



MEAT MARKET

By: NICK GREEN

Once every other month or thereabouts, a traveler might stumble upon one of the stranger scenes in Malifaux. In the darker hours of the night, when Delios hangs in the sky but before Illios has risen, a train of dusty wagons will sometimes roll quietly into one of Malifaux's many decrepit ghost towns. The leader of the procession activates her constructs and sends them through the town to clear away debris and cluttered paths and then begins the ritual that will bring the Meat Market into existence.

As the last words of the spell leave her lips, the ghost town lurches into a semblance of life. Rotted walls of flesh push up from the ground to form crude sheds and huts, while elsewhere ghostly stalls and canopies fade into existence around half-remembered paths and streets. Misshapen creatures shuffle out of the wagons, dragging their wares into the forming stalls with the slow patience of the dead. Near the entrance to the emerging market, two statues of white marble push their way up from the ground. One depicts a man with a ram's head; its grasping hand reaches towards the second statue, an emaciated woman with the head of a crow.

These statues serve as a sort of clock for the market's existence. Over the course of the next few nights, the statues gradually move together,

until the ram almost has the crow in its grasp, at which point the organizer of the Meat Market gives the signal, causing the fleshy walls to instantly rot away into refuse and the ethereal stalls to fade back into the aether as the market packs up its wagons and rolls out of town. The meaning of the statues isn't something that the market's organizer shares with others, but the popular theory among those familiar with the market is that the statues represent how close the Guild's Death Marshals are to discovering the location of the market, and that they move closer together as the hunters close in and slowly part when false leads or other events distract them.

While the market is in existence, it serves as a dream come true for those who practice the necromantic arts. The wares sold by the market's stalls are as varied as they are disturbing. Some stalls peddle the severed limbs of humans, Nephilim, and creatures stranger still, each preserved with magic to keep it fresh and free of rot, while others deal exclusively in preservative chemicals, necrotic unguents, and fell tinctures. Another ghostly stall contains nothing but dark grimoires, strangely incorporeal until the stallholder, herself a floating spirit with a rotting face beneath her pince-nez, hands them to a buyer. More mundane booths sell the tools of the graverobbing trade, surgical instruments, soulstones, and ruined constructs.



Very few of the merchants that man these booths are willing to deal in Guild scrip. Most prefer to operate on the barter system, trading their wares for whatever unique or interesting items their customers bring to the market. Corpses and information are the most common form of currency in the market, though Soulstones and Grimoires also change hands from time to time. While this might make the market a tempting target for thieves, its wares are protected by the intimidating Phlegyas.

These shrouded spirits manifest with the market, though they seem to be independent of it and have been known to protect customers from annoyed merchants on more than one occasion. These spirits flit about the market, directing traffic and watching everything from beneath their black hoods, but this is merely secondary to their primary role. When the Meat Market first arrives in a ghost town, the Phlegyas appear to prospective customers – typically those who show some degree of skill in the necromantic arts – and whisper the name of the ghost town that is hosting the market.

The organizer of the Meat Market remains out of sight for its duration, typically remaining within her wagon unless a matter arises that requires her direct attention. While most correctly assume that the market's leader is a skilled necromancer, most would be surprised to learn that she is also undead. Tamar, as she calls herself, is a stitched-together amalgam of various Nephilim parts that have been combined to create a surprisingly attractive whole. The stitches that criss-cross her body are delicate and careful, and she is quite capable of intelligent speech and independent thought. If there is any flaw in her construction, it is her nonfunctional wings, which hang around her in a tattered shroud of white filigreed flesh.

Tamar's reasons for creating the Meat Market are her own, and she keeps them as secret as every other detail of her past. There have been rumors that she is trying to use the market in an attempt to lure a heretic Nephilim to her side, though whether to welcome or kill him is a matter of debate. Others claim that she is slowly gathering the artifacts of Old Malifaux to her side in preparation for some greater scheme, though what that might be is a matter of even less certainty.

USING THE MEAT MARKET IN YOUR GAME

Here are a few suggestions to help you work the Meat Market into one of your sessions.

FATED WORKING WITH THE GUILD

The Death Marshals have heard rumors of the Meat Market, but their efforts to find the market before it's packed up and moved on have thus far been doomed to failure. They've captured a few solitary Resurrectionists and slain a handful of lurking undead left behind after the market moves on, but they're still no closer to finding the market and putting a bullet in its leader's head. Thinking that outside agents might have a better chance of avoiding notice, the Guild contacts the Fated and puts them on surveillance of a Resurrectionist who they believe will be traveling to the market during its next appearance.

FATED WORKING WITH THE ARCANISTS

Many of the Arcanists are keen magicians, and within their ranks there will always be those who seek more power than they already have. If an Arcanist suspects that a valuable Grimoire or a powerful artifact will be offered for sale at the Meat Market, the Fated could be sent to retrieve it... which means convincing a necromancer to lead them to the market and then trying to purchase the item in question before another prospective customer can get to it first.

FATED WORKING WITH THE RESURRECTIONISTS

Fated who dabble in necromantic magic might be invited to the Meat Market by a Phlegyas who speaks of the wonders for sale in the ghastly market. With such a short warning, however, the Fated will have to scramble to gather enough corpses or rare items to give them purchasing power. Even then, it might end up being a race between the Fated and the Death Marshals, who are determined to shut the market down this time...



FATED WORKING WITH THE NEVERBORN

The Neverborn aren't fond of the undead, and they are even less fond of the idea that one of their own has been transformed into an undead abomination that is actively encouraging the practice of necromancy with her blasphemous marketplace. Tamar would be on the lookout for a pack of Nephilim, but a few humans might be able to sneak in and destroy the abomination before she realizes what's happening.

FATED WORKING WITH THE TEN THUNDERS

The Ten Thunders crave to own a stake in every criminal activity in Malifaux, and their hooks in smuggling, prostitution, and extortion have given them a great deal of influence so far. While the Oyabun finds the very idea of the Meat Market to be loathsome, he is quite interested in learning how Tamar is able to accurately predict how close her pursuers are to locating her. The Fated are sent to the Meat Market to meet with Tamar to see what the Thunders can offer her for this knowledge... and to bring it back with them, one way or another.

FATED WORKING WITH THE GREMLINS

A few months back, a Gremlin necromancer got a visit by one of the Phlegyas, which resulted in a whole lot of screaming and panicked shooting before she was able to trap the spirit in an old moonshine jar. She's asked around a bit since then and has put the spirit of the Phlegyas into one of her dead cousins so that he can lead her to the market, but he only moves when he hears music, and she can't play more than two notes on a banjo. The Fated will have to dust off their banjos and empty jugs in order to keep the music going and the zombified Gremlin walking towards the Market.

FATED WORKING WITH THE OUTCASTS

For those who live on the fringes of society, a steadfast ally is worth as much as the largest Soulstone. Unfortunately, one of the Fated's allies has disappeared in search of the Meat Market. The Fated can pick up the trail, but whether they find their ally hale and hearty or hanging from the walls of one of the market's stalls is yet to be seen.



PHLEGYAS

Enforcer (8), Spirit, Woe

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> 3	<i>Speed</i> 2	<i>Resilience</i> 2
<i>Charm</i> -5	<i>Intellect</i> 0	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 3
<i>Defense</i> 5 (13)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 5 (13)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (13)	<i>Charge</i> 6	<i>Wounds</i> 7	

Skills: Appraise 1, Barter 2, Centering 2, Evade 3, Intimidate 2, Notice 3, Necromancy 2, Pugilism 3, Scrutiny 4, Toughness 2, Track 3.

Incorporeal: This character ignores, and is ignored by, other characters and terrain during any movement. Reduce all damage this character suffers from Shooting and Close Combat attacks by half.

Terrifying (Living) 11: Enemy Living characters must pass a TN 11 Horror Duel when they end their turn within this character's engagement range or target this character with a harmful action.

(1) Tear Apart (Pugilism)

AV: 5 (13) ===== Rg: $\frac{1}{11}$ 2 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/5 damage.

$\frac{1}{11}$ *Expulsion:* After damaging, if the target is within the boundaries of the Meat Market, it is teleported 5 miles in a random direction.