

Wyrd

D Penny dreadful

ONE SHOT

MADMAN,
INTERRUPTED

THROUGH THE BREACH



MADMAN, INTERRUPTED

D^{Penny}
Dreadful

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INTRODUCTION

When the Malifaux Sanitarium was first commissioned, it was a place for the city's wealthy residents and Guild personnel to put their husbands, wives, children, parents, and siblings after their minds had been shattered by Malifaux's many horrors.

The Governor-General had heard the stories of people losing their minds during the days of the first Breach, and he was determined to prevent his city from descending into the madness that overshadowed accounts of the first forays into Malifaux. Even though psychology was still a relatively new field, the Governor-General selected a large stone building to house the Sanitarium. He reasoned that if he chose a large enough building, there would be plenty of room for all the patients, and he wouldn't have to hear about it for decades to come.

Within eight months, the Sanitarium was running at capacity. Six months later, there were so many people crammed into the Sanitarium that the safety of its employees could no longer be guaranteed.

In order to combat the overcrowding, the Sanitarium doctors began to release patients early, declaring them cured and fit for reintroduction into polite society. For the most part, these patients merely became a burden for their loved ones, but others - such as those with the Grave Spirit whispering in their ears - were driven to murder by their madness and became a burden for the city at large.

Now, the doctors at the Malifaux Sanitarium carefully evaluate each patient that enters their care. Those who show the most promise for recovery are transferred to the Blackwood Home for Mental Healing, while the most violent patients are usually sent to the nightmare that is Smedley's Asylum. The rest remain at the Sanitarium for treatment.

This adventure has roots long before the Fated become involved, when a man by the name of Matthias Keller was picked off the streets and brought to the Sanitarium where he fell into the clutches of a manipulative doctor with no concern for his sanity.

WITHIN THESE PAGES

Here's a list of what you'll find in this adventure!

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the section you're reading now!

CHAPTER 2: ADVENTURE

The adventure begins with the Fated being contacted by a guardsmen about a missing patient at the Malifaux Sanitarium. As the Fated investigate the Sanitarium and question the staff, they will gradually come to the conclusion that someone helped the patient escape.

An investigation of the accomplice's home reveals the true motivations behind the escape and sets the Fated on the path to the Contract Town of Miner's Gulch. Depending on how quickly they arrive, the Fated will either of the opportunity to stop the patient from unleashing a terrible entity upon the world or be forced to deal with the consequences of its escape.

CHAPTER 2: FM CHARACTERS

This chapter contains the stat blocks for the various adversaries the Fated might encounter over the course of the adventure, providing a quick reference to make it easier for the Fatemaster to run the game.

The form is a character sheet template. At the top, it has fields for 'FATED NAME' and 'PLAYER NAME' with a 'GUILD SCRIPT' field to the right. Below these are 'CURRENT PURSUIT' and 'STATION' fields, followed by 'DESTINY STEPS FULFILLED' (represented by five circles) and 'EXP.' (represented by a bar). The 'ASPECTS' section is divided into 'PHYSICAL' and 'MENTAL'. Physical aspects include Might, Grace, Speed, and Resilience. Mental aspects include Intellect, Charm, Cunning, and Tenacity. Below these are 'DERIVED ASPECTS' including Defense, Walk, Wounds, Willpower, Charge, and Height. The 'ATTACKS' section has two identical tables, each with columns for NAME, AV, DAMAGE, RANGE, SPECIAL, RELOAD, CAPACITY, and TN. To the right of the attacks is a large 'SKILLS' table with columns for SKILL, AV, RATING, and ASPECT, and multiple rows for entry.

CALL OUT BOXES

There are many call out boxes like this one scattered throughout the adventure.

These boxes have two main functions. Boxes like this one highlight rules or special notes for the Fatemaster.

Boxes like the box on the right are used to show dialogue or description. They are intended to be read by the Fatemaster aloud to the players. Be careful, though; some are only intended to be read if the Fated take certain actions or are successful at certain challenges.

"Yeah, I was there." The drifter sighs, his shoulders slumping at the admission. "It only lasted a moment, and I still don't know how I lived through it. There was only the one Ortega, but she was so fast with that gun of hers..." He shakes his head. "Two of the bandits were dead before they even realized she had drawn on them."

His gaze becomes distant as the memory comes back to him. "It was a ballet of death."



MADMAN, INTERRUPTED

PROLOGUE:

MISSING PATIENT

As the adventure begins, the Fated receive a message from Cormac Pell, a Guild Guard who works the overnight shift at the Malifaux Sanitarium. An important patient has gone missing, and he needs the Fated's help to find him before it costs him his job (and possibly lands him in jail).

The patient is a research subject for one of the doctors on staff - Dr. Horus Rimer - who is blaming Cormac and the other two guardsmen on duty for the escape. He is threatening to go to their superior if the missing man is not found and returned immediately. Cormac and the others are already on thin ice after a mistake on another assignment led them to be assigned to the Sanitarium as punishment. If Rimer goes to their boss about this, that will be the end of their careers and charges might be brought against them.

Desperate now, the three of them have pooled their resources together to hire the Fated for assistance.

Cormac's missive asks the Fated to meet him at a Guild-friendly tavern called the Watch's End as soon as possible. When the characters arrive, read the following text:



The rain bores down mercilessly upon Malifaux City as you arrive at the Watch's End, an old wooden tavern just a stone's throw from the Guild Enclave. The warm light from its windows and the trailing smoke from its chimney serve as beacons of refuge and comfort to those caught out in the storm.

Or at least, to those who are willing to take that comfort and refuge in the company of two dozen or so off-duty members of the Guild Guard.

Despite being more than an hour before noon, the tavern's tables are a crowded sea of red and gray uniforms. Guardsmen wrap their hands around mugs of hot wine and dig greedily into steaming plates of food.

Tucked away at a secluded table by the stairs, one man sits alone. He glances up as you enter and then stands, beckoning you over to his table.



The man at the table is Cormac Pell, and as the Fated arrive, he shakes their hands. He's somewhere around five and a half feet tall, with a slim, muscular frame that is accentuated by the dark colors of the Guild uniform. Despite his tired eyes and haggard features, his uniform is in good condition, and he seems comfortable in it.

After introductions are made, Pell gestures for the Fated to take a seat, waiting until they are all seated before taking his own. Read the text box below:



"I'm sorry to drag you out in this mess," he says, hooking a thumb in the direction of the window and the pouring rain, "but unfortunately, I don't think it can wait."

Pell scans the room quickly, making sure that nobody is eavesdropping, and then leans forward, lowering his voice. "Me and a couple of mates are in a bad way and we need your help. You see, a couple of months ago we got into some trouble, and the Captain reassigned us, set us to work at the Sanitarium. We've been doing our best to keep our heads down and stay out of trouble, but last night one of the patients went missing. We think he's escaped, but we can't for the life of us figure out how. If you don't find out where he got off to and get him back to his cell, we could be headed for the mines for negligence of duty, or worse, the gallows."



Pell says that he and the other two guards, Elsa Lennon and Roscoe Sudworth, were on duty during the night the patient disappeared, and that they have scrounged up every bit of scrip they could muster. They'll give it to the Fated if they can find the patient and bring him back to the Sanitarium. It comes out to a total of 22 scrip and a written I.O.U from the owner of a local diner for one fine meal (which Roscoe won off the diner's owner).

If the Fated accept the job, Pell relaxes visibly and thanks them before going into more detail.

The patient's name is Matthias Keller. Pell doesn't know much about his circumstances before he was brought in to the Sanitarium, just that he had only been in Malifaux for a few days before some guardsmen found him in the streets of Downtown in a kind of stupor.

Up until about a month ago, Keller had been as quiet as a mouse. Then he suddenly started screaming until his voice gave out and scraping his fingertips raw on the rough stone so that he could use his blood to paint weird pictures all over the walls of his cell. The doctors eventually gave him charcoal to draw with so that he wouldn't destroy his hands completely. Pell and the other guards were employed at the Sanitarium at the time but regarded it as a crazy person getting crazier; certainly nothing to be overly concerned about.

Pell suggests that the Fated come to the Sanitarium that night, at the beginning of his shift. He takes down the Fated's names and says that he'll make sure that they get added to the list of authorized visitors so that they can talk with the other guardsmen and the Sanitarium staff.



SCENE 1:

THE ASYLUM

Cormac Pell's shift doesn't start until 5 p.m., so the Fated have some time to prepare or tend to other matters before then. The Malifaux Sanitarium is about a quarter mile from the Guild Enclave, in the Downtown district. If the Fated attempt to visit the Sanitarium before Pell's shift starts, they are denied entry. The Fatemaster is encouraged to track just how much time the Fated spend on their investigation, as it determines whether or not Keller has succeeded in his plans by the time the Fated catch up with him.

When the Fated arrive at the Sanitarium at the appropriate time, read the following text:



The sky has long since darkened from bleak gray to familiar black by the time you arrive at the Guild run Sanitarium. The relentless downpour of the morning has tapered off into a softly falling mist which manages to paint the area in a strangely fanciful light. The crowds that bustle back and forth on the streets avoid coming anywhere near the looming stone building in front of you, and as you bundle up against the dampness, a bell tolls in the distance, marking the hour. The sound carries strangely down the street, a forlorn echo of the original chime.

Up ahead of you, near a tall, barred gate set into the Sanitarium's outer wall, you see Cormac Pell and two other members of the Guild Guard waiting for you.



As the Fated come into view, Pell waves them over and introduces them to his colleagues, Elsa Lennon and Roscoe Sudworth. They both shake hands with the Fated and thank them for their help before excusing themselves and making their way inside to start their shifts. If the Fated have questions for the guards, Pell says that they can chat with them once everyone is on the clock.

After they depart, Pell suggests that the Fated start their investigation by talking to Dr. Horus Rimer before he leaves for the night. Keller was his patient and research subject, and the doctor might be more inclined to talk to the Fated than he is to cooperate with the Guild Guard, who he blames for Keller's escape.

He always warns that Rimer isn't the most pleasant of people on a good day. After last night's escape, he's likely to be downright miserable to deal with.

ENTERING THE ASYLUM

When they are ready, Pell leads the Fated through the barred gates and across the Sanitarium's courtyard. The walls here are tall - twelve feet of sturdy brick - and topped with spooled barbed wire that seems difficult to climb over. Pell mentions that they checked the length of the walls as soon as the sun was up and didn't find any sign of blood or torn clothing caught in the wire, but with the recent storm, he can't be certain that such clues didn't get washed away with the rain.

If the Fated succeed on a TN 10 Athletics + Cunning Challenge, they notice that the bricks on the side of the wall have been ground down until they were smooth with the mortar, robbing it of any hand or footholds; the only way someone was climbing up over this wall was with tall ladder.

The Sanitarium's double doors are unlocked. Just inside there's a guardsmen seated at a desk, in front of a row of bars with a locked door in the center. Pell introduces him as Harvey Gibson, prompting another round of handshakes as Pell has the Fated sign in on a clipboard. Harvey wishes Pell and the Fated good luck and unlocks the interior door, allowing them to enter the Sanitarium proper. Once they're through, Gibson locks the door behind them.



CLUES IN MALIFAUX CITY

If the Fated attempt to find clues regarding Keller's escape by questioning people in town, there are two avenues of investigation that might yield useful information: Greg Duncan, a chef who was returning home from a catered party at the time of the escape, and Samantha Bartleby, a ticket taker at the Southgate Station in the Southern Slums.

A TN 14 Bewitch Challenge and two hours of questioning are enough to get someone to point them to Greg Duncan, who saw something odd the night of the escape. If questioned, he says that he saw a haggard man matching Keller's description a few blocks from the Sanitarium. The man was carrying a pistol and seemed crazy, and he accosted Duncan, demanding to know how to reach the 'town in the Badlands.' Duncan panicked and told him to take the Southern Belle train from Southgate Station, at which point the man tossed him aside and ran off.

If the Fated happen to question the workers at the Southgate Station, a TN 9 Bewitch Challenge gets Samantha Bartleby to reveal that there was some sort of crazed, armed man on the tracks the morning after Keller's escape. He took a few shots at some of the workers and then disappeared. The Guild Guard investigated and determined that the man had likely hitched a ride on a departing train headed south from the city.

CLUES IN EDGE POINT

If the Fated travel south to Edge Point - the only significant stop along the rail line - a TN 6 Bewitch Challenge puts them in contact with Henrietta Von Howell, a wealthy socialite who remembers seeing a man climbing along the outside of her train as it traveled south. She opened the window and inquired what he was doing out there, at which point he shoved a gun in her face and demanded that she take him to 'Miner's Gulch.' She responded by jabbing him with the tip of her parasol, which caused him to fall from the train with a shout of frustration and surprise. Von Howell considers the entire experience to be a sign that Condor Rails needs to do more to control the 'itinerant hobo population.'

TALKING TO RIMER

Once inside the building, Pell leads the Fated through the Sanitarium toward the wing which houses the doctors' offices. There are no patients wandering the halls - Pell mentions that they're only allowed out of their cells when accompanied by a doctor, nurse, or orderly - which makes the empty halls feel lonely and just a bit spooky.

Pell explains that he's taking them to see Dr. Rimer first, as his shift is ending soon and the doctor doesn't usually linger too long at the Sanitarium after it's over.

As the characters approach Rimer's office, read the following text:



Pell's footsteps slow as he leads you to a dead-end hallway, coming to a stop in front of a heavy wooden door marked with a nameplate reading "Dr. Horus Rimer." He takes a deep breath, obviously bracing himself, and then raps his knuckles sharply against the door. "Doctor Rimer?"

"Come in." The disembodied voice from beyond the doorway is slightly high-pitched and grating, even with the thick wooden door to act as a filter. Before Pell can so much as reach for the nob, the voice calls out again. "For God's sake, I said come in already!"



Rimer stands as the Fated enter, coming around to the front of his desk. Though almost six feet tall, he still seems like a small man: thin to the point of appearing frail with only a few sparse wisps of gray hair to decorate his otherwise bald head, Rimer looks to be in his late forties or early fifties.

The doctor seems surprised to see the Fated, and his demeanor softens as he introduces himself before casting a glare toward Pell, as if demanding to know who the Fated are. Pell explains that the Fated are looking into the disappearance "on the behalf of the Guild Guard," which draws an eye roll from Rimer as he dismisses Pell. As he leaves, Pell mentions that he'll wait outside for them.

Once the guardsman has left the room, Rimer sighs and turns back to the Fated, apologizing for his rudeness. He claims that he "cannot abide incompetence" and motions for the Fated to have a seat in his office... which contains exactly two chairs on the opposite side of his desk. Any additional Fated will have to stand (or sit on the floor, which earns another sigh from Rimer).

Read the following text:



Rimer seats himself behind his desk as you look around the office. It's neatly ordered, with the desk situated directly opposite the office door. Tall windows line the wall behind the desk, all of them reinforced with iron bars that make the room seem more like a prison than an office.

The other two walls are dominated by rows of free-standing bookshelves, three on the wall to your left and two on the wall to your right, the latter framing a small fireplace. An empty gun case hangs over the fireplace's mantle.

"Now," Rimer says, calling your attention back to him as he folds his hands together on his desk. "How can I assist your investigation?"



Dealing with Rimer is all about knowing where to stop. Despite how he treated Pell, Rimer can be a perfectly civil conversationalist - right up until the point where they push him too hard, at which point he becomes offended and asks the Fated to leave. A TN 10 Scrutiny Challenge reveals that Rimer is agitated and entitled, and that is he is unlikely to respond well to any sort of challenge to his authority.



QUESTIONING RIMER

Here are some of the possible relevant topics the Fated may ask Rimer about.

MATTHIAS KELLER

If the Fated bring up the escaped Matthias Keller, Rimer calmly explains that he believed Keller suffered from a rare manifestation of Badlands Fever. Most of those affected by the condition constantly repeat the phrase ‘The desert must be fed,’ but in Keller’s case, his breakdown took a different course. Rimer claims that he might have been able to make a breakthrough in the treatment of Badlands Fever, if only he had more time to study his patient.

A TN 11 Scrutiny Challenge reveals that there is more Rimer isn’t telling them, but if pressed, he claims that anything further pertains to his research, which he does not intend to share with them. If they attempt to press him beyond that, he grows indignant and asks them to leave.

CORMAC PELL

Rimer considers Pell and his “cronies” to be incompetent at best and negligent at worse. He knows that they were assigned to the sanitarium as punishment, but not the nature of the misdeeds that earned them that punishment. He makes a half-joking comment that they probably lost a prisoner at the jail, given their track records.

A TN 10 Scrutiny Challenge reveals that Rimer is playing up his dislike of Pell and the others, almost as if he were putting on a performance.

THE EMPTY GUN CASE

If the Fated mention the empty gun case above his fireplace, Rimer mentions that he kept a pistol as a means of self-defense, but that he (ironically) lost it when he was mugged on his way home from work several months ago.

A TN 10 Scrutiny Challenge reveals that Rimer is lying, but if pressed, he calls them idiots and calls for Pell to escort them out of his office.

THE PREVIOUS NIGHT

If the Fated ask Rimer about the events of the night before, he says that he spent the afternoon with Keller and returned him to his cell at 7:00 p.m. He mentions that whenever a patient is checked in or out of their cell, the time is recorded in the log book kept at the main desk. He returned to his office, gathered a few papers, and then left for his home. His departure, he mentions, is recorded in the log book at the front doors.

As an afterthought, he mentions that Keller was particularly excited last night and that he was forced to sedate the man, which resulted in him returning Keller to his cell later than usual.

A TN 10 Scrutiny Challenge allows a Fated to sense that Rimer is giving them a carefully rehearsed story, rather than the truth. If they accuse him of lying, the character sees a flash of panic in his eyes before he calls them idiots and calls for Pell to escort them out of his office.



Once the Fated are done talking to Rimer (or after they are unceremoniously thrown out of his office), Pell asks if they want to talk to the rest of the staff or take a look at Keller’s cell. There’s time for both, but if the Fated feel like splitting up, he’ll take everyone to the main desk in a patient ward to meet the staff and then take anyone that wants to see Keller’s cell further into the complex.

TALKING TO THE STAFF

Aside from Cormac Pell and Dr. Rimer, there were six other people who were working in the Eastern wing of the Guild Sanitarium last night: two members of the Guild Guard (Elsa Lennon and Roscoe Sudworth), two nurses (Mira Aiken and Elaine Davenport), and two orderlies (Magnus Beckham and James Conner). When Pell leads the Fated into the patient ward, all six are gathered around the main desk.

THE GUILD GUARDS

Cormac Pell has already told the Fated everything he knows about what happened, and Roscoe states that he and Pell were making the rounds together last night. Neither saw anything suspicious or out of the ordinary.

Elsa, on the other hand, was stationed at the main desk. She remembers signing Keller into Rimer's custody and then signing him back into his cell later in the evening. She checks the log book for the exact times: Rimer checked Keller out at 2:30 p.m. to take Keller down to the labs for study and then brought him back just at 6:57 p.m.

As she's looking over the log book, Elsa chews her lip thoughtfully for a moment. She says that normally, Keller is back in his cell by 5:30 p.m. at the latest, and a brief perusal of the log book confirms that. Even on nights when Rimer is staying late, she says, he brings Keller back by 5:30 p.m. and then locks himself away in his office.

She goes on to mention that Keller was really quiet when Rimer brought him back last night. Rimer claimed that Keller had gotten out of control while he was in the lab and he'd been forced to sedate him. Since that explained Keller's behavior and the lateness of the hour, she'd put the whole thing out of her mind until Keller's cell was found empty hours later. As far as she can remember, he didn't make a single sound after he was back in his cell.

THE NURSES

The first nurse, Elaine, was at the main desk when Rimer brought Keller back to his cell and can confirm Elsa's version of events.

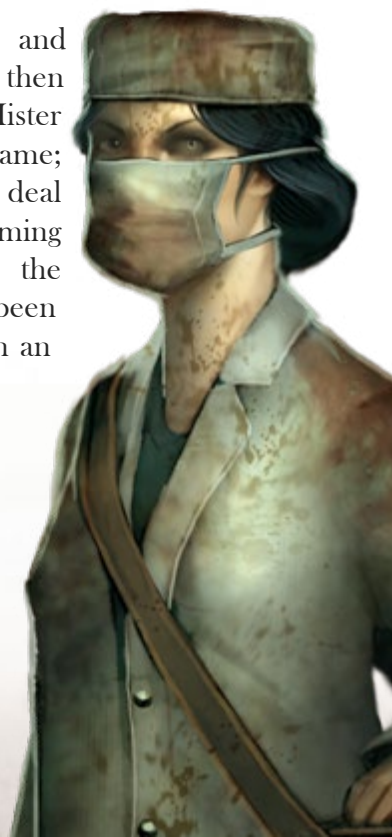
Neither Mira nor Elaine have anything of note to contribute on Keller's disappearance, but a TN 9 Scrutiny Challenge reveals that they're holding something back.

If pressed, it takes a TN 10 Bewitch, Convince, or Intimidate Challenge to get them to mention that Dr. Rimer has been acting strangely lately (neither wants Dr. Rimer making their job more difficult than it already is).

On a success, Elaine explains that Dr. Rimer started working at the Sanitarium a little more than a year ago, but up until recently, his attendance has been terrible. At least once a month, he disappears for three or four days in a row without saying a word to anyone. To make matters worse, when he returns, he usually has such a foul temper that the nurses have to spend another week avoiding him.

A little over a month ago, though, Rimer's absence stretched out to over a week and a half. Everyone thought that he had quit or been killed by a mugger, but then he showed up one morning as if nothing had happened, as happy as could be. For the next few days, he was almost pleasant to deal with.

Mira chimes in at that point and mentions that it was right around then that this whole thing with "Mister Keller" started. She says it's a shame; one day he was quiet and easy to deal with, and the next he was screaming and throwing himself against the walls. Since then, Dr. Rimer has been working with Keller every day in an attempt to help him recover.



THE ORDERLIES

Both Magnus and James are sullen, angry men, and it's difficult to get them talking without an incentive. If the Fated succeed at a TN 11 Barter Challenge and give him at least 5 scrip, however, Magnus will tell them what he knows. Read the following text:



“Alright, look.” Magnus pulls you off to the side and looks around to make sure that no one else is listening. “James and I keep an old mattress stashed down in the basement for when we need to get away for a little bit, maybe take the occasional nap. It's hidden behind a bunch of old beds and junk down there.”

“Anyways, I was down there last night, and I hear the basement door open up. That thing squeals like nothing you've ever heard. At first, I thought maybe it was James coming down looking for me, but when I stuck my head out, there were two of them: Dr. Rimer and that guy who escaped.”

Magnus casts another glance back over his shoulder. “I thought it was a little weird, them being down there and all, but I didn't stick around to find out what they were doing. As soon as they were out of sight, I high-tailed it out of there. I was going to say something to one of the guards, but before I got a chance, I saw the doctor taking that guy back to his cell. So I figure, why bother, right? If anyone found out about our little hiding spot, they'd pitch a fit, so it didn't seem worth mentioning.”



KELLER'S CELL

Once the Fated are ready, Pell will take the Fated through another locked door and down a hallway to Keller's cell. He explains that they usually don't give writing tools to patients, but after Keller kept hurting himself to draw on the walls with his blood, they relented and gave him a stick of charcoal. Read the following text:



No more than eight feet in any direction, the inside of Keller's cell is an eerie and somewhat grotesque testament to the man's sudden, headlong plunge into madness. Harsh lines of blood and charcoal cover the walls, forming a bizarre web of overlapping pictures and writing that is almost painful to look at. Drawn in thick slashes of rusty red and dusty black, they appear over and over, perhaps a dozen times all in all: **GET OUT.**

The images scrawled on the wall can no doubt be deciphered, but it will take time.



The door of Keller's cell is thick, reinforced wood with a single slot to pass food through. There's a key lock and a deadbolt on the outside of the door, and both are intact and functional. A TN 10 Notice Challenge reveals no sign of tampering or unusual scuff marks on either lock.

The images in Keller's Cell are a result of Rimer's gradual brainwashing of the man. Using his manifested power of being able to create illusions - combined with a number of drugs and his training as a psychologist - Rimer convinced Keller that an object he calls the Vessel was calling to him. By the time Rimer's brainwashing had reached its conclusion, Keller believed that the only way to save himself from the visions and whispering voices was to do what the Vessel wanted him to do: namely, to retrieve it from the Contract Town of Miner's Gulch and deliver it to a building in the Howling Slums.

Deciphering the images in Keller's Cell is handled with an Ongoing Challenge:

INTERPRETING MADNESS

- **SKILLS ALLOWED:** Art, Literacy
- **TARGET NUMBER:** 12
- **DURATION:** 10 minutes
- **SUCCESS REQUIREMENT:** 4
- **FAILURE REQUIREMENT:** 2

Keep track of the time the Fated spend on this Ongoing Challenge, as it directly affects how long their investigation takes; see the A Trail of Clues section on page 19 for more details.

For every success the Fated achieve on this Ongoing Challenge, they're able to make out one of the images drawn on the walls of Keller's cell. Each one appears several times, and each appearance is an evolution of the one before it, showing more detail. The images can be deciphered in any order.

IMAGE 1

The first image depicts a simple cube covered in arcane markings. In the earliest versions of the picture, the markings are little more than scrawled lines of no consequence, but in the most recent versions, they are drawn with exacting detail. If any of the Fated succeed on a TN 12 Enchanting Challenge, they realize that the markings are a containment spell of some kind and are designed to seal something within the cube. (This is the Vessel, a magical prison created by Rimer's grandfather during the days of the First Breach.)

IMAGE 2

The second image shows a mining town and actually has the most variation between versions as each one shows a slightly different perspective of the town's central square: the well, the saloon, and a long series of buildings stretching off into the distance. There's not enough detail to get a definitive location, but none of them seem to include a train station. A TN 16 Geography Challenge identifies the town as Miner's Gulch, a small Contract Town in the Badlands. (This is where Rimer wants Keller to go to retrieve the Vessel.)

IMAGE 3

The third image shows another building in a very different locale. It's a shabby building on a cobbled street, drawn in exacting detail. The other structures that appear around it are almost fuzzy by comparison, but there's a small fountain topped with some sort of winged humanoid statue in the distance. A tall barricade runs along the side of the image, suggesting that wherever it is, the building lies near one of the barricades that separates the inhabited portion of the city and the Quarantine Zone. A TN 14 Geography Challenge identifies the fountain (and thus, the building) as being in the Howling Slums district of the city. (This is where Rimer wants Keller to bring the Vessel once he's retrieved it.)

If the Fated successfully complete the Ongoing Challenge, they find small, cramped writing almost hidden between two larger scrawls. It reads: "Doctor making me see things." (This is a reference to Rimer using his illusions to brainwash Keller.)

If the Fated catastrophically fail the Ongoing Challenge, they find a scrawled phrase written in tiny, red-brown letters (his own blood): "Mira's eyes glow in the dark I know I know watching me." (This is just crazy rambling with no basis in reality.)



THE SUSPICIOUS DOCTOR

At this point, there's no evidence to suggest that Keller was able to (or capable of) escaping from the Sanitarium on his own. On the other hand, there's a fair amount of strange behavior on the part of Dr. Rimer, and if the Fated have some success during their investigation, it should be enough to encourage them to take a closer look at him.

Rimer leaves the Sanitarium at 6:30 p.m. (about an hour later than usual, due to being nervous about the Fated's investigation), takes a brief dinner at a small diner that lasts an hour, and then heads home, arriving at 8:00 p.m.

The Fated's investigation takes one hour to complete, plus however long they spent on the Interpreting Madness Ongoing Challenge. Since the Fated arrived at the Sanitarium at 5 p.m., this means that the Fated wrap up their investigation a little after 6 p.m., giving them a narrow window where they can still catch Rimer while he's at the Sanitarium.

SEARCHING RIMER'S OFFICE

If Rimer has gone home for the day (or if the Fated wait for him to leave), they can investigate his office in his absence. The Fated will either have to convince one of the guards to open it for them (which requires a TN 7 Bewitch, Convince, or Intimidate Challenge, as Rimer as them all thoroughly intimidated) or sneak away and pick the lock (which requires a TN 12 Stealth Challenge to duck away from the guards and a TN 10 Lockpicking Challenge and a Lockpicking Skill Toolkit to open the lock). Alternatively, the Fated can attempt to force the door open with a TN 10 Athletics Challenge, but the guards will attempt to stop them if present, and if not, the noise attracts both Cormac Pell and Roscoe Sudsworth to investigate the disturbance.

Unfortunately, there's not much of note in Rimer's office. His desk contains a stack of patient files, but Keller's file is missing. If the Fated think to mention it to the guards or nurses, they'll suggest that he might have taken it home with him; he's been doing that a lot with Keller's files, ever since Keller had his breakdown a month ago.

FOLLOWING RIMER HOME

If Rimer hasn't left when the Fated finish their investigation, they can covertly trail him with TN 8 Stealth Challenges; if any character fails, he notices someone following him and quickly hurries home to avoid what he believes is a mugger or other miscreant. If none of the Fated alert him to their presence, they're able to watch him eat at a diner before returning to his apartment at 8:00 p.m.

If Rimer has already gone home, the guards can obtain his home address for the Fated from the Sanitarium's personnel files.



SCENE 2:

RIMER'S APARTMENT

Rimer's home is a second floor apartment that is situated above a tailor's shop in the Downtown district. It consists of three rooms: a small kitchen, a living room, and a small bedroom. The only restroom is a communal restroom that is shared by the floor's other apartment; it must be accessed via the hallway.

The bedroom and kitchen are just as neat as Rimer's office, but the living room is a different story entirely. Every available surface is either littered with open books or covered in pinned-up sheets of paper bearing his cramped writing. The only clear area in the entire room is a space directly in front of its largest wall, which bears a large map of Malifaux that has been marked up in all manner of notations and drawings.

If Rimer is home when the Fated arrive, their arrival annoys him, and he quite rudely informs them that he has no interest in discussing business matters on his off hours. If the Fated succeed at a TN 11 Scrutiny Challenge, they are able to pick up on the fact that Rimer is very worried about seeing them again. He attempts to shut the door on the Fated, but they can push past him and into his apartment with a TN 8 Labor Challenge.

If the Fated force their way into his apartment, Rimer is outraged and demands that the characters leave at once before he calls for the Guild Guard. Despite his threats, however, he never actually sends for the authorities, instead refusing to answer any questions as he follows the Fated around and interferes with their attempts to search his apartment. If the characters turn hostile (or discover his Journals or the Vessel materials), Rimer uses his illusion powers to cover his escape and flee.


Similarly, if Rimer returns home to find people searching his apartment (or just comes home to an apartment that has been searched), he realizes that someone is on to him and flees at the first opportunity.

If Rimer flees (for any reason), he goes to the building in the Howling Slums and waits for Keller to return with the Vessel. He tries to gather up the Journals and Vessel Materials before leaving, but if the Fated are present, he leaves them behind. Rimer

knows that trying to sneak the items out might end up drawing attention to them, and he'd rather take his chances on the Fated not finding them if possible.

If the Fated choose to stake out his apartment, then Rimer proves to be remarkably boring. He works in his apartment for a few hours, then turns out the light and goes to sleep. He leaves the next morning at 7:00, stops at the same diner for breakfast, and then continues the rest of the way to the Sanitarium.

SEARCHING THE APARTMENT

The Fated can make a TN 5 Notice Challenge to search Rimer's apartment. If Rimer is present, he proves to be a distraction and imposes a  to this Challenge for as long as he is allowed to move freely within the apartment. On a success, the Fated notice the markings on the Map (see below). If they achieve a Margin of Success, they also find the Journals (pg. 17), and two Margins of Success allow them to find the Vessel Materials (pg. 19).

THE MAP

If the Fated notice the markings on the map, read the following text:



The longest wall of the living room is occupied by a large, crudely drawn map of the Badlands. Hastily scrawled notes mark the locations of towns and settlements spread out through the barren area, but all of them have been harshly exed out. The one exception is the town of Miner's Gulch, situated a few hours south of Edge Point, which has been circled several times.

Scraps of paper create an uneven border for the map; a chronicle of the doctor's search for the town made up of handwritten notes and pages torn from the books with passages underlined. One page stands out from the others - at the top of the map, sitting at the apex of the notes like a keystone - is a dry, yellowed piece of paper bearing an old drawing of a cube with arcane markings on its sides.



If any of the Fated succeed on a TN 12 Enchanting Challenge, they realize that the markings are a containment spell of some kind and are designed to seal something within the cube. If the Fated successfully identified the cube drawing in Keller's cell, then they automatically pass this Challenge. Either way, they notice that the drawing is identical to the one in Keller's Cell (pg. 13).

A TN 10 Geography or History Challenge allows a Fated to realize that many of the marked locations on the map are towns that were lost during the time of the First Breach.

THE JOURNALS

The Fated find a pair of journals on a small desk, buried underneath several layers of loose paper. The first is the Ancestor Journal, which appears to be about a hundred years old, while the second is Rimer's Journal, a much newer book. Both are described below.

ANCESTOR JOURNAL

As the characters examine the journal more closely, read the following text:



Bound in red leather, cracked and dry with age, the thin volume smells faintly of pipe tobacco and dust. The pages within are brittle and what remains of the book's stitching is barely holding it together.

A faint scrawl on the inside cover declares that the journal once belonged to Jonah Rimer, likely one of the doctor's ancestors. The first page begins in the middle of a sentence, suggesting that there are either pages missing or that there was another volume before this one; unfortunately, the journal's poor condition makes it impossible to tell which.



The journal is faded and contains plenty of misspelled words and bad grammar; after an hour spent reading it, a character must succeed at a TN 12 Literacy Challenge. On a failure, the character is unable to read the journal. On a success, however, the character learns that the journal details Jonah's encounters with an entity that taught him much about the use of magic before turning on him and attempting to possess his body. Jonah managed to fight the entity off and seal its essence inside "the Vessel," a glass cube inscribed with arcane markings that were designed to seal the entity inside it.

After he locked the spirit away, Jonah took the Vessel out into the Badlands and buried it at the bottom of a maze of canyons. Despite his seeming victory, some of the journal's later entries express doubt as to how long the Vessel would be able to contain the entity within it and his fear of what might happen should it fail. He speaks of his intention to construct another Vessel - stronger and more durable than the original - and his notes detail exactly what materials and steps would be necessary to create it.

There's also an in-depth description of the process needed to bind the entity and transfer it into the new Vessel.

Unfortunately, it appears that the Breach closed before Jonah could actually build the new Vessel. The last entry is still describing his search for the proper materials.

RIMER'S JOURNAL

Rimer's journal is written in a precise and meticulous hand, and the book is divided into three sections by a pair of stiff ribbons. The journal takes two hours to read but does not require any Literacy Challenges to understand it; for all of Rimer's faults, he has excellent penmanship.

The following page contains breakdowns of all three sections of his journal.

Section 1

The first section is an analytical account of Rimer's search for the Vessel. It contains everything from the necessary supplies for each trip to the names of the guides he hired (and how competent he felt each of them were). Each entry covers a single expedition and contains copious notes about each location: how it compared to the landmarks and notes in his grandfather's journal as well as any potential difficulties that might arise if that site should prove to be the location of the Vessel.

At the end of this section is the entry for the town of Miner's Gulch, notable for the last words in its entry. Read the following text:



The last entry of the journal reads as follows: "Subject has shown an even greater propensity for obsession than I had anticipated and is likely to become violent if challenged in pursuit of his goals. Town has a population of approximately forty-five people. Subject will need to be outfitted with a weapon and instructed to use whatever force is necessary to cow the population and retrieve the Vessel. It is unlikely that the subject will be forced to kill all of the town's residents; I estimate the death toll should not exceed fifteen souls. Acceptable loss."



Section 2

The second section of the journal focuses on Rimer's experiments on Matthias Keller and sheds some light on his 'escape' from the Sanitarium.

The section begins with a detailed list of traits and attributes that Rimer was looking for in a subject, such as obsessive qualities and physical fitness. The next few pages afterwards contain profiles of Keller and several other patients at the Sanitarium, each with a series of notes about their individual attributes. A handful of the names are crossed out in obvious rejection and some are unmarked, but Keller's name is circled several times.

Following his selection, Rimer describes every session with Keller in exacting detail. His goal, as he states it, is not just to drive the man insane, but to create a very specific fracture in his psyche that would make Keller obsessed with finding the Vessel and bringing it to Rimer. Using his ability to create illusions, Rimer assaulted Keller with an ever-evolving series of visions and whispering voices, brainwashing him into believing that the Vessel was calling to him.

He then describes choosing a building in the Howling Slums as the drop-off point to meet with Keller after he returns with the Vessel. Rimer's notes are detailed, and with a TN 8 Geography Challenge, the Fated can locate the building in the Howling Slums. Rimer notes, however, that he's somewhat concerned that Keller will not be able to find his way to the drop-off point, but that he's willing to take that risk. If worse comes to worse, he assumes, Rimer will be picked up by the Guard and sent back to the Sanitarium for his care, at which point he can pick up the Vessel from Keller's logged belongings or interrogate the man until he tells Rimer where he stashed it.

Section 3

The third section of the journal is a careful examination of several different possible routes and methods for staging Keller's escape. Each one is carefully plotted out with notes about who might be encountered on each route and what obstacles would have to be overcome. There are small maps sketched onto the pages, and even a description of the illusion he would have to create in order to make it appear that Keller was returning to his cells. It's clear from his notes that Rimer considers most of his coworkers to be idiots.



VESSEL MATERIALS

Tucked into the back of the closet in the bedroom is a small box containing a worn and stained piece of oilcloth. Beneath the cloth are carefully cut panes of glass and brass edging, each approximately 6" on a side, a small vial of acid, and a number of loose pages that appear to have been used to practice drawing mystical symbols.

These are the materials that Rimer had planned to use to construct a new Vessel. If the Fated were able to decipher the directions in the Ancestor's Journal, they can finish constructing the Vessel with one hour of work and a TN 13 Artefacting Challenge. If they fail this Challenge with a Margin of Failure, they ruin the materials and cannot repeat the Challenge; otherwise, they can attempt the assembly again with another hour of work.

So long as the Fated have the Ancestor's Journal, they can hire artisans to replicate the pieces of the cube, but doing so requires a total of 8 scrip and a week of work. Unless the Fated tip very well (at least 2 additional scrip), word of their obviously magical device also gets back to the Guild's Witch Hunters, who are certain to pay the Fated a visit in the future.

A TRAIL OF CLUES

Though there is little at Rimer's apartment to suggest his motivations, the evidence clearly demonstrates that not only was he the mastermind behind Keller's escape, but that Keller is only one piece of a much larger plan that centers around an artifact called the Vessel. If the Fated turn Rimer's Journal over to the guards at the Sanitarium, it's enough to clear the guards' names. See the Conclusion (pg. 27) for more details.

Regardless of whether or not the characters confront Rimer at this point, they should be able to deduce that Keller has traveled to the town of Miner's Gulch, and that he might be willing to kill to find the Vessel. If the Fated act quickly, the characters just might have a chance to stop him.

If the Fated decide to travel to Miner's Gulch, there are two possible ways the adventure can unfold, depending upon how long Keller has been on the run. The fastest way south is to take the train to Edge Point, which costs 1 scrip per person. From there, they can hire a stagecoach to take them the rest of the way for a total of 2 scrip (regardless of the number of passengers). The entire travel time is six hours.

If the Fated arrive in Miner's Gulch the night after Keller's escape - the same evening the Fated met Pell and began their investigation - then they have the opportunity to stop Keller from getting

his hands on the Vessel. This path is described in Scene 3: In the Nick of Time (pg. 20).

If the Fated arrive after that night's dawn (6:00 am), however, then Keller will not only have acquired the Vessel, but he will also have been possessed by the entity within it. This path is described in Scene 4: Always Too Late (pg. 24).



SCENE 3:

IN THE NICK OF TIME

This scene takes place if the Fated arrive before dawn, the night after Keller's escape.

It's dark when the Fated arrive at Miner's Gulch. Read the following text:



There is little to distinguish Miner's Gulch from any other fading boomtown on the outskirts of civilization. The night air, though cool, is painfully dry and dusty, and the unpainted wooden buildings are peppered with dry rot. The two most important structures - the saloon and the well, likely in that order - are right smack-dab in the center of town.

As you approach, it's clear that something is very wrong. Despite the lateness of the hour, there should still be lights shining through the windows, and the saloon should have at least a few patrons enjoying the late hour. Instead, seven corpses lay sprawled out in front of its door, and the small town is smothered under a blanket of silence. The only light seems to be a flickering firelight to the south of town.



The bodies lying near the saloon's door have each been shot several times in the chest. One of them wears a badge that identifies him as the town's sheriff.

An empty double-action revolver is lying on the ground a few dozen feet away, but there's no sign of the firearms that the sheriff and the other men were presumably carrying. A TN 8 Doctor Challenge is enough to tell that the men have been dead for about twelve hours at this point.

The saloon and all of the town's homes are empty.

If the Fated investigate the firelight to the south of town, read the following text:



As you follow the main road south toward the flickering flames, the oppressive silence is gently pushed aside by the faint click of tools; the unmistakable sound of metal striking against earth and stone.

The first fire is twenty yards beyond the last building, and on the far side of the flames, you can see the missing townsfolk. Men, women, and children are digging a deep pit in the earth while another man - presumably Matthias Keller - stands upon a large wooden crate with a shotgun in his hands. Two mismatched pistols are jammed into his belt.

The man's eyes shine with madness, even in the dull glow of the fires, and his face and hands are a weeping mass of blisters and second degree burns, likely the result of crossing at least a portion of the Badlands with no cover from the sun.

A cry comes up from the pit. "We're through! We're thro-" The words are suddenly cut off as a ripple of magical power passes over the crowd.



Any Fated present when the ripple of magical power passes over the crowd must attempt TN 10 Centering Challenges. Any who fail cease whatever they're doing and stand in place, slack-jawed and staring blankly into the distance. Keller throws aside his shotgun (a Collier Hammerless) and leaps eagerly down into the pit; if the Fated chase after him, see *The Chase* (pg. 21) for more details.

Most of the townsfolk - a little over twenty five of them, all in all - freeze in a similar manner, their faces slack and absent of any expression at all. After a moment, the affected Townsfolk turn as one and begin attacking any unaffected characters as their

eyes glow with a faint purple light. Those townsfolk who were not affected by the ripple of power attempt to restrain their crazed neighbors and family. They have no idea who the Fated are, but if they seem to be well-armed or after Keller, they shout for them to go after “that madman.”

The Affected Townsfolk that aren’t restrained fight as three mobs, and their stats can be found on page 30. If any Fated characters failed the Centering Challenge, they join one of these mobs in attacking their former companions (which has no effect on the stats of the mob; Fated that are ‘absorbed’ into a mob in this manner cannot be individually targeted).

When the last Affected Townsfolk has been defeated, any Fated who had joined those mobs are reduced to 0 Wounds and knocked unconscious; when they regain consciousness, they are once again in control of their actions.

If all of the Fated fail their Centering Challenge, see the Bad Things Happen sidebar on page 27.

THE CHASE

If the Fated chase Keller down into the pit, they have a chance to catch him before he reaches the Vessel. Read the following text when they enter the pit:



The pit is about a ten foot drop, and it's just as wide. From that point, it's another ten foot drop through a small hole into the darkness of the caverns below. You can smell dust and stale air, and you can hear Keller's fading footsteps and cackles of victory echo eerily up from the darkness.



Keller doesn't have any light source to help him see, but the entity within the Vessel has touched his mind and is leading him to it. A character on the surface (such as one of the townsfolk, if the Affected Townsfolk have been defeated) can grab a burning stick from the fires and hand it down to the Fated to use as a torch, but doing so takes two rounds. If a character has to climb out of the pit to get a torch (there are enough crude handholds to make climbing out a non-issue), then it takes four rounds.

Once the Fated have dropped from the pit and into caverns below, chasing after Keller is handled with an Ongoing Challenge:

CHASING KELLER

- **SKILLS ALLOWED:** Acrobatics, Athletics, Navigation, Track
- **TARGET NUMBER:** 7
- **DURATION:** 1 round
- **SUCCESS REQUIREMENT:** 6
- **FAILURE REQUIREMENT:** 2

The TN of this Challenge is increased by +1 for each full round that passed between Keller entering the caverns and the Fated entering the caverns. If the Fated do not have a light source or cannot see in the dark, they suffer a \square to every Challenge made as part of this Ongoing Challenge.

If the Fated succeed at this Ongoing Challenge, they catch up to Keller before he reaches the Vessel. See The Vessel on page 22 for more information.

On a catastrophic failure, Keller manages to reach the Vessel before the Fated can catch him. See The Shattered Vessel on page 22 for more information.

THE VESSEL

Regardless of the Fated's success or failure at the Ongoing Challenge, read the following text as they finish it and arrive at the Vessel's location:



You barrel out of the darkness of the tunnel and into a larger cavern that is lit with a sinister purple glow. Water drips down from fang-like formations along the ceiling into the pools below. Ahead of you is a narrow stone bridge, twenty feet long, that runs uphill toward the back of the cavern and the source of the eerie light.



If the Fated succeed on the Ongoing Challenge, then they catch up with Keller before he crosses the bridge. He turns and starts shooting at the Fated, signaling the start of Dramatic Time. Keller starts the combat ten yards from the Fated and two yards from the edge of the cavern cliff. His stats can be found on page 31.

The caverns are roughly seven yards wide and littered with enough rocks and debris that they count as severe terrain (and thus reduce movement by half). The purple light of the Vessel provides enough illumination to allow characters to see without penalty.

Characters standing on the narrow stone walkway suffer a \square to their Defense duels (there's no room to dodge). If they suffer damage, they must immediately pass an Acrobatics duel with a TN equal to twice the damage suffered or fall 10 yards from the ledge and suffer 5/7/9 damage as they land on the stalagmites and shallow water pools below. Characters can climb up to either side of the trench with a TN 8 Athletics Challenge, which allows the character to climb a number of yards up the wall equal to half their Walk speed, plus one yard per Margin of Success.

After the battle, the Fated can cross the bridge to reach the Vessel. It's a glass cube that glows with an intense purple light; any character looking at it for longer than a few moments feels a throbbing pain behind her eyes. If a character touches the Vessel with bare flesh, she must attempt a TN 12 Centering Challenge or become possessed by the entity within. See the Possession section on page 23 for more information.

THE SHATTERED VESSEL

If the Fated suffer a catastrophic failure on the Ongoing Challenge, then they arrive in the cavern as described above, only Keller is on the other side of the bridge. Add the following text to the previous text box:



You barely have time to adjust to your surroundings when you catch sight of Keller in the distance. As you watch, he throws something to the ground, shattering it open with the sound of broken glass.

The purple light flares, and Keller is wreathed in violet flames, his eyes shining like beacons in the dark. With a primal cry of triumph, he throws his arms wide and shouts a harsh word of command.

All around you, the darkness begins to break away from itself, congealing into a titanic, misshapen form of inky shadow as it lumbers toward you.



The Fated have to contend not only with a Possessed Keller, but also with the Darkness Golem that he just summoned on the Fated's side of the bridge. The bridge is only 7 yards long, so Keller stays on the opposite side of it and uses his magic to hamper them during the fight. The stats for Possessed Keller and the Darkness Golem can be found on pages 32 and 33, respectively.

The entity controlling Possessed Keller can only control him while he is conscious, so knocking Keller unconscious is an effective way of neutralizing it. If Possessed Keller is killed, however, the entity immediately attempts to possess the nearest character each turn until it succeeds. If the Fated flee from the cavern, they move beyond its range, but in time, the entity will be able to extend its reach and possess one of the residents of Miner's Gulch; see the Conclusion section on page 27 for more information.

POSSESSION

If a Fated character is possessed by the entity, she falls under the immediate control of the Fatemaster and becomes an Enforcer (8) character. The entity can make use of any of the character's Manifested Powers or Spells, as well as Possessed Keller's ability to Obey and Enchant Weapon. While possessed, the entity attempts to get to the surface so that it can spread its malign influence to as many people as possible; if the possessed character reaches Malifaux City, see the Conclusion section on page 27 for more information.

As with Keller, knocking the possessed character unconscious renders the entity unable to control the possessed character until she regains consciousness (at which point, the entity resumes full control).

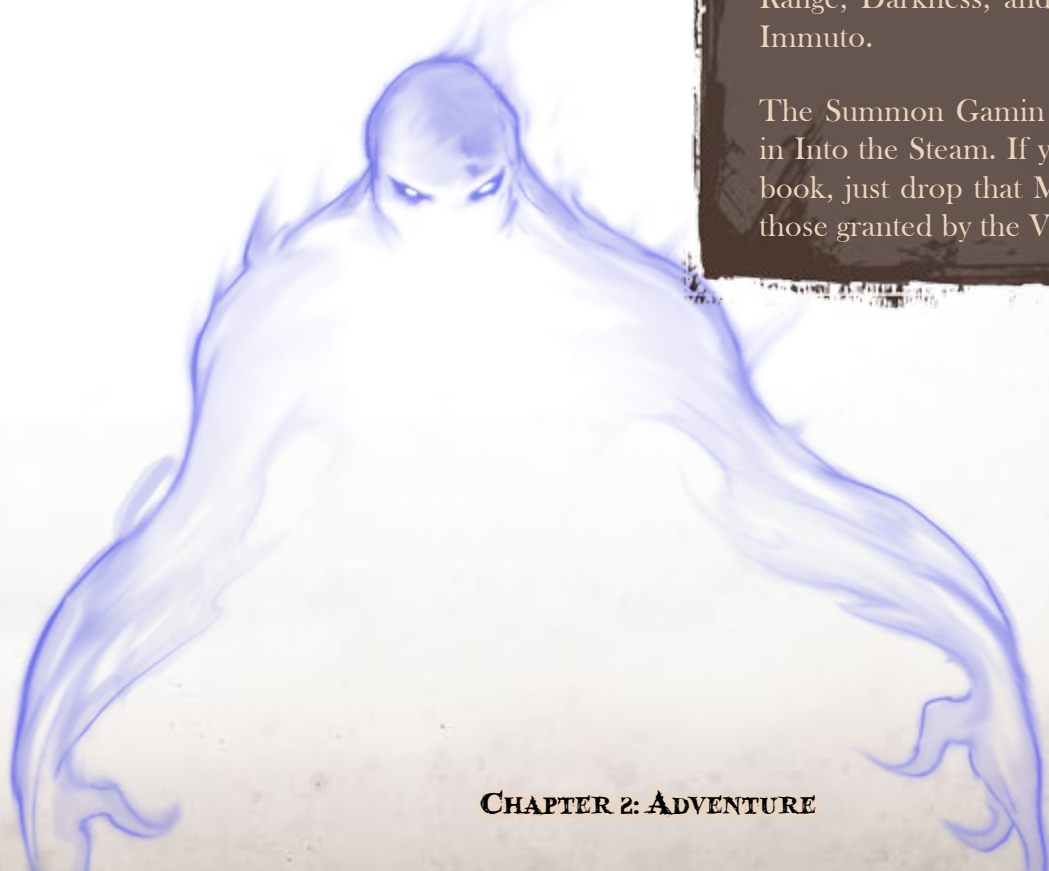
THE RITUAL

If the characters have the Ancestor Journal (pg. 17) and have constructed a new Vessel from the Vessel Materials (pg. 19), they can attempt to use the ritual to imprison the entity within the new Vessel. Doing so requires the characters to spend a total of 10 AP chanting the ritual, spread out across any number of characters and turns.

As soon as the Fated begin the ritual, the entity turns its full attention toward anyone chanting and attempts to prevent them from completing it. If they succeed, the new Vessel and the runes carved into its sides glow with a bright white light as the entity is sucked into the Vessel and imprisoned there. Because this Vessel is stronger than the original, characters can handle the trapped entity without concern (though breaking the Vessel still frees the entity as described above).

While the entity is trapped within the new Vessel, it functions as a Grimoire with the Summon Gamin, Mind Control, and Elemental Projectile Magia, and the Alter Range, Darkness, and Increased Duration Immuto.

The Summon Gamin Magia can be found in *Into the Steam*. If you are not using that book, just drop that Magia from the list of those granted by the Vessel.



SCENE 4:

ALWAYS TOO LATE

This scene takes place if the Fated arrive in Miner's Gulch any time after dawn.

Read the following text:



A silence thick with dread hangs over the sandy streets of Miner's Gulch; the only sound comes from the occasional ruffle of your clothing or the scuff of your boots. As you approach the center of town, the wind shifts toward you, carrying with it the fetid stench of bodies left to rot in the hot sun.

Three bloated corpses lay sprawled out in front of the saloon, but before you can investigate, three dozen men and women shuffle into view, each of them holding hammers and pickaxes in limp arms. Their expressions are blank, but as they draw closer, you can see a dull purple glow in their eyes.



There is one mob of Affected Townsfolk here. It begins the battle fifteen yards from the Fated but close the distance at a steady pace.

Alerted to the characters' presence by the sounds of the battle outside, the unaffected townsfolk - who have been tied up in the saloon - immediately begin calling out for help. Once the Fated have dealt with the Affected Townsfolk, the Fated can enter the saloon and free them without incident.

After the Fated have freed the trapped townsfolk, read the text on the following column:



A middle-aged man rubs at the rope burns on his wrist for a moment, then reaches out to shake your hand. "I don't know who you are, but I'm damn glad to see ya. Name's Percy, but everybody 'round here calls me Perky. I own this here saloon."

He rubs a hand over his mostly bald head. "Damnedest thing. Fellow came stumblin' out of the desert yesterday, his face all burnt up, jabbering on 'bout somethin' callin' him to Miner's Gulch. The Sheriff - that's him and his boys out front, poor bastards - thought he had gotten lost in the desert and went crazy from the sun. Happens sometimes. This fellow, though, he just whipped out a revolver and started shootin' til he ran out of bullets."

Percy takes a deep breath and sighs. "Once that was done, he grabbed their guns and started screaming at us. Made us grab tools and spend all day and most of the night digging a damned hole out on the edge of town. He just stood there the whole time, kept hollerin' at us to dig faster. Anybody who stopped for more than a couple breaths got shot; lost two more that way."

"The real crazy started when we broke through into some cave system down there. Half the town got this weird look on their faces and started pushin' folks back from the hole, 'cept for the fellow, who just jumped right down there. Didn't even look to see how deep it was." He shakes his head. "After that, things got bad. The folks that got weird started beating us that didn't, and when that was done, they tied us up here. They're probably still out by the hole, guardin' it."



If the Fated seem inclined to attack the Affected Townsfolk guarding the pit, Percy asks them to go easy on them. Whatever it is that's happening to them, he doesn't consider it to be their fault, and the small town has already lost enough people.

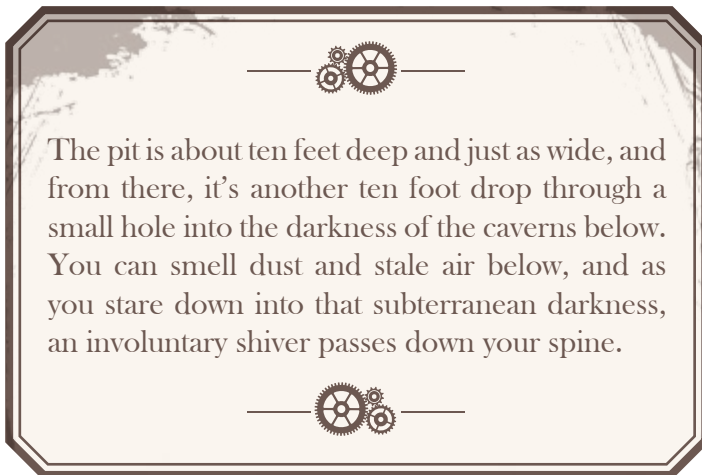
If the Fated succeed at a TN 10 Leadership Challenge, the rest of the townsfolk will agree to come with the Fated and help them deal with the Affected Townsfolk by the hole. If this happens, the Fated only have to deal with a single mob of Affected Townsfolk; the rescued townsfolk from earlier will take care of the other mob using tool handles, ropes, and chains to restrain them.

PIT AND CAVERNS

When the Fated arrive at the pit, there are two mobs of Affected Townsfolk (pg. 30) guarding it. They take notice of the Fated when they approach to within fifteen yards and close at a quick pace, but avoid straying more than thirty yards from the pit if possible.

The Fated can attempt to sneak past them and slip into the hole, but doing so is difficult; each such character must succeed at a TN 14 Stealth Challenge. On a failure, the character is unable to get close enough to the hole without the mob seeing them. If any character achieves a Margin of Failure on this Challenge, the mob spots them and attacks.

When the Fated enter the pit, read the following text:

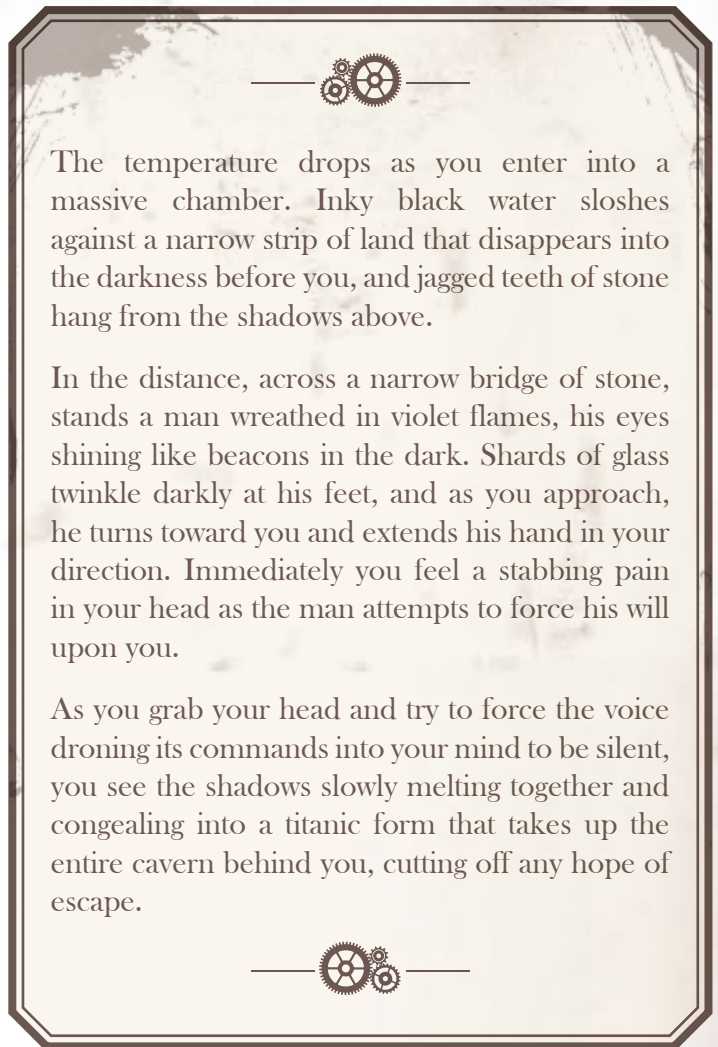


The pit is pitch-black, so characters will need a source of light in order to see, which might prove difficult if they sneaked past the Affected Townsfolk.

If the Fated have any source of light, they can follow the cavern's path without difficulty. If they don't have any light, it takes much longer for them to slowly crawl forward, hands either pressed to a wall or held

out in front of them as they shuffle forward through rubble and debris.

As the characters reach the central chamber, read the following text:



The Fated must each attempt TN 10 Centering Challenges. Any who fail come under the control of Keller, who has been fully possessed by the entity. These characters function as Enforcer (8) Fatemaster characters until the end of Dramatic Time, or until another character takes a (2) Use Skill Action and makes a successful TN 14 Counter-Spelling Challenge to break the enchantment.

While under the control of Possessed Keller, a character's eyes glow with a faint purple light. If all of the Fated end up under his control, see the Bad Things Happen sidebar on page 27.

The mass of darkness forming behind the Fated is a Darkness Golem. It lumbers forward and attacks any characters that resisted Possessed Keller's influence. Stats for the Darkness Golem can be found on page 33.

Possessed Keller (pg. 32) remains on the opposite side of the bridge and uses his magic to hamper the Fated during the fight. The bridge is only 7 yards long, but characters standing on it suffer a \square to their Defense duels (there's no room to dodge). When characters on the bridge suffer damage, they must immediately pass an Acrobatics duel with a TN equal to twice the damage suffered or fall 10 yards from the ledge and suffer 5/7/9 damage as they land on the stalagnites and shallow water pools below. Characters can climb up to either side of the trench with a TN 8 Athletics Challenge, which allows the character to climb a number of yards up the wall

equal to half their Walk speed, plus one yard per Margin of Success.

The entity controlling Possessed Keller can only control him while he is conscious, so knocking Keller unconscious is an effective way of neutralizing it. If Possessed Keller is killed, however, the entity immediately attempts to possess the nearest character each turn until it succeeds. See the Possession section on page 23 for more information.

If the Fated flee from the cavern, they move beyond its range, but in time, the entity will be able to extend its reach and possess one of the residents of Miner's Gulch; see the Conclusion section on page 27 for more information.

The entity can also be trapped in a new Vessel, if the Fated have built one; see The Ritual on pg. 23 for more information.



CONCLUSION

Once the characters have defeated Keller and the entity, there are still a number of loose ends to be addressed.

Rimer waits in the Howling Slums for Keller to return the Vessel to him. He hadn't counted on Keller shattering the Vessel when he found it, and even if the Fated fail to find Keller, he never returns with the object. If the Fated scared Rimer off, he can be found waiting here, growing increasingly nervous with each passing day.

If the Vessel survives intact - or if the Fated release the entity but fail to trap it in a new Vessel - then the entity continues to lure townsfolk down into the caverns to become its host. Filling the pit in is enough to prevent it from influencing the townsfolk, and once that is done, Miner's Gulch slowly returns to a quiet (if traumatized) mining town. They make certain to avoid the caverns containing the Vessel when digging new mining tunnels in the future.

If Keller is alive after the final battle, the characters will still need to return him to the custody of the Sanitarium. He is in bad shape; between the mental damage inflicted by Rimer and the physical damage of his second degree sunburns and his battle with the Fated, it's unlikely that he'll ever fully recover.

Delivering Keller (or his body) to the Sanitarium will close out the job they were hired to do. If the Fated found evidence of Rimer's involvement in Keller's insanity and release, then Pell and his fellow guards will be allowed to keep their jobs and will pay the Fated the agreed upon 22 scrip and the I.O.U. to a local diner.

If the Fated did not find evidence implicating Rimer, the guards are allowed to keep their jobs (with a pay cut) so long as Keller is returned alive. If the Fated only return with a body, then Elsa Lennon is allowed to keep her job (with a pay cut) as she wasn't doing rounds the night Rimer escaped, but Cormac Pell and Roscoe Sudworth are both fired. They eventually find work as mercenaries, but a few months later, on a job in the Northern Hills, they're ambushed in the middle of the night by Hoarcats and eaten in their tent.

If the Fated successfully trapped the entity within a new Vessel, then they need to decide what to do with it. The Vessel is a powerful grimoire and could be a dangerous tool in the wrong hands. Both the Guild or the Arcanists would be willing to reward them handsomely for turning it over to them, and once word gets out about the entity and what happened at Miner's Gulch, the rumors will no doubt attract a variety of private collectors who are willing to go to great lengths to obtain such an item. This could provide the basis for another adventure in the future.

BAD THINGS HAPPEN

If all of the Fated fall under the entity's influence, then there is little to stop it from gaining further power. The entity emerges from the caverns with the next nightfall and subjugates the rest of Miner's Gulch, then marches on Edge Point with a small army of sunburnt, mesmerized townsfolk. The Fated are little more than puppets in its growing army, but as it marches on Latigo and seizes control of the Ortega family, it allows the (presumably) less dangerous Fated slip from its control.

They won't have much time to warn Malifaux City of the increasingly dangerous army marching on their southern gates, but if they are skilled and lucky, they may be able to warn the Witch Hunters and devise some sort of method to protect themselves from the entity's mind control powers. If the Fated learned about the Vessel, then they have a proven method for containing the entity. Either way, it could very well be the start of an entire campaign!





FATEMASTER CHARACTERS

The following pages contain the stat blocks for the Fatemaster characters that the Fated are likely to encounter over the course of the adventure. They have been created with an eye toward ease of use by the Fatemaster and include everything needed to run these characters in a combat situation.

Depending on the situation, Fatemasters more familiar with *Through the Breach* may want to adjust some of these characters' Rank Values ahead of time to create more or less of a challenge for their players.

In general, Fatemasters should be wary about increasing the Rank Values of the characters in this adventure by more than a few points. This adventure doesn't involve much combat in the beginning, but if the Fated are facing off against multiple mobs of Affected Townsfolk or the Darkness Golem, they're going to be in for a tough battle, and increasing their Rank Values runs the risk of creating an encounter that the Fated can't overcome.

If your Fated are truly dangerous in combat, however, then increasing the Rank Value of the Affected Townsfolk in particular might be a memorable way to drive home just how dangerous the Vessel can be, especially if the Fated don't have access to weapons or spells that deal  or  damage.

The Affected Townsfolk and Matthias Keller can also be improved by giving them access to better weapons. Adding a modification or two to their weapons is a good way to increase the threat they pose without adjusting their Rank Value, but keep in mind that the Fated might loot their bodies and take their improved equipment for themselves!

DR. HORUS RIMER

Despite a Masters in experimental psychology from John Hopkins University, Horus Rimer's interests in the workings of the mind are purely professional. While quite skilled at his chosen field, he was never particularly passionate about it, and as the years passed, he began to gradually become bitter about his work.

What Rimer wanted more than anything else was to have magical adventures like his grandfather, who was quite the dashing sorcerer during the days of the first Breach. He spent much of his family's meager fortune purchasing rare grimoires and copies of occult texts, only to find his ambition blocked by his lack of access to Soulstones. Without the valuable gems and the magical power they offered, he was utterly unable to invoke any of the spells he had learned, which frustrated him to no end.



When the Breach reopened, Rimer leapt at the opportunity to travel to Malifaux and found that the spells he had studied back on Earth were able to freely manifest illusions on the other side of the Breach. It gave him just enough of a taste for magic to drive him onwards, and soon he was pouring through his grandfather's journal in search of the entity that his ancestor had sealed away. Once he had the Vessel, Rimer reasoned, he could become a truly powerful spellcaster and finally live the life he had always felt was his destiny.

DR. HORUS RIMER

Minion (5), Living, Academic

<i>Might</i> -2	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> -1	<i>Resilience</i> -1
<i>Charm</i> -1	<i>Intellect</i> 3	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 2 (7)	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 1 (6)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (9)	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 4	

Skills: Convince 2, Bureaucracy 2, Deceive 3, History 2, Intimidate 2, Labor 1, Leadership 1, Literacy 3, Mathematics 1, Navigation 2, Notice 2, Prestidigitation 3♣, Stealth 1, Teach 1, Wilderness 1.

Cynic: This character gains ♣ on duels to resist deception.

(1) Weak Flailing (Martial Arts)

AV: -1 (4) ----- Rg: ♣ 1 ----- Resist: Df
Target suffers 0/1/2 damage.

(1) Phantasm (Prestidigitation)

This character creates an animated illusion that appears real to observers and lasts for up to 5 minutes. When created, this character must determine all of the details of the illusion, such as what it will do and how it will be sensed. The illusion can be seen, heard, and smelled, but has no real substance. Any character with reason to disbelieve the illusion can attempt a TN 10 Willpower duel to see through it. This character can change the form or actions of the illusion by taking this Action a subsequent time.

AFFECTED TOWNSFOLK



Peon (Variable Rank Value), Living

Might 3	Grace 1	Speed 1	Resilience 2
Charm 0	Intellect -3	Cunning 0	Tenacity 4
Defense 3	Walk 5	Height 2	Initiative 3 (varies)
Willpower 6	Charge 5	Wounds Special	

Skills: Athletics 2, Carouse 3, Intimidate 3, Labor 2, Melee 2, Notice 2, Pugilism 2, Scrutiny 2, Thrown Weapons 2.


Collective Focus: This character has the following Condition: "**Rank Value +8:** Treat this character's Rank Value as equal to the value of this Condition. This character does not add its Rank Value to its Defense."

Angry People: This character is immune to Willpower duels and can never perform duels using Skills it does not possess.

Multiple Bodies: This character does not have Wounds; when this character would suffer damage, instead reduce its Rank Value Condition by 1, unless the attack dealt  or  damage, in which case its Rank Value Condition is reduced by the full amount of damage dealt. When the Rank Value Condition reaches 0, the Affected Townsfolk disbands.

(1) Fists 'n Stuff (Pugilism)

AV: 5 (varies) ===== Rg:  1 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

 *Yeah! Show 'um!:* After damaging, immediately take this Action again.

(1) Thrown Rocks (Thrown Weapons)

AV: 3 (varies) ===== Rg:  6 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 1/2/3 damage.

AFFECTED TOWNSFOLK

Many of the townsfolk of Miner's Gulch have come under the sinister influence of the entity trapped within the Vessel. They move as if in a trance, their every action dictated by the terrible force that has seized control of their minds and bodies.

While under the control of the entity, the eyes of the Affected Townsfolk glow with a faint purple light. Knocking them unconscious is enough to disrupt the tenuous link between themselves and their puppetmaster, but should the entity not be dealt with in a permanent manner, it is only a matter of time before they once again find themselves slaves to its unknowable agenda.

Fortunately, few of the townsfolk are armed with anything that might be considered a real weapon, so their attacks take the form of punches, kicks, and the occasional thrown rock. While not dangerous individually, in groups, they can be quite deadly, especially once the few townsfolk carrying shovels or picks get involved in the fighting.



MATTHIAS KELLER

When people cross through the Breach into Malifaux, they often experience a few moments of confusion or disorientation. For most, this interdimensional vertigo passes quickly. A handful of passengers, however, never quite recover from the transition and end up wandering the streets of Malifaux City in a daze until they are snatched up by the Guild or some other, darker predator.

Matthias Keller is one of the sufferers of this so-called "Breach Psychosis." The Guild plucked him off the street without much ceremony or complaint and moved him to the Malifaux Sanitarium, where it was hoped the doctors could help and cure him.

Instead, Dr. Rimer twisted Matthias Keller's mind toward his own ends, reasoning that Keller would make the perfect subject to retrieve his grandfather's Vessel from Miner's Gulch.

Matthias Keller is little more than a shadow of his former self. Memories of his life before Malifaux occasionally flicker to life in his mind, but they're little more than drifting cinders compared to the raging inferno that is his obsession with the Vessel.

Rimer's brainwashing has transformed Keller into a fanatic of the highest order, and he will stop at nothing to find the Vessel and return it to its 'temple' in the Howling Slums. Only then, he's convinced, will the whispers and visions end, allowing him to return to the tatters of his former life.



MATTHIAS KELLER

Enforcer (7), Living, Tormented

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 1	<i>Resilience</i> 2
<i>Charm</i> -1	<i>Intellect</i> -1	<i>Cunning</i> 0	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 4 (11)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 1 (8)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (11)	<i>Charge</i> 5	<i>Wounds</i> 5	

Skills: Bureaucracy 1, Evade 2, Intimidate 2, Labor 2, Navigation 1, Pistols 1, Pugilism 2, Wilderness 1.

Crazy +7: This character suffers -7 to the final duel total of any duel involving a Mental Aspect.

Maddening Whispers: Any character that ends its turn within 3 of this character gains the following Condition: **"Crazy +1:** This character suffers -1 to the final duel total of any duel involving a Mental Aspect. He may hear voices or see things that are not actually there, at the Fatemaster's discretion.

(1) Hard Punch (Pugilism)

AV: 4 (11) ===== Rg: 1 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 2/3/3 damage.

(1) Paired Collier "Rough Riders" (Pistol)

AV: 3 (10) ===== Rg: 10 yards === Resist: Df
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage. This Action gains 1 to its Attack. Capacity 6, Reload 2.

POSSESSED KELLER

During the days of the first Breach, Horus Rimer's grandfather trapped a powerful entity within a magical construct he called the Vessel. The entity had tried to possess him, and though Rimer was able to defeat and imprison it, he doubted whether his Vessel could contain the entity for long.

A century later, the entity has once again found a host for its malignant will in the form of the mentally broken and shattered Matthias Keller. Already driven insane by Rimer's brainwashing, it was a trivial matter for the entity to seize control of Matthias' mind. In his efforts for retrieve the Vessel, Rimer had unintentionally given the entity the perfect host.

While not originally a creature of darkness, the century the entity spent in the lightless caverns beneath Miner's Gulch has given it a thorough understanding of the shadows and how to bend them to its will as surely as the weak minds of humans.



MATTHIAS KELLER

Enforcer (7), Living, Tormented

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 1	<i>Resilience</i> 2
<i>Charm</i> -1	<i>Intellect</i> -1	<i>Cunning</i> 0	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 4 (11)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 1 (8)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (11)	<i>Charge</i> 5	<i>Wounds</i> 5	

Skills: Bureaucracy 1, Enchanting 3☞, Evade 2, Intimidate 2, Labor 2, Navigation 1, Necromancy 4☞, Pistols 1, Pugilism 2, Sorcery 3☞, Wilderness 1.

Hard to Wound +1: Damage flips against this character suffer ☐.

Maddening Whispers: Any character that ends its turn within 3 of this character gains the following Condition: **"Crazy +1:** This character suffers -1 to the final duel total of any duel involving a Mental Aspect. She may hear voices or see things that are not actually there, at the Fatemaster's discretion.

(1) Hard Punch (Pugilism)

AV: 4 (11) ----- Rg: ☞ 1 ----- Resist: Df
Target suffers 2/3/3 damage.

(1) Paired Collier "Rough Riders" (Pistol)

AV: 3 (10) ===== Rg: ☞ 10 yards === Resist: Df
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage. This Action gains ☞ to its Attack. Capacity 6, Reload 2.

(1) Obey (Necromancy/Charm)

AV: 3☞ (10☞) === Rg: 5 yards ===== Resist: Wp
The target performs a 1 AP Action controlled by this character. This Action may not force the target to sacrifice itself directly but can cause her to take Actions against her own nature.

(1) Enchant Weapon (Enchanting)

For the next minute, any character damaged by the enchanted weapon (which may be this character's fists) gains the **Blind** Condition until the start of this character's next turn.

DARKNESS GOLEM

This creature is an inky black mass of sentient darkness that has taken the vague form of a humanoid creature. Its physical body has a consistency akin to thick syrup or molasses, but when separated from the core of the golem, this substance boils away into insubstantial darkness.

Golems are not particularly bright combatants, and the Darkness Golem is no exception. Though cunning enough to recognize ambushes and react quickly in combat, it greatly favors smashing its enemies into bloody smears with its massive fists and can often be tricked into closing into melee when a retreat or other withdrawal would be the wiser option.

At its core, a Darkness Golem cares little for its own safety or preservation, and when the magics that animate it finally fail and give way, the darkness it harnessed flows outward like a crashing wave, knocking characters back even as it blinds them.



DARKNESS GOLEM

Enforcer (8), Construct, Golem

<i>Might</i> 5	<i>Grace</i> 0	<i>Speed</i> 0	<i>Resilience</i> 3
<i>Charm</i> -3	<i>Intellect</i> -1	<i>Cunning</i> 1	<i>Tenacity</i> 3
<i>Defense</i> 2 (10)	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 3	<i>Initiative</i> 2 (10)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (13)	<i>Charge</i> 6	<i>Wounds</i> 10	

Skills: Notice 2, Pugilism 3☞, Toughness 4.

Armor +2: Reduce all damage suffered by this character by +2, to a minimum of 1.

Born in Shadow: This character can see perfectly in the darkness and is immune to the **Blind** Condition.

Darkness Demise: When this character is killed, all characters within (X)2 suffer 2 damage and gain the **Blind** Condition until the end of their next turn.

Melee Expert: This character generates 1 additional AP per turn, but this AP may only be used to make a Close Combat attack.

(1) Darkness Talon (Pugilism)

AV: 8☞ (16☞) ===== Rg: // 2 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 3/4/6 damage.

☞ **Toss:** After succeeding, push the target up to 10 yards in any direction.

☞ **Clinging Shadows:** After damaging, the target gains the following Condition until the end of its next turn:

"Clinging Shadows: This character suffers ☐ to any Action that normally requires sight, such as most Attack Actions."

(3) Darkness Smash (Pugilism)

AV: 8☞ (16☞) ===== Rg: // 1 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 9/10/12 damage.

☞ **Clinging Shadows:** After damaging, the target gains the following Condition until the end of its next turn:

"Clinging Shadows: This character suffers ☐ to any Action that normally requires sight, such as most Attack Actions."

SOMETIMES THE ONLY WAY TO STAY SANE...

...is to get tossed into an asylum.

Unfortunately for the staff at the Malifaux Sanitarium, one of their patients has mysteriously disappeared from his cell. The guards are concerned for their jobs and have turned to the Fated to help them find their missing patient, but is everything at the Sanitarium really what it seems?

Madman, Interrupted is a fun One Shot adventure for the Through the Breach roleplaying game. It requires the Fated Almanac to play.



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