIFE** - In the world of Nocturne, the afterlife is not one place, but many. The beliefs of the original Dreamers and the multitudes of Sleepers brought into being places one step beyond Nocturne. And as belief made it real, those who crossed over made these realms permanent. Every legendary resting place of the spirit is distinct, separate from all others, and *real*. How real it is to you depends on how strongly you believe you are going there, and how likely the current inhabitants are to decide that you meet the entry requirements. If you think you are going to Hell when you die, you are going to Hell when you die (they let *anyone* in). If you think you are going to Heaven, you will at least make it as far as the Pearly Gates. An afterlife must be or have been truly believed in to exist. Those that have been created by modern authors may be detailed and discussed and even played in as role-playing games, but they are not believed in, so they have no dimensional home (sorry, Cthulhu).

▼ **Note** - Devoted Dreaming fans of a particular fictional world may have made Weaves that represent their particular vision of what that afterlife might look and feel like, and novice Dreamers encountering these might not understand the difference between a facsimile and the real thing.

Each afterlife has its own doorways to Nocturne, places where it is easier to make the crossing. These will usually intersect with places in the material world that have an affinity to that particular afterlife. Dreamers will be able to feel the nature of any nearby afterlife while in Nocturne, and many places are avoided because they are too repulsive to the psyche, or so seductive that leaving them is difficult. More detail on this subject is in **The Apocrypha** chapter.

▼ **ICONS** - Normal "equipment" doesn't exist in Nocturne. One can take the Nocturnal equivalent of a Materia gun and shoot someone with it, and it will hurt quite a bit, but if you stop paying attention to the fact that you are holding a gun, it will vanish back to wherever you got it from. Experienced Dreamers do not rely on such things when travelling unless there is no other choice. However, keeping a *real* gun on your nightstand gives you a quick and useful Nocturnal weapon if a Dreamer breaks into your house and tries to cause mischief while you are asleep.

The exception to this is Icons. Icons are objects that exist *only* in Nocturne. They may have at one time existed in Materia, but this is not required, nor is possession of the Materia item needed. An Icon is an idea or concept in fixed form. It is something that has been believed in so strongly or for so long that it has an enduring form in Nocturne. Unlike an item created in Nocturne by Threading, an Icon is difficult or impossible to disrupt, and a character who possesses an Icon retains it until they die or choose to give it up. Depending on the Icon, this can make an adventurer extremely powerful. Note that giving up an Icon requires that it have a *willing* recipient who knows the nature of the Icon. There are Icons that no one really wants, making giving them up nearly impossible. If the owner of an Icon passes to the Apocrypha, the Icon endures. It manifests in Nocturne in a place appropriate to it, appropriate in that it should only be found by someone who deserves it.

**EXAMPLE:** The Holy Grail is an Icon. If lost, it will only be found by someone who undertakes a long and dangerous quest to locate it.

When the adventurer is awake, the Icon is not visible in Nocturne, but gives the adventurer an aura that can be detected by the sensitive, and any Dreamers in proximity to the adventurer can sense its presence if not its exact location. The power of an Icon will influence the personality of the one who possesses it. In addition to any abilities it grants the owner, the nature of the Icon will eventually override or enhance the same traits in its owner. It could make a scoundrel honorable, or make a saint into a debauched sinner. Sometimes these changes last only for the duration of ownership, sometimes they seem to last forever.



An Icon acts as Weaving in the Nocturne location it resides, and all Icons are powerful enough to have at least a 1 point effect in the Materia that corresponds to that Nocturne location. Extremely powerful Icons may have a 2 or 3 point effect, but few if any have had more than this. The effect on the person who possesses the Icon is typically *double* the effect it has on the Materia.

**EXAMPLE:** An Icon that had a one point "evil" effect would cause everyone in the Materia equivalent of its location to have any temptation to do evil a point harder to resist. The owner of the Icon would find such temptations two points harder to resist. However, they would also find that making evil plans was two points easier...

Icons are typically associated with enduring religions or extremely powerful myths. For instance, Christianity and Arthurian legend have each generated Icons. Most of the Eastern and aboriginal myth cycles will also have Icons. Even more modern myths have generated lesser Icons. There may be Icons associated with vampires, Lovecraftian horror or perhaps even Star Trek, though the latter two are probably too recent for a genuine Icon. Give it a few more generations and it could happen, though.

A Dreamer can create an Icon of sorts. It is not a true Icon, but shares many of its characteristics. By using Weaving skill on a Materia item while awake, a Dreamer can incorporate part of what they are into that item. All it really requires is time and a strong emotional commitment to the project. This item eventually becomes a permanent Weaving in a Materia item, which lasts in Nocturne as long as the Materia item does. The main use of such an item is to be a focus for the Shadow of that person, and is called a Shadow Icon. If they can go from an Apocrypha to the location of that item, they can use the level of its Weaving to add to their own abilities in Nocturne. If the Shadow is not strong enough to leave its Apocrypha on its own, the Icon can be used by a Dreamer to summon that Shadow, and use its level of Weaving to augment the Shadow's abilities. The group of Dreamers known as the Architects regularly use this talent. Their members keep a lifelong diary, which is transported to a safe Materia location upon that member's passing to an Apocrypha. Other members of the group can then use that diary to summon the Shadow of that person for assistance in solving problems.

A Shadow Icon is *always* possessed in Nocturne by the person who holds its Materia form. While it may be visible in Nocturne to anyone else at that place in the Pattern, it is not "touchable", nor can its abilities be used. You have to be holding the Materia form of the Shadow Icon while Dreaming in order to use it. A Shadow Icon can be moved from place to place in the Pattern, but will always revert to its Materia "home" when the Dreamer carrying it awakens.

Certain ancient Dreamers of great power created such Icons to help themselves return to Nocturne after the death of their Materia body. The members of the Priesthood in particular are skilled at this, though their particular Shadow Icons are not readily portable in Materia or Nocturne. Someone who has possession of such an Icon can have a powerful ally at their disposal. While that Shadow might have its own agenda, it *can* be blackmailed with the threat of destroying the Materia Icon, which would forever destroy it in Nocturne. Long term possession of a Shadow Icon (keeping constant possession in Nocturne) will tend to warp the psyche of the owner towards that of the Shadow represented by the Icon. Depending on who the Shadow Icon represents, this can result in a lot of harm or eventual insanity. It is rumored that powerful enough Shadows can actually displace the soul of a living Dreamer and take over their body, making the full transition from the afterlife back to Materia with much of their psyche intact. This is never done by "good" individuals, since it effectively kills the previous inhabitant of the body, whose soul is sent to its appropriate afterlife.

▼ **Note** - The limits on creating a Shadow Icon are more or less the same as for Weaving a permanent change to an area. The maximum amount of effect that can be in a Shadow Icon is the full dice in the Weaving skill roll of the person who created it. In order for a Shadow Icon to allow a Shadow to return to Nocturne with the same stats they had in life will require a Shadow Icon with 6 points of effect. This would require a cumulative effort of about sixty-three thousand dice of Weaving effort, which would take a Dreamer with a 6d+0 Weaving skill roll over ten thousand hours of effort (about four years of full time work).

**True Icons** - The following are a handful of the genuine Icons floating around Nocturne.

**Necronomicon:** The book that cannot be read, the Necronomicon is the name of an Icon that represents every supposed evil spellbook or tome of forbidden knowledge that has existed throughout history. The Necronomicon is the manifestation of human willingness to sacrifice *everything* in the quest for power over one's fellow man. Willingness to sacrifice wealth, life, family, sanity, body and even soul to gain that which cannot be had from talent or ability. It is absolutely unchecked ambition, written in blood and bound in human skin. While it can be opened, what is written on its pages can only be understood by its owner, who cannot put it into words for anyone else. Its mere presence is a 2 point modifier in the Materia to affect the chance a person will take a risk in order to get ahead *and* the chance of succeeding at it. This could range from wasting money on lottery tickets to murdering one's spouse in order to get the insurance money. If the intent is already there, the presence of this Icon will magnify it. The owner of the Necronomicon is a compulsive risk taker, a type A personality just looking for an opportunity to crash and burn. If they are highly talented, the 4 point modifier the Icon grants them will probably make them rich and famous in short order. If they are not that talented, it will probably make them dead.

The Necronomicon currently resides in the Nocturnal location of Las Vegas. While it cycles through Dreamers fairly rapidly, it apparently has an affinity for Las Vegas and its new owners tend to stay there as well.



**Excalibur:** Excalibur and its scabbard are the spirit of uncorrupted leadership, taking charge not for personal gain, but for the good of those being led. This doesn't mean that the leader cannot enjoy the material benefits of their position, but that Excalibur will only be a benefit so long as they remain uncorrupted. The Materia benefits are two-fold. Excalibur is a 2 point shift in favor of making the best decisions for the most people, and its scabbard is a 2 point shift to ward off physical attacks on its owner.

Excalibur can only be found by someone both destined to lead and who is *currently* noble in intent. Purity of heart is a bonus, but is not required. Regardless of how the personality of its owner shifts, the benefits of Excalibur are retained as long as it is possessed, but the sword and scabbard can be lost or stolen if the owner becomes corrupted by the power at their disposal. The current whereabouts of Excalibur are unknown, and it is generally believed there has been no worthy bearer for centuries.

**The Holy Grail:** Said to be the cup Christ drank from at the Last Supper. To drink from it is to taste bitter foreknowledge. The owner knows when and how they will die, and regardless of what they might do, events will transpire and conspire such that this fate cannot be avoided. The knowledge, once granted, fades from conscious memory and cannot be recalled, but subconscious confidence gives the owner a 2 point shift in difficulty when doing any action that puts them at great personal risk. That is, you might know that you will die someday, but today *isn't* that day... Of course, when the time does come for fate to step in, the owner of the Grail will know it with just enough warning to do something to make a difference for someone else, but not do something that will alter their pre-ordained fate.

In addition to this ability, the Grail gives its owner the ability to know if someone is going to betray them. They have to touch the person, and that person has to be in a position to perform a betrayal. There is no knowledge of when or how, only that it will happen *someday*. The current whereabouts of the Holy Grail are unknown.

**The True Cross:** The True Cross is a large and powerful Icon. Many are the reliquaries that claim to house fragments of the True Cross, but none of them have any power. The True Cross is the Nocturnal manifestation of the actual cross that Christ was crucified on. The Dreamer who takes possession of this Icon is destined to carry its weight for the rest of their life. The presence of the True Cross is a 3 point modifier in the Materia to any attempts to understand one's self, to understand one's place in the greater scheme of things, to accept what you are, and to become what you can be. In an overall sense, it helps people find redemption. The magnified effect on the owner is why the cross is a burden. To always be fully aware of what you truly are, and to exactly know the limits of what you can ever be is more knowledge than most of us want to have, so finding someone willing to take the True Cross from you is exceptionally difficult.

The True Cross is often in the possession of those who are considered "living saints". Its owner always seems to be the best person suited for the task of carrying it, even though they might not seem so at first. The True Cross is an Icon closely associated with Heaven, and the owner will find themselves much less able to accept, perceive or influence parts of the Pattern associated with the other Apocrypha.

**Dragon's Egg:** There have at times been several Dragon's Eggs, but only a few are known to be in existence at this time. They are thought to be the last true remnant of Dreaming from the Age of Reptiles, some millions of years ago. As alien in nature as if they came from another world, they were never meant for human Dreamers. They weave a carnivorous intent and emotionless cunning in the part of the Pattern where they lay, and lay a similar compulsion on the personality of anyone who possesses one. If the impulses can be controlled, they channel into a keen ability to sense strength and weakness in others, a trait that can be quite beneficial. However, if the one who possesses this Icon is weaker in will, it will drive them insane, starting with casual cruelty and ending with murder and cannibalism.

Fortunately these Icons are few and far between. Novice Dreamers have almost always been the victims of the Dragon's Egg. More experienced Dreamers sense the aura and know not to pick one up. Of the known Dragon's Eggs, three are possessed by aboriginal tribes in various parts of the world, one by a dictator in an Eastern European country, and one by the CEO of a multinational shipping firm.

▼ **THE DREAMS OF THOSE WHO SLEEP** - Even the Sleepers dream. They just don't Dream. A Dreamer who goes to the Nocturnal location of a Sleeper's body can create, enter or modify the dreams of that person. You simply will yourself into their "psyche space", and become an independent facet of their preconscious. This is not done without risk. A regular dream is like a Weave. It is all one area for purposes of manipulating it, but the overall control of that area resides with the Sleeper. Within their own dream, the Sleeper gets to add 1d to their own Fate, and subtracts 1d from that of any Dreamer who enters it. So, a Sleeper can easily overcome the abilities of lesser Dreamers, possibly trapping the Dreamer in a nightmare beyond their control. The advantage a Dreamer has is that they have skill in the subtleties of dreams, while the Sleeper has to rely on raw talent. While Dreamers can take damage from the nightmares of a Sleeper, Sleepers cannot take damage from the machinations of a Dreamer (maybe 1 non-lethal hit from nightmares). The worst a Dreamer can really do is wake the Sleeper up. However, recurring nightmares and a lack of sleep can wear on the psyche and the health of a Sleeper, making them vulnerable to Materia hazards.

When a Dreamer enters the psyche of a Sleeper, they do so not knowing what they will find. If there is no dreaming going on, the Dreamer can attempt to create one, if only to communicate with the Sleeper. This is the most common reason to interact with a Sleeper. The problem is that unless the Sleeper wakes up immediately afterward, they will tend to forget anything that was said.

While a Dreamer cannot harm a Sleeper, they can over time Weave the Sleeper. Just like Weaving a place, except the effect is only on the Sleeper. Since the "area" of the Weaving is small, the effect is doubled. The Materia life of the victim is affected, and all their dreams are tainted by the Weaving, which may further aggravate the situation. A hostile, powerful Dreamer can slowly drive a Sleeper insane, ruin their health, alienate them from their friends and cause all manner of hurt. It is seldom done by human Dreamers because of the time this takes, but hostile and more or less immortal Entities can and will do this on occasion.

# EABA

▼ **MAGIC** - Threading skill represents projection of individual will. Anyone can learn to do it, and even those untrained can perform simple Threading tasks. However, Nocturne is a vast reservoir of energy that the cognoscenti can tap into and manipulate in ways far more complex than Threading allows. This is the source of what we call "magic".

**Framework** - In **EABA** terms, the use of magic in Nocturne has the following mandatory limits:

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Base cost	0
●	Requires minimum Fate of 5	-5
●	Generic penalty (damage limit)	-10
●	Generic penalty (mentoring)	-5
◆	Extraordinary range	+20
	Framework base	+0

The minimum Fate requirement means that the adventurer must have a *current* Fate of 5 or more to use a "magic" power. This means that if they have travelled or threaded and have a reduced Fate as a result, they cannot use magic powers until they return to their Materia body and recover their Fate. The "damage limit" is the same as for normal combat. Attacks that would be half-lethal or non-lethal count as non-lethal, and lethal attacks count as half-lethal. "Mentoring" is explained later, but makes new spells harder to learn and decreases the amount of self-teaching that can be done. Nocturnal spells have "extraordinary range" for two reasons. First, they can affect a Dreamer, who is really only a floating consciousness on a sea of psyche, and secondly because Nocturnal effects of sufficient power can breach the barrier and actually be seen and felt directly in Materia.

**Using Magic** - Like Threading, magic is a skill, and operates as described in **EABA**. An overall "sorcery" skill is used to represent the basic mental techniques required. Once these are mastered to at least a +0d level (5S), each individual "spell" is another skill for at least +0d (also 5S). Neither sorcery skill nor individual spells can be learned if a Dreamer does not have a current Fate of at least 5(1d+2). In addition, a spell cannot be self-taught if it includes any modifiers that the Dreamer has not already mastered.

**EXAMPLE:** A Dreamer wants to learn "Mystic Minefield", a spell that seeds an area with half-lethal darts that spring from the ground. If the Dreamer does not already know a spell that has "half-lethal damage" as a modifier, then they must learn "Mystic Minefield" from someone else, or learn some other spell from someone else that has this modifier. Once the Dreamer knows this modifier, they can incorporate it into spells of their own design.

▼ **Note!** - From an adventurer design standpoint, this means that any adventurer who starts the campaign with knowledge of spells has a mentor, teacher or friend in their adventurer's background, since the first spell learned *absolutely requires* someone else to teach it.

The subtleties of manipulating the fabric of the Pattern as opposed to forcing your will upon it take time. Time is the one thing that Apocryphal powers have in abundance, so Entities and other manifestations of Apocryphal will are very likely to have "magic". Similarly, knowledge of Nocturnal magic is one of the boons that can be granted by Apocryphal powers in exchange for eternal service. The binding of the supplicant to the Apocryphal power provides the link for the knowledge, bypassing that nasty learning curve problem. It also means that falling out of favor with that Apocryphal power may mean a loss of whatever level of ability was originally granted.

Similarly, someone who "walks a path" may have access to one or more "spells" as a result of their intuitive connection to that aspect of the universe. Again, if they fall from the path, that connection is broken and the knowledge cannot be accessed.

**Magic and Materia** - Magic powers only work in Nocturne, but if an effect generates sufficient power, it can bleed over into Materia as a real world effect. This is *extremely* difficult. Any Materia effect of a magic spell is reduced by 6d, and effects reduced to 0d or less simply do not show up in Materia and are completely undetectable by Materia means. Ones of greater effect show up in Materia as pale shadows of their powerful Nocturnal effect. As a super-intense sort of Weaving, magical effects that breach into Materia will tend to appear as a form of coincidence if at all possible.

**EXAMPLE:** A "fireball" cast in an apartment might manifest as a puff of fire and smoke from an overheated electrical outlet, or as a painful flash of heat with no visible source.

In addition to any modifiers on the power, breaching into Materia does half-lethal hits to the user of the power equal to the effect that reaches Materia, even if the power is not one that does damage. This cannot be prevented by any means, and makes use of such powers self-limiting.

The Others (page 4.13) were the only group reliably able to generate Nocturnal effects of sufficient force that they could directly alter the real world without taking severe side effects on themselves. Their few survivors and some of their half-breed descendants have individuals with this level of talent, making them formidable enemies. Historically there have been a few humans with this talent, the notable ones being Waking Dreamers. They could generate an effect in Nocturne while awake, and generate effects of sufficient power that they could be seen and felt in Materia. But, a human Dreamer of such power comes along only once every few hundred years and none are known to currently exist. For reasons unknown, few of these former Dreamers are known to be Shadows. It is a mystery oft discussed but never solved.

**Props** - Within the broad framework of "magic" Dreamers will often use various mental props to help them generate effects. These include mental tricks like gestures or mnemonic phrases, or crutches like a "spellbook" (which would be a Materia item that the Dreamer has invested time and emotion into, much like a personal Icon). Independent "magic items" do not exist, so there are no "wands of fireballs" or "wish rings" or any such magical gewgaws or gimcracks.

**Shove:** One of the spells known to and used by Others who have the talent. Its actual name is more akin to "Rejoicing at the awareness of impending death", but between the apostrophes and glottal stops, humans would trip just trying to pronounce it. Within Nocturne, it is an extremely powerful psychic "grab and throw" that either does damage appropriate to its Strength, or can toss the target a convenient distance away, into a hostile Weave, or off a convenient precipice. A variant for Materia assassinations takes longer to prepare, but is used to trip up someone in a critical situation. Like the "Slice" spell, it is especially convenient for someone who lives in icy mountain areas and does not like visitors.

**Version 1** (difficulty of 15)

- **Framework base:** (0 points)
- **Acts as an Attribute** (+30 points)
- **Ranged effect(31m)** (+20 points)
- **Power lasts an instant** (+0 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)

**Version 2** (difficulty of 16)

- **Framework base:** (0 points)
- **Additional +4d effect** (+40 points)
- **Acts as an Attribute** (+30 points)
- **Ranged effect(5m)** (+5 points)
- **Power lasts an instant** (+0 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires total concentration** (-10 points)
- **Takes a minute to activate** (-10 points)

**Slice:** Another spell used by the Others. It's true name is "painful separation of body and spirit". It is akin to a Threaded melee weapon, but uses the fabric of the Pattern to do the damage rather than the will of the Dreamer. As a result, it cannot be blocked by Projection skill, though it is affected by Threaded armor. A variant of the spell can be made powerful enough to do Materia damage. Not a lot, but enough to cut ropes, maybe even brake lines or puncture fuel tanks. And a slice across the eyes when you are in a critical situation can be the difference between life and death.

**Version 1** (difficulty of 13)

- **Framework base:** (0 points)
- **Lethal damage** (+40 points)
- **Melee range** (+0 points)
- **Power lasts an instant** (+0 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)

**Version 2** (difficulty of 17)

- **Framework base:** (0 points)
- **Additional +4d effect** (+40 points)
- **Lethal damage** (+40 points)
- **Melee range** (+0 points)
- **Power lasts an instant** (+0 points)
- **Requires gestures** (-5 points)
- **Requires total concentration** (-10 points)
- **Takes a minute to activate** (-10 points)

▼ **Note** - Remember that since magic is not a Threading, it does not necessarily cost Fate to use (unless a spell was designed that way), and that a Dreamer can have multiple spells of the same type going at once, while they could not do the same with Threadings. Magic in Nocturne is rare. Those who have it like the extra flexibility and power it gives, power that would be diluted if the knowledge were widely spread.

▼ **THE RULE OF THREE** - Early in the rules it was mentioned that the number three is repeated often through the realms of Nocturne. Three is one for each extreme, and one for what stands between them. There is the Apocrypha and Materia, and between them, Nocturne. In the Christian belief system, Heaven has the intangible Holy Spirit, Christ who became Man, and God the Father between them, and Clint Eastwood movies have the Good, the Bad and the Ugly.

All the important facets of *everything* in **Nocturne** occur in threes. Even if you cannot see all three parts from where you stand, they are there, and you need to take them into account. Each action, each plot has success, failure and something in between. Each Entity has a strength, a weakness and what holds the two together. Each realm has its opposite, and Nocturne between them.

It is more than just semantics. The universe of **Nocturne** is trinary in nature. Actions, people, places and things will naturally gravitate to one of the three possible states, with the median state being the easiest to achieve, and thus where most things end up.

*It is easier to be simply flawed rather than to be purely good or purely evil.*

This three-fold nature of the world can even apply to group activities. We understand this instinctively, even if we are flawed in implementing it. How many times have you done something with friends "on the the count of three"?

Any plan or action that works on three possible states gives each of the three people involved a one point shift in difficulty on their part of the action, at least until chaos intervenes and the adventurers are no longer working in concert.

**Walking a path** - Choosing to work and live towards an extreme of a three-fold state of being is called "walking a path". There are as many paths as there are adventurers. A path could be called "hedonism", "greed", "love", or whatever, as long as it is something that has an opposite, like "denial", "charity", or "hate". An adventurer who chooses a path can walk it with a sureness of purpose that those who tread the broad thoroughfare cannot achieve. If an adventurer sets their path in full alignment with one extreme or the other, they gain the benefits of working in harmony with the nature of the universe. As long as they walk that emotional, moral and spiritual path, all tasks that work towards their ultimate goal are reduced in Difficulty by one level (2 points).

In the long run, this is a *tremendous* benefit, but it is not acquired overnight, nor is it without its serious drawbacks. The universe does not share its power readily, and while it makes no moral judgements of its own, following a narrow path may force an adventurer to make difficult choices.

**EXAMPLE:** An adventurer who has chosen a path called "righteous justice" is in pursuit of a demon, when they pass through an apartment building. The adventurer sees that faulty wiring has just touched off a fire. They can choose to ignore this, and continue pursuit of the demon, possibly resulting in the deaths of several people in the building from flames or toxic smoke. Or, they can return to their body and make an emergency call and alert firefighters. If they do the latter, even though it is a good deed, they have strayed from the path of "righteous justice", and lose the benefits it gave. If they continue to pursue the demon, regardless of the cost to others, they stay on the path, and retain the benefits it gives.

This is undeniably harsh, and those who follow a path often lead a lonely life. Even one who chooses something like "love" may find that they must give up "love for one" in order to embrace "love for many".

One might have to consistently walk a path for several months in order to gain the benefits, and these benefits can be lost in an instant of hesitation or weakness. It is a Hard(11) Will task to gain the benefits of walking a path, and the roll can be made once each month the adventurer has been on that path. Once they have found the path, they get the bonus on any action relating to that path. However, if a player tries to justify an action in order to gain the bonus, then they are trying too hard. The path should be clear for all to see, even if they can't follow it themselves.

▼ **Note** - An adventurer can begin play "on a path" if they take the Trait of Unusual Background to reflect the time and effort they have spent to gain the path.

Those who follow opposite paths and meet in Nocturne *must* confront each other in some way, and those who follow a path will recognize their kindred souls *and* their opposites immediately. Love must try to conquer Hate, Hate must try to destroy Love. Failing to make the attempt for whatever reason displaces one from their path.

The benefits of walking a path do not *directly* translate to the Materia. However, one who walks a path has a surety of purpose and clarity of thought that gives them a 1 point decrease in the difficulty of their path-related actions in Materia. And of course, losing the path affects both Materia and Nocturnal benefits. The self-doubt that will plague the fallen Dreamer can be a temporary penalty to all their actions, neither crippling nor permanent, but just enough that those who look carefully can see the difference. *He's lost his edge...*

Those who follow a path are much more likely to encounter Entities, either for good or ill. It is the nature of Apocrypha and Entities in general that they are strongly focused on a particular set of beliefs or code or morals, very much akin to walking a path, though the Entities do not gain the benefits of same. Someone who walks the same path as an Entity will generally be seen as an ally, even if the mortal is not sealed to or formally associated with that Apocryphal power. As such, the Dreamer might find themselves assisted on occasion by unexpected help, and similarly, might find themselves doing the work of a higher power even though it was not their intention.

A person can walk a path as part of service to an Apocryphal power, or as an agent of some aspect of that power. The path of "righteous justice" might be a path one can walk in service to the Creator. While one would by nature be allied to all servants of the Creator, the path is a "higher calling", and adherence to the path is more important, even if other servants of the Creator do not see it at the time.

Normally, the benefits gained on a path are because the Dreamer is attuning themselves to the universe. Following a path that is part of service to an Apocryphal power may, at gamemaster option, confer *extra* benefits. These might be granted by the Apocryphal power, or be conferred by resonance with a being that is by its nature a kind of Path. These benefits might include temporary acquisition of beneficial Traits, occasional flashes of insight, or extra benefits on Attribute and skill rolls that follow that path. However, falling from the Path may have consequences more severe than simply losing the benefits. Falling out of tune with the will of an Apocryphal power is often seen as a sort of weakness, disloyalty or betrayal. Satan fell from the Creator's path, and look what happened to him...

Regaining that lost state of grace may require an exceptional service or sacrifice, or might simply be impossible. There's lots of room there for the gamemaster to have fun with if any adventurer ends up in this state.

▼ **DREAMERS & MADMEN** - Something for the gamemaster to consider is that much of our most powerful imagery comes from the creative or disturbed mind. While Nocturne as written has people of all types as Dreamers, it might be that only the most intense of souls can reach Nocturne. You could play this as requiring either a skill roll in some creative endeavor of 4d+1 or more, or at least three levels in some Personality Trait that makes it difficult to live in normal society.

However, once in Nocturne, this skill becomes the adventurer's Weaving skill. A poet speaks, and things change. An artist paints or scupts a new reality. A musician changes reality with their music or melody. Those with the strong emotional states reflected by the Personality can gain a 2 point reduction in the difficulty of any Nocturnal skill rolls that the Personality could be a benefit to (imagine a Waking Dreamer musician-mage with the added benefit of a cooperating crowd).

This will require some changes to the way things work. Instead of being filled with a cross-section of humanity, beggars and bankers and factory workers, instead, Nocturne is filled with poets and madmen. This will have obvious ramifications for the allied groups and organizations listed in the next chapter, as well as being a challenge to run and play in. You can also add some aspects of this to a normal campaign to make unusual or powerful extras for the players to have to deal with.



# FRIENDS & FOES



by jontop



*And all you create,*

*and all you destroy;*

*And all that you do, and all that you say;*

*And all that you eat,*

*and everyone you meet;*

*And all that you slight, and everyone you fight;*

*And all that is now,*

*and all that is gone;*

*And all that's to come,*

*and everything under the sun is in tune;*

*But the sun is eclipsed by the moon...*

-Pink Floyd, *Eclipse*

▼ **THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY** - We've talked about Entities, Bogeymen, Elementals and other hazards of Nocturne. *But what about the other Dreamers?* At any given moment, there are perhaps thousands of Dreamers active in Nocturne. Those with similar goals and interests will tend to find each other out, *and find out about those who oppose these interests...*

As an option for the gamemaster, each of these groups is listed with various "entrance requirements". This isn't really saying that background checks are done to see if you meet the requirements, but rather that only people with certain qualifications and mindset will find a particular group to their liking, or in the case of the more ruthless groups, whether or not a person has what it takes to survive in that kind of organization.

All the requirements must be paid for or met by the adventurer. The benefits are free, and do not count towards the adventurer's point totals. In general, *Friends and information resources of a group are generally worth a two point shift in difficulty for any task where that knowledge or that group's resources can be brought to bear.* This is a two way street. The adventurer may be called upon to make trips in Materia or Nocturne on behalf of a colleague in that group, just as they can call on others to help them.

While not listed, membership or inclusion in *most* of these groups would be considered a Secret, with various overt and covert repercussions if the secret got out. Keep this in mind.

## Nocturne

Let's elaborate on that. Being an inner circle member of a group is not something that happens overnight, nor do people without a lot of discretion become privy to the secret information a group has collected over the centuries. Having a group as a friend and knowing its "trade secrets" implies that the adventurer is keeping those secrets...secret. They do not tell them to friends outside that group, non-Dreaming family, no one.

If word gets out that the adventurer is spreading around hard-won info for their own personal benefit, or events transpire that can be linked to such an indiscretion by the adventurer, then repercussions *will* happen. Imagine a conversation between a few powerful Dreamers after a plan goes awry...

*"The only way they could have known what to do is if they had inside help."*

*"Surely we were not betrayed from within?"*

*"Find everyone involved in the debacle. Find everyone they know, and then everyone **they** know. We'll get to the bottom of this, and someone will pay..."*

The very least that will happen if an adventurer betrays a group's trust or divulges its secrets is that all benefits of the group are immediately lost. While some of the group might remain on speaking terms with the adventurer (leaving open the possibility of forgiveness if the adventurer is innocent), no one will lift a finger to help the adventurer and the best that can be hoped for is that their oldest and best friends in the group might be persuaded to "look the other way" if the adventurer needs some of that person's resources.

If the group is known for violence or ruthless tactics, betrayal of the group is going to get the adventurer killed in short order, either directly by their own former compatriots, or by simply letting the adventurer's enemies know that any protection of the group no longer applies.

Note that the requirements are for someone to be a "member" of that group. One can work for a group without being a "member". A Dreaming goon who works for a member of the Illuminati has no influence on Illuminati matters, but is rather just an instrument of its policies.

Adventurers do not have to be a member of or associated with one of these groups, but you can be certain that they will cross paths with one or more of them eventually...

▼ **THE PLAYERS** - Those who fear or wish to prevent the Awakening are known as the Elite, while those who seek to bring it about are loosely known as the Redeemers. These two groups are far from monolithic blocks, because each group is composed of numerous factions, each with their own goals and beliefs about the Awakening.



**Mater Ecclesia**(Redeemers) - The "Mother Church" believes that the Awakening is the event commonly known as the Rapture in the book of Revelations. When the Awakening occurs, the Nocturne will disappear and the realms of the Materia and

Apocrypha will once again be adjacent. Those who are the chosen of God will transcend directly into Heaven, while the rest will undergo seven years of tribulation before the final judgement. The Mater Ecclesia is a secret branch of the Catholic Church, and conducts almost all its operations out of Vatican City.

The Mater Ecclesia wishes the Awakening to come to pass, but does not make any direct efforts to bring it about. They *will* interfere in anyone else's attempts to bring it about, however. When it happens is to be God's will, not man's. They do however keep a very close watch for omens and portents, as well as a remarkably sophisticated network of observers and agents in both Nocturne and Materia.

The mother church is if not the oldest, certainly the best organized and continually led group of Dreamers. They have extensive written records and a fairly good correspondence with those of their number who have passed on to the Apocrypha. Their Materia and Nocturnally secure vaults beneath the Vatican also hold a handful of powerful Icons, some of which are there for use in emergencies only, and some of which are there to keep them from ever being used by anyone.

**Requirements:**

Two levels of limited Status (Catholic hierarchy)  
Language(Latin) at 3d+0 or better  
Personality (loyalty to Church), 3 or more levels  
Fate of 6+

**Benefits:**

Friend (the Vatican)  
Access to secret Vatican records



**The Architects**(Elite) - Scientists and philosophers of powerful will sometimes find their dreams invaded by their peers, or gain inspiration and insight from legendary thinkers of the past. Those who can grasp the

concept and reality of Dreaming are invited to join the Architects. The Architects were founded in 1703 by Issac Newton, whose ghostly presence can still be faintly invoked (though he is not very talkative).

The hub of all Architect activity is the **Apple Tree**, a small and very secretive club in London. It is named not for the apple that supposedly fell on Newton's head, but rather for the tree typically seen in paintings that represent the forbidden fruit from the Garden of Eden. The Apple Tree has a very strong presence in Nocturne, and it maintains its secrecy by simple physical concealment. The Materia location of the club is secret, and only members are allowed inside its Materia presence. This and powerful Weavings keep most other Dreamers at bay. Those who do manage to find their way in but who do not meet the qualifications to join are usually persuaded to keep the secret...by one means or another.

Within the Apple Tree, Dreamers can engage in discussion with their peers, free from the constraints of their physical bodies. Stephen Hawking is a member and is a quite dashing and articulate fellow, as well as a very powerful Dreamer. In addition to the intellectual cross-pollination, the Apple Tree has a rather unique library.

While most forms of Materia information storage will waver and change content, the books in the Apple Tree library are of a different sort. There are hundreds of journals that are the diaries and unedited autobiographies of its members, their greatest hopes and deepest fears put down on paper.

Upon that Dreamer's death, this self-penned book of their life is delivered to the Materia location of the Apple Tree. There it becomes a strong emotional link to the Apocryphal presence of that person and can be used to gain a bonus to draw that person into the Nocturne, or to give a bonus to that person's abilities once there. This allows an Architect to discuss problems with deceased members, and keeps an individual's research from dying with them.

Architects believe the Awakening would be a catastrophic blow to the psyche of humanity, all of mankind's ills brought into the refuge of sleep. Tyrants could oppress their populace even in their dreams, governments would spy and pry, and sociopaths would cut through the unprepared like a scythe through wheat. The Architects have no active efforts to prevent the Awakening, but will gladly pass on any information they get to groups that do interfere with such efforts. Other than this, they take no part in Nocturnal intrigues.

**Requirements:**

A Science skill roll of 6d+1 or more  
Fate of 4+

**Benefits:**

Access to Shadows of past savants  
Possible Friends in the scientific community



**Anarchists (Redeemers) -**  
Anarchists are just "anarchists", not "The Anarchists". They generally feel the Awakening will cause chaos, but ultimately be more empowering to the individual than to organized

power structures like governments, corporations or religions. They have no coherent plan to bring about the Awakening and few of them even are on the right intellectual track. However, "disorganized" does not mean "harmless". There are only a few dozen Anarchist Dreamers in the world, along with some less fanatical supports or hangers-on. Half of them hate the other half. Of those that do talk to each other, little cooperating is done, but the conduit of Dreaming does let them communicate securely and pass on information about potential targets and threats in the Materia. It even lets anarchist leaders in prison continue to lead their groups, in spirit if not in body.

In Nocturne, Anarchists are generally rude, blunt and will resort to violence with little provocation. As a result, most Dreamers avoid them, which suits the Anarchists just fine.

**Requirements:**

One or more levels of reduced Wealth  
Personality (egotistical), 1+ levels  
Personality (ruthless), 1+ levels  
Enemy (half of the Anarchists)  
Fate of 5+

**Benefits:**

Friend (the other half of the Anarchists)  
Diverse tidbits of info from all other groups

## Nocturne



**Pagans (Redeemers) -** The term "pagan" covers a loose alliance of mystics and new age spiritualists, as well as Wiccans, Druids (real or self-styled), Gaeans (*not* Gaeani) and other global consciousness types. Their belief is

that with proper shepherding by enlightened Dreamers, the Awakening can bring about a new age of peace and prosperity for mankind. While the individual groups may have some inklings of how to bring about the Awakening, none has all the parts or the power to make it happen. This does not keep them from experimenting, sometimes with disastrous psychic backlash on the experimenters. They have had some successes. Potential riot situations have been quelled by pre-emptive dreams laid onto a population, juries have been manipulated, local elections swayed and so on. They have also driven people mad, caused UFO scares and mass hysteria on occasion, though these were unintended consequences or side effects completely unrelated to the desired effect.

Their problem is that results vary even when identical circumstances are repeated, making it difficult to actually learn anything new from the process.

**Requirements:**

Forte on Fate (Dreamer)  
Personality (non-violent), 1+ levels  
Fate of 5+

**Benefits:**

Friend (other Pagans)  
Pagan knowledge base



# EABA



**Vikings(Elite)** - The Vikings are a more pessimistic type of pagans along with a handful of Jungian philosophers and some heretic Buddhist warrior monks. They feel the only thing that keeps the old gods at bay is Nocturne. If all

humanity gains full access to the Nocturne, they feel that all the energy pent up in the Apocrypha in the form of deities and supernatural beings will be released. Whether this is really supernatural forces or just a manifestation of the collective unconsciousness of man is open to debate, but the Vikings think the result will be Ragnarok, the war of the gods. Invested with power over thousands of years, these beings will far outstrip the capabilities of any Dreamer and can wreak havoc in the Nocturne on a scale that is difficult to imagine. Some feel that this level of power could even breach directly into the Materia and cause a disruption in the fabric of reality that would end the world.

In life, Vikings are sworn to watch for those who would bring about the Awakening and prevent it by *any means necessary*. In death, they have chosen Valhalla, where they will wait for an Awakening they hope never arrives. But if it does, they are sworn to defend the Materia against any assault from the Nocturne, and to drive all other Apocryphal forces back to whatever realm they came from.

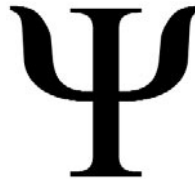
As a group, Vikings will tend to use Materia and Nocturne in equal proportion, using their strengths where their enemies are weakest.

### Requirements:

Personality (loyal to Viking ideals), 2+ levels  
Threading skill roll of 4d+0 or better  
A weapon or combat skill roll of 4d+0 or better  
Fate of 4+

### Benefits:

Friend (other Vikings past and present)  
Viking knowledge base



**The Psilent Pservice(Elite)** - This is not really the group's name, but a general term its members use to describe each other. These are the handful of Dreaming agents that the major govern-

ments of the world have at their disposal. This is of course *extremely* secret, and in some cases unofficial. For instance, the Secret Service does not know that the National Security Agency keeps a round-the-clock Dreaming watch on the President. They protect his meetings from Dreaming eavesdroppers, and coincidentally eavesdrop themselves to gain advance knowledge of potential budget cuts and other problems.

The United States Pservice had its formal origins in the 1950's after CIA experiments in heightened psychic awareness and telepathic spying. The lone CIA employee who knew of the experiments and who was also a Dreamer used this acceptance of the paranormal to introduce Dreaming to the agency, which quickly led to recruitment for and formalization of the Pservice. Prior to this, the United States had no formal Pservice, only the occasional field operative with limited Dreaming ability. Such agents kept this talent to themselves, lest they be pulled from active duty for "psychological evaluation".

Some countries have no Pservice members, or only one (and who would he or she tell about Dreaming?). China and India, which might be expected to have a large Pservice, actually have less than the United States, China because of an official denouncement of the supernatural, and India because of biases in the caste system. However, France actually has more Pservice Dreamers than the United States. The former Soviet Union had more than the United States as well, but most of them have since left the country and been hired by third world nations who want to expand their own Pservice presence.

The various pservices operate with much the same philosophy as their parent governments. Dictatorships use them to spy and oppress. The United States uses its pservice mostly in a defensive fashion, and the French pservice does a lot of industrial espionage. One thing the United States Pservice excels at is protecting government secrets. Through public records, private databases and the Echelon surveillance net, an agent who spots a spying Dreamer can upon awaking create a picture of the Dreamer, and cross-reference this with attitude and mannerisms to generate a list of potential people that Dreamer might be in the Materia.

Armed with this, a further investigation of the suspect(s) will determine if they are indeed Dreamers. Then a decision on what legal and extra-legal means can be used to dissuade that person from further espionage attempts can be made. The exact level of acceptable dissuasion varies with the government in question...

Dreamers who pass an extremely thorough security check may actually be recruited as freelance agents (the Secretary will disavow all knowledge of your actions...), while others can be sidetracked, misled or discredited by any number of well-established but bogus organizations or schemes.

The various Pservices are consistent in that they feel the Awakening would cause too much civil disruption and loss of vital services, as well as opening the vaults on all the dirty little secrets they have been keeping for decades. So, what little cooperation there is between Pservices is usually sharing of information about attempts to bring about the Awakening, or groups or individuals actively researching this topic. Rogue Dreamers who operate across international boundaries are also a topic of discussion, but this depends on the current state of diplomatic relations between the countries and any *quid pro quo* that needs to be established.

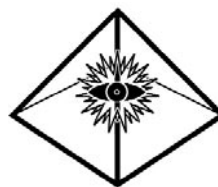
#### Requirements:

Two levels of limited Status (government rank)  
 No subversive criminal record  
 Personality (loyalty to Pservice), 2+ levels  
 Personality (loyalty to government), 1+ levels  
 Fate of 5+

#### Benefits:

Friend (the Pservice)  
 Access to secret Government records  
 Possible international cooperation

## Nocturne



**Illuminati(Elite)** - The Illuminati are the wealthy and powerful who are also powerful Dreamers, or who believe in Dreaming and have powerful Dreamers at their disposal.

Dreaming is used to get information on competitors, make secret deals to circumvent stock market or anti-trust regulations, give nightmares to opponents, or dig up blackmail tidbits on government officials who might try to hinder "business as usual".

In Nocturne, the Illuminati simply extend their tactics and business practices from the Materia. Nocturne is just another way to do business, with its advantages and limitations. Before the advent of radio, it was used to make fortunes in commodity markets through advance knowledge of shortages or surpluses in distant places. No one has yet found a way to charge for dreams, or deliver product through Nocturne, so its direct uses in the modern world are limited.

The Illuminati like the *status quo* and see no need for an Awakening that might influence their Nocturnal and Materia arrangements. Each member of the Illuminati generally has a number of powerful Dreamers at their disposal, both as sentries, bodyguards, spies and enforcers. Nocturnal security around an Illuminati is at least as tight as Materia security, and without any legal restraint, the threat and use of force are common means of making a point. The various Pservices are quite aware of the Illuminati, but have enough problems keeping Illuminati agents out of government secrets, much less mounting any sort of offensive against them.

There is an unspoken agreement to stay out of each other's Nocturnal business. The government's Dreamers don't mess with the Illuminati unless they try to affect national security (which *does* include industrial espionage), and the Illuminati don't pry into government secrets. There is the occasional cooperation between an individual Illuminati and his own government's Pservice on matters of mutual interest, but it is limited entirely to that matter and is only with one member, not the Illuminati as a whole.

The double-dealing, power-seeking nature of Illuminati members makes them ideally suited for being Enlightened, but the two groups have opposite agendas regarding the Awakening. As a result, they hate each other with a passion and actively seek to thwart the other group's activities just on general principle. If either group operated by itself, it would be extremely powerful, perhaps completely dominating Nocturne. As is, neither group can reliably annihilate the other, and their machinations reduce each other's power to simply a dangerous rather than staggeringly dangerous level.

The Illuminati were recently dealt a serious blow by the Others, who used their Materia agents to completely flatten a major office building during a meeting of high ranking Illuminati. Secret evidence revealing the existence and nature of the Others was to be revealed, but the meeting was canceled at the last minute for unknown reasons. Only the person with the knowledge ended up dying, but the Others had a contingency plan that has the Illuminati suspecting both their own numbers and the Enlightened. This tit-for-tat feuding has caused a number of casualties, both personally and in a global financial sense, much to the delight of the Others.

**Requirements:**

Three levels of limited Status (business leader)  
Business-related skill roll of 6d+0 or more  
Increased Wealth, 4+ levels  
Personality (ruthless), 2+ levels  
Personality (pragmatic), 2+ levels  
Enemy (the Enlightened)  
Fate of 5+

**Benefits:**

Wealth and power are their own rewards...

**The Enlightened (Redeemers) -**

There are those who think the Awakening will bring about a global consciousness, and those who think it will release the supernatural from the Apocrypha. The Enlightened think both, and neither. They want to be the focus for an Awakening that they believe will do both. When funneled through them, it will allow *their* will to control the energies of the Apocrypha, and use it to dominate the will of mankind. They call themselves the Enlightened. Everyone else calls them "devil worshippers", out of a mistaken belief they are making bargains with less savory Apocryphal entities to gain secular power. While some of them might, this isn't their focus.

The Enlightened are vicious, ruthless, pragmatic and constantly fighting each other for dominance. Each wants to be the alpha when the Awakening comes, or to at least be the favored servant of a powerful master. They have amassed a great deal of info about how to bring about the Awakening, but they suffer from their internal dissent and the non-repeatability of their experiments (much like the Pagans).

The Enlightened are much more willing to experiment without regard for the consequences, so their collective database is larger and might actually generate useful information, if the various Enlightened would share more data with each other. They share enough to be useful to each other, but not enough to let anyone amass enough knowledge to gain a superior position in the pecking order.

The Enlightened know and use the full power of Dreaming to generate wealth and positions of power for themselves, using their own Dreaming and that of their followers to do whatever is required to get the desired result. Often, the results of Dreaming are used to provide information for followers in the Materia to do the dirty work. Theft, extortion, blackmail and even murder are common tools of the more powerful Enlightened, and all of them guard themselves against these threats quite carefully. While their ability to track down Dreamers is not as technologically sophisticated or speedy as the United States Pservice, its brutality, intimidation and access to credit information does a passable job for locating any Dreamer who does not carefully cover their tracks. Any Dreamer is a potential resource for them, so killing other Dreamers is not the preferred tactic. Fear, intimidation and coercion are the usual tools in the Enlightened arsenal.

At first glance, an Enlightened might pass for an Illuminati. Secure, powerful, wealthy and arrogant. However, an Enlightened's wealth and power are usually far more concentrated on the individual rather than a corporate structure, their power is far more likely to include secular power, and the power and wealth have a greater chance of being hereditary rather than earned. For instance, the self-made billionaire owner of a software company might be an Illuminati. A seven-term Congressman from a very wealthy family or the hereditary sultan of a small country would be more likely to be an Enlightened.

#### Requirements:

Three levels of limited Status (political figure)  
 Dreaming-related skill roll of 4d+0 or more  
 Increased Wealth, 4+ levels  
 Personality (ruthless), 2+ levels  
 Personality (pragmatic), 2+ levels  
 Enemy (the Illuminati)  
 Fate of 6+

#### Benefits:

Wealth and power are their own rewards...



**The Priesthood (Elite)** - After the global cataclysm that brought about the decline of the Others and the end of the Age of Heroes, there were no sane Dreamers left. Those who survived with some fragments of reason intact sought to record what they knew of what happened. But for peoples without writing, this had to be done in the form of oral tradition, and Weaves that conveyed feelings and sensations and symbolic imagery. Over the literally *thousands* of generations that passed before true literacy became available, most of the meaning and deeper truths were lost or imperfectly passed on, what we call "geomythology", the turning of real-world events into exaggerated or distorted myths. What remained became the legacy of the strongest Dreamers of their day, the Egyptians of the Old Kingdom, codified as best they could in the Book of the Dead and the Paths of the Underworld. It was the priesthood of the Egyptians who first wrote down the concepts we refer to as "true names", and who first understood that Nocturnal immortality could be gained through the physical recording and preservation of the artifacts of life, what modern Dreamers refer to as Icons, but in a form far more powerful.

## Nocturne

*Properly preserved, the body of a Dreamer and their life history on the walls of their tomb can act as a focus to allow the essence of that person to return of their own volition to Nocturne from its Apocrypha. Dead but uncorrupted, they are betwixt and between. Similarly, by destroying that body and defacing the life history written on the tomb walls, that person can be forever banished to their Apocrypha, never to trouble living Dreamers again.*

The Priesthood are those small minority of Dreamers who follow the old beliefs and ways. They study the Book of the Dead with all the devotion of a Biblical scholar, and work in the Materia to make sure that upon their passing, they have the best chance possible of remaining a presence in Nocturne. The most powerful of the Priesthood are revered as minor gods in their own right, very powerful Shadows that surpass lesser Entities, can summon magical energies capable of being detected in Materia, and who have near-fanatic followers to help further whatever agenda that Shadow was pursuing in life. These followers are also responsible for preserving and protecting the preserved remains and life record of that person, since without these, they would lose most if not all of their Nocturnal power.

Politically speaking, the Priesthood likes things they way they are. They do not actively support or oppose any group that doesn't bother them. Their knowledge base in the form of ancient Dreamers is far greater than that of the Apple Tree, but is much less worldly. As an insular group, they know a great deal about themselves and their past (including humanity's most distant past), but do not know, care to investigate or help groups or individuals that cannot advance the Priesthood's goals.

They are perhaps the only group of humans aside from Crom's monks that has any significant knowledge of the Others, but they have not seen fit to share that knowledge and perhaps do not even care, so long as the Others stay out of their way. The members of the Priesthood are also the most likely group to have members capable of breaching into Materia with "magical" abilities, though this level of talent may take decades of study to manifest at detectable levels.

# EABA

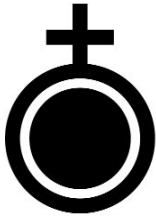
By and large, they are fanatical but harmless... unless you have (or worse, *are*) something that they need or *think* they need, at which point they will move Heaven and Earth to acquire it.

## Requirements:

Personality (fanatically devoted), 4+ levels  
Ancient history skill roll of 5d+0 or better  
Two Dreaming-related skill rolls of 4d+0 or better  
Fate of 7+

## Benefits:

Friends among the Priesthood  
Access to the talent pool and knowledge of other members



**Gaeani(Redeemers)** - The Gaeani believe that Awakenings have already happened, but we have simply misinterpreted the signs. They believe that upon an Awakening, Materia, Nocturne and Apocrypha become one, and *all* Dreamers

ascend to a higher form of being, becoming their own separate universe forever separated from our own, an eternal higher consciousness of pure thought. A difficult to prove hypothesis, and since there is no evidence to support it, most Dreamers see the Gaeani as gullible, misguided, nutcases, or all three.

Gaeani believe that each of the great geologic extinction events was actually an Awakening for one or more species that were the dominant Dreamers of that time. Even species that modern paleontologists consider primitive, the Gaeani feel might have been complex enough to Dream and have a sense of community and culture. What geologists see as meteor impact craters or giant calderas, Gaeani see as ancient Awakening sites, the places where Materia life ended, and eternal life began.

The most devoted Gaeani think that the Materia and Apocrypha are the spiritual equivalents of matter and antimatter, and to directly connect the two will not only cause the Awakening, a sustained connection will provide the energy to power it. The fact that this energy will cause massive amounts of Materia destruction and possibly the extinction of mankind is not really a concern. The Dreamers will survive, and the non-Dreamers exist only to help bring about that final ascension.

While the Gaeani have a clear vision of what will bring about the Awakening, they have no clear means of making it happen, and therefore have extreme variations in the details of their beliefs. Like all the other Redeemer factions, they experiment, explore and keep their ears open for information that will help them in their quest. In Materia, the Gaeani operate mostly as various cults. They have a fair number of Materia operatives and devotees, with varying degrees of knowledge of the true goals of the group. The financial resources of the cult members support the Dreamers in charge of that particular cult, allowing the Dreamers to spend as much time as possible in their spiritual quest. Cult leaders are generally skilled at manipulating the dreams of their followers, and have been known to "program" members to perform certain tasks in the Materia, especially illegal tasks that they do not want directly linked to the Gaeani.

It is worth noting that most of the "mainstream" religions will have "discredited" offshoots that operate in many ways like the Gaeani. While Dreamers in these fringe religions may have abilities that they attribute to divine intervention (like prophecy or speaking in tongues) these are not actually Dreamer groups. However, it may take some investigation to find this out, which can sidetrack adventurers away from what they are really looking for...

## Requirements:

Three levels of increased Wealth  
Personality (Messianic complex), 4+ levels  
Forte on Will (charismatic)  
Skill roll on personal beliefs of 5d+0 or better  
Fate of 6+

## Benefits:

Freedom to do what you want...  
Devoted followers



▼ **ALLIES & ENEMIES** - Humans are not the only species that Dreams. Others do as well, but few of them are actually Dreamers. Some have proportionately more Dreamers than mankind. We have a natural affinity or antipathy to these species that is thousands of years old and lodged deep in our collective unconscious. When these beliefs are not completely uniform, one wonders if it is truly a case of the species being allied with mankind, or whether some group of mankind has allied itself with a species that ultimately cares little for us?

**Cats** - It is unknown how many thousands of years ago that cats joined the households of mankind. Perhaps they lurked outside the campfires at night in search of warmth, or perhaps some kits were brought home by a hunter after the mother was killed, and gosh, they were just too darned cute to put on the spit with the rest of dinner. Either way, they have ingratiated themselves into our daily lives, and see us as some combination of mother, child, friend and companion. The ancient Egyptians revered cats and gave them their own goddess and special status in society, and traces of that linger on to this day. Dreaming cats have their own small Apocrypha, a place mankind would find both interesting and disturbing to visit, but a place which suits felines perfectly.

Those who do not Dream are still aware that cats somehow have a special link to mankind. Those who do not understand or resent this link may consider cats an evil influence, and there were many periods in history where cats were persecuted and ownership of a cat was considered very suspect. Many of these times coincided with a rise in the Nocturnal presence of rats and other rodents, to mankind's peril.

Among cats that live with humans, there are a disproportionately high number of Dreamers, and since they sleep most of the day and night, cats Dream a lot. A household with a Dreaming cat is safer from outside interference than one without, especially from the predation of rodents both real and Nocturnal. Once a cat has established a territory in the Materia, it can roam it at will in Nocturne. So, even if locked in a house, it can explore and hunt outside in Nocturne, only needing to go outside in the Materia if there is something threatening (or tasty!) that requires its physical presence.

## Nocturne

Many cats have the characteristic of being Waking Dreamers. They see the Nocturne even when they are awake. When your cat suddenly wakes up and runs yowling into another room, or bats furiously at an empty spot on the wall, it is because they see things that you do not.

As natural hunters and hedonistic little monsters, they work to protect their safe environment and the people who maintain it for them. Both awake and asleep they keep rodents at bay, and a Dreaming cat is an extra layer of protection against threats to that part of the Weave.



### Dreaming Cat

Strength: -2d+0

Agility: 2d+0

Awareness: 1d+0

Health: 1d+0

Will: 1d+2

Fate: 1d+1

### Skills:

Strike (0d+1 lethal): +1d

Stealth: +1d

Threading: +0d

### Abilities:

Dreamer (Fate Forte)

Running (Health Forte)

Unlike Dreaming dogs, Dreaming cats have some instinctive Threading ability. A Dreaming cat can make itself appear (and be) far more menacing in Nocturne than it is in Materia.

**Dogs** - The domestication of the dog is probably more ancient than that of cats, and may have occurred in much the same way. But dogs, being larger and more oriented to a group social structure, found their use as active helpers of mankind rather than independent agents like the cats. Shepherding, hunting and guarding are roles they readily take to under human supervision, but if left only to the company of themselves, even the best-trained or well-mannered dogs can revert far too quickly into a menace rather than a boon to mankind.

All breeds of dogs (and wolves) are capable of Dreaming, but are not that powerful. Left to themselves, their Dreaming tends to revolve around the roles they were trained or bred to do. A rat-hunter will Dream of hunting rats, a shepherd will guard its flock, a guard dog will protect its owner or territory, and so on.

Dogs view their owners as part of their pack or family, and the protection of the pack is a strong instinct, whether awake or Dreaming. Unlike a cat, a dog powerful enough to Dream can and often will accompany the Dreamer, and will operate on some combination of instinct and obedience, depending on how well it was trained.



### Dreaming Dog

Strength: 2d+0  
Agility: 1d+1  
Awareness: 1d+0  
Health: 1d+1  
Will: 0d+2  
Fate: 1d+0

### Skills:

Bite (1d+0 half-lethal): +1d  
Sensing: +1d

### Abilities:

Dreamer (Fate Forte)  
Running (Health Forte)

Dogs use Sensing as a form of tracking, replacing the Materia sense of smell. Dogs can use this ability more or less at will, without having to spend a lot of time at it. This makes them good guardians, as they can sometimes spot things immediately, while a human Dreamer would take several minutes to Sense something.

The relationship between dogs and cats is a jealous one. Dogs are not as powerful Dreamers, but are more powerful physically. A Dreaming cat can abuse a Dreaming dog (and often does so just for fun), and the dogs tend to return the favor in the Materia. If raised together, dogs and cats can get along in both Materia and Nocturne, and will protect each other and their household quite well.

**Rats** - Humans and rodents share too many characteristics to be allied forces. Both will expand to consume all available resources without thought for the future, they will destroy the environment they need to live in, and engage in selfish or fratricidal behavior for the smallest of short-term gains. The presence of rodents cuts into mankind's ability to engage in these behaviors, and so men and rats have been enemies since the day the first rat started nibbling the first food a human set aside for a rainy day.

Not many rats Dream, but there are a *lot* of rats, and Dreaming rats do the same thing as Materia rats. They chew, despoil and destroy. While these actions have no direct result in the Materia, they can influence the probability or severity of negative events at that location. A building infested with rats not only has their Materia presence causing problems, but the Dreaming rats also increase the chance of disease, fire and other disruptions caused by their Nocturnal activities. Rats may Weave small, but they Weave constantly and in great numbers.

Human Dreamers find it easy to manipulate Dreaming rats to do their bidding (so long as it involves doing what they normally do), and a concentration of them can cause considerable harm in both Nocturne and Materia.



### Dreaming Rat

Strength: -2d+0  
Agility: 1d+0  
Awareness: 1d+0  
Health: 1d+2  
Will: 1d+1  
Fate: 1d+0

### Skills:

Bite (0d+1 lethal): +1d

### Abilities:

Dreamer (Fate Forte)

While there are rat "deities", there is no intelligent Apocryphal force to guide rats. Rather, a Dreaming rat is just a smarter and more cunning member of its kind, and more likely to breed and have Dreaming offspring. Like most animals, a Dreaming rat sticks to Nocturnal turf it has explored in the Materia, so the best defense against rats both real and Nocturnal is a good cat or dog. Cats are better at keeping their Nocturnal presence at bay, and encouraging their Materia presence to go elsewhere, while dogs are much better at simply killing their Materia presence and getting rid of the problem entirely.

**Reptiles** - Mankind has an antipathy to reptiles (and especially serpents) that extends back to our most ancient history. The fall from grace in the Garden of Eden is brought about by evil personified by a serpent. The worm Ouroboros is a serpent, and dragons in Western history and legend are seen as evil that threatens all that is good in the world. When we think of large reptiles, we think of poisonous snakes, crocodiles, velociraptors and other creatures imbued with a vicious cunning and complete disregard for our fragile human lives. Whether or not this is really the case is not the point. Most of us have a simultaneous fascination for and repulsion of reptiles (odds are you never tried to scare a younger sibling with a rubber koala). Such has always been and always will be the case.

Snakes especially are seen as ancient, and sometimes wise, for they shed their skins and seem renewed each year, giving them an aspect of regeneration and immortality. The truth is far more sinister.

Very few reptiles are Dreamers, they simply lack the will and intellect needed. Those that do Dream are the larger varieties such as very large snakes, alligators and crocodiles, and these can be extremely dangerous, more so in the Materia than the Nocturne. In Nocturne, a Dreaming reptile can receive simple guidance from the primal Apocryphal forces of reptile-kind. These may be known in human terms by ancient names like Seth, Typhon, or Da, but they are far older than that. The age of reptiles lasted some millions of years, and while no truly intelligent species developed, some came close before their extinction. Over those millions of years before mankind's ancestors were even born, these reptiles and their Dreamers built up a staggering amount of Apocryphal force, a force that has seen no renewal since the cataclysm that ended their era over sixty million years ago. By the time humans arrived on the scene, this energy was nearly gone, but it still existed, and in its own way resented mankind's rising star. The personification of the reptile psyche still works in its slow and subtle way to harm mankind whenever possible. Reptiles are not truly a threat to mankind. They will not bring about or thwart the Awakening, nor cause massive harm to Sleepers or Dreamers. But, the anger and spite is still there, and when forces can be manipulated to cause harm, even if only to a single person, the opportunity will be taken.

## Nocturne

▼ **Note** - There are exceptions with potentially interesting complications. For instance, numerous South Pacific cultures have tales where their people originated from snake ancestors or from the marriage of women and snakes. Worship of the snake deity Manasa also remains in India. And while western dragons are generally the sort that like to eat damsels, oriental dragons are forces of balance and justice. Some of the things Dreamers think of as reptiles in Nocturne may simply be Entities of some Apocryphal force.

An important thing to remember about any animal capable of Dreaming is that they are *not* intelligent. They act on instinct and training. They are capable of cunning, sometimes alarmingly so if directed by an outside force, but a person should be capable of out-thinking one in any situation where there is actually time to think. Getting outsmarted by an animal can be embarrassing, fatal or both.

**Things ancient and sleeping** - As an option for a campaign, the idea of ancient reptiles can be taken a step farther. What if reptiles *did* achieve sentience during their eons of dominating the Earth? And their extinction was brought about by a failed Awakening, much like the one that happened to the Others. With the Dreaming reptiles gone, all that remains are their Apocryphal forces, deities of beings long extinct. Deities who have slept millions of years waiting for a sentient mind to cross their threshold. *And now we have.* For the past several thousand years we have trod across their doorstep by accident or design. Like all reptiles, they are slow to awake, but we have finally gotten their attention.

*And they don't like us much.*

They cannot breach to the Materia, or bring about the Awakening, but they can work through us *so that we bring about our own destruction.* And then they will go to sleep again, hopefully to awake to the tread of scaled feet on their Apocryphal doorsteps.

To this end, they will grant boons and powers from their remaining store of power, while their Entities prowl Nocturne. Forms aliens to the mind of Man stalk the dark places, and even the denizens of Hell do not cross their path, for they are older, wiser and scarier than any demon from the pits of Hell.

This can make for an interesting campaign, for not only are their competing problems that will demand the adventurer's attention. Those who are bitter foes regarding the Awakening may be unlikely allies against the workings of the ancient reptile gods.

**Other Animals** - Those animals previously mentioned are the main Dreamers, though there are rarely Dreamers among other higher species. In particular, there may be many Dreamers among the porpoises and whales, but their Dreaming is of an alien kind and they seldom leave the Nocturnal oceans. In centuries past there were more equine Dreamers, though their numbers have diminished in recent times. If an adventurer wants to have a Dreaming animal companion of a non-standard type, the gamemaster will have to come up with background material appropriate to the animal.

**Animals and Apocrypha** - Few or no animals have the strength of will to return to Nocturne from the Apocrypha. For those who believe, there are afterlives for companion animals where what remains of their essence is cared for or merges with some larger entity. For cats, this would be the goddess Bastet, a force that has waned greatly since Egyptian times, but who still exists. Others believe that they will be reunited with their companions in whatever afterlife they go to. Likewise, dogs have their own Apocryphal place. Rats and reptiles are beloved by few, and whatever essence they have largely dissipates upon their death, often temporarily polluting the Weave at the spot of their demise. Those of exceptional power are drawn to the primal Apocrypha that this power came from, to be recycled eventually into another of their kind.

▼ **THE OTHERS** - Humans did not always have a distrust, fear or hatred of those who were physically different, whose skin, eyes, hair or other features were unlike those we grew up with. How ethnic hatreds came to be is one of humanity's oldest and most tragic stories.

All humans are descended from one common ancestral *homo sapiens*. Many thousands of years ago, our ancestral Eve became the genetic mother to all humanity. Something in her and her children was aggressive, inquisitive and creative enough to outcompete all other human offshoots, eventually driving them into extinction.

*Or so it is thought.* The Neanderthals were the last competitors to modern humanity, co-existing for many thousands of years with our ancestors. They were known to our ancestors simply as the "Others". The Others were very powerful Dreamers, using Nocturne for their philosophical and cultural achievements. In groups, they were powerful enough to affect the Materia in small ways, but not enough to protect them from the ravages of the expanding population of an aggressive *homo sapiens*. In desperation, the Other Dreamers strove to break down the barriers between Nocturne, Materia and Apocrypha, knowing that in such a world, their power as Dreamers would be unmatched. This was no casual undertaking, but a lifetime of concerted work by the most powerful of their Dreamers. The earliest human Dreamers got wind of this plot, and worked through dreams to recruit bands of heroes to journey to what is now Indonesia and confront the Other Dreamers where they were weakest...the real world.

In a world where animals had yet to be domesticated and maps were non-existent, a journey by foot of some thousands of kilometers took years, and the heroes were assailed both by day and in their dreams. Still, some made it the Other's jungle lair in time to disrupt the final ceremony. The delicate balance of power the Others worked a lifetime on shaping went awry at a critical moment approximately eighty thousand years ago. The *uncontrolled* intersection of Materia, Nocturne and Apocrypha only lasted a moment, but caused an explosion which left a crater over a hundred kilometers across. The dust and seawater blown into the equatorial jet streams covered the globe, causing a catastrophic year-long winter. For hunter-gatherers who did not store food for any length of time, it was more terrible than could be imagined.

*It was the end of the world.* Many vibrant communities perished under blankets of ash, or through slow and terrible starvation under an uncaring gray sky whose only rain was bitter and black. They are only remembered through the cries of their Dreamers, filtered through the blasted psyche of those Dreamers who did survive, and then to oral legends handed down uncounted times.

Worldwide, only several thousand *homo sapiens* and several hundred Neanderthals survived. The Dreamers that survived the blast and the winter and the famine were hopelessly insane for the rest of their lives. Their babbling recollections continued in oral tradition for countless generations and are the basis for any number of legendary themes that survive to the present day. The idea that death in service of a cause is heroic, the legends of monsters swallowing the sun, lost continents of wizards sunk into the sea, and seeming eternal punishment for the actions of one's forefathers, all come from this ancient event and its permanent effect on the human psyche.

From this global holocaust, *homo sapiens* recovered faster than the Others, and though none remembered the nature of the ancient hatred, they felt it nonetheless.

*The Others were different.*

*The Others were bad.*

*That which was different was bad.*

The Others were driven into remote regions by the expanding numbers of humanity, until most of them were driven into extinction. The last major settlements of the Others were wiped out about ten thousand years ago. The few survivors interbred with *homo sapiens* or disappeared into regions that are so remote and inhospitable that they would be the last place on earth anyone would want to live.

*They survive yet today.* There are pure Others living in the remotest regions of the world's highest mountain ranges, having adapted over the millennia to heights that humans cannot survive at. They cannot pass among humans unnoticed. They are different in a way that transcends physical appearance. An Other among humans would either be fled from in terror or torn to bits by a mob within minutes, an ancient reaction coded in the genes of the survivors of that holocaust. We can sense that they are different, and *wrong*. The pure Others have little technology and few ways to acquire it, make it or learn from it. They simply remain in their mountain caves and view the world through the lens of the Nocturne.

Half-breed Others inhabit remote areas, usually in close proximity to the pure strain. Humans and Others *can* interbreed, and the pure Others have fathered half-breed children by force or subterfuge to act as their agents in the Materia. Over the generations, the male part of this Other gene mix has worked its way through the human population, so large groups of people may share a portion of it.

Those who have a larger portion are the unlucky ethnic groups who are singled out for persecution for no apparent reason. They are just unconsciously seen as "bad" by their neighbors, and will face lifelong discrimination and mistreatment for reasons beyond their control. This discrimination can be overcome with effort by strong-willed individuals, but getting society as a whole to overcome it is probably impossible.

Those with the blood in the remote mountain villages shun outsiders and worship or revere the Others. It is from these villages that the Others get materials and news from the outside world.

The Others are still active, and hate humanity as much as humanity hates them. The Other Dreamers are extremely powerful, but subtle and reclusive. They will work in concert to affect a single important place or individual, and through that person or place wreak as much havoc on humanity as possible. They prey upon our distrust of others, magnifying it until it becomes obsessive. Between Hitler and Stalin, they killed millions. They kept Stalin on a psychopathic binge for decades, and used Nocturne to ferret out anyone who might be a threat to him. More millions died, and the Others came close to starting a nuclear exchange on several occasions in the Cold War era.

Even in Nocturne, very few know of the existence of the Others and fewer speak of it. The Priesthood knows of the Others, but only in an academic sense, with little or no current knowledge of Other whereabouts and activities. The Others take *great* pains to avoid human Dreamers, at least in situations where the Dreamers would be expected to survive the encounter. If they need to move about where they can be seen in Nocturne, they are masters of altering their appearance, though Dreamers and especially Dreaming dogs will still have a diffuse, unquantifiable "bad feeling" around them. If they take human guise in Nocturne, it is often as an unusually ill-tempered and obnoxious individual, which does an excellent job of masking the inherent human reaction to them (since there are plenty of obnoxious jerks in Nocturne to blend in with). If threatened, Others will usually flee, but if forced into a Nocturnal fight, can be extremely powerful. If someone is a persistent problem to the Others, agents will be sent in Materia to take care of the problem once the Dreamer in question is located. The usual assassination method is a poisoned dart, though with modern medical technology this isn't as certain as it used to be. Overkill with high explosives is simple and reliable, and the Others are *not* worried about collateral damage, nor about the survival of the person carrying the high explosives. Some unknown proportion of suicide bombers are actually agents of the Others sent to target key Dreamers...

The long term goals of the Others have little to do with the Awakening. The racial memories of their failed attempt are so powerful that they cannot even discuss the topic amongst themselves. As powerful Dreamers, their paths may intersect the other groups at times, but they cannot be steered one way or the other.

▼ **THE COMMUNITY OF DREAMERS** - There are some tens of thousands of Dreamers in the world, perhaps hundreds of thousands if you count those who only rarely manage the feat or don't remember that they Dream. This is a lot of people, but they are spread very thin. Ten thousand spread around the world is only a bit more than one in a million. A hundred thousand Dreamers around the world is still only a group of about one hundred forty in a city of ten million.

Dreamers *are* more highly represented in less-developed nations, though their effects tend to be more local and these Dreamers do not tend to wander as far from their homes as first world Dreamers. It is not that aboriginal peoples or less developed nations have some inherent spiritual superiority. It is just that without the pressures on and choices available to a first world resident, the subtle and faint nuances of Dreaming are more readily detected and practiced. Not that subsistence farming in a drought-prone region undergoing a civil war is any fun, but without electricity, most of our modern passive forms of entertainment cannot exist, leaving time for the mind to follow its own path.

While Dreamers are spread thin, distance is not a major problem for most Dreamers, and time is an inconvenience that can be worked around. If a Dreamer does not have access to a Created form of rapid transport, they can always hitch a Nocturnal ride to the airport and settle down in an unoccupied seat. Or for that matter, ride on the wings. A one thousand kilometer an hour breeze on your face is only a problem in Nocturne if you *allow* it to bother you...

To get a better feel for the community of Dreamers, imagine a cosmopolitan place like New York City, and select one hundred thousand people at random, about one percent of the population. This group of people will be a microcosm of humanity, with the occasional statistical glitch caused by the relatively small sample size. There will be the appallingly rich and the abjectly poor, the powerful and the powerless, geniuses and dropouts, old and young, those who are natural allies, and those who hate each other for reasons real and imagined. Random chance might select two members of the same family, or among identical twins, one might be a Dreamer, and the other not.

With the exception of children, who are either under-represented among Dreamers or who more readily forget their Dreaming, this sample is about what the adventurers are part of. Here is how Dreamers break down for some of the major nations and population blocks if you assume a world Dreaming population of about one person in one hundred thousand. Figures do not exactly come out to one in one hundred thousand, because some countries have both a higher or lower percentage of children, and because of cultural considerations that might affect the overall incidence of Dreamers in that culture (particularly lower in China, India and Russia).

Country	Population	Dreamers
United States	≈285,000,000	≈2,200
China	≈1,260,000,000	≈1,900
India	≈1,000,000,000	≈1,330
Brasil	≈175,000,000	≈1,250
Japan	≈127,000,000	≈1,100
Germany	≈82,000,000	≈690
Mexico	≈100,000,000	≈660
Russia	≈146,000,000	≈600
Italy	≈58,000,000	≈550
France	≈60,000,000	≈480
Great Britain	≈60,000,000	≈480
Canada	≈31,000,000	≈250
Australia	≈19,000,000	≈180

It is a community of sorts, with neighborhoods composed of time zones and personalities. You might feel an affinity for the Pagans, but if your adventurer lives in Romania and the most active part of the Pagan community is in the western United States, you will rarely interact with them unless you schedule your life around it. It might be easier for you to simply move to where the Pagans are...

Along those lines, Dreamers who share common goals or beliefs are more likely to help their fellow Dreamers in Materia matters. In a practical sense, this means that Dreamers are not scattered randomly across the globe, but tend to cluster in small groups of similar interests whenever this is practical. This is added to by the fact that Dreaming does tend to run in families, though not in any way that Dreamers have been yet able to selectively breed for.

## Nocturne

**EXAMPLE:** Our Romanian Dreamer might be assisted in moving to the United States by a Pagan who runs a chain of New Age shops, and who can help the Romanian Dreamer get a work visa and a job at one of their stores.

While this is certainly an advantage for the cooperative groups, it also makes it easier for any enemies to target large chunks of that group. There are *former* groupings of Dreamers that no longer exist because they were taken out all at once by hitherto unknown enemies.

Groups (and individuals within groups) that dislike each other tend to keep their Materia presences as far from the other as possible, a sort of mutual fear of Materia interaction. Physical distance tends to reduce the chance that someone will just buy a gun, drive up to their enemy's house and start blazing away. Rather, groups of Dreamers who tend to hate each other for Materia reasons (like say Turks and Armenians) tend to despoil each other's Dreaming activities and send rude emails rather than engage in overt Materia actions. Casual Dreaming conflicts share a lot of characteristics with Internet flame wars.

Now, this sort of thing *does* happen, though usually as a matter of desperation or some other highly emotional response. Some of the more overtly nasty power groupings like the Illuminati will use Materia intimidation as a proactive measure, taking out potential problems before they become real problems, but even for ruthlessly self-centered groups, a live Dreamer is usually more of a potential resource than a liability. Being able to control and manipulate your enemies through their own members is to be preferred to killing them. This is especially the case if any of the Dreamers in question are powerful enough to return from their Apocrypha after death.



**THE APOCRYPHA**





And maybe, I'll find out

a way to make it back someday.

To watch you,

to guide you, through

the darkest of your days.

If a great wave shall fall,

fall upon us all;

Then I hope there's someone out there,

who can bring me back to you.

If I could, then I would,

I'll go wherever you will go.

- The Calling, Wherever You Will Go

▼ **THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY** - The Apocrypha and the Primal forces have been touched on earlier, but the details on the most important of these regions has been vague.

**Hell** - "Hell is knowing you have no one to blame but yourself..."

The idea of a special Apocrypha for "bad" people is a fairly recent development in human history. The earliest Apocrypha did not have this separation. Individuals singled out for eternal punishment got special treatment, like being chained down and having your liver torn out by an eagle each day and having it grow back each night (which was the punishment of Prometheus for repeatedly outwitting Zeus). But, there was no special separate place for miscreants as a group. Everyone went to the same place, and their status there depended on their status in life. Kings were kings after death, and peasants stayed peasants. Since most of us are "peasants" and we don't want to spend eternity that way, these Apocrypha have diminished in scope and importance, their primal forces waning and of little importance in the current affairs of mankind.

## Nocturne

Now we have Heaven and Hell. Hell is a concept that crosses many major religions and modern cultures, a place where the damned and the unbelievers suffer unspeakable torment for all eternity, and the place devils, demons and ultimate evil like to call home. Not surprisingly, Hell meets all human expectations. For those who follow a faith that mandates such a place, or even for those who don't care much one way or the other but were raised in such an environment, Hell is where you go when you die...if you believe you belong there. If you've been a bad person and think you're going to Hell...you are. When you get there, your chief torment will be realizing that you have no one to blame but yourself for your predicament.

Regret, remorse and pain are the nature of the place, and all who make it there are tainted by these traits. Perhaps fortunately, most souls are so stripped of identity by the transition to an Apocrypha that there is very little left to feel pain or remorse. So, there is significant effort made to getting a hold on powerful Dreamers who can remain capable of remembering and regretting...forever.

As an Apocrypha, Hell has a number of regions, depending on the exact nature of the Hell you believe in. Some parts of Hell are inescapable, once there, you are damned for all eternity. Some parts of are a sort of Apocryphal septic system, processing the damned through various stages of torment that eventually result in a purification that lets the poor sinner eventually reach Heaven. Ancient versions of Hell, such as the Greek underworld, are mostly empty these days, but can be used as a means to get from one part of Hell to another. *Dante's Inferno* is a good read for information on the nature and geography of a particular region of Hell. The information is attested to be fairly accurate, though how Dante got the information remains unknown.

The Primal Apocryphal force of Hell is known by various names, but we know him/her/it as Lucifer. Like the other Primal Apocrypha, Lucifer is constrained to his own domain and can only send Entities into Nocturne to cause mischief. The nature of Lucifer is that of a brilliant, beautiful and seductively appealing evil that masks an implacable jealousy and hatred of the mankind that shaped his image. Lucifer is evil created from good, never able to regain that former state of grace, and hating all because of it. Lucifer is eternal regret. Whatever your weakness is, Lucifer can find a way to exploit it. It may be to your short-term advantage, but always to Lucifer's long-term gain.

The Entities of Hell are known as devils, demons, or ifreet. Sometimes damned souls are given short reprieves and sent out on errands that would normally use a lower level Entity. Devils have a distinctive self-image, but can easily mask this and appear in many guises. They are always up to something rotten. It is their nature. *They can't help it.* They also are not all that fond of Hell, and will try their best to stay in Nocturne as long as possible, performing their duties carefully enough not to be forced back to Hell, and well enough that they would not be punished for malingering and taking advantage of the situation. A common task for Entities is to catch and return any Shadows who have escaped Hell. Anyone powerful enough to retain their identity in Hell is powerful enough to return to Nocturne and Lucifer seems unwilling or unable to exercise his will to prevent these escapes. So, several devils have a more or less permanent station in Nocturne, hunting down and "killing" escapees. As long as a particular devil remains loose in Nocturne, anyone it has killed is prevented from returning to Nocturne. There are a few isolated groups of Dreamers that run the "Underworld Railroad", providing assistance to Hell's escapees, and occasionally sending a devil back to Hell, which of course allows a whole batch of damned souls another chance to escape torment again. Since there seems to be an unlimited supply of devils, this is a constant struggle with alternating successes and reverses. Lucifer responds by using corrupted Dreamers to kill the Materia bodies of anyone who manages to kill a devil, thus freeing that devil from its banishment in Hell. *Doing good is sometimes risky business...*



**Heaven** - "For those who have been to Heaven, every place else is Hell..."

As long as there has been a place of eternal punishment, there has been a place of eternal reward. Heaven or Paradise are the most powerful of these Apocrypha. In this place, all bask in eternal awe of the Creator, lost in bliss and worship of a force so overwhelming it stuns the senses. It is a place of peace, warmth and eternal contentment. If they were not also overawed by the Creator, visitors would also find it unbelievably boring. Like Hell, most of Heaven's inhabitants are so stripped of identity by the time they reach there that all they are capable of are repetitive hosannas. Those who retain some sense of self-identity are largely overwhelmed by the pervasive presence of the Creator. This is probably a good thing, since it is the only way that people who would otherwise be at each other's throats in life could co-exist in Heaven. For instance, fundamentalist Christians, fundamentalist Jews and fundamentalist Muslims all share the same Heaven. Only the awe of the Creator is powerful enough to overcome Materia antipathies.

The Creator is the term the Primal Apocrypha of Heaven is known by. He, she or it did not actually create the universe, though it might believe it did. The Creator does embody some parts of all the Primal Apocrypha that somehow merged with Christianity or other monotheistic religions. Is it coincidence that Christmas falls at a time to compete with pagan winter solstice festivals? *Of course not.* As people would be drawn from one to another, some part of their beliefs would come with them. So in this sense, the Creator does embody the oldest elements of mankind's Apocryphal beliefs, making the Creator the oldest surviving *human* Apocryphal force (reptiles have one that is far older).

The Entities of Heaven are generally known as angels, though there may be a number of varieties of them. Archangels, seraphim, and so on. Specially favored Shadows would be known as Saints, and may have enough power to Weave temporary changes that can affect Materia (it's a miracle!). Angels are sent into Nocturne more rarely than devils are. The Creator seems less interested in interfering in mankind's affairs. Some think the Creator is simply saving their power for a final confrontation as predicted in the Revelation of Saint John, while others think the Creator has just become wrapped up in its own glory.

Shadows of sufficient strength can leave Heaven of their own accord, though like all Shadows they cannot actually describe what their Apocrypha is like except in the vaguest terms. They do remember that it was far better than anything Nocturne has to offer, and only a sense of mission or purpose prevents them from immediately returning to the divine fold. This longing to be reunited with the Creator is strong enough to overcome all but the strongest *Materia* ties the person might have had in life. Heaven's Shadows are of course overwhelmingly imbued with the attributes of Heaven, a sort of kind but just righteousness that can love and punish at the same time, a hatred of sin but love for the sinner. The personality of the Shadow remains the same, but some of their beliefs in life may have been irrevocably altered. They can still be humorous or witty, laugh at a joke or have a good time, but they will also seek justice, and despise evil to an alarming extent. The Creator has no objection to Shadows who come and go from Heaven, for by their nature they are doing the Creator's work, and the nature of Heaven is such that they will always long to return there.

**Reincarnation** - At some unknown time between conception and birth, a thinking creature develops its soul. Some Entities have the power to exchange this nascent soul for one from their Apocrypha, or to be there when the developing body first gains the potential to host a soul and put one of their choice into the empty vessel. For the vessel to survive the this process, the soul needs to be very weak. Normally, only those souls stripped of identity are used, but at times a shred of who they once were can remain.

Since souls spontaneously come into being, reincarnation is not really necessary. An Apocryphal power will sometimes grant the request of a Shadow who wishes to "try again", especially as a reward for faithful service. Less benign powers may use it in less charitable ways, trying to get a particularly evil soul back into circulation among the living, or punishing someone by giving them a short, unhappy life as a diseased rat or such.

Reincarnation is not really a game mechanic. Only the raw essence of the type of person you were is reincarnated, and of course, there is the lag time to consider, making it unlikely to occur in the course of a campaign.

## Nocturne

**The Abyss** - It is the Nocturnal embodiment of negative human emotions and desires taken to their extremes. It has no desires, intelligence, or will, but is just a cosmic tar pit that sucks in Dreamers. Like a black hole, it draws any in its vicinity closer and closer until they are trapped with no hope of escape. Any Dreamer in the grip of a powerful negative emotion or self-destructive urge may find they have reached the threshold of The Abyss if they are not extremely careful in their travels.

The threshold of the Abyss is populated with lost souls, Sleepers and Dreamers with haunted looks staring at an invisible boundary and occasionally crossing. Some come back, some don't. Others stare into nothingness and suddenly realize what they are doing, disappearing and never coming back. Others return again and again, until they finally cross. Few of those are ever seen again.

The Abyss beckons with the unspoken promise of knowledge or whatever the seeker wants to fulfill their emotional need. A way to salve an unchecked grief, ambition, greed or lust are the typical draws. If you find yourself at the threshold of the Abyss, it is a Challenging(9) Will task to avoid crossing the threshold, which only has a Fate cost of 1. Dreamers who lack the Fate to cross and fail the roll get another roll when they awake. Failing means the Dreamer will knowingly or subconsciously seek out the nearest *Materia* location that is a threshold to the Abyss, so that they will have the Fate needed to cross the threshold the next time the Abyss is encountered. Such locations are usually urban, with the highest possible concentrations of greed and despair.

If the Dreamer makes the threshold Will roll, or the second Will roll when they awake, they realize the folly of their emotional state and begin to make changes that pull them from the edge of the Abyss. They have looked into the Abyss, and not liked what they saw. Few of those who escape the Abyss ever find themselves there a second time.

A Dreamer who crosses the threshold to the Abyss is granted some boon. Knowledge that will help them, absolution or oblivion are typical. This boon also tempts them to go further. Even Dreamers who cross the threshold *without* an emotional handicap are tempted in this way, but they get a -2 to the difficulty of the roll. Each step grants more than the last, but each step also adds 1 to the difficulty of the Will task needed to pull back from the Abyss. Each failed attempt to exit the Abyss also adds 1 to the difficulty of future attempts.

A Dreamer can find themselves inextricably trapped in the Abyss, and such a person will lapse into a coma in the Materia until they are rescued, which may not even be possible. To rescue a Dreamer from the Abyss requires that someone else go in and "carry" the other Dreamer out. This is entirely a matter of will, no props such as ropes or gizmos are possible. The rescuer needs to make the same Will roll as the victim would, with the -2 to difficulty if their emotional state is balanced. Failing the rolls can trap the rescuer in the Abyss as well...

One whose body dies while they are trapped in the Abyss is forever lost. No part of that person survives the process or translates to another Apocrypha, they simply become part of the haunted despair that is the nature of the Abyss.

**Valhalla** - The resting place of warriors and doomed gods. It is much as described, a place of feasting and fighting and endless resurrection. Most of this is simply the nature of the place, the souls of those who have no identity left forming an ambience or background noise for those who still retain some shred of their former selves. Whether they are Norse or not, Valhalla attracts the souls of those who follow a warrior ethic. Death in battle is not *required* for entrance, it's just preferred. Valhalla's Primal Apocrypha still goes by the name of Thor, whose exact nature is still unclear (and he seems to prefer it that way).

Valhalla has waxed and waned over the centuries. It is currently doing well, though not nearly as popular during its heyday about a thousand years ago. The group of Elite known as the Vikings are main supporters. Shadows from Valhalla are proportionately more likely to be out and about in Nocturne. It is the nature of Valhalla that they are more likely to see force as the solution to a problem, but they are also bipolar fellows who are either fun-loving or morose about the future.

▼ **SELLING YOUR SOUL** - The Materia can affect Nocturne only through the action of Dreamers and Materia can be affected from Nocturne likewise. It is assumed that the same relationship does *not* apply between the Apocrypha and Nocturne, otherwise the Apocryphal powers would stride through Nocturne like giants. They have to send their avatars, who are powerful, but limited. Another means the Apocryphal powers use to extend their influence is to grant boons to Dreamers. In exchange for eternal allegiance and a lien on the Dreamer's soul, the Dreamer is granted powers or abilities in Nocturne that are not normally available to Dreamers.

The normal boon is simply a permanent bonus to the Dreamer's Fate score of 3(1d+0), allowing them to accomplish more and quicker while Dreaming. Other boons can include long-hidden knowledge or directions to secret places, free or less restricted entry to Apocryphal boundaries or personalities, or more powerful but restricted use of a particular type of Dreaming ability.

Since the Apocryphal powers presumably have access to the sum of knowledge of any and everyone who has ever passed on to a particular realm, the knowledge base available is staggering. Information about what is in that Apocrypha is still restricted.

The amount of a boon that a power will grant to a Dreamer depends on what the Dreamer has to offer. A less powerful Dreamer with questionable motives might only be able to negotiate a minor boon, while a powerful Dreamer that can significantly further a power's aims in Nocturne could strike a much better bargain. Similarly, a less powerful Dreamer would only negotiate with the lower level Entities, while a powerful Dreamer might find themselves in the mind-numbing presence of the Power itself. Not that dealing with secretarial Entities is easy either...

*"And your name is...?"*

*"My master would know you from where...?"*

*"And your karma is significant because...?"*

To be touched by an Apocryphal power is to be forever changed. The Dreamer's default appearance is altered in some way, whether by a visible mark or a different type of aura. This can be disguised like any other aspect of appearance, but is there all the same. Similarly, the touch of the power can actually manifest in *Materia*. This is never a major change, but is significant in that it happens at all. A change of eye color, a shock of snow-white hair appearing overnight, a strange looking birthmark or an aura that causes small animals and children to shy away from the individual would be examples. Less visible changes might include subtle tweaking of the person's DNA to grant better health or an extended physical lifespan.

Why would a Dreamer give up possession of their soul for temporal power? For the same reasons they do everything else. Perhaps they believe they can get out of the deal later. Maybe they are just short-sighted or greedy. Maybe they hope to win the Power's favor and become an avatar of sorts after their physical death. Or maybe they simply see which way the wind blows and want to get the best deal for something that is going to happen anyway. After all, the Christian religion seals the believer's soul to the Creator in exchange for eternal happiness in the afterlife. No benefits in the material life are granted, so the Creator gets a pretty good deal, has lots of unpaid believers spreading the word and doesn't have to negotiate with Dreamers for anything. On the other hand, the Apocryphal power of Hell has plenty of folks believing they are headed there anyway, so there are always plenty of new souls, but very few who deliberately spread the faith while alive. This makes Lucifer more likely to negotiate with Dreamers. Other Apocryphal powers have their own motivations and styles, and Dreamers can probably find someone or something that shares their beliefs and is willing to grant favors in exchange for eternal allegiance.

Just remember that once a pact is sealed, it is irrevocable and forever unless it has stipulations that allow the Dreamer to invalidate it. How likely a Dreamer can find a loophole depends on how many lawyers are in the particular Apocrypha that makes up the contract... The key thing to remember about this sort of deal is that it only works if both parties enter into it willingly and with full knowledge of the rights, responsibilities and consequences of their actions. Each party would know if the other was holding back or under duress, and it is simply the nature of Nocturne that the agreement would not be valid nor would any benefits transfer. This says nothing about one party *fooling* the other, or making ambiguous claims or promises that can be interpreted in more than one way...and that's how things can get interesting...

## Nocturne

No Dreamer is ever going to be able to challenge a Primal Apocrypha, even one faded and waned by time. It would be like standing up against a hurricane. The best you can hope for is that it sweeps over you quickly and doesn't kill you in the process. This level of power makes them aloof and perhaps haughty and rightfully so. Even if one crosses the threshold to an Apocrypha, they are unlikely to gain the direct attention of its Primal Apocrypha. More likely, any contact will be with an Entity whose sole purpose is dealing with Dreamers, a sort of secretary who is capable of making decisions involving Dreamers without actually consulting "the big guy". Only if a question or request is of such a nature that it mandates the Primal Apocrypha's presence would a Dreamer ever find themselves in such a presence. And in this case, the Dreamer had better have a strong and clear case to make. A Primal Apocrypha might be powerless in Nocturne, but in their own domain a simple twitch of the will is enough to blast a Dreamer into a coma or give them nightmares for months.

Another reason a Dreamer is unlikely to encounter a Primal Apocrypha is that there is a basic inability to communicate. Most Apocrypha have a hierarchy of Entities for a reason. A Dreamer can speak to a lesser Entity, which in turn can talk to the more primal nature of a more powerful Entity, and so on, until the Primal Apocrypha gets the message, or whatever part of it is translatable. The higher up the chain the message goes, the more of the content is replaced by concept. A long and eloquent request might simply come out as "help?" by the time a Primal Apocrypha gets it. Even worse, by the time it gets all the way to the top the chain of communication, the reason for the request may no longer be relevant. There are unverifiable accounts of Entities dispatched to help a mortal or mortals in dire need several years after the critical circumstance had ended.



# ADVENTURES



We will provide the grand design;  
 What is yours and what is mine.  
 There is no more new frontier;  
 We have got to make it here.  
 We satisfy our endless needs;  
 And justify our bloody deeds;  
 In the name of destiny, and in the name of God.  
 And you can see them there, on Sunday morning;  
 Stand up and sing about what it's like up there.  
 They call it Paradise, I don't know why;  
 You call someplace Paradise, kiss it goodbye...

- Eagles, *The Last Resort*

▼ **INTRODUCTION** - Every campaign needs some long term hooks, big plots and big secrets. In *Nocturne*, there is the Awakening looming over everyone's life, the secret machinations of different factions, and the hidden influence of the Others.

And while these are certainly "big picture" items, there is sort of a Lovecraftian Catch-22 to it all. If the big event happens, your campaign is effectively over, or at the very least it will be radically transformed in ways the adventurers won't initially be able to fathom.

On your way to the big event that either ends it all, or resets the Awakening clock so that it becomes a problem for future generations of heroes, there will be adventures. Mundane or exotic, standalone or linked by common plot threads. If you have bought **Nocturne**, you have some interest in the subject matter, and probably have some ideas already germinating to draw in your players. If not, let's get you started...

## Nocturne

▼ **ARMY OF ONE** - Lori of Istria was a Hero from after the Age of Heroes had ended. She was born countless generations after the sun died and had been reborn, when the civilizations of Men and Others were still tiny and scattered, but their hatred for one another still burned bright in memory. An age when Lemuria still rose above the waves, when ice blanketed half of the uninhabited lands that would someday be known as North America and mammoths still roamed the plains of central Asia.



### Lori of Istria

Strength: 2d+1  
 Agility: 3d+1  
 Awareness: 2d+1  
 Health: 2d+2  
 Will: 2d+2  
 Fate: 2d+0

### Abilities:

Sight  
 (Forte on Awareness)  
 Self-image  
 (Forte on Will to oppose  
 hostile Threadings)  
 Larger than Life

### Skills:

unknown, see note at  
 end of adventure

Lori followed and still follows the Path best described as secrecy. She is the second oldest Shadow aside from Crom, and none others from her time survive in *Nocturne*, or if they do, they are even more secretive than her. She was not an Assassin, though she could have been. She was not a Warrior, though her prowess with weapons was well known. She was a Scout. She could move where others could not, and had a legendary ability to place herself (and those with her) at the best place, at the best time. Those Others that died because of her, seldom died at her hand, but because she was able get someone more suited to the task to the best place to do it. She was not Death, she simply scheduled Death's appointments...

Even then, she did not so much hate the Others as love humanity. She saw that the two could not co-exist, and simply worked to bring a final end to the conflict.

She died nobly in battle while still in her prime. Assisting wounded comrades at a battle's end, she was struck from behind and transitioned to the next world unknowing of what had happened. It is not exactly clear to which Apocrypha she went, but it took her many, many generations before she returned to Nocturne. By then, the ice had receded from the continents, the Others had largely been banished to their mountain caves and had mostly passed into legend and folk tales. Men had found new foes in each other, and had lost and regained knowledge from Lori's time and before. Her companions in life long gone and her foes hidden but still alive, she set her feet to her old path, wrapping secrecy and stealth about her like a cloak, whispering in the ears of Dreamers and Weaving traps to lure in unwary Others.

She adapts. Her self-image reflects her body as she remembers herself, but the outward trappings change with the times. For those who see her, she seems to fit in with the time and place as though she were born there. Never has she revealed her true self to anyone, but always operates unseen or disguised. And such is the nature of her involvement in the first adventure...

Somewhere, there is a powerful individual who is a Sleeper. There are many such, people who have wealth and mundane power sufficient to require full-time security as protection against kidnapping, assassination and the like. This does not require them to be a billionaire or figure of international renown. Perhaps they are simply someone in an area where security needs are higher than usual, like parts of South America or a former Soviet republic. This Sleeper's actions are accidentally disturbing some plan of the Others, or maybe even intruding into areas where the Others live. A major climbing expedition to a hitherto unscaled peak, a new observatory in the Andes, maybe even plans for an Alpine resort. We'll say this person's family name is Vranson.

So, the Others do what they do best, begin a Dream campaign against this person and the things that person holds dear, setting up long-term Weaves to bring misfortune to the family, and attempting to unsettle their dreams and thus make their waking life miserable. Lori, randomly tracking Other Dreamers, sees the sleeping, barely Dreaming daughter of the targeted individual. The daughter, Demelza, reminds her of someone she knew in a previous life or previous century. Lori knows the Other tactics well, and decides to intervene. Not directly. *Not her style*. Instead, she contacts a Dreamer she has worked with in the past, and gets from them information on the best way to contact some likely pawns. The adventurers. Working through the ones with easiest Nocturnal security, she Weaves delayed messages for them to find upon Dreaming or returning to their bodies. Dramatic, untraceable messages like blood oozing from the walls forming the phrase "Evil stalks the House of Vranson".

Adventurers who investigate mundanely should be able to track down one or two Vransons that are good prospects for Dreaming inquiry, but should not discount any possibilities. Material poverty is no barrier to Nocturnal importance or prowess. Physical investigation of the Vranson in question should be nigh impossible, as mundane security is top-notch.

So the adventurers will of course recon by Dreaming. They will note some unpleasant psychic graffiti, which, if examined closely, some of which appears to have been partly erased. It seems at least two parties are contesting the site. There are several other complications to investigating the scene by Dreaming.

First, since Material security is top-notch, so is the Nocturnal equivalent. For a place like a house where people are always coming and going, this will not be much of a problem. However, since the adventurers are probably Dreaming by night, they will probably have to cool their heels for a while until a member of the household security staff enters or leaves the house for some reason. And while flying Dreamers can gain access to upper level windows, they are likely barred, closed or both. One can always use Nocturnal force and just bash a way in, but this leads to the second complication.



The cat, Demelza Vranson has a great fondness for the household cat, Mutters. Mutters has a great deal of affection for her as well, is fiercely territorial, and Dreams. Mutters has been on edge of late, with the Others or their agents skulking about and working mischief. Mutters won't leave the house while the Others are about, but he draws the line if anyone comes in. Any untoward noise or strangers in the house while Mutters is on Dreaming rounds will provoke a confrontation, though any adventurers with an animal companion, empathy or "smelling" of other Dreaming cats may simply cause a growling standoff rather than a surprise attack. While well fed and content now, Mutters has a Nocturnal self-image of his scruffier days, bigger, fluffed out, with exaggerated features to make him look more imposing. The first sign of this is probably a very angry and fearsome looking feline dropping off the Nocturnal ceiling and latching onto someone's face for a respectable 1d+1 in half-lethal hits from oversize Threaded claws). Any initial attack will be barely seen. The gamemaster should describe a hideous wail that freezes the marrow in the bones, followed by furred mass the size of a medium dog, moving way too fast to pick out any details (except the outsized saber teeth), exploding out of nowhere to wrap itself around one of the adventurer's heads, then vanishing around a corner and out of sight. Just cause Mutters is not that tough doesn't mean he can't *look* the part, if only for a moment. Any respectable Dreamer can kick Mutters into next week, which will wake him up yowling to rouse the dead. Mutters is also Sensitive, and while awake will be bristly and agitated as long as Dreamers are about. Which leads to complication number three.

*Majoram DeWitt.* Majoram is the Vranson's old Jamaican nanny, and while she is not a Dreamer, she is a Sensitive. She raised the elder Vranson, and has been a fixture in the household for several decades. She practices her own (ineffective) form of voodoo to ward off the evil spirits and other Dreaming presences that she can sense but not see. While uninitiated in the ways of Dreaming, she does have a good deal of common sense in the ways to make things difficult for the intangible. For instance, many Dreamers can be locked out, or *locked in*. While she cannot Dream or Weave, she knows people within the local Jamaican expatriate community who probably can, even if these people are of a very limited mindset and do not perceive much of Nocturne aside from the glimpses afforded through their trances and rituals.

While considered eccentric, she is considered to have excellent judgement, and as long as something she insists on is not going to obviously put someone in harm's way, her quirky requests will likely be indulged.

Majoram has been getting "the willies" for weeks, and has known the cat since it was a kitten. She's the one who thought it was "special" and brought it home to begin with. While the two of them are not much of a security force, they are better than nothing.

Remember that Majoram will not be visible to Dreamers, and Mutters will not be visible to Dreamers once awake.

The last complication to simple reconaissance is the daughter herself. Demelza might just begin Dreaming while adventurers are lurking about. This isn't likely to be a huge problem.

*"Who are you? What are you doing here?"  
"We aren't here - you're just dreaming. Go back to sleep..."*

Demelza is 13 years old, and her self-image is that of a young gymnast, something her asthma and general poor health prevents her from being in *Materia*. She is also a romantic in the way that only 13 year old girls can be.

Lori will be lurking about, observing from a safe distance, or through someone else she has involved in the affair, a generic low-level Dreamer who can be used to pass information to the adventurers without Lori's direct involvement. This tactic allows the gamemaster to provide a patron to control or assist the party indefinitely, while still allowing them to achieve and ass-kick on their own.

**Scene Two** - Guessing by the psychic graffiti, the presence of a young Dreamer and the *Materia* security, adventurers should be piqued enough to continue investigating, both the Vranson household, and the unknown person who left the info leading them there. The latter is fruitless, but the former may bring them back to the Vranson household a little more prepared.

There is another presence there within the house, a Shadow smelling faintly of brimstone and regret, looking nervously about, and trying to reach into the dreams of the young daughter, or maybe his attempts to scrub off the psychic graffiti will be interpreted as putting it there. If he senses the approach of anyone, he will try to flee. Oddly enough, Mutters tolerates his presence, though he is none too happy about it.

This Shadow is the girl's late gay uncle Dustin Vranson. He was the first and thus far only casualty of the Other campaign. A brilliant man and passable Dreamer, he was ambushed in Nocturne by three Others and nearly killed. When he could not be awakened, he was taken immediately to the hospital, where he was misdiagnosed as having had a serious stroke. The combination of his mediocre health, serious injury and the well-meaning but misdiagnosed administration of heavy clot-busting drugs did him in. This was about a month ago.

Not a bad man in any significant way, his time and upbringing kept him conflicted for his whole life about his sexuality, and he ended up damning himself to Hell as a result. Dead, he knew why he had been attacked, though he did not know the identity or nature of the Others. So, to warn his family (and also that it was damned unpleasant there), he escaped Hell.

He is a good guy, not aligned in life with any of the nastier power groups. Had he been more scientifically inclined, he might have been invited into the Architects. Not having children of his own, his parental instincts were transferred to his brother's children, of whom the daughter in question is the youngest and only one still living with the family. He was on good terms with his brother, and his well-known and tolerated habits gave him the nickname "Uncle Swishy".

If the adventurers are at all civil to Dustin Vranson, he can be reasonably helpful. He doesn't know or can't remember a lot of details, but he is sure that some unsavory-looking characters have been camping out around the house and Weaving something disturbing. He has tried to erase it when they go, but they are so much more powerful that it is a losing battle.

He isn't much of a Shadow, almost childishly simple in intelligence and Mutters could probably take him out on a good day, but he has a loyalty to family and a perseverance that are noteworthy. He also has one of Hell's "truant officers" out looking for him, a minor Entity whose powers are on par with an experienced Dreamer. Dragging Dustin Vranson back to Hell would not even break a sweat on this Entity, who should probably show up on the scene at the best possible dramatic moment.



## Abacak

Strength: 3d+0  
Agility: 2d+1  
Awareness: 2d+2  
Health: 2d+2  
Will: 2d+1  
Fate: 2d+2

## Abilities:

Shapeshifter  
(Forte on Fate for some Threading tasks)  
Concentration  
(Forte on Will to maintain focus on a task)

## Skills:

Threading: +2d  
Projection: +2d  
Travelling: +1d

Abacak is a low-level Hellish Entity, whose normal asymmetric appearance and evil demeanor are adequately represented by the word "demon". But, as a manifestation of the nature of the Father of Lies, Abacak can appear to be other than it really is, and is quite capable of doing good in the name of a greater evil. While it hasn't been out of Hell for a while, it does understand the ins and outs of Nocturne, and as an Entity of fairly low power, is quite willing to swallow his pride and use things outside its own ability to get things done. For instance, if it thinks it has to confront adventurers at the Vranson home, it might swipe a guard's pistol just to have a nice surprise for the first few rounds of any fight.

At some point, the paths of Uncle Vranson, the adventurers and Abacak will intersect, and the gloves will come off.

*To Dustin Vranson: "Naughty, naughty boy. We've missed you so. We've got quite a party planned for your return. It will last...forever!"*

*To the adventurers: "I just want what's mine - stand aside, and no one has to have any, shall we say, rude awakenings!"*

Abacak is good at being bad, but he knows deep down he is not a match for a group of skilled adventurers, or even one really good Dreamer. But he does have an "employer" with a fearsome reputation, and is quite willing to play that card if needed. This offers the party the best kind of role-playing moment: the moral choice. If they make the right choice, and offer resistance even if they feel outmatched, Lori can step out of nowhere (in disguise, naturally), and offer support. With the appropriate repartee, of course.

For instance, the adventurers spit defiance at Abacak, either out of support for Uncle Vranson, or simply because no one likes demons. Abacak mocks them, "Idiots! Even if you somehow send me back, my Master will have each of you killed, and then I'll be out again. Faster than having a good lawyer. And we'll probably clean up a few of your loved ones, just for fun."

If the adventurers show any sign of backbone at this point, Lori will emerge from cover, a sigil known to Hell's minions emblazoned on her breast, her aura dripping with...not power, but that certainty of purpose that only the oldest souls can cultivate. She addresses Abacak by name, and calmly says, "And what if I send you back?" Abacak will be visibly taken aback, sputters, points a taloned finger around a lot, shrieks "You haven't heard the last of this!" Then "Poof!" In a cloud of Nocturnal brimstone, Abacak is gone. Lori offers to spirit away the escapee to some moderate term refuge. Scene ends.

▼ **Note** - Sure, Abacak can likely beat Lori one-on-one, but she has help here, and the consequences of loss are *much* worse for him. Lori has managed to stick around for a long time, so anyone she personally banishes is likely to stay banished for quite a while. No point risking a cushy assignment over one bad-luck encounter. He can simply report that the fugitive has had help eluding capture and the hunt will take more time than expected...

**Scene Three** - So far, all of this is incidental to the real threat, which is the Others' actions against the Vranson family. While the Vransons live in a region that is passably accessible to human agents of the Others, for now, the real action is Nocturnal.

The Others, who are long-accustomed to operating unseen, may even show up during some of the other scenes, but will not intervene and might not even stick around to see what happens. They will be back, however. The Others have a bag of tricks that goes back a *long* way, and may include things that simply cannot be done by humans (just to make them a little harder to beat). They don't play fair, and they don't fight fair. They have Icons usable only by Others, are known to embody part of themselves in Shadow Icons that also serve as weapons. If they are at a scene first, they will try to set up Weaves to be used as traps in combat, and will often enter into "negotiations" simply as a way to get close and initiate a surprise attack. They don't play well with others, and they play for keeps.

## Nocturne

In appearance, the Others will match the ethnic grouping and cultural setting of the Vranson family, in an attempt to mislead any Dreaming onlookers that the feud is local in nature. As far as demeanor, they will be unreasonable, arrogant, condescending, and bullying. Like they are looking for any excuse to start a fight.

*"That pathetic Shadow you associate with. Not a month ago he walked among the living. Our powers are vast, our reach is broad. Unless you wish to join him in eternal oblivion, you will leave. While we choose to allow it."*

Their attitude will more than mask the normal antipathy a person would feel in the presence of Others.



### Ka'rac'atu

Strength: 2d+0  
Agility: 2d+1  
Awareness: 2d+2  
Health: 2d+0  
Will: 2d+2  
Fate: 3d+0

### Abilities:

Disruptor  
(Forte on Will for negating a Threading)

### Skills:

Threading: +2d  
Projection: +2d  
Travelling: +2d

Ka'rac'atu is a moderately skilled Nocturnal warrior for the Others, and for any encounter with the adventurers, would have enough companions to overmatch a starting group of adventurers. Given that Ka'rac'atu and his group would expect to strike with surprise, and will already have their weapons and armor Threaded into being, having numbers of a little more than half those of their foes should suffice, plus a few lesser Dreamers from among their human and half-breed allies. Note that pre-fight Threadings will probably drop their listed Fate by about 3 points.

If the Others find that there is serious Nocturnal resistance to their Dreaming efforts against the Vranson family, they will likely call off their hostile Weaving. A long-term Nocturnal assault against a prepared foe isn't their way. They will probably find a way to make a serious attack against the adventurers, just to test their abilities and get a feel for how much of a future threat they are likely to be. Causing serious harm is the goal, but if they are outmatched, they will try to disengage. See the notes on [page 3.16](#) about exiting a Weave while entangled with someone else's will. The Others are well skilled at coordinated actions to get themselves out of entangling situations, whether by immobilizing opponents so they can disengage, or negating hostile Threadings. Similarly, they are just as good at keeping disadvantaged foes from escaping a bad situation.

In this particular case, the Others have been here before and have already done some Weaving, so it is possible that the scene or certain areas of the scene are set up to give the Others an advantage. For instance, tactically luring a foe onto a small, noxious Weave that nauseates an adventurer for a +4 difficulty to all their actions unless they beat the Weaving roll of the Other who placed it.

Again, if needed, Lori is probably waiting in the wings. Getting directly involved with more powerful foes is not her style. However, since one of the common Other tactics is to have a "sniper" in reserve, she may place herself to remove this individual from the equation without the adventurers ever knowing about it. She knows most of the Other tricks, and may provide (through other contacts) knowledge of the ones she thinks are most likely to be used in this particular situation. She doesn't give out one iota of knowledge more than is necessary for the success of an endeavor. If opponents find themselves thwarted at every turn, they will change tactics, which means more risk and the effort of learning new countermeasures.

Regardless of how the fight ends, the Others will probably not be back. Instead, they will focus their efforts through Materia and their agents there, a task that Vranson family and business security is probably more competent to handle than the adventurers. Lori, in whatever guise she used to communicate with the adventurers, may leave a cryptic final message, but will not leave any way of contacting her, and of course, can't be followed. And odds are, the Vranson family will never know anything of what actually transpired, and probably never will. Doing good will have to be its own reward...

**Wrap-up - Army of One** is not a long adventure, but with gamemaster detail and embellishment, can run for multiple sessions. It gives adventurers and players a fairly useful introduction to **Nocturne**, starts a few useful medium- and long-term plot threads and introduces some possibly recurring characters. For any experience rewards, consider it a short or medium adventure.

The immediate aftermath of the final scene may involve a number of nosebleeds and bruises when adventurers awake in Materia, with possible excuses to be made for unaware employers (or family members). Give the adventurers time to recover while you plan their next challenge.

▼ **Note** - To the gamemaster, the easiest way to describe Lori's personal prowess is to assume she cannot be followed unless she wants to be, and will never make a tactical mistake. She will be in the best possible place, at the best time to be there, taking into account all the options available to her friends and foes. If she avoids being engaged by an enemy, nothing can prevent her from fading out of a bad scene like a gust of smoke. She hasn't survived for tens of millennia by taking unnecessary chances...

Typically, her most common tactic is to remain unseen, and simply feed intelligence information to someone who is in a position to use it.

Lori is usually pro- rather than anti-, and her tendency is to focus on an individual rather than a group. Her contacts, her actions, her plots, all tend to involve individuals, and who that individual works for or what that group believes in are secondary considerations. She may feel an affinity towards the Vikings, though even her closest "allies" in that group only know of her existence, not her identity and history. Often, she is drawn in by nothing more than a memory, a person who reminds her of someone from her past, either distant or recent. Perhaps the grandson or granddaughter of some Dreamer she owed a favor to in a century past.

▼ **GAMEMASTERING NOCTURNE** - There have been many other role-playing settings that deal with the world of the collective unconscious, and notable comics like **Sandman** have delved into the theme. The idea that there is another world that exists just out of sight is a powerful one, that goes back to some of our earliest myths. Just because Nocturne portrays a particular representation of things, it does not mean it is the only one, or that it is the only one that can exist at one time in a campaign.

It is possible for instance, to play Nocturne as a strictly bounded religious setting, where the only true Apocryphal powers are God and Satan, and everything else is mere deception. The material world is devoid of magic and divine intervention, and the war is fought in the realms of the heart and mind. Adventurers have presumably chosen the side of good, and must fight the forces of evil both in Nocturne and within themselves. And while Nocturne is set in the present-day, there is no reason why a campaign of this or any type could not be set in the past, where witches and warlocks are simply powerful Dreamers attempting to corrupt the souls of the righteous. Or, are simply trying to do good, but are misunderstood by an ignorant populace...

Nocturne can be another plane of existence for a fantasy campaign, where new rules apply and new challenges await. It could be an ultimate version of cyberspace, a realm of mind to which all residents of a distant future universe are connected to at birth, or perhaps it is the manifestation of every possible alternate world that you belong to, and that every time you wake up, you are unsure if the body you inhabit and world you see around you is the same one you fell asleep in.

You could add "genuine" psychic phenomenon to the mix, and toss in ideas of tantric magic. As a child with Dreaming potential passes into puberty, they might get a tremendous but temporary boost to their Dreaming abilities. Uncontrolled, this could be strong enough to have manifestations in Materia, perhaps explaining poltergeists.

One could also borrow from other religious or philosophical beliefs. Tibetan tulpas or thought-forms might be a cross between a Weaving and an Elemental, a Nocturnal being that cannot directly affect Materia, but which can be seen, heard and communicated with in Materia by anyone capable of Dreaming. Groups of Dreamers might be able to create or summon beings of significant force, who within a limited area or timeframe might be able to have effects on the real world. Even more than that, some believe that matter is simply solidified thought, an illusion given credence by collective belief.

## Nocturne

It might be that Nocturne is the reality, and Materia the illusion. All that is, was and ever will be is simply what we will it to be, and the Awakening is really just the realization that Materia is the true dream. For most, this realization would shatter their minds, fracturing the illusion, and it would truly be the end of Materia, and possibly the Apocrypha as well.

As we expand our knowledge, we expand the dream. As we turn telescopes towards ever more distant galaxies, we find them, *because we expect to*. As we search for more and more elementary particles, they exist *because we think they need to*. But in the end, the only truth is that what we are is the whole of what is. So, a Nocturne campaign is more than just a challenge. It becomes a struggle to determine the nature of the universe itself!

As you see, Nocturne can be a lot more than just "dreaming". Are all of these ideas suitable for a campaign? Yes, *though probably not all at once*. Go online, look up various philosophies and religions, see what they think is beyond the world we see and touch, and wonder how and why they came to think that way. Then see if it makes sense to add it to the campaign you were thinking of running.

▼ **SOURCES** - Below is a short list of titles that may be of interest to a **Nocturne** gamemaster.

**Sandman**: A comic by Neil Gaiman. Excellent piece for inspiration. Available in graphic novel form.

**The Dream Ouroboros** rpg: The world exists as the dreams of dragons. English translation of the popular French rpg **Reve de Dragon**.

**Dreamlands** rpg: Based on ideas in the H.P. Lovecraft tale "Dreamquest of Unknown Kadath".

**Dreamwalker** rpg: Dreaming special forces work to fight off an astral invasion.

**In Nomine** rpg: A modern rpg in which players take the part of angels and demons, struggling for control of humanity and themselves.

**Nobilis** rpg: Explores the clandestine war between immensely powerful meta-beings fighting to control the destiny of creation and reality.

**Rapture** rpg: *The end is now!* The Rapture is upon us and demons war freely across the earth.

**Unknown Armies** rpg: While played in a material world, higher forces and concepts are at work.

**Shades of Earth** rpg: Set in 1938, where the Axis of Evil draws a curtain of darkness across the face of the earth as its agents move about under the cloak of a secret agenda to gather spiritual power.

**Spookshow** rpg: Sometimes, the ghostly dead just won't go away. And they've found the perfect career...espionage!



# PERSONALITIES



*In the ink of an eye I saw you bleed;  
Through the thunder I could hear you scream,  
Solid to the air I breathe,  
Open-eyed and fast asleep.  
Falling softly as the rain;  
No footsteps ringing in your ears.  
Ragged down worn to the skin,  
Warrior raging, have no fear.  
Secure yourself to heaven,  
Hold on tight, the night has come.  
Fasten up your earthly burdens, you have just begun.*

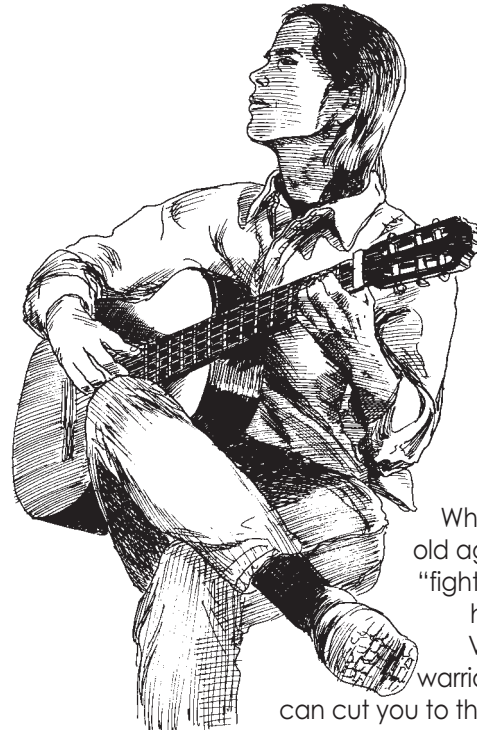
- Indigo Girls, *Secure Yourself*

▼ **WELCOME TO THE MACHINE?** - There is no gear or equipment list for **Nocturne**. There is really nothing you can take with you except what is in your head, and the Nocturnal representations of the real-world items in your campaign (which you already have equipment lists for). Instead, we'll give you a short cast of characters, heroes, villains and otherwise. It's not *what* you encounter in Nocturne, it's *who* you encounter...

Of course, there are far more interesting individuals than this short list. Some are Shadows so weak as to be barely corporeal, even in Nocturne, and others are simply the majority of Dreamers who have no compelling story. The Shadows, Entities and Dreamers that follow are just to spark your imagination and give you ideas for adventures and personalities of your own.

## Nocturne

**Silver John** - Silver John was a warrior of a different sort. A 20th century Appalachian balladeer, he brought joy, wisdom and peace to many, but he was also a force for "good", defined as the overall welfare of humanity. His main foe and his main challenge were the forces aligned with Hell, those seeking to corrupt humanity, whether *en masse* or one individual at a time. He acted independently of any Apocryphal entanglements, though most of his work was actually supported by the Creator.



### Silver John

Strength: 2d+0  
Agility: 2d+2  
Awareness: 1d+1  
Health: 2d+1  
Will: 1d+0  
Fate: 1d+2

### Abilities:

Friends (among Heaven's Entities)

### Skills:

Unknown

When he finally died of old age after decades of "fighting the good fight", his soul passed on to Valhalla. While not a warrior with weapons, he can cut you to the quick with a word or tune from his silver-strung guitar.

Freed from the constraints of his mortal body, his Shadow now roams Nocturne whenever possible. He lacks the intensity of his mortal life, but is still passably powerful and respected by his Nocturnal peers. Such was his life that he can still call on the aid of more than a few lesser Entities if need requires it. A Shadow Icon exists for Silver John in the guise of his silver-strung guitar, but its whereabouts are unknown at this time. A Dreamer with the assistance of Silver John and his Shadow Icon could be a powerful team.

**Reznor, the Hunter** - Reznor is one of the Hellish Entities responsible for dragging escaped Shadows back to Hell, kicking and screaming if possible. It (Reznor has no personal concept of gender) is like most demons, in that it doesn't like Hell. But Reznor does like its job, and is quite good at it.

Reznor's self image is rather ghastly and only vaguely humanoid. It is not quite symmetrical, quite hideous, very muscular and just plain disturbing to look at. Reznor is quite adept at concealing this form when needed, but its aura is still something to give a Dreamer a chill.

While Reznor's apparent (and typical) tactics are to simply intimidate Dreamers and follow the leads so generated to its quarry, Reznor is far more clever than this, but keeps it hidden. Reznor will engage in subtle and long-term psychological ploys, disguise, manipulation and the use of intermediaries for surveillance and other tactics. Reznor actually prefers the subtle approach for everything except the final kill, to defeat both his quarry and those who would interfere with the hunt.



**Reznor**  
 Strength: 4d+0  
 Agility: 2d+2  
 Awareness: 2d+2  
 Health: 3d+1  
 Will: 3d+1  
 Fate: 3d+1

**Abilities:**  
 Unknown

**Skills:**  
 Weaving: +1d  
 Threading: +2d  
 Projection: +3d  
 Travelling: +2d

As an Entity, Reznor does not recover lost Fate from instantly travelling from place to place in Nocturne, so it relies on more mundane forms of travel to extend the time it can spend in Nocturne. It is not uncommon to find Reznor taking up an empty first class airline seat, and casually giving dozing passengers nightmares just for the fun of it.

Reznor has been around long enough that it has Woven a lair for itself inside Mt. Etna, a place that is nasty and uncomfortable for anything that isn't Reznor, with the good parts of Hell (very few) and none of the bad.

**Anoshim** - Anoshim is not a name, but rather a type of angel or Entity associated with the Creator. The term "anoshim" is a corruption of a far more ancient term to mean "frail" or "mortal". While powerful, they are the least of Heaven's Entities. They appear as androgynous humans of some indeterminate ethnicity, and seldom if ever disguise this appearance.



**Anoshim**  
 Strength: 2d+2  
 Agility: 2d+1  
 Awareness: 2d+2  
 Health: 2d+0  
 Will: 2d+2  
 Fate: 1d+2

**Abilities:**  
 Unknown

**Skills:**  
 Threading: +1d  
 (Movement): +1d  
 Projection: +1d  
 Travelling: +2d

Among themselves, they have no names or individual identifiers, but can still tell each other apart and communicate in a way to identify one particular Anoshim or the other (this lack of self is common to all of Heaven's Entities). But there is no way of translating this into any human language. So, if an Anoshim has a name, it is one adopted purely for the convenience of human Dreamers, and the Anoshim will usually refer to itself in the third person ("This is the one known to Dreamers as Kheph").

Anoshim are observers and messengers, sent by more powerful Entities when time does not permit or warrant their involvement. Their relative frailty gives Anoshim a more human outlook, and alone among Heaven's Entities they will "eat" and "drink" in Nocturne, and actually have some small sense of humor. If called upon to fight, they will typically manifest wings, an armor of light and a flaming sword, though they are not as skilled or powerful with these as the more powerful of Heaven's Entities.



**Selle Shiffer** - She is an 11-year old girl with an astounding imagination and potential as a Dreamer. She is yet untrained, but not inexperienced. She has been Dreaming since the age of 6, and while she does not have a lot of skill, she has managed to stay hidden from "strangers" and has a pretty good survival instinct. The few times she has been forced to defend herself went very badly for her attackers, so there is a rumor in certain circles about a vigilante Dreamer that goes about like a wolf in sheep's clothing...



**Selle Shiffer**

Strength: 1d+0  
 Agility: 1d+2  
 Awareness: 2d+0  
 Health: 2d+0  
 Will: 1d+2  
 Fate: 3d+2

**Abilities:**

Unknown

**Skills:**

Threading: +0d  
 Projection: +0d  
 Creating: +0d

If her natural abilities continue to grow, she could become one of the most powerful Dreamers of the age. Those who can read the signs know of the coming of a legendary Dreamer, though whether it is Selle or not remains to be seen.

Selle has come to understand that no one around her believes that dreams are "real", so she keeps her explorations and discoveries to herself. Not being able to confide in her parents or even her friends has made her a very lonely little girl, and this loneliness may make her vulnerable if an unscrupulous Dreamer ever finds and "befriends" her.

## Nocturne

**Crom** - Crom is the only Shadow from the age of heroes to survive in recognizable form to the present day. It was his axe of meteoric iron that struck down the high shaman of the Others on that fateful day some tens of thousands of years ago. It is said that he was Valhalla's first hero, and possibly Thor himself, though of course he can neither confirm or deny it.

In his time he was a mighty individual of godlike talent and stature. His transition to the Apocrypha has made him simply powerful instead, though there is some evidence to suggest he was originally fairly weak and simply increased his abilities as a Shadow through his tens of thousands of years of experience.



**Crom**

Strength: 3d+2  
 Agility: 3d+2  
 Awareness: 2d+2  
 Health: 2d+0  
 Will: 3d+1  
 Fate: 0d+1

**Abilities:**

Unknown

**Skills:**

Threading: +0d  
 Projection: +3d

Crom's only limitation in Nocturne is his Fate. Anywhere he wishes to go, he must traverse by walking or using some Nocturnal equivalent of a Materia item. Similarly, he cannot Thread any but the simplest items for his own use. However, he is the only Shadow known to possess Icons, which are his weapons and armor.

Crom will spend years at a time wandering Nocturne, observing and interfering when he feels the need. Abrasive, overbearing but on the whole a "good guy", those who encounter him are of mixed opinions.

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A Shadow Icon exists for Crom. While his body was completely obliterated in the explosion caused by disrupting the Others, his meteoric iron axe was blown clear into the Himalayas, where its melted blade was found by Buddhist monks several centuries ago. They understood what it was, but not who it represented until decades later, when Crom finally reached their sanctuary. He has taught them what he knows, and they in turn act as his Dreaming eyes and ears. Crom still holds a grudge against the Others, and most of his efforts in Nocturne are spying them out and trying to convince other Dreamers to do something about it. While there are Other clans in the Himalayas, there remain none within a hundred kilometers of "his" monks. While he is formidable in single combat, his inability to project his will makes it difficult to deal with groups or affect Materia in any meaningful way. He has been banished back to Valhalla numerous times, but seldom for more than a human lifetime.

**Anne Calvert** - A devout Christian and unknown to herself, a Dreamer. She is unskilled and lacks experience, and seldom remembers her infrequent Nocturnal journeys.



**Anne Calvert**  
Strength: 1d+2  
Agility: 2d+0  
Awareness: 2d+0  
Health: 2d+0  
Will: 2d+0  
Fate: 1d+1

**Abilities:**  
Limited mindset (3 levels)

**Skills:**  
None

While Dreaming, she sees Nocturne as an allegorical journey, a metaphor for the challenges of maintaining one's belief in a sometimes hostile world. She will be friendly if encountered, and eager to convince others of a higher Truth. So far, she has avoided harm not from skill, but from the strength of her convictions, which make her nearly intangible to anything outside the traditional Judeo-Christian belief system.

She may get in over her head at some point and need rescued by adventurers, though anything (even a rescue) that might upset her beliefs will not be regarded favorably.

**Antar'e'bashor** - He is the leader of a clan of Others that live in a remote section of the Andes mountains, a thousand meters or more past where humans can go unaided. Like most clans, his lives at a very primitive level of technology. They live in caves whose openings have been modified with worked stone for security and protection from the weather. Their diet is simple fare, either hunted at lower elevations or brought up to them by their half-breed cousins in the small native villages that are almost always nearby.



**Antar'e'bashor**  
Strength: 2d+0  
Agility: 2d+1  
Awareness: 2d+2  
Health: 2d+2  
Will: 3d+0  
Fate: 3d+2

**Abilities:**  
Magic spells

**Skills:**  
Weaving: +2d  
Threading: +3d  
Projection: +3d  
Travelling: +2d  
Creating: +2d

Antar'e'bashor has embraced technology to about the same degree as other clans. They have portable radios to listen to the outside world, a handful of solar-recharged lanterns, and have learned to read and speak English in order to better investigate and infiltrate while in Nocturne. Antar'e'bashor holds an implacable hatred for all humanity and Dreamers in particular. He cannot bring himself to even think about the Awakening, but he works to prevent it nonetheless. Out of sheer spite, for he simply does not want humans to ever succeed after causing the Others to fail. He will go to remarkable lengths towards this goal, even swallowing his hatred long enough to work with or alongside Dreamers that are actively working against the same faction as he currently is. His "disguise" is that of a shabby and thoroughly disagreeable and abrasive sort of fellow, and this outward unlikeability serves quite well at masking his true nature and covering for his lapses of self-control in the presence of human Dreamers.

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