



THE DEVIL IN THE DETAILS

THE DEVIL IN THE DETAILS

A New Monster and Storytelling Adventure System scene for Scion: Hero

by Jesse Heinig



Three hundred miles had already passed under the odometer, and another thousand lay ahead. Though his preternatural endurance kept him awake during the drive, Eric had gotten a late start, and already the nighttime roads stretched ahead like sinuous, blackened rivers. Suburbs had given way to farmsteads and rural landscapes, until at last the route was little more than a pothole-laden thread winding between hulking trees.

For a moment, Eric caught a glance of light reflected in a pair of large and luminous eyes, but they vanished into the brush as he sped by. Still, the sheer size of the saucer-shaped orbs stuck in his mind; no raccoon or opossum had eyes that large. He took a quick look over his shoulder, then returned his attention to the road.

As Eric turned his head forward, something fell out of the branches overhanging the road. A tremendous KABANG reverberated through the car as it bounced off the hood, and Eric heard a drumroll sound of it hammering on the roof. He jerked the wheel

to the right, and whatever it was flew off the other side of the car, spindly limbs flailing. The GTO crashed through the underbrush and slammed into a heavy tree, screeching to a stop.

After catching his breath, Eric turned to grab the Goat's car cover in hopes of using its magic to restore the vehicle. With his back turned, he didn't notice a slender hand reaching through the shattered windshield to wrap its fingers around Giantbane, Eric's enchanted pistol...

ABOUT THE STORYTELLING ADVENTURE SYSTEM

Think of an SAS product as a story kit, as if you'd bought a piece of modern furniture and brought it home in a big flat box. You open it up, eager to be the Storyteller for your troupe, but what you find is a collection of pieces and parts (like the parts in this article). To put it together, you'll need some tools: in this case, the **Scion: Hero** Rulebook, and any other books for the **Scion** system for the particular chronicle you're running (such as **Scion: Ragnarök** or the **Scion Companion**). You'll use these parts and tools to build a story together with your friends. It might not look quite like you expect it to when it's all done, but as long as everyone enjoys it, it doesn't matter how you end up using all the pieces, or even if you throw some of them away.

To learn more about the Storytelling Adventure System, be sure to read the free SAS Guide, found at the SAS website: www.white-wolf.com/sas

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Scene

THE DEVIL IN THE DETAILS

MENTAL ••

PHYSICAL ••

SOCIAL –

Overview

Scions deal with Legendary monsters of all sorts, so any hero worth her salt is used to encountering basilisks, lamassu, trolls and the other creatures of antiquity. Legends aren't limited just to the ancient world, though—the modern age has its share of urban legends as well. One such legend has made its mark for the last half-century as the Dover Demon, the Riverside Bridge Monster or the Jersey Devil. If these creatures are the mannegishi of Cree Indian folklore, their history may stretch back even further, but with the new Overworld War, mortals and Scions alike will certainly see them in greater numbers. The mannegishi stalk humans and Scions alike to play petty but dangerous pranks and to steal valuable items—sometimes even the Relics of Scions.

Description

At first, it seemed like just an anomaly—an oddly misshapen cat climbing along a low stone wall, a raccoon-like shape darting across the road with only a brief pause to reflect its eerily glowing eyes. Now, though, it's clear that the creature you've been spotting over the past several nights isn't just some curiosity of the local fauna, and it's definitely shadowing you.

Storyteller Goals

The monster showcased here is definitely a titanspawn, but one with a slightly different agenda than most. In the mundane World, the mannegishi is just a trickster that enjoys playing dangerous pranks, such as flipping over canoes in cold rivers (sending the occupants for a hypothermia-inducing swim) or leaping down from a bridge and dancing on top of a car's roof until the terrified occupant crashes. A mannegishi rarely picks a fight; getting stabbed, shot or clubbed isn't amusing. Instead, a lone mannegishi usually stalks a likely target for a short time and takes an opportunity to terrify the poor sod. In the case of Scions, though, a mannegishi has a special agenda: it loves to steal Relics.

Mannegishi usually operate alone, but when given the opportunity to molest a group of Scions, an entire tribe may show up. A single mannegishi may create a distraction and make off with a Relic (or perhaps a mundane item of some value) during the chaos. Scions with Epic Perception aren't easily surprised, though; in such a case, a whole band of mannegishi may descend upon the Band to keep some busy while others make off with Relics.

The goal is to create a swiftly ratcheting sense of tension, starting with a few fleeting appearances by the mannegishi, which will appear at the edge of vision at night, then vanish into the darkness. If the Scions are very alert or very persistent in chasing down the mannegishi, then the titanspawn will resort to causing chaos by frightening normal mortals, engineering car crashes, breaking mundane

light sources and similar acts of vandalism that make the environment more conducive to their mischief.

Character Goals

Determine what the mannegishi are, what they want, and how to keep them from running off with Relics! The Scions will know quickly that something is going on—they deal with this sort of menace as a matter of course—but the mannegishi are frustratingly elusive.

Actions

The Scions are likely to either hunker down or head to a secure area once they realize that the mannegishi aren't just strange raccoons or errant orangutans. Talking to the mannegishi is a pointless gesture; while the monsters can understand human speech, they're not keen on cooperating, nor do they have the ability to speak themselves. Clever Scions, though, may set a trap or counter-ambush for the mannegishi. Since the mannegishi only come out at night, the Scions will have to wait until dark to spring their trap.

Because the mannegishi are both skittish and intelligent, they're not keen on attacking the Scions during the day, nor any time that the Scions might have the obvious upper hand. Since they're beasts, they also don't have a regular home for the Scions to track down and attack. The best way to handle the mannegishi for good is to set up a trap somewhere in a rural area, perhaps by pulling the car over to the side of the road or taking a nap in an old farmhouse. Once the mannegishi slink in to harass the Scions, the Band can leap to the attack.

Counter - Ambush!

Dice Pool: (Wits + Stealth) vs. the mannegishi's (Wits + Investigation; dice pool 5)

Action: Contested

Hindrances: The ambush site is well-lit (-1); the ambush site is in an open area, without much cover (-1); the Band leaves more than one person in the open at the ambush site (-2)

Help: The ambush takes place during a new moon (+1); the Band leaves out something valuable at the ambush site, like a gold bracelet, a gemstone or a Relic (+2)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The mannegishi arrange a horrid counter to the Scions' trap. Perhaps they hurl bags of flaming feces, or manage to crawl into a big rig and harass the driver, forcing him to smash into the Scions' hiding place. The mannegishi know exactly where the Scions are waiting and are careful not to trip any perimeter guards (such as a Vigil Brand or Ward from the Guardian Purview).

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Failure: The trap fails to put the mannegishi in a compromising position. Although the mannegishi show up to cause havoc, they are also prepared for the Scions, and are ready to run away or take advantage of the environment, as the circumstances permit.

Success: The Scions manage to spring a trap on the mannegishi, and catch the troublemakers by surprise. Each Scion gains a bonus die to the Join Battle roll (**Scion: Hero**, p. 187).

Exceptional Success: The Scions' trap is an unmitigated success. The Mannegishi slink into the trap but wind up in indefensible positions, caught in the Scions' web. Each Scion's first attack ignores the DV of the targeted mannegishi.

Consequences

When the Band beds down for the night or makes a stop on a lonely stretch of road, a group of the mannegishi tries to sneak up close, create a distraction and then steal something. If the Scions manage to set a trap or just fight off the pests, the Band will discover that the creatures are, in fact, some sort of cryptic phenomenon, and a small form of titanspawn (perhaps related to a vanished Native American pantheon). If the mannegishi manage to steal something important and escape with it (even if some of them are killed), then the Scions will doubtless have to track the creatures down in order to recover the item. Either way, the mannegishi prove to be a momentary nuisance that is not necessarily a harbinger of some greater evil, but still annoyingly cunning.

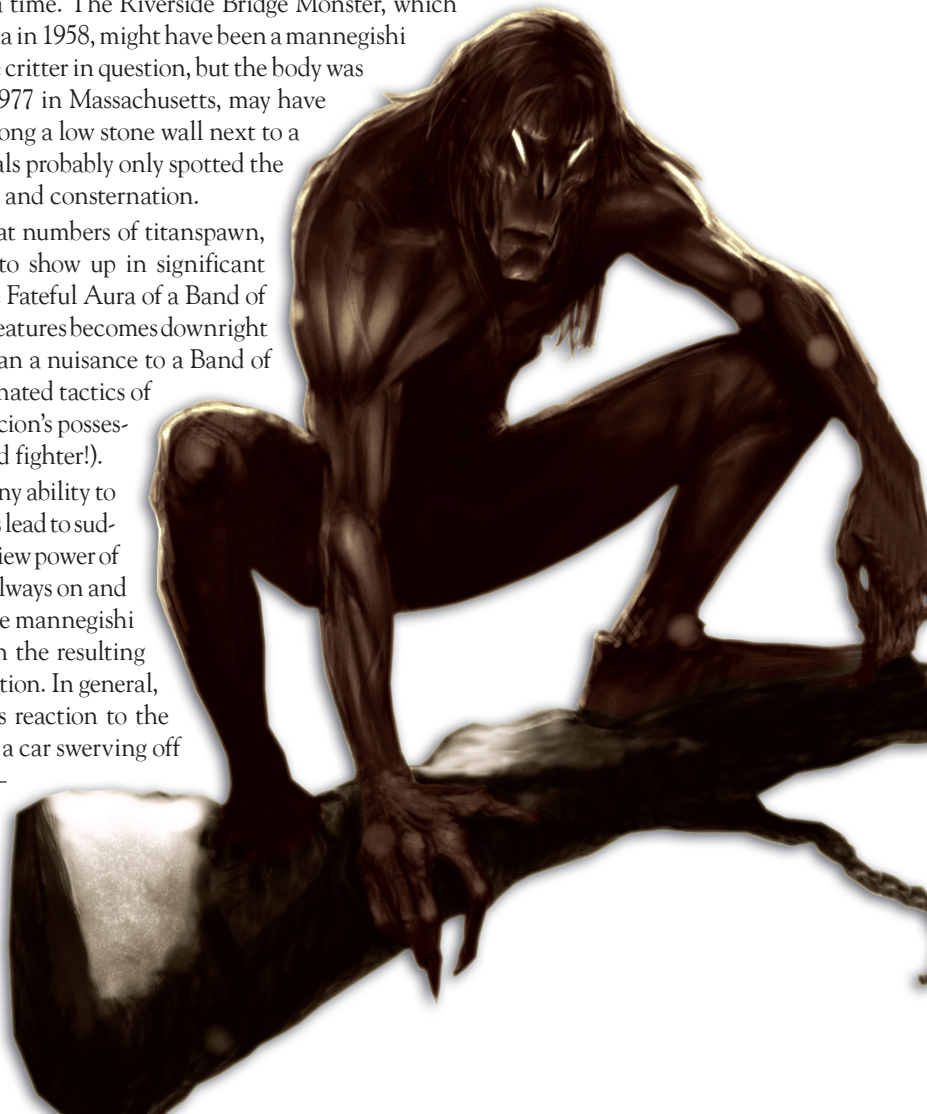
Mannegishi

To all appearances, a mannegishi is something like a bizarre monkey or a bulbous, unusually dexterous cat. Its head is elongated and ovular, but lacks a nose; its lanky limbs have six digits, with an opposable thumb on each side of its hands. A stubby tail and short, dark-hued fur rounds out the creature's animalistic appearance. Typically, the nocturnal creatures only come out on dark nights and in places where they can easily hide and move about via climbing and brachiating. Given the opportunity, mannegishi will stake out a likely place to startle travelers, then use their unexpected dexterity to perform stunts or tricks that inevitably lead to dangerous situations—drivers swerving off of roads, machine operators accidentally dropping heavy loads, repair crews inadvertently cutting into power lines or sewer mains and so forth.

Most mortals only see one mannegishi at a time. The Riverside Bridge Monster, which apparently attacked a traveler's car in California in 1958, might have been a mannegishi hoping to instill a little fear; the driver shot the critter in question, but the body was never found. The Dover Demon, spotted in 1977 in Massachusetts, may have been one of these creatures; it was crawling along a low stone wall next to a road at night. In both of these cases, the mortals probably only spotted the creature because it wanted to cause some fear and consternation.

With the Overworld War setting loose great numbers of titanspawn, mannegishi have become common enough to show up in significant groups, like a troop of monkeys. Throw in the Fateful Aura of a Band of Scions, and an encounter with a dozen of the creatures becomes downright probable. A lone mannegishi is little more than a nuisance to a Band of heroes, but a large group of them using coordinated tactics of distraction can easily cause real damage to a Scion's possessions (or even to a hero who isn't a very skilled fighter!).

Eye of the Storm: Mannegishi have an uncanny ability to survive the chaos that results when their actions lead to sudden disasters. This functions as the Chaos Purview power of the same name (**Scion: Hero**, p. 140), but it is always on and has no cost for the mannegishi. Of course, if the mannegishi sticks around too long or becomes involved in the resulting events, it risks losing the benefits of this protection. In general, if a situation results because of someone else's reaction to the mannegishi—such as the previous example of a car swerving off the road after spotting one of the creatures—the mannegishi remains untouched by the subsequent events. Only if the mannegishi stays in the area and continues to cause trouble does it become subject to the painful consequences of random destruction.



SCION

Name: Mannegishi
Level:

Calling:
Nature:

Pantheon:
God:

ATTRIBUTES

Strength	●●●○○○○○ □□□□□□□□	Charisma	○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□	Perception	●●●○○○○○ □□□□□□□□
Dexterity	●●●○○○○○ □□□□□□□□	Manipulation	○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□	Intelligence	●●●○○○○○ □□□□□□□□
Stamina	●●●○○○○○ □□□□□□□□	Appearance	●●●○○○○○ □□□□□□□□	Wits	●●●○○○○○ □□□□□□□□

ABILITIES

- Animal Ken ●●○○
- Athletics ●●●○
- Awareness ●●●○
- Brawl ●●●○
- Fortitude ●●○○
- Integrity ●○○○
- Investigation ●●○○
- Larceny ●●●○
- Melee ●●○○
- Stealth ●●●○
- Survival ●●○○
- Thrown ●●●○

BIRTHRIGHTS

KNACKS

- Cat's Grace
- Monkey Climber

BOONS

WEAPONS

- Bite: Acc 8, Dmg 3L, Parry DV —, Spd 5
- Clinch: Acc 8, Dmg 3B, Parry DV —, Spd 6
- Thrown Debris: Acc 8, Dmg 4L, Range 10, Spd 6
- Unarmed, Light: Acc 9, Dmg 3B, Parry DV 10, Spd 4
- Unarmed, Heavy: Acc 7, Dmg 6B, Parry DV 7, Spd 5

WILLPOWER

- □□□□□□□□

LEGEND

- ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
- ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
- Legend Points 1 |

NOTES

Soak: 3B/1L Dodge DV: 6 Join Battle: 6

Other Notes: Mannegishi can throw nearly any small object with sufficient precision to present danger, as noted above for their Attack entry of thrown debris. These creatures rarely engage in close combat, although a pack of them might swarm a lone opponent and clinch before biting.

In spite of their appearance, mannegishi are not animals. Thus, the Animal Purview power of Animal Communication (Scion: Hero, p. 139) is of no help with them.

VIRTUES

- Ambition ●○○○
- Malice ●●●○
- Rapacity ●●○○
- Zealotry ●○○○

HEALTH

- 0 -1 -1 -2 -2 -4 1
- □ □ □ □ □ □

Night Eyes: Mannegishi see perfectly in darkness, as per the Darkness Purview power of this name (Scion: Hero, p. 140). Since they're nocturnal, the mannegishi prefer to use darkness for cover; they do not suffer any penalties from sunlight, but certainly don't like to be caught outside during the day.

Preternatural Camouflage: Mannegishi that don't want to be seen are very hard to spot. If a mannegishi freezes against a dark background, it blends in immediately. Even a moving mannegishi among bushes, trees, or even the shadowy underhang of a bridge can be stealthy beyond measure. If a mannegishi uses a miscellaneous action to hide (Speed 5), it gains a +3 dice bonus to its corresponding Stealth score, and it can even avoid the powers of observation possessed by a Scion with Epic Perception. Mannegishi will often leap out to perform one act of surprise, then dash back into darkness to hide again; in groups, they will take turns harassing the target.

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SCENE: The Devil in the Details

MENTAL ●●

PHYSICAL ●●

SOCIAL —

HINDRANCES

- The ambush site is well-lit (-1)
- The ambush site is in an open area, without much cover (-1)
- The Band leaves more than one person in the open at the ambush site (-2)

HELP

- The ambush takes place during a new moon (+1)
- The Band leaves out something valuable at the ambush site, like a gold bracelet, a gemstone, or a Relic (+2)

OTHER

- Mannegishi will attempt to steal Relics when possible.

STs

Sneak a group of mannegishi among the Band to steal Relics and valuables.

PCs

Determine that the mannegishi are not natural animals, then prevent them from causing chaos.