



magnum  
opus™

the  
World of Darkness

PROMETHEAN  
THE CREATED

REPORT NUMBER  
3257689

# PROLOGUE: BANS

NAME (LAST, FIRST, MIDDLE) OF PERSON GIVING STATEMENT Mark Johnson		DOB/AGE 42	RESIDENCE PHONE 555-867-5309	BUSINESS PHONE
RESIDENCE ADDRESS 1554 Litton Drive		ZIP CODE 30083	BUSINESS ADDRESS 780 Park North Blvd Ste A	ZIP CODE 30033
DATE OF STATEMENT 04/08/07	TIME STARTED 10:25 a.m.	TIME ENDED 12:15 a.m.	LOCATION/WHERE STATEMENT TAKEN Stone Mountain Police Dept.	
STATEMENT TAKEN BY (NAME/STAR) Roland Ortiz		IN PRESENCE OF Stan Ewing		

## Six Months Ago, After

The fifth time I bring the club down, his skull caves in. His brains, already half-pulverized by the damage, spill out around the weapon. I'm crying so hard I can barely breathe. I drop the club, stagger away, pick up his shotgun and place the barrel under my chin. I pulled the trigger, but nothing happens, and that makes me cry even harder.

"You have to chamber the shell," says a voice. I turn my head and see a monster on the wall. I recoil and my fingers are already growing into claws before I realize that it's a mirror, it's my own reflection, tinted by the blood and bile covering the glass. But my reflection is talking, and I can see Pyros around that glass like heat rising off desert sand.

I look down at the gun. My reflection was right. While he'd loaded the gun, he hadn't cocked it. I do so, and I glare back at the glass, daring the qashmal to challenge my decision.

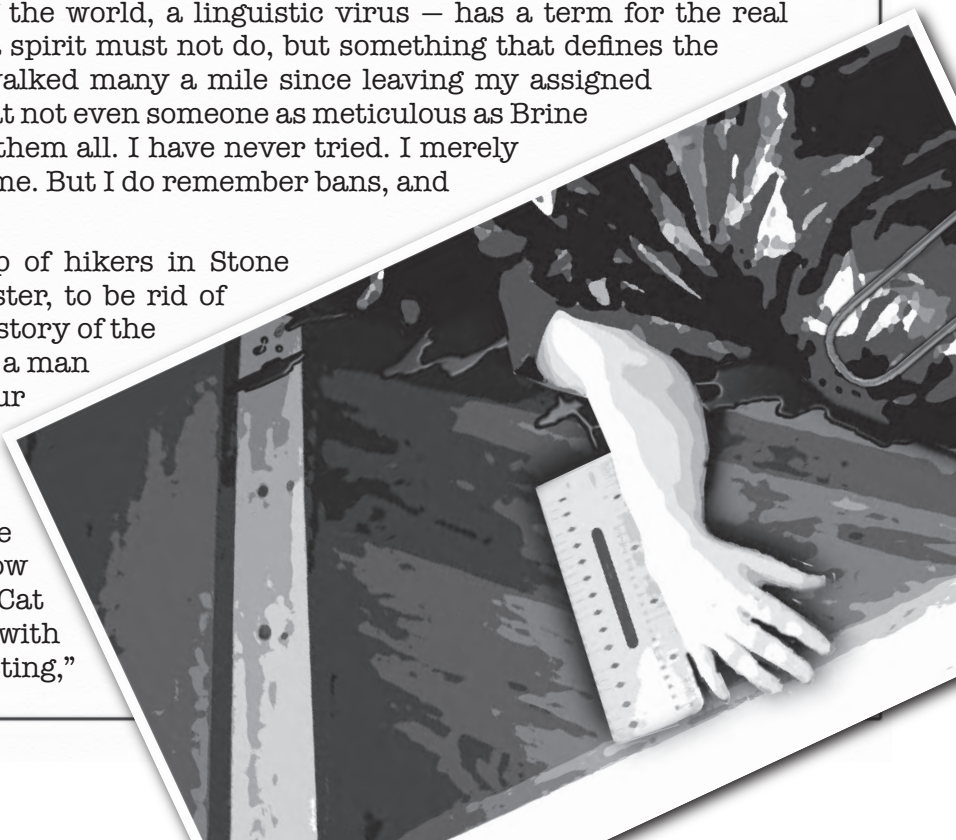
But he doesn't, so I put the barrel under my chin again. I pull the trigger.

I feel stinging, biting pain. A million bees sting my neck and my throat. The bees push their way up into my brain, burrow through the stolen flesh that I carry through the world, drill their way through my skull and exit, humming angrily, from the back of my head. They carry with them brain tissue, those tiny bees made of steel and carbon, they carry cerebrospinal fluid, blood and, perhaps, the Divine Fire. It all takes place in half a second. I crash the floor, dying, and I see what's left of his body on the floor.

## One Year Ago

Every spirit has a ban. The word is misleading, but I don't know that English — such a strange, bastard tongue, like a contagion on the lips of the world, a linguistic virus — has a term for the real concept. A ban is not something that a spirit must not do, but something that defines the spirit as walls define a room. I have walked many a mile since leaving my assigned task, and I have met so many spirits that not even someone as meticulous as Brine or as verbose as Verney could catalog them all. I have never tried. I merely remember the ones that have touched me. But I do remember bans, and I leave those secrets behind me.

I stopped and told a story to a group of hikers in Stone Mountain Park. They tried to walk faster, to be rid of me, but I kept pace and I told them the story of the Black Cat, the death-spirit that can kill a man with one scratch of its claws, can devour a woman in two bites and can leave a child torn to skin and sinew in an eye blink. I told them this story and framed it as "a Native superstition," because these hikers were white and didn't know any better. I told them that the Black Cat cannot harm a woman while she is with child, and they said "oh that's interesting,"



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TIME STARTED

10:25 a.m.

STATEMENT TAKEN BY (NAME/STAR)

Roland Ortiz

and walked even faster, and I sat down in the wood. But I looked to Twilight and I saw that the Black Cat, which had been following them all day, was now stalking away petulantly because they knew its secret.

Every spirit has a ban, and spirits know their own natures. Human beings do not have bans, and they do not know their natures. Any human who claims to know his place in the world is lying, for it is not in the human condition to know. They may search for purpose and gain much in so doing, but they will never find it, and that is humanity.

We, the Created, we know our purpose. Our purpose is to follow the Pilgrimage and to reach that state of ignorance, to give up a clear path and take on a state of perpetual uncertainty. Only a fool would follow the Pilgrimage. I have come to this realization many times over my years of life, and each time I swear that no longer will I strive for humanity, no longer will I follow useless milestones. And certainly no longer will I tell stories to humans, warning them of the spirits in their midst. The spirits grow angry when I reveal their secrets, and my memory, if not my flesh, bears scars of the kindnesses I have done to humanity.

No longer will I search for humanity. I take this as my ban.

### **Eleven Months Ago**

“Nice fuckin’ mullet.”

I turn and stare at the man. Other people, lounging on the grass, looking up at the carvings in the mountain, don’t notice. He didn’t yell. He’s counting on me to yell. Most people in Atlanta are polite to strangers, and I find that even through the haze of Disquiet they usually afford me a forced smile and a nod. This man, though, clearly wants to hurt me.

It isn’t just me, though. I rub my eyes and look around him, and sure enough, imp-like creatures perch on him, anchored against the vacuum of the Shadow by his hatred. Did he attract them with that hatred, or did they bring it with them? I don’t know. I don’t care. I have made my vow, and the Pilgrimage is dead to me. I consider hurting him, but I decide instead to play stupid. “Thank you,” I say, ruffling my hair with my hand.

“Fuck you,” he says, and he walks away.

“Jackass,” says a voice next to me. A young man reclines on a blanket, propped up on his elbows. I’m just sitting on the grass. I don’t have so much as a pair of sunglasses to my name. He moves over a bit and offers me some space.

I am truly bewildered. I take his offer, and he smiles kindly at me. There is no lust in his eyes, no false faith behind his smile. He doesn’t even ask my name, he simply gets comfortable and looks up at the sky, streaked with orange as the day breathes its last. I stare at him, searching for Pyros, searching for Flux, searching for anything of the world of spirits or beasts, but I find nothing. But he can’t be human. Humans don’t act this way, not to the Created.

He notices me watching him, and he makes eye contact. This, I think, will do it. It always starts with

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them looking at my eyes and seeing the Shadow contained therein. Will he shy away from it or jump in, reveling in his newfound knowledge?

He does neither. He extends a hand, and says "My name's Charles."

The tears come before I can stop them. I turn away, coughing, trying to cover up my sobs. I almost manage to regain my composure, but he puts a hand on my shoulder and asks if I'm all right. I can't respond. He helps me to my feet and leads me off of the hill into the trees, into the cool shade, away from the throngs of people. I finally manage to choke back my emotion, and I say, "I'm sorry about that."

"It's all right," Charles says. "I don't like crowds either."

I look at him for the first time. Before now, I had seen him through the lens of my own notions of humanity, and then through the alchemical operations that allow me to see the energies that might sustain or kill me. Now I just see him using light, vitreous humor and flesh. He is taller than I am, but only by a few inches. He is slightly plump around the middle. I am not proficient at guessing human ages, men especially, but he is perhaps 30, maybe a bit younger. He has very little hair, cut close to his scalp, and if it grew in it might be light red or yellow.

He stares at me without hatred or even fascination. He knows something is wrong with me, but he thinks it is a phobia, a simple inability to handle crowds of people. His mind does not recognize the Divine Fire within me, or perhaps it does and he responds differently?

I can think of nothing to say that would convey what I feel for him. I say, "My name is Zo Malak."

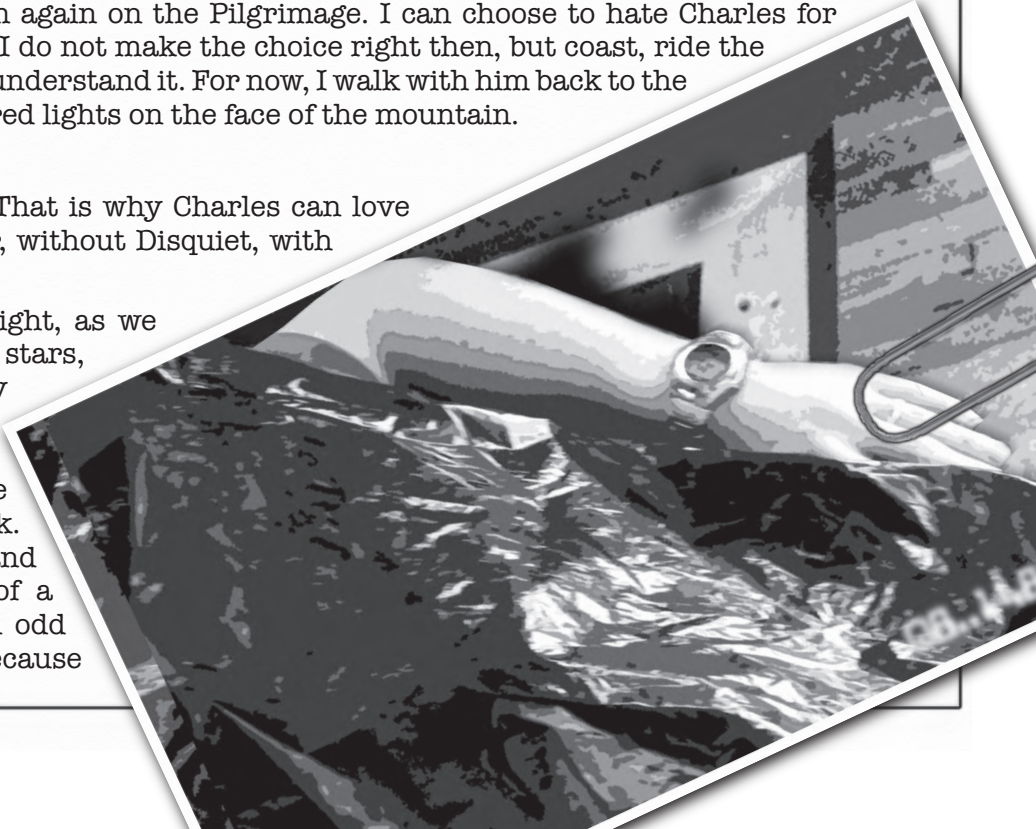
He shakes my hand. "Nice to meet you, Zo. My name is Charles Monahan."

I know at that moment that I am again on the Pilgrimage. I can choose to hate Charles for that, or I can choose to accept it. I do not make the choice right then, but coast, ride the moment, let it sit until I can fully understand it. For now, I walk with him back to the blanket, sit down and watch colored lights on the face of the mountain.

### Eight Months Ago

Humanity does not have a ban. That is why Charles can love me. That is why we live together, without Disquiet, with hate.

I told him the truth that first night, as we lay together naked under the stars, bodies steaming in the hot July darkness, breathing deeply. I didn't know what he was feeling — for all I knew, he bedded strange women every night of the week. But I wanted him to understand that I wasn't strange because of a bad upbringing or because of an odd religious belief. I was strange because



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I had never been born, never raised. I rose up from the desert sands with the spirits crying for my blood, and I wanted him to know that, too.

So I showed him. I knew he wouldn't believe me, so I showed him. I held up my hand and called the Pyros within to change the flesh, and my fingernails became gruesome talons. But in that moment he saw my true form. He saw the spirit-stuff leaking from the rents in my body. He saw that I have no eyes and that my mouth drips with the black blood of Twilight. He saw that, and then he saw me again — just me, Zo Malak, a woman whose body he had kissed, stroked and been inside just moments before.

Charles was a rational man, and though what I told him was impossible to everything he'd known before, he was willing to change what he had known before. He was willing to know new truths, and that was one reason I fell in love with him.

Today, I wait for him to come home. His house has become stained as spirits flock to the thinning barrier that my Azoth creates. We may need to move soon. I tell him this every day, but we haven't found a solution yet. He has friends and family here, and he sees less of them now, for unlike him, they react just as people always have. Long years following the Refinement of Tin taught me to diffuse Disquiet, but such tricks only work for so long, and they do nothing to hold back the encroaching Wasteland. We will have to flee soon, in any case, because there is one final danger that I haven't revealed to him yet.

Today I will tell him about the Tamer.

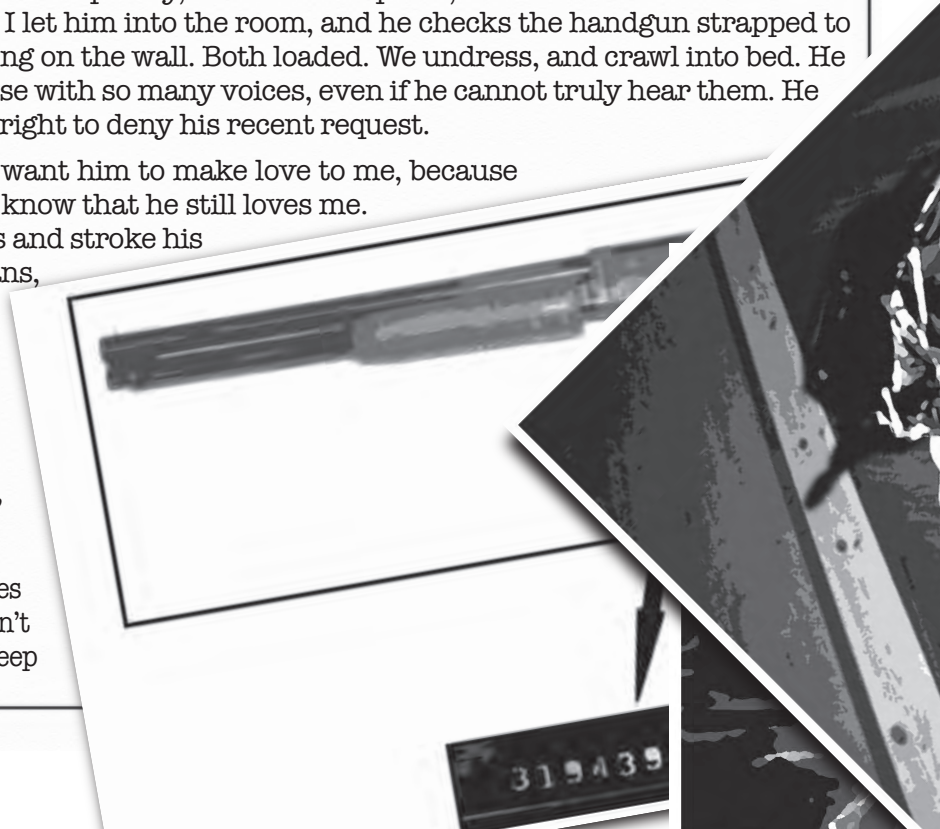
## Seven Months Ago

We open the door to the bedroom, and I scan it quickly, as usual. No spirits, at least none that we need to fear. No Flux-borne horrors lying in wait. I let him into the room, and he checks the handgun strapped to the side of the bed and the shotgun hanging on the wall. Both loaded. We undress, and crawl into bed. He is tired — he has trouble sleeping in a house with so many voices, even if he cannot truly hear them. He is bitter, too, because he knows that I am right to deny his recent request.

I curl up behind him and kiss his neck. I want him to make love to me, because I am hurt by our argument and I want to know that he still loves me.

He does not respond. I reach over his hips and stroke his stomach. These actions, like spirit's bans, are ritual. They define us. I touch him in certain places, he knows what I want. If he were to kiss below my ear or run his fingers underneath my breast, it would mean the same thing. He knows what I want, but he doesn't want to give it to me. He turns to me. "I'm sorry, Zo," he says. "I just don't feel like it."

I shut my eyes, and he leans forward and kisses my eyelids. I start to cry. I hate crying. I didn't used to feel that way. Sometimes I would weep



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when I saw humans behaving in ways that were hurtful, because I thought that they should be happy to have what they had. Now I weep because Charles wants what I have, and I cannot convince him otherwise.

He holds me close, and I know he still loves me, and that is a mercy in itself. "I'm sorry," he says again, even though I've asked him not to say that so much. "I know you're right, I believe you. It's just that if it were both of us . . ." He trails off because he expects me to finish his thought. I don't. He sees this, and continues. "If it were both of us, we could try to figure this out together." I say nothing. "We could protect each other." I say nothing, still. "From the Tamer, I mean."

He has never used those words before, and I seldom say them aloud. The Tamer is Hell walking on legs, a Centimanus whose only mission is to take my Divine Fire for himself. I sit up. He switches on the light. "I love you," I say, stroking his face. He smiles. "And that is why I cannot do this. I cannot give you what I have, because you are alive." He opens his mouth to protest, but I shush him. "You would need to die," I say. "You would be torn asunder . . ." my voice breaks. The thought of my Charles in the grip of the spirits' claws is too much. I take a breath and continue. "You would die, torn to pieces, and then I could raise the parts up as one of the Riven. But it wouldn't be Charles Monahan that stood up. He — you — would be gone, gone to wherever human souls go. I don't know." I roll up my nightshirt and point to a scar on my stomach. "You asked me once where I got this scar, and I said I didn't know. That isn't because I've forgotten. It's because that scar was present when I woke up. It's a wound that happened to the girl who died in the desert, whose body the Ulgan used to call down the spirits and make a protector for the tribe. Not me."

He nods. He finally understands. "It's just that you're so much more than I am."

I sigh. I have heard this before, though not from him. My associate Verney tells me of people like his creator, transhumanists who seek to escape the pitfalls of humanity through technology. "But I'm not," I say. "I am not a human exposed to the Fire and made stronger. I am dead flesh exposed to the Fire, made to walk and breathe. I am not more than you. I am less. I am not whole." I kiss him. "Except here with you."

He returns the kiss. He pushes me onto my back and rolls up my shirt, and he makes love to me. I am a true woman, for a few moments, I am human.



5:30 a.m.  
Coroner called today,  
Apparently, the ~~corpse~~  
Jane Doe corpse from  
last night was apparently  
green last. Sons of bitches  
probably CREMATED  
WRONG FUCKING  
AGAIN.  
up milk and can  
the way home.  
dig

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## Six Months Ago, Before

He got his wish.

That phrase greets me as I open the door to our home. It is written on the walls. Carved into the walls, really, 100 times in 100 different scripts. I don't need to think long about the significance. I run for the bedroom.

Charles is there. He is lying on the floor. He is dead. He has been torn to pieces and reassembled.

I was gone too long. I received the letter from Verney, but he wouldn't meet me in Atlanta. I had to go all the way to Pennsylvania. I curse him, curse the stupid, stubborn bastard for making me leave and curse myself for doing it.

The Tamer has been here. I can smell the stink of his Pandoran hounds in the room, but they are gone now. They'll be back soon, I'm sure, but he wanted to give me a few moments alone with Charles.

With Charles' remains. The Tamer couldn't make a new Ulgan. He's been Hundred Handed far too long to create anything but Mockeries. I won't have to watch Charles' body rise up.

I kneel by him and stare at his face. I am too shocked to weep or scream, but that time is coming. The spirits around me are rioting. The Wasteland here is thick. No wonder they found me.

Charles' hand moves.

It is only that one movement that spurs me. Nothing moves but his fingers. He might be coming back to life as an Ulgan, or he might be on the verge of splitting into hideous Renders or he might simply be twitching as dead people sometimes do. I don't care. None of those possibilities is acceptable to me. I pick up an iron club from the corner, a weapon with which I've grown proficient over the years, and I bring it down upon his skull.

## Five Months, Twenty-Nine Days Ago

The Tamer does not return. I wake up in a morgue. I do not see the qashmal, or Charles or any other people. I look for spirits, but I see none in this cold, sterile place.

I leave. I steal clothes as I have always done. I steal money as I have always done. I steal pen and paper and stamps, and I write to four post office boxes around the country, as I have for nearly 20 years. I write my story of Charles. I write of my sorrow and my loss and my foolishness.

I sign the letters "Zo Malak, Pilgrim." Because I am on the Pilgrimage, and I will never leave it again. I want to become human. I want to return to the lawn where first I met Charles. And there I want to die, so that my soul goes on to meet him in whatever hereafter there might be for us humans.



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THE PROMETHEAN SERIES

PROMETHEAN:  
THE CREATED

PANDORA'S BOOK

STRANGE ALCHEMIES

MAGNUM OPUS

SATURNINE NIGHT

COMING NEXT IN THE  
PROMETHEAN SERIES:

## SATURNINE NIGHT

Good Book says the world's caught in a long, dark night, waiting for a brand new dawn to come and sweep all that darkness away.

Don't know if that'll ever happen, but I do know this: there's folks set on making things darker. They're looking for ways to break the laws the Good Lord set for all of nature's ways. I've seen it happen, and the night's getting darker and longer.

Sometimes I think I mightn't ever see the sun come up.

- John Ash, Tammuz

*Special Thanks to Kelley and Mike for being the best darn cadavers ever in a prologue photo shoot.* -Mike C.



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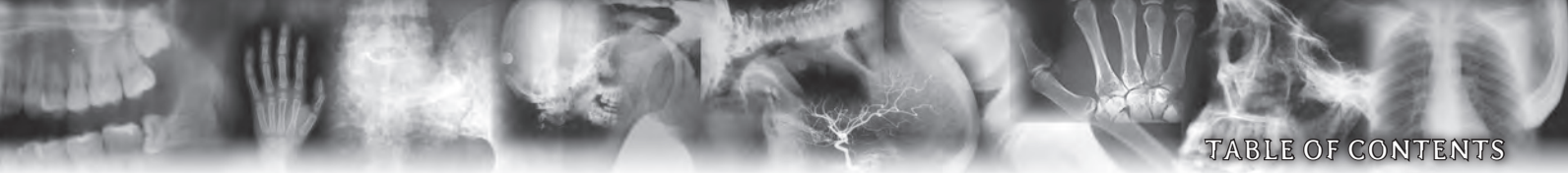
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# INTRODUCTION

Four Months Ago

I return to Pennsylvania. I hand-deliver my letter to Verney. He reads it, and he refuses to make eye contact with me. He knows that had I not been here with him, I would have been able to save Charles.

He doesn't speak much. He tells me that he'll see me again — Detroit, in one year, unless we die or find the New Dawn. That is always the agreement with the five of us. If one of us completes the Great Work, we won't subject him or her to our pain again. But we never believe it could be a possibility.

He leaves, and I don't know where. I discover it two days later when I hear about a fire in Atlanta. He went back, and he hunted down the Tamer. He didn't destroy the Tamer, but he burned much of his Sandoran hunting pack. The Tamer wouldn't stand and fight against Verney. He isn't that stupid, but his pack...well, his pack are Sandorans, and Verney's fire burns rich and bright. Humans don't obey bans, and neither do Fromethans, but Sandorans do. They obey hunger, and that can be used against them.

Verney is a true friend, but he didn't do this out of friendship. He did it out of vengeance. That is what defines him.

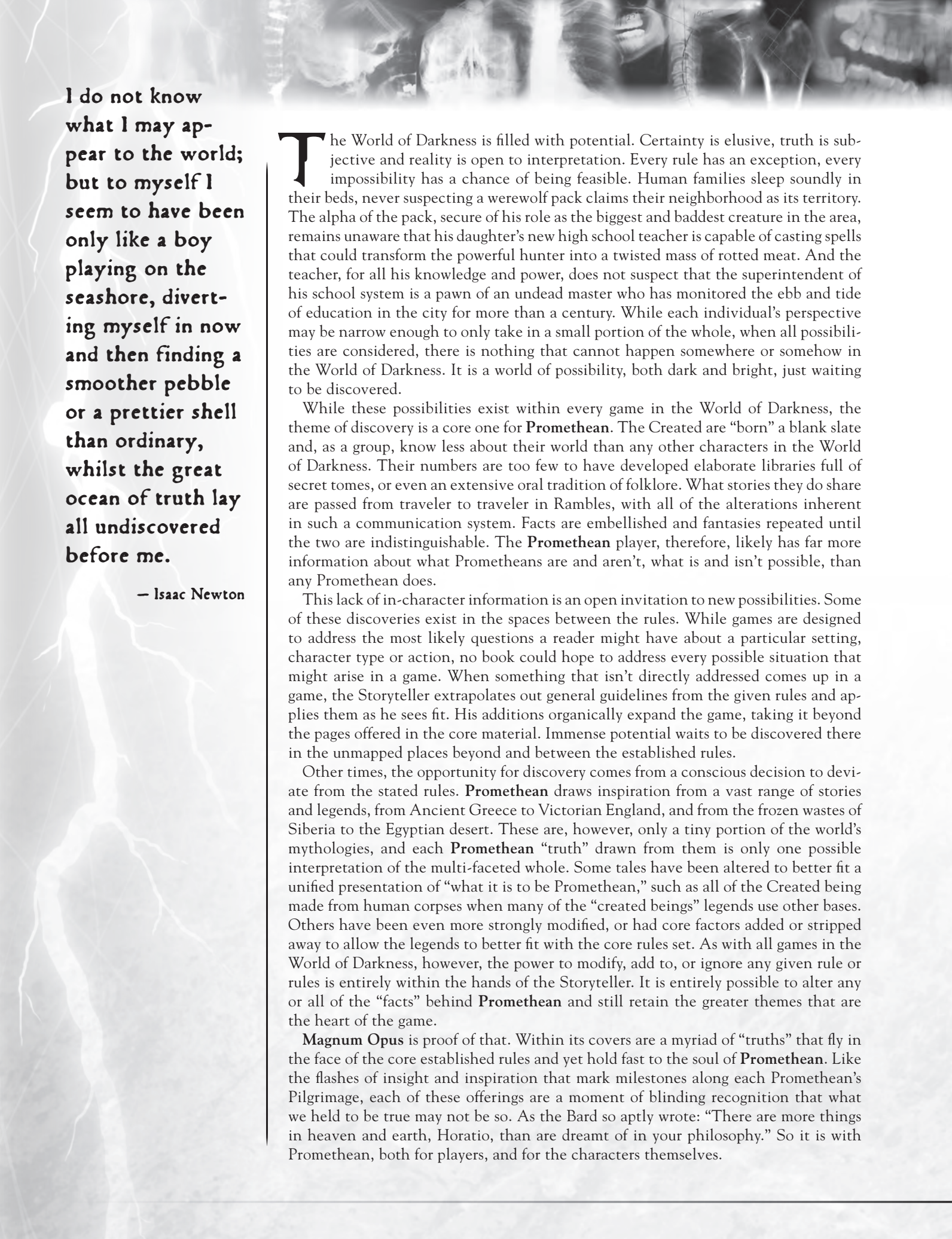
I imagine him, standing outside the blaze, listening to the screams of the Mockeries and searching the crowd for the Tamer. I've told him that the Tamer walks among men without showing his true face, that his Azoth does not call to ours the way it should, but I'm sure Verney looked anyway. I'm sure the onlookers blamed him for the fire, and I'm sure they chased him.

And in some secret, putrid part of my heart, I'm glad. I think Verney should hurt, just a bit, for calling me away.

-as told to me by Zo Malak



Vatché Mavjian 20



I do not know  
what I may ap-  
pear to the world;  
but to myself I  
seem to have been  
only like a boy  
playing on the  
seashore, divert-  
ing myself in now  
and then finding a  
smoother pebble  
or a prettier shell  
than ordinary,  
whilst the great  
ocean of truth lay  
all undiscovered  
before me.

— Isaac Newton

**T**he World of Darkness is filled with potential. Certainty is elusive, truth is subjective and reality is open to interpretation. Every rule has an exception, every impossibility has a chance of being feasible. Human families sleep soundly in their beds, never suspecting a werewolf pack claims their neighborhood as its territory. The alpha of the pack, secure of his role as the biggest and baddest creature in the area, remains unaware that his daughter's new high school teacher is capable of casting spells that could transform the powerful hunter into a twisted mass of rotted meat. And the teacher, for all his knowledge and power, does not suspect that the superintendent of his school system is a pawn of an undead master who has monitored the ebb and tide of education in the city for more than a century. While each individual's perspective may be narrow enough to only take in a small portion of the whole, when all possibilities are considered, there is nothing that cannot happen somewhere or somehow in the World of Darkness. It is a world of possibility, both dark and bright, just waiting to be discovered.

While these possibilities exist within every game in the World of Darkness, the theme of discovery is a core one for **Promethean**. The Created are "born" a blank slate and, as a group, know less about their world than any other characters in the World of Darkness. Their numbers are too few to have developed elaborate libraries full of secret tomes, or even an extensive oral tradition of folklore. What stories they do share are passed from traveler to traveler in Rambles, with all of the alterations inherent in such a communication system. Facts are embellished and fantasies repeated until the two are indistinguishable. The **Promethean** player, therefore, likely has far more information about what Prometheans are and aren't, what is and isn't possible, than any Promethean does.

This lack of in-character information is an open invitation to new possibilities. Some of these discoveries exist in the spaces between the rules. While games are designed to address the most likely questions a reader might have about a particular setting, character type or action, no book could hope to address every possible situation that might arise in a game. When something that isn't directly addressed comes up in a game, the Storyteller extrapolates out general guidelines from the given rules and applies them as he sees fit. His additions organically expand the game, taking it beyond the pages offered in the core material. Immense potential waits to be discovered there in the unmapped places beyond and between the established rules.

Other times, the opportunity for discovery comes from a conscious decision to deviate from the stated rules. **Promethean** draws inspiration from a vast range of stories and legends, from Ancient Greece to Victorian England, and from the frozen wastes of Siberia to the Egyptian desert. These are, however, only a tiny portion of the world's mythologies, and each **Promethean** "truth" drawn from them is only one possible interpretation of the multi-faceted whole. Some tales have been altered to better fit a unified presentation of "what it is to be Promethean," such as all of the Created being made from human corpses when many of the "created beings" legends use other bases. Others have been even more strongly modified, or had core factors added or stripped away to allow the legends to better fit with the core rules set. As with all games in the World of Darkness, however, the power to modify, add to, or ignore any given rule or rules is entirely within the hands of the Storyteller. It is entirely possible to alter any or all of the "facts" behind **Promethean** and still retain the greater themes that are the heart of the game.

**Magnum Opus** is proof of that. Within its covers are a myriad of "truths" that fly in the face of the core established rules and yet hold fast to the soul of **Promethean**. Like the flashes of insight and inspiration that mark milestones along each Promethean's Pilgrimage, each of these offerings are a moment of blinding recognition that what we held to be true may not be so. As the Bard so aptly wrote: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." So it is with Promethean, both for players, and for the characters themselves.

## Storytelling and Possibility

To bring this home to the act of roleplaying somewhat, consider what function the rules and setting assumptions play within the context of the game. Most of the default assumptions of **Promethean** are present for two reasons. One reason stems from the metaphysics and underlying cosmology of the setting, and the other has to do with game mechanics. For instance, Prometheans can increase any of their Attributes by expending Pyros. This is because Pyros is fundamental to their being, and every aspect of their lives comes from this energy. As such, a Promethean can become more socially deft (through raising Manipulation) or cannier (raising Wits), as well as stronger or tougher, by Pyros expenditure. This increase is fleeting (in game terms, a single turn) and slight (a single die, unless the Promethean can spend more than one Pyros in a turn).

From a game mechanics perspective, the expenditure of Pyros fits into the larger World of Darkness because the other games have similar mechanics. Vampires can increase their Physical Attributes only because of the basic and physical nature of the fuel they use (blood). Werewolves and mages don't expend Essence or Mana to accomplish this, though they have other methods of increasing their potential. This is done in the name of "balance," but such concerns are largely invisible and usually irrelevant to you as Storyteller, especially if you're simply running a **Promethean** chronicle with no interference from those other creatures.

So what does all that mean? It means that you can change the default assumptions of the setting, whether by altering metaphysics or game mechanics. It means that you can even alter the way these assumptions present themselves *for just one character*. Pyros is by no means fully understood, and every Promethean uses and experiences it in a slightly different way. Every Pilgrimage is unique, so why should each Promethean condition be unique?

It's useful, obviously, to have a base from which to work. If the core book had presented the process for creating and playing Prometheans as a scattershot, "do what you want" approach, the book would have been much longer and quite incoherent. By establishing a few basic starting points — Prometheans are made of corpses, they heal through electricity, etc. — we provide the players and Storytellers with enough of a frame of reference to decide what to change. You aren't playing the game "wrong" by deciding that Golems should be made of rock or that Frankensteins should show signs of rot as their Humanity ratings fall, you're playing the game as it makes the most sense to you, and that's appropriate.

**Magnum Opus**, in fact, is dedicated to helping you tweak those assumptions.

## How to Use This Book

**Magnum Opus** encourages players and Storytellers to drive **Promethean** into whatever unexplored territories they see fit. Within its pages, readers will be offered deviations from the basic: alternate mythologies, creation variations and philosophies so deviant that most Prometheans do not even know they exist. From left-handed paths to diabolic progenitors, these possibilities can expand the core game in new and exciting directions.

**Magnum Opus** is more than an assortment of supplementary ideas, however. It's an open invitation for Storytellers and players to make **Promethean** the game they would like it to be. Examples are offered not to give hard-and-fast, either-or options to the core rules, but to act as inspiration and encouragement to take **Promethean** in whatever direction will most enrich each individual chronicle. Any or all of them can be added as-is, or tinkered with and expanded upon to transmute the game into the end product that is desired.

Prometheans are, in the World of Darkness, the things that should not be. Therefore, more than any other game, they hold the potential to be whatever it is that the Storyteller — and the players — need them to be. **Magnum Opus** is the key to unlocking that potential.

## Chapter Breakdown

**Chapter One: What Is and What May Be** spins a plethora of new tales, myths, legends, and "truths" for **Promethean**, from the "real" story of Galatea to the elusive rumors of Prometheans bearing human children. This chapter introduces new character options for players and Storytellers: Prometheans born of circumstance rather than intention, Created formed of stone, wood or clay, dream-spawned Prometheans and those crafted from animals rather than human flesh.

**Chapter Two: Rare Alchemies** explores Promethean philosophy, journeying beyond the basic six Refinements to incorporate four new Refinements and, for those whose vision is not captured by the existing offerings, suggestions for creating customized Refinements to truly embody any character's philosophical viewpoint. This chapter also includes new Transmutation classes and new Athanors.

**Chapter Three: The Long and Winding Road** leads Storytellers through some of the most treacherous aspects of running a **Promethean** game, such as the intricacies of handling milestones for multiple characters and how to prevent going to the wastes from stalling a chronicle. It offers suggestions for navigating the treacheries of crossover games including Promethean characters, including alterations to the Disquiet rules as well as ways interacting with other supernatural characters may help the Created along their Pilgrimage. While many of the insights and suggestions offered are pertinent to Storytelling in

general, they also address specific aspects of running **Promethean** that may not arise in other games.

**Chapter Four** continues the on-going **Promethean** chronicle with “To the Wastes.” This chapter pulls characters into the gritty underbelly of human society, bringing them face-to-face with some of the horrific and heartbreaking choices humans are faced with on a daily basis. Set in Colorado, this three-act story places the characters in life-and-death situations alongside humans and offers them the opportunity to learn a great deal about humanity than more distant observation could ever reveal.

## Inspirations

So many works of fiction play on the theme of “discovery of the unknown” that it would be impossible to narrow them down for inclusion here. To an extent, all tales that focus on time travel, encounters with alien cultures or dimensional shifts play into the trope of “things are not as we know them.” Any of the classic legends of humans being pulled into realms of the dead or the supernatural play out these themes, as do the modern retellings thereof. While these topics are certainly prevalent in **Promethean**, they are strengthened by the information contained in **Magnum Opus**. In blending new and unique possibilities with the established game setting, characters are made to realize that even their own reality — Prometheans, their origins, and the rules that govern them — is an elusive and transitory one, full of contradictions and things, people and possibilities that they have yet to understand.

Along with the media inspirations offered in the previous **Promethean** source material, the following works are suggested as inspiration for **Promethean: The Created**.

## Literature

“The Outsider,” by H.P. Lovecraft embodies the mood of **Promethean** as well as the themes of self-loathing and alienation that can be found within the game.

James Clavell’s *Shogun*, while based in history rather than fantasy, thrusts the main character into a world for which he has little to no context, and where he must quickly learn to adapt or die. The theme is one many of the Created may find familiar, although without *Disquiet*, the foreign culture is much more forgiving of the Blackthorne’s mistakes than humanity is of Prometheans’.

*Terminal Café* by Ian McDonald plays on **Promethean** themes in several layers. The devaluation and destruction of characters who are hunted for no fault of their own, the trials and tribulations of beings who are less than human and yearning to attain humanity, and the relationship between life, death and rebirth are all explored in a gritty and entertaining fashion.

*Siddhartha* by Herman Hesse is one of the most pertinent books available on the nature of the Pilgrimage. While the titular character is entirely human, his quest for knowledge and insight mirrors that of Prometheans’ search for mortality. “When someone is searching,” said *Siddhartha*, “then it might easily happen that the only thing his eyes still see is that what he searches for... You, oh venerable one, are perhaps indeed a searcher, because, striving for your goal, there are many things you don’t see, which are directly in front of your eyes.”

Any of the many interpretations of the Korean formative story, *The Legend of Tangun*, offer insight into the alternative myth of animals aspiring to become human. On a larger scale, these stories can be seen as metaphors for the entire Pilgrimage — creatures see attaining humanity as the ultimate goal, but who may or may not be capable of achieving it themselves.

Hans Christian Anderson’s *The Little Mermaid* (far different in moral than the sappy Disney version) speaks of the sacrifice required to attempt to attain humanity, as well as the reality that not all who seek this goal will attain it, no matter how great their desire.

Mervyn Peake, *Titus Alone*: The last and most hallucinatory of Peake’s *Gormenghast* trilogy, constructed from the notes of a dying man, it relates in its odd, pained manner the life journey of a man who cannot fit in.

Grant Morrison and Jon J. Muth, *The Mystery Play*: Telling you why this graphic novel is quintessentially **Promethean** would spoil the ending. Just read it.

Jorge Luis Borges, *The Book of Imaginary Beings*: The one-stop shop for all your Athanor needs. A fun read, too.

Enki Bilal, *The Dormant Beast* and *December 32<sup>nd</sup>*: These European graphic novels, the first two parts of a yet-to-be-finished series (the third part, *Rendez-vous in Paris*, has yet to be translated into English) are apparently science fiction. Actually, they’re a dreamlike allegory of the effects of the war in the former Yugoslavia. Horrific scenes and sustained meditation on memory, tragedy and what it means to be truly human make them perfect inspirational material.

*American Indian Myths and Legends*, selected and edited by Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz. This excellent collection of legends from many different Native tribes includes the Blood Clot story that is retold (with a Promethean twist) in Chapter Four of this book.

## Movies

The cost of transformation and the responsibility of “creating” a new being are themes that the musical play, *My Fair Lady* (1964), addresses, albeit in a lighthearted manner. Even more so than the play, *Pygmalion*, that inspired it, *My Fair Lady* leads viewers through the frustration of seeking a goal

of self-betterment and the corresponding doubt of original worth that accompanies it.

Directed by Akira Kurosawa, *Rashômon* (1950) investigates a rape and murder where each of the four witnesses (including the murdered man's spirit) report the same scene completely differently. *Rashômon* delves deeply into themes of life and death, love and hate, as well as the transitory nature of truth.

*Dirty Pretty Things* (2002) is a film about immigrants in London. It's *noir* and has a wonderfully subtle menace. The film isn't about the supernatural, rather, it's about "the people you do not see," as the protagonist puts it. It has some great material for Disquiet and the alienation that all Prometheans feel, if you look for it.

Finally, *May* (2002), by contrast, isn't subtle in the slightest. It's a brutal, violent look at a woman who just wants a friend. If you thought the Galateids were just pretty, harmless social butterflies, rent this movie and see the truth. Not for the faint of heart, however.

## Music

A variation on the Little Mermaid trope, *Rusalka* is a poignant turn-of-the-century opera by Antonin Dvorak. As with Anderson's *Mermaid*, the titular character's sacrifice does not earn her desired end, instead the opera concludes with her permanent transformation into a demon of death.





## CHAPTER ONE

# WHAT IS AND WHAT MAY BE

Three Months Ago

I find a letter from Dr. Brine waiting for me in my post office box. I don't realize how much I miss him until I read his neatly typed letter. He ignores much of what I've written, for he has no time for pain and sorrow. He focuses instead on Charles, and why he was able to love me.

"Did you never consider the significance of this?" he writes. Oh, Dr. Brine, I did, but not the way you mean. You and Charles would have loved each other. Charles made me perform experiments, too. He helped me refine my control of Sfyros without realizing it, because after the 100th time in a day scrutinizing a book in an unfamiliar language and finding its meaning or examining a rock and knowing its composition, I become quite proficient in such things. But I never experimented with Charles, never tried to deliberately instill Disquiet in him. I'm sure Dr. Brine would have tried that, but I kept thinking of Orpheus and Eurydice.

Some Vlgan call themselves Orpheans, and while I do not, I have always loved the story. The story is about faith, in many ways — Orpheus could not keep his faith, looked back and lost his love forever. I was determined that I would accept Charles for what he was, and not test him. But now that he is gone, I wonder — what was he, exactly?

Was he a Redeemed Promethean? Was he kin to the wolf-changers, and so touched by spirits that he saw nothing strange in me? Was he enlightened, his mind opened in ways that most humans are not? I have always said that humans don't have bars as spirits do, but perhaps that isn't true. Perhaps most humans have bars, but men such as Charles have been able to shed them.


Dr. Brine theorizes all manner of things. That Charles was the son of a Promethean, what Brine calls a Scion. That Charles was the descendant of a demiurge. That Charles' mother was impregnated not by his father's seed, but by a qashmal's will.

But in his last paragraph to me, Dr. Brine suggests that Charles was just a man, a man strong-willed enough to love without judgment. And in that statement, I find hope for the doctor yet.

-as told to me by Zo Malak



Martien



**In these matters,  
the only certainty  
is that nothing is  
certain.**

— Pliny the Elder

There is no Library of Alexandria for the Created. Their knowledge is etched in fire on stone, one sigil at a time, or shared around Ramble fires by word of mouth. Each meeting, each new tale holds the potential for greatly increasing a Promethean's knowledge of the possibilities that exist for himself and others like him. Unless he has the benefit of a helpful (and honest) creator who is, herself, experienced and informed, he may never learn more about the Created in general than what his own experiences teach him. Looking down at his mismatched limbs, it becomes quickly obvious to a Frankenstein that he is unlike the humans he sees around him. But until he meets one, how could he ever extrapolate that there are others of his kind who are as perfectly formed as the Galatea? Or that the cold-blooded Osirans exist, when all he has encountered is his own hot-tempered kin? Having met these two, would it be any more surprising for the Wretched than to encounter a being with Azothic Radiance, and to discover she was made of stone, rather than flesh? Or that, rather than aspiring for humanity, the wooden Promethean the Frankenstein meets desires nothing more than to fully become the cedar tree the Promethean was originally carved from? It is no great leap for an inexperienced Promethean to believe that a newly met Golem can heal by being exposed to fire, blood or sunlight, once the Wretched has learned that he himself can do the same through electricity. The world is full of strange creatures, and being one of the strange only makes it more feasible that any other possibility can be true. Each new individual a Promethean meets is more than a potential companion (or enemy), he or she is a new doorway to the world of possibilities that exists just outside the character's experiences.

In human society, beliefs often contradict each other. Even within the same culture and time period, myths, legends, folklore and religion all can offer forth very different views on any given topic. Promethean tales vary just as widely, but have not had the benefit of numbers to wear away at the rough edges of each tale and polish it down to its base "truth." Each story may very well be being told by the individual who experienced it or someone who knew him directly. As such, while a piece of human folklore may have been scrutinized by hundreds or thousands of individuals for the "ring of truth" before the tale reaches an audience's ears, the tales told around a Ramble fire are virtually unscathed. As outlandish as they may be, chances are that they are either truth or an intentional fiction; there are simply not enough tellings to build them into the epic evolving legends that humanity often crafts.

## Not of Woman Born — Constructs

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Deep within each of the Created is a spark of Divine Fire that drives the Created along the Pilgrimage toward their ultimate goal: Humanity. Attain, not regain, for a Promethean was never human. For all that his physical form was crafted from dead human flesh, it no more makes him a human than a suit of clothing is a cotton plant or a turkey dinner is an egg. The material from which the thing is created is not the thing.

The mistake is easily made, by human and Promethean alike. When crafting something with human form, the natural place to begin is with something already in that form. Thus human flesh is most often used when creating the Created.

This, however, is a convenience, not a requirement.

## Red Clay, Black Clay

According to some legends, Raba Ben Joseph Ben Hama was among the first to learn this truth. Jewish folklore tells how, from his studies among the ancient tomes including the *Hilkot Yetzirah*, he was given the foundation for the alchemical processes required to create a living being from clay: the first Golem. Although later generations would credit Raba with other goals, the truth of the matter is that his motive was simple. He, just as many other humans before and after him, wanted to play God.



Raba was renowned for his creative interpretations of texts that were, even in the third century, already considered ancient. He had, by virtue of the information found within, and his own Qabbalistic experiments, extended his lifetime greatly, seeming a young man despite passing a century in age. But a near-eternal life and nigh-divine power was not sufficient to satisfy him. Following in the footsteps of lore that claimed that Adam, the first man, was kneaded out of red clay, Raba set out to create life. He wove together what would become the first Tammuz generative ceremony, shaping cold, black clay from the banks of a holy river into the likeness of what he hoped would be the first of an entirely new race of humans who would worship him as their god. His experiment was successful, to some extent. When he carved the sacred sigils into the clay construct's forehead, the creature stirred to life. It was not, however, human life. It was the first Tammuz.

Raba named his creation "Golem," meaning a lump or clod of soil. (The term would later come to mean "idiot" or "mindless oaf," in no small part due to Raba's disenchantment with his creation.) Although Golem sought nothing more than to serve his creator, Golem was not the creation his master intended, and Raba's disappointment bred first distaste and then hatred of his clay-slave. Adding to his frustration was the fact that although he tried again and again over the remainder of his extended lifespan, Raba was never able to recreate the experiment with even his original success. He took his torment out upon his creation, who spent years suffering under levels of servitude and oppression that only the most creative and well read of masters could have invented. Earth is strong, and the first Tammuz was earth embodied. His patience equaled his stamina, both enduring far beyond human capacity. But all things have their breaking points, and eventually Raba crossed even the Golem's threshold to accept abuse.

Raba's blood stained Golem's hands scarlet, a mark of guilt that no river could wash clean. For the crime of killing his "father," the Tammuz was cursed. As a punishment for Raba's murder, he was rejected by the very earth from which he was created, and every creature that walked upon it. This, according to legend, was the first Disquiet, and the place where the Golem walked died beneath his clay feet, becoming the first Wasteland.

Other versions of the tale still lay claim to the first Disquiet, Torment and Wasteland, but trace the Golem's lineage much further back. These stories claim that the Golem demiurge was not a man at all, but God himself, who created the Promethean from the soil of the earth long before Adam was made. Although formed of clay, this first being was fully human in every fashion, even possessing a soul. He was, however, as vulnerable to the pressures of his Creator as all later Promethean would be and rebelled against his proscribed servitude to the Almighty, denying God as his Creator. No sooner had the words left his mouth

than judgment fell upon him, striking him dumb so that he might never speak such blasphemy again. God withdrew his blessing of humanity from his first creation, and cursed him to wander the Earth a soulless being of earthen clay. By the time Adam and Eve rebelled against God's laws, the Golem had borne the brunt of his curse for centuries, and perhaps this is why they were only banished from the garden rather than having their humanity ripped from them. God was merciful with them, as parents often are with younger children, and could not bear to see them wander the Earth in torment as his first creation did.

It is this curse, those who believe the tale claim, that causes Disquiet. All human beings know that the Golem no longer bears God's favor, and they keep their distance from their elder "sibling" and all his kin, for fear of sharing his fate.

## Stone Secrets

Of course, not all Promethean are constructed from clay, not even all Tammuz. Most tales relate that Golem's own creation was formed from a human body after multiple attempts to create a clay progeny in his own image brought forth only Ishtari *Sublimati*. Driven mad with failure, he sought solace in the familiar, approaching a rabbi in silent supplication. The holy man rejected him, denouncing his existence as a blasphemy, and began calling for the village watchmen. Golem sought to silence the rabbi's shouts and succeeded all too well. He escaped with the village guards on his heels and the suffocated clergyman over his shoulder. Later, his Azoth still tainted with Torment, Golem would attempt the generative act a final time, and with the awakening of his child, Raben, the Tammuz line truly began. Golem taught his creation all he knew, save for the shame of having spawned so many failures before his success. He taught Raben where the form he was made of had come from, as a lesson not to allow one's Torment to overcome him, and many years later after Golem's death, when Raben felt the need to create progeny, he chose the body from a slave girl who had been worked to death by cruel masters.

Over the centuries, others of the Tammuz have been formed as their Progenitor was, directly from the clay of the earth. Most of the Lineage, however, do not even know that such a thing is possible. Some of those who hold the knowledge do not share it because they believe that it is impossible for one of the clay-created Tammuz to achieve their Great Work; they are supposedly destined to die unRedeemed. Others hold it secret because they believe that the chances of creating a Pandoran are significantly higher when using an earthen form rather than a flesh one. Regardless of the reason, it is rarely discussed. When the topic arises, some actively decry the possibility of Golems being created directly from the earth, even if they know it to be true. Others simply retain the stone-faced silence their kind is known for, and hope for the subject to pass.



## The Marble Maiden

Tammuz are not the only Prometheans whose Progenitor was first crafted from the earth. Although many of the Galateid claim the dominant myths related to their origins are but human misinterpretations of the reality, others know the truth. The legendary king of Cyprus, Pygmalion, unable to find a bride worthy of him, dedicated years of work to sculpting a woman from stone. This beautiful statue was brought to life, and for a time Pygmalion may have been the happiest man on Earth.

Some legends say it was Aphrodite's intervention that stirred Galatea to life. Others, that Pygmalion invested so much of himself that he literally shared his life force with her, or that he somehow found, in the frenzy of his innovative labor, the secret connection between the creation of art and the creation of life. Some claim it was a gift from the gods, a wish granted or a reward for his change of heart. Others, knowing the end of the story, name it a curse.

Pygmalion's creation was a beautiful creature, the epitome of womanhood. Other men noticed her, casting covetous glances her direction. Pygmalion grew jealous, locking her away from all other eyes in a sumptuous chamber to which only he held the key. At first she was content to be held thus, a pampered concubine and priceless pet. But, as time passed, Pygmalion grew tyrannical, expecting perfection from her words and deeds as great as that of her appearance. Pygmalion's visits grew less frequent and more violent with every passing month, and those who passed by the hallway outside her prison chambers more often heard her tears than her song. But even sorrow has its limits. At length her supplications turned to protests and her sadness to wrath. One morning, the king's servants found their master dead in Galatea's chambers with bands of bruising around his throat. The king's creation was nowhere to be found.

## The Bones of the Tale

Just as any legend, the tale of Galatea and Pygmalion has undergone countless retellings over the centuries. In some, Pygmalion is a king, in others, only a lonely artist. Some place the tale in Cyprus, some Rome and one legend on the island of Atlantis before its destruction. Some stories speak of the sculptor summoning forth his creation from stone, others from ivory or even wax. But the one factor that all variations of the human myth of Galatea share is that she was carved or crafted out of something inanimate, the product of an artist, not a grave-robber.

If asked, most Mannequins shrug the issue aside as simple fallacies in human storytelling. After all, what craftsman would admit to dabbling in resurrections of human flesh when he could avoid being labeled a monster by claiming his creations were crafted instead of inert (and much less controversial) substances? How much more glorious (and less grisly) to claim to have brought a work of art to life through one's remarkable talent with a chisel than to have to admit to the corpse's former family members that one somehow raised their daughter or sister from the dead?

But, at the heart of most stories lies a kernel of truth, and it is, of course, possible that the Galatea myth is no different.

## Branches of Stone, Branches of Steel

Each Lineage has tales, some more obscure than others, of their Progenitor's true beginnings. And in each, the first of their line was crafted, at least in part, from non-human materials. Some of the legends have stood the test of time; others have faded into oblivion, or been corrupted into a wholly different form. Regardless, the truth remains, for those willing to seek it.

The Osirans began when a holy statue of their god was desecrated and carried to the four corners of the Earth by the enemies of his people to break their morale. Their queen, the embodiment of Isis personified, sent her 12 finest soldiers in every direction and the statue was recovered, save for the 13th piece. The enemy general himself kept the statue-god's manhood hostage as insurance should the other pieces be recovered. He attempted to use the final piece as a bargaining method, offering to wed the Egyptian queen and unite their lands. The queen gave him her answer in the form of her suicide while lying atop the rejoined statue of Osiris. Her sacrifice drew the attention of the Divine Fire and created the first Osiran, who rose up and smote the offending general, securing his people's freedom.

Protection of an entire group of people was also the duty of the Ulgan Progenitor. At the center of the territory of the Massagetae people was a great birch tree called World Tree, which the tribe held to be the center of the earth. When the Roman army invaded the Massagetae's lands and scattered the tribe, three of the tribe's most powerful shamans made a stand at the World Tree, to protect it from the invading Romans. The army slaughtered the spirit-workers, and then cut down the tree, but not before the shamans' life-blood soaked into the tree's roots. That night, a huge storm struck the area, blowing away the invading army's square-walled tents while leaving behind the displaced tribes' round ones. The remaining tribesmen recovered the wood from the fallen World Tree and crafted it into a wooden effigy combining aspects of all three of the fallen spirit-workers. During the next storm, the wooden shaman was struck by lightning, splintering it into many pieces. The tribe was despondent, believing this to be a sign of the spirits' displeasure with their action. When the Roman army returned, however, the wood splinters rose up of their own volition and took the shape of the three-faced shaman once more, and drove the invaders away.

The story of the Wretched Progenitor, being the most modern of the five Lineages, might seem less likely to be altered from its original form. Shelley's recounting of the tale emphasizes the mad doctor's raiding of graveyards and charnel houses for the raw materials of his experiments.



Surely Frankenstein's monster, if no other Promethean, was solely created of formerly human bodies?

And yet, Shelley was a creature of her own time. Victorian society was obsessed with crimes of bodysnatching and gory corpse-butchered. While her words on the topic are ambiguous enough to leave room for many possibilities, it must be remembered that she was describing the generative act at least second-hand and from within the framework of her own culture. Whether the tale was whispered to her by the doctor or the monster himself, or from more distance sources, it is obvious that she intended it to be not a teaching tale but a warning against further experimentation. There were few metaphors available to her more heinous than that of corpse-crafting, and so it was this with which she painted the crime.

## Igniting the Spark

As any Promethean who has used lightning or household current to recharge herself can confirm, Pyros is frequently conducted via electricity. Some substances are more conductive of electricity than others. Run a current through wood, for example, and far less electricity will be passed through it than through a similar amount of metal, most of which

are high-quality conductors. Distilled water, purified of salts and minerals, is non-conductive, but tap water, laced with electrolytes, conducts electricity. Human flesh, being predominantly saltwater laced with minerals, conducts electricity remarkably well; human muscles, nerves and organs rely on the constant low-level flow of electricity between cells in order to remain functioning. And for a Promethean created of flesh, this conductivity simplifies the process of using electricity to glean Pyros. Many Prometheans believe that the human body's ability to conduct electricity and Pyros gives human flesh a singular ability to act as the base for creating a Promethean. As Prometheans come into being with an innate drive to attain Mortality, beginning with a once-human corpse seems logical, and few question this premise.

Pyros, however, although often conducted through electricity, is not governed by the same natural laws as electricity. While the human body, with its innate connection to the Divine, may serve as the best conduit for the Divine Fire, human flesh is not the only capable substance. Any substance, even if it does not conduct electricity, can be capable of conducting Pyros, especially when prepared with the proper alchemical processes.



At the Storyteller's discretion, certain aspects of Promethean existence may work differently on Constructs — Prometheans who have been crafted of stone or wood or clay or metal — than they do on corpse-based Prometheans. These changes are optional, and can be incorporated wholly or in part as suits the individual chronicle.

Many aspects of Constructs are likely to work identically to traditionally created Prometheans. Just as other Created, Constructs pursue milestones, follow (and change) Refinements as other Promethean do and can learn most of the same Transmutations. They suffer Torment as others of their Lineage. When Constructs remain in an area too long, they trigger Disquiet and Wastelands just as any other Promethean. They can be Redeemed and must create progeny, either another Construct or a traditional member of their Lineage, before they can do so.

Constructs are not, however, susceptible to some of the problems that haunt their more traditionally created brethren. As most are carved, shaped or crafted out of a solid substance, they have no need to eat or to breathe. Rather than food and oxygen, their existence relies solely upon their own Azoth and Pyros. This gives them the ability to attain a hibernation-like state for an extended period, slowly consuming their own store of Divine Fire to remain “alive.” Constructs do not suffer from penalties for not eating, and they can't smother, asphyxiate or drown. They are, therefore, not susceptible to Torment stemming from hunger. Their Azothic fires burn hotter than most Prometheans', however, and therefore Constructs do not gain a point of Pyros every day at dawn (rather, they do, but expend this point during the course of the day to keep themselves animate).

Because Constructs have no organs, their humours are generated directly by the same Azoth that fuels their existence, and they are not susceptible to the problem of rebellious organs as other Prometheans. This, however, causes more problems for the Construct than it solves. Lacking internal organs, Constructs bear their Vitriol throughout their bodies, making them exceptionally vulnerable to predation by hungry Pandorans (or unscrupulous Prometheans). Pandorans can automatically sense exactly how much Vitriol is within a Construct, and do not need to spend Pyros to “lure” a Construct's Vitriol to the surface before attempting to attack and consume it (see p. 225 of **Promethean: The Created**). Likewise, the lack of internal organs makes it impossible for a Construct to use Transmutations that rely upon (or grant) organs. These include (but are not limited to):

**Metamorphosis:** Redundant Organ (Duplicating internal organs is impossible. Extra eyes, ears, mouths and tongues are possible.)

**Pandoran:** Hundred Hands (Limitations are the same as for Redundant Organ, but arms, legs and tentacles are also allowed.)

## The Strength of My father: Constructs and Residual Memory

Constructs may retain memories of their pre-Promethean “lives,” but these memories are even more disjointed than those of human-based Created. A Construct who takes the Residual Memory merit (see pp. 97-98 of **Promethean: The Created**) gains only one memory die for every point of the Merit taken. Rather than being used for Skills, these dice are used to add to a Physical Attribute roll once per game session, to represent the Created being able to temporarily tap into the Strength, Dexterity or Stamina of their former existence. Unfortunately for the Construct, the experience of channeling a previous incarnation is even more jarring than for other Promethean. Remembering an existence as a chunk of metal, tree or slab of stone is disturbing on a deep and fundamental level. Players with Construct characters choose a mild derangement upon purchasing the Residual Memory Merit. On the turn following any use of the memory dice (rather than only after spending all of them), the player rolls the Promethean's Humanity. If he succeeds, there is no effect. If he fails, the derangement becomes active for the scene.

## Feet of Clay

Incorporating the possibility of Constructs enhances several existing themes within the game. Whether the Storyteller decides to include them as a true viable variant on the generative act or as an unrepeatable freak happening, the possibility of non-corpse Created is one that may amplify a variety of perspectives to the chronicle.

## You Cannot Regain What You Have Never Had

Some players have difficulty with the primary theme of Promethean: attaining Humanity as a driving goal. Unlike vampire, mage and werewolf characters, the Created do not begin as human and then gain supernatural powers. Although the creation mechanics begin by creating a human being and adding supernatural, the in-character premise is quite different. Prometheans have not “gone beyond” humanity — they never had it. By striving to attain their Mortality, they are not giving up being super-human. They are transitioning from less-than-human to human.

It may be difficult for a player to avoid thinking of his character as super-human if every Promethean character he has created or encountered was made from a human corpse. Especially for players who are familiar with **Vampire: The Requiem**, the idea of Prometheans as former humans is a

difficult one to avoid. An encounter with a statue-turned-Aphrodite or a wood-carving-made-Riven may cement the concept that regardless of where their bodies came from, no Promethean is ever truly human before her Magnum Opus.

## There Are More Things, Horatio...

Fear of the unknown is one of the great human truths. In a roleplaying game in which players often have as much access to the rule books as their Storytellers, preventing players (and consequently their characters) from becoming jaded can be difficult. One of the basic themes of **Promethean: The Created** is “Wonder.” For creatures who have never had the experience of being human, the world is a wondrous place; inequitable, hate-filled and often deadly, but always wondrous. One way of maintaining that sense of awe is to ensure that the players sometimes encounter creatures, people and situations that challenge their grasp of “how things work.” When a player is shaken out of his jaded perspective, he enhances his ability to put himself into his character’s inexperienced viewpoint and find, in the familiar, a new sense of wonder.

## If He Can Do It, So Can I

Another primary premise in Promethean is that of optimism. While it is a very human trait to experience self-doubt and to contemplate the possibility of truly being unworthy or incapable of claiming Redemption, locked away in the bottom of Pandora’s box is always the tiny glimmer of hope, which is a far stronger force than many credit it to be.

Seeing someone achieve a goal that seemed impossible for them to attain inspires us to continue to strive toward our own goals. A Promethean whose faith in the Pilgrimage is waning may find renewed strength in encountering someone for whom, at first glance, Redemption seems impossible. While the fairytale of Pinocchio’s seemingly unattainable desire to become “a real boy” may not strike this message home to a despondent Promethean, watching an allied Ulgan who was once birch-wood undergo the transformation into human flesh and blood can give the Created hope, if not proof, that such a goal is within their reach as well.

## Game Mechanics

The possibility of bringing a Promethean into being by using something other than dead human flesh as a base affects some Lineages more severely than others.

The Wretched are the least likely to use this method of creation, and thus least affected by it. The use of human flesh is more closely tied to their Lineage than to any other, and a Frankenstein rarely deviates from it entirely. One might, however, if dissatisfied with the strength or durability of his available selection of corpses, supplement them with other materials. Bones might be strengthened with stone or metal,

joints with industrial grade hinges. Skin, especially, might be replaced with other substances. Leather, metal or high density polymers might protect the creator’s investment of time and energy far better than vulnerable human flesh would. Storytellers are encouraged to implement whichever changes to game mechanics make the most sense for part-human, part-not Prometheans. A lesser version of both benefits and drawbacks might be very appropriate to reflect their partial deviation from the human corpse creation theme.

Galateids, on the other hand, are among the most likely to embrace Construct creation. Many legends credit their demiurge as having used it to create the first of their kind, and it circumvents the trials and tribulations associated with attempting to obtain a perfect human corpse upon which to perform the generative act. Eschewing the use of human flesh, however, does create as many problems as it solves. Creating (or finding an artist to create) an appropriately detailed and unflawed sculpture, mannequin or statue may prove to be even more difficult than obtaining a perfect corpse would have been. It may suit the Galateid’s nature better to commission or create an exquisite work of art for this purpose, but many more individuals exist who are capable of creating an unmarred corpse than those capable of creating a flawless work of art. In this case, the majority often wins over the morality.

Tammuz are associated as strongly with the Construct mythos as Galatea, although enough rumors of curses and punishments by God exist that they are less likely to use it than the Dolls. Myths of stone-slaves, after all, are less conducive to propagating the practice than legends of works of art brought to life by the power of love.

While this practice is not unheard of in the Osiran and Ulgan Lineages, neither does it have the extensive mythic background of the Galateid and Golems. Storytellers should feel free to create their own Egyptian or northeastern European folklore to supplement existing tales if they desire this alternative generative form to play a major role in their chronicles.

## Sticks and Stones

Cosmetic differences may be the first clue that those who encounter a Construct have to their unusual nature. Other Prometheans likely notice right away that the Frankenstein they encounter has been crafted of mismatched steel rather than patchwork flesh, or that their new Ulgan acquaintance is fashioned of splintered wood rather than a sundered corpse. Constructs of the Galateid or Tammuz Lineages are more difficult to pinpoint in this manner, as the disfigurements for traditional Created of both Lineages gives them a non-flesh appearance. Thus, Constructs of these Lineages may more easily pass as “normal” members than in other Lineages, at least if they are crafted of their Lineage’s favored material. A wrought-iron Muse, however, would definitely stand out as unique. All in all, however, Constructs’ disfigurements are



similar to those of other versions of their Lineage. Tammuz are clay-covered, even if they are not constructed wholly of mud. A Wretched Construct still has a mishmashed appearance, whether his joined parts are metal, wood, leather or cloth. Ulgan are sundered, and Osirans are missing a body part, whether they are traditional or Constructs. And Galateid Constructs, of course, are inhumanly perfect in form, whether they are crafted from stone, steel, wood or flesh.

The nature of a Construct, however, is more than skin deep. While a traditionally created Galateid may appear to be made of marble, an Adonis Construct truly is. This material difference may, at the Storyteller's discretion, offer the Construct some advantages over traditional Promethean, but each carries its own drawback as well.

Constructs who are created of stone or metal, by virtue of the hardness of their base material, gain two points of armor. This protection cannot be ignored with armor-piercing ammunition. The price of this added durability, however, is weight. Due to their increased heaviness, stone or metal-based Constructs' Speed is reduced by 2.

Constructs created from wood or other flammable substances (wax, plastic, paper) are especially vulnerable to flame, taking twice the aggravated damage that the fire would have inflicted on a normal Promethean. Bashing damage, however, is halved (rounded up) due to the resilient qualities of these substances.

Constructs crafted from other substances can be given similar bonuses and drawbacks to reflect the unique nature of their base material, as the Storyteller sees fit. Using very conductive versus non-conductive substances may affect the transmission of electricity for healing (or even of Pyros, should the Storyteller see fit to rule it so). Using certain materials may even leech over into the Disquiet, Torment or Wasteland mechanics of the game. A wooden Construct might cause increased levels of blight around himself, while one of cement might cause roadways and housing foundations to fail wherever she walks. Similarly, a Construct crafted from a precious material (gold, titanium, jade or even antique ivory) might taint those who are affected by her Disquiet with maniacal levels of greed or miserliness, while she herself exhibits foolish levels of charity while under the throes of Torment, giving away everything she (and her throng) owns.

## Disquiet and Disfigurements

The Divine Fire can hide the disfigurements of a Promethean made from flesh, but making an iron Promethean look human is beyond the power of the Azoth. While certain Transmutations (Color of Man, for instance) can fool human onlookers, a Construct must take great care to avoid letting humanity see him too closely. Makeup, heavy clothing and even masks can be employed to hide the Constructs' nature, but in general, non-flesh Prometheans have a much more difficult time interacting with humanity than the "standard" Created.

Disquiet works the same way for Constructs as for flesh-crafted Prometheans, save that it tends to accrue more quickly. A Construct's Azoth is considered two dots higher for the purpose of inflicting Disquiet only.

## What Are the Odds?

Should Storytellers allow Prometheans to create progeny from substances other than human corpses, Storytellers may choose to include the following modifications to the roll to see if the generative act was successful. The proposed adjustments are in addition to those offered on p. 186 of **Promethean: The Created**.

Modifier	Condition
-4	Generative material is anything but a human corpse.
-3	Generative material is formed by individual without Crafts Skill.
-2	The creator is a Construct.
+1	Predominant generative material is favored by Lineage (see sidebar).

## Favored Materials

Each of the Promethean Lineages has a substance or substances that the Prometheans most closely favor. Using a favored material reduces the likelihood of the generative act failing.

♣ Frankensteins - Copper

♠ Galateids - Marble

♣ Osirans - Limestone

♠ Tammuz - Clay

♣ Ulgan - Birch

Storytellers should feel free to adapt these materials as they see fit. What is important is that the material used has a serious and credible link to the Lineage. A Galateid who painstakingly crafts his would-be progeny from hand-selected mammoth ivory or the finest mahogany log, at the Storyteller's discretion, have a legitimate claim upon these materials being favored by the Lineage, as might one of the Wretched who collects vast quantities of scrapped silver (the most conductive of metals) from which to mold his creation.

## Becoming a Real Boy

One of the aspects a Storyteller must decide upon when incorporating Constructs into a Promethean game is at



what point the Created begins to physically take on human attributes. Several options are possible, and the Storyteller should feel free to incorporate only one or several of them as best suits his chronicle.

Having Constructs take on a flesh form rather than that of their originating material is an option, but likely one of the least satisfying. It not only reduces the impact of incorporating Constructs into the game but also may counteract the significance of the transition from non-human to human that including them can create.

The transition theme can be emphasized, on the other hand, by using a gradual transformation from non-flesh to flesh as the Created Construct progresses along his Pilgrimage. Small changes, such as those described in the chapter on short-term games (see p. 109) can be incorporated to reinforce the character's gradual attainment of milestones and his coming ever-nearer to Redemption. Care must be taken, however, for the process not to take on too great of a "steering" effect. Characters must be allowed to contemplate the significance of their actions and using the transition as too much of a thermometer can remove some of the soul-searching that the Pilgrimage should include.

The final option is for Construct characters to retain a wholly or predominantly non-flesh form until their Magnum Opus. Storytellers may find this to be the preferable method, as it creates the greatest dramatic effect in terms of the transformation. Others may prefer a slow transformation as offering them the opportunity to play out the drama of the change over multiple sessions rather than at one climactic finale.

## Tura Evenkia

**Quote:** *All things will be revealed in time. I am patient.*

**Background:** In the forest, not a tree exists that does not shudder at the sound of the saw. The scream of blade against still-living wood spreads through the taiga, sound traveling as fast as the wind through the branches. Larch roots are shallow but broad. They spread out like grasping fingers from the base of each tree, reaching for their neighbors, interlocking the entire forest into a connected community. These trees are, as much as any plant can be, empathetic to each other's condition. When one is struck by disease, fire or lightning, the rest feel it, and slowly recoil their roots from the stricken one's, as if its pain is transmitted, driving the others away. The separation from others, the pulling away, just as the humans pull away from her now. The patterns are repeated, over and over, and Tura watches as she has for years.

Others think her crazy for saying so, but Tura knows the truth. Trees feel pain. She believes it. She knows it. She remembers it firsthand: the bite of the saw, the stab of the drill, the slice of the plane. None, however, could equal the pain that came afterwards. The splintering of her body was nothing compared to the rending of her soul as the howling spirits tore her, limb from limb.

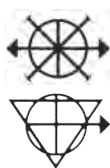


Tura's first act was one she will always regret. Driven mad with the pain of her creation, she struck out at the nearest target: her creator. She would never know if it was her awakening or her first blows that surprised him the most. Her hardwood fists pummeled him to the ground, then sprouted sharp thorn-claws that tore his flesh from bone. By the time she'd calmed, all that remained of her creator were scattered bits of crimson meat and ivory bone.

Since that day she has wandered the world, seeking out others of her kind. Thus far, none of the Created she has encountered shares her strange condition, and many do not believe she is truly constructed of wood, rather than flesh, despite her obvious disfigurements. She still hopes, however, to find others like her and perhaps find the answer to the question that has plagued her for years: is it possible for a Construct to become Redeemed?

**Description:** Instead of flesh, Tura's body appears to have been roughly carved from wood. Her features are little more than rough gashes in the wood, chiseled there long before her creator shared his ectoplasmic humour with her. Her hair is formed of strips of bark, roughly woven into a fall of brown. Similar to all Ulgans, her form has been torn asunder and still bears gaping wounds from her generative process. But rather than ravaged flesh, Tura's injuries are those of splintered wood. Rough-hewn edges catch and grind against each other with every movement, spanning the uneven gaps that still mark her wooden frame.

In clothing, as in every other aspect of her life, she favors simplicity: sturdy boots, loose trousers and shirts, bulky coats and a stocking cap pulled down around her ears. She travels light, shunning most conveniences of the modern traveler. Her prized possession is a fist-sized snuff bottle carved from a single piece of carnelian. The bottle formerly belonged to her creator, and she



shows it at each Ramble she enters into, hoping to find someone who can tell her about her unfortunate creator.

**Storytelling Hints:** From seeing similar objects in spiritually significant places in northern Siberia, Tura assumes that she was originally a life-sized piece of religious art, somehow brought to life. She is correct. Her creator discovered the statue from which she was made as he camped along the Yenisey River. This was not the first time he'd encountered such idols left as offerings to the local spirits, but for whatever reason, he was struck with a thought, *Could an already spiritually dedicated form like this one be quickened with the Divine Fire?* Unfortunately, while his experiment was successful, it was also fatal, and Tura never had the benefit of his insights.

Tura does not so much walk her path as lumber along it like a bear, with little grace but a great deal of strength. She is slow to speak or act, but once she is started on a course, almost nothing will dissuade her until she has accomplished her goal. She accepts the Disquiet-spawned rejection of humanity with quiet forbearance, and seems vaguely surprised when other Prometheans do not treat her in the same fashion. She has, at heart, accepted the fact that she is an aberration, and possibly the only one of her kind.

**Lineage:** Ulgan

**Refinement:** Cuprum

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 1, Stamina 4

**Social Attributes:** Presence 1, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Crafts 1, Medicine (Herbalism) 3, Occult 3

**Physical Skills:** Brawl 2, Stealth 2, Survival (Cold Weather) 4

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 2, Empathy 3, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 2, Subterfuge (Blank Stare) 3

**Merits:** Direction Sense, Elpis 2, Residual Memory 4, Strong Back

**Willpower:** 8

**Humanity:** 6

**Virtue:** Faith

**Vice:** Sloth

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 1

**Speed:** 9

**Health:** 9

**Azoth:** 8

**Bestowment:** Ephemeral Flesh

**Transmutations:** *Deception* — Color of Man (·); *Disquietism* — Rabid Rage (··); *Electrification* — Feel The Spark (·), Shock (··), Arc (···); *Metamorphosis* — Mask of Medusa (·), Natural Weaponry — Claws (··); *Sensorium* — Sensitive Ears (·), Aura Sight (··), Ephemeral Gaze (···), Rarefied Senses (····), Piercing Sight (····)

**Pyros/per Turn:** 30/8

## Serendipitous Creation — The Extempore

It is a vanity to believe that we are all created for a reason. It gives our existence meaning and value and our lives purpose, even if we do nothing with that potential. For Prometheans this is no vanity. One of the first facts a Created learns is often the identity of his creator, and one of the first questions a Created asks is why he was made. Many are fortunate enough to receive an answer immediately. This knowledge gives the Created a surety of purpose that at first glance might seem enviable to humans, who may spend their entire existences seeking an answer to the same question. This comprehension, however, is balanced by the bitter pill that is often the answer — that their “purpose” is only to serve as a stepping stone toward their creator’s Magnum Opus.

When the knowledge that their “birth” is an act of directed will is removed, however, Prometheans are denied both the answer and the bitter truth behind it. They are left, as humans are, to journey along their paths seeking the answer to one of the most timeless of questions: “Why am I here?”

## Bin Gereh — “Born of the Bad Night”

In the time of Saladin, a gigantic earthquake devastated the Upper Nile Valley, killing more than a million souls and marring the land for hundreds of miles. Locally, it is known simply as the “Bad Night,” and eight centuries later, its effects can still be seen on the area, physically and culturally.

Great chasms still scar the land, where the soil was ripped open by the might of the earth’s fury. Worse yet are the places where jagged cliffs stand as the sole testament to places where the ground opened up to swallow entire villages and then slammed back in place to crush them whole. Stories are shared to this day of the storm that accompanied the disaster: how the night sky was as bright as day with lightning and flames and the winds blew so hard that cattle and carts were picked up into the sky and thrown to the ground miles away. Children for centuries were frightened into behaving by grandmothers threatening that if they did not mind themselves, the hungry ground would open as it did on the Bad Night and consume their entire village. The screams of the doomed would be drowned out by exploding thunder and rending of the earth and it would be all their fault for misbehaving. Strange legends were born on the Bad Night, tales of vermin falling from the sky and villagers throughout the kingdom being struck blind or deaf or dumb from the sheer wrongness of it all. Throughout Egypt and Syria, the stories have been passed



along for generations, and few children come to maturity without encountering them.

But one story dating back to that fateful night is not told by the human occupants of the Valley, but only around sequestered campfires at the rarest of Rambles. This story is rarely believed, but still it persists, and has throughout the centuries between that time and this: the tale of Bin Gereh, the one who was born of the Bad Night.

### The First Day

Bin Gereh woke to silence in the remains of what was once a large village. He walked out among the ruined houses and met no one but corpses. Some had been crushed beneath fallen buildings, some had been half-consumed by great rifts in the earth and some seemed to have fallen dead in their tracks without a single mark upon them. He passed through the devastation in silence, accompanied only by the shuffling of his own bare footsteps in the now-dry soil. No maker welcomed him into being, no teacher guided his first steps, because none existed. He was not orphaned or abandoned. He was truly alone, apparently spawned by the might of the Bad Night itself.

Now and again, throughout the ages, a Promethean meets up with Bin Gereh on his Pilgrimage, as he walks his solitary path across the face of the Earth. Some of those whose paths have crossed his claim he is Nepri and some believe him to be Tammuz; others posit he is actually Ulgan. The truth, however, is not so simple.

His sandy skin writhes when Pyros flares it to life, and when he uses one of his Transmutations, the gaps between his ragged bits of flesh gape open like chasms in the earth ready to swallow up whatever is near. Neither sleeping in soil, nor water nor surrounded by voices strengthens him, nor does interacting with humanity, a fact that only serves to strengthen his feeling of alienation. He is reported to have demonstrated (when need be) both phenomenal strength and stamina, and although he rarely speaks of it, he is rumored have lived through more than 100 "deaths." During philosophical conversations, he sometimes ponders whether he can be killed permanently at all.

According to those who have met him, he's tried all five of the generative acts in order to create progeny, but all have failed more than once. He's stopped trying, for the most part, although he hasn't given up hope of Redemption. He simply trusts that, when he is ready, the fates will cross his path with the right situation.

## The Extempore

At its heart, the creation of a Promethean is an alchemical process, not a magical one. While one method (the most common one) of bringing a Created into being is to intentionally bring together the proper components in precisely the right proportions in a very ritualistic procedure, the rite itself is little more than a method of passing the alchemical formula down in a method that can withstand the test of time. Many “spells” and obscure processes throughout history have relied on similar mnemonic devices to ensure that important information is accurately transferred from teacher to student and beyond, especially in cultures and situations where written texts are not used. Just as ancient Qabbalists feared persecution (or competition!) should their arcane secrets be discovered, the early Created could not risk the secrets of their generative formulae to a concrete format and so instead developed elaborate rituals that would help serve to pass the vital recipes from one “generation” of Promethean to the next.

In truth, it is not the ceremony that creates a Created, but the formula. And thus, any situation that brings together the proper components in the proper order and then applies the appropriate energy can bring forth a similar result, whether the process is being directed by intention or not.

The generative formula is a complicated one, however, and not likely to be duplicated by accident. Only in the most extenuating of circumstances do all of the elements necessary to create Promethean life come together in precisely the right ways, and even then, without the spark of Divine Fire, there can be no Created.

Only a few situations exist outside of human or Promethean intervention that provide sufficiently intense amounts of the Divine Fire to spontaneously generate a Promethean. In Bin Gereh’s case, the earthquake that devastated his homeland was accompanied by (or perhaps caused by) a Firestorm of almost unheard of strength. Rumors exist that the appearance of an Arch-*qashmal* may spark enough Divine Fire to do so as well, although the veracity of such tales is often called into question by those who do not believe that the Arch-*qashmallim* even exist.

Along with the Divine spark, in order for a Promethean to be created, a freshly dead body must be infused with sufficient quantities of elementally charged alchemical humour. While this infusion is most easily provided by another Promethean, situations can arise in which the alchemically charged humour (or humours) are manifested by other means. Natural or human-made disasters may manifest sufficient elemental energy to do so. Some seem fairly simple. Earthquakes, such as the one from which Bin Gereh was spawned, provide earthen energies and melancholic humour. Floods provide the phlegmatic humour associated with water, and sweeping forest fires or explosions may provide fiery choleric humour. Tornados lend their wind to the sanguine humours while battlefields, war zones and horrific accidents may create

enough ectoplasmic humour to suffice for the alchemical process of creating a Promethean. Most often, however, more than one humour is involved in serendipitous creations. Naturally speaking, for example, tsunamis may combine earth and water, hurricanes may meld water and air or volcanic eruptions may merge fire and earth, while accidents (or acts of intentional human destruction) can spawn an almost infinite variation of humeral combinations.

In part because of this variety, serendipitously created Prometheans are less similar to each other than those of any other Lineage. In truth, they are each their own unique Lineage (in most cases a Lineage of one, the first and last of their line), but for the purposes of examining the phenomena, the few Promethean scholars who are aware of the existence of these Prometheans refer to them collectively as the Extempore.

## Meaning

While at first glance the idea of serendipitous creation seems little more than an additional method of bringing Prometheans into existence, its roots go much deeper. If not all Prometheans are the results of human tinkering, it could be argued that they are not simply failed experiments or flawed creations, but instead that they have a rightful place in existence. And if, building upon this premise, they do not generate Disquiet and Wastelands because they are “wrong” (and are seeking humanity to become “right”) then a Promethean’s entire worldview might be changed simply by encountering one of the Extempore. What, if not a desire to “fix” herself, motivates a Promethean to become human? Is it a natural progression, from Created to human, like a caterpillar becoming a moth? Is the desire to become human innate at all, or is it simply a misplaced self-loathing that might be abated by a Promethean’s acceptance of himself as a natural part of the world? While these questions may seem esoteric to an individual being pursued by a mob of torch-wielding humans, these questions play directly into the primary themes of **Promethean**, and the introduction of an Extempore into a chronicle can encourage similar philosophical ponderings on the part of both players and characters.

## Mechanics

Extempore Created are each unique, and Storytellers are encouraged to tinker with the existing aspects of the Created to come up with their own individual Extempore as suits their chronicles. Extempore are also, however, a rarity, and for the most part should be used as a singular and unique encounter, although a throng of Freaks who have, over the ages, sought out and recruited only those who are serendipitously created while spurning their Pilgrimages might provide additional layers of encouragement for those who encounter them to reconsider what they believe they know about the Centimani.

Since creating Extempore involves tinkering with the base rules of character creation for **Promethean**, Storytellers should be careful to make certain that the benefits and drawbacks of the character are neither crippling nor disproportionately powerful, especially if the Extempore will be a character in a chronicle with traditional Prometheans.

## Extempore Bestowments and Weaknesses

Brought about by circumstances that do not exactly replicate any other Lineage's generative rituals, Extempore Promethean most often do not bear the same Bestowments as other Created. Some, such as Bin Gereh, seem to manifest a variation of a traditional Bestowment, while others may exhibit something completely different (but appropriate to the situation in which they were created).

An Extempore created during a tsunami might have the ability to merge with seawater, or regenerate herself entirely when submerged in it. One brought to life during the height of a famine might have no need to eat to survive, or conversely, he may be impossible to kill as long as he has eaten within the last hour (but needs to eat twice as much as a normal Promethean to stay healthy.) A spontaneously Created individual who was born of a massive battle may find she is invulnerable to certain types of damage, sabers and swords, which slide off her flesh as if it were steel, or bullets bounce off her skin.

In counterbalance to their sometimes amazing abilities, however, Extempore often do not receive the benefit of many of the inherent gifts a Lineage bestows upon a Created. Just as Bin Gereh, the Extempore might not regenerate Pyros in connection to any Lineage's element, or he might suffer from disfigurements on a larger scale than other Promethean (either bearing the disfigurements of several Lineages, or something unique to himself). An Extempore may cause a Disquiet-like reaction in other Promethean who can feel on an innate level that the Extempore is somehow "wrong."

As it is impossible for an Extempore to recreate the unique circumstances brought it into being, there is little worry about them populating the Earth with a vast army of their progeny. So as long as the character's weaknesses (physical or social) are in keeping with the benefits her unique Bestowment gives her, Storytellers can use Extempore alongside traditional Created. Extempore whose Bestowment (or Bestowments) makes them much more powerful than "normal" Prometheans and who are not subject to similarly strong weaknesses are best used as Storyteller-controlled characters or to serve as story hooks and plot points.

### Bin Gereh

**Quote:** *You think you know what it is to be alone. You have no idea.*

**Background:** Born of disaster, Bin Gereh has wandered the earth for centuries, fading in and out of the

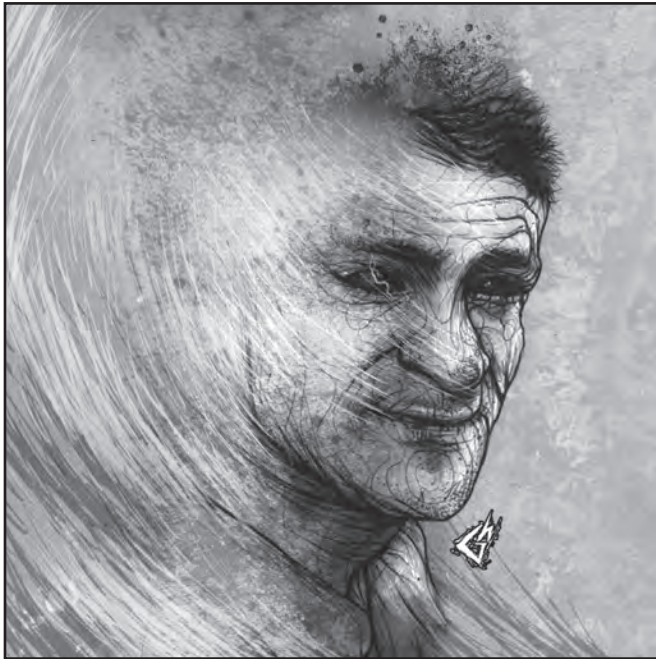
wastes as he continues to seek an answer for his great question: "What am I?" Unable to create others of his kind, and uncertain whether he is capable of ever truly "dying," Bin Gereh alternates between a stoic acceptance of his situation and a bitter belief that he is cursed by the tragedy that created him. His greatest fear is that he will spend all of eternity on his Pilgrimage and that when the last Promethean has become human and the last being in the human race has died out, he will be left to continue his journey utterly alone for all time. He actively seeks to join a throng, but his Azoth is so polluted as to make it difficult for other Promethean to spend time around him long without being besieged by a contagious form of his own melancholy, a fact that only reinforces his fears of a solitary destiny.

**Description:** Bin Gereh appears to be a middle-aged man of indeterminate racial background. His skin is tan, but whether that is from the sun or his heritage is a matter of interpretation. His eyes are a nondescript brown, as is his hair, and he is of average build. When his disfigurements appear, however, he is anything but typical, even to other Prometheans. His skin takes on the swirling texture of the wind blowing across a sand dune, rippling constantly as if ruffled by a desert storm. His eyes are glassy black as a night sky, and flash with occasional sparks of lightning. His body is sundered into rough chunks between which are hungry gaping rifts. His normal dress is mundane traveling clothing: jeans, hiking boots and a long-sleeved shirt even in the hottest climates.

He rarely carries anything with him, having cached goods all over the globe over the years to draw upon as need be.

**Storytelling Hints:** The consummate wanderer, Bin Gereh can lend an air of mystery to any chronicle and can be particularly useful for demonstrating that the whys and wherefores of how the universe works are a strange and vague lot of sometimes contradictory rules and guidelines. He may also encourage Prometheans to examine their preconceived notions about their place in the greater scheme of things, questioning what they have been taught or have assumed about not only the generative act, but also the nature of Promethean existence.

When Bin Gereh encounters others, they rarely know what to make of the strange Promethean. In truth, he rarely knows what to make of himself. He can shift quickly from his normal resigned acceptance of his fate to a near-suicidal funk, especially when confronted with others making plans to begin creating progeny or when pressed as to his own Lineage. (He claims to have none.) This can be used to emphasize the sense of alienation in **Promethean**, or to encourage an existing throng to value their own bonds.



**Lineage:** Extempore

**Refinement:** Stannum

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 2, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Academics (History) 3, Investigation 2, Medicine 1, Occult 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Larceny 2, Stealth 2, Survival (Deserts) 4, Weaponry 2

**Social Skills:** Empathy 2, Expression 1, Intimidation (“Just Let Me Pass”) 3, Persuasion 1, Socialize 1, Streetwise (Handouts) 3, Subterfuge 1

**Merits:** Direction Sense, Languages (Egyptian, English), Repute 2, Resources (Many Small Survival Caches) 2

**Willpower:** 8

**Humanity:** 7

**Virtue:** Fortitude

**Vice:** Envy

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 11

**Health:** 9

**Azoth:** 7

**Bestowment:** Endless Night (see below)

**Transmutations:** *Disquietism* — Alembic (··), Scapegoat (·), Safe Sojourn (···), Soothe Disquiet (··); *Deception* — Color of Man (·), Incognito (··); *Electrification* — Feel the Spark (·); *Mesmerism* — Suggestion (··), Logos (···)

(**Note:** While Ben Gereh’s current Refinement of Tin is the focus of the majority of the Transmutations listed here, he has existed for long enough to have gained an extensive list of Transmutations. Storytellers are encouraged to create “episodes” in his history to reflect the pursuit of any Refinement they feel adds to their stories, and to grant him Transmutations to reflect the same.)

**Pyros/per Turn:** 20/7

**Unique Bestowment — Endless Night:** After being killed, Ben Gereh spends but a single night dead. He wakes with the dawn, wholly healed and “alive.” Unlike Osirans or other Promethean who must strengthen themselves significantly between resurrections (i.e., repurchase the Revivification Bestowment), dying does not seem to “expend” Ben Gereh’s ability to revive himself. When traveling through war-filled areas, he has on occasion been killed, woken with the dawn and been slaughtered again within moments, the process repeating some times for days on end.

While Bin Gereh fears that this seeming immortality may be a curse, which will result in him being the last living creature on the planet, the truth is that he is not immortal. He is, however, invulnerable to death while on land. Having been brought into being by history’s greatest earthquake, he is nigh unkillable in its domain. He cannot, however, resurrect himself from drowning, and cannot use his Endless Night Bestowment while aboard a sea-going vessel or while immersed in sufficiently large quantities of water. The fact that this has not happened yet — despite many ocean crossings over the years — might be simple chance, or it might be evidence that Ben Gireh still has some role to play before reaching the end of his journey.

## The Prodigal Demiurge

Behind every masterpiece there is something mysterious at work. Something — or someone — ignites the spark of genius, and a human craftsman is, for one electric moment, inspired beyond human capacity, spawning an unrepeatable masterwork into the world. The creation of a new Promethean Lineage is in such a work, a lightning stroke of brilliance and suddenly something that should never have been able to come into being exists. Some demiurges, such as Pygmalion, credit the Divine, acting to share its own beauty with the world or inspire humanity to continue striving to better themselves. Few argue, because few know the truth hidden in the shadows behind those brilliant flashes of genius. It is not benevolence or a drive to inspire, however, that fuels the creation of new Promethean Lineages.

It is desperation.

## The Root of the Divine Demiurge

As far back as ancient Greece, philosophers attributed the ability to extend one's self far beyond the normal limits of creative ability to the attention or patronage of a divine benefactor or muse. This godly patron would inspire the artisan, either through a direct manifestation and influence or through more subtle means, out of an innate desire to see the world enriched with ever greater and more glorious works of art and creativity. At least in the case of the Created, however, the reality is much less selfless.

In the earliest of ages when the lands of the physical and the lands of the spiritual were less succinctly separated than they are today, there was a great conflict in the ethereal kingdom. Unlike previous squabbles between aspects of the Divine (which were truly all parts of the great wholeness of spirit), this was the first true war. At length, one faction was victorious and the other vanquished. And, as would come to be traditional at such times, this fallen one was painted as the scapegoat for the entire situation and bore the brunt of the matter upon his shoulders.

The defeated aspect was cast out of the Divine for its "sin." This separation tore a fiery rift between the physical and the spiritual, and the entity that would come to be known as the Prodigal was barred from interacting completely with either. This division, the first sin, had far further-reaching effects than even the Divine itself could have foreseen. As soon as blame was cast and part of the Divine separated from the rest of it, the nature of reality changed forever. No longer were things merely a matter of perspective with different aspects of the Divine seeing things differently while remaining part of the whole — for the first time, there truly was "right" and "wrong," an entirely separate physical and spiritual division in reality.

## In Limbo

After a veritable eternity as part of the Divine whole, the aspect that would come to be known as the Prodigal found itself alone. For days (or perhaps centuries), it contemplated its situation, attempting to understand exactly what had happened and how it was possible for it to feel so . . . alone. At length, the Prodigal decided that the "what" and "how" were not as important as rectifying the situation. The Prodigal was no longer whole, and no matter what the cost, it must find a way to rejoin with the rest of the Divine. At first the Prodigal tried simple methods, but its pleas to the rest of the Divine fell upon deaf ears. What was once a part of it was now an impervious wall of Divine Flame that the Prodigal could reach, but never breach. The Prodigal didn't have much better luck with the world of the physical, either. While the Prodigal's influence was greater there, it quickly found that its presence often paved the way to madness among the mortal creatures who were ill prepared to deal with being directly touched by even one small aspect of the Divine. The Prodigal mourned the destruction it came to see in its wake, but,

having no other options save for eternal shunning, the Prodigal set about creating a plan to return to the Divine whole of which it had once been a part.

The Prodigal feels the weight of the first "sin" on its shoulders and knows it must divest itself of this burden before it can rejoin its once divine state. Knowing its burden to be too heavy for any human to bear, the Prodigal hopes that if it can create another being, like itself, to take up the guilt, the Prodigal may be permitted to leave its state of limbo behind and rejoin the Divine. With the onus of sin upon it, the Prodigal may be incapable of creating a perfect being to which the Prodigal can pass its guilty burden, but that has not stopped it from trying time and time again.

Cursed as it is to be neither of the spiritual or physical worlds, the Prodigal is unable to take direct action in either. While its Divine kin are immune to its manipulation, however, humanity is not so inured. Throughout history, the Prodigal has, through visions, ethereal appearances or emotional manipulation, inspired various human beings to create what it hoped would be the form of its replacement. When each was completed, the Prodigal used its status in limbo to focus the Divine Fire into the creation and stir it to life. Each stirred, and for a moment the Prodigal dared to believe that its burden might at last be lifted. But in each case, while something was brought into existence, the Created was not sufficient to bear the burden of the first sin, and the Prodigal was forced to spend the next decades, or in some cases, centuries, scheming another attempt.

## Agents of the Divine Will

Several theories exist as to what role the *qashmallim* play in the Prodigal demiurge's mythology. Some believe that the *qashmallim* are, like the Prodigal itself, shards of the Divine cast out from the whole of it and striving, each in their own way, to return. Others believe the *qashmallim* are simply ripples of *Pyros*, triggered by the Prodigal's manipulation of the Divine fire in its attempts to inspire the creation of a replacement. Less optimistic individuals believe that the *qashmallim* serve as a Divine army being actively played out against the Prodigal's efforts to return. Whenever it seems that the Prodigal or one of its creations may approach the perfection necessary for the Prodigal to pass along its guilty burden, a *qashmal* is charged with some obscure task to prevent this goal from being achieved.

One of the most intriguing theories, however, is that the *qashmallim* are actually tools of the Prodigal itself. Locked as it is, between the spirit and physical worlds, proponents of this theory believe



that the Prodigal is cursed to undo its own efforts and the Elpidos and Lilithim serve as pawns in a celestial chess game the Prodigal is doomed to play with itself for all of eternity.

## Resonances

The story of the Prodigal demiurge, just as many epic “great truths,” has been adopted into one form or another by many of humanity’s cultures throughout the ages. As with the stories of the Garden and the Flood, many religions speak of the separating-out of a part of the godhead as part of the early history of the world. Christian mythologies relate this story in the form of Lucifer being cast out of Heaven, while Loki was bound to a rock to await Ragnarok. These stories, along with those of the war between the Olympians and the Titans in Greek legend and the Aesir and Jotun in Norse myth, all share common roots with the Prodigal demiurge, being manifestations of the story told in a context that humans, unaware of the presence of Prometheans, could understand.

## Flawed Attempts

The creatures that the Prodigal created, imperfect and born of failure, were the Progenitors of each of the Promethean Lineages. While the Progenitors believe the humans who “created” them to be the cause of the Progenitors’ existence, in truth, all owe their spark of Divine Fire (as well as their ability to pass it on to others of their Lineage) to the same Prodigal demiurge. As it strives, time and time again, to create the perfect offspring to take up its long-borne burden, it never makes the same mistake twice. The number of potential mistakes, however, is infinite, and even the most obscure and unlikely rumors of Promethean Progenitors created through strange and unique methods all ultimately lead back to this same semi-divine demiurge, who has left his thumbprint on each of them.

Because of this origin, all Created must create another of their kind before they are able to undergo Redemption. Similar to their Prodigal creator, they must pass along the burden of their imperfections to another before they may go on to their final destiny.

## The Prodigal’s Seven Deadly Sins

Those who believe the story of the Prodigal demiurge, either as literal truth or as a parable about the nature of the Created, often equate each of the known Lineages with one of the archetypal vices, a connection that only strengthens the link between the Prodigal demiurge and mythic demons and devils.

**Wrath:** It is difficult to imagine the Wretched linked with any of the vices more closely than they are wrath. This is

reflected in every aspect of their being, from their choleric natures to their furious Torment.

**Envy:** At first glance, it might seem that the beautiful and sensual Galateid would be the living embodiment of Lust, but in truth, their sanguine nature drives them constantly to covet that which they cannot have. Not only do they seek constantly for the attention and acceptance of others, jealously yearning for the affection they see humans bestow upon each other, but they spur the same invidious desires in those around them.

**Pride:** Hubris is rarely in shortage where the Nepri are concerned. Whether it traces its roots back to their belief that their Lineage was created by a goddess, or the common acceptance of their Progenitor as an Egyptian god, pride is not only the Osiran’s trademark vice, but often their downfall as well.

**Sloth:** Legends mark the Golems as mindless servants, taking no action save for those they are ordered to, and while many of the Tammuz seek to slip the yokes of their literal or figurative servitude, they must always contend with an innate predisposition toward inaction.

**Greed:** Not all forms of greed are for physical goods. For the Riven who walk both the physical and spiritual worlds, no one aspect of reality is enough for them. No matter how many paths they walk, they seek always seeks more: more knowledge, more influence and more spiritual power.

**Lust:** While a Centimanus can be of any Lineage, it is likely to become an all-consuming identity, more akin to a Lineage than a Refinement. The Hundred Handed are often seen as perversions, their craving for the destructive energy of Flux simulating the human lustful cravings perhaps more closely than any other emotion a Promethean can experience.

**Gluttony:** If the existence of the Nuclear Prometheans is indeed more than a wild rumor, there can be no doubt that the all-consuming element of atomic energy is the epitome of gluttony.

With the rumors of the Nuclear Promethean in the current era completing the full cycle of sins, some who follow such myths believe that the Prodigal’s next attempt is destined to be significantly different from the Prodigal’s past efforts. Some feel that, having completed all seven imperfections, its next effort is destined to succeed. Others believe that, having worked its way through the vices, future Lineages will take a more “holy” bent, embodying the archetypal virtues over the next dozens of centuries. Less optimistic philosophers feel that, since the Prodigal has “perfected” its imperfections through trial and error, its next failure will be a spectacular one, resulting in something more monstrous than any Promethean in history.

Another theory, perhaps even more frightening, exists, however. As the Centimani are, in truth, a Refinement rather than a Lineage, some believe that the Prodigal demiurge has not yet created his seventh “sin.” Lust, they say, has yet

to be “born.” Considering the most recent creations (the Wretched and the Nuclear Prometheans), the demiurge’s pattern seems to be taking an extremely destructive bent. Some theorize that the Lust Lineage, when it springs into being, will spawn communicable disease (especially, but not limited to, sexually transmitted ailments) with the same virulence that the Nuclear Promethean are reputed to spread cancer. Others believe that the Lineage that embodies Lust has already begun, but has somehow managed to remain below the radar of other Prometheans. As proof, those (perhaps slightly paranoid) individuals who purport this theory claim that human society is already showing signs of being well within the throes of the Lust Created’s Disquiet: overpopulation, the AIDS epidemic, recent outbreaks of malaria and cholera and the advent of bird flu.

## Meaning

Introducing the mythology of the Prodigal demiurge into a chronicle can give Storytellers an additional tool for incorporating the concepts of duality in their storylines. Within this myth are black and white, good and evil, the divine and the diabolic, but portrayed with sufficient ambiguity to allow characters (and players) leeway to explore the topics from all directions. Should they encounter rumors of the Prodigal demiurge (or a human or situation it is influencing), will they react to it with suspicion or sympathy, see it as the source of all misery in their existence or the potential epitome of the Promethean condition? Or will they even be able to accept that it exists at all, stuck as it is between the worlds of flesh and spirit?

Players may also find that the Prodigal demiurge mythology provides an answer (although not necessarily the right one) to the question of why some humans can create Prometheans and others cannot (as well as why the same human cannot replicate his experiment successfully). This mythology also strengthens the import of the generative act, and may lead characters to contemplate the burden they may or may not be transferring to their own progeny through it.

Stuck as the Prodigal is between the physical and spiritual worlds, it is unlikely that any Created will encounter the Prodigal demiurge directly. The entity isn’t likely to dabble directly in situations in which Promethean already exist, either, as it sees them as a reminder of its past failures, although as with any mythology, the Storyteller should feel free to use it in whatever manner best suits the story. In addition, this mythology may prove useful as a background story to lead philosophical Prometheans into deeper contemplation of several of the aforementioned aspects of their existence. And finally, it can be used as the “backstory” behind a multitude of the alternate mythologies presented in **Magnum Opus**, blending the mythologies to enhance the mystery thereof.

## Mechanics

The Prodigal demiurge requires nothing in the way of mechanics and can be inserted into any storyline on a “mood and feel” basis. Since the Prodigal demiurge is neither physical nor spirit, it cannot be detected by either means, although, should it suit a Storyteller’s needs, he may allow Prometheans to detect the Prodigal’s presence by virtue of its Azothic aura or by using Sense Pyros, Sense Flux or similar Transmutations.

## Scions

To the newly Created, the gaping abyss between themselves and the humanity they seek to join often seems impassable. For all that they are crafted of human flesh, the possibility of attaining their own humanity, of completing their Magnum Opus, can seem a pipe dream when those self-same humans loathe and shun them.

Sometimes, however, whether by miracle, fate, or a touch of the Divine, a Scion enters the world, giving a light of hope to those who need it most. Born of Created flesh, but wholly mortal, these miracles bridge the gap between Pilgrim and Redeemed, between Created and human.

## The Miracle of Birth

Jeremy Lyndon wasn’t much of a man by most accounts. He was tall and rangy, like one post of a long-abandoned barbed-wire fence. His features weren’t fine, neither was his speech, and his clothing and manners were coarse and low-born. Still, for all his faults, he was the focus of an inhuman passion that would live on long after the man himself had gone to feed the worms.

Gideon was a Muse, but none could claim she was fickle. Jeremy was the first man she’d laid eyes on, and she loved him from the minute his gaze met hers. She loved the way his eyes had widened when he first saw her, how his voice broke a bit when he said hello. She loved asking him questions as they got to know each other, loved the funny expressions he got right before he’d say, “Well, that’s kind of a strange thing to say, don’t you think?” She loved how he kissed her and how he started turning off the light when they were going to make love. She loved everything she learned about him, digging through the refuse from his apartment building. And how dedicated to his work he was, even when it meant he couldn’t make time for her. And even when he started refusing her calls and threatened to get a restraining order, she still loved him. The night he died, she loved him, even as he turned the gun toward her, and when she struggled with him, begging him to return her affection and the bullet exploded in his chest, she loved him as his hatred for her faded from his dying eyes.



Three seasons later, and Constant came into the world. When he'd first started moving in her belly, even Seeker (who would later come to be known as Uncle See, despite his protestations) claimed it was impossible. But impossible or no, a few months later Gideon struggled for most of a red-hot Arizona summer day to bring Constant into the world with an incredulous throng doing what they could to aid her through the unfamiliar process.

None of them knew what to expect from Gideon's son. Seeker and Cyrano had both brought progeny into the world, but only through the rites, never . . . like this. None of them had even seen a birth or held a live baby. This mewling bundle of flesh was nothing like a new Created, nothing like anything they'd been let near before. Until his arrival, babies had been kept from them, guarded by overprotective parents and snatched away by suspicious nursemaids if the throng wandered too near their carriages. But he was theirs. All of theirs, for they raised him as a family, sharing the duties and together reaping the benefits.

"He could grow to hate us," Seeker had warned her, out of earshot of the others. But he hadn't. He loved them all, apparently impervious to Disquiet, and more than once their Scion's innocent affection and honest insights had aided them in their Pilgrimage where a more sage voice might have been at a loss.

And now it was only the two of them. Seeker had been the first, finding his Redemption when Constant was barely as tall as his waist. The Nepri had forgotten them, forgotten himself, and walked away into his new future without ever looking back. Constant had been the one to comfort the remains of his family. "It's not his fault he can't remember us. But we can remember him." Gideon and Cyrano had nodded at each other, surprised at how much the boy understood.

Cyrano was next to go, although he hadn't so much walked away as been torn from the arms of his throng in ragged bloody chunks. He'd put himself in front of Gideon and the boy, and held off three Pandorans until they could escape. Without Seeker, there was no one to bring Cyrano back from his final sleep, and the two of them had been able to do little more than creep back to cover up the remains and escape again, hoping the Pandoran pack wouldn't follow to finish the job. She'd almost lost it there, falling to her knees alongside the rubble they'd covered him with and refusing to get up for the longest time. But Constant eventually led her out of the tunnel and back into the twilight of the street above. "He wanted us to go on, Mama. We owe it to him. He died so we could go on."

She didn't know how to go on, after that, though. Months passed, and she didn't let Constant out of her sight. She'd quit her job, stopped going out at all unless he was right beside her, and then only for necessities such as a teenaged boy would need before returning to their sequestered little den beneath the abandoned house they called home. She'd stopped seeking, stopped trying, stopped living, in truth. All she could think about was

making sure he didn't get taken from her as well. She worried he'd chafe under the attention, but he just nodded in his sage way. "It's okay, Mama. I understand."

He was gone the next morning, nothing but a note left on the counter. She'd cried as she read it, and then broke the table and the chairs and the little black-and-white television before returning to the counter to read it again.

"You gotta go on, Mama, and while I'm here, you can't look forward. I'll see you again, some day, on the other side of your journey. I know you can do it. I love you. Constant."

The boy understood more than she thought.

## Possibilities

Few Prometheans put much stock in the legend of Constant Gideonson. Those who do tell the story do so in a variety of fashions and for a variety of reasons. Some, especially the Galateids, credit the miracle of Constant's conception to the love Gideon had for his father. While experiencing (and learning to deal with) rejection may serve as a milestone for many Prometheans on their Pilgrimage, Gideon's adoration endured even in the face of a would-be fatal rejection. Her devotion, some say, was rewarded, transforming her love for the unworthy human into the seeds of a human worthy of her affection: her son, Constant.

Others tell the story slightly differently, claiming that when Gideon was Created the generative process somehow sparked Constant into being. This touch of Divine Fire, they claim, rather than any sort of biological miracle, gave the boy his invulnerability to Disquiet and his innate understanding of the workings of Pilgrimage. Some devotees of this theory even credit the boy with being a Promethean Messiah, a guide sent from the Divine Will to lead the Created toward their Redemptions.

Others claim that the story is more of an allegory, with Constant representing the driving desire to attain Mortality inherent in every Promethean. Proponents of this theory believe that at a certain point along the Pilgrimage, a Created must grow beyond his aspirations for Humanity in order to attain it, shedding their desire in a *wu wei* philosophy that actually brings them closer to their goal. After all, one of the strange paradoxes in striving for Humanity is that most humans do not value humanity as greatly as the non-humans seeking to attain it.

Perhaps even stranger than the legend of Constant Gideonson being born of a human father, are those that credit Cyrano, Gideon's Ulgan throng-mate, with siring the child.

Whether the story is literal or metaphorical, the prospect that Prometheans can spawn human children opens up an entire new world of possibility, both for the Scions and for the Promethean themselves.

## Two of a Kind

Although it is not unheard of for Promethean to take lovers amongst their own kind (especially after having been introduced to the experience by human lovers and then spurned), Promethean procreation through such means is a sketchy rumor at best. Some believe that such pairings should be taboo, that the offspring, should there be any, would be Pantoran. Others believe that, should a pair of Promethean generate a child at all, it would be human and possess its own supernatural abilities far beyond that of its parents.

While a Promethean whose only lover is another of the Created may believe her pregnancy to be the result of this pairing, other possibilities exist. The Divine Fire is a little-understood phenomenon, and if the Storyteller deems it so, it is possible that a sufficient manifestation of the Divine fire might spark human life within a Promethean womb. This possibility also paves the way for the potential of a Promethean becoming pregnant without having ever had intercourse, as well.

## After the End Game

It is not surprising that a Redeemed Promethean, having attained Humanity, could bear human children. She has, after all, earned that ability through her efforts and Redemption. That she would bear a Scion, a child who is immune to Disquiet, however, may complicate matters, especially for a Redeemed who no longer remembers her existence as a Promethean.

The children of Redeemed are often Scions, although few of their parents remember enough of their previous lives to recall the legends thereof. Most often then, children who speak of monsters, or point them out in a crowd, are shushed and silenced, and if they persist, counseled, medicated or even institutionalized. Some Scions deal with their parental disbelief by learning not to admit what they see. Others protest their "truth" until the bitter end, earning themselves hours of therapy and psychoanalysis, or even a diagnosis of schizophrenia. Scion children of humans who have no contact with Prometheans are also susceptible to the same fates. Strangely enough, the presence of a Created parent, or at least an ally, may be a true lifeline for a Scion child in these situations.

## Meaning

While humans often refer to the "miracle of the birth process," in truth it is a common occurrence, biologically reproducible in all but the most unusual of circumstances. All

human beings were born as someone's children and may, in turn, go on to become someone's parent, themselves creating human children. For a Promethean, however, the generative act is the "norm." The birth process, should it happen, is the rarest of rarities. Much like the marvel of a human progenitor bringing a Promethean to life, giving birth to a human is something that should not, by all logical accounts, be possible. When it does happen, it is truly a miracle.

## The Impact of Creation

The act of creating another Promethean through the generative act is one that most of the Created are driven to either out of loneliness or need. Without it, they cannot hope to attain Humanity. The act is often tainted with guilt. Condemning another individual to her own wretched existence, regardless of the motivation, is difficult to do without at least a small amount of remorse. Should the act of giving birth to a human being (or siring one, if the Promethean is male) be possible, this is an entirely different matter. By doing so, the parent is creating a child who is, at birth, the epitome of what the parent herself seeks to become. Without doing more than existing, the child has outstripped the parent's Pilgrimage and achieved his or her end goal. Not only can this be a great source of wonder for the parent, but the potential also exists that a Torment-ridden Created might find great resentment at the ease with which her child has been gifted with this great treasure — a bitter reversal of the resentment she may feel toward her own creator for bringing her into existence. These paradoxes may give the astute Promethean the opportunity to explore several aspects of human emotion: love, joy, pride, selflessness and, in some cases, bitterness, anger and even hatred.

**Note:** While the act of creating a human child may seem to mirror that of the generative act, for the purposes of Redemption, these two processes of creation are quite different. Unfortunately for the Created, the former does not negate the need for the latter before attempting to become Redeemed. A Promethean who has birthed a human child must still create a Promethean by means of the generative rituals of her Lineage before she has a chance to undergo Redemption and attain Humanity herself.

## Pregnancy Milestones

As one of the basic human functions, the act of procreation may offer a Created many opportunities to learn about the human existence and, thus, achieve milestones. Above and beyond the plethora of insights that sexual interaction may reveal (assuming the pregnancy is the result of a sexual encounter), a Promethean who becomes pregnant will be indoctrinated firsthand into the physical and social realms of one of the most intensely emotional human experiences.

Human society treats pregnant women differently from any others. Human instinct at the deepest level is to protect the individuals who are carrying the next generation, and this manifestation, when tainted by a Created's Disquiet

effect, may lead to a variety of reactions from humans who encounter an obviously pregnant Promethean.

Until the effects of Disquiet begin to taint the encounter, pregnant Prometheans may find themselves overwhelmed by the sheer volume of human attention their condition garners. No other physical condition seems to inherently invite social and physical interaction the way that an obviously pregnant individual does. Complete strangers approach expectant mothers, asking intimate questions about their pregnancies and offering detailed information about their own experiences. Many strangers even feel comfortable breaking the nigh-invulnerable "personal space bubble" most strangers afford each other, and pat or stroke the expectant mother's belly as if, by virtue of her condition, it has somehow become community territory. These experiences, often unsettling even for human mothers, may be overwhelming for a Created who is accustomed to being ignored or actively shunned. Introverted Prometheans may feel the need to hide themselves away from humanity to avoid this attention, while for some, especially the Galateid, the interest may prove to be addictive.

Not even the most community-inspiring of conditions, however, can avert Disquiet's effects for long, and the same sense of emotional investment in the future that inspires humans to interact so intimately with pregnant women can spark Disquiet reactions even more severe than normal. A pregnant Promethean is less likely to be physically attacked than a non-pregnant one, "out of concern for the baby." She is also less likely to be ignored or avoided when the effects of Disquiet first begin. Her condition ups the proverbial ante on social discomfort, spurring concerned individuals to become involved in what they may perceive as a drug-abusing, alcoholic or mentally unstable mother-to-be. While this may, at first, seem to be preferable to the normal Disquiet reactions, it can result in the individual in question being paid more attention than she might prefer, sometimes even taken into some sort of "protective" custody (ranging from imprisonment to institutionalization). Which, of course, means that when the more advanced effects of Disquiet do manifest (and they will, eventually), the Promethean is less likely to be able to escape and thus avoid the danger.

Still, although the situation offers unique challenges to the Promethean, it also affords opportunities for unique insights into humanity. A pregnant Created will, undoubtedly, be treated differently from a non-pregnant one, and has access to milestones and insights impossible for any other Promethean to achieve. When else, after all, might an Osiran be extolled with firsthand accounting of a multitude of human birth experiences, or a Frankenstein be reassured that her sturdy build will make her experience easier? At least until Disquiet sets in, pregnancy affords the expectant Promethean inclusion in a social group in which the barriers to communication and togetherness between strangers are far fewer than in most aspects of human society.

Of course, for male Prometheans, the post-conception experience is a less direct one. The role of expectant father, however, is not one that should be discounted or downplayed. The complexities of pregnancy and childbirth hold as many opportunities for learning about human nature for the observing Promethean as for the pregnant one. While most human women will not be able to stave off Disquiet throughout the entirety of their pregnancies, the depth of emotion involved with the process can offer a Promethean father-to-be milestones, regardless of the duration of the relationship. Dealing with a pregnancy may show him another side of the generative act (whether he has yet undergone the Promethean ritual or not), and if he believed it was impossible for him to sire human children, it may make him re-think what he knows about the rest of the “rules” of Created existence as well. Or, if he understands human procreation enough to believe himself cuckolded, he may be put into a position of accusing his lover of betrayal. Paranoia and fear of infidelity, although not ideal aspects of humanity, can be important insights into human reactions, as can the possibility of learning to trust someone.

## Milestones from Babies and Children

Whether the Created bear the children themselves or simply return to investigate their children after their births, the Created can also discover an entirely unique side of humanity centered around interaction with the very young. While human children eventually are affected by Disquiet, the products of Promethean-human pairings are not, giving the Created the opportunity to explore this facet of humanity in an in-depth fashion not normally open to them. Human parents often say that having children taught them more about the world than the entire rest of their lives have. For Prometheans, these lessons can be the key to great strides along their Pilgrimages.

Never before have the Created been faced with a being relying upon them as totally as a newborn child does. Neither, in all likelihood, have they ever had the opportunity to receive unconditional love such as a child can offer. And, once the child becomes more sentient and interactive (assuming accidents, Pandorans, protective outsiders or the like do not separate parent from child), the insights increase exponentially. Not only does the role of parent provide the Created with insights, but close contact with a human child who is unaffected by Disquiet is a virtual guarantee of a plethora of milestone-attaining opportunities and insights. Seeing the world through a child’s eyes, listening to a young person’s questions (and answers) and experiencing the changes in human development as the infant grows into a young adult are all ripe with the opportunity for a Promethean’s Pilgrimage to progress alongside.

Some sample milestones related to interacting with children might include the following:

- Giving birth or witnessing the birth process.
- Being visually or audibly recognized by the baby for the first time.
- Protecting the child from a dangerous situation (or alternately, failing to protect him and having him come to harm).
- Teaching a child one of his major accomplishments (walking, talking, feeding himself, riding a bike).
- Witnessing children’s cruelty to each other, especially toward (or from) her own ward.
- Being the target of strong emotional responses from the child; hearing “I love you!” (or “I hate you!”) for the first time.
- Being given a parental pet name (Mommy, Mama Mikey, Nana, etc.).
- Being lied to.
- Dealing with significant illness, disease, danger or injury to the child.
- Having the child be ashamed to have the character as a parent (i.e., not wanting to be seen with the character, etc.).
- Explaining the Promethean nature to the child.

## The Long Night

The World of Darkness is a dangerous place, especially for the young and inexperienced. The harsh flipside of “the strong survive” is that frequently the weak do not. No parent or guardian can, regardless of his superhuman powers and abilities, protect his ward from all harm.

And, unlike Promethean progeny, human children do not come back from the dead.

The loss of a child, be her human or Promethean, is one of the most devastating tragedies any individual will ever endure. Regardless of the circumstances, bereaved parents may be wracked with an entire gamut of negative emotions including guilt, anger, denial, sorrow and fear. Their entire belief system is challenged as they try to come to grips with the unthinkable. For human parents, the loss of a child often spurs other major changes in their lives. Their loss fills them with questions. Seeking the answers (or avoiding facing them) may send the parents into (or away from) religious extremes, spiral them deeply into (or act as impetus for breaking) addictive habits or bring them closer to (or estrange them from) their friends and family.

When the Created parent experiences such a loss, the situation is a bitter balance of negative and positive. While it is difficult to imagine good coming from the depths of tragedy, the loss of a child – and all of

the circumstances that follow — is milestone-rich territory. Knowing that each human parent lives every day with the threat of experiencing this sort of loss may give a Promethean insight into the sometimes-overprotective nature of human society, as well as how this desire to protect can sometimes encourage humanity to view children as the property of their parents. It may also allow him to understand, on a deeper level, the fear in a mother's eyes as she snatches her child away from the Promethean's presence. The loss of a child may encourage the Promethean to ponder what, if anything, happens after death, which in turn may lead to philosophical ponderings on the nature of the human soul. Not all milestones are pleasant. A Promethean parent may find that even in the depths of his own pain, he is given greater insight into how humanity's frail and often far-too-short lifespan affects every aspect of their interactions with each other.

## Mechanics

The miracle of Promethean-human (or Promethean-Promethean, or even spontaneous Promethean) procreation doesn't really require mechanics. Unlike Redemption, this is not something that is a normal aspect of the Pilgrimage, and Storytellers should never feel pressure to include this kind of procreation in their chronicles unless it serves a significant role to promote their stories. Thus, rather than consulting a hard list of modifiers or dice pools, Storytellers are encouraged to weigh the possible ramifications for their storylines and employ (or not) the possibility that best suits their games.

If used, a Promethean pregnancy (whether born by or sired by a Promethean, or both) could either last as long as a human gestation (36–40 weeks) or progress at double speed, by virtue of the supernatural parent's influence on the young zygote, as suits the story best. Pregnant Prometheans would likely, by virtue of their increased stamina, suffer little in the way of negative physical effects from their condition, but might well be subjected to strange cravings (although what serves as "strange" to a creature that can easily live on paper, insects or old shoe leather is up to the Storyteller).

Scions are immune to Disquiet, and can sense the Azothic Radiance of Prometheans as the Created can for each other. Similar to the Created, however, Scions' ability to sense Azoth leaves them vulnerable to Prometheans who are suffering from high levels of Torment. Scions feel uncomfortable around Torment-wracked Prometheans, though exactly how the Scions react depends on the character in question.

## Scion — Constant Gideonson

**Quote:** *Don't worry, Mommy. I won't let them hurt you.*

**Background:** Constant Gideonson has lived all of his 15 years on the road. He was born just outside of Goodyear, Arizona, on a day so hot his Uncle Cyrano claimed to have



cooked his mama's breakfast on the sidewalk outside of the bus station just before she gave birth to young Constant. In his short life, he's seen more cities, states and miles of concrete than most humans ever will. The majority of his education came from his mother, or one of the rest of their throng, all of whom looked at Constant as a miracle.

**Description:** Constant is a wiry 15-year-old boy. His sandy blond hair flops into his face more often than not, but even his overgrown bangs cannot hide the observant gleam within his blue eyes. In the way of teenaged boys, his hands and feet seem too large for the rest of him, and if he grows into them he will likely be a giant among men some day. For now, however, he is all knees and elbows, more gawky than graceful, at least physically.

**Storytelling Hints:** Constant has an insight into the Promethean condition that few others, Created or human, ever will. He is slow to speak, but quick to offer insight when appropriate. He seems to be able to innately sense Promethean by virtue of their Azothic Radiance, and sees them as each other do (in their full disfigurements), but is immune to the ravages of Disquiet, making him a valuable companion or ally for a lonely Promethean.

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics 1, Computer 1, Investigation 3, Medicine 2, Occult (Prometheans) 4

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Larceny 3, Stealth 2, Survival 3, Weaponry (Improvised) 2

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Empathy 4, Expression 2, Persuasion 2, Socialize (Prometheans) 3, Streetwise 2

**Merits:** Direction Sense, Iron Stomach, Repute 4

**Willpower:** 6

**Morality:** 7  
**Virtue:** Hope  
**Vice:** Pride  
**Initiative:** 6  
**Defense:** 3  
**Speed:** 10  
**Health:** 8

## A Maker Dreaming

This happens somewhere in Australia. There's a man, and he has what the people call a Goanna Dreaming. Dirawong the Goanna made everything, and the man has the Dreaming, which means that he makes things. He makes tools, and spears, and he makes straps and clothes and he makes pictures of the Dreamtime, which he paints on rocks with paints he mixed himself. He's good at making things, this man, and his tribe comes to him when they need things, but they don't talk to him much, because he's odd and intense, and they can see he has the Goanna Dreaming.

One day, Dirawong comes to him, an enormous lizard, as long as he's tall, and it coils its tail around him. The Goanna sits there for a while, whispering into his sleeping ear. The lizard asks the man what he wants to make, and the man says that he wants to make spears and beads and cloths and straps and pictures. And then Dirawong asks him what he *really* wants to make, and the man says that he really wants to make another one of the people. He wants to make a man, not the hard way, not the usual way. He wants to make a man, full-grown and ready to live, and Dirawong says to him, that's not an easy thing to do.

The man says that he guessed that it might not be easy. He says he wants to try. The Goanna tells him to follow his Dreaming, but warns him that he'll find out more than he wants to know if he follows it to the end. Then Dirawong hops away into the desert, and finds himself a possum to eat, and the man carries on dreaming.

And the following day, he wakes up and takes his spear and his bundle of paints and his knife and he goes walkabout. He finds himself a river to camp by, and then he starts dreaming.

It's not easy. He puts down his head every night, and every day, he hunts down something to eat and drinks from the river and thinks about what he's going to dream about. It doesn't work to begin with. He does it night after night, and the moon changes its shape over and over again, and the river gets lower and higher several times over, and the dreams don't do what he wants them to do. Dreams are slippery things. They don't pay attention to you. They run away.

He's there for a long time. His hair goes gray. Some of it falls out. But he stays there, hunting, eating, sitting under a tree by the river and desiring to dream. One night, he sees, lying on the ground before him, the face of a man, his eyes closed, lying perfectly still. In his dream, he stands and watches the face all night, waiting for something to happen.

He wakes up as the sun rises. That day, he eats or drinks nothing. He simply sits under his tree and pictures in his head the face of the man in his dream. And that night he dreams again of him. This time the man with the Goanna Dreaming pictures a lock of the man's hair. And the following night, he dreams some more hair. Each day that follows, he hunts, he eats and drinks and he prepares to dream. And each night that follows, the man with the Goanna Dreaming dreams more of his new man, each time adding another tiny fragment to the figure in the dream.

One night, in his dream, he finishes the man. Every pore of his skin, every tooth in his mouth, everything, it's all done. But there is no life.

That last night, he remains asleep. The sun rises, and he isn't awake to see it. In his dream, the sun rises, too, and the sun says to him, *look around you*.

The man with the Goanna Dreaming looks around him now, and sees the place where his dream is. His creation lies on the bank of a river. A eucalyptus grove stands nearby. And behind him, far away, a rocky hill rises, and on the hill, beneath a tree like his own, the man with the Goanna Dreaming sees a figure sitting, watching. He looks for a while. The figure looks back. He does not know this place.

The man with the Goanna Dreaming looks around him. The water on the river reflects the fire of the morning sun.

So the man with the Goanna Dreaming steps over the man he created, reaches out and takes a handful of the fire of the sun from the water, and then he stuffs it in the mouth of his creation.

And the creation vanishes.

The man looks up, and before he wakes, he realizes that he, too, was once dreamed.

And somewhere else, hundreds of miles away, a corpse ceases to be a corpse. A pair of eyes snaps open. A pair of lungs takes a ragged first breath.

## A Question of Place

It might *not* have happened in Australia. Maybe it happened in Peru. A man rowed down the river as far as he could go, and he sat in the jungle and met the Virgin Mary and made his dream Promethean. Or perhaps there was a man in northern India, outside of a village 100 miles from anywhere else, a lonely sadhu who sat and saw Shiva reveal to him exactly how to make a man in his dreams. Or a man somewhere in the southeast of the North American continent, who, long before the white man got so far, saw Coyote and got the hint.

It doesn't matter. There are dreamers everywhere.



## Meaning

A Promethean made of a dream, however or wherever he was made, has a tough break. He never met his demiurge. He has no one to explain to him what being a Promethean is like. He doesn't even know that he was created. He looks in the water nearby. His skin is translucent. His eyes are solid orbs of black.

He has no idea what he is. Everything is new. He has to work everything out for himself.

Everything, every misery, every horror, every triumph is new and strange. Most Prometheans are surprised when they first experience Disquiet, and they've had some warning. What about the Promethean who really doesn't have any idea about what he does to other people? He'll figure out that he's not the same as these people, but he'll have no idea why. If he's worked out what he looks like, he behaves strangely around people when he meets them the first few times. He doesn't know that his disfigurements hide themselves. He assumes that the hostility of these people he's drawn to is because he looks a little different.

The call to humans is still within him. He feels the need to approach them. But he doesn't understand how to step up to people, how to talk to them. He doesn't have the first idea what to do.

Could he be expected to know that his presence in the land messes up the order of nature? Maybe he just thinks the Wasteland is the natural order of things.

Whatever happens, the dream-created Promethean is an innocent. For him, everything is new. When he develops a Refinement, there's no guarantee that he'll associate it with a metal, or understand it as an alchemical operation. His behavior affects the way he develops his powers. The way in which he develops his powers influences the way he behaves in future.

He was dreamed into being. Dreams shaped him. Every time he sleeps, he dreams. They're not his dreams. Having no dreams of his own, he finds himself a powerless observer in the dreams of humans who don't even live near him.

Each dream is a world in itself. It follows its own rules. In the world of a dream, things have always been the way they are, and the dreamer instinctively knows the rules of the dream. If the dreamer's heart is made of glass and full of flies, it makes sense within the context of the dream. If the dreamer can transform people into trees with a touch, she knows how to do it within the context of the dream, and forgets when she wakes up.

The Promethean who finds himself caught in another person's dreams has no knowledge of what the rules are. He has to follow the dreamer's rules, and probably has no control over the course of the dream. Naked, visible for what he is and, most importantly, mute, he stands and watches. He becomes part of the landscape of the dream. He's at the dreamer's mercy (although the dreamer doesn't necessarily realize that).

The Promethean doesn't even know what the dream's rules are. He has to work that out. The only thing that he knows for sure is who the dream belongs to. To him, the dreamer stands at the center of the dream's area. The Promethean can walk around in the dream, to an extent, but the further from the dreamer the Promethean strays, the more vague the details of the dream become. Details increase near the dreamer. Things seem more solid (although in a dream, they're liable to change at any moment).

The chances are that a dream-born Promethean causes a dream to become a nightmare, just by being there, just by standing there in the middle of the dream. He's a figure of terror. He might not wish it, but his presence can turn a romantic idyll or a whimsical flight of fancy into a screaming, sweaty horror.

A teenage boy dreams, for the first time, of a beautiful girl, in the sunshine, in a beautiful place. They kiss. He holds her. And then he sees, standing over her shoulder, a thing in the bushes, peering out at him. He screams. The girl vanishes. The sun shines black. It begins to rain, and the land, full of grass and flowers, becomes, thanks to the dreamer's fear, blasted and barren. The boy is frozen. He can only look at the creature before him, and stays there, staring into its sad, terrible eyes until he wakes up.

A woman has a dream in which she's told that she missed out on gaining a vital certificate when she was a teenager, and she has to go back to school. They fit her for a uniform, and she looks at herself, and she's 14 and scared again. Back in the school she hated, she sits through lessons where teachers scream at her and other children throw things at her and pass her obscene drawings of her and one of the older boys. And now it's break, and she's in the schoolyard, and she's holding herself tight and hoping the girls don't come and stand in a circle and scream names at her and she suddenly realizes that something tall and hideous is standing beside her, and she cries and cries, and when she wakes up, she is still crying.

A man dreams that he has to give a presentation to the board of directors and the partners. He stands by the flipchart. He realizes that he has forgotten his presentation. And then he realizes that he is naked. He falters, looks over his shoulder and sees a dark figure with an awful face . . . .

A child dreams that there is something in the closet. He gets out of his dream-bed (so much larger and warmer than his real bed) and walks to the closet. The door is ajar. He reaches out and slowly opens the door. In the shadows, something hulking and horrible breathes, and reaches out a pathetic hand. The child screams . . . .

A woman can fly. She soars above a landscape she does not know. Below her, trapped on a mountain peak,

is some kind of monster. It screams its frustration, for it cannot reach her. She laughs . . .

A man finds that he has become a dog. He runs in his dream with a pack. They're chasing a fox. The fox eludes them. They crash through the bushes, and collide with something bulky and foul-smelling. The man-dog goes for his throat, and the pack follow. They tear the thing to pieces . . .

The Promethean is thrust into a stew of hopes, fears and desires. And he cannot be part of it. Even in dreams, he's rejected and assaulted.

The predicament bleeds out into the Promethean's Wasteland. People caught sleeping within its perimeter begin to find their dreams colliding with the dreams of others. The man who becomes a dog runs into the lovers in the meadow. The naked businessman finds himself having to give a presentation to a class of half-remembered schoolchildren.

Worse comes if the dream-born Promethean ever forms an alchemical pact. When he discovers that there are others like him, he has no reason to know that they don't experience human dreams. But as his Azoth becomes closer to theirs, they join him. They're caught up with him.

It's possible that the dream-born Promethean can learn how to influence the dreams he experiences. Even if he doesn't, there's something he can draw out of them. It could be an important milestone for him to draw lessons from the dreams he sees. One day, if he gets to the end of his Pilgrimage, he'll have his own dreams. In experiencing these, he'll know what to do with them.

## Mechanics

A Promethean made from dreams could belong to any Lineage. For example, the creator could have dreamed about having made a man from the sewn-together parts of several corpses. The dream comes true. It is so. Far away, a new Frankenstein awakens. The parts come together, gaining sutures, staples and wires without anyone seeing. The man in the mortuary comes in one morning, and maybe one of the cadavers in his care is missing an arm or a head. They don't float through the air. There isn't a flash of light or a magical cloud. There's the simple instance when no one is looking. When someone looks again, even if the person lost concentration for only an instant, the parts aren't there — they're with the newly-made Frankenstein.

The same goes for any of the other Lineages. Even if the dream-born Promethean doesn't have a Lineage (and he doesn't have to), he has a humour, which governs his Wasteland, the Disquiet he causes and the Torment he experiences. His humour (and the element attached to it) reflects his creation in the dream. The Promethean in the story could be driven by fire (from the stolen sunlight), water (from the place where the stolen sunlight was trapped) or spirit (from the dream).

## Caught in Dreams

When a dream-born Promethean's Wasteland reaches its second stage, the dreams of people caught in its range begin to crash together. There's no mechanic for this. It's a story element. It's ideal for crossovers. There are vampires, werewolves and mages who know how to interact with dreams. Even if they don't have dream-shaping powers, they all dream. The intrusion of a gruesome stranger in dreams could be the means by which other supernatural beings become aware of the Promethean and his throng.

Although the dream-invading effect happens every night for the dream-born Promethean, the Storyteller doesn't have to narrate the effects of every dream on every night. Playing through every dream can make the experience repetitive. On the other hand, only playing through the dreams that contain direct significance to the story can be a dead giveaway. Used sparingly, a dream-born Promethean's experiences in dreams can add depth, atmosphere and fear to a chronicle.

A dream can drag Prometheans into all sorts of stories. The dreams of a serial killer, a police detective (corrupt or honest) or a vampire elder can contain as many story hooks as the dreams of a kidnap victim, an abused child or a battered wife. Werewolf dreams could contain wild, violent imagery, bright colors and quick changes of perspective and place. A vampire's dreams might be confused and hazy. A mage's dreams might be heavy with symbolism.

Other Prometheans in a Branded throng with the dream-born don't automatically find themselves trapped in the dream. The first time it happens, they're powerless to avoid it, but on subsequent nights, the other Prometheans in the throng can avoid becoming dragged into the dream on a successful roll of Resolve + Composure.

A Promethean caught in human dreams (and that includes both a dream-Promethean and any companions he's dragged in with him) still causes Disquiet. Humans who dream about the Promethean need to check for Disquiet, although the effects of a failure don't show until the human meets the Promethean in the real world. When that happens, Disquiet kicks in, immediately.

## Bestowment: Dream sharing

The Promethean's connection to the stuff of dreams invades his daily — or nightly — experience. He sleeps, and having no dreams of his own, dreams other people's dreams. He's a visitor, a spectator. He can see what they're dreaming, and they can see him. In their dreams, he's the monster in the corner, the bogeyman under the bed. If he has this Bestowment (which he can take in lieu of another Lineage Bestowment, or buy later as a Transmutation), he can exert a small amount of control over the dream he's trapped inside.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Action:** Instant and contested

**Transmutation Cost:** Wits x 7

The player spends one Pyros and rolls Wits + Empathy, reflexively contested by the dreamer's Resolve. If the character succeeds, he can interact with the people in the dream, both the dreamer and the other characters created in the dream through conversation and through physical means. If the character is attacked, for example, he can now fight back. Although attacks on a dreamer have no effect on the real world, "killing" or "knocking out" a dreaming human ends the dream. Everyone caught in the dream wakes up.

If the character is in an alchemical pact, and his companions are with him in the dream, they also gain the benefit of the Bestowment.

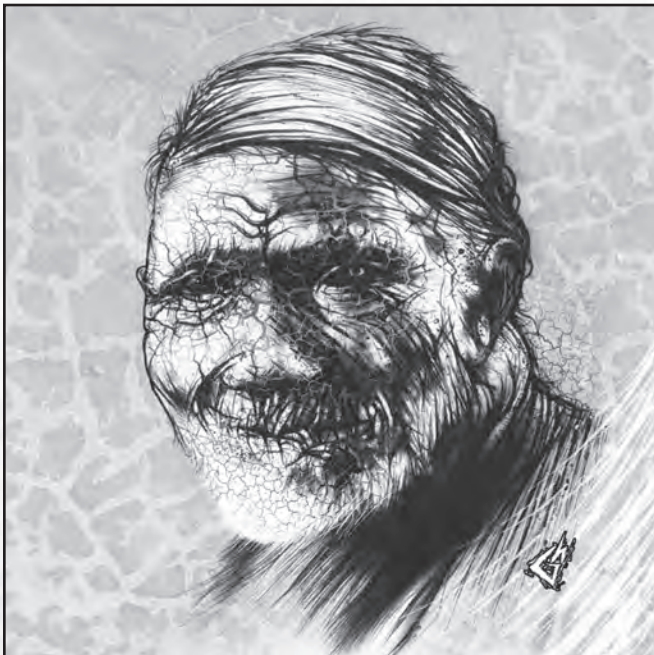
## The Traveling Man

**Quote:** *Best to sit it out. You'll wake up some time.*

**Background:** The Traveling Man's been walking for centuries. He came to himself in the middle of the Outback, made by the man with the Goanna Dreaming, and he got up and walked, and he's been walking ever since. When the ships came bringing the white men, he walked onto one of them and went traveling elsewhere.

It's been a couple of centuries now, and the Traveling Man's walked across the world, from the rice fields of India to the meadows of England, from the plains of the western United States to the rain forests of Africa and South America. He knows the dreams of nearly every nation on Earth, and he knows the lie of 100 different lands.

**Description:** Usually, the Traveling Man looks like an old Koori. He's short, with tightly-curled gray hair and a bushy gray beard. His face looks as if it's been weathered by the desert wind and blazing sun for centuries, and his eyes, deeply set under bushy brows, shine with a light that's



old and lonely and wise. He wears dusty jeans, a threadbare shirt with rolled-up sleeves and walking boots that look as if they could fall apart at any moment.

When his disfigurements become visible, his eyes vanish into shadow, and his skin is covered with what looks like a crust of ancient desert sand.

**Storytelling Hints:** The Traveling Man keeps on traveling. He's always on the move. But he's tired, and he's not a whole lot closer to ending his Pilgrimage. His problem lies with settling down long enough to make another Promethean like himself. He doesn't know how to dream up another Promethean. If he met another born like him, perhaps he'd work it out, but until then, he's going to keep walking through the dreams of the world.

The Traveling Man's governing humour is melancholy, and he is associated with the earth. He suffers Torment, causes Disquiet and creates a Wasteland as if he were a Tammuz.

**Lineage:** None

**Refinement:** Cuprum

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 6

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Crafts (Whittling, Making Weapons) 3, Investigation 1, Occult (Dream Interpretation) 4

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Larceny 4, Stealth 5, Survival (Desert Survival, Hunting) 5, Weaponry (Spear, Knife) 4

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken (Dogs) 3, Empathy 1, Expression (Storytelling) 3, Intimidation 1

**Merits:** Elpis 2, Fresh Start, Holistic Awareness, Languages (most majority languages: assume that unless it's a minority language, such as Welsh or Catalan, he knows it), Repute 3, Strong Back, Strong Lungs

**Willpower:** 6

**Humanity:** 7

**Virtue:** Hope

**Vice:** Pride

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 9

**Health:** 11

**Azoth:** 6

**Bestowments:** Dreamsharing, Revivification

**Transmutations:** *Corporeum* — Swift Feet (·), Autonomic Control (·), Serpent Strike (···), Hard Body (····); *Metamorphosis* — Mask of Medusa (·), Blessing of Tethys (··), Redundant Organ (··), Procrustean Shape (···), Shape of the Barghest (···), Chimera (····); *Sensorium* — Bloodhound's Nose (·), Discriminating Tongue (·), Translator's Eye (·), Aura Sight (··), Ephemeral Gaze (···), Firesight (···), Rarefied Senses (····)

**Pyros/per Turn:** 15/6

## Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Size	Dice Pool
Knife	1L	1	8

## Great-Grandfather Crow, and Other Stories

In a world full of vampires, werewolves, miracle-workers and angels, is there anything too far-fetched to believe? The story of Hendaïd Bran stretches the bounds, and although a fair proportion of the Prometheans who live in the northern hemisphere have heard it, few give it any credit. The story has been passed around Promethean campfires for centuries, and its core is this: someone once used the body of an animal to make a Promethean.

There are different versions of the story. In Australia, it was a snake. In India, a monkey. In Canada, it was a timber wolf. In the steppes of Mongolia, it was a horse. But in the version of the story that comes from Wales, it was a crow. The creator had the shape of a man. But he lived in the mountains and he had seen no people, live or dead, for decades. He neared the end of his Pilgrimage, and as is the way of these things, he needed to pass on the Transforming Fire.

He had seen a crow land on a ledge, far above his cave, and not fly away. He'd watched that crow. It had been ill, or starving. He saw it die, and when it died, he climbed up and cradled its body in his hands and took it back to his cave, and there, in the cave, he made it like him. He gave it the Pyros, and he whispered a few secrets in its ear and let it fly away, and then, when it had gone, he retreated into the shadows of the cave, and when he came out, he went down the mountain and traveled to a place where there were people, and they let him stay there.

But the crow, the crow with the mind of an intelligent being and the desire but not the potential to become human, the crow flew across Wales and gradually realized what he was. And sometimes he tried to speak to people, who threw stones at him, or told their friends and got burnt as witches or pretended that they hadn't heard. And his own, the birds, they were just birds, and they flew from the crow's company and cawed and attacked him if he came too near.

The trees withered when he stayed in them too long. And the fields he stole corn from (and he cursed the fact that he even knew or cared what stealing was) became barren and nothing would grow in them.

Sometimes he'd return to the places where people were and try to talk, and although they were scared of him, he became the subject of stories. They called him Tad Bran, Father Crow. And when a century had passed, they called him Taid Bran, Grandfather Crow. And when a few more centuries had passed, he became Hendaïd Bran, Great-Grandfather

Crow. And Hendaïd Bran he remained, and still remains, because the story goes on that he's out there, old and lost, and wondering if he will ever find a hand to alight on, or a way to cease to be what he is. He knows that he can never be human, but that's not really what he wants. He longs to be just a crow, a dumb beast with no memory. Perhaps that's where his Pilgrimage ends. Perhaps there is no end, and the only hope for Hendaïd Bran is to one day die.

### Meaning

On the surface, having a Promethean made from the body of an animal seems pretty straightforward, if a little hokey. But introducing such a creature into a chronicle raises all sorts of questions about what makes a Promethean, and what makes a human.

Where does Promethean consciousness begin? A Promethean often suspects that the ability to speak languages, and the other rudimentary skills that all the Created have must come from within the body, a kind of chemical or physical blueprint of the consciousness and soul that once inhabited the flesh. But if someone made a Promethean from an animal, that can't be the case. The consciousness of a Promethean animal (and by extension, a Promethean made from a human body), which is not a soul, would have to come from somewhere else, somewhere outside. Perhaps it's a function of the Pyros. But then, if a Promethean's consciousness came from outside, does that make a Promethean who achieves Redemption a false human? Is he still not fully human? And if he is, what implications does this have for the source of human consciousness?

And what does that mean for the flesh? Can any flesh be made into a Promethean? Is the process limited to flesh at all? Is its shape important? Sure, there are Pandorans that take all sorts of grotesque forms, but even if you count the *Sublimati*, they're not of the same order as Prometheans.

The thing that makes Pandorans different from Prometheans is the fact that Pandorans can't become human. They exist only to wait and consume. The *Sublimatus* can't become human because it has no Azoth of its own, and cannot create a soul in the Promethean crucible. The animal Promethean can't, apparently, become human because he simply isn't made from a human body.

In all other ways, he's a Promethean. He needs to find the key to Humanity, but he faces obstacles that other Prometheans don't face, particularly when it comes to creation. Every Promethean must make another. Passing on the Azoth is essential. An animal Promethean simply doesn't know how to do it, and, more than that, doesn't have the manual dexterity to prepare the body. A Wretched dog is physically unable to slice up bodies and sew them together. It needs help to do that. The same goes for an Osiran or an Ulgan. A wolf or dove has no means of obtaining, let alone measuring out and mixing the necessary substances to make a new Galateid. Even a Tammuz monkey lacks the



opposable thumbs necessary to tear a tiny slip of paper and inscribe a word of power on it. In the end, the fiddly parts aren't as important as the transfer of Azoth. But an animal Promethean doesn't know that. He knows instinctively what the process was that made him, and despairs of ever being able to do it. It could be an important, central milestone for an animal Promethean to discover that he *can* make another Promethean, that the Azoth is good for any kind of flesh, animal or human, and that all he needs is a bit of help. But, as in the case of poor Hendaïd Bran, that really depends on finding another Promethean willing to talk to him and willing to help. And they're rarer than crow's teeth.

Finding another Promethean who is prepared to talk is another issue. When a Promethean meets an animal with the power of the Pyros, her first thought is, "Pandoran." Even if she takes note of the Azoth the creature exudes, the suspicion of something freakish and *wrong* is still there. The Measure that passes between a Promethean made from a horse and a Promethean made from a woman is not an easy thing. When the horse begins to speak in a guttural, tortured voice, using vocal cords that were never designed

for this, it's too much to ask that the other Promethean will give him the benefit of the doubt without some serious convincing. An animal invested with Azoth and given a voice and a mind to use it is an abomination, even by the standards of other Prometheans.

An animal Promethean can talk. But he loses the ability to communicate with the species to which his body once belonged. He can talk with people, but that's frankly suicidal under most circumstances. He has all these thoughts and ideas to impart, and no one to communicate them to.

Bitterness and despair are likely results of this constant rejection. A Promethean wolf with no one to talk to goes mad and begins to attack animals and people, desperate that someone will hunt her down and destroy her. Hendaïd Bran has almost given up on his own Pilgrimage, and although he's proud, he desperately approaches a throng of Prometheans with his story. A Promethean monkey sits in the middle of an Indian village and begins to talk and talk, hoping that when the rocks start flying, they won't hurt too much before sweet oblivion comes.

The attitude a Promethean holds toward his Pilgrimage governs his Refinement, which means a different thing to a

creature that isn't made from a human body. Cuprum is an obvious Refinement for an animal who seeks to avoid trouble. Stannum works for an animal Promethean bearing a grudge against the people and animals that reject him. Perfection is difficult, when your consciousness sits so uncomfortably in the body you inhabit. Most animals exercise as a matter of course. They all protect their bodies, and so Ferrum, while not out of the question, seems unlikely. Mercurius requires discipline and thought, and while an animal Promethean can be disciplined and thoughtful, the rigors of simply surviving, of constantly moving, make Mercurius even less likely than Ferrum.

Aurum seems the most counterintuitive of all of them, but an animal Promethean could take two approaches to the Refinement of Gold. On the one hand, the animal could constantly skirt around the habitations of humankind, like the fox that spends its nights in back gardens, the magpie that lives around the farm house or the stray cat in the back alley. A Promethean animal can fit into that role quite easily, examining the humans who live nearby to see what she can learn from them. On the other hand, the Promethean animal might desire to become an animal like others, who wishes to escape the curse of consciousness and become a dumb beast. That could also be an operation of Aurum.

In theory, the Promethean animal should be able to enter into an alchemical pact with other Prometheans. Whether the other Prometheans would want that, or even admit its possibility is another issue.

Hendaïd Bran doesn't know what would happen to him if he finally completed the Great Work. He could lose his memory and consciousness and become an ordinary crow. It's what he wants. On the other hand, it might not work at all. His creation might have been a freak occurrence, meaning that he's stuck as he is. If he finds that out, he might have to find a way to die, which is not easy for one such as him.

There's a third possibility. If that old black bird flies into the crucible, there may just be a man who walks out. Azoth can warp flesh. The Centimani prove that. The Promethean's consciousness is potentially a human consciousness. The Azoth demands a human soul. Is it so impossible the old crow could grow and lose his feathers? It's the ultimate fairy tale conceit (consider the Frog Prince as a Promethean, and the girl's kiss an allegory for the Great Work). In the World of Darkness, magical and wondrous endings like this don't normally happen. The success of the Great Work, however, is possibly one of the most hopeful endings a character could have. And, of course, an animal Promethean becoming human raises the question of whether he actually wants to be human.

If the animal Promethean becomes a human rather than an animal with no consciousness, is this better? Is consciousness a blessing or a curse? Is a human body any better than an animal body? Would the crow, now earthbound, sink into despair?

## Mechanics

Mechanically speaking, introducing an animal Promethean is simple. Find (or create) the traits for an animal (start with the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 202). Add dots of Merits, Azoth, Lineage, Refinement and Transmutations as if you would when creating an ordinary Promethean character. That's it. The important thing is the backstory.

The *really* important thing is working out what an animal's presence signifies in the chronicle, and what the characters can learn from it. Discovering that the Azoth inhabits flesh in more forms than just humans (and thinking about what that means) could prove to be an important milestone. Aiding a Promethean animal to the end of its Pilgrimage is another.

## Disquiet

A Promethean animal causes Disquiet the same way that any other Promethean does. A human hears and sees the Promethean animal talking, and has no doubt where this weird, strangled voice is coming from: it's cause for a second Disquiet check, with a -1 modifier to her roll. Every time the human sees this happen, the player must roll again, rolling with a -2 modifier the second time, a -3 modifier the third time and so on.

## Hendaïd Bran

**Quote:** *There's not much an old bird can teach you, no, oh no, oh no.*

**Background:** Great-Grandfather Crow knows that there are creatures like him, only made from humans, but he has only met, over the centuries, three of them, and none would help him on his Pilgrimage. He's flown a dozen times around the world now, and he's seen many



things, but the riddle of his predicament has escaped him. The problem of creating another like him (or not like him) when he has no hands seems insurmountable, and the old Azoth burns his feathers from within, driving him to endlessly seek for something that he is beginning to think can never be found. In truth, he has no idea how his own Gwaith Mawr (Great Work) will end. He doesn't even know if it will.

**Description:** He looks like an ancient, one-eyed crow, with matted feathers and eyes like beads of obsidian. When his disfigurements become plain, his feathers bleed darkness and his eye is like a pit into which a person could fall, forever.

**Storytelling Hints:** He's old, so old, and so very tired. He wants to become a dumb animal. He cannot finish the work on his own, for he has no hands with which to assemble his progeny. He will take whatever help he can get, but he is proud, and he will not lower himself or abase himself for anyone. He does ask for help, but only on his terms.

**Lineage:** Osiris

**Refinement:** Aurum

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Academics (History) 4, Occult 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawl 3

**Social Skills:** Intimidation 2, Survival 5

**Merits:** Elpis 4, Language (Welsh, English), Repute 3

**Willpower:** 8

**Humanity:** 6

**Virtue:** Hope

**Vice:** Sloth

**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 14 (flight only; species factor 10)

**Health:** 6

**Azoth:** 7

**Bestowment:** Revivification

**Transmutations:** *Disquietism*—Scapegoat (·), Alembic (···); *Deception*—Leave No Trace (·), False Tracks (···); *Mesmerism*—Fixed Stare (·), Flight Instinct (·), Firebringer (·), Suggestion (·), Atavistic Instincts (··), Logos (···), Waters of Lethe (···)

**Note:** Hendaid Bran is so old, he probably knows many other Transmutations, perhaps even Pandoran Transmutations, but attempting to list them all would be overwhelming. The Storyteller should feel free to decide on some more history for the bird and give him some more Transmutations accordingly.

**Pyros/per Turn:** 20/7

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Beak	1L	5

## The Seer's Pilgrimage

When Prometheans gather, they tell stories. Certainly, most of these stories are tales of the road, of battle, of challenge, of cleverness and wit and wisdom — all the stories that men have always told and will always tell. Some of these stories hold deep meaning, however, and sometimes reveal secrets that are important to those who walk the Pilgrimage.

Among these legends, no story is so often told as that of the Seer. According to this piece of mythology, the Created have always sought to be human. But it wasn't until the creation of one who bore unique insight and tremendous wisdom, one capable of not just desiring that destination, but of seeing the road by which to arrive there, that the Pilgrimage became a reality.

After years of seeking and searching, it is said that he not only discovered the process by which he might become human, but as his final milestone, taught other Prometheans the seeking of the Elpis. With this final accomplishment, he infused into the Divine Fire the instinctive desire and understanding of the Pilgrimage, and saw the New Dawn.

Unfortunately, this core of the legend is the only part the Created can agree on when it comes to the Seer. Over the years, many stories about the Seer have evolved and merged with prevailing folklore and stories about particularly wise Prometheans. Many stories told about such a protagonist evolve into stories about the Seer within a generation of their first telling.

Scattered among these stories, however, are called the Revelations: stories about the milestones of the Seer. These are not always obvious, and in fact, few can agree as to which tales are actually Revelations. Every Refinement has adherents who claim that the Seer was one of theirs, and who point to certain of his legends, claiming they are Revelations.

Occasionally, a Created historian attempts to gather all of the tales of the Seer, filtering out those stories that are based on the exploits of other Prometheans. It is the work of a lifetime, and generally agreed to be an impossible task. Those with a philosophical bent believe that the Seer was never a single individual; rather he is the archetype of the Promethean on the Pilgrimage, a Seeker for enlightenment. They believe that it isn't a matter of finding out who the Seer was, because every Promethean has the potential of being the Seer at any given point during his Pilgrimage.

The stories that are the "true" Revelations have a few traits in common. First, they highlight a moment of enlightenment, the fulfillment of a milestone that is reached through both sacrifice and wisdom. Second, they always embody the important aspects of the Refinement the Seer is said to follow in that story. Third, they always feature the



details of the location where the story happened — or at least enough information to research it.

Finally, and most important, Revelations trigger some kind of strange, deep longing in some Prometheans. This longing feels akin to homesickness, and most who experience it are filled with a desire to find the site where the story took place — where the Seer achieved his enlightenment. This desire isn't a compulsion or mania of any sort. Rather, it is what the Promethean thinks about when he has time to think, and he feels a sense of longing to find this place.

Those who give in to this sensation and journey to the site often experience a tremendous moment of awareness and enlightenment. In visiting the site where the Seer has been, the Promethean so inspired may experience a sudden understanding of one of his milestones. In a flash, he understands the Seer's Pilgrimage in context with the Promethean's own, and standing on that site, comprehends one of the steps toward his own Mortality.

These sites are scattered all over the world. Where Prometheans have walked, there is a possibility of a stop on the Seer's Pilgrimage. Many of these locations are marked with a unique Pilgrim's Mark resembling the alchemical sign "work complete," reflecting the effect that the site has on those who have experienced the Seer's Revelation. This is called the Shrine-mark.

Those interested in Seer legends sometimes speak of the "cycles" that such pieces of Promethean folklore fit into, focusing on conceptual and philosophical ideas, dividing the stories into five main cycles, one for each of the primary Refinements practiced by the Created. Though other legends exist that don't neatly fit into any of the other cycles (some of which have caused Revelation in those who adhere to other Refinements), these are the most common.

## The Walker Among Men (Aurum)

The Walker Among Men Cycle is the collection of stories that best exemplify the Seeker as a follower of Aurum. He seeks the wisdom of humanity not simply by observing humanity, but by living among them, by becoming one of them. Most of the Walker Among Men tales seem to take place in Europe at some point after the fall of Rome and before the Renaissance. A few of these stories also take place in Asia, India and Africa, though the time frames of those stories vary widely.

- **The Library of Iksender:** Once, the Seer is said to have sought sanctuary within the Library of Iksender, in Ankara, Turkey. An edifice of Byzantine origin, it was purchased by a man of some means and turned into a library for the people of Ankara in AD 1150. Aurum folklore states that the Seer dwelt within the Library, wandering its aisles, speaking to men both wise and foolish, for many weeks. Though he fled the Library, lest his nature lead to its destruction, he took with him a tremendous understanding of the effect of learning on

the human mind, and a lifetime love of education as a result. Though the edifice presently serves the city bureaucracy as a courthouse, the Library of Iksender still bears a Shrine-mark, hidden in the hollow parts of the ceiling, accessible through secret passages, where the Seer once slept.


- **The Garden Window:** In Nice, France, stands a certain large house. Though it is a private residence now, in the time of the Seer, it was used as a boarding house. The Seer, traveling through Europe just before the Renaissance, watched the coming and goings of the people around him for days. Then, slowly, the Wasteland began to affect the gardens outside the window. Roses withered on the stem, leaving only rot-slicked thorns, and the birds that came here to eat the seed scattered around rarely left, their little wings atrophying, until they were tiny little hopping things, missing feathers in a scabby patchwork. The Seer watched the humans continue to take strolls through the garden, seeming to ignore its sudden hideousness. In that moment, he understood an essential part of human nature: their hate was by choice, the things they found ugly were willful. Humans reacted strongly to disgust and dislike, but those emotions were not absolutes — all too often they were the result of choices. The Garden Window has the Shrine-mark above the windowsill that still shows through, despite multiple coats of paint.

- **The Castle of Family:** Though it is known by another name to tourists to Bavaria, this castle was where the Seer understood the importance of family to humans. For years, he'd taken to defending one particular family and its holdings. Their youngest daughter was slaughtered by the razor-skin of a pack of Pandorans he'd fought, so he stayed with them even after he'd made his amends. Posing as an eccentric uncle from a distant branch of the family, the Seer worked tirelessly to help them prosper and become happy. Though he was forced to keep his distance, one Christmas night, as he brooded on the roof of one of the towers, the three youngest children came up to find him, telling him that they couldn't open their presents until he was there — and in that moment, he understood that he wasn't unique in his interactions with his "family." These children had always been terrified of him, but they'd come to find him anyway, for true families cleave together, despite unease and disagreements that may cause friction among them, because something stronger holds them together. The Shrine-mark is carved deep into one of the crenellations of this roof.

## The Ancient Anchorite (Cuprum)

The Ancient Anchorite Cycle relates the wanderings of the Seer in such a way that cause Revelation in those who follow Cuprum. In these legends, the Seer escapes the cloying claustrophobia of humanity, seeking wild vistas as places where he might find peace with himself. He seeks wisdom in nature, and often finds it. The Ancient Anchorite tales





encompass the much of the world, though most of them seem placed in the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and into the steppes of Asia. Some tales take place in the Americas. The time frame involved with Ancient Anchorite tales is uncertain, as they focus on his involvement in the wilderness, rather than among humans, where cultural clues and names might give hints to the time in which it occurred.

- **The Seer's Cave:** In the temperate rainforests of the Pacific Northwest, in Canada's British Columbia, there is a cave. Several days' hike from any of the settlements (save perhaps a couple of clusters of cabins rented out to fishers and campers), it is said the Seer used this cave as a retreat. Some claim he traveled here over the Bering Strait in truly ancient days; others postulate that he journeyed here during the time of the tribes. Regardless, the Pariahs have a story of his arrival, and the lessons he learned there. He ate the food the place had to offer, marveling at the abundance of life. He learned to endure the weather, vastly different from anything he'd known. The thick molds of the area took root in his very flesh, filling in the spaces between his fingers, at the joints of his limbs and eventually blinding and deafening him, but they opened his senses in ways he could not have anticipated. His understanding blossomed, and he realized that many of the customs and desires of people were shaped by the world around them. Thus, it was possible to learn about humanity even distinctly apart from it.

- **The Bodhi Tree:** In 500 BC, the Prince Gautama Siddhartha sat beneath a *bodhi* tree in the town of Bodhgaya and meditated. Buddhist doctrine teaches that beneath this tree, he became the Buddha, and began to teach others how to achieve enlightenment. Prometheans on the Refinement of Cuprum say that the Seer came to this place, seeking to understand in humanity some of its noblest ideals. Sitting beneath a similar tree one night, he understood *anatta*, one of the precepts of Buddhism: that there is no such thing as an unchanging, ever-enduring soul. Humans are simply one flow of ever-changing being — the humanity he sought was not a final destination, but simply the beginning of another process. It was not a state of being, but a state of *doing*. In this moment, he came closer to understanding what it meant to be human. Hanging from one of the branches is an ancient wooden plaque, engraved with the Shrine-mark.

- **The Speaking Stone:** Beside a stream three days from Kiev, in Ukraine, is a tall stone. It is rounded along its side, but flat on top, and one who is sufficiently dexterous might climb atop it. To Cuprum Prometheans who know of the legends, this is the Speaking Stone, atop which the Seer meditated for weeks without moving or ever leaving his trance. Though the wind chapped his flesh until it dried up and sloughed off in strong rains or early frosts, he did not move. It is said that peasants came from miles around, asking for his wisdom, but he never spoke. It is not the Speaking Stone because of what he said while atop it — it is the Speaking Stone

because while the Seer was atop it, he learned much about being human by the requests for wisdom and the tales that others brought before him, thinking him a holy anchorite. The Shrine-mark is etched into the top of the stone, where only someone seated there might see it.

## The Seeker of Perfection (Ferrum)

The Seeker of Perfection Cycle focuses on the ideals of the Seer as one of the Titans of Ferrum, going through trials of both athletics and violence in order to master both spirit and body. In these tales, he learns that physicality is the path, but not the goal — only when his great strength and power are applied with wisdom does he accomplish the lesson of these tales. The Seeker of Perfection tales are common in Asia, northern Europe and northern and central Africa. This cycle seems to share legends within a broad span of time, sometimes from a vague tribal era, extending through the Classical period and into the heights of the Roman Empire, though some of the Asian tales are later chronologically, hinting that the Seer may have journeyed out of Europe and into Asia.

- **The Keep of Shadows:** In the legends of Cu Chulainn, the mighty hero sought training in the arts of battle from the warrior-woman Scathach, in her shadow-keep. Exploring this concept, the Seer discovered a valley in the highlands that, at a certain point in the day, is entirely shrouded strange shadows that cut across the terrain in straight lines and angles. Standing in the valley, the shadows lend the impression that one stands beneath the walls of a great castle, though it is merely a trick of perspective and the shades. The valley is scattered with impressive rock formations, and it is said that the Seer practiced his sword- and spear-work atop these great boulders, capturing the old lessons of the Hound of Ulster, working himself to exhaustion, until his vision blurred. In doing so, he fulfilled an important milestone for himself: understanding that even the most powerful of defenses relies on perspective and illusion — those who are most strongly defended always *seem* to be defended. Perspective is all, and when battling a foe, what that foe perceives is as important as what is actually there. At the height of the valley, in the place where the shadows hint that the window to some sort of great hall might be placed, is a Shrine-mark carved into the living rock, half-grown over with lichens.

- **The Terrible Wasteland:** Over the centuries, the name of this place in Central Africa has changed, and with every version, its name meant the same thing as “Hell” to the locals. In this hard, terrible place, a place of dust and bare stone, neither animal nor plant can thrive. Moreover, the landscape's mercurial nature is swift and violent. In the blink of an eye, the weather can change from calm, dead air that throttles those who breathe it into a terrible stinging in a windstorm that threatens to flay flesh from bone. When the Seer came here, he learned another thing about it — it is

terribly susceptible to the Wasteland effect of Prometheans. Within hours of his arrival, the place had transformed into the worst manifestation of the Wasteland, though this place also seemed to contain that transformation within its wicked borders. Here, the Seer came face-to-face with the devastation his very existence could wreak. Here, he learned to survive in a land that he destroyed, rather than fleeing it as the Created normally do. Though he crawled out of its devastation weeks later, parched, starved and nearly mad, he learned that the hardest obstacle against which he could hurl his body was his own nature. In the center of this several-mile wide Wasteland stands a single tall stone, etched with the Shrine-mark, blackened with a strange residue: the blood of Prometheans who have braved this site and learned its lessons.

- **Sweet Water Mountain:** North of the Sichuan Basin in central China, in the mountains that overlook a river, is Sweet Water Mountain. From its east-facing cliffs, the ruins of a monastery can be seen. Ferrum Prometheans tell the story of the Seer, who came here from India, seeking to understand martial traditions. Though the exact arts he studied are disputed — indeed, there are some stories that claim he didn't come here to learn martial arts at all, having come during a time before the codification of martial arts traditions — they all agree that his true test came from standing beneath the great waterfall that roars down the face of the Sweet Water Mountain. Though its torrent can crush a man's bones, the Seer is said to have stood beneath its flows, repeating the movements he'd been taught, over and over, until he collapsed and floated downstream. The bank where the monks found his unconscious form bears a Shrine-mark.

## The Star-Worn Walker (Mercurius)

The Star-Worn Walker Cycle portrays the Seer as a great visionary and mystic of the Divine Flame, finding guidance in astrology. These pieces of folklore paint the Seer as a tremendously wise wandering sage capable of understanding the things that occurred around him within the context of his own Pyros — all the world outside of the Seer is simply

a reflection of the Fire Within, and this understanding brings the Star-Worn Walker great enlightenment. The Star-Worn Walker tales are usually set in Arabian locales and times before the Ottoman Turks and in European areas as of the early parts of the Renaissance.

- **The Dancing Ground:** Somewhere in the rocky Nefud Desert of northern Arabia is the Dancing Ground. Still used by modern Sufis as a pilgrimage site, Mercurius Prometheans say that the Seer once visited this favored site of the dervishes throughout history. Drawn by the legends of the strange, ecstatic powers of the Sufi mystics, the Seer came here and learned how to perform the whirling dance of the dervishes, meant to embody the whirling of the planets in the skies, and ending face-down, with navel in contact with the earth. And there he lay, for 40 days and nights, breathing in the dust, until it filled his lungs like a layer of stone. It was here that the Seer is said to have unlocked his understanding that control of Pyros is suffocation of Pyros — like any fire, if it is controlled, it will begin to die. Only through providing it room to expand, air and fuel can it truly burn brightest. The Shrine-mark chiseled into the ground here is said to match the spot where the Seer found himself staring when he opened his eyes after his dance.



• **The Old Herbalist's Shop:** In a small town in Germany, Mercurius Prometheans claim that the Seer visited an herbalist who specialized in strange new concoctions. This odd man was apparently led by his insight, and had occult interests. In fact, his neighbors suspected him of witchcraft and creating flying ointments for hags. In the attic of this small village shop, Ophidians claim that the Seer lay down after ingesting one of these strange mixtures, and dreamt a dream of serpents crawling beneath his skin, hissing subtly in voices just beyond the range of his hearing. He spoke with them, though, and they were his own Pyros, seeking to guide him in his achievement of his Great Work. The Shrine-mark here is carved into the beams of the attic roof, and can only be seen when lying in the spot that the Seer supposedly experienced his vision.

• **The Witch's Graveyard:** Just outside one of the many tucked-away little townships in central Massachusetts is a place the locals call the Witch's Graveyard. Though no one really believes in witches anymore — the loons in Salem aside — this site has always been called the Witch's Graveyard, since the times when they did believe in them. They say that most of the local witches who died in the trials were buried here, in shallow, unmarked graves. It's an unpleasant and strange place, where the sky seems darker overhead and the wind carries an unpleasant reek. Those Created who tell the story of the Witch's Graveyard say that when the moon sits, bone-white and bloated in the sky, the ghosts of witches rise here, and call out to their lost familiars. And though their demonic imps are long since dead, something in their voices reaches out, and the Pandorans awaken and come running to their call. The Ophidians tell of the lessons the Seer's journey to this place, his battle with the Pandorans awakened by the witch-call and his conversations with the hanged hags, who taught him terrible secrets of blackest magic, of Flux and their goddess Lilith (whom some Ophidians suspect was a *qashmal* of some sort). The site's Shrine-mark is carved deep into the trunk of one particularly gnarled old beech. Some Prometheans warn that this place is also considered a holy site by some *Sublimati* and Centimani.

## The Scorched Saint (Stannum)

The Scorched Saint Cycle of legends contains some of the rarer tales. Many Prometheans are uncomfortable with the idea of the path of the Furies as a means to enlightenment, but these legends highlight the ways in which they might be. In these stories, the Seer is greatly wronged by the world, but he visits great vengeance upon those who treated him unfairly. All of these tales are marked with elaborate plans of retribution, which only truly unfold at the end of the story, and all visit retribution on the guilty appropriate

to the crimes they committed. These tales often focus on punishment for those who not only wronged the Seer but who tended to victimize others around them as well, turning the Seer into a champion of other victims. These tales, just as those of the Ancient Anchorite, seem to cover a wide gamut of time frames and places. The earliest is set in Egypt, during one of the earliest dynasties, while the latest is set in the mid-1800s, in the American West.

• **The Tomb of Amseti:** Perhaps the most commonly told tale of the Scorched Saint Cycle, the Seer's experiences being used as a pawn by dynastic nobility in ancient Egypt is frequently told and retold. When he came to court, certain factions within the upper echelons of society saw his power and sought to use him. Soon, he found himself being shuttled between scheming would-be plotters, until he discovered a key piece of information that unfolded the entire situation to him. But he did not rush out and unleash bloody vengeance. Instead, he continued to depend on the fact that both sides assumed that he was their pawn, and simply used his position and their ignorance to his advantage, culminating in an incredible bloodbath between his foes, entirely orchestrated by him. A father was tricked into an act of incest with his own daughter. A wife killed her husband, fearing that he would denounce her as an adulterer to the court. A son poisoned his brother, mistaking him for an enemy. The Seer's last action was to spit on the tomb of Amseti, one of the more influential schemers. Now, in the Valley of Kings, Furies sometimes seek the mastaba-tomb of Amseti, which bears the Shrine-mark. Storytellers warn those who hear this story, however, that monstrous Pandorans are known to dwell in the sands in the Valley of Kings. It is even said that some of them are ancient *Sublimati*, animal-headed horrors that await the coming of seekers, disguised as funeral statuary of Egypt's gods.

• **Rio del Oro, California:** An old ghost town from the Gold Rush era, some stories claim that the Seer came here following the murderer of a prostitute he'd befriended. According to the legend that relates the tale, the Seer stalked the man here and watched as he panned for gold, eventually striking it rich. Through a complex web of intrigue and long-term plans, the Seer had his revenge: when the dust settled, the man was dead, killed by one of the young women of the brothel he frequented. His wealth disappeared and found its way into both the pockets of the brothel's prostitutes as well as the family of the woman he murdered back East. A mirror hangs in the main hall of the old ruined building that once served as a brothel still bearing the lines of waxy drippings that form the Shrine-mark here.

• **Shofeld:** Shofeld, a small coastal village in southern England is notorious among those Furies who find interest in the Scorched Saint Cycle. It is said that when the Seer washed ashore — having barely escaped the fury of sailors caught in the grip of Disquiet — he tried to acquire the help of its folk. At first, they were quite giving, feeding him, pro-

viding him with new clothing and a place to stay in exchange for some basic work. But, as Disquiet gripped them as well, they began trying to drive him away, feeding him bad food, giving him the worst clothing (or cutting holes in clothing that they offered to wash) and putting insects and rodents in his bed. While none of these things were likely to harm or even inconvenience the Seer, he slowly grew more and more angry at the breaches of hospitality. When he asked if there was anything wrong, they lied to him, preferring to take their displeasure out on him than admit their pettiness. Eventually, he snapped and undertook a season-long furious vengeance. He systematically denied those who had denied him the very aspect of their hospitality they tried to withdraw: he poisoned and spoiled food, destroyed clothing on lines and even burned down the house of his hostess. Eventually, though, he realized that this petty vendetta was beneath him, teaching him the valuable lesson that so many Furies often have to learn: not all vengeance is worth pursuing. Sometimes, it simply locks one into the mentality of those who harmed one in the first place. Better to save one's fury for the truly deserving — or perhaps for those who were cruel of their own nature, rather than because of Disquiet. The Shrine-mark of Shofeld is etched into the stones of the old village well.

## Meaning

For the chronicle, using these stories serves to emphasize the Promethean love of storytelling when they gather into groups. The Created are all the heroes of their own individual adventures, an epic quest with the most wondrous of rewards, and the things they encounter and accomplish are worth retelling. Somewhere along the way, these tales may provide hints to other Prometheans on how to accomplish the same goals.

The Seer, whether he ever truly existed or not, is the archetype of this concept. Tales of the Seer's Great Work are meant to inspire other Prometheans to accomplish their goals. These tales serve not simply to entertain but to inflame new ideas and aspirations in the Created, to propel them forward in their search. Those who follow this sense of inspiration to the site described in the tale that inspired him often find a moment of enlightenment there. The Promethean stands in the very place that the Seer once stood, and can share in some of his insight. The Seer's enlightenment produced Vitriol, a substance both physical and spiritual, and that great moment in time might be re-experienced by those Created who stand in the same spot and share some of the same goals.

These locations are an excellent way for Storytellers to get the throng to a new area quickly. These sites, whether or not the characters themselves are seeking the Revelation there, make for excellent story hooks as well. Most of the sites are simply visited occasionally, but some Created may wish to guard the sites, or to stay in the area and chronicle

the version of the Seer story they heard that led them to that spot. Alternately, Pandorans or other foes may stake out one of these spots, waiting for the inevitable Prometheans who are drawn to it, like hunters hidden near a drinking hole.



## Mechanics

Using the Seer's Pilgrimage in a **Promethean: The Created** chronicle is a two-step process. The first of these is Revelation, wherein the Promethean hears a tale of the Seer from another of his kind, and feels a wave of inspiration. The second part occurs when the Promethean seeks out the location that corresponds to the legend that inspired him.

## Revelation

In order for proper Revelation to occur, the story must be heard from either another Promethean or from another entity that interacts in some way with the Divine Fire. Tales circulate of certain *Sublimati* collecting tales of the Seer, and one legend even originated from a *qashmal* that appeared to a throng. The power of the Revelation is only transferred from one being of the Pyros to another — other beings cannot act as either recipient or transmitter of the Seer's Revelation.

These legends seldom instill Revelations into more than a single Promethean. While they may be interesting and perhaps even inspirational, it is practically unheard of for the legend to bear meaning for more than one listener at a time. When more than one Promethean finds a Revelation from one of the stories of the Seer's Pilgrimage, the Prometheans are invariably members of a Branded throng. Although the Seeker's travels are broken into "cycles" by Refinement, a given Revelation might resonate with a Promethean whether or not her current Refinement matches the cycle of the tale.

When one of the Created experiences Revelation, she is swept away in a moment of overwhelming exhilaration. The words seem to echo in her mind, searing themselves into her memory — she will never forget the story she has just heard. Moreover, she instantly regains all Willpower points, as though she'd just fulfilled her Virtue. The rush of empowerment and inspiration that comes with the Revelation is prodigious, indeed.

## Finding the Shrine

The places noted as one destination of the Seer's Pilgrimage are called Shrines. Though the Created may be moved by the Revelation, visiting these locations — as pilgrims of ancient times visited holy sites — makes the true power of the Revelation manifest.

They are not all easy to find, though. Many of the most common Shrines (such as those listed above) are described in the stories and well-known to Prometheans who have studied the Seer Cycles. Most of the other Shrines, however, are not so well-known. Many have

to be researched or otherwise investigated in order to learn of the Shrines' whereabouts.

The Storyteller should construct the process for discovering the whereabouts of a Shrine. Each such step in the process not only unfolds more information but may very well lead to clues.

### Interviews

Prometheans keep the secrets of the Seer's Pilgrimage, even if they don't always know it. Those seeking the clues necessary to find a Shrine tend to seek out their fellow searchers. The Created are not the only ones with this sort of information, however. *Sublimati* and Centimani may have information about the whereabouts of Shrines (though rarely for the same reason as the seeker). Other, stranger sources of information may sometimes be necessary: ghosts, mages, *qashmal* and strange spirits all have the potential to know something. Finally, the stories of the Seer have not remained simply among the supernatural creatures of the world: many different kinds of wanderers have, over the years, taken up company with a Promethean for a short time while on the road, and may remember some of the stories the Promethean told. These kinds of information have surfaced among gypsies, carnies and circus folk, hobos and motorcycle gangs.

Followers of a given Refinement may carry some knowledge of the whereabouts of a Shrine associated with their Refinement. They may also have spoken to (or at least heard of) others seeking the same Shrine, and remember some things about that search. Likewise, Prometheans who spent a great deal of time in an area with a Shrine may very well have encountered more than one seeker there, and know something about it.

In the same way, the humans of an area may have some clue about the strange places that surround them: several Bedouin tribes almost assuredly know of the Dancing Ground in the Nefud Desert, and many of the elders of small Massachusetts towns remember stories about the old Witch's Graveyard. Even if these clues lead nowhere, the seeker may be guided to the same false lead that other seekers before him have discovered — and he may find more information there, perhaps. On any important roll that may gain the seeker knowledge of his goal, if the player rolls an exceptional success, the surge of excitement that comes with getting so much closer to the goal grants the character a point of Willpower. Likewise, once a Promethean accomplishes his goal and discovers the whereabouts of the Shrine with certainty, the thrill of doing so — of being so close to his goal — replenishes his sense of self. He recovers *all* his Willpower.

### Research

The average library does not have any information on the Seer's Pilgrimage — only a library of tremendous rarity and value possesses mention of Prometheans at all, unless you count Mary Shelley's classic. But a library or other

source of information doesn't need to know the meaning or importance of the Shrine the seeker searches for to provide some clues about where it might be found.

Even a small library or amateur website may provide some clue. A book of old wives' tales from Britain may point out a tradition of not taking in sailors who wash ashore along a small coast in southern England, giving a clue as to the whereabouts of Shofeld. A glossy photo-magazine dedicated to anthropological and archaeological findings may have printed photos of cave drawings — and among them, a Shrine-mark — from caverns in the Pacific Northwest, laying bare the location of the Seer's Cave. An undergraduate's book on Irish mythology that relates the tale of Cu Chulainn and his journey to Scotland to learn from the Scathach may include academic references to suspected camp sites of a band of warriors during the Bronze Age suspected to be the origins of the Scathach legends.

### Dreams and Meditation

The experience of the Revelation affects a Promethean on a deep level, much of it subconscious. It is then, perhaps no coincidence that those seeking one of the Shrines often remember things they thought they had forgotten that relate to the potential location of the Shrine. Stranger still, a seeker may find himself experiencing memories that are not his own. Some believe that these come from the murky memories somehow trapped in the body used to make the Promethean, but others claim that some of these are the memories of the seeker's creator, or creator's creator, carrying memories of the Seer's Cycle in the spark of Divine Fire that passes from maker to made. Dreams and visions unlock themselves when a seeker meditates or sleeps, revealing clues to his search, but almost always veiled in symbolism and intertwined with other concerns to the psyche. Many of these images do not seem immediately relevant, but are revealed as clues later.

Thus, a seeker hunting for Rio del Oro may awaken from a dream in which he caught a glimpse of a nearby mountain with a distinctive face, only to see a photo of that mountain later on while searching the Internet. A seeker who awakens from a meditation may find that the gibberish that he can't seem to forget is actually a phrase in Russian, giving him a clue to the whereabouts of the Speaking Stone.

### Happenstance

Finally, seemingly random chance often plays a strong part in the seeker's journey to discover the whereabouts of the Shrine that draws her. She may happen to overhear a conversation between two other Prometheans that somehow relates to her quest. She may stumble on a book in the trash bin and pick it out for some reason, only to discover it is an old guide book from the turn of the century that includes a photo of the Garden Window, with its Shrine-mark prominent.

## Dangers in the Quest

Only a fool believes that the Shrines are unguarded and safe places. Part of the danger of many of these sites is their proximity to humanity: some sit in the middle of busy urban areas, the locals completely unaware that there is something in their midst of importance to the occasional unsettling stranger. It is worth noting, however, that places that see a steady stream of odd visitors, who seem to want nothing more from the area than to show up and simply be in the presence of that area are likely to get something of reputation as being haunted — or at least, a place where undesirables seem to like to congregate.

More than this, however, creatures inimical to the Created may find these to be excellent places to wait for them. From Pantlorans seeking easy Vitriol to scientists looking for more of the Azoth-infused flesh from which to create clones, the Shrines associated with the Seer's Cycle make excellent ambush points.

Finally, the power that the Created bring to bear may create dangers at a Shrine. A place that has seen the tread of many Prometheans in succession may become strange, somehow, particularly when the Wasteland effect begins to take hold and interact with whatever odd power associated with the Revelation that is located there. It may spark firestorms, attract strange and unwholesome spirits or manifest unusual examples of Wasteland.

## Visiting a Shrine

Once a Promethean knows where the Shrine is, he need only visit it. This is a transformative experience for most Prometheans. Many such seekers approach the Shrine from the direction the Seer must have approached the site, walking in his footsteps. Then, upon encountering the heart of

the Shrine, the Created seeker experiences a moment of transcendent revelation.

The player rolls Wits + Composure + Azoth. This roll is reflexive.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The strange inspiration that has been guiding the Created since he first experienced the Revelation abandons him, leaving him disillusioned and bitter. He loses a point of Willpower and must check for Torment.

**Failure:** The Promethean arrives, and though he finds the site to be interesting, it does not ring with the truth he assumed he'd find here. He loses a point of Willpower in his disappointment.

**Success:** The sudden moment of insight washes over him, giving him some understanding of one of his milestones. The Storyteller should reveal one of that character's milestones to the player. Additionally, the Promethean gains a point of Vitriol.

**Exceptional Success:** The insight is transcendent and seared into the mind and spirit of the Promethean. Not only does he discover the nature of one of his milestones, but he also discovers either how much Vitriol accomplishing that milestone will earn him or how many total milestones he yet possesses. Additionally, he may purchase the Pilgrim Merit (see below) for half the normal experience point cost.

## New Merit: Pilgrim (••)

**Prerequisite:** Promethean; must have experienced (but not necessarily yet completed) the Revelation

Those Prometheans who have experienced part of the Seer's Pilgrimage are often its most ardent adherents, possessed of a nearly missionary fervor to tell the stories of the Seer. They are also quite focused on learning more about the Seer — though this focus is most often on the Cycle associated with their Refinement.

**Effect:** When you gain the opportunity to tell the story that has had such an effect on your Pilgrimage, you gain a point of Willpower. Should one of the Prometheans you tell this or any Seer legend to experience the Revelation, you regain all your Willpower. Finally, if you succeed in gaining inspiration at a Shrine, you gain one more Vitriol than normal from the experience.

## CHAPTER TWO

# RARE ALCHEMIES

Ten Weeks Ago

John Ash telephones me. He is self-conscious about his writing. We find a way to talk on the phone, a number that he can use for me, just like we always seem to.

"Got your letter," he says. I wait. "I'm real damn sorry, Zo."

"Thank you, John."

Nothing for a long while. Then I say, "Are you going to be there next year?"

"Less I die or find the light, yeah. Thought I might go out west first, though."

I'm sitting on a bus stop bench in Philadelphia with a cell phone in my hand. It's cold for the time of year. "Out west" sounds nice, and I think for a minute that I might go meet him. I like John, and I could use the company. Then he says something that stops me.

"You ever think about sin, Zo?"

"What about it, John?"

"I met a man one night, standin' at the crossroads like to sell his soul. I met him and I felt his Measure, and I asked his Ramble and he said he was looking to sin." A pause. He takes a sip of something, and I smile, because I know it's root beer, and I remember him introducing me to the drink. "I thought he was one of them. Like the Tamer. But then we talked, and he said he wasn't no freak. He was a Cobalt. A sinner-by-choice. Said you couldn't learn about clean until you got dirty."

"And?"

"And I thought that made sense, so I ran with him for a time. And then we met up with monsters, come to take our fire, and I..."

"John?" I thought the phone was dying, but then I heard him breathing. "John, you met with monsters and you what?"

"I thought to sin," he said, and he didn't have to say anymore.


We finished our conversation, but I didn't say I'd see him soon. I couldn't meet him now. It wasn't because I thought he'd betray me like he had that other man. I knew John better than that. I didn't want to see him because I knew he'd be grieving, and I didn't want to be around another's grief. I had enough of my own.

-as told to me by Zo Malak




Melvin





There is an alchemy in sorrow. It can be transmuted into wisdom, which, if it does not bring joy, can yet bring happiness.

— Pearl Buck



**T**hough five Refinements are well-known (six, if one counts the Centimani), they are not the only ones. It is the nature of the Promethean experience to attempt to transform the self, to seek the New Dawn, and those who do not ever meet other Prometheans may attempt to find their own way to do so, developing new Refinements. Most of the time, Prometheans wind up instinctively following Gold, Copper, Iron, Mercury or Tin, but sometimes a Promethean's understanding of the Great Work leads her to a more rarefied Refinement.

Such Refinements, when they enter the awareness of other Prometheans, are often given names of metals, based on what their strengths, weaknesses and approach toward the Great Work seems to be.

## Creating New Refinements

Creating a new Refinement is rare. Most of the Created are more than willing to follow the techniques and philosophies that worked for those who came before them. Often, a Promethean can find sufficient variety and focus to find one or two already extant Refinements that suit her well enough to give her many years of dedicated adherence to those philosophies.

Sometimes, however, a Promethean finds little of value in a Refinement — or too many things he considers objectionable. Other times, a Promethean has walked the Pilgrimage, has held to his Great Work for many, many years, with no results. Nothing in the philosophies he has followed suited the individual needs of his personal Refinement, and he must go searching elsewhere. Sometimes, this search leads him to a rare Refinement, or one he might have never considered. In a rare few instances, however, this leads him to create a wholly new Refinement, which focuses on concepts that have proved to be part of his Pilgrimage but are ill-suited to other Refinements.

Those who create new Refinements begin a process that usually takes years. The founders of Refinements tend to take inspiration from their own Pilgrimages — they see a theme or philosophy emerging in their milestones, and seek to push themselves further in that direction, hoping to unlock more enlightenment. These founders seek out compatible mortal philosophies, religions and occult practices, finding and incorporating ideas that uphold the new direction of their Great Work, and abandoning those that do not.

This is a time of tremendous experimentation on the part of the Created, who must try dozens of practices, ideas, philosophies and techniques, immersing himself in one after another, keeping those that seem to uphold his Great Work, and abandoning those that do not. The attempts to do so don't always lead to a new Refinement, however. Indeed, most often, the Promethean finds that he has approached an already established Refinement from a new, unconsidered direction.

But occasionally, after several years of work, experimentation and refinement, the Promethean achieves the pinnacle of his endeavors. He can feel the potential of a Refinement settle in his Azoth, granting him an affinity with certain Transmutations — in some cases, with heretofore-undiscovered potential Transmutations that begin to open up entirely new directions of experimentation for him.

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## Other Alchemies

Though the following Refinements, just as the Refinements described in *Promethean: The Created*, use alchemical materials for their core symbolism, these are not the only possible interpretations. Indeed, according to some stories, there was a time when the alchemical refinements were known by their astrological correspondences: the Path of the Sun (Aurum), the Path of the Moon (Argentum), the Path of Mercury (Mercurius), the Path of Venus (Cuprum), the Path of Mars (Ferrum), the Path of Jupiter (Stannum) and the Path of Saturn (Plumbum).

Perhaps more interesting, however, is that from time to time, other philosophies crop up, based entirely on other sets of symbols. Rumors claim that there are five Refinements secretly practiced in Asia, based on the elements of Taoist alchemy. One of the legends of the Seer's Pilgrimage (see p. 46) claims that the Seer came upon a throng of Prometheans, who claimed to be the inheritors to ancient philosophies based on the roots of the Tarot's Major Arcana. Journals kept by Prometheans during the 1800s claim to have met indigenous lines of Prometheans who practiced Refinements based on animal symbolism or on that of native gods.

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# AES: REFINEMENT OF BRONZE (Aid)

## SENTRIES

*There's a young man with a guitar and an open guitar case standing outside Smiths'. He's singing in this nasal, reedy voice a song about how he's a rock and an island. We stop and listen. It's easy for us. The crowd might be rushing past, but no one ever bumps into us.*

*I ask Tara how it can be that he's a rock and an island. He's a man, not an island. She says it's a way of talking. Like he's lonely and separate from everything, like a piece of land in the middle of the sea, with nothing joining it to anywhere else, which is what an island is. And she says she's like that.*

*I say, no, not really. Because it isn't me, or you, I say, it's us. We are here together. We are separate from them, but we are an island, the two of us. We are one.*

*The crowd flows around us, keeping its distance, and I reach across and hold her hand. And I feel her shudder.*

A Promethean realizes quite early on that he is, for all intents and purposes, alone in the world. Humans fear and hate her without really knowing why. Even nature itself rejects the Promethean. Small wonder then that when Prometheans meet, they form strong attachments, sealing their cooperation with alchemical pacts and Branding themselves with their mutual purpose.

As long as Prometheans have formed these alchemical pacts, there have been rare individuals who make maintaining their pacts their consuming purpose. Without even trying, they allow their own alchemical substance, gaining endurance and strength on their Pilgrimage from their relationships. The practitioner of Aes never walks the Pilgrimage alone. He might love the members of his throng. He might hate them. It doesn't matter. He's their guardian, their protector and their helper, and whatever he thinks about them, he'll stand by them and give them his aid on the Pilgrimage.

Well over 3,000 years ago, humanity discovered that copper and tin, alloyed together, made bronze, which proved different from either of its components. Bronze was malleable, but only to a point, and when worked well, it became hard and inviolable, lasting for centuries without any damage more than a slight patina. Bronze could be sharpened and hardened to make durable tools, or molded into finely detailed statuary. The paradox of bronze is this: through mixture, it becomes strong, pure and inviolable. An adulterated metal becomes a step to perfection.

## OVERVIEW

Thousands of years ago, so the story goes, the first Promethean throng joined together and the first alchemical pact was made, and it was a pact of bronze. There were two of them. The tellers of the story don't always agree on the subject of which Lineages they belonged to or what their names were, but most versions agree that one practiced Cuprum and one practiced Stannum, and one was male and one was female.

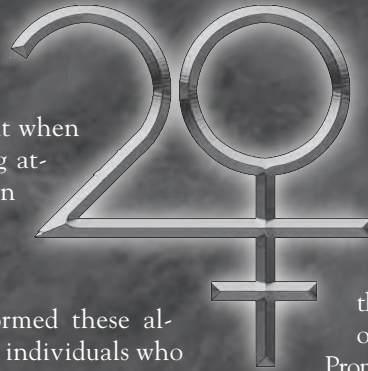
Their devotion to one another caused their Azoths to change. Copper mixed with Tin and Tin mixed with Copper. Their powers grew close together. They shared powers, alchemical operations, thoughts and feelings. They became as Bronze. When the time came for them to complete the Great Work, they became mortal at the same moment. In that split second, they joined together. They became a *rebis*, an hermaphroditic being who lived out a mortal life in bliss and harmony.

A practitioner of Aes puts his self to one side, instead giving himself up to the society of the throng. His companions become everything. If they are hungry, he takes it upon himself to find them food. If they are poor, he clothes them. If they are in danger, he warns them. If they are under attack, he defends them. It isn't for nothing that he is sometimes called a "Sentry" or a "Guardian." A watchman guarding a gate looks inside as well as out, and the practitioner of Aes also keeps the throng he serves under close watch. It's for their own good. Even the best-intentioned, most humane Promethean can fall from grace. A Sentry who dedicates himself to a bunch of incompetents feels quite justified in making sure they're out of harm and temptation's way. It's the only way to get them to the end of the Pilgrimage.

Working for others can be draining, and the practitioner of Aes works to make his body hard and enduring like the bronze that he emulates. Bronze is inviolable and long-lasting. So, too, the Sentry. Purity is important, the better to serve, support, protect . . . and control.

## PRACTITIONERS

It's impossible for a Promethean to begin practicing Aes if he isn't in a throng. The whole point of Aes is the act of cooperation with other Prometheans. Many Prometheans never meet another of their own kind, and so have no chance to take up the Refinement. This means that it's extremely unlikely that a Promethean will begin his Pilgrimage practicing Aes, unless he was created at the same time as another. Having said that, there are rumors of Promethean "twins," a pair of Prometheans created at the same time in the same actions. If they exist,



it's conceivable that one or both of them might practice the Refinement of Bronze.

A Frankenstein could practice the Refinement quite easily. The Wretched yearn for any kind of companionship at all, and a Frankenstein who joins a throng could easily find himself making it the primary focus of his Pilgrimage.

Although a Tammuz has a horror of servitude, there's a vast difference between being indentured and choosing to serve. Aes could have an appeal for a Tammuz with a need for comradeship and a strong arm. Likewise, the benefits of communal living can appeal to an Osiran, whose phlegmatic temperament sees the benefits in working together more clearly than some other Prometheans do.

A Galateid is somewhat less likely to take up the Refinement. Human companionship matters most to the Muses. Ulgans, too, can find their attachment to Twilight a hindrance to forming relationships with other Prometheans that are so close that they inspire alchemical operations within a Promethean Azoth.

## PHILOSOPHY

Unlike some of the other Refinements, Aes cannot be practiced in isolation. This Refinement only takes one Promethean to practice it, but he needs to be part of a throng. Bronze comes from the influence of others on the Promethean. He modifies his own Refinement, making it an alloy of that he sees around him. It's a metaphor, of course: a Promethean doesn't have to be practicing Cuprum or Stannum to transfer to Bronze. Promethean Aes is every alloy, the alloy that comes from others altering the way that they see the world.

Relationships change us. They make us who we are. They make us stronger, more able to deal with the problems of living. Sometimes they harden us and harm us. The gradual understanding of how interaction with others changes a human's life can be an important step on a Promethean Pilgrimage.

### Strength in Unity

In ancient Rome, the symbol of unity was the *fasces*, an ax with a bundle of rods tied around it. A man could break any one of the rods with ease, but when they were bound together, it was impossible. It was a metaphor for the strengths of Roman society. Alone, anyone could be broken, but together, although individuals might have fallen by the wayside, they believed that their society could never be destroyed. In the end, their society remained more or less stable for centuries. It worked for the Romans. A Promethean who walked the streets of Classical Rome could never have really grasped how the Roman social and political system worked, but at least one of the Created saw the sign of the *fasces* and understood immediately what it meant.

This principle guides the Sentry. Alone, a Promethean is in terrible danger. With his throng, that danger remains, but he's not facing it alone.

### Avoid Temptation

If a Sentry wants to guard the misfits and monsters he calls his friends properly, he has to be irreprouchable. What kind of guardian cannot keep his own house in order? A drunken watchman is worse than useless, because he's not only sleeping on the job, he's violating the trust others put in him.

The practitioner of Aes does his very best to avoid situations in which his own flaws will put himself or others in danger, even when there isn't any clear danger to avoid. At all times, he avoids risking Torment and tries not to indulge his Vice, whatever that might be. He keeps out of the way of humans, and trains himself in every skill he knows, the better to succeed in all things, in all ways.

He's always on duty, and always owes it to his companions to do his absolute best for them, whether they want him to or not. And that means being morally flawless. It's hard. The higher the standard the Sentry sets for himself, the easier it is to fail.

The practitioner of Aes is often very black-and-white in the way he sees things. He doesn't necessarily expect the other members of his throng to live up to his standards, but there's a good chance that he'll judge them for not doing so. He might not realize he's judging them, and he probably even thinks that he's tolerant of their flaws. The very fact that he considers himself to be "tolerant" is actually a manifestation of his being judgmental.

### Choose Your Compromises

A practitioner of Aes often has a clear-cut idea of what the right thing to do is. But even the most rigid Sentries realize early on that never backing down risks the disintegration of the throng. Sometimes it's necessary, for the sake of the continued existence and harmony of the throng, to make compromises. Besides, the Sentry reasons, if he backs down sometimes, people are more willing to listen to his point of view.

But which compromises to make? That's the tricky part. For example, a throng of Prometheans might have to choose which way to travel: through the mountains or through the city? They're both dangerous, but the city has people, and people mean Disquiet, and Disquiet means violence and Torment. The practitioner of Aes argues strongly for the mountains, but he's overruled by the others, who are sick of living on bugs, leaves and berries. They're adamant on this point. The Sentry shrugs, knowing that he's not going to win this one. The next time there's a disagreement, this time about whether one of the throng should try to shoplift some food from the late-night supermarket, the Sentry vetoes it. He points to the CCTV camera, and the security man. His companion raises an eyebrow. He concedes that maybe the Sentry is right.

## PRACTICES AND OPERATIONS

In the end, everything the practitioner of Aes does depends upon his being in a throng. It's the one operation from where he draws his purpose and meaning. Everything comes from the companionship of other Prometheans. If a Sentry is humorless and driven, it's because he's got his throng to think about. If he's co-dependent or obsessed with another Promethean, it's because he's thrown himself into supporting them. If he's physically strong, it's because he's perfected his body, the better to defend his friends. If he's adept at the use of Transmutations, it's because he's developed them, the better to share their benefits with the throng.

The practitioner of Aes is the quintessential team player. If there are roles missing from his group, the Sentry fills them. If the others need to be defended, he becomes better at fighting. If

they're no good at talking with outsiders, he practices his social skills. He sees it as his job to be what his companions need, and to help them to get through their Pilgrimage, because if they get to the end of the Great Work, he gets that much closer.

### Throng and Pacts

Better still than forming a throng is forming an alchemical pact. The pact has its advantages and disadvantages, but for the Guardian, it's the affirmation of his duty and his purpose. A pact seals the throng and makes it work.

Often, the Sentry adds to his relationship with others a veneer of emotion, in an attempt to make this operation a humane operation in a way. She might begin to see her companions as her friends. She might develop a fraternal (or maternal) relationship with the others, the throng becoming her family with all that entails. She might even take a companion as a lover.

The emotions a Guardian develops toward her charges aren't necessarily always healthy, however. Love, friendship and familial bonds can easily become co-dependent and twisted. Romantic love can become colored by lust or obsession.

Then again, she could be practicing the Refinement out of purely contractual motives. The throng gains from her presence, but the Sentry gains the protection of the throng. It works both ways, especially if they join in a pact.

A Promethean who has heard of the Refinement of Bronze probably knows the tale of the Sentry who stayed by the friend with whom he shared a Brand through all kinds of sufferings, defending and supporting his companion through a Saturnine Night that lasted half a century. The Sentry was present when his friend completed the Great Work, and as his friend stood up, blinking, looking through mortal eyes for the first time, the Sentry reached out for him and tore him limb from limb. The Sentry hated his companion. The Sentry had hated him for as long as he knew him. The needs of the Great Work superseded the Sentry's hatred. He gained from the other's companionship and had promised that his "friend" would see the end of the Pilgrimage. That done, he simply did what he had always wanted to do.

### Purification

The Sentry maintains his own purity. Through remaining pure in body and mind, he becomes fit to be whatever the other members of his throng need him to be. He eats little, does not indulge his needs and constantly exercises.

If he believes in a higher power, the practitioner of Aes prays. He might not expect an answer, but the act of prayer is important to him, not the result—it's a psychological discipline, and discipline is vital if a Promethean is going to succeed in practicing Aes.

### Transmutations

Benefice, Corporeum

### Skills

The Sentry pursues excellence in everything. She's likely to develop in those Skills that can be of direct aid to her companions. Medicine and Crafts both have their attractions for the Sentry. Fitness is important, too, and so Athletics is useful for the practitioner of Aes. Many throngs need someone to drive the car or do the talking. Wherever there's a gap in the knowledge of the other Prometheans in the throng, the Guardian will do her best to fill it.

## Stereotypes

**Argentum:** If you didn't have me watching your back, where would you be? Being lynched, that's where.

**Cuprum:** No, it's fine. You stay behind that bush. I'll do all the work. Again.

**Ferrum:** Training works better with a partner.

**Mercurius:** Your secrets are too valuable to keep to yourself.

**Stannum:** Yeah, rip it all up. No, really. It's not like you're the one who's going to have to put everything right afterwards.

**Centimani:** You think you've got friends? You've got a bunch of broken toys.

## SENTRY MILESTONES

A character practicing Aes seeks to gain Mortality through aiding others in their own Pilgrimages. His milestones should reflect the Sentry's preoccupation with teamwork and with physical development. Milestones for a practitioner of Aes could include the following:

- Gaining the trust of another Promethean.
- Understanding how the influence of others changes and develops the self.
- Being vital to the creation of an alchemical pact.
- Saving a companion from peril, perhaps even saving a life.
- Experiencing the failure of a group endeavor.
- Learning that close relationships can be harmful and painful.
- Putting his own feelings about the members of his throng behind the imperative to work as part of a group.
- Enduring a Firestorm.
- Being vindicated after having disagreed with others in the throng about the best course of action (particularly if others ignored the Sentry's advice).
- Being present and of help when a member of his throng gains Mortality.

## ATHANORS

A Promethean who creates an Athanor while practicing Aes further develops the idea of cooperation. His Boons reflect that he doesn't exist in isolation.

### ADT —

### COOPERATION (OSIRIS)

In ancient myth, the ants, symbolic of industry and co-operation, were said to rise up from the very stones of the ground themselves, creatures of living stone that worked until the end of their days.



The Promethean who creates the Athanor of the Ant works like no one else, and is an asset to any team. When working on something that requires time and effort, he excels.

**Trait Affinities:** Stamina, Wits

**Promethean Boon:** The Promethean's player gains the following benefits:

- He gains a +1 dice pool bonus on any roll in which the character is part of a team, whether the character is the primary actor or not (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 135).

- He can spend a point of Reagent to gain a +2 dice pool bonus to the first roll in an extended action.

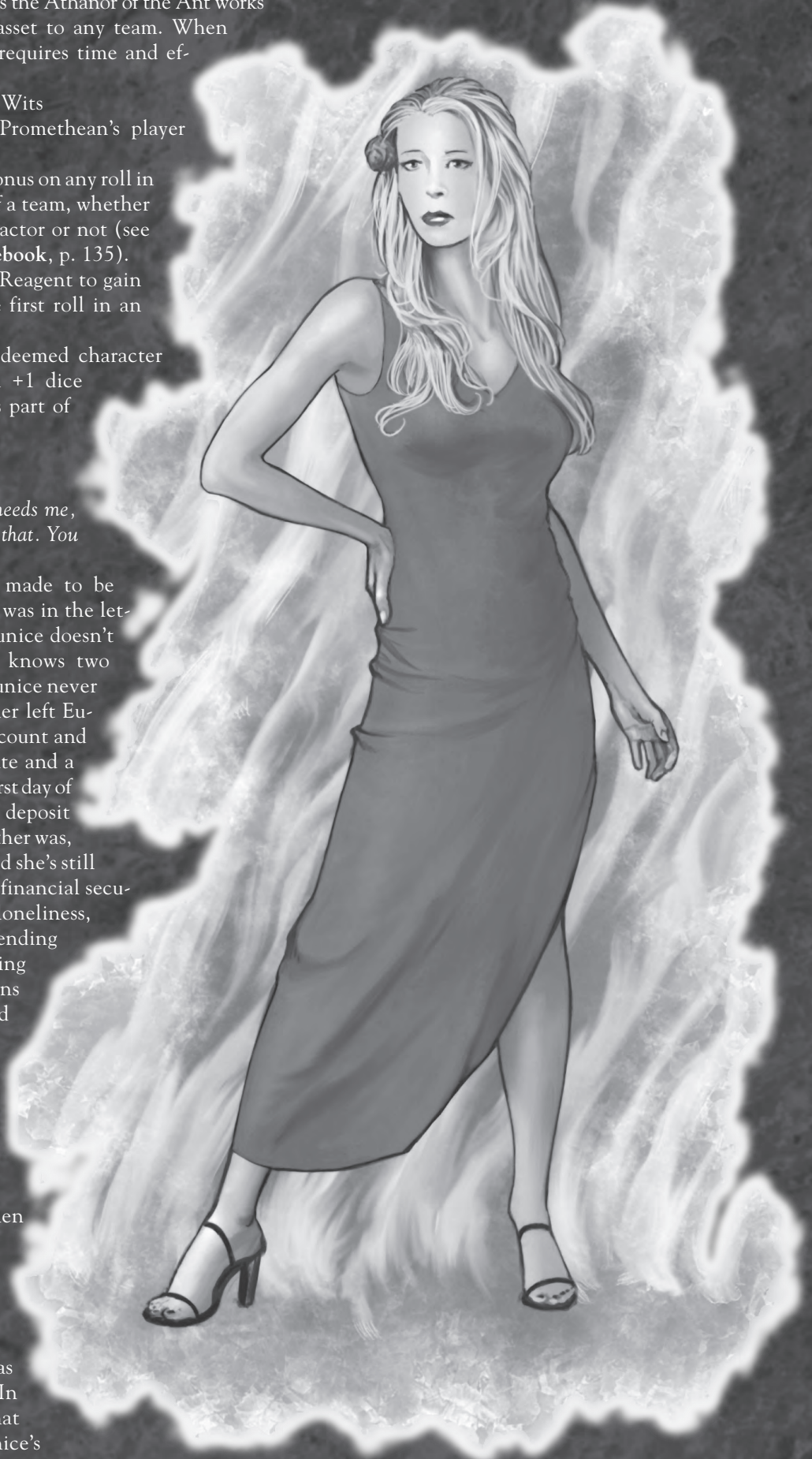
**Redeemed Boon:** The Redeemed character continues to benefit from a +1 dice pool bonus when working as part of a team.

## EUNICE

**Quote:** *She needs me. She needs me, and I need her. You don't have that. You can't.*

**Background:** Eunice was made to be beautiful. She knows that. It was in the letter that "Mother" left her. Eunice doesn't remember Mother, but she knows two things. One, Mother asked Eunice never to search for her. Two, Mother left Eunice the details for a bank account and a debit card, a birth certificate and a Social Security card. On the first day of every month, there's a sizable deposit to the account. Whoever Mother was, she had good connections, and she's still looking out for Eunice. Still, financial security hasn't helped Eunice's loneliness, which was what led to her spending as much time as she could trying to spend time among humans (taking on a series of office and secretarial jobs). It also led to Eunice nearly being killed. If an Osiran named Tara K hadn't saved Eunice, she wouldn't be alive and they wouldn't be in a pact, and they wouldn't be lovers, and . . . Eunice gets breathless when she talks about Tara. Tara is everything to her.

Whether Eunice is everything to Tara is another matter. The Osiran sometimes seems to use Eunice as some kind of willing slave. In the large, comfortable flat that they currently rent with Eunice's



money, Eunice is the one who cooks and cleans. Eunice is the one who takes on the errands. Tara stays inside mostly, these days, researching stuff on the Internet that she hasn't told Eunice about. Sure, she tells Tara she loves her — but what does a Promethean really know about love?

**Description:** Eunice is one of the most beautiful people anyone could ever meet, beautiful in that leggy, narrow-hipped, broad-shouldered way that fashion models are beautiful. Huge, heavy-lashed eyes and full, immaculately made-up lips dominate an angular face, framed by stylishly cut, short blonde hair. When at rest, she gives an impression of stillness and grace. She wears fashionable, stylish clothes, usually sharply cut designer business suits and the like.

At the times when others can see her disfigurements, however, Eunice's beauty takes on a plastic, inhuman quality. Stillness becomes stiffness, and those full, red lips look like they've been painted on. Her hair gains a sheen as if it's made of some synthetic fiber. She looks for all the world like a store mannequin.

**Storytelling Hints:** Eunice gives the impression of being composed, efficient and businesslike, but actually she's not all that bright. She's almost completely dependent on Tara, whose direction Eunice asks for virtually every decision she makes, no matter how trivial. On the flipside, her jealousy is a vast, poisonous thing. Tara is hers and no one else's, and no one is allowed to be with her. If Tara were to grow bored of exploiting Eunice and dump her or betray her, Eunice would need some time to understand what had happened. Perhaps she'd blame other people for "what happened to Tara," and take out her frustration and anger on them. Perhaps, if things went sour with Tara, Eunice's obsession could turn into stalking behavior, and perhaps even violence directed at her former loved one.

However it ended, if Tara weren't around to tell Eunice what to do, Eunice's fascination with Tara means that the results can't be good.

There's also the mystery of Mother. At the moment, Eunice accepts the regular allowance without question, but what if she decides she wants to know more? And why is Mother doing this? Is there something she wants?

**Lineage:** Galatea

**Refinement:** Aes

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 1, Wits 2, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 6, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Computer (Accounts) 1, Crafts (Style) 1, Investigation 1, Politics (Business) 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Drive 3, Larceny 1, Stealth 1

**Social Skills:** Empathy 1, Expression 1, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 1, Socialize 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge (Poker Face) 2

**Merits:** Lair (Size 2, Security 4), Resources 4, Striking Looks 4

**Willpower:** 6

**Humanity:** 7

**Virtue:** Charity

**Vice:** Envy

**Initiative:** 4

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 7

**Health:** 7

**Azoth:** 2

**Bestowment:** Mesmerizing Appearance

**Transmutations:** *Benefice* — Many Hands Make Light Work (·), Helping Hand (·), Share Pyros (·); *Corporeum* — Swift Feet (·), Autonomic Control (·); *Deception* — Leave no Trace (·); *Mesmerism* — Fixed Stare (·)

**Pyros/per Turn:** 11/2

## The Strange Case of Tara ik

What's up with Tara? Eunice may not be the brightest bulb in the box, but she deserves more than being exploited. Maybe the reason is one of the following:

\* Tara once cared for Eunice, but has given up on the Pilgrimage. Recently, Tara joined the ranks of the Hundred Handed. She's been exchanging emails with another Centimanus. She's going to bring her new friend up to the flat soon, along with his other friends. And then they'll eat Eunice alive, and if no one stops them, Eunice will let it happen.

\* Tara cares for Eunice, but as time has gone on and Tara's humanity has withered, she no longer knows how to say so. She doesn't know what to do to make it better. She needs help, because soon, her frustration at her own inability to relate is going to burst out into the open, and violence and tragedy will result.

\* Tara doesn't care for Eunice, but needs her, at least until Tara finds someone better. She's found a way to contact another Promethean throng (the troupe's) via the Internet, perhaps through a bulletin board or through a blog she keeps. She's trying to get them to come and take her away. She hasn't told them about Eunice. What's going to happen when they find out?

# Argentum

## Refinement of Silver (Mystery)

### Mystics

*I knew that I couldn't tell the doctors everything I'd seen. Not anymore, at least. When they'd first brought me in here, I guess I was babbling, screaming at the top of my lungs about the teeth in the shadows. I hear they had to calm me by putting me into a featureless room — one of the padded ones, I think — and turning up the lights, so that there weren't any shadows. They said I found the one place in the room where I didn't cast a shadow, and sat there, trembling, until I passed out from exhaustion.*

*In our group meetings, and in my interviews with the psychologist, I tell them that I don't remember what happened. I've even dropped hints that I might have been on some kind of hallucinogenic drug or something, but I'm not sure they believe that one.*

*She's the only one I can tell. She says that this old state hospital has been an asylum for more than 50 years, and that she comes here every decade or so, to talk to people like me. I thought she was an angel when she first showed up at my window.*

*We talk, now, and she makes it better, some. I've stopped trying to chew away the skin on my forearm — she's the only one who knows that I do that because that's where the shadows touched me, and made me feel infected. Like I'd started rotting right there, and sometimes I just want to make that feeling go away.*

*I know what she is. Or, at least, I know she's not human. Not really. She looks like us, but she's not. She's one of them. She's a monster — she was pretty honest about that when we first met, but she won't tell me what she is. You'd think I'd be crazy to have anything to do with her, I know. I kinda felt that way the first few times we talked, but I think she understands me.*

*And after all — if the world is as full of monsters as she says it is, isn't it better to have at least one of them as a friend?*

Most Refinements focus, of necessity, on humans. Whether trying to be like them, hating them, trying to live among them or avoiding them utterly, the presence of humanity defines so much of what the Created are and do. Practitioners of Argentum are no different, though their focus is shifted slightly into the shadows that surround humanity. If other Prometheans were biologists, the Mystics would be ecologists — seeking to understand not the thing but the environment in which the thing exists.

As monsters themselves, Prometheans often encounter other things in the World of Darkness: things that are not themselves human, but are certainly intertwined with humanity. Those who practice the Refinement of Argentum

seek to understand that interaction. Thus, they are seekers of strange occult and supernatural phenomenon. Where some Prometheans seem not only content, but desperate, to ignore the supernatural world, Mystics look into the dark places, hoping to get the abyss to stare back at them.

After all, that's the only way they can talk to it.

### Overview

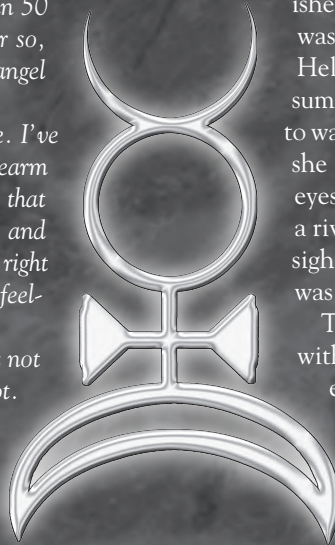
No one really knows who the first practitioner of the Refinement was. Unlike most other Refinements, though, the practitioners of the Path of Silver have a few stories about who may have founded their Refinement. The two prevailing stories are those of the Unblemished Rose and of Romis Tal.

The first of these tells of a Galateid whose beauty was so breathtaking that she was called the Unblemished Rose by the ones who admired her. She was reckoned one of the greatest beauties of the Hellenes, and ardent suitors surrounded her. One summer, however, the ranks of her admirers began to wane, until they'd all but disappeared. Curious, she found them adoring another beauty. To the eyes of the Unblemished Rose, this was not simply a rival — the Galateid looked with eyes beyond sight and discovered that this midnight temptress was a vampire.

Though Unblemished Rose was initially taken with terrible jealousy, something happened — she experienced an epiphany, for the jealousy allowed her to understand what it would be like to be merely beautiful by human standards. She suddenly knew what other women felt when they regarded her, what a human woman must experience when someone more lovely suddenly wins the

attention that others had gifted her with. Wondering what other insights vampire-kind might hold for her, she introduced herself and began a lifetime's work exploring the secrets and society of vampires. Though no one knows what truly happened to her, some say that she exists to this day, the foremost expert on vampires among the Prometheans.

Others, however, maintain that her story was more tragic, claiming that she discovered Mortality. Unfortunately, by this point, she was so well-known by vampire society that they followed her, not understanding what had happened. Some say they killed her, fearing what she knew. But others say that she was attacked, her throat ripped out and given the vampiric Embrace and turned into one of the horrors.



This part of the story is given as an Argentum warning: one should be circumspect and careful in exploring the details of the supernatural world, for it is inimical to humanity. They say that she was turned into a vampire a mere day after seizing the Elpis, and yet struggles to this night to retain a grip on what little humanity and sanity her 24 hours as a mortal granted her.

The legend of Romis Tal, however, tells that the first of the Refinement was the Ulgan who sought to master the practices of the Buddhist monks, going so far as joining a monastery. Some claim that he walked Aurum at that time, seeking to be among mortal. Others claim that he wanted to master Cuprum, desiring the solitude of the Himalayan monasteries, or Mercurius, embracing the mystic practices of the Tibetan monks.

Regardless of his original path, however, the story maintains that he discovered the secrets of Argentum here, for strange spirits drawn by the practices of the monks inhabited the monastery he dwelt in. Wicked devils that sought to tempt the monks away from their search for enlightenment, these spirits inflicted madness and degradation on the holy men. Slowly, they succumbed to insanity — some sat, trying to meditate as they were taught, but could only remain in one place while piercing their flesh with thin needles, again and again. Others became savage and bloodthirsty cannibals that hunted at night among the darkened corridors of the monastery, leaving a half-eaten corpse for the others to find the next day.

Finally, the spirits grasped Romis Tal's mind, and his power was made manifest. Disquiet shattered the remaining fragile peace of the monastery, and he fought the spirits, driving them from the holy place and then fleeing it himself. The Mystics believe that he sat in the mountains above the monastery and formulated the first precepts of Argentum there.

There are many versions of this tale. In some of them, rather than spirits, Romis Tal encounters a werewolf dwelling at the monastery, seeking to control the werewolf's terrible killing urge. In others, he meets with ancient gods, tribes of yeti in the snow-cloaked mountain peaks intent on terrorizing the monastery, or blasphemous sorcerers hidden among the monks. All of these stories, however, emphasize the wisdom that Romis Tal gains about the human condition from interacting with these monsters.

All of these origin stories have one thing in common, though. They both feature, on some level, madness on the part of the protagonist. For a short time, the Unblemished Rose is driven mad with jealousy, and Romis Tal is attributed with a handful of different kinds of insanity in his various stories. Mystics in human society have long been associated with madness, and so it is no surprise that followers of Argentum seek to understand this unique human condition — a condition that some of the Created on this Refinement have noted is probably the single most common reaction in humanity to the supernatural.

## Practitioners

Those who seek the path of Argentum are rare, even among the Created. Some who come to it do so out of a sense of desperation — since they fit so poorly in among humanity, perhaps they should understand more of what it means to be supernatural, to be part of some “society of the supernatural,” as it were? Of course, those who seek to become Mystics for this reason are usually disappointed. If humans are fearful and hate-filled, then the creatures that share the shadows with Prometheans are doubly so. Most creatures in the World of Darkness quickly learn that suspicion is the first tool of survival. Unrecognizable things, even more so than recognizable entities, are treated with the mistrust necessary to stay alive, for more than one creature hunts other denizens of the night for food or other, less savory purposes. Thus, a Mystic has a lot of suspicion to overcome if he deals with other supernatural creatures, while trying to maintain enough caution to keep himself from getting killed.

Those who come to Argentum and stay with it are those who are truly fascinated with the supernatural for its own sake. Many of the Created learn about supernatural entities piecemeal, a little nugget of lore at a time. But those who truly delve into these mysteries often surface with an interesting conclusion: nearly every sort of major supernatural phenomenon has some kind of tie to humanity.

What does it say about humans that some of them become werewolves? What can vampires — who were themselves once human — teach the Created about that state? What is it in humans that sometimes allows them to shatter the normal walls of perception and understanding, allowing them to wield magic? The existence of ghosts is likewise some kind of commentary on the nature of humanity and its urges and desires, but what, exactly? Any of these lines of inquiry can lead to insights in the Great Work, and the Mystics of the Argentum Refinement wish to be the ones making those inquiries.

On a more mundane level, Mystics usually express a fascination with insanity. Some are perhaps mad themselves — indeed, the Prometheans of other Refinements tend to consider the Mystics' desire to seek communication with and understanding of the other horrors of the world to be somewhat a kind of insanity.

Of all the Lineages, Ulgan are drawn to the practice of Argentum, and with good reason: they are capable of perceiving an entire facet of reality that others cannot, instilling in them an awareness of the ways in which the supernatural affects the normal, everyday world. A few Galateids and Osirans walk among the ranks of the Mystics, but the rarest of the adherents to the Refinement of Silver are Tammuz and Frankensteins. Tammuz often fear supernatural creatures, many of whom have occult means of binding their wills — particularly mages. Frankensteins, on the other hand, all too often react with anger, or invoke it in those around them, making extended association with other monsters a dangerous gamble.

In a throng, Mystics often have the most knowledge about the various types of supernatural creatures a group of Prometheans may run across — or run afoul of. They



often try to either gather as much information about the local supernatural world as they can, in order to keep their throng-mates apprised of where to avoid and who (or what) to be cautious of. More relevant, perhaps, Mystics are frequently very cognizant when it comes to noticing the signs of influence from other supernatural entities or phenomena. The Mystics are also fairly well aware of their throng-mates' various psychological states, given the Mystics' interest in the spectrum of human sanity.

## Crossover Madness

Using this Refinement is, obviously, only really a viable option in those chronicles that include other supernatural creatures. If the Storyteller doesn't wish to delve into the strange secrets and social mores of the rest of the World of Darkness, she is well within her rights to ask a player to choose a Refinement other than Argentum.

Argentum is an excellent Refinement, however, for Promethean characters who show up in other World of Darkness games. Insofar as any Promethean can be said to be sociable, Mystics are tremendously interested in the goals and lives of the other creatures of the supernatural world they inhabit. A Promethean with this Refinement makes an excellent addition to a coterie of vampires, pack of werewolves or cabal of mages. See Chapter Three for more on this subject.

It should be noted, however, that the Storyteller can include supernatural creatures without access to other books. Creating a vampire, werewolf or mage is easy enough without using *Vampire: The Requiem*, *Werewolf: The Forsaken* or *Mage: The Awakening*. The Storyteller need only create a character as normal, choose a set of Promethean Transmutations to use as powers iconic to those kinds of creatures and describe them in terms appropriate to the entity in question. The players shouldn't ever really be privy to the mechanics going on behind the Storyteller's screen anyway — these supernatural creatures should be described in terms of narrative, with whatever mechanics are most convenient for use.

## Philosophy

In alchemical correspondences, Silver is associated with the Moon. Therefore, silver has connotations of mystery and madness: to the occultist, silver is associated with the strange things that exist beyond the safe, normal world. Where the sun is symbolic of daytime and the normal, mundane existence of humans, strange things lurk in the nighttime shadows cast

by the silvery moon. At night, things exist that would be mad to consider during the day. Indeed, it might be said that the insane impossibilities are given form and reality by the wan light of the moon.

Practitioners of Argentum have noted that the supernatural and insanity are intimately connected. Specifically, encountering the supernatural nearly always results in madness of some sort for mortals. For this reason, Mystics also study human insanity. This is not, however, because of some innate insight that the mad possess. Though a few Mystics believe that insanity may be a key to understanding how the Divine Fire operates — particularly when one considers the fact that of all the demiurges remembered, most seemed seized with some kind of mania or melancholy — most of those who adhere to this Refinement know that human fear of madness drives humans to equate the ramblings of the insane with some kind of wisdom.

Believing that a loved one is spouting some kind of insight beyond the understanding of normal men is more reassuring than accepting that he has simply ceased to be able to function in reality, a pitiable prisoner of his own mind. This does not mean that the insane's perspectives aren't valuable, however — they simply aren't some kind of key to mystic insight. In understanding how the insane perceive the world, Mystics can learn something about human understanding and perception of the world. If everything is simply perspective, why is it that humanity is not comfortable with some perspectives of reality? What does this say about the human condition?

For all the potential insights into the Great Work, those who practice Argentum must be cautious. It is easy to become distracted from the search for humanity when one surrounds oneself with the other freaks of the world. It is tempting to become enwrapped in the politics and passion plays of the supernatural things, neglecting humanity as boring and mundane.

Thus, many adherents of Argentum seek out throngs, to help keep the Mystics grounded and focused — the Moon is well associated with madcap whimsy, and the Mystics know it. By the same token, the understanding of other supernatural entities (and sometimes even contacts among the other shadow societies) that followers of this Refinement cultivate makes them extremely valuable to other Prometheans.

**The Mystery unfolds in the Shadow, as well as the Light.**

Mystics believe that understanding the human condition requires study not simply of humans themselves but of those things that surround humanity. Any predator affects the way a given population exists, after all, and while not all the supernatural creatures are inimical to humans — and in fact, all supernatural creatures have learned to hide themselves from humans, a valuable insight in and of itself — these creatures do exist quite closely with humans.

Thus, a Galateid haunts one of the favored feeding grounds of the local vampires to watch not only the vampires but the mortals around the vampires — how the mortals react, subconsciously, to the presence of predators in their midst. Sometimes, he follows some of those who interact closely with the vampires home, watching them in their day-to-day lives, comparing that with how they act around the undead, hoping

to gain some insight into the kinds of changes the vampires cause in the humans they prey upon.

Likewise, consider an Ulgan who is something of a ghost-chaser. Though she roams fairly frequently, she makes a point of discovering which areas in her new location are haunted, and visiting them. She learns about the history, and finds out what tragedy led to the haunting, hoping to gain insight into the human condition — what affects mortals so powerfully that they linger, even after death?

### **In Madness, Enlightenment.**

Sometimes the mad see or understand things. Sometimes, however, the seeing or understandings of those things is what makes one mad. Which came first? To the Mystics, the insights into human nature that the insane have to offer are simply one more shadowed source of understanding the Mystics' own Great Work. A thing is defined by what it fears as much as what it embraces, and the way humanity reacts to its mentally ill members says something about it. Once, the mad were considered touched by the supernatural. Indeed, some tribes considered their madmen to be magicians or mystics of some sort. Now, however, in a day when the supernatural has no place in the world, the insane are ideally treated for their madness, or — failing that — locked away and forgotten.

The concept of treating the mad is a fascinating one to Mystics. They have watched as treatment for the insane has evolved rapidly in the past century or so. Once, the goal of asylums was simply the containment of the mad, with efforts at healing that more closely resembled torture than treatment. Since those times, humanity's understanding of both the human psyche and the effects of chemicals on such have gone a long way toward genuine healing.

Perhaps more relevant, though, Mystics point out that as humans have become less superstitious, they seem more willing to deal directly with insanity. Where once madness was a source of terrible shame and fear, today's folk seem to wear their labels of mental disorders with some kind of pride.

Ultimately, though, Mystics are most concerned not with chemical imbalances or abuse traumas but with madness caused by encounters with the supernatural. What does it say about the human mind that realization results in such disablement?

## **Practices and Operations**

Mystics are quite varied in their day-to-day lives. An Argenteum Promethean with an interest in vampires may very well keep vampiric hours, staying awake all night and sleeping during the day. Likewise, one with an interest in mages may seek out traditional places of spiritual significance, and the gatherings of occult societies, looking for those who exhibit some sign of true power.

Most Mystics learn the Sensorium Transmutation "Aura Sight" shortly after taking up the mantle of this Refinement. Though a seeker after the supernatural can hardly rely on that alone in his search for the monsters of the world, this Transmutation's utility is without compare.

Mystics often have an area of specialty that they focus their efforts toward: vampires, werewolves, ghosts, mages, spirits or other things. Simply seeking these entities out is tremendously dangerous — most creatures of the night have learned to fear

those not of their kind who are capable of identifying them, to say nothing of those who actively seek them out.

Despite this, Mystics are not purely hunters in this regard. They must be careful, for more than one of their ilk has ended up dangling at the end of another supernatural creature's webs. Vampires and mages in particular are notorious for their willingness to use those around them, and the Created have a great many strengths that an ambitious supernatural might use to his advantage.

Mystics use common sense in dealing with these creatures: if they seem afraid or too friendly, it's probably best to leave them be. Those who demonstrate a degree of cautious curiosity, however, are the ones adherents of the Argenteum Refinement seek to make allies of.

Prometheans who practice this Refinement invariably study insanity of some sort. Nearly every kind of supernatural being is known to either produce or contribute to insanity in mortals, a fact that Mystics find strangely comforting — it means they aren't the only ones who drive mortals insane. Mortals who serve vampires are often quite degenerate, with some of them teetering on the very verge of madness. The simple sight of werewolves in their bestial forms has been known to invoke a terrible panic or catatonia in humans, and some mortals continue to be haunted by their experiences with the lupine creatures.

A few who experience the magic of sorcerers have been known to describe strange, disjointed experiences, but most seem to retreat into denial so intense that their memories entirely rewrite themselves — in a fashion similar to those who encounter Pandorans outside of their dormant forms. Those who relate ghostly hauntings and manifestations of other supernatural creatures are often thought of as delusional, and in some cases, those encounters do indeed drive those who encounter ghosts insane.

When Mystics have a difficult time finding other supernatural presences, they often turn to state mental hospitals and psychiatric wards. Gaining access is relatively easy, either as a night janitor or some such worker, or even simply by sneaking in. More than one Mystic has made a reputation for herself as a "secret friend" to someone locked up in an asylum, whispering through air ducts or windows. Sometimes, Mystics gain an insight into the human condition by the manifestation of insanity. Other times, though, they hear stories of strange shape-shifting monsters, witches who bear hexes for those who displease them or bloodsucking fiends, giving Mystics a lead.

The files of the hospitals are very valuable in finding the right patients to speak with as well — most patient files contain transcripts of lengthy therapy sessions, with the deepest secrets of the patients laid bare and recorded by the doctor.

### **Supernatural Scholars**

Among the Created, few know as much about the supernatural as Mystics. The specific "areas of study" that individuals choose can vary widely. Some Argenteum scholars choose to study a single kind of creature or phenomenon, whether vampires, Fortean phenomena, ghosts or possession cases. Other Mystics — particularly those who settle down in a single area for a while — may try to become expert on the supernatural phenomena of that

area, recognizing the places where vampires and witches can be found, exploring the haunted sites of a city and the like. These Mystics also the ones most likely to be familiar with its supernatural history.

Mystics focus this interest in a variety of ways. Some take up the pseudo-science and similar trappings of parapsychologists, while others approach their interest in the supernatural world from a solidly scientific background, and are interested in the psychology of a vampire, the biology of a werewolf, the physics around magical use. Others take a more scholarly view, hunting through old books and handwritten journals of those who may have encountered the supernatural in the past. A few Mystics even choose to learn about the supernatural through immersion, learning the Transmutations of Spiritus that allow Mystics to go among their subjects of interest and study them up close, maybe even finding one willing to directly answer some questions.

It is important to note that while many Mystics become caught up in the minutiae and fascinating trivia that surrounds the creatures of the hidden world, the Refinement teaches that such pieces of information are relevant only in how they reflect the influence of supernatural creatures on the humans around them. Thus, Argentum inquiry tends to focus on what sorts of relationships the supernatural creature has with the humans around it, how strangers react to it and the overall effects of its hunting or other predation on the local human populace. Mystics are also fascinated by the subterfuges supernatural creatures use, and of the folktales or outright fabrications that humans come to use to explain some of the things they can't explain — and which ones the supernatural creatures foster.

### Haunting Asylums

To Mystics, there are secrets to be understood in madness. Sometimes, the insane are simply unbalanced and broken, victims of biochemical problems or terrible psychological traumas. Some of the insane, however, are driven to that point by seeing things that they can't understand. Occasionally, someone who is labeled as "insane" actually isn't — she has simply seen things that no one believes could possibly be true, and she is one of the few people who don't pretend otherwise. Mystics haunt places where the insane are taken, discovering their secrets and making them more comfortable when possible: it isn't uncommon for an Argentum Created to make a few friends at a local psychiatric ward, and sneak them little snacks and other diversions from their lives sometimes.

The Refinement is quite clear: madness itself is only useful as a gauge of the spectrum of human sanity. Madness does not grant some sort of inherent insight into anything. Madness is frightening for those who are not mad, debilitating for those who are and is more to be pitied than be fascinated with. The only time this is not true is when the supernatural is somehow involved. Argentum Created are interested in the mentally ill whose illness is tied to the supernatural, in some fashion, though it isn't ever easy to tell which inmate is there because of natural causes, and which ones have experienced some kind of occult horror.

### Transmutations

Sensorium, Spiritus

### Skills

Mystics tend to immerse themselves in Academics and Occult lore of all sorts, seeking the kinds of hidden pieces of information that have filtered into humanity's understanding of the occult, as well as some minor Medicine knowledge, normally focused on insanity. Mystics often round out this knowledge with a grounding in Investigation, allowing them to rely on more direct methods of gathering information. More than this, though, Mystics often require a means of defending themselves, particularly favoring Weaponry, as all too often fisticuffs and guns do little good against supernatural threats. Many Argentum Prometheans focus on skills such as Athletics and Stealth to manage escapes and getaways and tail creatures of interest. Finally, some Mystics round out their skills with some knowledge of Persuasion, for use in fast-talking their way out of violence.

## Stereotypes

*Aurum: You miss so much by fixing your gaze on humans, and humans alone. The world holds so much more.*

*Cuprum: If your own company was enough to enlighten, you'd already be human. Get out and do something.*

*Ferrum: There's plenty that a strong body can accomplish — just look to some of the other creatures in the world to see that. But you're the only one I've met who thinks you can find enlightenment there.*

*Mercurius: Why are our powers the only ones that matter? The world is bigger than the Created, and the Divine fire is just one flame among many.*

*Stannum: Yes. That's exactly what we need. More violence and revenge — the cycles that define the existence of most monsters. Isn't it exhausting being that self-involved?*

\* \* \*

*Centimani: Oh, there are plenty of monsters in the world, freak. Why would you ever choose to become one of them, when you have another alternative?*

## Mystic Milestones

A Promethean who practices Argentum seeks to understand humanity through comprehending the things that dwell in the shadows all around it, subtly affecting humanity's development without humans ever being aware. Milestones for a practitioner of Argentum could include the following:

- Encountering a specific type of supernatural creature.
- Carrying on a peaceful conversation with a specific type of supernatural creature.
- Driving someone insane through revelation of his own supernatural nature.
- Discovering that a madman got that way due to interaction with the supernatural world.
- Surviving the attack of a supernatural creature.
- Helping to free or heal someone who is not really insane, but has simply encountered the supernatural.
- Uncovering the involvement of supernatural creatures or phenomena in the lives of humans, and understanding how that involvement has affected the mortals.
- Assisting a mortal to understand the existence and influence of the supernatural.
- Gaining a derangement.
- Succumbing to the powers of a specific type of supernatural creature.

## Athanors

Mystics understand the Athanor process to be a refinement of their own supernatural existence. As a result, many Mystics are fascinated with Athanors, and sometimes seek to question those who create them. Any Athanor that aids Mystics' involvement with the supernatural is considered quite worthy of practice.

## Raven — Psychopomp (Ulgan)



In many of the indigenous, animistic traditions of the world's various cultures, the raven has some association with death. Rather than a harbinger of mortality, however, the raven is painted as a liminal creature, an entity that spans the boundary between life and death. In some cultures, the raven acts as a psychopomp, guiding the souls of the dead to their final reward. Those Prometheans who develop the Athanor of Raven frequently interact with ghosts (often purchasing the Ephemeral Flesh Bestowment if they do not possess it initially) and are fascinated with human death.

**Trait Affinities:** Manipulation, Occult

**Promethean Boon:** The player may spend a point of Reagent for the character to become instantly aware of the direction and distance of the nearest haunted location or ghost. In addition, for a point of Reagent, he may cause any ghost to gain a number of Essence equal to his Azoth, creating an alchemical reaction within himself that generates significant power for the shade.

**Redeemed Boon:** The Redeemed gains the Unseen Sense Merit, attuned to the presence of ghosts and haunted places.



argentum: refinement of silver

## Old Widow Maggie

**Quote:** *Oh, you poor thing. Murdered on your wedding night. Can you tell me, though — why did he do it? Did he say? What keeps you here? Grief? Rage? Let Maggie help, sweetness. I just want to help.*

**Background:** Old Widow Maggie has been around for a while. Her early years, during the waning decade of the 1800s, were spent finding out who was using her flesh before it was hers. As it happened, her body had belonged to a widow who fell in with an old drunk Indian. The man moved into her house originally to help her do some chores, and just ended up sharing her bed. In time, his Riven Wasteland turned the area into a nightmare, but she still loved him. Unfortunately, her neighbors didn't, and they killed him and beat her nearly to death. When he returned to life, he was wracked with guilt. So, he helped her to finish dying, and then brought her through the rites that make a new Ulgan.

After finding out these details, she wandered aimlessly for a while, avoiding most folk. She liked to chat, however, so she simply wandered from graveyard to cemetery in her travels, finding the ghosts that lingered there. Though most of them had precious little to talk about — ghosts being terribly focused creatures — they were often willing to talk about their lives. Maggie learned so much about what it was like to be human from them. They only seemed to remember their most important events, their loves and their victories, their hatreds and defeats.

It was like a windfall the first time she fulfilled a milestone. She helped the ghost of a young soldier-boy who died in World War II by getting his last words back to his lady-love. Maggie thought her heart would break at the young woman's tears, but still, the pure emotion and . . . humanness . . . of being involved in their grief distilled something in the burning mass that passed for her spirit, refining itself into purest Vitriol.

Since then, Maggie has found the Argentum Refinement, and is probably one of the oldest still-extant practitioners of the Path of Silver. She takes great delight in hearing the wonderful stories of ghosts' lives, and helping them if she can. Old Widow Maggie has roamed for a long time, though she goes to the wastes every 20 years or so. She just recently returned from an extended period in the deserts of Arizona, where she claims to have spoken to a raven-spirit. It played tricks on her, as raven-spirits are wont, but it also claimed her as one of its kin, for her role in aiding so many souls.

**Description:** Old Widow Maggie dresses in whatever formal mourning attire she can. She's found that people are less apt to bother a lone woman in a cemetery dressed for mourning, so as her old clothing starts to get tattered and frayed, she finds a secondhand store or estate sale and acquires another set of widow's weeds. She always wears long black gloves and a broad-rimmed hat, with widow's veil netting over it. Her eyes are deeply smudged with black kohl, and her cracked lips are too red.

When Maggie's disfigurement shows, an unwholesome fog seeps from her empty eye-sockets, and a slight moaning

can be heard near her. Her skin pales terribly, and becomes like yellow-white leather.

**Storytelling Hints:** Maggie enjoys the company of ghosts and those spirits associated with death (such as raven-spirits, yew-tree-spirits and spirits of grief, mourning and memory). She is an avid collector of the life tales of those ghosts she meets, and she keeps a big, leather-bound book filled with onion paper on which she has made charcoal rubbings of several hundred gravestones, with little notes and drawings along the edges, which she uses as mnemonic devices for their various tales. She is quite tolerant of young Prometheans, and enjoys teaching them about the Refinement of Argentum. She feels that she may be on the verge of her New Dawn, and is somewhat fearful. Though she longs for mortality as fiercely as any Promethean, she has also heard how many lives end in sadness and regret, and is perhaps a little too afraid of that happening to her.

**Lineage:** Ulgan

**Refinement:** Argentum

**Athakor:** Raven

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics (History) 2, Crafts 3, Investigation 3, Medicine 1, Occult (Ghosts) 4

**Physical Skills:** Brawl 2, Larceny (Tombs) 2, Stealth 4, Survival 2, Weaponry 2

**Social Skills:** Empathy 3, Expression 2, Persuasion 3, Subterfuge 4

**Merits:** Danger Sense, Elpis 3, Language (Spanish, Lakota, Chinese, Russian), Repute 2, Residual Memory (Survival, Intimidation) 2, Resources 2

**Willpower:** 6

**Humanity:** 8

**Virtue:** Faith

**Vice:** Envy

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 5

**Health:** 9

**Azoth:** 6

**Bestowment:** Ephemeral Flesh

**Transmutations:** *Corporeum* — Autonomic Control (·), Regeneration (··); *Deception* — Leave No Trace (··); *Disquietism* — Scapegoat (·), Nameless Dread (···); *Sensorium* — Bloodhound's Nose (·), Sensitive Ears (·), Translator's Eye (·), Aura Sight (··), Nightsight (··), Rarified Senses (···), Clairvoyant Senses (····); *Spiritus* — Essence of Sunlight (·), Essence of Nettle (··), Tainted Azoth (·), Ephemeral Infusion (···), Bane of Ephemera (··), Nettle Shield (··), Nettle Warding (···), Twilight Summons (····); *Vulcanus* — Sense Flux (·), Sense Pyros (·)

**Pyros/per Turn:** 15/6

# COBALUS

## Refinement of Cobalt (Impurity)

### Cathars

*Two floors down, cars drive slowly back and forth. One stops every so often, and a window rolls down, and sometimes one of the women on the pavement gets in and vanishes, and someone else stands in the spot. It's like a factory line I once saw, long ago. Its moving parts and lubricants are flesh and secretions, its fuel human need.*

*Comfortable on my window ledge, I am enthralled by the woman's movements, the way she uses her mouth, without once focusing on the man or the yellow wallpaper or anything else. The man is done; the woman spits something into a tissue she has ready by the foot of the bed.*

*The man dresses. He hands the woman a couple of bank notes. The woman, still naked, her arms wrapped around herself, looks through the money. But she still takes it. I crane my neck forward, press my face right up against the glass. How much?*

*The man glances at the window, and he sees me, and his eyes widen and he mouths a single syllable, and then he is gone. He leaves his jacket behind. The woman looks after him, looks at the window, sees me. I cock my head to one side, fascinated by the way the woman wraps a sheet around herself, as if somehow it matters. The woman, never once taking her eyes from mine, pulls on her panties and her bra, slips into her dress, picks up her shoes and coat. Then she reaches into the man's jacket and takes his wallet. And backs out of the door, and is gone.*

*I'll sit here for a while, and wonder what it was I have just seen in that woman's eyes.*

Every Promethean feels it at some time. It's the sense that something is wrong with the Great Work. There's a faint psychic sickness, like the nausea someone feels in a room with a gas leak shortly before smelling the gas. Sometimes it happens when a Transmutation fails. It's like there's something in the way, some byproduct, some impurity that keeps the reaction from working.

A Promethean practicing the Refinement of Cobalt recognizes that impurities in the Great Work are an inevitable part of the process. Torment and Disquiet are byproducts of the Pilgrimage. They need to be experienced. The so-called Cathar understands that impurities and failings need to be brought out into the open and worked through in order to be defeated. One has to sin to be saved.

It takes time. No one turns lead into gold without a great deal of work. If the Great Work is to be completed, it has to be completed properly, and that can, in the eyes of the Cathar, only be achieved through experiencing the failings

of the Promethean condition and rising above them.

The Cathar doesn't give in to these things. She recognizes that it would be better if she didn't suffer Torment, create Wastelands, cause Disquiet and fail to work Transmutations. But she does all these things, and she believes that they'll never go away unless she knows her enemy. At the same time, she tries to gain an insight into human imperfections. Part of the value, the beauty of humanity is its fragility.

### Overview

Alchemists observed, as time went on, the presence of impurities in their operations. As Paracelsus observed, one of the most common byproducts was a blue deposit left behind by the presence of a substance that shouldn't have been there, degrading otherwise useful ores such as copper and nickel. Alchemists imagined the presence of goblins, the "kobolds" of folklore who were said to live in mines and transformed good ore into dross. So, when an 18th-century chemist finally discovered the ferrous element that was the cause of all the difficulty, he called it "cobalt," in Latin "Cobalus."

In the 100 years or so that followed, a few Prometheans reflected this late addition to the alchemical canon, adopting a Refinement of Impurity, a work dedicated

to the detection and expulsion of the impurities and faults that hinder the stages of the Great Work. Perhaps befitting a Refinement that first appeared at the end of the age of alchemy and the dawn of the age of scientific chemistry, the Cathar is in many ways a scientist. He investigates the effects of his Azoth on himself, on others and on the environment. He observes the way that humans respond to their own difficulties, to the troubles that imperfect beings armed with free will and driving needs bring to each other.

Cobalus has never been very common, even for an order of beings as rare as the Created. Cobalus is a subtle, difficult Refinement to practice. Its rare practitioners walk a delicate balance between stability and chaos, madness and control. A Cathar insists that in order to understand Torment and conquer it, a Promethean had to experience it. The practitioner of Cobalus embraces contradiction and balance. In the 21st-century world, balance has largely gone out of style. For decades at a time, Cobalus has died out, practiced by no Promethean. Still, every so often a



Promethean finds the Refinement for himself and remakes himself in the Refinement's image.

The Cathar places himself in situations that other Prometheans avoid. For example, a Promethean practicing Cobalt might live in the middle of a crowded urban center for years, long after the rise of Disquiet and the expansion of his Wasteland have made his continued residence extremely hazardous. Intensely curious, the Cathar needs to understand the consequences of her presence and her actions. She needs to *know*.

Stories do the rounds of the first practitioner of Cobalus, to whom tradition gave the name the Blue Watchman, who lived in the sewers under a slum tenement in Limehouse for decades. He watched prostitutes, criminals and people who were just trapped in poverty for years. Observing their comings and goings through holes and cracks in the building's fabric, the Blue Watchman took copious notes on everything he saw, and on what his own presence did. He recorded his narrow escapes, the way that the rats left his underground home alone, the way that the area above became known as a place where storms grew. Most of all, he watched how the people in the tenement lived, how they were sometimes turned into monsters by the squalor in which they lived. And he watched, too, those who rose above it all. They were the ones he loved the best.

One day, sometime in the middle of the 19th century, lightning, drawn down by the Blue Watchman's Wasteland, struck the tenement. It burnt down. Most of the people inside died in the flames.

The two Prometheans who knew the Blue Watchman didn't see him again after that. His lair was untenanted. One of the Prometheans who knew him claimed that he had died. The other believed that the lightning was brought down by the moment of his Redemption.

Was the Blue Watchman's Redemption worth it? Tellers of his story leave that question open, but point out that it has this lesson: curiosity can bring results, but it can also bring destruction. Often, curiosity brings both at the same time.

## Practitioners

The practitioner of Cobalus is most likely to be a Promethean whose certainties have taken a blow of some kind. Strong beliefs, when placed under pressure, sometimes emerge unscathed, but just as often break or bend. For example, a Promethean possessed of a deep religious faith meets a *qashmal*. He identifies it as an angel, but in so doing, violates everything he thinks he knows about the God he formerly believed protected him. He begins to doubt. He begins to investigate alternative viewpoints. He embraces ambiguity. He begins to practice Cobalus.

Or take the example of another Promethean, a practitioner of Mercurius perhaps, who reaches the end of her Pilgrimage and then fails to become human. What went wrong? She passed all the milestones. She completed every alchemical operation. She should have transcended her state. But it hasn't worked out. There must be a flaw in the process. There must be some impurity she has failed

to purge from herself during the course of her Pilgrimage thus far. She becomes obsessed with finding the flaw. She becomes a Cathar.

A calm, phlegmatic Osiran finds observation easy, both of others and of himself. During Torment, he becomes distant and emotionless, a dispassionate observer in his own body. Cobalus comes easily to him. A Frankenstein, her entire body a mess of fragments and flaws, the descendant of a mistake, could find the obsessive practice of Cobalus an important step toward understanding what she is, perfecting it and escaping it.

While an Ulgan or a Galateid could well take on the practice of Cobalus at any time, a Tammuz is less likely to begin the Refinement. The Tammuz, whose drive for freedom is central to his being, finds the practice of a Refinement whose ethos revolves around delaying Redemption and examining the Promethean condition difficult to understand.

Cobalt has a radioactive aspect. Cobalt-60 sheds dust and contaminates in more ways than simple discoloration. A story tells of a Promethean who developed the Refinement of Impurity further, into the Refinement of Sickness. If there really were a Nuclear Promethean he (or she) might practice Cobalt, but what the result of that might be is anyone's guess.

## Philosophy

The blue-colored impurity had plagued chemists and alchemists for centuries. When Georg Brandt isolated cobalt, a ferrous, magnetic metal, as its source, he redeemed it. It had, unknown to craftsmen, been the true source of the bright vibrant blue that had been sought after by glassmakers and ceramicists for millennia. Cobalt became a sought-after pigment for artists. In more recent years, the isotopic metal has gained use in medicine.

The redemption of what was once a frustrating impurity lies at the center of the practice of Cobalus. This is the Lesson of Cobalt: in time, most things have their uses. Impurities can be, with effort, investigation, and patience, isolated and either eliminated or instrumentalized.

But they need to be observed first.

### Observation Is Paramount

How can one of the Created really know what it's going to be like to become human if the Promethean hasn't spent enough time watching the ordinary folk and taking note of who they are? How can a Promethean become human at all if he hasn't experienced everything the Pilgrimage has to offer? The Cathar sees that experimentation and observation are vital to succeeding in any scientific or alchemical endeavor, and applies that axiom to the Pilgrimage.

Gregarious, inquisitive and always asking questions, the practitioner of Cobalus seeks out other Prometheans to travel with or lair with. Science requires a big enough sample, after all.

### Redemption in Due Course

True science takes time. Through investigation and experimentation, a scientist can make a world-changing

discovery. Just as often the scientist spends a lifetime laying the groundwork for greater men. Darwin could not have created the theory of natural selection without the work of Lamarck to build from. Einstein could never have produced his work if there had never been a Newton. Serendipity happens, but the other 999 times out of every 1,000 that something important happens, it happens because of hard work. It happens because someone invested effort and time.

The Pilgrimage works like this, too. It can't be rushed. It's not something that needs a quick, slapdash piece of work: it's the transmutation of soulless lead into living, feeling, changing, aging gold. Although another Promethean might consider the Cathar to be obsessed with sin and Torment, and consumed with curiosity, in reality the practitioner of Cobalus takes this as a vitally important principle. Although it sometimes might not seem the case, the Cathar remains on the Pilgrimage and seeks to achieve the completion of the Great Work. She simply has no intention of rushing it.

#### **Salvation Is Worthless Without Understanding Sin**

Without knowing the darkness, says the Cathar, how can you fully appreciate the light? Without knowing the impurities of your soul for what they are, how can you remove them? The practitioner of Cobalus is intensely curious about her own imperfections and failings. She needs to know how to fail, because without failing, how can you really contextualize success? She examines her moral shortcomings, following her feelings and pursuing her urges, for good and bad, the better to see what the results are.

She seeks to understand Torment. It's a hateful, vile experience, but it is not to be feared, she thinks, because it is merely an impurity. By experiencing it, she brings it out to the open and examines it. She works it out of her system, out of *the* system she creates as a means of approaching the culmination of the Great Work.

#### **Balance Is Vital**

Having said all that, going too far has its consequences. The practitioner of Cobalus looks down on the Mimic for spending too much time trying to be human before he's ready. The Cathar is curious about humanity, but rather than attempt to fit in, she watches and learns. Likewise, the practitioner of Cobalus scorns the Ophidian for fixating on the Pyros without really seeing the flaws in the system, but she equally looks down on the Centimanus, whom the Cathar considers to have lost all control and surrendered himself to the Flux.

Either way leads to folly. Unlike the practitioners of the other Refinements, the Cathar walks a tightrope between control and complete surrender. She skirts the edge of monstrosity, the better to understand it and defeat it. She doesn't court monstrosity, though. She doesn't always go out of her way to make Torment and Disquiet happen, she's just far more accepting than her companions when such things do.

The Centimanus throws himself into darkness and mutation. The Cathar, on the other hand, keeps one foot in sanity. She tests the waters, and seeks to know what

it's like, but in the end she holds back before immersing herself. A Freak who met the Cathar would probably discount her as a coward, but the Cathar is likely to finish the Great Work.

## **Practices and Operations**

Cobalus depends upon an investment of time. Prometheans don't age, and while they may not exactly have all the time in the world, the only reason a Promethean really has to want to become mortal sooner rather than later is because the Promethean condition is so unpleasant. The Cathar reasons that no matter how awful the Promethean's lot, the best way to be sure of achieving the end of the Great Work is to do it properly. That means not rushing it. It means constant examination of the Promethean's self, in body, mind and Azoth. It also means investigation of Disquiet and Torment. And it means examination of humans and what they do to one another. Mortality is the goal, and the practitioner of Cobalus should never stray from the path leading to that goal. The learning lies in the process of getting there.

#### **Constant Observation**

The Cathar makes every effort to find out what he can about his imperfections, and those of others. A practitioner of Cobalus who is lucky enough to meet another Promethean does everything he can to cultivate the acquaintance. Sensible enough to realize that his new potential friend is not likely to give secrets away for free, the Cathar might decide to use what help he can give as a bargaining tool: aid for secrets.

On the other hand, he might decide that he can simply find out more by being alongside another Promethean. The Cathar would jump at the chance to enter an alchemical pact, too. Experiencing and perfecting a new phase of the Great Work allows the Cathar to take further steps toward the final expulsion of impurities from his Pilgrimage. Being there when another Promethean of his throng achieves Mortality could be an amazing lesson for the Cathar, allowing him to witness firsthand the final stages of the process. He takes note of what mistakes and flaws yet need to be expelled and sees what he could improve when it's his turn.

Observation extends to ordinary humans, too. Humans are imperfect. They sin. They fall short of their ideals. They exploit and harm others, and get mistreated in their turn. The Cathar aims to see how they deal with their own impurities, and what difference it makes. He recognizes humanity as a fragile, beautiful thing, but still finds it hard to see why so many humans squander it. He examines humans to see how he can avoid the same mistakes they fall into.

It's a doomed enterprise, of course. Many humans live long lifetimes, growing through childhood and adolescence, and never understand why they do what they do or gain an inkling of what a life means. What hope, then, for a being who was born full-grown and bereft of memory? Even so, it's unlikely that a Cathar will understand this truth himself. After all, just because a Promethean Refinement



leads its practitioners to take on an operation doesn't mean that it will work.

### Weathering Disquiet

The Azoth, burning in the Promethean's veins, triggers Disquiet in humans. The Cathar, who might well have already experienced Disquiet too many times before switching to Cobalus, knows this all too well, and has decided to bear it and allow it to happen. He sees himself purified, refined by the suffering.

It might end in tragedy. Prometheans who wait too long before making their escape from the humans who fear the Created so can find themselves in deep trouble. A Promethean committed to seeing it through to the bitter end may not come out the other side.

### Accepting Catharsis

Torment, similar to Disquiet, is one of the most unsettling of the impurities a Cathar faces. The practitioner of Cobalus tries to observe the causes, sensations and effects of Torment, imagining herself as an impartial observer, a compartmentalized consciousness inside her rampaging body, trapped in her boiling mind.

Observing the Torment of other Prometheans is equally instructive. There's a temptation for the Cathar to set small traps for her fellow Created, pushing them here and there, setting them up for difficult situations, just to see what happens when they fall to Torment. It's dangerous, and it violates the principle of "balance in all things." By making Torment happen, she begins to travel too far along the path that leads to Flux. This isn't to say that a Cathar won't ever try this, but a Cathar who starts doing this is in real danger of joining the Hundred Handed. Besides, there's the simple fact that antagonizing other Prometheans makes it more difficult to learn from them in the future. Knowing about Torment, being curious about it, even courting it, all are subtly different from going out of one's way to create it.

On the other hand, as she develops more power, the Cathar finds herself able to learn Transmutations that allow her to manipulate her Torment and even to transfer it to others. Again, the practitioner of Cobalus does not cause Torment; she simply purges the impurity and places it elsewhere. If she can observe the results of her Torment on another, so much the better. It gives her the necessary perspective to see how she can deal with it better.

### Transmutations

Contamination, Deception

### Skills

The practitioners of Cobalus know themselves, they know their own bodies and they know how to find things out. Many develop a good deal of ability in Medicine and Empathy. Investigation is a must, since discovering truths about others often requires a good deal of inquiry.

Cuprum: Put your head in the sand, then. See where it gets you.

Ferrum: You know the pain you get when you get a stitch in your side? And you know how you have to fight through it? You do. So how are we so different?

Mercurius: So. You've got all the facts, stored away in neat little jars. How's that working out for you?

Stannum: You concentrate on the impurities and ignore the finished product. What point is there in that?

\* \* \*

Centiman: I know you for what you are, and I will not be like you. I will not. Not again.

## Cathar Milestones

A character who practices Cobalus likely needs to reach milestones that, on the one hand, depend upon learning about his failings and on the other, involve rising above those failings. Milestones for a Cathar character could include the following:

- Forming an alchemical pact and learning a secret from it.
- Witnessing a human harm another (and learning about other ways in which humans are imperfect, outside of Disquiet).
- Experiencing Torment and learning some (possibly hard, possibly tragic) lesson from it.
- Triggering Disquiet in its most severe form and escaping from it.
- Failing to rescue someone through his own fault, or failing to complete an important task because of his inadequacies and impurities (including instances of Torment and Disquiet).
- Succeeding in an enterprise despite experiencing Torment or Disquiet (or both).
- Suffering as a result of curiosity
- Causing innocents to suffer as a result of curiosity.
- Engaging in self-examination and grappling with doubt as to the validity of the Refinement.
- Gaining a greater degree of success in an enterprise than practitioners of other Refinements while holding true to the methodology of Cobalus.

## Athanors

The Cathar sees the generation of Reagent as the expulsion of impurities in a useful form. Just as other Prometheans, the Cathar will carry the mark of the Athanor on his soul for not only the rest of his Pilgrimage but the rest of his mortal life, whether or not he sticks with the practice of Cobalt through to the end.

## Stereotypes

Aurum: So noble. So much effort. But what's the point? It's all too much, too soon.

An Athanor created by a Cathar is likely to allow a Promethean to function at least a little longer in situations that other Created would shy away from. Given the emphasis that a Cathar places on the understanding of Torment, it stands to reason that a Cobalt Athanor is likely to grant some small advantage to the Promethean when that Torment begins to rise, either in resisting it or in coping with the consequences after the fact.

## Salamander — Fire (Ulgan)



The salamander of myth was a creature that lived comfortably in fire, whose body was so intensely cold that it could douse nearby flames

with only a touch.

The Promethean who creates the Athanor of the Salamander gains enough control of his body to duplicate this feat.

**Trait Affinities:** Stamina, Wits

**Promethean Boon:** The Promethean gains the following benefits:

- He can spend a point of Reagent to ignore two points of damage caused by flames.
- He gains a +2 dice pool bonus on rolls to resist Torment brought on by the proximity of fire.

**Redeemed Boon:** The Redeemed character ignores the first two points of damage (but no more) suffered in a scene.

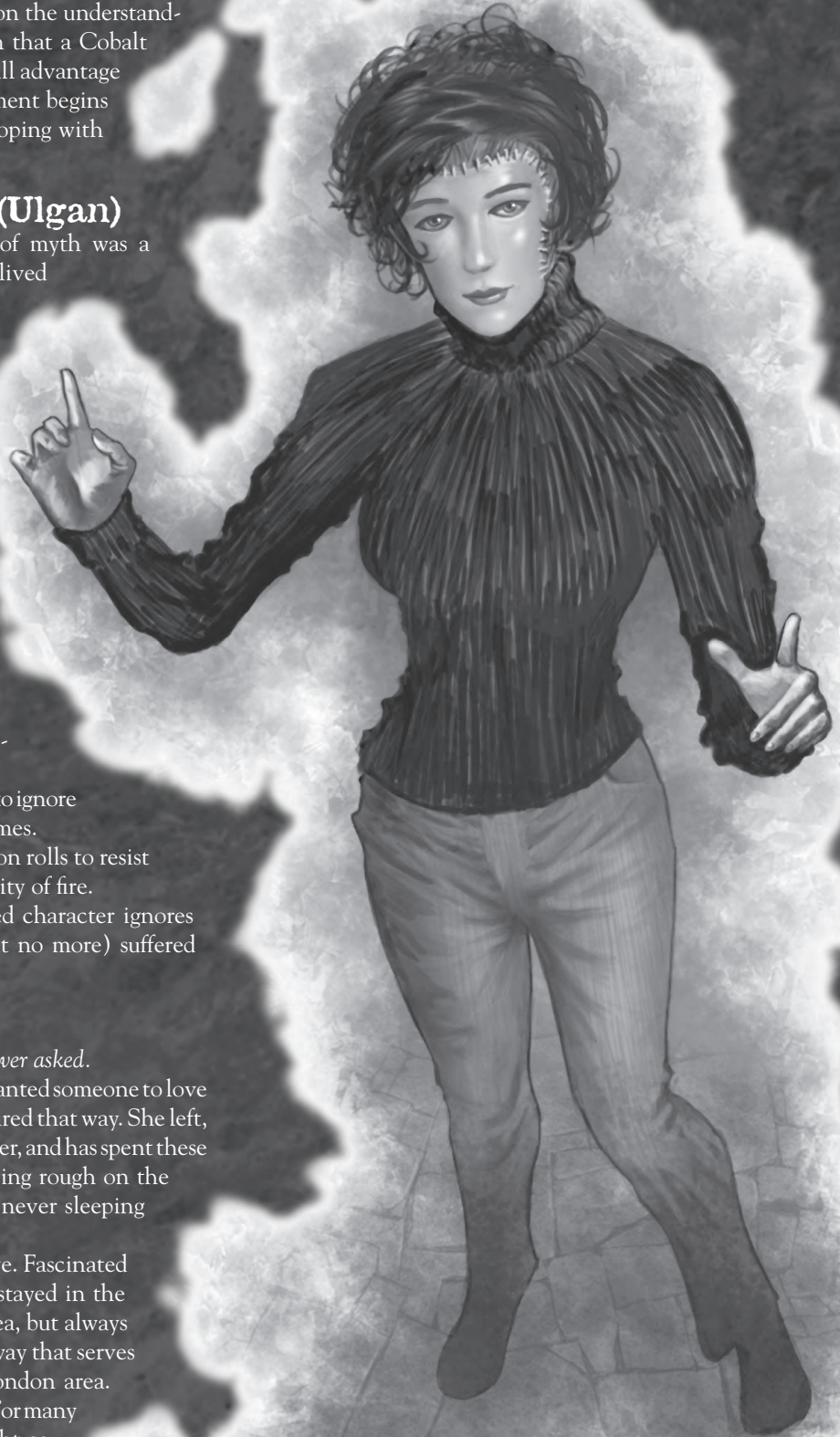
## Cynthia Mask

**Quote:** *No, I can talk. You just never asked.*

**Background:** Cynthia's creator wanted someone to love her. Cynthia couldn't. She wasn't wired that way. She left, or was thrown out, she can't remember, and has spent these first few years of her Pilgrimage living rough on the streets of every corner of London, never sleeping in the same pitch twice.

Somehow, she managed to survive. Fascinated by the city's wildlife, Cynthia has stayed in the metropolis, moving from area to area, but always staying within the M25, the motorway that serves as the perimeter of the Greater London area. She's never been outside of London. For many people of London, the capitol might as well be their entire world. For Cynthia, it's literally true. It's the only world she has ever known.

Living in the presence of so many survivors, so many communities, so much



cøbalus: refinement of cøbalt

pain and wealth, squalor and finery, Cynthia had no choice but to embrace the contradictions that compose her own life. She knows what she is capable of, and she knows what it is to experience Torment. She's obsessed with seeing everything she can of London, the high and the low, and she knows the rooftops of some areas of London better than even the pigeons. The tiny aerie she's made at the top of a tower block in east London is a vantage point for her, the place from which the city below reveals its secrets unawares.

**Description:** Cynthia usually looks like a short, slim, pale young woman, with graceful hands and a pretty but immobile face, like she's suffered recently from Bell's palsy or as if she's had one too many Botox injections.

When her true form becomes visible, the fact that she doesn't actually have a face becomes obvious. Cynthia's creator ran out of time when making her and couldn't find one. Instead, she stitched the plastic face of a life-size doll onto Cynthia's bare facial muscles. Cynthia Mask slurs her speech slightly — part of her tongue is missing. Usually, she doesn't talk at all, unless she has something to say. Most people think she's deaf-mute, an impression augmented by her knowledge of sign language.

She wears relatively clean, fashionable clothes stolen from passed-out London clubbers and students' washing lines.

**Storytelling Hints:** Cynthia wants to know everything about everyone. She wants to understand. She goes out of her way to find out the minutiae of lives, and looks at herself the same way. A Promethean throng in London could find Cynthia a valuable ally, but should expect her to be a constant and somewhat unnerving presence around them, watching everything they do. Cynthia's habit of silently rooting through other people's stuff could cause trouble for a more sensitive or secretive Promethean.

**Lineage:** Frankenstein

**Refinement:** Cobalus

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 1

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Crafts (Needlework) 1, Investigation 1, Medicine 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Climbing) 3, Brawl 1, Larceny 1, Stealth (Work in Silence) 3, Survival (Streets) 2, Weaponry (Knife) 2

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Empathy 2, Expression 1, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 1, Streetwise (London, London Rooftops) 4, Subterfuge 1

**Merits:** Elpis 3, Lair (Size 1, Security 3), Language (British Sign Language), Repute 1, Residual Memory (Crafts) 1

**Willpower:** 4

**Humanity:** 7

**Virtue:** Charity

**Vice:** Envy

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 10

**Health:** 6

**Azoth:** 1

**Bestowment:** Unholy Strength

**Transmutations:** *Contamination* — Pressing Need (·); *Deception* — Incognito (··); *Disquietism* — Scapegoat (·)

**Pyros/per Turn:** 10/1

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Size	Dice Pool
Butcher's Knife	2L	2	7

# PLUMBUM

Refinement of Lead (Source)

## Originists

*She found me as I lay in that filthy bed. I'd felt it earlier when our Azoth touched — when Azoth called to Azoth — but I hadn't had the ability or the interest to see who it might be. I didn't care, truth be told.*

*She'd walked into that room, and simply stood there as I stared at the ceiling. I think I glanced over at her once, and then tried my best to ignore her. She neared, and knelt beside me. I lost it when she touched my shoulder.*

*I curled into her arms, sobbing. I'd failed. I'd had it in my grasp, and been found wanting. Though it was a whole week before, the agony, the grief of it was so raw that it may as well have been just a heartbeat ago.*

*My progeny, created lovingly from the remains of five very worthy people. I raised her and taught her, put her on the first steps of her Pilgrimage and set her on her way — I let her go before we could grow to hate one another, so that we could remember our time together as being too short, and too quickly ended, perhaps. Regret is better than hate, isn't it?*

*I'd seen two of my throng-mates through to their New Dawn, and I'd even stayed around to make sure that one of them found a good place to live and got a good start on his life. I did so in secret, using the knowledge I'd gained from my own Refinement to help set him up. I think I was meant to do that; the glow of accomplishment became the sweet burn of Vitriol, after all.*

*I worked my ass off, slaughtered Pandorans for one of the qashmal and did so gladly. I learned what it meant to be human, I thought, and fought to protect them from myself. I was responsible in my endeavors, never staying too long, always on the lookout for Disquiet, or the Wasteland effect. I even usually managed to stave off Torment, and when I failed, I made it right . . . or as right as I could make it.*

*But in the end? When the time came?*

*I'd failed to attain my New Dawn, I'd let the Elpis slip away. She rocked me in her arms, weeping with me. I didn't have to say anything — she just seemed to know. She let me cry, until I couldn't anymore, then she let me sleep. When I awoke the next day, she had Thai food, and offered me one of the white cartons.*

*"Let's talk," she said. "But I don't want to talk about failure, about loss. I don't want to talk about what you aren't, but about what you are. Nicolas, alchemy is complex, and it is not enough to know the goal. You have to understand what you're starting with."*

To most Prometheans, the metal of lead represents the "base" Promethean condition, the foundation upon which

they intend to build their eventual mortality. Associated with the planet Saturn, the experience of being one of the Created is called the Saturnine Night, and to most Prometheans is an experience they wish to escape. Thus, the pursuit of the Refinements, all of which are symbolized by metals alchemically "higher" than poor, base lead.

Not all Prometheans believe this, however. Those who do not point to alchemical practice, in which it is necessary to understand the materials one works with, in order to work transformations. Transformation requires understanding of two states, not one — the alchemist must understand both the metal in its original state as well as what he intends to transform it into. This is the basis of the Refinement of Plumbum, which explores the Promethean condition in an effort to truly understand what one is, that one may transcend it.

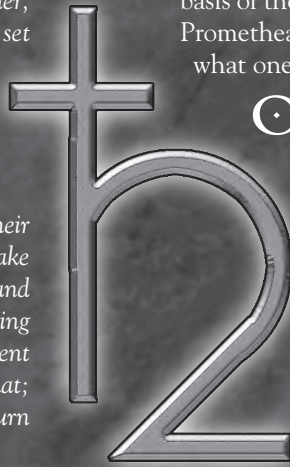
## Overview

The origins of the Refinement of Source are something of a mystery. Its practitioners claim it has its genesis in the Roman Empire, but can offer little evidence. What is known is that once Prometheans began referring to the Refinements of the Great Work by metallic symbolism, lead was used to describe the basic existence of Prometheans. Whether that led to a new way of looking at the Created and their Great Work, or whether it was applied to an already extant philosophy is unknown.

The Originists do seek the Pilgrimage, but they lack the near-desperation that other Prometheans have when it comes to their Great Work. Originists sometimes coyly characterize other Prometheans as being in a rush to escape something that they don't truly even understand or know much about.

Other Prometheans are often forced to admit: adherents of Plumbum do often possess tremendous knowledge about the Promethean condition. More than this, though, Originists usually know more about the scant history of Prometheans than others. After all, interest in their current state of being has led them to inquire about the Pilgrimages of others of their kind, and most adherents of this Refinement are minor scholars when it comes to such things.

This isn't to say that the adherents of Plumbum are part of some world-spanning society, however. Part of the Promethean existence is that solitude is common, and wishing that it weren't so doesn't change that. Originists



plumbum: refinement of lead

are, however, the ones most likely to desire some kind of Promethean legacy, some place where their lore might be recorded, some gathering place where they might begin to form a kind of society.

The Originists often find it tempting to imagine some well-hidden place where young Prometheans might journey to learn about themselves. They envision a place where mentors might seek to impart their wisdom to those who would follow a given Refinement, a place where all Prometheans can benefit from the successful Pilgrimages of those who have gone before them. In such a place, Prometheans might keep tabs on the locations of Pandorans, and perhaps even root them out for good. Prometheans might teach one another of the dangers they face, and share their insights into the Promethean condition. Young, lone Created might meet others like themselves, and form Branded throngs to seek out new wonders and unlock the secrets of not just the Great Work but what it means to be Promethean.

Similar to all philosophies, the Refinement of Plumbum has a grand dream, and one that is unattainable. This has not stopped some of its adherents from trying, however.

## Practitioners

Those who adhere to the Plumbum Refinement seem to have one thing in common: they have all studied another Refinement in the past. Those who are particularly disdainful of the theories of Plumbum like to call it “the failure’s Refinement,” but this is true on some level: nearly every Originist once walked another path but sought out Plumbum after finding that path didn’t teach them what they needed to know.

Most Prometheans who practice the Refinement of Lead can relate a difficult experience or ordeal while practicing another Refinement. These difficulties often led them to the conclusion that forms the basis of practice in Plumbum: they did not know enough about the Promethean condition. Where one might have faced a crisis in which Aurum failed to provide him with the means to deal with mortals once again and simply called it quits, another may have found Cuprum desperately lonely and impossible to practice.

Occasionally, this failure on the part of another Refinement is greater than that. The apocryphal reason for seizing upon the Refinement of Source is the failure to achieve Mortality — the Promethean did “everything right” (or perhaps more realistically, as few things wrong as possible), yet when the moment came, when the Great Work reached its critical point, and the surge of transformative power and Hope should have come, there was nothing.

In actuality, Plumbum practitioners who have been at this point are few and far in-between. But those who have walked the entire process, seizing milestone after milestone, actively living the Great Work for years on end, only to stumble at the last critical moment are creatures of both great wisdom and tragedy. They know that the Elpis is possible to hold, for though they failed to do so, they nearly did, and just the nearness of its touch has left an indelible mark upon them.

When Prometheans seek out Plumbum, they invariably seek to better understand their nature and origins. Of all the Refinements, Tammuz and Ulgans seem to take to Plumbum the most readily — both approach the truth of their being frankly. Osirans occasionally become Originists, and are often the finest of the Refinement’s scholars and philosophers. Frankensteins and Galateids are least likely to practice the Path of Lead, as they most often seek to deny what they are or desire most to flee from it.

In a throng, Originists are often considerate of their throng-mates, helping them by acting as counselors, or giving the occasional shoulder to cry on. When things become difficult, the follower of Plumbum can usually sight out what has happened, particularly if the ill was caused by something inherent in the Promethean nature. In a gathering of those who fling themselves headlong toward being something other than they are, the Originist acts as a reminder that until they do escape the Promethean state, they cannot ignore the limitations and demands of being one of the Created.

## Philosophy

When adherents of Plumbum claim to be practitioners of the Refinement of Source, they refer to the Promethean condition. Lead is a cold, soft base material that has long symbolized contaminated, impure things. This continues to be the case in this day and age. Concerns about lead in a variety of aspects of daily life, from wargaming miniatures to piping to paint to use as an artificial sweetener in Third World countries are still prominent today. Why, then would anyone proudly claim to study it, to base their Great Work on that weak metal?

In the planetary symbolism of alchemy, lead represents Saturn — the basis for the poetic “Saturnine Night” some Prometheans use to describe the experience of simply being one of the Created. Many Originists claim that the phrase is appropriate, for their understanding of the condition is more characterized by the brooding ill-humored scorn that the phrase “saturnine” has come to mean. It is difficult not to be bitter when one does not understand one’s own origins, after all.

To the Originist, this Refinement’s association with Saturn is best understood through examination of the Roman god of that name. A fearsome monster, it had been foretold that a day would come when Saturn’s rule of the universe was overthrown by one of his children. Fearful of this, Saturn consumed his children, and continued to do so, lest he be thrown down.

Eventually, however, his wife Ops (whose name refers to riches and prosperity, but gained through working the lands) hid one of their children, offering Saturn a stone in swaddling clothes instead. Thus was Jupiter spared, and later he rescued his siblings from the gullet of Saturn, forcing his father to give over rulership of the world. Jupiter’s original role was still remembered after that point by gods and men alike, however, and honor given to him for the role he played.

Originists have found tremendous philosophical meaning to this story, particularly as it relates to Promethean

existence. Each of the Created is a monster. The children of Saturn were the gods of Olympus, and if he allowed them to be born, he would be thrown down for the horror he was.

The “children” that the Originists speak of are the natural outcomes of being a monster. Prometheans affect the world around them, but every so often, they seek to deny or flee those effects. Many of the Created would rather take refuge in bitterness and anger than admit the reactions of the mortals who just tried to burn the Prometheans’ lair to the ground may have been spawned of Disquiet. Too many Prometheans ignore the effects of Wasteland, pretending they do not see the damage they are doing until it is too late. In this way, according to Originist philosophy, these Prometheans are like Saturn, “consuming” those things that prove them to be monsters, taking refuge in avoidance rather than facing what they truly are.

**Consume Not Thy Children.**

Though Originists may use the example of Saturn when speaking of the dangers of Pandorans and the seemingly inevitable conflict that will arise between progeny and creator, most often, when Originists speak of “children,” they refer to the things that come of being Promethean.

All the good things that come of being Promethean are referred to as the Originist’s children. Originists believe that to take these good things for granted — seeing them as simply tools for the Great Work, rather than something valuable in and of itself — is blindness and folly. Such things include the power to aid others, the ability to see some of the wonders of the world in ways mortals cannot and the alchemical unity of a Branded throng.

Adherents of Plumbum also consider the unpleasant experiences of the Promethean condition to be their children as well. Too often, Prometheans seek to deny or simply escape from these occurrences. Originists teach that these things should be studied, and understood, for they say something about the Promethean himself. The ways in which Disquiet manifests, the patterns of Wasteland and the Promethean’s mind when experiencing Torment are all signposts on the path to understanding the self.

Some adherents of Plumbum take this a step further. Not only do they attempt to be conscientious about their own “children,” but they are willing to take up the role of Ops in dealing with others of the Created. These Originists seek to prevent other Prometheans from “consuming” the facets of their strange existence, and to face the horrors — and occasional joys — of the Saturnine Night.

**Know Thyself.**

Attributed throughout various times in history to Socrates, Pythagoras and others, the phrase *gnothi se auton* was inscribed in gold on the lintel of the entrance to the Temple of Apollo at Delphi — some Originists even claim that the gold upon which this was written was alchemically transmuted from lead. Though an oft-abused sentiment after centuries of philosophy, Originists still take the precept very seriously: it forms the basis for their Pilgrimage. Adherents to Plumbum take the effects they have upon the world

very seriously, and take time to reflect on the events that surround them.

Many Originists believe in exposing themselves to a wide variety of situations, experiences and different people and cultures, all with an eye turned inward: the Originists’ own reactions to these events are what fascinate them most, rather than the experiences themselves. Likewise, many adherents of Plumbum seek out those situations and interactions that cause unexpected reactions in them — a situation that elicits unexpected fear, excitement, passion or any other uncontrollable, unanticipated response is likely to be replicated, as closely as possible, multiple times, in order to explore the experience.

## Practices and Operations

Originists believe that their understanding of the Promethean condition comes not simply from understanding themselves, but from understanding other Prometheans. As a result, they tend to be not only willing to seek out other Prometheans, but anxious to do so. Each new Promethean Originist encounter is a new piece in the puzzle that is the Created, and one they are eager to understand.

Some Originists take a great deal of pride in seeking out young Prometheans and teaching them what the Originists know. Such a mentor is often a godsend, for Originists are fastidious keepers of information on such topics as the *qashmallim*, Pandorans, Centimani and other such nuances of the Promethean experience. Though Originists often urge young Prometheans to take up study of Plumbum for a while at least, these adherents also understand that those who genuinely appreciate the Refinement of Source tend to be those who have ventured onto other Refinements for a time. Such mentors often maintain networks of Promethean contacts, good for helping their charges learn the principles of other Refinements.

Most Prometheans who study this Refinement are record-keepers of some sort, keeping a journal or diary. They also tend to write down the Rambles of those Prometheans they encounter, recording their doings and personalities for the insights they provide into what it means to be a Promethean — not simply for themselves, but for others.

Originists are, of course, very careful to couch their writings in terms that do not betray the true nature of their subjects. As a result, many journal-keepers use the alchemical symbolism so common to Promethean philosophy, while others devise unique ciphers and word plays to accomplish the same ends. Originists who meet one another often trade information, reading one another’s journals and talking for hours about what they find therein, asking questions, seeking clarification and taking notes.

**Historical Research**

More than simply recording information about the Prometheans around them, many Originists seek the evidence of Promethean activity in history. Most have their own theories about various historical figures — some believe that the Secret Chiefs of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, who communicated so many alchemical concepts back into

a more common circulation, may have been Prometheans. Likewise, it is the pet theory of more than one Originist that the strange powers and claimed immortality of the Comte St. Germaine marked him as one of the Created, likely a practitioner of Mercurius. Of course, for every well-reasoned theory on such a subject, there are three other absurd assertions — sometimes, all held by the same Originist.

### Self-Reflection

The process of self-reflection is considered vital to those on the Refinement of Lead. Originists are taught to meditate (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 51) as part of their journey, finding the center of the self and setting the moral compass firmly in check. Emphasis is also placed on the journal — not simply as a tool for recording information but as a place of reflection and a record of impressions. Many of an Originist's most valuable insights come from reading through the pages of his personal diary, finding the patterns and unrealized discoveries there.

### Transmutations

Disquietism, Saturninus

### Skills

Originists are often quite skilled in the use of Academics and Investigation, fitting areas of study for those interested in seeing patterns in both history and the world around them. More than a few find some interest in the study of Occult, as well, for its insights into alchemy and the supernatural. Finally, skills such as Streetwise and Persuasion are vital, due to the overtly social nature of most Originists, in dealing with other Prometheans.

## Stereotypes

**Aurum:** Ah, rarified gold. How will you pretend to be one thing when you don't even know what you are right now?

**Cuprum:** Your self-reflection is laudable, but too often you aren't a hermit. You are a refugee.

**ferrum:** How thoroughly you abuse your body. Do you hope that when you wake up tomorrow, it won't be what it is now? That isn't Refinement — it's a temper tantrum.

**Mercurius:** Is a human only his soul? Neither are you merely your Pyros.

**Stannum:** Of course you are angry. You deny what you are in a headlong rush to escape yourself, and slam your head into the wall again and again. That'd piss anyone off.

\* \* \*

**Centimani:** We seek to transform. But better to remain stagnant than to seek what seems to be transformation, but is only destruction.

## Originist Milestones

Those whose Pilgrimage leads them to the Refinement of Lead find enlightenment in self-discovery. In understanding what they are, they may begin to learn how to become what they are not. Milestones for a practitioner of Plumbum could include the follower:

- Making amends for harm caused by Disquiet, Torment or Wasteland.
- Learning the Bestowment of another Lineage.
- Discovering a piece of heretofore unknown Promethean history.
- Teaching another Promethean about the strengths and weaknesses of being a Promethean.
- Revealing the truth of Promethean existence to a mortal.
- Adopting an Athanor.
- Creating Pandorans accidentally.
- Helping another Promethean find a Refinement that fits him.
- Becoming part of a Branded throng.
- Being nearby when a Promethean the Originist aided achieves Mortality.

## Athanors

Adherents of Plumbum are fascinated with Athanors, seeing them as a step in the right direction: a focus on what it means to be Promethean, an advancement that takes advantage of their nature as one of the Created, specifically focused toward the ultimate goal of becoming human. Some Originists claim that the first Athanor was developed by one of their own, but there is no way to prove this.

## Sphinx — Wisdom (Osiris)



The Sphinx of Greek legend posed a riddle to those who happened past, as the Sphinx sat outside of the city of Thebes. Those incapable of answering its riddle were strangled. Only Oedipus could answer the riddle “Which creature in the morning goes on four feet, at noon on two, and in the evening upon three?” The answer, of course, was “Man.”

Likewise, those who adhere to the Refinement of Lead believe that the answer to the riddle of the Promethean condition — the answer that allows the Created to transcend that condition — is the Self. Those who do not understand their condition will never proceed beyond it, and are destined to be strangled by the inability to achieve the heights to which they all aspire. The Athanor of the Sphinx grants tremendous problem-solving capability and understanding of riddles and enigmas.

**Trait Affinities:** Intelligence, Investigation

**Promethean Boon:** The Promethean gains the Encyclopedic Knowledge Merit. Additionally, when

making an Encyclopedic Knowledge roll, the player may spend one Reagent to gain 9 again on the roll.

**Redeemed Boon:** The Redeemed retains the Encyclopedic Knowledge Merit.

## Nestor

**Quote:** *The taste in your mouth is too bitter, but the only way you can truly fail is if you let that taste be the last one in your mouth. Mourn, but then begin again.*

**Background:** Nestor rose from the clay without a cry or panic. He simply sat up and looked around. His mentor taught him of the Pilgrimage as soon as he could clearly speak and communicate, and brushed aside his questions about what he was. When she left him, eager to complete her own Pilgrimage, she left behind the progeny she called Nestor — “Wisdom.” Though his mentor intended her enthusiasm to be infectious, it was actually off-putting. He felt unprepared, unready to seek out Mortality. How could he seek to become something else, when he had no clue what he was now?

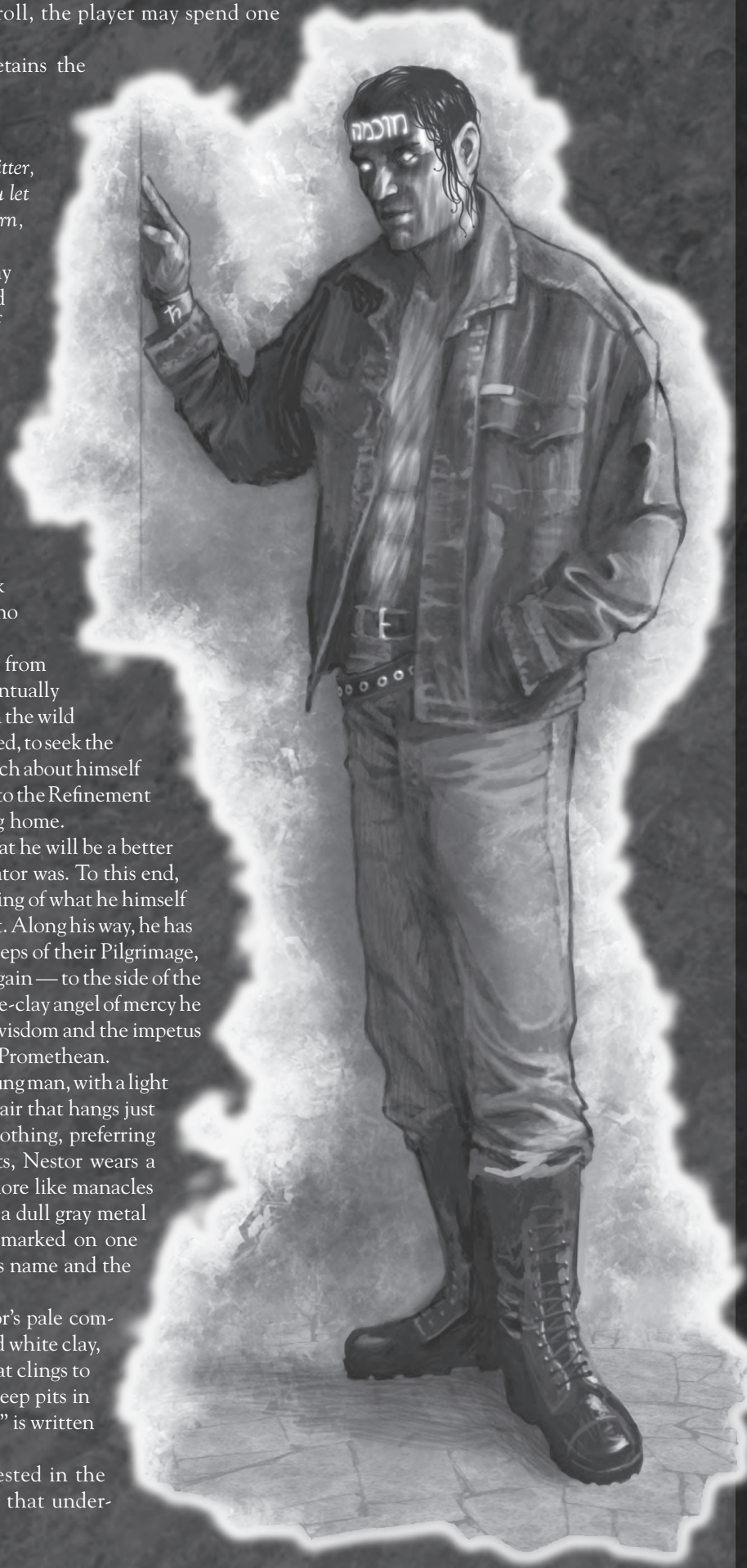
Nestor wandered for a while, moving from Refinement to Refinement, until he eventually met an old, beautiful Adonis who lived in the wild hills of Greece. He’d gone there, he claimed, to seek the origins of Galatea and had discovered much about himself while he was there. He brought Nestor into the Refinement of Lead, and he felt as if he were coming home.

Since those days, Nestor has vowed that he will be a better creator to his progeny than his own creator was. To this end, he felt that he owed them an understanding of what he himself was, and what being a Promethean meant. Along his way, he has aided and nurtured others through the steps of their Pilgrimage, and something has led him — time and again — to the side of the downtrodden and despairing. Like a white-clay angel of mercy he has appeared, offering support, words of wisdom and the impetus to keep going for more than one young Promethean.

**Description:** Nestor is an attractive young man, with a light complexion, hazel eyes and dark black hair that hangs just above his shoulders. He wears simple clothing, preferring jeans, boots and a T-shirt. On his wrists, Nestor wears a set of wide bracelets that appear to be more like manacles than items of jewelry. They are made of a dull gray metal that looks like lead (actually pewter), marked on one side with the Greek letters that form his name and the astrological sign of Saturn on the other.

When his disfigurements show, Nestor’s pale complexion is revealed to be strange, streaked white clay, and his hair is a thick, black oily mass that clings to his head and neck. His eyes burn from deep pits in the clay, and the Hebrew word “Wisdom” is written on his forehead.

**Storytelling Hints:** Nestor is interested in the Promethean condition — he believes that under-



plumbum: refinement of lead



standing it is the secret to his Pilgrimage. In many ways, though, he has chosen the Refinement of Lead in order to stall in his own Great Work, as he is fearful of failure. He has seen so many fail, and worries that he will be among them. To this end, he tells himself that there is no one true Promethean condition, and that the whole of it is expressed differently for each of the Created. Thus, he wanders, meeting new Prometheans and seeking to aid them in whatever way he can. He seems saint-like in this regard, but is truly simply distracting himself from his Pilgrimage, out of fear.

**Lineage:** Tammuz

**Refinement:** Plumbum

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Academics 2, Computer 1, Investigation 3, Medicine 2, Occult 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Brawl (Grappling) 3, Drive 1, Survival 2

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 2, Empathy (Prometheans) 3, Expression 1, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 2, Streetwise (Finding Lairs) 2

**Merits:** Brawling Dodge, Eidetic Memory, Elpis 2, Inspiring, Language (Hebrew, Latin, Spanish, French), Meditative Mind, Repute 2

**Willpower:** 5

**Humanity:** 7

**Virtue:** Hope

**Vice:** Sloth

**Initiative:** 4

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 10

**Health:** 8

**Azoth:** 4

**Bestowment:** Unholy Stamina

**Transmutations:** *Disquietism* — Soothe Disquiet (·), Safe Sojourn (···); *Saturninus* — Azothic Awareness (···), Subtle Dampening (·), Fire Reader (··); *Vitality* — Fist of Talos (·), Might (··)

**Pyros/per Turn:** 12/3

## Transmutations

With an increased understanding of the Azoth, Prometheans may learn new techniques and methods to transform themselves or the world around them through manipulation of the Divine Fire and humours. As new philosophies unfold, their theories and concepts often lead to new expressions of the Pyros, opening strange new Transmutations to the grasp of Prometheans.

### Benefice

The Benefice Transmutations are useless to a lone Promethean. Each of the various Benefice powers first depend upon their user being in the presence of other Prometheans, allowing a Promethean to give a tremendous amount of aid to the actions of his companions.

Some of these Transmutations (namely Common Perception, and Inviolable Unity) only work on Prometheans with whom the user has developed an alchemical pact. Those Transmutations that don't require a pact still benefit greatly from one. A Promethean gains a +2 dice pool bonus when using any

Benefice Transmutation on a Promethean with whom the Transmutation-user has forged an alchemical pact.

### Helping Hand (•)

The Promethean with this Transmutation can empower her friends with the Pyros, making their actions that much easier to perform.

**Prerequisite:** None

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult

**Action:** Instant

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The subject suffers a -2 dice pool penalty.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The subject enjoys the benefits of the 9 again rule on one non-combat action chosen by the Promethean using the Transmutation. If the subject already enjoys the 9 again rule (for example, a Promethean with the Unholy Strength Bestowment rolling Strength), he gains the benefit of the 8 again rule instead.

**Exceptional Success:** As above, but the subject enjoys the 8 again rule.



## Many Hands Make Light Work (•)

As the quintessential team players, the practitioners of Aes learn early on how to work as a team in circumstances in which teamwork is impossible.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Composure

**Action:** Instant

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean cannot attempt this Transmutation again for the rest of the scene.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Prometheans in the throng are not subject to restrictions on the maximum number of persons able to help in one non-combat action. They can even work as a team if the action is not normally one that can be performed as a team (such as throwing, running or driving, for example). If conditions are cramped or quiet, somehow the throng, quietly and efficiently, still somehow help, working in eerie concert.

**Exceptional Success:** The effects of the power are active for the rest of the scene, applying to all teamwork actions.

**Suggested Modifiers:** Four or more Prometheans in throng, including the user of this Transmutation (-3).

## Apportion Harm (••)

The Promethean can, through the laying on of hands, take the injuries of his friends upon himself.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Medicine

**Action:** Instant

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean takes one level of lethal damage without healing any of his friends' damage.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Promethean can take from his friend one level of damage for every success gained, starting with the least severe (the ones on the right) and working toward the most severe (on the left). The Promethean takes this damage himself, and the Promethean's player marks the damage on his own sheet in the usual way.

**Exceptional Success:** As for a success, but the first level of damage the subject has is completely healed, and the Promethean using the Transmutation doesn't have to take this first level of damage himself.

## Share Pyros (••)

This is identical to the Vulcanus Transmutation of the same name (see **Promethean: The Created**, p. 155).

## Able Worker (•••)

A Promethean who knows how to use this Transmutation can give to one of his companions a supernatural encourage-

ment, a confidence in his own actions that displays itself in a supernatural aptitude.

**Prerequisite:** Helping Hand (•)

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Composure + Azoth

**Action:** Instant

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean cannot attempt to use this power for another 24 hours.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The recipient gains the benefit of the Extra Talent rule (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 135), meaning that his player can add one of the character's Social Attributes to any one dice pool. If the dice pool is based on a Power Attribute, the subject can use Presence. If the dice pool is based on a Finesse Attribute, the subject can use Manipulation, and if the dice pool is based on a Resistance Attribute, he can add Composure to the roll. If the roll is based on a Social Attribute, the Attribute in question doubles. The recipient can choose which dice pool to augment.

If the recipient hasn't taken advantage of the power by the time the scene has ended, the effects of the power are wasted.

**Exceptional Success:** The recipient can add an extra two dice to whichever dice pool he chooses to augment.

## Common Perception (•••)

This Transmutation gives the Promethean the power to briefly tap into one of the senses of a companion, seeing, hearing, touching, tasting or smelling what the other does.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Composure (vs. Composure + Azoth if subject is unwilling; resistance is reflexive)

**Action:** Instant

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean loses the sense he is trying to gain for three turns.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Promethean can share in one sense belonging to the subject for one turn per success. The Promethean can't perform any other action while using this Transmutation.

**Exceptional Success:** The Promethean can choose two senses to share with the subject.

## The Community of Power (••••)

The user of Benefice can grant his friends the ability to work as a team when performing actions that cannot in other circumstances be performed by a team. Having mastered The Community of Power, the Promethean can give his throng the ability to aid each other in the use of their Transmutations and Bestowments.

**Prerequisites:** Many Hands Make Light Work (•), Helping Hand (•)

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Azoth

**Action:** Instant

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean may not attempt to use any Benefice Transmutation for the remainder of the scene.

**Failure:** The power fizzles, and nothing happens.

**Success:** The throng can choose to work as a team in the working of one Transmutation or Bestowment, using the teamwork rules found in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 134. The Promethean using the Bestowment or Transmutation is the primary actor. The other players in the troupe can choose to aid by each spending one Pyros and rolling the same dice pool as the primary actor.

The effects of The Community of Power last for one scene or until one of the Prometheans in the throng has used a power and any of the others has chosen to help him. If none of the Prometheans in the throng have used a Transmutation or Bestowment by the time this power's effects have worn off, the power is lost.

**Exceptional Success:** The throng can choose to work together on the working of up to two Transmutations or Bestowments before the effects of The Community of Power wears off. Its effects still lasts for a scene.

**Suggested Modifiers:** Four or more Prometheans in throng, including the user of this Transmutation (-3).

## Protective Boon (••••)

The Promethean possessing this Transmutation can use the Pyros to grant to a companion the ability to avoid being easily harmed in a fight.

**Prerequisite:** Share Pyros (••)

**Cost:** 2, 4, or 6 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Instant

The Promethean must be able to touch his companion to be able to use this Transmutation. For each two points of Pyros the player spends (up to a maximum of six), the recipient gains a +1 bonus to his Defense for the remainder of the scene. A Promethean with insufficient Azoth to spend so many points at once can keep hold of his friend, if the friend is willing, for as many rounds as it takes to spend that much Pyros.

Both Prometheans must concentrate on the transfer of power, and can't perform any other action until enough Pyros is spent to create the bonus.

## The Fortified Compact (•••••)

A user of Benefice can channel his Pyros in such a way as to create a temporary alchemical pact with Prometheans he doesn't share such a pact with, or to increase the strength of a pact that already exists.

When a Promethean uses the power on other Prometheans with whom he's bonded, their Azothic Brands glow like

molten metal in a smelting pool.

**Prerequisite:** Many Hands Make Light Work (•)

**Cost:** 4 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Azoth vs. Composure + Azoth (if the subject is unwilling)

**Action:** Instant (and contested, if the subject is unwilling)

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean attempting this Transmutation cannot attempt it again for the rest of the scene. If he and the recipients of this Transmutation are already in an alchemical pact, its members lose all of the pact's games effects for the remainder of the scene. The Azothic Brand that each bears fades away until the pact reinstates itself in the next scene.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** If the subjects of the power are not bound in an alchemical pact with the Promethean using this Transmutation, they gain all of the benefits and penalties of a pact for the rest of the scene.

If the Promethean is using the Transmutation on the other members of his Branded throng, all of them gain the following benefits:

- Each member of the pact can transfer *three* points of Pyros per scene, instead of the usual one. The range stays the same.

- When a Promethean's player rolls for Disquiet, the character's Azoth incurs a -2 dice pool penalty for every Promethean of different Lineage in his throng. The dice pool does not increase for Prometheans of the same Lineage who may be in the throng.

- When a player rolls to resist Torment, the character gains a +2 bonus to his Humanity dice pool for every Promethean of a different Lineage in the throng, and suffers no penalty for Prometheans of the same Lineage who may also be Branded with the character.

- When a Promethean uses a Transmutation or Bestowment, the player gains a +2 bonus to dice pools for every Promethean of a different Lineage in the throng, and a +1 bonus for every Promethean of the same Lineage in the throng.

**Exceptional Success:** The effect of the Transmutation lasts for 24 hours.

**Suggested Modifiers:** Each Promethean recipient beyond the first (-1).

## Inviolable Unity (•••••)

A united front makes a group harder to defeat. The Promethean who knows this Transmutation can make this a reality. By channeling the Pyros, he anneal his friends' skin in alchemical fire.

**Prerequisite:** Common Perception (•••)

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Stamina

**Action:** Instant

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean attempting this Transmutation suffers a -1 penalty to his Defense for the rest of the scene.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Promethean gains a pool of points equal to the number of successes rolled, which he can share with the members of his throng. Each point grants one point of armor. The player can choose to withhold points from any character in the throng, but the Promethean using this Transmutation cannot take more points than any other character in his throng. For example, the player of a Promethean who has two companions in his throng rolls four successes. He gives two points of armor to one of the other characters, one point to the other and one point to his own character.

**Exceptional Success:** Everybody in the throng gains one free point of armor, plus any points gained from successes.

## Contamination

These Transmutations deal with impurities, both physical and spiritual. The Promethean who masters the Transmutations of Contamination learns how to identify, manipulate and control his own and others' physical urges and understand their sins. To control these things, the Cathar believes, is to purge them. To purge them is to purify oneself. The bringing out of these impurities causes the Promethean who performs these Transmutations to develop a faint bluish coloration to his skin, which appears less as a stain on the skin than as a color rising to the surface from beneath.

## Detect Impurity (•)

Everyone has a weakness. This Transmutation allows the Promethean to examine a person and divine her Vice, allowing him to play on that weakness and use it as a weapon.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Empathy vs. Composure + Azoth

**Action:** Instant and contested; resistance is reflexive.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean gets a completely wrong idea of the subject's Vice.

**Failure:** The Promethean can't divine the subject's Vice.

**Success:** The Promethean learns exactly what the subject's Vice is, and has an idea of how best to exploit it.

**Exceptional Success:** The Promethean learns what the subject's Vice is and gains a +1 dice pool bonus

for actions designed to exploit the subject's Vice, for the rest of the scene.

## Stress Cracks (•)

The Promethean can cause tiny "stress fractures" in the mind and behavior of a target. The target might snap at someone he was pleasantly chatting with only moments ago. In a more stressful situation, the results are even more pronounced.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Empathy vs. Composure + Azoth

**Action:** Instant and contested; resistance is reflexive.

The Promethean must be able to see the target in order to use this power.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean fails to work the Transmutation, and cannot use it again for the rest of the scene.

**Failure:** The Promethean fails to cause the subject any discomfort at all.

**Success:** The target feels a sudden and intense burst of stress, and cannot contain it. He lashes out in some way commensurate with the situation. In conversation, the target might insult another person, perhaps even swearing or shouting. If the situation is already tense and threatens to turn physical, the target might shove or strike another person.

**Exceptional Success:** The target remains on edge for the rest of day. All dice pools for actions requiring concentration suffer a -2 penalty.

## Confession (••)

This Transmutation gives the Promethean the power to elicit secrets from people. He asks a leading question. There's a pregnant pause. And then, just briefly, his victim tells him her innermost thoughts.

**Prerequisite:** Detect Impurity (•)

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Composure vs. Composure + Azoth

**Action:** Instant and contested; resistance is reflexive.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean's attempts at finding out the truth are awkward and stilted. The victim, if not another Promethean, rolls for the next stage of Disquiet immediately.

**Failure:** The Promethean doesn't find out anything.

**Success:** The victim feels compelled to blurt out what she's thinking right now, no matter how embarrassing and potentially dangerous it might be. The effect lasts one turn.

**Exceptional Success:** The effect is the same, except

that the victim keeps talking for another two turns, letting drop thought after thought.

### Drain Emotions (••)

With this Transmutation, the Promethean gains the ability to draw negative emotions from the victim, using them as a temporary source of strength.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Empathy – subject's Composure

**Action:** Instant

The Promethean feeds from fear, anger, hate, distrust and the like, using the emotional energy to fuel his own psyche, and leaving the victim feeling tired and listless.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean fails, and is unable to use this power again for the rest of the scene.

**Failure:** The Promethean fails to drain any of the victim's emotional energy.

**Success:** The Promethean steals one point of Willpower from the victim for every success gained. The Promethean can't take more Willpower than the victim has. If the Willpower the Promethean steals causes her own total of temporary Willpower points to rise above her permanent Willpower dots, the extra points vanish at the end of the scene.

**Exceptional Success:** Multiple successes are their own reward.

**Suggested Modifiers:** Subject is affected by Disquiet or Torment (+1).

### Fever Dreams (•••)

This is the same as the three-dot Pandoran Transmutation of the same name (see **Promethean: The Created**, p. 244). Using this power as a Contamination Transmutation doesn't cause Humanity loss in and of itself, although its consequences might be cause for degeneration.

### Guilt Trip (•••)

This Transmutation gives the Promethean the power to learn someone's guiltiest secret.

**Prerequisite:** Confession (••)

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Empathy vs. Composure + Azoth

**Action:** Instant and contested

The Promethean has to touch the target to use this power. The power works in a flash: the Promethean has a brief vision of the single worst thing that the subject ever did. Unless the player rolls an exceptional success, there are no names, dates and places, although the general identity of figures in the vision is apparent to the Promethean. For example, a Promethean shakes hands with a man and has a vision of him smothering an old lady with a pillow. No one needs to tell the Promethean that this was the man's grandmother, although he won't



know her name. The revelation comes to him, instinctively, powerfully, a feeling beyond simple language.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The subject appear entirely guilt-free to the Promethean, who can't use this power again on this subject for the rest of the scene.

**Failure:** The Promethean learns nothing.

**Success:** The Promethean learns the subject's guiltiest secret, in a flash.

**Exceptional Success:** The Promethean not only knows the worst thing the subject ever did, he knows the names of people involved, when it happened and where it happened.

## Remove Inhibitions (•••)

The Promethean learns how to purge minute amounts of the contaminants that course through his body in a form that he can use against others. He exudes a light, easily evaporated substance from his fingertips. The first person he touches finds herself facing the urge to act directly on her desires, likely causing embarrassment and humiliation.

**Prerequisite:** Stress Cracks (•)

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Intimidation – victim's Composure

**Action:** Instant

The Promethean needs to touch the skin of his victim to use this Transmutation. This power works on supernatural targets as well as on humans.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The power backfires, and the Promethean suffers its effects as if someone had successfully used the power on her.

**Failure:** The Transmutation has no effect.

**Success:** The Promethean successfully infects the subject with the chemical. The victim loses all of his inhibitions. He acts on his urges. A man might flee a room in which he is uncomfortable, or lay someone out with a haymaker, or grab a woman he is attached to and kiss her or any of a dozen different things, depending on the person and how he's feeling at the time.

The effect lasts for one turn for every success the Promethean gained. After the effect fades, there's probably a moment of embarrassment or fear, as the victim realizes what he's doing.

**Exceptional Success:** There are no further effects beyond the increased duration.

## Transfer Torment (••••)

Prometheans can feel Torment rising, like a choking, suffocating cloud of violence. A Promethean with this Transmutation can, as he feels the rise of Torment, pass his Torment onto another person, who then experiences it.

**Prerequisite:** Remove Inhibitions (•••)

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Resolve + Azoth vs. Composure + Azoth

**Action:** Instant and contested; resistance is reflexive.

The victim of this power experiences the same kind of Torment that the Promethean is prone to, and behaves in the same way (so a Wretched Torment involves the urge for spite and revenge, a Galateid Torment causes the victim to act on his urges, and so on). If the Promethean uses this power successfully against a vampire or werewolf, the victim enters frenzy or Death Rage rather than Torment.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean enters Torment immediately.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Promethean transfers his Torment onto the victim. The victim then behaves as if suffering the same sort of Torment to which the Promethean is prone.

**Exceptional Success:** The victim suffers from the Promethean's Torment and loses a point of Willpower.

**Suggested Modifiers:** Subject is human, including mages (-1), subject is a vampire or werewolf (+1), subject's Humanity or Morality dots are higher than the character's (-1).

## Eyes of Madness (••••)

Everybody has a bit of madness within him, struggling to get out. With this Transmutation, the Promethean can inflict a derangement on his victim.

**Prerequisite:** Fever Dreams (•••)

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Intimidation vs. Resolve + Azoth

**Action:** Instant and contested; resistance is reflexive.

If the Promethean using this Transmutation has Humanity 5 or above, the player must make a degeneration roll (three dice).

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean gains a mild derangement.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The victim suffers from the effects of a mild derangement, chosen by the Promethean's player, for the next 24 hours.

**Exceptional Success:** The same, except the player can choose a severe derangement for the victim.

**Suggested Modifiers:** Subject's Morality is higher than the character's (-1).

## Plague of Desire (•••••)

The Promethean enhances the ability to remove inhibitions by refining the agent he secretes into a powerful pheromone. This causes anyone who smells it to lose all semblance of self-control and follow his animal instincts. The effects may vary. A room full of people at dinner could

tear off each other's clothes and begin to rut like cats in heat. On the other hand, the same room full of people could just as easily turn into a bloodbath, as steak knives and forks become lethal weapons. Whatever happens, the loss of control is terrifying. It creates a tableau worthy of Hieronymus Bosch at his most hallucinatory.

**Prerequisite:** Remove Inhibitions (•••)

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Intimidation + Azoth

**Action:** Instant

The Storyteller compares the number of successes rolled by the Promethean's player against each victim. If the successes beat the victim's Composure score, he falls prey to the Transmutation's effects. Most people have a Composure rating of 2, so the Storyteller could rule that three successes is the baseline, and only take note of the individual Composure of exceptional or supernatural individuals.

A character affected by this power can resist for one turn if the player spends a Willpower point and rolls Composure + Azoth. The Willpower point doesn't give a bonus to the dice pool; the point simply allows the character to resist.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean using the Transmutation enters Torment.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** Everyone within a five-yard radius gives in to primal urges. What those urges are depends on the person and the situation. A criminal (or a cop) with an itchy trigger finger could shoot someone. Someone else could curl into a ball or start swearing at the top of his voice, while two or more others begin to have sex in the open. The effect lasts for a scene.

**Exceptional Success:** Extra successes simply add to the chance of affecting more people.

**Suggested Modifiers:** Character is attempting to affect more than two people (-1); character is attempting to affect more than eight people (-2); character is attempting to affect more than 20 people (-4); character is trying to affect a crowd of more than 100 people (-6).

## Quell Torment (•••••)

The Promethean who gains mastery of this Transmutation learns how to purge his own Torment, holding it down, at least until next time.

**Prerequisite:** Transfer Torment (••••)

**Cost:** 3 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Reflexive

The Promethean uses this power *before* rolling to avoid Torment. The player spends the Pyros and avoids having to make a Humanity roll.

## Saturninus

Though most Prometheans tend to think first of Transmutations when contemplating their supernatural prowess,

nearly every aspect of the Saturnine Night is supernatural. The Divine Fire touches the daily existence of the Created in very real ways, dozens of times daily, from the ability to eat nearly anything and go long periods without food to the ability to strengthen their limbs with Pyros and power Bestowments. Practitioners of Plumbum frequently learn Transmutations that strengthen and magnify these innate abilities as a means of delving further into what it means to be a Promethean.

## Azothic Awareness (• to •••••)

"Azoth calls to Azoth." Every Promethean who has met another of his kind understands this on an instinctual level. Saturninus practitioners sometimes spend time honing their awareness of this call, however, which allows them to extend their sensitivity beyond the normal range of their own Azothic Radiance.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** None

The five levels of this Transmutation must be purchased in sequential order, beginning with the one-dot version. For each dot in this Transmutation, the range at which the Promethean may detect another's Azothic Radiance (see the chart on p.92 of **Promethean: The Created**) is increased by one step. Note that this extends the range at which other Prometheans can be detected, rather than the range at which the wielder himself may be detected. This change is permanent when the Transmutation is purchased.

For example, a Promethean with Azoth 2 has an Azothic Radiance that covers a city block. If another Promethean in the area has this Transmutation at two dots, however, he can detect the first Created if they are in the same neighborhood. The first Promethean's Azothic Radiance doesn't actually increase. The Transmutation simply makes the detecting Promethean more sensitive to Azoth.

## Cleansing Ritual (•)

Rites of contrition have long existed in human society. To those studying the Promethean condition, it became clear that sometimes it was necessary for the Created to seek absolution as well, particularly since the most odious of a Promethean's sins may leave marks in his Azoth detectable by others. Though Prometheans are solitary creatures, a Promethean's sins lie in the open for others of his own kind to see and judge. Scholars of the Saturninus Transmutations developed this Transmutation as a means of mitigating that effect.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Reflexive

Instances of Torment remain in a Promethean's Azoth, detectable by other Created who take her Measure. Those with this Transmutation, however, may be absolved of their trespasses.



Doing so, however, requires that the Promethean seek a means of righting the wrongs committed due to Torment. If she arranges to see that the widow of the man she killed while in Torment is taken care of, or sees to the rebuilding of homes she burnt down, she may use this Transmutation once the task at hand is completed, scouring the effects of that Torment from her Azoth. Though she may not be able to right all the wrongs she committed, she must make some effort. The time spent righting the wrongs committed is considered to be time gone to the wastes for the purpose of reducing the power of Torment in the Promethean's Azoth.

### Subtle Dampening (•)

Though dampening the Azothic fires that burn within him may put Pandorans off his trail, dampening can cause a subconscious feeling of uneasiness in other Prometheans. Those who learn this technique, however, are quite adept at doing so without disturbing their fellow Created.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Azoth

**Action:** Instant

When the Created dampens his Azothic fires (see **Promethean: The Created**, p. 92), he may spend a point of Pyros to attempt to adjust the dampening. Many who have mastered this ability choose to dampen their Azoth on a daily basis.

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** Not only does he fail to work the changes to his Azothic dampening, but he mismanages the Divine Fire within himself. He receives the normal -3 social penalty with other Prometheans, while Pandorans receive no penalty to rolls to track him.

**Failure:** The Promethean fails to correctly manipulate his dampening. His Azothic fires are dampened as normal, as described on p. 92 of **Promethean: The Created**.

**Success:** The Azothic fires are dampened. This has the normal effects on Pandorans tracking the Promethean, though the penalty to social interaction with other Created is negated.

**Exceptional Success:** The Promethean's manipulation is quite skilled; not only does he not suffer when dealing with other Prometheans, but Pandorans receive a -5 penalty when hunting him, rather than the normal -3.

**Suggested Modifiers:** Per consecutive previous day the Azothic fires were dampened (-1/day), taking 10 minutes to meditate (+1).

### Refined Masquerade (\*\*)

Normally, something in Promethean nature cloaks their true appearances from the rest of the world. Only the agitation of the Divine Fire within the Created can disrupt this. Prometheans who make the effort to study such things can even calm their Pyros in such instances, preventing it from affecting this disguise.

**Cost:** 1 Willpower

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Reflexive

This Transmutation may be activated any time the use of Pyros would normally reveal the Promethean's disfigurements, preventing such revelation by spending a point of Willpower. This Transmutation must be activated for each instance of possible revelation (spending of Pyros, etc.) and lasts only for that instance.

### Slow Awakening (\*\*)

Prometheans who study the skills of Saturninus aspire to control of the Azothic Radiance. This technique permanently transforms the Azoth of the Promethean who has mastered it, so that not only do Pandorans take a longer time to rouse in its presence, but the Promethean may become aware of it happening.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Composure + Azoth

**Action:** Reflexive

The Azoth of the Promethean with this Transmutation awakens Pandorans in two minutes, rather than the normal one. This is a permanent alteration to the Promethean's nature.

Additionally, when the Promethean enters an area and begins to awaken Pandorans, the Storyteller should roll the wielder's Wits + Composure + Azoth to determine if the Promethean detects the fluctuation in his Azoth that indicates this process has begun.

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** Not only does he fail to detect the Pandorans, but they gain a +1 die bonus to rolls to both track and stalk him unseen.

**Failure:** The Promethean fails to detect the beginning of the Pandoran awakening.

**Success:** The Promethean becomes aware that he has just entered an area in which his Azothic Radiance has encountered dormant Pandorans, who have begun to awaken. He doesn't know their exact location, however.

**Exceptional Success:** Not only does the Promethean become aware of the incipient end of Pandoran dormancy in his area, but he knows precisely where they are. If he does not know the area, he knows how far away from him and in what direction they lie.

**Suggested Modifiers:** The wielder is accompanied by other Prometheans who do not possess this Transmutation (-1/Promethean), the area is very busy (-1), the area is effectively abandoned (+1), the wielder possesses the "Sense Flux" Transmutation or any Pandoran Transmutations (+2).

### Fire-Reader (\*\*\*)

The Azoth of a Promethean carries much about him: his misdeeds, his personal power, his humour. Those skilled in understanding the subtle patterns within another

Promethean's Azoth can determine this information and much more. Because it is the power of the Azoth that reveals this information, the wielder of this Transmutation need not be in the presence of the other Promethean — he need only be able to detect his Azoth, through the calling of Azoth to Azoth.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Empathy + Azoth

**Action:** Instant

The Promethean using this power must be able to detect the Azoth of the one the wielder wishes to read. The ability to detect the presence of another Promethean through Azoth's call to Azoth is sufficient for this purpose.

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The Azoth of the one the Promethean would read overwhelms him, causing him to lapse into unconsciousness for one minute.

**Failure:** The wielder fails to read the Azoth of his target. Subsequent attempts have a -1 penalty. This is cumulative over multiple failed attempts during the same 24-hour period.

**Success:** The wielder may discern one Trait of the one he is reading per success rolled, including Lineage, Refinement, Vice, Virtue, preferred name (i.e., the name the target would introduce himself as), Azoth rating. The wielder may also spend a success to "read" the target as though they were in one another's presence, taking his Measure.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to the Traits above, the wielder may spend successes to ascertain the following: Humanity (though this reveals only relative Humanity — equal, higher or lower than the wielder's), derangements (one per success) and which Transmutation categories the Promethean has Transmutations in, starting with the category he has the most dots worth of Transmutations in. Only the fifth and subsequent successes may be spent on these Traits; thus, if the wielder rolls six successes, he must spend the first four on Traits covered under "Success" above. The last two may be spent on Traits from either category.

**Suggested Modifiers:** Using this Transmutation while not in the presence of the Promethean in question (-3), target Promethean's Azoth is greater than the wielder's (-1/point difference), wielder's Azoth is greater than the target's (+1/point of difference).

## Humour Attunement (•••)

The flow of the humours is a major point of study for students of Saturninus. Though each Lineage has a humour that predominates, all Prometheans possess all five humours. A Created with this Transmutation may attune his humour to match that of one of his Branded throng-mates, allowing the wielder to harvest Pyros from situations he might not normally benefit from.

**Cost:** 1 Willpower

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Reflexive

The Promethean activating this Transmutation must touch a Branded throng-mate of a different Lineage. For the next 24 hours, the wielder loses the ability to regain Pyros by sleeping in his Lineage's key element. Instead, he gains the ability to regain Pyros by sleeping in the key element of his Branded throng-mate's Lineage (see p. 93 of **Promethean: The Created**).

The wielder may use this Transmutation on another Promethean not of his Branded throng, but doing so costs one additional point of Willpower.

## Magnified Potential (••• or •••••)

The potential of the Created to achieve superhuman potential for short periods of time is a simple feat for most of them. Students of Saturninus believe the process to be inefficient, however, and a few have sought to refine the technique, producing this Transmutation.

**Cost:** 1 Willpower

**Dice Pool:** [Appropriate Attribute] + Azoth

**Action:** Reflexive

When a Promethean uses his Transhuman Potential (see p.165, **Promethean: The Created**), he may spend a point of Willpower and make the attempt to extend the duration of that boost. This Transmutation may only be applied to a single Attribute at a time, even if Pyros is used to boost multiple Attributes in the turn in which the Transmutation is activated. Using Pyros to boost an Attribute affected by this Transmutation causes that use of the Transmutation to end immediately.

There is also a five-dot version of this Transmutation, which may be purchased only once the Promethean has purchased the three-dot version. The differences in the two Transmutations are noted below.

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** Not only does the Transmutation fail to hold the boost in place, but the Pyros is wasted, negating the effects of the use of Transhuman Potential.

**Failure:** The Transhuman Potential functions normally, but the attempt to extend its duration fails.

**Success:** The boost from Transhuman Potential remains for one turn per success rolled. (At five dots, one minute per success.)

**Exceptional Success:** The boost from Transhuman Potential lodges firmly in the body of the wielder, increasing its duration to one minute per success rolled. (At five dots, the duration is one scene or one hour, whichever is longer.)

**Suggested Modifiers:** Activated during a stressful situation, such as combat (-2), activated after at least 30 minutes of meditation time (+2).

## Efficient Grounding (••••)

The Promethean handles electricity like no other creature. Finding the minute traces of the Divine Fire that are part of all expressions of electricity, the power of lightning heals

the Created. A few students of Saturninus have studied and improved this ability.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** None

This Transmutation does not need to be activated to use; it is simply a permanent change in the Promethean's nature once purchased. This Transmutation alters the way Electroshock Therapy (see p.164 of **Promethean: The Created**) functions.

Every point of bashing damage taken from a source of electricity can be used to heal either two points of bashing damage or a single point of lethal damage. In addition, two points of bashing damage from a source of electricity can be used to heal a single point of aggravated damage.

## Pyros Refinement (••••)

Certain Prometheans study the processes by which they refine Pyros from normal events around them: the rising of the sun, exposure to a thunderstorm, remaining in the presence of mortals or the infusion of power that comes with accomplishment and success. These processes can be tapped for greater power by the Created who understands them.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** None

This Transmutation does not need to be activated to use; it is simply a permanent change in the Promethean's nature once purchased. When regaining Pyros through the rising of the sun, exposure to a storm, being in the presence of mortals or by accomplishing some momentous event, the Promethean regains two Pyros, rather than the normal one (see p. 93, **Promethean: The Created**). This does not apply to those humour-based techniques used by the Lineages to recover Pyros.

## Refine Bestowment (•••••)

With Lineage comes natural gifts, miracles worked through humour and Pyros. Many Prometheans scarcely think of these traits, relying on them in the way a normal human relies on naturally strong muscles or a quick wit. Created who seek to understand the Promethean condition often delve into the secrets of these Bestowments, refining and strengthening them through discipline and practice.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** None

This Transmutation does not need to be activated to use; it is simply a permanent change in the Promethean's nature once purchased. This Transmutation alters the way his Bestowment (see p.116 of **Promethean: The Created**) functions, and may be purchased multiple times. Each time this Transmutation is purchased, it applies to a different

Bestowment possessed by the Created.

- **Ephemeral Flesh:** When this Bestowment is Refined, its bearer may activate it reflexively, and without Pyros expenditure.

- **Mesmerizing Appearance:** When using this Bestowment, the Promethean gains the benefit of 8 again, rather than 9 again.

- **Revivification:** When this Bestowment is Refined, its wielder gains the option of spending a number of Vitriol equal to the Azoth rating of the one he is reviving, rather than a dot of Azoth. The Bestowment works normally for purposes of self-resurrection, but the cost to re-purchase it after dying is Azoth x 4.

- **Unholy Stamina:** Per "Mesmerizing Appearance," above, but applied to Stamina.

- **Unholy Strength:** Per "Mesmerizing Appearance," above, but applied to Strength.

## Other Bestowments – Strange Alchemies

At the Storyteller's option, the Bestowments included in **Strange Alchemies** may also be improved through the use of the "Refine Bestowment" Transmutation:

- \* **Corpse Tongue:** Refinement of this Bestowment eliminates the need to spend Pyros for more precise answers – all answers are complete and lengthy.

- \* **Heart of Stone:** Awareness is refined in this form. As the Promethean sleeps, she dreams of the things that are going on around her. Her dreams wander away from the environment when there is nothing of interest to her, but she becomes aware of those who approach and can identify them. She may choose to awaken at any point based on what she experiences in her dreams.

- \* **Orphean Song:** A refined Orphean Song is more potent, as the skills of the singer matter more; the dice roll for this Bestowment becomes Presence + Expression + Azoth.

- \* **Spare Parts:** Refining this Bestowment allows the Promethean to graft the parts he claims onto himself more adeptly. He only needs a total of three successes, and each roll takes 30 minutes.

- \* **The Scrutiny:** The cost for this Bestowment is reduced to one Pyros.

- \* **Unbreakable Will:** Per "Mesmerizing Appearance," above, but applied to Resolve.

## Spiritus

The practitioner of Argentum seeks to understand the shadowy inhabitants of the World of Darkness. This involves blending in with them, because unfamiliarity breeds fear and hostility.

The body of the Created does not change with the practice of Spiritus, but the Azoth does. The techniques allow the practitioner of Spiritus to refine his Azothic Radiance so that it seems to be something else, triggering a variety of reactions — primarily from supernatural creatures. Those skilled in these techniques are capable of interacting in the realms of the supernatural in ways that are not ordinarily possible.

Multiple Transmutations within Spiritus are part of a series of similar Transmutations; these have the “(Type)” or “(Material)” parenthetical in their names. Each version of that power is an entirely separate Transmutation, and must be purchased separately.

In addition, an entire cascade of Transmutations might be mastered through the study of Spiritus, beginning with the “Mask of (Type)” Transmutation. Purchasing any of the refinements that have this first Transmutation as a prerequisite require that the Transmutation purchased be of the same “(Type)” as the Mask the Promethean already possesses. Thus, a Promethean who knows Mask of the Moon may learn Cloak of the Moon, but may not learn Cloak of Night until he knows Mask of Night. This applies all throughout the cascade.

### Essence of (Material) (• to •••)

Prometheans who study the supernatural creatures of the World of Darkness are likely to run afoul of the power of those entities at some point or another.

Supernatural creatures of the correct type who attempt to use their powers on a Promethean protected by this Transmutation experience some kind of sensory effect when doing so. Werewolves may smell molten silver just after using a power on the Created, vampires experience spots in their vision as though they had just glanced at the sun, mages taste salt on their tongues and spirits and ghosts feel either cold iron or the lash of nettles against their bodies.

**Prerequisite:** The Promethean must have been subjected to the powers of a creature of the appropriate type before a Transmutation protecting the Promethean from such powers may be purchased.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Reflexive

This Transmutation is always active, even if the Promethean is unconscious. The three levels of each of these Transmutations must be purchased in sequential order, beginning with the one-dot version.

The Promethean gains added resistance to the powers of a specific type of supernatural creature. This power is

called “Essence of Sunlight” against vampires, “Essence of Silver” against werewolves, “Essence of Salt” against mages, “Essence of Iron” against spirits and “Essence of Nettle” against ghosts.

This Transmutation grants its benefit only on powers that are invoked against the Promethean. For instance, this Transmutation would protect the Created from a vampire’s power of mental domination, but not from a punch or bite bolstered with the vampire’s augmented strength. For this Transmutation to protect the character from a supernatural power, that power must target him (and only him) directly. Area effects, powers used on other targets and powers that augment the supernatural creature are not affected.

This Transmutation grants the following benefits:

- **Opposed Rolls:** When making a contested roll to resist a power used by a creature of the appropriate type, the Promethean gains an additional die per dot in this Transmutation.

- **Passive Resistance:** The Promethean’s Resistance Attributes are increased by an amount equal to the dots in this Transmutation for the purpose of passive resistance of supernatural powers. For instance, if a power is activated by a roll of (Wits + Empathy – target’s Composure), add the rating in this Transmutation to the Promethean’s Composure for the purpose of determining the penalty to that roll.

### Tainted Azoth (•)

With a thought, the Promethean may taint her Azoth, shifting its expression to be more like the innate power of other supernatural creatures. While this has no effect on her personally, her Azoth now resonates with the presence of other supernatural creatures the way her Azoth normally does with other Prometheans.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Instant

For the rest of the scene, the Promethean is capable of detecting a single type of supernatural creature. Supernatural creatures are treated as though they had an Azoth equal to the Trait that most closely reflects their personal supernatural power: Rank for spirits, the average of Power, Finesse and Resistance for ghosts, Blood Potency for vampires, Primal Urge for werewolves and Gnosis for mages. In order to change the type of creature the Promethean can detect, he must reactivate this Transmutation.

In order to taint his Azoth to resonate with a given kind of supernatural creature, the Promethean must have had some kind of interaction with that creature before: three turns of combat is sufficient, as are three minutes of conversation. The Promethean must have been aware of what the supernatural being was while this interaction was going on, however.

## Mask of (Type) (•)

Some Prometheans are capable of mimicking the supernatural creatures they have encountered, subtly shifting their bodies to adopt the subtle clues that many such creatures look for when identifying others of their kind.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Instant

There are three major expressions of this Transmutation, though others are certainly possible. Developing any one of these Masks requires that the Promethean have spent at least one hour in the presence of that type of supernatural creature. A Promethean may only activate one Mask at a time. These Transmutations do *not* change the Promethean's aura.

The Promethean with this Transmutation active still triggers Disquiet, but supernatural creatures of the type associated with the Transmutation's "(Type)" gain a +1 bonus to resist Disquiet. In addition, for as long as the Transmutation is active, manifestations of Disquiet seem to be natural reactions to the presence of a supernatural of the appropriate type: humans affected by Disquiet seem to shy away in almost subconscious fear.

- **Mask of Night:** The Promethean shifts his body so that it seems more vampire-like. His flesh tone pales, his eyes seem slightly more reflective, his body scent all but vanishes, his eyeteeth seem subtly more pronounced and his skin is cold to the touch. This lasts until the Promethean sleeps, is rendered unconscious or until sunlight touches him.

- **Mask of the Moon:** The Promethean shifts his body so that he seems to be a werewolf in human form to those who know what to look for. He has something of a primal air about him, and his gaze is that of a predator. His body scent is altered subtly, seeming to have a tinge of animal musk to it and his teeth become somewhat more pronounced. This lasts until the Promethean sleeps, is rendered unconscious or until silver touches him.

- **Mask of Sorcery:** The Promethean takes on the air of one who wields sorcery. These changes are subtle, however. Those with the Unseen Sense Merit attuned to magic instantly notice the Promethean. Otherwise, he appears to be a normal human, though one on whom it is hard to focus attention for too long. He gains a +1 die bonus to Stealth and Socialize rolls to remain unnoticed. This lasts until the Promethean sleeps or is rendered unconscious.

## Cloak of (Type) (••)

Those who understand the subtleties of appearing to be one of the supernatural creatures on the surface often master the ability to fool supernatural senses as well.

**Prerequisite:** Mask of (Type) (•)

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** None

This power is activated when the Promethean activates the appropriate "Mask of (Type)" Transmutation, augmenting its effectiveness. This alters the appearance of the Promethean's aura so that it does not seem to be one of the Created to aura perception powers, but instead looks like the aura of the appropriate type of supernatural creature.

In addition, the bonus granted for supernatural creatures of the appropriate type to resist Disquiet is increased to a +2 (see "Mask of (Type)" for more details).

- **Cloak of Night:** When viewed with powers that view the aura, the Promethean's aura appears pale, as that of a vampire.

- **Cloak of the Moon:** When viewed with powers the view the aura, the Promethean's aura appears intensely vibrant, as that of a werewolf.

- **Cloak of Sorcery:** When viewed with powers that reveal the aura, the Promethean's aura appears to have many sparkles, as that of a mage.

## Ephemeral Infusion (•• to •••••)

Prometheans capable of interacting with the unseen Twilight sometimes find themselves at a disadvantage. Those skilled in the arts of Spiritus, however, may infuse objects with the ectoplasmic humour and a spark of their own Pyros, granting those items a spiritual presence in Twilight.

This process takes a few moments, during which the Promethean handles the object, breathing small wisps of ectoplasm onto the object, coating it. Then, with a flick of his fingers, he ignites the ectoplasm in lightning-white arcs with a spark of Pyros, creating a glossy "finish" over the item that gives it solidity in Twilight.

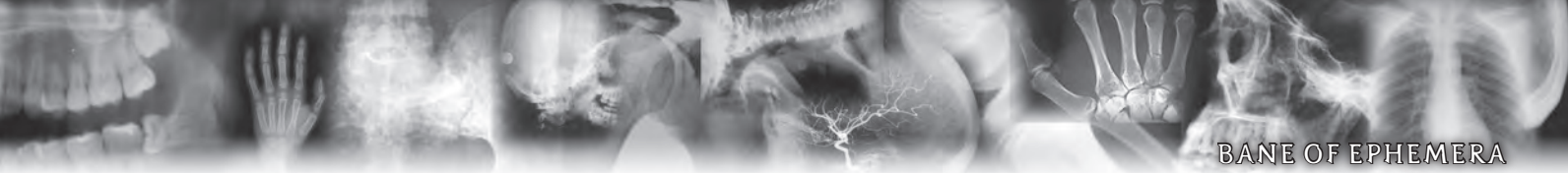
**Prerequisite:** Ephemeral Flesh Bestowment

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Crafts + Azoth

**Action:** Extended (a number of successes equal to the Structure of the object; each roll represents one minute spent imbuing the object)

The Promethean must have the Ephemeral Flesh Bestowment activated to use this Transmutation. With a touch, the Promethean imbues an item with ectoplasm and then ignites it with Pyros, granting the item solidity to entities and things in Twilight. For all intents and purposes, the item functions normally with regard to creatures and objects in Twilight, save that they cannot pick it up — though they



may touch it, they may not lift or move it from Twilight without using other powers to do so.

At any given time, the Promethean may only infuse a number of objects with a total Size equal to the rating of this Transmutation minus one, allowing the infusion of a single Size 1 object at ••, a pair of Size 1 objects or a Size 2 object at •••, all the way up to four points worth of Size at •••••. Clips of bullets and other ammunition (Size 1 for a single clip or magazine) may be imbued, gaining the ability to strike ephemeral targets. The gun itself need not be imbued.

This Transmutation remains in effect until the Promethean who infused the item revokes that infusion, by touch. He may also revoke the infusion from anywhere in line of sight with the expenditure of a point of Willpower. The four levels of each of these Transmutations must be purchased in sequential order, beginning with the two-dot version.

### Bane of Ephemera (••)

Many Prometheans on the Refinement of Silver have learned of the volatile mixture that is ectoplasm and Pyros.

Occasionally, those capable of touching Twilight take advantage of this knowledge, and develop this Transmutation.

The Promethean breathes ectoplasm into his cupped hands and then sets it alight with Pyros. It flares for just a moment in the physical world, with a flash and scent of ozone easy explained away as flash powder. Those capable of seeing him in Twilight, however, can see his body wreathed in arcs of spiritual levin. Spiritual entities struck by the Promethean's bare-handed attacks are grievously injured.

**Prerequisite:** Ephemeral Flesh Bestowment

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Instant

The Promethean must activate have the Ephemeral Flesh Bestowment in order to use this Transmutation. For the remainder of the scene, and for as long as the Promethean can physically interact with Twilight, his Brawl attacks inflict lethal damage to spirits, ghosts and other entities present in Twilight. This applies only to attacks made without the benefit of weapons of any kind.

## (Material) Shield (•••)

Prometheans wise in the ways of the supernatural can often extend their defenses to others. One of the Created with this Transmutation can pass on the effects of her Essence of (Material) protection to others by touch.

**Prerequisite:** Essence of (Material) (••)

**Cost:** 2 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Instant

The Promethean with this Transmutation must touch the one she intends to protect. If the one she is protecting is part of the same Branded throng as she, the cost is reduced to one Pyros. For the remainder of the scene, the one so protected gains the benefits of having the “Essence of (Material)” Transmutation, as though he possessed the Transmutation at the same rating of the Promethean protecting him.

This Transmutation may be used on non-Prometheans, with one exception: creatures of a given supernatural type may not be protected from the workings of their own kind. Thus, vampires may not benefit from a Sunlight Shield version of this power, and mages may not benefit from a Salt Shield.

If the Promethean spends a point of Willpower when activating this Transmutation, the protection lasts for one day instead.

## Sense of (Type) (•••)

This Transmutation is a further refinement of the ability to masquerade as other kinds of supernatural creatures. Prometheans with this Transmutation can adapt their senses to their disguise, granting them the preternatural senses of those the Created mimic.

**Prerequisite:** Cloak of (Type) (••)

**Cost:** +1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** None

This power is activated when the Promethean activates the appropriate “Mask of (Type)” Transmutation, augmenting its effectiveness. Possession of this Transmutation also automatically increases the normal cost of the appropriate “Mask of (Type)” Transmutation by one Pyros.

In addition, the bonus granted for supernatural creatures of the appropriate type to resist Disquiet is increased to +3 (see “Mask of (Type)” for more details).

The sensory abilities gained depend on the type of creature being mimicked:

- **Sense of Night:** Prometheans who mimic vampires gain the senses necessary to become the ultimate urban predators. In low-light situations, the Promethean’s eyes become reflective, like a cat’s. In absolute darkness, they glow a malevolent crimson. In both situations, they can see perfectly, without the need for additional light.

Additionally, the Promethean gains the ability to smell spilled blood with a normal Wits + Composure roll, at a

range of his (Azoth x 10) yards. This range may be doubled in sterile or clean situations where no other scents compete with it, or halved in situations with strong scents (such as in the wilderness or in a typical urban area).

Finally, the Promethean under the influence of this effect gains +1 Presence for as long as it is active.

- **Sense of the Moon:** Prometheans who mimic werewolf senses find that the entire world opens up before them, containing undreamt nuances. The scents of an area grant an understanding of what has passed through there before, as well as a hint of what they were feeling. Likewise, the hidden pitches in human voices reveal much about them, as do the scents that cling to their bodies: details of a target’s sex life, his emotional state, diet and recent locations can all often be scented.

In most instances, this requires a simple Wits + Composure roll. The successes from this roll can be added to other applicable rolls (as though they were additional dice from a Teamwork action). A Promethean investigating an area might add the successes from scenting the area to his Investigation roll, while using the scents from a person might add to an Empathy roll.

The Promethean may also track targets by scent. This requires an extended Wits + Survival action, requiring between 10 and 20 successes, with each roll representing 10 minutes of time. This roll may also be contested if the quarry is seeking to hide his trail.

Finally, the Promethean under the influence of this effect gains +1 Strength for as long as it is active.

- **Sense of Sorcery:** The Promethean masquerading as a mage gains the ability to innately sense the use of magic and other supernatural powers in his vicinity. There is no roll involved, and the Promethean does not automatically know its source or effect — he is simply alerted that it is occurring.

In addition, the Promethean gains the ability to read auras, as though he possessed the Sensorium Transmutation “Aura Sight” (see **Promethean: The Created**, p.146).

Finally, the Promethean under the influence of this effect gains +1 Intelligence for as long as it is active.

## Glimpse of Mortal Memory (••••)

One of the most fascinating things about supernatural creatures, as far as a Mystic is concerned, is that many of them were once human. What changes must be wrought upon human “gold” to change it into another state? Is the vampiric state akin to Promethean lead, or another material entirely? In order to understand these changes, a Mystic can look into a supernatural being’s mind and see her as she was before the supernatural claimed her. In the process, the Promethean can learn much — secrets, facts and even talents.

**Prerequisite:** Tainted Azoth (•)

**Cost:** 1 Willpower

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Wits + Azoth (vs. Resolve + Special [see below], if target is unwilling)

**Action:** Instant (and contested, if target is unwilling)

The character must touch the target in order to use this Transmutation. If the target is unwilling, the target's player resists with a roll of Resolve + supernatural power Trait (Blood Potency for vampires, Primal Urge for werewolves, Gnosis for mages). This Transmutation has no effect on spirits, but can be used on ghosts if the character knows and activates the Ephemeral Flesh Bestowment; ghosts contesting this power will roll Resistance only.

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The character loses control of the power, opening a floodgate of information into the target's mind. The Promethean loses any dots in the Residual Memory Merit, as well as all of Willpower points. Willpower can be regained normally, but the Merit dots are lost forever.

**Failure:** The target accrues more successes than the Promethean. Nothing happens; the target's mind remains closed.

**Success:** The Promethean is able to access the target's memories of being mortal. The target experiences these memories right along with the Promethean. If the character is searching for a particular memory, he sees it and can draw whatever knowledge from it he needs (this might allow the character to experience any mortal occurrence firsthand, which might fulfill or a milestone or point the character on the right track to do so). If the character simply wishes to "skim" the target's mind for interesting memories, he can learn any factual information the Storyteller deems appropriate. In addition, the character can absorb some of the Skills of the target's mortal life. The player rolls Intelligence + Wits. Each success grants a +1 modifier to a Skill that the target had *before* becoming a supernatural creature. This modifier lasts for one day.

**Exceptional Success:** The connection lasts longer, allowing the Promethean to search for a particular memory and attempt to mimic Skills, to search for two memories or to mimic Skills twice (that is, the player rolls Intelligence + Wits twice and receives the bonus in two Skills).

## (Material) Warding (••••)

Prometheans who learn how to resist the powers of other supernatural creatures do so by learning their weaknesses. Once Prometheans exhibit a mastery of those techniques, learning how to ward an area against their infiltration is but a small stretch.

**Prerequisites:** Essence of (Material) ••

**Cost:** 1 Pyros per 10-foot radius

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult + Azoth

**Action:** Instant

The Promethean with this ability may ward an area against the influence and presence of the sort of creature associated with his "Essence of (Material)" Transmutation.

This Transmutation may affect a maximum area radius of the Promethean's (Azoth x 10) feet, and requires 10 minutes of preparation before the ward can be erected. The ward lasts for one hour per dot of the creator's Azoth. The creator who chooses to spend a point of Willpower when creating the ward may extend the duration to one day per dot of his Azoth.

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** Not only is the area not protected, but for the remainder of the scene, the area is highly attuned to the energies of the kind of creature the area was intended to keep out. Such creatures can automatically detect something strange in the area as though they possessed the Unseen Sense Merit, and gain a +1 die to the uses of all their supernatural abilities while in that area.

**Failure:** The ward unravels as it is created. Any materials used (see Suggested Modifiers, below) in its creation are rendered useless for further uses of this Transmutation.

**Success:** The ward is erected. The players of any creatures of the appropriate supernatural type must spend a point of Willpower and make a Resolve + Composure roll for their characters either to enter the area or use their powers to affect it. This roll is a contested action, against the successes rolled in the activation of this Transmutation. Even once a supernatural creature enters the warded area, his player must still make another roll to use his powers while within it.

**Exceptional Success:** Not only is the ward potent, but those who attempt to breach the ward and fail suffer a single level of lethal damage as arcs of the Divine Fire repel them. In addition, the player of the ward's creator may spend a point of Willpower to instantly negate a supernatural creature's attempts to enter the ward. This is declared after the creature's player spends Willpower to ignore the warding, but before the roll. The creature's Willpower is still spent, but his player may not roll. This is considered a failure for the purpose of the ward's ability to inflict damage.

**Suggested Modifiers:** Less time taken (-1/minute less than 10 minutes taken in preparation), more time taken (+1/doubling of base time required); *Sunlight Warding* — Performed in some place associated with death, or where much death has taken place (-2), performed in some place where blood has been spilled in the last week (-1), performed during the day (+2); *Silver Warding* — Performed in wilderness areas (-2), circling area in an unbroken line of powdered or fragmented silver (+2); *Salt Warding* — Performing in place where Awakened magic has been used in the past week (-1), performing in a place of occult significance (-1), circling area in an unbroken line of salt (+2); *Iron Warding* — Performing in a place where a spirit has exercised its powers to affect the physical world in the past week (-1), circling the area in powdered iron or iron objects every foot or so (+2); *Nettle Warding* — Performing in a haunted area (-2), circling the area in an unbroken line of nettle blossoms (+2).





If the creator possesses the “(Material) Shield” Transmutation, those who are also protected by that Transmutation may aid him in erecting the ward. This is performed as a Teamwork action (see **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 134), with the assistants’ players rolling Intelligence + Occult. Each such assistant also adds +1 to the creator’s effective Azoth for the purposes of determining the radius and duration of this Transmutation.

### Shadow Alchemy (•••••)

The Promethean’s understanding of a given type of supernatural creature has progressed to the point that he can begin to affect such creatures on an alchemical level. He can strengthen the creature, bolstering its powers, or he can send the monster into spasms of pain, rotting away its flesh.

**Prerequisite:** Essence of (Material) (•••)

**Cost:** 2 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Occult + Azoth – Stamina + Special (see below)

**Action:** Instant

The Promethean must touch the target in order to use this power. If the target is unwilling, the player suffers a modifier to the roll equal to the target’s Stamina + supernatural power trait (Blood Potency for vampires, Primal Urge for werewolves, Gnosis for mages). This Transmutation can only be used to affect ghosts or spirits if the Promethean knows and activates the Ephemeral Flesh Bestowment, in which case the roll suffers a penalty equal to the Resistance of the spirit or ghost. The Promethean can *only* use this Transmutation on creatures for which he possesses the appropriate “Essence” Transmutation. For instance, a character with Essence of Salt and Essence of Sunlight could use Shadow Alchemy on vampires or mages, but not on werewolves.

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The character’s attempt to alter the supernatural creature backfires.

The Promethean’s Pyros reacts with the creature’s otherworldly nature, inflicting aggravated damage equal to the Promethean’s Azoth on both the character *and* the target. The Promethean must immediately check for Torment.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The character can work alchemical changes on the structure of the target. In the simplest form, this allows the Promethean to inflict one level of aggravated damage per success, boiling away the target’s body. If the Promethean so desires, however, he can improve the creature’s form, granting a pool of two dice per success that the creature’s player can use on any roll that incorporates the creature’s supernatural prowess. This includes combat, provided that the supernatural creature is in some way using its supernatural potential (any attack that a werewolf makes in a non-human form, or that a vampire makes using a Discipline of any kind), as well as non-combat uses of supernatural power (any Discipline, Gift or Spell, but not mundane uses of Skills). These dice last for the remainder of the scene, after which the power’s effects fade.

**Exceptional Success:** No further effect beyond the greater number of successes.

## Twilight Summons (•••••)

Those who have sought knowledge of the entities of Twilight can delve into the ancient techniques for summoning them. Though most of the time these old “spells” are useless in the hands of non-mages, the Pyros can accomplish strange things when it is used to transform ectoplasm into binding mechanisms of pure willpower and ephemera. This summoning takes some time to accomplish, and relies on either knowing the name of the entity (whether ghost or spirit) to be summoned or having encountered that entity personally. Only entities that exist in Twilight may be summoned.

**Prerequisites:** Ephemeral Flesh Bestowment

**Cost:** 2 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Occult + Azoth – Rank (spirits) or Resistance/2 (ghosts)

**Action:** Extended

Performing the summoning is an extended action, requiring a number of successes equal to the sum of the spirit’s Power, Finesse and Resistance. Each roll reflects half an hour of work, and receives a penalty equal to either the Rank of the spirit or the half the Resistance of the ghost.

Once the successes are achieved, the spirit appears, entirely in Twilight. The spirit cannot flee the site laid out for it to appear in, though the spirit may use any of its Numina or other powers. For this reason, the Promethean might prefer to protect himself from

th’s spirit influences through the use of the “Iron Warding” or “Nettle Warding” Transmutations. The spirit remains trapped in the spot it is summoned to for the remainder of the scene, or for one day if the player spends a point of Willpower.

This Transmutation does not grant the Promethean any control over the ghost or spirit thus summoned. The Transmutation simply pulls the spirit from its normal location and binds it to the spot to which the spirit is summoned. Most Prometheans attempt to bargain with spirits in return for information or services, though other Prometheans are only too willing to resort to force and intimidation to get what they want.

If a spirit or ghost agrees to something, the Pyros of this Transmutation forces the spirit to adhere to its agreement, though this does not prevent the spirit from finding loopholes to exploit. These agreements are never for a service longer than a number of days equal to the Promethean’s Azoth without significant bribery, however.

For the time a ghost is summoned, the Promethean is considered an additional anchor, allowing the ghost to remain away from its natural anchors. Also, if part of the agreement a ghost makes requires it to be away from its anchors, the Promethean may instill in the ghost one additional, temporary anchor, for up to a number of days equal to his Azoth. This allows ghosts to haunt people or places, or accomplish other deeds.



## CHAPTER THREE

# THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD

One Week Ago

I received no letter from the Hangman's Beautiful Daughter in response to my story. I found her nearly eight months later, sitting by the side of the road in a tiny town in western Massachusetts. She told me that she was working up the courage to go to Boston. I never asked her why.

She said she had read the letter that I wrote and that she kept thinking of the moment that I knew I was again on the Pilgrimage. She said she had experienced those moments herself, and she spoke of a "quicken-  
ing," some movement inside her. It burned, she said, but it was not pain as much as activity, friction.

We know about Vitriol. We know that Sandorans and even other Frometheans can split us open and syp on the fluid of the Pilgrimage. Vitriol, in human understanding, is acid, but to us it is in many ways the elixir of life. I have spoken to others of the Created about these moments, and many of them agree with the Daughter — they speak of movement within. One compared it to what a human woman must feel when an unborn child kicks, and I confess I find that comparison uncomfortable, though I do not know why. Another spoke of a light at the corner of his eyes. Yet another could identify such moments in hindsight only, when the context for the lesson appeared.

I understand the Daughter's comparison to movement, but not in my gut, as she seemed to think. To me, the movement is in my muscles, my legs and my back, propelling me forward. When I stray from the path to the New Dawn, be it out of spite or distraction, something happens to propel me on.

When I stood in Charles' home and committed suicide, the qashmal encouraged me. Why? Because, I think, my death was a step on the Pilgrimage. Before that, I had always believed that if the Tamer found me, he would kill me and I would rise up. I could never be human, then, until I understood mortality, the true fear of Death.

Oh, how I understand it now. The Tamer still follows, and he knows exactly how much he has taken from me.

But he has run out of time.

-as told to me by Zo Malak



Mavian

Hope is the last thing that dies in man; and though it be exceedingly deceitful, yet it is of this good use to us, that while we are traveling through life it conducts us in an easier and more pleasant way to our journey's end.

— Francois De La Rochefoucauld

This chapter addresses some of the unique aspects of **Promethean: The Created** that pose challenges from a Storytelling perspective. While a Storyteller will probably not encounter all of these facets in a single game, forewarned is forearmed, and a Storyteller who familiarizes himself with the potential issues that could arise is less likely to be caught unawares mid-game.

## Fluctuations and Waste

Prometheans are rare. While most vampires, werewolves or mages (and humans, obviously) in the World of Darkness probably know a number of other individuals like themselves, it is not at all unfeasible for one of the Created to have never met another. This rarity only adds to their inherent feeling of detachment and disconnection from the rest of the world. When they do encounter others with whom they can form a throng, the loneliness spawned by their former isolation makes the Branded bond one of the strongest social connections that exists in the World of Darkness. This two-sided coin of isolation and connection is one of the strongest themes in **Promethean** and can create unanticipated complications for Storytellers. When the configuration of either the troupe or the throng changes, the ramifications for the chronicle may be far-reaching.

Most games experience some fluctuation of players and characters during the course of the chronicle. Players leave the game for a multitude of reasons, taking their characters away as they do so. Even when players remain the same, characters sometimes change. Sometimes this change is permanent, as when characters die or leave the troupe's group forever, and sometimes the changes are short-term but still significant. Such changes are often unavoidable, and end up being ignored or (with varying degrees of plausibility) explained away in most games. Considering the tightly knit nature of Promethean interaction, however, changes here may have more impact (and thus require more delicate handling) than in other game settings.

## Going to the Wastes



While many games create situations in which the characters are temporarily separated from one another, in general “splitting up the party” is so characteristically a bad idea that it has become a tongue-in-cheek trope of game play. Most times this separation is short term, but **Promethean** contains a dynamic that can “split the party” for a much longer period. Going to the wastes, a period of self-imposed seclusion for the purpose of Azothic purification, can take a Promethean character out of interactive game play for as little as a month, or as much as several years of in-character time. While going to the wastes drastically changes a character's interaction with the rest of the game, there are a many reasons why any given character may go to the wastes during the course of play.

Consider Dead Zone, a throng containing Little Mikey (a six-foot-tall female Frankenstein whose body contains parts from victims of a plane accident), Sharp (an Adonis who was abandoned by his creator and knows little of Promethean existence) and Mr. Eglantine (a centuries-old Nepri who has only recently returned from many years in the wastes). Even with this small throng, many situations might arise that could send one of the characters off to go to the wastes.

Going to the wastes aids in reducing the buildup of Torment. During the course of their game, Sharp seeks to find a job to support himself. He applies for a graveyard shift gas-station position. The interviewer, a swaggering redneck, rushes through his interview, and refuses to return Sharp's calls inquiring about the job. Sharp goes back to the site, where he's not only told that someone else has the job, but is mocked, called “fagboy” and threatened. His Torment flares, and he becomes obsessed with the job denied him. He decides that if the new employee who “stole” his job were no longer available, they would have no choice other than to give the job to him. Without



telling the rest of his throng, he returns in the middle of the night to the work site and tries to intimidate the new employee. They get into a scuffle, and the job-thief strikes Sharp with a tire iron. The pain causes his Torment to rise again, and he strikes back with the nearest weapon at hand — the gas nozzle. When the frightened employee drops his cigarette into the spilled pool and the gas ignites, the fire worsens Sharp's Torment. Skin charred, he retreats in almost mindless horror to the throng's lair. The rest of Dead Zone finds him there, still smoldering. He reeks of fire and fuel, and speaks of nothing but plans to burn down the entire strip mall that the station is located in. It is obvious that his Torment is dangerous, and before long he may find it necessary to leave the throng and go off to the wastes to reduce it.

Torment is not the only force that drives Prometheans to go to the wastes. For example, shortly before the throng convened, Mr. Eglantine attempted the generative act. He failed, and much to his horror, spawned a Pandoran instead. Although Mr. Eglantine managed to destroy the Sebek before it could escape, he still bears the mental,

if not the physical, scars of the encounter. Because of knowledge gathered over his years of existence and the teachings of his own creator, Mr. Eglantine now realizes that his next attempt to create another Promethean is even less likely to succeed than this one. He may well decide to go to the wastes before trying again. Prolific Prometheans who wish to create additional progeny sometimes go to the wastes for a time to reduce their Azoth (and the related penalties from having performed the generative act before) before attempting the generative act.

Little Mikey, on the other hand, has her own reasons for going to the wastes. She has, with unprecedented speed, progressed through a multitude of milestones, and her player was called upon to make the roll for Rebirth recently. Unfortunately, she failed — perhaps due in part to having given in to the temptation to perform lacunae on a weaker Promethean she encountered along her path. Now she must go to the wastes to reduce her Azoth (and subsequently rebuild it) before she can attempt Redemption again.

## As One

Occasionally, all members of the throng go to the wastes at the same time. Although they cannot interact in game (this, after all, defeats the purpose of the mandatory seclusion of going to the wastes), it gives the Storyteller the opportunity to handle the situation without the added complication of the rest of the troupe continuing on with the regular part of the game. If the members of Dead Zone all find themselves gone to the wastes at the same time, their Storyteller may wish to spend time with each of the players separately to play through what happens to their characters during their secluded time. This time should not be glossed over or downplayed, as going to the wastes will not only be different for each of them, but is also an important time for characters (and their players) to gain additional insights into the Pilgrimage and their own roles.

Mr. Eglantine approaches his seclusion philosophically. He knows that the very act of trying to create another of his kind has polluted his Azoth to an extent that any further attempts to do create will be hampered. Having witnessed firsthand the horror of a creation gone wrong, he worries about another attempt, and yet his desire to create a child-companion for himself is stronger than his fear. He methodically sets out to do everything he can to make certain his next attempt is successful, and although he loathes to separate himself from his newly found throng, he knows it will increase his chances of success with the generative act next time. Thus he carefully makes arrangements, preparing himself as for a hermitage. Hoping to use the solitude to study some arcane texts he has recently discovered, he even arranges for solitary lodging at a remote location near a restful river.

Sharp, on the other hand, makes no preparations whatsoever for going to the wastes. As his Torment builds, he becomes more and more obsessive about everything in his existence: finding a job, others' perceptions of him and potential betrayal by those he trusts. His growing Torment stains his Azothic aura, making him more repugnant even to members of his own throng. The rest of Dead Zone begins, if not to shun the Adonis, at least to grow more uncomfortable in his presence. Wrapped in the throes of Torment, he simply flees one night, leaving no word for his throng-mates as to his intention. He spends his time shunning company and on the run. Moving more or less randomly, he continues until at last he drops from sheer exhaustion, and slumbers. Upon waking, he begins running again, repeating this process until at last the tainted Torment is burned away and his Azoth is once again pure.

Obviously, this is a chancy method of going to the wastes. If Sharp should happen to run across a traveler, the Adonis must start all over again. Unless the Storyteller has a specific reason to foil the player's plans — one

that enhances Sharp's story and the chronicle as a whole — the Storyteller should probably leave the character to his retreat. Going to the wastes is hard enough without throwing up more obstacles.

Little Mikey's time spent going to the wastes, however, differs significantly from that of either of her throng-mates. Her recent failure in her attempt at Redemption has turned her philosophically inwards and away from her original Refinement, Aurum, onto the Refinement of Self. Unlike Sharp, she is not driven by the ghosts of her Torment, but instead seeks to find in her travels what she perceives must be her own internal imperfection, that which kept her from Redemption. For a Promethean who knows nothing but the city, survival in the wilderness will be a challenge, but through these trials and her own introspective contemplations during them, she hopes to refine herself through the final degrees to prepare for her successful Magnum Opus.

Although each of these challenges is separate from the others and will require in-depth interaction with the players, the fact that all three members of Dead Zone are going to the wastes at the same time simplifies the situation for the Storyteller. As well, and perhaps more importantly, it reduces the in-character ramifications for the other members of the throng.

## A Hermit Alone

In all likelihood, though, while all of the members of Dead Zone have reasons to seek the wastes eventually, chances are that when they do so, it will not be at the same time. Instead, Sharp may attempt to control his Torment for as long as possible until he snaps one day and abandons the rest of the throng. Or, if it appears that the Adonis has managed to keep his Torment under control, Mr. Eglantine may begin planning his sojourn, leaving Little Mikey to deal with Sharp's barely tamed internal struggles. Whether the remaining throng-members bond closer in the absence of the other, or whether this sets them off onto their own journeys to the wastes, entirely depends upon how the characters react to their loss.

Becoming a member of a Branded throng is one of the most significant events any Promethean will ever undergo. Leaving that throng, even temporarily, is a difficult decision, but as noted above, one that may become necessary or desirable for a wide variety of reasons. However, the impact of going to the wastes isn't solely on the individual who is leaving. Human families often find themselves at a loss when one of their children goes off to college or moves out for the first time, and yet this is a natural progression that their society teaches them is inevitable. How much stronger, then, is the impact for Prometheans who have no societal context for their loss? Empty nest syndrome has nothing upon the loss felt in a throng when one member leaves. It is more akin to a divorce or death in the family, even if the throng-member plans to return quickly.

## Departures

Similar to Sharp's, some departures to go to the wastes are quite spontaneous. These, most often Torment-driven, are still not unexpected, at least by those left behind. The rise of Torment is not a subtle one in most of the Created, and even if Little Mikey and Mr. Eglantine do not know when the breaking point will be, they likely sense that something must give soon where their belabored throng-mate is concerned. It may be a relief when Sharp does finally disappear. With the rise of Torment comes an associated increase in taint in his Azoth. The Measure becomes an uncomfortable encounter, even for members of the throng. Mr. Eglantine begins to avoid the Adonis, and Little Mikey finds it is all she can do to keep from wrapping her strong fists around his delicate neck and squeezing.

And yet, for all that a Tormented Sharp is uncomfortable to be around, he is still "family." While Little Mikey and Mr. Eglantine may breathe a short sigh of relief when Sharp goes to the wastes to purge his Torment, it is not long before guilt and sorrow set in.

The absence of a throng-mate isn't any easier when the journey is planned. A Promethean such as Mr. Eglantine may begin preparations to go to the wastes long before departing. While these arrangements may at first seem preferable to a sudden departure, rather than preparing the rest of the throng for his absence, they often serve only as a constant reminder that the loss is coming. Sharp, feeling the effects of rising Galateid Torment, may fixate on his soon-to-be-departed throng-mate. He may become obsessed with Mr. Eglantine, involving himself heavily in every aspect of Eglantine's existence that he can, in an attempt to convince Eglantine not to go. Sharp may try to make himself indispensable, hoping that this will prevent the departure, or he may begin spending as much time away from his throng-mate as possible, in an immature attempt to hurt Mr. Eglantine in the same ways Sharp anticipates hurting when his throng-mate leaves.

Other throng-members may find themselves growing increasingly resentful of the efforts made by the departing individual in other ways. Little Mikey may feel that Eglantine's going to the wastes will leave her responsible for Sharp's safety, a responsibility she may not feel up to. She may, consciously or subconsciously, sabotage his preparations. Important items may become "lost," funds may be diverted to other needs and "emergencies" may arise that she hopes will delay the Osiran's departure, perhaps indefinitely. In the extreme, it is possible she may even severely injure herself or one of the other members of the throng in an attempt to keep the "family" together.

## A Gaping Hole

Throns that are missing a member due to long-term absences such as going to the wastes may (at the

Storyteller's discretion) suffer tangible effects as well as emotional ones. Game effects that normally hinge upon their presence, such as increasing or slowing of the Disquiet or Wasteland effect or the ease of learning certain Transmutations may be rendered null while the influencing throng-member has gone to the wastes. Likewise, even if the absent member is technically within the range for throng-members to be able to share Pyros, he is not able to do so. The member's presence is effectively removed from the throng temporarily, both physically and spiritually.

The time a Promethean spends gone to the wastes is best run in a side session between the player and the Storyteller, in part to keep the information centered on the particular character involved. While Sharp may return and share his adventures with the rest of the throng, what he tells them will be presented through his (and his player's) intentional and unintentional filters. On a purely pragmatic note, running this information outside of the normal game session prevents the other throng-members' players from having to sit around with nothing to do.

Storytellers should encourage their players to bluebook their characters' time in the wastes. While in-character journals (see p. 207 of **Promethean: The Created**) can enrich any **Promethean** game, they are of special benefit during times when a character has gone to the wastes. The player's logging process mirrors the introspective solitude the character is experiencing, and can add many layers of depth to this aspect of the game. Likewise, a journal provides a handy reference for both player and Storyteller, should either's memory of the incidents fail in the future.

## While You Were Out

The other side of the coin, of course, is that as the throng goes on in the character's absence, his player is left with no involvement in the at-home activities, hardly the recipe for an entertaining game session. A variety of options exist for handling this situation. While the player may simply choose not to attend games for the duration of his character's absence, a large part of the entertainment value of roleplaying games is the social aspect to them. Excluding one player from the group for a few sessions likely reduces the fun not only for the affected player, but for the rest of the troupe as well.

Perhaps more preferable is giving the player the opportunity to introduce another character. This option has two alternatives: creating another character for the game, or allowing him to play a Storyteller character for the duration of his player character's absence.

Introducing an additional character to the existing throng poses several complications, not the least of which is that (hopefully) the character will be returning to the







throng at some point. This leaves his player faced with the choice of setting aside the second character upon his return, or (if the Storyteller is amenable) juggling two characters in the same chronicle.

Short-term characters can be an asset to a game. They give players an opportunity to explore character concepts very different from those of their main characters. Referring back to *Dead Zone*, a new character might give Sharp's player a chance to dabble with playing a Tammuz and to experience how the Golem is different than his Adonis. Or it might offer him the chance to explore a different aspect of the Galateid's sanguine nature; perhaps his new Adonis might be boisterous and outgoing where Sharp was obsessive and introspective.

Either way, the new character might also give the other players (and characters) a broader range of experiences than their small throng has previously had access to. The new character may have things to teach the existing ones, not only by virtue of potentially being of a different Lineage and Refinement, but also in terms of background, experience and attitude. In a Promethean's world, any new input may very well be the key to new insights, milestones and advances along the Pilgrimage.

While this can be enriching to the game, it can be challenging for the player, the Storyteller and the rest of the troupe. Everyone concerned must spend extra effort to keep lines of in-character information straight. Which character took part in which conversation? Was it Sharp who knows about Little Mikey's phobia of snakes, or the new Golem? Who talked with the security guards outside the lair, and which character had the key piece of information about the Centimani the throng encountered? These issues are difficult enough when the characters are played sequentially, but if Sharp's player is allowed to retain his new character, even for occasional visits, after Sharp returns from the wastes, they get even more complicated.

Of course, if the Storyteller chooses, he can either take control of the Golem when Sharp returns, effectively turning him into a supporting character, or find an appropriate end for one of the two characters, rather than allow Sharp's player to retain control of both. Perhaps a more interesting solution to the "what to do with Sharp's player while his character is gone to the wastes" problem, however, is to assign him temporary control over a Storyteller character.

### Only Yours for the Moment

Some players do not give a temporary character the same level of thought as one that they intend to play long-term. Others may, even if the character is well crafted, play with a more "disposable" attitude, charging headlong into perilous situations even when doing so doesn't really suit the character. This type of behavior

may not only result in a "revolving door" character process for the player but may lay waste to the game for the other players as well. A variety of possibilities exist for dealing with these challenges.

Offering a small number of experience points or other in-game benefit for the regular character if the temporary character is played well can sometimes be the carrot that leads a player away from the temptation to treat a temporary character with less care than a regular one. Such rewards should not be overwhelming, perhaps as little as a point or two of experience per session, but they can help compensate for the player's regular character being out of play.

Where the carrot does not work, sometimes the stick will. Strong-arm tactics can reduce negative player impact at two different stages in a game. The first, and most effective, is when the character is being created. Making certain that the player is not building a character who will be disruptive to the game often nips such situations in the bud. A Storyteller who has approved a mentally unstable, pyromaniac Frankenstein with a background of killing police officers and no Skills beyond combat can hardly complain when the Wretched comes into play and starts wrecking things. Of course, if the Storyteller creates the character, he can sidestep this particular issue, but then the responsibility falls upon the Storyteller to both create a three-dimensional character and to communicate the nature of the character adequately to the player.

But assuming the issue is not with how the character was designed but that she is being played disruptively, the Storyteller can still attempt to guide the player through the use of the stick. In this case, the Storyteller can not only reward smaller numbers of experience points and Vitriol if the character is being played disruptively, but can also introduce strong in-character consequences for the character's actions. Nosey public-watch groups, police investigations and media attention can send a strong message that the character's actions are not going unnoticed. This is, perhaps, the least effective method of those offered. While it can sometimes work in conjunction with other methods, by the time the situation has devolved to the stage where post-creation stick-methods are necessary, it's probably time to sit down and have a serious (and private) discussion with the player about the ramifications that his actions are having on the rest of the game.

Of course, one way to avoid a player running a temporary character differently from a long-term one is to not tell the players the character is temporary at all. For example, while Sharp is gone to the wastes, the Storyteller could give Sharp's player a character sheet and a cursory background for Meridian, an Adonis with a charismatic and rowdy personality quite different from Sharp's. Meridian's an



experienced Promethean, having already created progeny, completed many milestones and experienced several Refinements. According to the information given to Sharp's player, Meridian is just passing through. On the character sheet, Meridian has the goal "obtain all information possible on Dead Zone," and the Storyteller gives Sharp's player a special notebook to log all the information he gathers on the other characters. Intrigued by his task, Sharp's player throws himself into playing Meridian, alternating between charm and guile to gather data on the throng over the course of the next several games. Then, when Sharp returns to play from the wastes, the Storyteller takes Meridian's character sheet back (along with the notebook) and drops the bomb: Meridian is Sharp's creator, and the information gathered may now be used to manipulate the throng to whatever purposes the elder Adonis has in mind. Or maybe Meridian is one of the Hundred Handed, with an army of Pandorans waiting to take over the throng's lair and keep the Prometheans captive as living Vitriol banks. Maybe he's a Serpent attempting to understand the effects of a

missing member on a throng, or a rival, who tries to convince the throng-members to shun their returned member and accept Meridian in Sharp's place. Maybe Meridian is just a nomadic Promethean who is seeking allies to help protect him from the enemy who is hot on his heels (and now heading directly for the throng). Or maybe he's a plot device, and his death in the next session will pull the throng into the Storyteller's next plot line.

While all of these aspects can be used secretly by the Storyteller to wind the new character into the chronicle before the Storyteller resumes control of it, they can also be revealed privately to the player. Not knowing for certain what role the character will play in the future may help the player (and the players of the rest of the throng) to treat him as more "real" than they might have if he were introduced solely as a stop-gap character, but being privy to some interesting information that the rest of the players remain unaware of may accomplish the same task. The decision about how much to tell in such situations is up to the Storyteller, based on her knowledge of the player's proclivities and playing style.

## The End

Going to the wastes can be a dangerous endeavor. A throng provides protection, as well as a source of support and a sense of belonging; to leave that safety is to take one's life into his own hands. Hungry Pandorans, angry mobs, raging Firestorms and a plethora of other natural and supernatural threats await the retiring Promethean. The World of Darkness is a deadly environment, and not all characters return from their solitary sojourn. Should a character who has gone to the wastes fall prey to Vitriol-starved fiends or bloodthirsty hordes of Disquiet-driven humans, it is up to the Storyteller to decide whether the rest of the throng is informed in some way as to their loss.

### Words from Beyond the Grave

Since communication with those who have gone to the wastes is counterproductive to the process and few (with the exception of non-Torment driven individuals such as Mr. Eglantine) schedule an itinerary for their journey, throng-members may not realize that anything ill has befallen their companion for quite some time. The cooperation of the fallen character's player is vital, should the Storyteller desire to maintain a sense of secrecy on this matter. Losing a character can be an emotional event, and care should be taken to enlist the player's aid in a positive manner if the Storyteller wishes to keep the other troupe members in the dark.

Should the Storyteller decide to create a method for the troupe to learn of their throng-mate's death, a variety of options exist. Although no rules directly address the issue, the Storyteller might use the alchemical Brand as a means of communicating the loss of a throng-member. The Brand itself might flare white-hot upon the fallen throng-member's death (and potentially again should he be resurrected). While the throng may not realize the exact importance of the blaze, ignoring a message inscribed on your flesh in charred sigils is difficult. If the Brand includes an aspect representing each of the throng-members, the symbol associated with the dead Promethean might fade as his Vitriol — and eventually his life — is gnawed away by feasting Pandorans. Should his death be more sudden, the symbol might feel as if it were being torn from each throng-member's flesh as the Brand disappears altogether.

Alternatively, the throng might encounter another of the Created who brings word of their throng-mate's death as part of his Ramble, not realizing the significance of what he is reporting. Or, should the circumstances surrounding the fatality merit it, mundane media might bring light to the fate of their fallen companion, perhaps in a form that only they would recognize as being supernatural.

### New Beginnings

Many of the same issues that plague players bringing in temporary characters while their primary characters

have gone to the wastes also exist for players who have lost a character. Thankfully, this is one situation in which the Prometheans' low population actually works in the player's favor. As the Created are so rare, it is more likely that a throng may overlook some of the rough edges that might have stopped a character from bonding quickly with the group in a more populous supernatural race. A werewolf pack may shun a new shapeshifter who doesn't seem to fit in right away; likewise a group of vampires probably treat a newcomer with suspicious distain. But the Saturnine Night is lonely, and often the need for company overrides other concerns.

While losing a character can be a frustrating and emotional event for players, the best solution is often the old adage: get back on the horse. Storytellers can aid players who have lost characters to blend back into the throng by providing possible hooks for the players' involvement. A new character could have heard of one of the throng-members through another Promethean's Ramble, or (if the other players are willing) could have shared a Ramble with one of them in the past and is now returning to renew his acquaintance. Perhaps one member of the existing throng owes (or is owed) a favor to the new character for past aid. New and old players can be thrown together via storyline, as a Pandoran chases the new character into the throng's territory, or she holds a piece of information or an item that may be the key to one of the existing throng-member's next milestones. Even with very different philosophies and goals, Prometheans, when thrown together, are more likely to group together than many other supernatural character types, just by virtue of the scarcity of their kind and the nature of their quest.

## A Stone's Weight

The Prometheans' Pilgrimage is unique to the World of Darkness. Progressing toward, rather than away from humanity is a path vampires, werewolves and mages cannot hope to follow, and milestones serve as a marker of this unique journey as well as offering vital and immediate tangible benefits to the Promethean character. No other type of character in the World of Darkness has the opportunity to gain an advantage of the magnitude that the milestone-Vitriol system offers Prometheans, and this, as well as the fact that each milestone brings them closer to the potential for Redemption, makes the milestone a crucial part of **Promethean**.

The essential nature of milestones also makes them one of the most challenging aspects of Storytelling **Promethean**. Because milestones play such an important role in each character's Pilgrimage, they require real consideration on the part of the Storyteller to create, both at their inception and their implementation.



No hard and fast criteria exist for what makes a good milestone, and each should ideally be catered to the individual Promethean. While Sharp may undergo an epiphany while helping a mother teach her children, the same event may mean little or nothing to Little Mikey. Likewise, the challenge of learning to stay one's anger for the sake of an ally may be meaningless to the Galateid, and yet may prove to be just the insight needed for the Wretched to progress along her Pilgrimage. A Promethean following the Refinement of Gold might learn a great deal of insight when faced with the choice of aiding a terminally ill human "out of her misery," while the same act might not affect a Fury as greatly. Each milestone must be planned carefully, specific enough to give the character (and the player) a real feeling of accomplishment rather than a few experience points for finishing a random quest, but not so precise that it's unattainable. Each milestone should take into consideration the character's past and current worldview, as well as his situation and circumstances, creating a milestone that is personally meaningful to the character.

The Storyteller's task is not complete when the character's milestones are drafted. During the course of game play, she is then responsible for giving the character opportunities to complete those milestones. It's hardly fair (or fun) to assign Sharp a series of milestones all related to discovering or interacting with his creator and then set him in a chronicle where his creator is already destroyed or where no clues are available to her existence. It isn't truly entertaining to make achieving milestones too easy, either. They should truly stand as situations that lend the characters new insight, open their eyes to new perspectives or teach them something important to their progress along their Pilgrimages.

## Weaving Threads of Stone

One of the ways that a Storyteller can simplify the challenge of creating and implementing individual milestones is to create milestones that, while remaining individually catered to each character in the throng, are interrelated enough to make the opportunities to realize them closely related in the same scenario.

Dead Zone's Storyteller decides on the following interrelated milestones to begin with for the throng. The Vitriol ranges are offered based on the table on p. 191 of **Promethean: The Created**. The Storyteller may want to note down a general range upon creating the milestones, and award high or low within that range based upon the difficulty of the task as it manifested, and the depth of insight the character drew from the experience. As well, while it is good to have milestones of various importance levels planned out for each character, it is not imperative that each character have the same exact levels available

at any given time. Some milestones will take longer to complete than others (and will be worth commensurately more Vitriol.) As long as each character has a variety of potential milestones at any given time, the potential exists for the characters to continue progressing along their Pilgrimages.

### Little Mikey

- *Discover the identity of two or more of the victims from whom she was created.* (The Storyteller wants her to deal with the fact that she is not a human, but was created from several individuals. He hopes this will give her the opportunity to come to terms with her nature as a Frankenstein, as well as potentially give her empathy with the transitory nature of human existence. Vitriol range: 1-3)

- *Experience a great personal loss.* (Born of a great tragedy herself, this milestone is intended to increase her empathy with humanity, as well as to introduce her to the human emotion of sorrow. Vitriol range: 4-8)

- *Solve a situation with guile rather than brute force.* (Overcoming her choleric nature is a major step toward balancing her humours. Vitriol range: 4-8)

- *Risk her life for another's cause.* (Having read in Little Mikey's background that she has a self-centered and "loner" personality, the Storyteller anticipates that it may be difficult for the Wretched to develop willing self-sacrifice, which she feels is an important part of the character's Pilgrimage. Vitriol range: 9-12)

### Sharp

- *Discover the identity of his creator.* (This can be an important milestone for any Promethean who has been abandoned after the generative act, but especially so for Galateids, whose need to connect may leave them feeling unfinished without closure in their creator/child relationship. Vitriol range: 1-3)

- *Attempting to perform the generative act.* (Sharp sees himself as unworthy of his creator's affections. It may prove difficult for him to overcome this enough to be willing to bring another Promethean into existence. Not only is creating another Galateid a required step before Sharp's Magnum Opus, but because of his self-view the Storyteller believes that being willing to attempt it at all is an important step in his Pilgrimage. Vitriol range: 4-8)

- *Resolve his creator's situation through forgiveness or revenge.* (Sharp carries a great deal of guilt with regard to his creation. His current view of it is introspective: "What is wrong with me that forced my creator to leave?" When he is ready to investigate outside of himself, the Storyteller believes Sharp will have learned an important lesson. Vitriol range: 9-12)

- *Experience envy and empathize with the envy he creates in others.* (Many Galateids are lifelong victims of their own envy-Torment, and some become masters at manipulating

the envy they cause in others. Fewer, however, learn to draw the connection between their own pain and that of others. Vitriol range: 4–8)

#### Mr. Eglantine

- *Incorporate a new technology in a meaningful way.* (After having spent a lengthy period recently gone to the wastes, Mr. Eglantine is seriously behind on his technical savvy. A new technology, not only learned but incorporated into his existence, will give him another connecting point with humanity. Vitriol range: 1–3)

- *Translate arcane documents.* (Mr. Eglantine's search for the secrets of Promethean history may provide clues for his throng and him on the nature of the Pilgrimage. Vitriol range: 1–3)

- *Be emotionally impacted by the death of a human.* (Possessing a cool and dispassionate nature, it would be a significant stride for a person's death to affect Mr. E. on an emotional level. Vitriol range: 4–8)

- *Atone for a wrong-doing.* (Remorse, and taking action upon that remorse, is a human quality that the Storyteller feels the cold-blooded character would do well to learn. Vitriol range: 4–8)

At first glance, the three seem so different that it would be difficult to reconcile their milestones into a cohesive setting. But as their Storyteller reads over the charactersheets and familiarizes himself with their backgrounds, he decides that the reason Sharp's creator abandoned him was because he was killed in the same plane accident that created Little Mikey's raw materials. Having already returned from one previous death, Sharp's creator may have been investigating a mysterious artifact, running from an enemy or traveling to return to her own throng (all possible tie-ins for further storylines for Dead Zone along the line). But by tying her into Little Mikey's history, the Storyteller is able to weave the milestones into a similar setting. Likewise, the investigation at the airport may give Mr. Eglantine the opportunity to learn (and incorporate) new technologies into his archaic existence, or to learn an important lesson from the human tragedy that occurred during the accident.

Or, taking an entirely different tactic on the situation, the Dead Zone's Storyteller may decide to send the throng off after rumors of a tome of interest to Mr. Eglantine, which they later discover is being kept by the same Promethean who created Sharp. By surrounding the elder Galateid with sufficient brute force to make a frontal assault foolhardy, the Storyteller may encourage Little Mikey's character to either aid in the acquisition through non-forceful means or take great personal risk in helping Eglantine gain the tome.

While it is important for a Storyteller to avoid railroading players into specific actions or reactions, by looking for opportunities in which milestones for multiple players may be addressed in a single situation, he reduces the levels of complication for himself and the chance that his players may find themselves being pulled in a multitude of directions, breaking the game up into several separate storylines rather than one cohesive tale.

## Archetypal Mile Markers

Another tactic that can be beneficial for Storytellers faced with the daunting task of creating milestones for throngs is merging milestones. Certain points along the human journey are significant and common enough that almost every member of a society understands them. In Western society, these might include birth, learning to walk and talk, potty training, entering school, first dates, the loss of virginity, marriage, divorce and, finally, death. These are situations that, even if we, as humans, did not experience them directly, or if our experience was significantly different from someone else's, we still have an understanding (or at least an idea) of what the experience is "supposed" to be like. Birthdays involve celebration, first dates are full of nervousness and anticipation; marriage is joyful, death is sorrowful. They are archetypal human milestones.

## Creating for the Created

The Created may also have similar archetypal milestones, although they may be very different from, or very similar to the human kind. Few (save perhaps for unfortunate members of the Golem Lineage) need to learn to talk, and most do not need to learn other basic human functions such as eating or walking. Humans learn some things early in their lives, however, that Prometheans do not necessarily innately know. Newly created Prometheans may or may not innately know how to read and write, for example, and almost never innately understand social niceties, making the first emotional conversation with a human an important milestone for many of the Created.

Some of these archetypal milestones may provide the Storyteller with the opportunity to create merged milestones for the troupe's throng. If none of Dead Zone, for example, has ever had a lair, then securing a long-term safe haven may be an equally important milestone for all members of the throng. Other such milestones might include the throng meeting a supernatural being (and recognizing it as such), defeating a Pandoran together, encountering a Centimanus or weathering a Firestorm. Even forming a Branded throng, if not simply part of the characters' background, can itself be a milestone for every Promethean involved.

Other merged milestone opportunities may be encountered by the Created on a less-equal footing. When Sharp creates another Promethean, the rest of the group may witness the generative act for the first time, giving them additional insight into the nature of being one of the Created. While this may be a superlative milestone for the Adonis, it may also be a minor or major one for the rest of the throng. Likewise, Sharp learning a new Transmutation (a major milestone for someone who

knows nothing about the Promethean existence) might potentially serve as a minor milestone for the rest of the throng, who are unfamiliar with the possibilities of Sharp's favored Transmutations. Mr. Eglantine taking on an Athanor might be a superlative milestone for him. But, since it is the first knowledge the other members of Dead Zone ever gain of Athanors, it may also serve as a minor milestone for each of them. Examples of other superlative, major and minor milestones are offered on p. 191 of **Promethean: The Created**, and can be used as a basis for establishing how much Vitriol should be awarded for milestones of each level.

Sometimes one Promethean's milestone paves the way for others' on a more philosophical level. When Sharp chooses to show mercy to a human rather than murdering her (or conversely, to kill her unnecessarily), it certainly may be a milestone for him. But depending on the circumstances, it may also provide other members of his throng (if they are present and aware of his choice) the opportunity to make similar monumental (and milestone-worthy) decisions. Do they support their throng-mate's choice? Do they attempt to stop him or swallow their concerns? Does Sharp's decision change how they feel about him? Each of these questions may provide the insight needed to complete a philosophical milestone related to Sharp's initial choice.

Another type of merged milestone is a situation in which one character's choice directly affects the other in a monumental way. If Little Mikey abandons the rest of her throng-mates while they are wounded, leaving them for dead in a battle with a pack of werewolves, it may be equally milestone-worthy, although opposite in function, for all of the throng-members. The Wretched gains insight from the difficult choice of "them or me" as well as learning the consequences of betraying those who trust her. The rest of the throng, on the other hand, learns an important lesson about self-preservation and perfidy. Lessons such as these may have to be handled more fluidly than other milestones, but certainly provide insightful learning opportunities for all involved.

### On the fly

While Storytellers should begin each game with a number of pre-planned milestones for each character, Storytellers should not feel limited to these pre-set milestones. Players often lead their characters in unanticipated directions, and the characters should not be penalized for handling situations differently than expected. Although these experiences are not listed as her milestones, if Little Mikey falls in love, creates progeny or dies and is resurrected, these experiences may very well be worthy of serving as "on the fly" milestones.

The deciding factor is not so much whether the Storyteller anticipated the situation, but whether the character learned something important from it. Situations in which characters gain a broader perspective of the world around them, grasp new insights into their Promethean nature or learn important lessons about themselves and humanity should always be eligible to serve as milestones and be rewarded with Vitriol.

## Milestones and One-Shot Play

**Promethean** is best suited to an ongoing chronicle. Although a Pilgrimage has no set time limitations, this journey takes a great deal of time and effort for any Promethean to complete. Some never reach their Magnum Opus. Not all **Promethean** games are long-term endeavors, though. Some, by virtue of time constraints, are limited to a number of sessions over a short-term period, or even a single session. These short-term games (labeled "one-shots" here, for ease of description, even though some may stretch out over more than one game session) provide a twofold unique challenge to the Storyteller.

First, milestones are an integral part of the Promethean experience, and yet milestones in a long-term game might happen for a given character every chapter or two. In a short-term game, a player probably won't get to experience his character completing superlative milestones such as successfully creating progeny or helping another character achieve Rebirth. The character may be hard-pressed to complete even a single minor milestone, if the game is very short. This denies the player the opportunity to experience one of the most interesting and unique aspects of **Promethean**. While the milestone marks the Created coming one step closer to becoming human, for the Promethean player a milestone not only gives her a sense of accomplishment mid-stream in the game, but also serves as a focal point that can help her more closely understand the world through her character's perspective. And since frequently one of the primary goals of a one-shot game is for the players to try out a new system, blowing all the whistles and ringing all the bells, to deny them the milestone experience is defeating, at least in part, the purpose of running the game.

Also, milestones provide a tangible in-game benefit to Promethean characters. In a world where they are shunned by human and nature alike, the Vitriol they receive for achieving milestones provides them with the additional supernatural strength (in the form of Azoth)

and powers (in the form of Transmutations) which help them continue their existence in an unkind world. As with milestones in general, these powers are part of the “bells and whistles” of **Promethean**, and to deny one-shot players the opportunity to experiment a bit with the interesting powers of **Promethean** goes against one of the primary goals of a one-shot game. If a player's character were to achieve a single milestone (and a few experience points) in a one-shot game, however, even if it was of a superlative level, the player would receive only enough Vitriol to purchase a single point of Azoth or a low level Transmutation. Hardly enough to get a feel for the depth and breadth of interesting features available in **Promethean**.

## Within or Without

What options, then, are available to Storytellers of one-shot stories? The simplest, if not the most satisfying, would be to simply eschew the use of milestones altogether. While milestones are a key element of **Promethean**, for a short-term game session, excising them is feasible. Even without milestones as markers for their journey, the **Promethean** theme of created beings attempting to understand and eventually achieve humanity is one which is intriguing and multi-dimensional. As characters would likely not be nearing Redemption in the course of a one-shot game, focusing entirely on thematic rather than goal-oriented objectives would still result in an interesting and entertaining game session. A one-shot game might involve a throng investigating a series of murders near their lair, for example, and discovering that one of the throng member's creator (or progeny) is responsible. Seeing the monstrous capabilities of those who are directly “related” to them can be cause for introspection that is very thematic for the **Promethean** game. Another game might revolve around characters whose efforts to “help” humans are turned against them, leaving them to weigh the cost of doing “right.”

## Alternate Guideposts

Some Storytellers running short-term games may wish to excise milestones from their game, and yet still provide their players with a feeling of progression toward Mortality. Implementing a gauging system for the Dead Zone for a one-shot game session would involve creating a method by which the characters could sense that they were proceeding along their Pilgrimage. One of a number of simple methods of descriptive feelings or cosmetic effects could be utilized to this end.

Promethean aspects could gradually be stripped away. Little Mikey, for example, could realize that each time she gains further insight into the nature of what it is to be human, one of the copper electrodes which adorn her Frankenstein visage disappears. For Sharp whose human

looks mask a Galateid façade of immaculately sculpted ice, human-esque flesh could slowly spread across his frozen mannequin form, as if he was slowly being thawed from the finger tips inward. And Mr. Eglantine could find that, with each milestone completed, his missing hand haunts him less. Perhaps it simply causes him less pain; he finds himself experiencing the “ghost limb” sensation less often. Or, as he nears Redemption, perhaps the missing appendage even begins to bleed, then slowly regenerate.

Alternatively, the Storyteller could make the changes less physical and more intangible. Mr. Eglantine may find that, the closer he approaches Redemption, the less his missing hand pains him. Rather than a constant niggling, the periods of being at peace with his missing appendage grow longer and more frequent. He may feel himself more refreshed, less constantly parched, as if the Water of Life which gave him his Promethean existence is quenching his long-denied thirst as he journeys nearer to his Magnum Opus. Likewise, Little Mikey may find her body moves more fluidly, as if her patchwork parts are less at war with one another and Sharp may discover that his passions, although still high, gradually become more easily tempered than they were upon the night he first woke, no longer controlling him wholly.

These methods may work well to demonstrate the characters' progression along their Pilgrimage, but they do not address the second aspect of milestones — serving as a trigger for in-game tangible benefits.

## Other Options

How then, is a Storyteller to allow her players to experience the two-fold processes of achieving milestones and then benefiting from the acquisition of Vitriol, in a game that only lasts a few hours? A variety of methods can be used to make even a short session serve as a “condensed version” of a longer chronicle with regards to milestones. Storytellers may find that one of these alternatives serves well for their one-shot game, but they are also encouraged to combine or modify several of them, or to create their own reward system. In one-shot games, even more so than in long-term chronicles, what truly matters is whether those involved are finding the game interesting and entertaining. One-shots are a perfect time for house rules, as long as they enhance, rather than detract from, the enjoyment of those involved.

## Milestones with Alternative Benefits

Another alternative that is well suited for one-shots is assigning alternative benefits to milestones. In a standard chronicle, milestones generate Vitriol for characters. Vitriol, in turn, allows them to purchase Azoth, Transmutations or Humanity. If characters only achieve one or

perhaps two milestones during the course of a game, the few points of Vitriol they earn will not make a tangible difference to their characters. Storytellers may wish to substitute other benefits for the acquisition of Vitriol in a one-shot game. This can be done in one of several ways. Some Storytellers may want to plan ahead of time that each time a milestone is achieved a certain in-game benefit is given. These might include completely refreshing the character's Willpower or Pyros, or gaining a single dot in a Skill or Attribute. Alternately, a Storyteller may allow a character a single use of a Transmutation in exchange a point or two of Vitriol. The last option allows players to experience some of the more high-powered aspects of the game without making their characters extremely powerful right away.

Another alternative is to create a chart of possible effects like those mentioned, and assign them as seems most appropriate at the time each character achieves a milestone. This gives the Storyteller more flexibility to customize the gain to the situation. When Little Mikey discovers the identity of one of the people from whom she was created, for example, the Storyteller could reward her with a dot of Intelligence (or Wits, or even Resolve, depending on which seems more appropriate to the investigation that was completed.) Mr. Eglantine might earn an additional dot of Investigation or Academics for translating arcane documents. Sharp's successful (or unsuccessful) completion of the generative act might garner the Adonis an additional point of Azoth, with the in-game logic being that the flare of Pyros from such creation refined and strengthened his Inner Fire.

Since few one-shot games using the standard milestone rules would garner more than one or two milestones per character, Storytellers can afford to be more generous with the alternate benefits of milestones than they might be in a longer chronicle.

## More Frequent Milestones

Some Storytellers may want to have their players experience the milestone aspect of the game more heavily than they normally would in a single session. One method for making milestones a more active part of a one-shot game is to create more milestones for them to achieve. The driving idea behind this method is that humanity is found not only in the big events of a person's life, but in the minutiae as well.

In a standard chronicle, a Storyteller might create 5-8 milestones, ranging from minor to superlative, for each player. As well, a number of situations are listed in **Promethean: The Created** (see p. 198). Although these are not milestones, per se, they still garner characters a single point of Vitriol in a traditional chronicle. In a one-shot game, this number could easily be increased into the minor milestone range. By creating more mile-

stones, or making milestones out of things which might not count as a full milestone during a standard chronicle, Storytellers can offer players more opportunities for their characters to experience the milestone process, and the rewards thereof. Examples might include:

- Meeting other supernatural creatures (1 point of Vitriol for each new being encountered, even if the Promethean has met one of that kind before.)
- Learning something about another supernatural type (1 point for each bit of new information, even if he has learned other similar things. Learning werewolves form packs similar to throngs and learning they have tribes would each be worth a point.)
- Discovering something new about his own Promethean nature (Learning a new Transmutation, discovering that he is part of a Lineage or Refinement, learning something specific about his particular flavor of Torment or Disquiet would each be worth a point.)
- Discovering something new about other Prometheans or about Promethean existence in general. (Each new discovery, no matter how minor, would be worth a point.)

For example, in the case of Dead Zone, each member of the throng gains 2 points of Vitriol for meeting another Promethean (the 2 other members of the throng), an additional 1 for discovering there were different Lineages of Promethean, 5 for joining the throng (which the Storyteller has decided is a major group milestone), 2 more for finding a lair (a minor group milestone), and another 2 for information learned about each other's Lineages while sharing their first Ramble. By the end of their first in-character evening together, they've each amassed 12 points of Vitriol that can be spent like experience points for Azoth, Bestowments, Humanity or Transmutations.

Mr. Eglantine's player, with an eye toward increasing the character's Azoth above its current 1 dot later in the game session, chooses to bank all 12 of his Vitriol. This option may allow him to purchase a second point of Azoth for 16 points of Vitriol later (the new level x 8), but it also carries an inherent risk. Pandorans (or unscrupulous Promethean) may sense his Vitriol-enriched aura and attempt to ravage the power for themselves.

Little Mikey's player, on the other hand, chooses a more immediate option. Hoping it will aid with upcoming investigations, she opts to purchase the Sensorium Transmutation "Sensitive Ears" at a cost of five Vitriol (Little Mikey follows the Refinement of Self). This leaves her seven points of Vitriol, which (due to Little Mikey's phobia of snakes) she chooses to spend on the Mesmerism Transmutation "Flight Instinct." Vitriol expended, Little Mikey is ready to return to the game with no worries about losing the precious power to hungry predators.

Aware that his character's quick temper may put him in dangerous places later in the game, Sharp's player decides to hedge his bets. He spends seven points of Vitriol (7 x



Sharp's current Azoth of 1) to purchase the Revivification Bestowment for his character. This, he hopes, will give the character a bit more chance to live through whatever risky situations he may get himself into further along the line. The player then banks the remaining five points of Vitriol toward a larger purchase later on.

Later in the game, Dead Zone goes through another encounter and gains more Vitriol. When the Prometheans discover that their lair is in the territory of a pack of werewolves, they all gain a point each for meeting each of the four werewolves (four points), another point for learning werewolves exist, one more for learning werewolves form packs, one for learning werewolf packs take territories and another for their first time witnessing werewolves change shape. When the Prometheans discover that the werewolves have captured Sharp's creator, each member of the throng receives the same three points of Vitriol as Sharp for his minor milestone. And when Little Mikey then uses guile, rather than force, to trick the beasts into sharing the location of the captive Galateid, the entire throng also gains the same four points of Vitriol as she would have in a standard chronicle for achieving this milestone. When the characters are on their way to the rescue, the Storyteller stops the players, bestows their 15 Vitriol and gives them the option to spend the points.

With this 15 to add to his already banked points, Mr. Eglantine now has more than enough Vitriol to increase his Azoth. His player spends 16 points (8 x his new Azoth level of 2) to increase his Azoth from 1 to 2. In addition, he decides to purchase the Vulcanus Transmutation "Electroshock Recharge." Since Mr. Eglantine is an Ophidian, the Transmutation costs 10 points of Vitriol. Mr. Eglantine already possesses Sense Pyros; if he did not, Electroshock Recharge would cost him an additional three points of Vitriol. (See pp. 118–119 of **Promethean: The Created** for more details on purchasing Transmutations.)

During the course of the game, Little Mikey lost a point of Humanity by stealing something of value to the werewolves and using it to negotiate for the information she needed. She would like to regain this point of Humanity, but the 15 points she has to spend are not enough to raise her Humanity of 6 back up to 7, so she decides to bank all points in hopes that the next segment of their adventure will give her the remaining six points of Vitriol she needs to increase her Humanity.

Sharp's player also wants to increase his character's Azoth. With his previously banked five points, he now has enough to spend the 16 points he needs to increase it, leaving him with four Vitriol. Since this is not enough to purchase Azoth, a Bestowment, Humanity or Transmutations, Sharp's player once again banks the remainder for later use.

Since bookkeeping for this point-heavy method could take up a great deal of time, the Storyteller for Dead Zone

has used a simple method of tick marks to keep track of what he believes are the milestones the characters achieve during the course of the game. In this way, he can award the points as a lump at various times throughout the game when the characters have earned enough to spend on a point of Azoth or a new Transmutation, rather than stopping the game every few minutes to note that the character has gained another minor milestone and point of Vitriol.

## More Powerful Milestones

Another option is to make the benefits of milestones more powerful. By altering the scale of milestones (see p. 191 of **Promethean: The Created**), Storytellers can give the milestones more impact on the progression of the character, at least from a power-level standpoint, while keeping the progression along the Pilgrimage aspect of milestones intact.

Rather than minor milestones resulting in an award of one to three points of Vitriol, the Storyteller may choose to award between four and eight points for each, with major milestones garnering characters nine to 15 Vitriol each. A superlative milestone might garner 16 Vitriol: enough to raise a character's Azoth from 1 to 2, or for him to purchase a two- or three-dot Transmutation.

The Storyteller may also choose to award two or three points of Vitriol for each of the normal single-point achievements (listed on p. 198 of **Promethean: The Created**), allowing the throng-members to accrue Vitriol more quickly from these small accomplishments.

## All of the Above

Storytellers may choose to implement some combination of the aforementioned methods, or all of them, in the same one-shot game. While doubling or more the effective rate of power gain for a long-term chronicle might result in a throng of unstoppable power-bloated Promethean trampling their way across the countryside, for a one-shot game the risks related to the characters becoming unreasonably powerful are fairly small, even if all of the suggested methods are combined. And, as one of the primary goals of a one-shot game is to allow players to try out as many aspects of the game as possible, allowing them to progress from beginning-level Created to powerful ones may actually be a benefit. It gives players the opportunity to play with a wider variety of powers than they would normally be able to access in a single game session. Should they come back to **Promethean** for a long-term chronicle, they will have a much broader range of experience with the powers available than they otherwise would have.

Storytellers must, however, explain that this progression is being artificially ramped up for the purposes of the trial game. The milestones are being both condensed and exponentially empowered to give the players a broader and

more in-depth experience with those aspects of the game. It would be unfortunate for a player to enter a long-term **Promethean** chronicle after playing a one-shot and expect that the same level of power.

## Crossover

While most other supernatural characters associate predominantly with their own kind (out of preference or necessity), the Created are more likely to not have that option, due to their numbers being so small. This alone is justification for having a Promethean character rub shoulders with the other denizens of the World of Darkness, but “crossover” games — chronicles in which players assume the roles of different types of supernatural characters — have a great deal of potential.

### Naming Names

When discussing **Promethean** in combination with **Vampire**, **Mage** or **Werewolf**, some terms from each of the games may prove useful.

Vampires call themselves *Kindred*. All belong to one of five *clans*, and many owe allegiance to political groups they call *covenants*. Vampiric supernatural abilities are called *Disciplines*. When Kindred form small groups that rely upon each other, the groups are referred to as *coteries*.

The word werewolves use for themselves is *Uratha*. They divide themselves into two factions, the savage, human-eating *Pure* and the less hostile but no less dangerous *forsaken*. Most werewolves belong to a *tribe*, a philosophically based social grouping. They use *rites* to summon the power of spirits, which can then grant the Uratha powerful *Gifts*. When werewolves form small bonded groups, they are called *packs*.

Mages often describe themselves as the *Awakened*. All mages walk one of five mystical *Paths*, and most belong to an ancient mystical *order*. The Awakened express their powers through *spells* capable of nearly anything. When mages choose to create small, tightly knit groups of individuals, the groups are called *cabals*.

## Supernatural Creatures and Disquiet

Supernatural creatures are not inherently unaffected by Disquiet. Mages, as humans, normally react to Disquiet exactly as humans do. Werewolves and vampires, on the

other hand, do not suffer effects similar to those of humanity, but still find themselves dangerously influenced by Disquiet. Storytellers who wish to run a game focusing on a mixed group of supernatural beings that includes a Promethean have several options available in dealing with Disquiet's effects on the rest of the group's characters.

For a short-term encounter, Storytellers may wish to have players use the normal Disquiet rules (see p. 172 of **Promethean: The Created**.) Over time, however, these will, at the very least, result in disharmony in the group. Especially in the case of vampires or werewolves, the end result will most likely be a blood bath as the group comes to blows in the grips of Death Rage or frenzy.

For longer interactions, Storytellers may wish to implement a modification of the Disquiet rules to facilitate extended interactions. At the simplest and most extreme, this can be simply ruling that other supernatural beings are, by their otherworldly nature, unaffected by Disquiet. This should have little effect on the game, other than giving the Promethean character a slightly larger base of individuals who are not supernaturally prompted to seek his destruction. As long as the characters interact with human beings on at least some occasions, the alienation theme will not be totally lost. In such a game, the juxtaposition between the Disquiet-sparked hatred received from the humans and the more individual reactions received from other supernatural beings may lead a Promethean's philosophy in interesting directions.

More enterprising Storytellers might choose to craft Disquiet rules that fall somewhere between these two extremes. Relying upon cosmetic effects rather than game mechanics to portray Disquiet's symptoms on supernatural creatures is one possibility. Mages could feel a shudder reminiscent of the Abyss whenever they are near one of the Created, and find themselves constantly looking over their shoulders for fear they are being watched by some unholy presence. A werewolf's hair might stand on end when a Promethean comes too close, the Divine Fire sparking almost visibly in the air. The werewolf may find himself wanting to establish dominance over the Promethean, with no idea why it is so important for the unnatural creature to bow to his superiority. Vampires may feel the Promethean's Inner Fire as if she had a tiny spark of the sun's own energy within her, not enough to hurt, but enough to set the bloodsucker on edge.

If game mechanics are desired, these superficial effects can be supplemented by a milder version of Disquiet. Perhaps the Promethean might be at a dice penalty when dealing socially with other supernatural beings, with this consequence either remaining the same or, should the Storyteller see fit, growing progressively at the same intervals as Disquiet would for a human. Thus a one-die penalty would be in place when Disquiet would normally be in the first stage, a two-dice penalty at the second stage and so on, until reaching the fourth stage where the Promethean

would be at -4 dice on any Social roll. (See pp. 169–170 of **Promethean: The Created** for details on determining the advancement of Disquiet.)

Yet another possibility exists for Storytellers who wish to eliminate Disquiet's effects from a Promethean's interactions with other supernatural creatures but who do not wish to arbitrarily declare Disquiet ineffective. This can be accomplished by having the Promethean(s) and the other characters work together to find a way to circumvent Disquiet's effects (which first requires identifying it). An inspired mage who wishes to be able to interact with one of the Created without suffering the ravages of Disquiet might take it upon herself to research a spell that would render her immune to them. Likewise, a werewolf might seek a long-lost Gift that would prevent him from losing control when interacting with the Promethean. Even among the cold-blooded undead, secret knowledge may very well exist that might allow the vampire to rein in his inhuman frenzy in spite of the prodding of Disquiet. The "Mitigating Disquiet" sidebar has some suggestions for how other supernatural creatures might circumvent this effect.

### Mitigating Disquiet

**Vampires:** While Disquiet has more to do with the Man than the Beast, the result is still a loss of control over frenzy. As such, a vampire who has mastered the first tier of the Coil of the Beast (p. 149 of **Vampire: The Requiem**) has an advantage. Depending upon how forgiving the Storyteller wishes to be, that Coil alone might be enough, or the vampire might need to develop a Devotion including Chastise the Beast and perhaps a dot of Resilience in order to make her immune to Disquiet. At the Storyteller's discretion, The Forgetful Mind (Dominate \*\*\*; p. 126 of **Vampire: The Requiem**) might be used to cure existing Disquiet.

**Werewolves:** Disquiet sends werewolves closer to Death Rage, and so fetishes such as the Mercy Gem (p. 206 of **Werewolf: The Forsaken**). Likewise, Gifts that mitigate Death Rage might, at a penalty, work to slow or cure Disquiet. A spirit of calm or compassion might be able to teach a Gift that prevents Disquiet, and such a spirit might be convinced (or forced) to use its Influence to add bonus dice to a werewolf player's Resolve + Composure roll to resist Disquiet.

**Mages:** If a mage knows that something about the Promethean's condition inclines mortals to detest and obsess over her, the mage can use a covert Perfecting spell of the Mind Arcanum (this requires Mind 3) to stave off Disquiet. Casting this spell allows the mage to shrug off Disquiet for

the next scene, unless he works duration factors into the spell. If the mage has Mind 4, he can cast this spell on others. Removing Disquiet once it has set in requires the use of the Breach the Vault of Memory spell (**Mage: The Awakening**, p. 214), but this will eventually wear off, at which point the Disquiet reasserts itself. With Mind 5, a mage can "reset" a person's mind with regard to Disquiet, removing any current traces and allowing the subject to start fresh with the Promethean.

## Unique Among the Unique

A Promethean forced to move only among mortals is a lonely creature indeed, her social bonds totally at the whim of Disquiet. If and when she encounters other supernatural creatures, she may be drawn to them simply by their lack of human reaction to her Azothic nature.

And, from the other direction, Prometheans are rare enough that few other supernatural creatures know of the Created's existence. Therefore, any supernatural beings a Promethean encounters probably don't have a pre-established opinion of the Created as a whole. While not all Created find acceptance in groups of other supernatural creatures, enough possibilities arise that the concept of running a game in which a Promethean runs with a werewolf pack or vampire coterie is not unthinkable. This storyline does, however, pose some challenges that a Storyteller would be wise to anticipate.

## One of the Gang

An entire tome could be written merely detailing all of the possible back-stories created to bring a Promethean into enough contact with other supernatural beings to be accepted into their social group, be it pack, coterie or cabal. In most games, however, this will be handled through creative background weaving on the part of the players. The Storyteller's real challenge, when dealing with predominantly non-Promethean troupes that contain a Promethean character, is in juggling the Pilgrimage for the Created character within the context of a **Werewolf**, **Vampire** or **Mage** game, and so that, rather than how to plausibly unite any given ratio of characters, is the focus of this section.

## What's In It for Me?

While any Promethean might find a place with another group of supernatural creatures, as one of the Created, he shares a major ambition with others of his kind (attaining Mortality). This is a goal that, while other supernatural characters (most notably vampires) might aspire to, they cannot attain. That does not mean that

other supernatural creatures cannot aid the Created along their Pilgrimages much in the way a Branded throng might. Beyond the minor milestones of simply meeting other supernatural creatures and learning about the truths and falsehoods associated with their mythology, long-term troupe association with vampires, werewolves and mages may all offer a Promethean aid on her Pilgrimage. Nothing of value comes without a price, however. Prometheans who spend significant amounts of time with non-Prometheans may experience some significant disadvantages as well.

## Seeds of the Past

Vampires, werewolves and mages share a common trait: all of them were once human, or at least believed they were. Most were raised by human parents (or parents thought to be human), attended whatever educational facilities that human children did and expected to live human lives and eventually die human deaths. Few ever realized, during this time, the reality of the supernatural world. Most did not believe in werewolves, vampires or mages until shortly before they became one. Prometheans, on the other hand, have never had that illusion (or if they did, it was very quickly dispelled). Few have a single memory of being treated as a human themselves, let alone the years that the other supernatural creatures possess.

Even though a vampire or werewolf views his lost humanity through the filter of his new supernatural perspective, he still has access to something that few Prometheans do: human memories of human experiences from a first-person perspective. Even the most inhumane werewolf or vampire may be able to, should he be so motivated, recount tales of his childhood and adolescence to the curious Promethean. The werewolf or vampire is less likely to look askance at the Created for asking strange questions: What was it like to go to school, to date, to marry? How does it feel to feed, to change, to kill? How did it feel to realize that you truly were different, that there was no going back? Do you ever wish you could go back? Do you ever wish you would die?

Those who have retained the most humanity, of course, may be able to share these memories, insights and perspectives with their Promethean allies more clearly than those who have distanced themselves from their human lives through age or radical paradigm shifts or both. A mage, being still human and thus having human insights and perspectives, can be an incredible boon to a Promethean seeking to learn about these things. More so even than the others, a mage may offer immediate human reactions to the Promethean's questions, and may be the closest a Created may ever get to having a relationship with a human without Disquiet's taint (provided that the mage has some way around Disquiet, of course).

## Among the Awakened



Mages are perhaps the most logical individuals for a Promethean to throw his lot in with. They look and act human (to the extent that they do not routinely shapechange or drink blood).

Despite their great supernatural power, they *are* human. But because of that power, they have the potential to dispel one of the greatest banes to the Promethean existence: Disquiet. Thus, they are potentially the only true humans that one of the Created may interact with outside of the damning influence of Disquiet.

From the moment of their Awakening, mages walk the line between "normal" humanity and almost godlike power, and that path colors every aspect of their lives. Their abilities are a siren song tempting them ever further from humanity, a situation that many Prometheans are familiar with. As the Created go about their Pilgrimage, many temptations lurk between their first waking moments and their Great Work. Torment compels them, Flux coerces them and even the instinctive drive to attain Humanity is not strong enough to guarantee their path will not deviate. Finding kinship within a cabal of mages may not lead a Promethean down the most direct path to his Magnum Opus, but he may learn much about the value of humanity while in the company of a cabal.

A mage cabal is the perfect place for Promethean to complete intellectual discovery milestones. Depending on the nature of the cabal and its members, he may find himself immersed in politics or philosophy, spirituality or the stock market, but time spent with mages is time spent in discovery and growth. A Promethean might easily experience milestones such as the following listed below, while spending time among the members of a mage cabal:

- Experience Supernal magic firsthand
- Witness the effects of Paradox
- Learn about Atlantis
- Discover which Path's views most closely reflect his own
- Learn about the Abyss or the Supernal realms

## Among the Kindred



A Promethean's Pilgrimage is not a utopian one. It is as valid to recognize the dark sides of one's self and how they correlate to similar murky places in humanity as it is to find the more idealistic resonances between the two. Regardless of

Refinement, the Created often find milestones in shadowy places: the discovery of hatred, jealousy or true fear; an understanding of the nature of prejudice; betrayal, manipulation, destruction and even death. Few are as well-qualified to act as mentor and guidepost into the sinister places of the World





of Darkness as the blood-drinking undead who carry out their eternal, infernal politics under cover of the night.

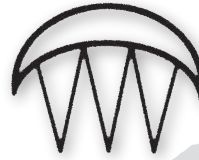
A vampire coterie is the perfect place for a Promethean to complete milestones focusing on hard decisions — weighing options, making choices and dealing with lies, deceit and multi-layered tactics, both as the target and the source. In the company of vampires, he will be faced with emotional and socio-political manipulation of the sorts that can only develop among those who have eternity to perfect them. He has the opportunity to learn that villainy sometimes wears an angel's face and know the price paid for every lesson learned. While it may seem counterintuitive, among the stagnant dead, a Promethean may learn the value of life, and through it, be spurred forward toward his own Magnum Opus. Should he spend time with a vampire or coterie, a Promethean may complete these types of milestones:

- Witness vampiric feeding
- Get to know someone who “died” centuries before the character was created
- Give up blood for a vampire, willingly or otherwise
- Fall under blood addiction

- Witness the Predator's Taint — the vampires' form of the Measure, which usually results in one Kindred cringing in fear before another, more powerful predator

- Be present at a vampire Prince's court or a covenant meeting

## Among the Uratha



Any Promethean who has seen the Disquiet-driven frenzy of a mob descending upon her knows that wrath is not a vice solely possessed by werewolves. It is not an Uratha's rage that makes it so rare for a Promethean to be adopted into the inner

circles of werewolf society, but the intrinsic conflict between a pack's drive to establish territory and the Wasteland's impact on any land the Created settles upon for long. Still, when the two paths do cross, a Promethean can learn much from the shapeshifters about strength and fury, as well as the bonds between those united in a common cause.

A werewolf pack is the perfect place for a Promethean to complete milestones related to action: situational discoveries,

emotional challenges and dealing intensely with the concepts of duty, family, control and the lack thereof. If one of the Created survives her time running with the wolves, she may experience milestones similar to the ones listed below:

- Witness a werewolf in their horrific half-wolf, half-human form
- Meet or see a Materialized spirit
- Comprehend the role of non-werewolf family members in werewolf society
- Witness a rite being performed
- See a werewolf in Death Rage (a very dangerous milestone!)

## A Stranger Among the Strange

Not all crossover games involving Prometheans and other supernatural beings



consist of a single Created among a group of werewolves, vampires or mages. While such a situation is less likely, a Storyteller could be called upon to run a game in which a Promethean throng forms the majority of the party, but another supernatural character is included. While the Created may accept the other for many of the same reasons that a solitary Promethean might seek out other supernatural creatures (companionship where Disquiet is less of a factor, expanding his knowledge base or strengthening his defenses against a hostile outside world), a non-Promethean cannot actually become part of a Branded throng. While she may be accepted

by the other characters as part of the throng, the actual process of including her in the alchemical pact does not work on a non-Pyros-bearing individual, so many of the supernatural (rather than social) benefits of belonging to a throng are denied her.

Non-Created individuals do not count for purposes of determining how much of a throng is of the same or different Lineages (for Disquiet or Wasteland purposes), and a Promethean cannot lend them Pyros by virtue of the alchemical Brand, no matter how much the others consider the outsider to be part of the throng. Without the Brand, the throng designation is a purely social one.



## CHAPTER FOUR

# TO THE WASTES

Tomorrow

Stone Mountain, GA — A gruesome scene greeted hikers this morning at Stone Mountain Park. The body of an unidentified woman, approximately 40 years of age, was found on the lawn beneath the famous bas-relief of Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis on horseback. While no official decision has been made, witnesses at the scene state that the death was a suicide.

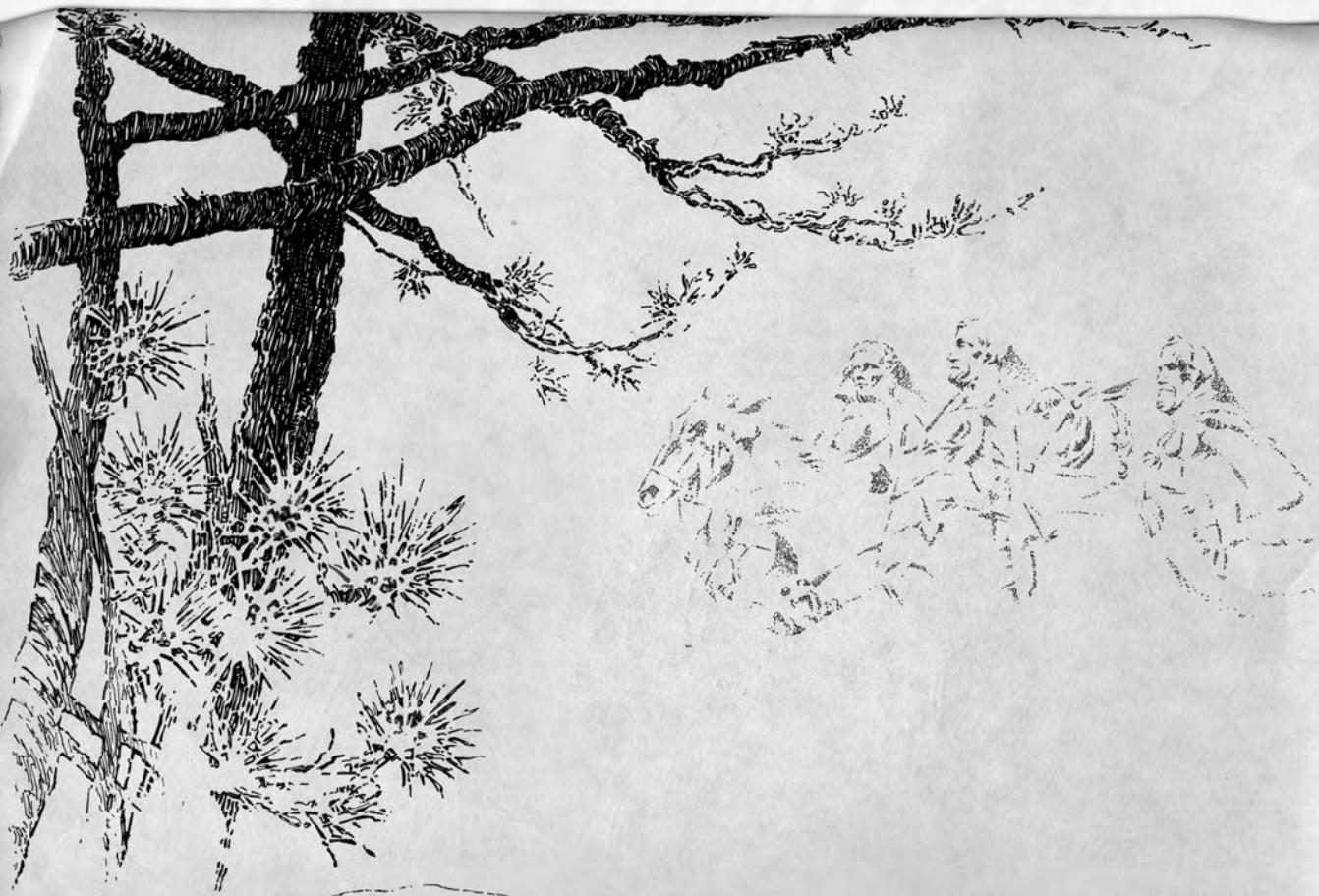
The woman was holding a pistol and had "a bullet hole in her chest and big hole in her back," said Emma Gattling, 37, of Denver, CO. "We'd brought our kids out here just last night to see the laser show, and we decided we'd come back and do some hiking. We never expected this."

Park officials say that the woman must have entered the park minutes after it opened, and are trying to trace cars in the nearby parking lot in hopes of tracing her identity. John Zimmerman of the Stone Mountain Police Department says that an official statement will be made sometime this afternoon, and if the victim has not been identified by then, a picture will be made available for broadcast in hopes that a friend or relative will identify her.

Only a handful of people saw the body before police and EMS crews arrived, but most, like Mrs. Gattling, were shocked and saddened. One man, however, who asked not to be identified, stated that "this is just some sick plea for attention. This old lady came out here with her ugly f—ing mullet and she saw all these young people around and she couldn't hack it, so she shot herself. And now she's going straight to Hell, because that's where suicides go, you know?"

Mrs. Gattling disagrees with this, however. "I can't explain this, but I think that poor woman died happy. I mean, maybe it's just something to do with the body's reactions after death, but she had the strangest look on her face. She was smiling like a woman in love. Like she was going home to her family."


-transcribed from the accounts of Zo Malak's death



Mavian







**“You can smell Greeley, Colorado, long before you can see it. The smell is hard to forget but not easy to describe, a combination of live animals, manure and dead animals being rendered into dog food . . . Many people who live there no longer notice the smell; it recedes into the background, present but not present, like the sound of traffic for New Yorkers. Others can’t stop thinking about the smell, even after years; it permeates everything, gives them headaches, makes them nauseous, interferes with their sleep.”**

— Eric Schlosser,  
Fast Food Nation

**T**he road to the New Dawn is long and arduous. Every Promethean feels the urge to obtain Mortality, but not every Promethean follows that urge. Those who do must meet their milestones, change the lead of their forms into the gold of a human body . . . and in so doing, gain something precious beyond words.

Along the way, though, the Divine Fire that passes for a soul in the Created can become tainted. Disillusionment, pain and anger lead to Torment, and Torment is a stumbling block on the Pilgrimage. All a Promethean can do is find somewhere far from human (or Promethean) contact and allow his poisoned fire to scorch the land. Going to the wastes is not a tradition, a religious practice or a ceremony among the Created, for such things would require a society. Going to the wastes is simply something that, occasionally, must be done.

In this story, the characters have a chance to go the wastes. After witnessing human misery, and probably accruing some Torment as Disquiet and violence build, they find themselves trapped beneath the Rocky Mountains. In this stony tomb, they can find the tools to carry on with their Pilgrimages with a renewed sense of purpose — if they can escape with their lives.

## Structure, Theme and Mood

“To the Wastes” is the fourth installment in the chronicle that began with “The Water of Life” in **Promethean: The Created**, and has taken the characters through the wreckage of New Orleans in “A Sheltering Storm” (presented in **Pandora’s Book**) and shown them that Prometheans and mortals can both be vicious and shortsighted in “Strangers on a Hill” (presented in **Strange Alchemies**). While this story, at its conclusion, points the characters toward Detroit, where the chronicle comes to an end (in **Saturnine Night**), you do not need to run these stories in the sequence provided. Indeed, a new throng could very easily begin in the Rockies with this story and then travel east to Chicago, Boston, New Orleans or Detroit. We have, however, provided a few hooks from the other stories in order to facilitate this ongoing chronicle.

“To the Wastes” is presented in three acts. In the first act, the characters come to Denver either as part of their Pilgrimages or pursuing a lead from “Strangers on a Hill.” They are offered work by a man who does not seem to suffer the least amount of Disquiet. This work, however, consists of long, grueling hours in a slaughterhouse. The first act culminates with the characters being attacked by their coworkers, which probably ends badly for the assailants, but has potential repercussions for the Prometheans as well.

In the second act, the man who offered them the slaughterhouse job finds them work once again, this time in a recently reopened gold mine. The characters are there scarcely an hour before an explosion seals them and several other miners in pitch blackness. As the air runs out, the miners — unable to see the characters and thus more resistant to Disquiet — share their final hopes and prayers. The Created, of course, survive longer than the mortals, and find a source of air and sustenance. The Created are trapped, but they are not the first Prometheans to dwell in these caves. The trapped Created find the notes and legacy of a practitioner of Plumbum, the Refinement of Source (see p. 75), at the close of Act Two.

The third act consists first of the time that the characters spend in the caverns, either going to the wastes, learning what this ancient Promethean had to say or even performing the generative act. Eventually, however, they can find a way out, and walk down the mountainside, hopefully closer to their New Dawn.

## Theme: Suffering and Perseverance

In this story, the characters see human beings take up jobs that are dangerous, low-paying and transitory simply so that they can afford to feed their families. Not only are they willing to do this work, they are, for the most part, *grateful* to have the opportunity. That doesn’t mean that they don’t recognize how horrific the work is (stabbing cattle in their throats

for 10 to 14 hours a day is wretched, no matter what the pay), but they also recognize that it's better than starving. The characters have, in the past stories, seen various ugly sides of humanity. Now they get to see humans as pitiable, steadfast and even noble . . . but still willing to work against the characters because of Disquiet.

Hopefully the parallel isn't lost on the characters (and the players). The Saturnine Night of Promethean existence is suffering. Unlike the humans that the Created see, however, who generally can expect nothing but drudgery throughout their lives (but who might have a chance to make things better for their children, for whatever it's worth), the Created actually *can* reach a reward. Once they do, they have the same trials and tribulations as any human, but at least the very land around them doesn't reject them anymore. Through perseverance, misery is redeemed. Through suffering, wisdom is obtained. These are basic life lessons, applicable to humans as much as to Prometheans.

## Mood: Isolation and Humanism

In "The Water of Life," the characters met up with at least one other Promethean (Carla Two), plus any that the Storyteller felt it necessary to include. In the next two stories, the throng found itself amidst more of the Created than the surrounding area could support. This story, as written, includes no other Promethean characters. The throng finds the remnants of one, but no living Created greet them. They feel no Azothic Radiance except their own, and for the majority of the story they have no company at all except for each other. This is the Saturnine Night brought (almost) to its extreme. Prometheans can go stir-crazy with loneliness just as easily as any human, and this, sometimes, is what drives them to create more of their kind. "To the Wastes" provides that loneliness and the opportunity to create new Prometheans.

Also, "To the Wastes" focuses on human issues: working conditions in slaughterhouses and mines, for instance, as well as business practices regarding migrant labor. This story is not meant to make a political statement; it's simply using actual situations to underline the themes of **Promethean**. In the process, however, the story spends less time dealing with overt supernatural influence and more time dealing with human tragedy and life. If you wish your rendition of this story to have a more otherworldly vibe to it, you should have no problem making it so. Look for sections throughout the story labeled "In the World of Darkness . . ." for suggestions.

## At a Glance: The Colorado Rockies

The Rocky Mountains stretch from the Liard River in British Columbia to the Rio Grande in New Mexico. A discussion of the mountain range as a whole is beyond the scope of this book (and quite unnecessary for this story).

Instead, this section focuses briefly on Colorado, specifically Denver and some of the surrounding regions.

Denver was founded in 1858 as part of the Kansas Territory, originally intended to be mining settlement. This gold rush turned out to be a bust, but the area made for a good trade route, and the Denver Pacific Railroad opened up western Colorado to travelers, merchants and miners. By 1890, Denver was the fifth-largest city west of the Mississippi River. Today, Denver is home to just over half a million people.

Colorado once played home to many independent ranchers, but their numbers are dwindling. Laws that prohibited "trusts" — large corporations conspiring to set prices and blackball anyone trying to sell their product in a manner to which the trusts objected — have been largely invalidated. Now, 84% of the United States' cattle are slaughtered by one of four meatpacking corporations, and because they control the flow of meat to the market, they control the prices. They don't use ranches, preferring to raise cattle in feedlots and send them straight to the slaughterhouses (more about conditions in these hellholes can be found in Act One), and therefore, the few remaining cattle ranchers have great difficulty selling their product, let alone at a good price. Colorado ranchland is disappearing at roughly 90,000 acres a year, as estate taxes make it impossible for ranchers to simply pass the land along — the inheritors must sell some of the land off in order to keep any of it.

Colorado contains vistas of breathtaking beauty, but the state is also, in many ways, a symbol of opportunism, greed and overdevelopment. From the wars with the Utes and Arapahos in the 19th century to the beef trusts of the early 20th (and now the 21st), from the endless quest to find gold, silver, coal, oil and anything else worth pulling out of the ground to the slaughterhouses of Greeley and the vanishing ranches of Colorado Springs, the American West is opportunity for profit, no matter what the human repercussions.

## Wolves of the Mountains

Storytellers who own **Hunting Ground: Rockies** can use the information in that book to help portray the Denver area and the Colorado Rockies, but this book is by no means necessary to run "To the Wastes." While a large number of werewolves claim territories in and around the Rockies, your troupe's throng might very well make their way through the area without ever seeing one of these shapeshifters. If you do wish to make use of the werewolves in your chronicle, you have a variety of options.

- **Cheat:** The simplest option might be the best. If you don't have access to **Werewolf: The Forsaken** or don't want to complicate matters with additional bookkeeping, that's fine. Simply create the characters you wish to use as werewolves, define them in **Promethean** terms (such as defining the function of their powers as Transmuta-

tions; Natural Weaponry, for instance), and off you go. The players won't see the mechanics anyway, so they'll never know the difference.

- **Use the Werewolf core book, but not the supplement:** If you do want to use *Forsaken* werewolves but don't have or don't care about the *Rockies* supplement, that's fine, too. You can create your own Uratha characters and local power structures from scratch.

- **Using the Supplement:** The *Werewolf* sourcebook **Hunting Ground: Rockies** focuses primarily on Denver, and details the many packs that claim territory in the Mile High City. The city has a great deal of history for the werewolves — Denver was the site of a terrible battle between the Uratha and a monstrous spirit-being called an idigam. The battle ended favorably for the werewolves, but not before the creature had left many of their kind dead or worse. The city is now “open,” insofar as the more powerful werewolves in the area don't bar younger Uratha from claiming territory. The inherent strangeness of the Created, however, probably sets the werewolves on guard. Prometheans register as “supernatural” to the Scent of Taint Gift, and probably carry odd scents (you could, for instance, rule that a Promethean who currently has unspent Vitriol smells faintly of sulfur — too mild for the human nose to detect, but a werewolf in wolf form might well notice it).

With all of this in mind, what happens when a pack of werewolves notices the throng depends entirely on that pack in question. Black Moon Extreme, for instance, is a young pack with a hot-headed leader. The packmembers are out to prove themselves, and have been doing so by killing vampires. It's not inconceivable that the pack might mistake a Promethean for a vampire, or that the werewolves might see the Created simply as something strange that needs to be put down.

On the other hand, a pack such as the Three Sisters might actually be able to help a Promethean along her Pilgrimage. These werewolves specialize in prophecy and the wisdom of the spirits, and a Promethean inclined to listen to such wisdom (an Ulgan especially) could benefit greatly from meeting these werewolves.

- **Other Supernatural Beings:** A city of half a million people probably has other strange beings in the shadows in addition to werewolves. Vampires stalk the nights of every major city, and mages are surely present, hunting down the secrets lost to time and progress. If you feel the story would benefit from including, say, a vampire who fell into a deep sleep after riding across the dark plains in the 19th century or a cabal of mages searching for the elusive monsters rumored to live in Denver City Park, by all means include them. The World of Darkness is big enough for such variety.

## Act One: Cogsin the Machine

In this act, the throng arrives in Colorado and is offered work at a slaughterhouse outside Greeley. During the course of this grueling labor, the Prometheans' coworkers, reacting to Disquiet, attack the characters, causing a riot and prompting the characters' “transfer” to a different kind of job.

### Getting There

Before this act begins, the characters need to get to Denver. The time of year isn't important for purposes of this story (and keeping it flexible allows for greater pliability when fitting “To the Wastes” into your larger chronicle). Some suggestions for bringing the throng to the city follow:

- **Set the chronicle here:** If you aren't running “The Water of Life” or either of the stories that appeared in *Pandora's Book* or *Strange Alchemies*, you can just begin the chronicle in Denver. You'll still need a way to bring the throng together, but some possibilities for doing this are discussed in Chapter Four of *Promethean: The Created*.

- **The Boston Connection:** If you've run “Strangers on a Hill,” you'll recall that Moses Moon, Lighthouse's demiurge, was traced to an occult bookstore in Denver. A scene in which the characters track down this lead is detailed below, and can provide a good entry point into this story.

- **Advice from a Mentor:** If one of the characters has a Mentor or Contact in another Promethean, she might be sent to Denver on an unrelated errand. The “mentor” doesn't have to be a Promethean, though. A character with the Elpis Merit might see a city rising high above the landscape, surrounded by mountains, and a staircase appearing in the rock leading to it. A *qashmal* might appear to the throng and put the notion of going to Denver in their minds.

- **The End of the Road:** If the characters are traveling, perhaps their vehicle breaks down in Denver. They'll need to make arrangements for another vehicle before they can continue on their way, and hopefully that will give you enough time to hook them into the story.

- **Events of the chronicle:** If you have any loose ends from the chronicle so far that your players are quite keen on following up, one of them could lead to Denver. Perhaps one of the characters knows that he is only one of several attempts by his creator to craft the perfect Promethean and that one of his “siblings” now resides in Denver. Meeting this sibling and trying to find out their creator's motives is probably tempting (and almost certainly a milestone).

Once the characters are in Denver, proceed with Scene One.

## Scene One: Around Denver

This scene presents three brief events that you can use to introduce the characters to the Mile High City. The first ties in with the previous story from **Strange Alchemies**, since characters playing through the ongoing chronicle will likely wish to resolve this point upon reaching Denver. The second two events are merely meant to show the characters the city and set the stage for the rest of the story. Part of setting the stage, as it happens, is inducing Torment, and so these events are meant to strike nerves for the Prometheans.

### Moses Moon's Legacy

Moustafa Jaymes, a.k.a. Moses Moon, did something that no mortal in centuries has been able to do — create a Promethean. Using ancient Egyptian techniques combined with his own understanding of soul alchemy, he created Lighthouse, a Promethean with heretofore unknown abilities. If the characters are in Denver looking for him, then they have the address of a New Age bookstore called Golden Moccasin Books, known to its regular patrons as “Gold Moc.” Moses Moon is not present, but in the bookstore the characters can find some hints as to his process and his intentions.

The proprietor of the bookstore is a woman named Amber Graham. Amber is in her mid-40s. She is slightly plump and has long hair that she dyes black on a regular basis. Amber is pleasant enough and has a passing knowledge of New Age occultism, but no real magical or alchemical knowledge. She offers to perform Tarot readings for the characters if they enter the store during business hours. If the characters accept, you can either make up the results of the reading (a few minutes of research online should easily turn up a description of the Major and Minor Arcana of the Tarot and a basic idea of what they mean) or, if you have a Tarot deck, go ahead and do “in-character” readings. You can even stack the deck, picking out what cards would be appropriate for which characters and arranging them in advance, shuffling the rest of the deck and then placing your chosen cards on top. It’s just as simple, though, to perform the reading as Amber does — that is, look at what cards come up, observe the subject’s body language, dress and mannerisms and wing it (this is called “cold reading”). Whether or not Amber actually tells the characters anything useful is up to you, but the cards might be an interesting way for the Elpis Merit to manifest.

Likewise, remember that Amber is a normal mortal. She suffers from Disquiet just as anyone else. She does, however, have a high Resolve + Composure pool (seven dice), so she might resist longer than most. If she becomes afflicted by Disquiet, the results of the Tarot reading (or any other interactions with her, for that matter) are affected. How they are affected depends on the Lineage of the character

inflicting the Disquiet. If the character is a Golem, Amber tries to keep him in the shop while she subtly uses several different divination methods (crystals, cards, pendulums, etc.) to ferret out information about the character; these have no actual mystical effect, but the “results” only confirm whatever hypothesis Amber has already fabricated. On the other hand, an Adonis character might make Amber interpret a Tarot reading in a way that makes the character into some kind of suitor to her. Disquiet also affects questions about Moses Moon, though not necessarily detrimentally. If Amber is fascinated or terrified by a character, she might answer questions honestly just to get the characters out of her store (or buy her time to think of something to do).

If the characters ask her about Moses Moon, she professes ignorance. If the characters describe Moon or mention his activities in Boston, she snaps her fingers and says, “Oh, you mean Moustafa. I forgot he went by ‘Moses’ out there.” She explains that Moustafa Jaymes is a close friend of hers and sometimes used her guest room while he was in town. She has not heard from him since before he left for Boston, but since the riots in that city she has been worried for his safety (obviously, if you haven’t run “Strangers on a Hill,” you’ll need to doctor this account somewhat). If you plan on running the last installment of this chronicle, to be presented in **Saturnine Night**, then Amber can tell the characters that Moon has family in Detroit and might have been going there after he was finished in Boston.

Convincing Amber to let the throno poke around upstairs requires some kind of special effort, be it a convincing lie (Manipulation + Subterfuge), an especially earnest plea (Presence + Persuasion) or a vicious threat (Presence + Intimidation). Other options include using a supernatural power to force the issue or simply breaking in later (which requires the appropriate Larceny and Stealth rolls). In any case, upstairs the characters find a spiral-bound notebook that Moses Moon accidentally placed on a high shelf and forgot to take with him. In the notebook are his preliminary notes on alchemy and the creation of “life from crude, dead flesh and water.” These notes are precious, for they can serve to make a character’s own generative act easier (see p. 187 of **Promethean: The Created**; these notes bestow a +1 to the Humanity roll to create a Promethean).

The last page of the notebook, however, contains a passage that might give the characters pause:

*Such beings do exist. I have seen them, and learned to recognize their markings. I have seen these marks on the walls of slaughterhouses here in Colorado, and I wonder how many among the workers bussed in from the city did not begin their lives as babes in arms, but as corpses revived by this elusive fire. What benefit could such creatures gain by taking work amongst the human masses, especially work so grueling? I have considered this question from every angle, and the only answer I can find is a Zen saying: “Before Enlightenment, chop wood, carry water. After Enlightenment, chop wood, carry water.”*



Moon did not leave behind any other notes, or any hint of where he might now be found.

If the Storyteller has not run “Strangers on a Hill” and wishes to do so, though, this might be the event that *leads* the characters to Boston (though they’ll be approaching the issue in a different way than the material presents). If the Storyteller has run that story but decided to remove the notion of a human demiurge from the equation, then Moses Moon is an occult scholar, gifted but still just a man and incapable of grasping the Divine Fire. The notebook might contain his observations of Prometheans he has encountered (perhaps a total of three, one of whom might be the Originist; see p. 75), but the last note remains as written.

#### In the World of Darkness . . .

Amber might have a touch of the supernatural about her. She might be blessed with some kind of prophetic gift, making her Tarot readings more accurate or poignant than they would otherwise be (if you have access to **World of Darkness: Second Sight**, she might possess some of the Merits listed there, but it’s just as easy to represent her “gifts” by Storyteller fiat). She might actually be a supernatural being of some kind, perhaps a mage using the occult bookstore as a front for her business of selling *real* magical tools, or a vampire using the store as a means to feed on the New Age crowd (meaning that the characters need to

arrive after dark to actually meet Amber). If you are using **Hunting Ground: Rockies**, consider using the Nevermore Bookstore, where the Three Sisters pack makes its home, instead of the Golden Moccasin.

### The Lost Dog

Play through this event when the throng is somewhere relatively private. One of the city parks in Denver would be a good locale, as would scouting rundown neighborhoods for a new lair. The characters shouldn’t be completely alone; there should be people within earshot or quick running distance, just to keep the characters on their toes.

Prometheans are used to animals shying away from them (or being outright hostile), as Disquiet takes its toll. When a dog wanders up to them, sniffing their hands and looking up expectantly, the characters might well feel overjoyed at first. Perhaps they are progressing in their Pilgrimages, and Disquiet is abating somewhat? Regardless of the cause, the promise of some companionship, even non-human, is probably enough to raise their hopes.

Sadly, any progress the characters have made toward the New Dawn has nothing to do with this animal’s behavior. The dog is possessed by a spirit of fire (see “Dramatis Personae” for this creature’s history), and since it perceives the world as a spirit, rather than as a dog, it doesn’t suffer Disquiet. It does, however, feel the characters’ Azoth as a sort of metaphysical

heat, and due to its nature wishes to join in the “blaze.” As such, the moment a character comes near the dog or offers a hand, the dog bites. Have the targeted character’s player roll Wits + Composure to avoid being surprised (see p. 152 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). Due to the dog’s quick movement and the fact that it isn’t sending out any hostile signals, the player suffers a –1 penalty on this roll. The Danger Sense Merit provides the normal +2 bonus. The dog’s bite inflicts aggravated damage to Prometheans, and while it probably won’t do more than a point or two, this is still enough to call for rolls to resist Torment, both for suffering aggravated damage and for suffering damage from fire (see p. 180–181 of **Promethean: The Created**).

The dog doesn’t bear the characters any malice, and so if the characters attack, the dog cries out in pain, rolls over on its back and responds as a normal dog (the spirit falls back on its host’s instincts, hoping to save itself). If the characters persist in attacking the dog, it tries to flee. Passersby hear the dog’s cries, however, and come to see what is happening. Once Disquiet kicks in (and remember penalties for witnessing disfigurements or Transmutation use), all they see is a group of strange people beating up some poor animal. If you wish to turn this scene into a fight between the characters and some enraged citizens, feel free (the “citizens” in question might be elderly folks out for a walk in the park, kids who yell at the characters to stop hurting the puppy, cops, gangbangers with guns and a soft spot for dogs or just normal Colorado residents who happen to be licensed to carry concealed firearms). Even if it just becomes a shouting match, the characters probably wind up having to resist Torment for dealing with people suffering from Disquiet.

If the throng kills the dog, the fire-spirit loses its host and vanishes back into Twilight. Depending on your preferences, the spirit might flee the area, looking for a fire big enough to sustain it (and probably dissipating quickly, unless such a blaze exists) or it might follow the characters, trying to figure out why they *feel* like fire even if they aren’t actually burning. Such a spirit, while not very powerful, is truly dangerous. It assumes that the characters *want* to burn, and it intends to help them. It can use its Influence to exacerbate any nearby source of flame, even a cigarette lighter.

If the throng includes an Ulgan or another character with the Ephemeral Flesh Bestowment, that character can talk to the spirit, either in the dog’s body or outside of it. If the characters explain to the spirit that they are not actually beings of fire, the spirit realizes its mistake and refrains from trying to burn them. If they are polite to the spirit and promise to set a fire, the spirit accompanies them and can even steer them toward safe hideouts or away from dangers (that is, you can use the dog to propel the characters toward plot points in the story). If the characters provide a large bonfire for the dog, it walks into the blaze, turns around a few times and settles down to sleep. The dog’s fur and flesh

burn away, its fat and blood sizzle in the coals, but the dog lies there with a look of absolute contentment. (This gruesome scene, of course, will almost certainly incite intervention and possibly violence from any able mortal witnesses, so the characters should consider the best place and time for this immolation.)

## Traffic Stop

This vignette can happen anywhere that the Storyteller wishes. The characters run afoul of an officer of the law. The cop can stop them on any pretext you wish. If they’re in a car, he could pull them over for speeding, having a broken taillight or simply say that there are “suspects in the area fitting your description.” The characters might well know their rights, but all that means is that they know that those rights are being violated. The cop and his partner order all of the characters out of their vehicle (or to simply harass them, if they’re on foot), demand to see identification, proof of insurance and car registration, and ask them questions about where they’re going and whether they’ve been drinking.

Initially, the cops aren’t afflicted by Disquiet. They’re just doing their jobs and being unpleasant about it. Of course, after a few moments of talking with the characters, you’ll need to check to see if they succumb to Disquiet. Apply a –1 penalty to the Resolve + Composure roll for these officers; it’s their nature to be suspicious, after all.

It’s in the characters’ best interests to be polite, to tell the cops whatever they need to know (and lie well, if necessary), and get gone before Disquiet makes things untenable. If the characters so much as offer wisecracks, one cop gets in the joker’s face and makes it clear that Denver’s finest don’t appreciate being back-talked, while his partner calls for backup. (How fast that backup arrives depends on where the characters are and what else is happening; if they’re in the suburbs, backup is a minute away, while on a highway it might take as long as 10 or 15.) If the characters fight or injure the cops, the characters can expect to have a full-scale manhunt underway in very short order. Make sure the players understand this (you might allow them to make Intelligence + Streetwise or Academics rolls to understand the gravity of attacking policemen). As much as it probably chafes them, their best bet is to endure the few minutes of grilling and dominance the cops serve up and then get away.

Of course, once the cops fall under Disquiet, they might well try to keep the characters around while checking for outstanding warrants or find some other pretext to arrest them, especially if the throng includes a Golem. This kind of behavior is difficult to wriggle out of without using Transmutations, and can potentially lead to Torment.

You can find Traits for police officers on p. 206 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. You might want to scale back those Traits a bit, however; they are meant to represent veteran police officers, which may or may not be what you want for this scene. In any case, it’s a good idea to assign names and

descriptions to these cops, so the players don't see them as "generic antagonists." If you describe a cop simply as "a cop in a blue uniform wearing mirror shades," the players don't see him as a human being as easily as if you describe "a white man in his late 30s, sporting the beginnings of a beer gut but thick, strong-looking biceps, wearing a gold wedding band and scuffed, well-worn boots."

## Scene Two: The Job Offer

In this scene, the characters meet a man who offers them a job working in a slaughterhouse in Greeley. The man, Joseph Boyce, seems like an ordinary mortal, but in talking to him at least one of the characters feels a stirring of the Divine Fire — a Revelation.

Run this scene after the characters have been in Denver long enough to find at least a temporary lair and wrap up any business that brought them here. Hopefully, at least one of the characters also suffers from Torment (but has worked through it for the time being). This Torment repulses other Prometheans (see p. 92 of **Promethean: The Created**), even members of a Branded throng. This sickening feeling isn't enough to turn friend against friend, but it's enough to make tempers flare and exacerbate any minor tiff, and so a character suffering from Torment might start feeling the urge to go to the wastes. Before anyone can make that decision, however, Boyce shows up.

Boyce is specifically looking for migrant workers, hopefully illegal immigrants, but he'll take anyone who looks down and out. He searches Denver's slums, city parks and other places where the homeless and downtrodden might congregate. Prometheans being what they are, the throng has probably attracted enough attention that someone mentions "that group of weirdoes hanging out under the bridge," or whatever applies to the characters. If the characters have enough money to avoid this kind of ignominious lodging, Boyce approaches them when they are out in public. Even if they appear normal or successful, Disquiet causes Boyce to condescend to offer them work. He feels that only the desperate and inferior take work in the slaughterhouses, and Disquiet leads him to see the characters this way.

Friendly and affable, he asks the characters if they are looking for work. If the characters respond in the affirmative, he appears enthused and relieved. He frames the issue in terms of need on his part — he says that he has a great number of openings at his plant and no one to fill them. The work doesn't require formal education or prior experience, he says, all it requires is stamina, a good work ethic and the willingness to relocate to Greeley for a while. He tries to avoid telling the characters the true nature of the job, calling it "factory work." If the characters push, he tells them that the jobs include working in a slaughterhouse. He admits that the work is hard, even unpleasant, but he compares the slaughterhouse workers to the early pioneers

of America, building new lives from hardship. Mention of the fate of the native inhabitants of North America sours him a little; "Indians" are among the many types of people whom Boyce dislikes, though he's adept at not showing it.

Boyce tells the characters that the slaughterhouse (he calls it a "packing plant") is north of Denver in the city of Greeley. He offers to provide the characters with transportation to the facility, and accommodations until they can find their own housing (which he assures them won't take long). What he isn't telling them is that he is a free agent, paid by the meat packing company to find employees. Once he delivers the employees to the plant, his obligation is over, and he never expects to see them again. (He will, of course, at the end of the act.)

While Boyce isn't exactly a sympathetic figure, his offer might appeal to the characters on any of a number of levels. Characters of any Refinement can find reasons to accept his offer:

- **Aes:** If a Sentry's throng decides to take the job, the Sentry must follow suit, of course. A Sentry might push to take the job if the throng is low on funds or if she feels that the throng as a whole needs to spend more time around humanity.
- **Aurum:** Obviously, spending time working in such an environment stands to teach a Mimic volumes about humanity. The lessons thus learned might be a little harsher than she realizes, of course.
- **Argentum:** A Mystic might best be motivated by the Revelation that Boyce is to pass along (see below). Or, you might seed some rumors of supernatural occurrences at a slaughterhouse (the unquiet spirit of a former employee, for instance, or a vampire collecting the blood of the slain cattle).
- **Cobalus:** Slaughterhouse work is dangerous and not a little controversial. Either of those traits, or just simple curiosity, might propel a Cathar to take the job.
- **Cuprum:** Pariahs are probably the biggest challenge to the Storyteller as far as getting the throng to Greeley. For what it's worth, not *every* Promethean needs to take a job, so if a Cuprum character is willing to work on other projects — finding a lair, for instance — she might still fulfill a useful role in the story. A Cuprum character looking to leave behind this Refinement and take on a new one might use employment in the slaughterhouse as a "training ground" for her new calling.
- **Ferrum:** The rigorous and physically demanding work makes for a perfect and unique opportunity for a Titan to test his mettle.
- **Mercurius:** What happens to a building when thousands of lives end in it every day? Do the spirits of the dead animals linger there? Might the "natural" Pyros of the area be usable, or will it decay into Flux? While not exactly a conventional locale for the study of the Divine Fire, the slaughterhouse still has potential secrets for an Ophidian to uncover.

• **Plumbum:** An Originist might see that working in close proximity to humans is doomed to failure, but also presents some interesting opportunities to learn about the Promethean condition. How much punishment can the Promethean form take? Will the already bad working conditions affect (or be affected by) Disquiet one way or another? **Note:** One of the central points of “To the Wastes” is finding the notes of a Promethean who followed the Refinement of Lead. Therefore, you might consider waiting to present this Refinement to the players until then.

• **Stannum:** Killing animals for 10 hours a day might allow a Fury to vent some anger without hurting people. A more philosophical practitioner of Stannum might wonder about the job’s affect on Torment — will it increase, or will the brutality of the work allow the Torment to bleed off into the surrounding environment?

Feel free to mention any of these reasons for accepting the job offer to the players. The benefits of this opportunity might not be immediately apparent, even though the drawbacks almost certainly are.

### Off the Beaten Path

So what if the characters refuse the offer? The players, after all, are well within their rights to decide that this sort of work is beneath their characters, and if their concepts support this sort of attitude it’s difficult to force it on them. What can you as Storyteller do to keep the game going?

• **Divide and conquer:** Ctds are at least one of the throng-members is going to see some redeeming value in the job. If it looks like the prevailing opinion is going against accepting Boyce’s offer, tell a player who is in favor of it (or at least on the fence) that the notion of taking the job gives her character a strange feeling, not unlike the welling-up of Vitriol inside her after she completes a milestone. Hopefully, with that potential carrot dangling before the group, they follow the lead. If you do this, of course, you’ll need to add a milestone to the character in question that can be fulfilled at the slaughterhouse.

• **Think ahead:** Have the characters bumped into a *qashmal* recently? Maybe this being could foreshadow “fatigue, death and blood all around, the cries of dying animals, but a promise of hope at the bottom of this box of woe.” Perhaps a character with the Elpis Merit sees visions of the slaughterhouse long before the characters ever meet Boyce (but be sure to remind the characters of their visions; such details tend to be lost in the deluge of information in roleplaying games). If you decide that Amber, earlier in this act, actually has

a touch of prophecy about her, she might be the one to presage the job in the abattoir.

• **Wing it:** If the players are dead-set against taking this job, don’t force it. They’ll be missing out on some potentially valuable insight into the human condition, but it’s not going to make or break your chronicle (what makes or breaks a chronicle, of course, is whether or not people are having a good time with it). If they refuse Boyce, let them knock around Denver for a while, getting into any trouble they like, and then have Boyce make the offer again later. Maybe instead of pitching the slaughterhouse job, he asks them how they would feel about the “safer” occupation of mining (allowing you to skip directly to Act Two).

### The Trip to Greeley

Driving from Denver to Greeley takes about an hour. As promised, Boyce drives the characters, unless they have alternative means of transport. Boyce drives a large, 12-seat van. It is filled to capacity (that is, 12 minus however many characters ride with Boyce) with other recruits, most of them Mexican.

Traveling separately is probably the best choice, as Boyce and the other workers in his van will succumb to Disquiet rapidly over the hour-long drive. In any case, when the characters reach Greeley city limits, Boyce pulls his van over at a fast food restaurant. He asks the characters if they want anything and proceeds to buy dinner for everyone present (he has an expense account, of course). The evening is cool and breezy, and the assembled workers sit at outdoor tables and chat.

At this point, it might be wise to give the workers a bit of personality. At least come up with some names and basic descriptions for them, because as mentioned earlier with regards to the overzealous cops, if these supporting characters have names and faces, the players are more apt to see them as human beings. Because one of the main themes of this story is human suffering and perseverance, it’s important that the Prometheans can recognize humanity and the value in it. As these men sit around the tables chatting, some in Spanish and some in English, eating their food and hopeful about the prospect of employment, let the characters soak up this example of humanity. Forego Disquiet rolls just for the moment, at least until a character draws attention to himself. Then roll seven dice (the highest Resolve + Composure pool present — Boyce) and determine the effects of the Disquiet. Make careful note of which character engenders the effect, because since the characters will be working with these men this Disquiet will only worsen. The rules for and effects of Disquiet can be found in Chapter Three of **Promethean: The Created**. It might be wise to reread them before running this scene.



Boyce, fortunately, is still affecting his friendly, gregarious façade. He glances off toward the mountains and asks the assembled workers if they've ever heard the story of the Blood Clot Boy. The other workers have not, but players can make Intelligence + Occult rolls for their characters (–2 for obscurity, a Specialty in Native American legends applies). If this roll is successful, the character knows that Blood Clot is a creation myth of the Southern Utes. If the character mentions this, Boyce looks blankly at the character, and then tells the story anyway:

*The story is that a man and woman found a blood clot on the ground while hunting buffalo, and took the clot home to boil it. But when they did, they heard a baby crying, and they found that the blood clot had somehow formed into a child. This kid — they just called him Blood Clot, I guess — grew up into the greatest hunter in the land. Killed all kinds of animals and fed his parents well, gave them skins and hides and all. And then one day he decides to leave to go seek his fortune, and before he does he calls up a big storm that kills a whole herd of buffalo so that his folks will never be hungry. And then he goes and finds another tribe and impresses them all with his strength, even though they're a little afraid of him. He marries the chief's daughter, and he warns her that since he's born of the blood of a buffalo calf she can't even say the word 'calf' around him. But one day when he's hunting buffalo, his wife spots a young one and yells 'Kill that calf!', and Blood Clot turns into a buffalo and runs with the herd for 10 years. But then after that, he decides he doesn't want to go back to his wife after she failed him, so he goes off and lives in a cave in the mountains until he gets over his hurt. He's still there, the Utes say, because now that there ain't no wild buffalo he doesn't have anywhere to go anymore."*

This story, though Boyce doesn't know it, is part of the Seer's Pilgrimage (see p. 46). Which characters experience the Revelation is up to you as Storyteller. It might be wise to choose the Refinement of whichever character objected strenuously to taking the job at the slaughterhouse, just to undermine any potential arguments for staying. Then again, if several members of the throng follow the same Refinement, you can increase the benefits by choosing this common Refinement. In any case, the characters who experience Revelation suddenly see a vision of a tall, imposing figure, blazing with Pyros and dripping with blood and animal fat, standing at the mouth of a cave as lightning arcs around him. Behind him in the cave is a drawing, similar to a pilgrim's mark, but one that the character(s) cannot quite identify. They feel it calling to them, however — their Pilgrimages have been given direction, at least for the moment. See p. 51 for more on the Revelation, and remember that any roll that the characters make that leads them closer to the Shrine (and therefore the mine in Act Two) can give them Willpower back, so be sure to keep an eye out for such situations.

After dinner and the story, Boyce drives the characters and their coworkers into the city. He drops them off at a

ratty motel just north of downtown Greeley, hands them room keys and tells them another van will be here in the morning to pick them up and take them to work. He admonishes them to get a good night's sleep — the van arrives just before sunup.

### **In the World of Darkness . . .**

Boyce is designed as a normal mortal, but he must have had some contact with or influence from Pyros at some point, because he is able to induce Revelation (see p. 51). How is this possible?

The easiest answer is that Boyce is under the influence of a *qashmal*. Some of these enigmatic beings can implant an idea in a mortal's mind, which can then be spread to others like a viral memory. It's entirely possible that such an idea took root in Boyce's head at some point in his travels, and he's only now met the Prometheans he's meant to bless with this story.

Another possibility, though, is that Boyce is a Redeemed Promethean himself. It's a sad commentary on the New Dawn if a former Promethean could develop into a bigoted mercenary like Joe Boyce, but then, part of being human is being able to make those sorts of choices. Likewise, Boyce might be a Scion (see p. 33), if you as Storyteller wish to use these beings in his chronicle.

Before you decide to make Boyce anything other than human, though, consider two things: What ramification will it have on the story, and how will the characters find it out? If Boyce is working under the direction of a *qashmal*, even if the *qashmal* gave him directions months or years ago, all it means for the story is that Boyce *can* pass along the Revelation. If he used to be a Promethean, though, maybe he guides the characters to the mine out of an instinctive desire to help them. If he's a Scion, perhaps he offers them the job at the slaughterhouse not because he simply wishes to fill his quota, but because he knows them for what they are and realizes that taking this job will ultimately be of benefit. Will the characters ever discover the truth about Boyce? Probably not, but knowing the truth will help you understand and portray him in a much more convincing (if not flattering) light.

## **Scene Three: The Slaughterhouse**

The characters can sleep in the rooms provided (enough for three people to a room), or make other arrangements as they wish. If they think to ask, the hotel clerk tells them that these rooms are only paid through tomorrow night, after which he is to start charging the workers to stay there. (The fee isn't much, but it should tip the characters off to what's to come.) In the morning, as promised, the van arrives to pick the workers up and drive them to the slaughterhouse.

The workers can smell the facility long before they see it. The fetid stink of manure, blood and rotting flesh is potent enough to penetrate the van's air-conditioning. Long accustomed to

the smell, the driver doesn't even flinch. The other workers, however, react with exclamations, profanity and retching.

The van pulls off the highway and onto a lonely paved road. The driver stops at a gate, and the characters see a high, chain-link fence stretching out for miles. A large NO TRESPASSING sign hangs on the fence, and as the characters' van passes through the gate, they might notice leaflets on the ground declaring the facility to be "a poison factory" and a "death camp." Apparently, a protest happened here recently.

The van drives through a large parking lot and drops the characters off by the main entrance. They hear loud mooing coming from an immense truck, but they have little time to process it. A heavyset man with a thin moustache and a clipboard comes out of the building, waves the crowd of workers over and introduces himself as Mr. Stevens. He asks if everyone speaks English, but does not wait for a response, and then waves at the crowd to follow him.

Stevens brings the workers into a small conference room, where he explains the purpose of this facility (slaughtering cattle coming from company-owned feedlots and packaging the meat for delivery to warehouses for distribution). He issues each employee a set of coveralls, a pair of earplugs and a pair of plastic goggles. As the employees change, he also hands over chain-mail aprons and gloves, totaling about eight pounds of metal. "For protection," he says, but offers no further clarification.

He then leads the workers on a (very brief) tour of the facility. At every station, he picks a worker or two, thrusts a tool into their hands and explains their new jobs to them in curt, brusque tones. None of the jobs that these workers (the characters included) are given require much in the way of skill, and they consist of repetitive tasks to be carried out thousands of times in the 10-hour shifts these people are to work.

What follows is a description of the slaughterhouse's stations and the jobs that the characters can perform. Place them anywhere you think would be effective.

### The Fab Room

The fabrication room is actually the end of the slaughter process. The room is largely stainless steel and is the cleanest room on the production floor. The room is huge, labyrinthine, and contains hundreds of pipes and conveyor belts transporting large pieces of red, still-bloody meat in all directions. The machines in the room assemble boxes, seal the meat in plastic wrap and prepare it for delivery. The room is chilled (about 40 degrees Fahrenheit). The fact that room is the first one the characters see is no accident — it is the most benign room in the place. It may dawn on the characters at this point that they are to see the slaughter process in reverse, starting with the finished product.

Much of the work in this room involves trimming the fat away from the meat with long knives. Some of the knives are electric,

and obviously take a degree of skill to wield. The characters notice that all of the employees here wear thick rubber gloves, but that the gloves boast gashes from old accidents. An elderly black man pushes a blue barrel on a handcart — the barrel is full of cow fat trimmings. He is missing three fingers from his right hand, and flashes the characters a nearly toothless and completely mirthless grin on his way past.

Glancing up, the characters see huge sides of beef entering the room on an overhead assembly. Groups of men with huge, saber-like knives hack this meat into smaller chunks, which are then added to the conveyor belts to be trimmed. The men strain and sweat, despite the cold air, hacking away at the beef with all their might.

Mr. Stevens looks around the workers. Any female characters are given jobs trimming fat. Stevens gives the job of hacking the meat to pieces to men that he thinks can handle it, but favors white employees, employees who can obviously speak English and employees who strike him as intelligent (not that he's any kind of judge). He considers this work the "best" he can give a new employee, and sadly, he's probably right.

### The Kill Floor

This room, unlike the refrigerated and clean environment of the fab room, is humid, hot and odiferous. Dozens of skinned cattle hang by their legs from the ceiling, and the characters see men with power saws cutting the cattle in half. One of the workers (probably not one of the characters, given the strong constitutions of Prometheans), turns around and retches into a garbage can. Mr. Stevens tells him to go outside and regain his composure, but if he can't hack it in here he's better off finding other work.

The scenes only get more gruesome. The workers see men with elbow-length rubber gloves reaching into the bisected cattle and pulling out their innards. One man drops kidneys down a chute, another slices out tongues, a third operates an electric knife to peel the remaining skin from the heads. Huge carcasses move through the room almost randomly, and the characters see several workers knocked to the blood- and manure-stained floor by the corpses. The workers pick themselves up and get back to work, but it's easy to imagine what would happen if a worker carrying a knife had such an accident.

The blood here is ankle-deep. The stench will never come out of the characters' shoes or their coveralls. The noise in this room is loud, but not deafening, and if the characters listen carefully they can hear a series of popping sounds coming from a nearby room.

Stevens chooses a few more workers here and sets them up at their stations. He asks if anyone can handle a power saw. The first person who answers in the affirmative gets to strip the meat off cattle skulls. Other jobs include cutting the animals in half, removing various innards (each person is responsible for a particular organ, so the kidney remover does exactly that for his entire shift), and removing the cattle's tongues.

The next room, separated by an open doorway, is where the cattle enter the factory. They are suspended from the ceiling conveyor by their feet, but they are still alive. Once in a while, one kicks at the restraints. The characters walk up a narrow, steel staircase caked in blood both old and fresh. At the top is a man holding a long pole with a knife at the end. The “sticker’s” job is to stab each animal in the throat with this knife, hitting the carotid artery every time, for 10 hours a day. Obviously, this doesn’t always happen, and toward the end of the shift it’s not uncommon for the sticker to take several tries on each animal, or for cattle to head toward the skinning machines still barely alive. The sticker stands in a river of blood almost up to his knees, killing roughly six cattle a minute.

Continuing on, the characters finally see the cattle entering the building. They walk down a narrow chute, and at the end they meet the “knocker.” This worker holds a compressed air gun that fires a steel bolt at the steer’s head, knocking it unconscious. This gun makes the “pop” that the characters heard earlier. Two workers catch the steer’s back legs and haul it up into the ceiling conveyor apparatus, where the steer flies off to the sticker and its demise.

Stevens pauses again. Any remaining characters are given shifts here, either as knocker, sticker or hoister. His job done, Stevens walks away. He does not tell the characters (or any of the workers) when they will be given breaks or how long their shifts will last, much less when or how much they can expect to be paid. The unstated, but obvious, fact is that if the characters waste time asking such questions, they will no longer have jobs. They are left to figure it out as they go.

## Storytelling the Slaughterhouse

How much in-game time you want to devote to the actual work of the slaughterhouse is up to you. Part of the real-life horror of such a job is the length of the hours and repetition of the work; imagine doing something that amounts to pulling a trigger, and nothing else, for 10 hours straight! But Prometheans don’t suffer from repetitive-stress injuries, and they don’t tire in the same way that mortals do, so the unpleasantness of the job stems from other issues for the characters.

First, consider the Wasteland effect. After an hour, mystical marks start to appear in a character’s station. Since the shifts



that the characters work are 10 hours, the Wasteland doesn't have time to fester into a *true* Wasteland (unless you want to have Stevens ask the characters to keep working, since they don't seem tired), but the mystical marks themselves can be disconcerting. Consider a Frankenstein working in the fab room. Her humour might cause the electric knives to short or stall occasionally, or cause tiny arcs of electricity to move across the metal walls. An Ulgan working as a sticker can probably expect unpleasant spirits to start whispering to him within the first hour of his employment. None of these effects need to be pronounced or have game effects, but the Prometheans' presence should affect the building in subtle ways.

Second, remember Disquiet. The characters' coworkers are forced to spend 10 hours at a time around Prometheans, which is enough to boost Disquiet into the third or fourth stage very quickly. For the next scene to happen, in fact, a considerable amount of Disquiet needs to build up. What you as Storyteller need to decide is how fast that happens. If you want to run side stories during the characters' employment time, allowing them to pursue other activities when they aren't working (so when do they sleep?), perhaps Disquiet should only advance at one stage per week. If the players don't seem interested in this stage of the story, maybe it's best to only have them work a day or two and then run Scene Four. In any case, describe the effects of Disquiet as they mount. Coworkers stop talking to the characters, or show an unhealthy interest. Coworkers stare at a character while working, knives never missing, eyes never leaving the character's hands. If the line slows, it's the character's fault. If a steer falls from the conveyor, it's because the Promethean sticker didn't kill it. Gradually, the characters become the scapegoats for the whole place.

Finally, decide if anything significant happens during a day on the job. Working in a slaughterhouse isn't exactly safe. Blades can strike machinery and go flying through the air to impale or lacerate employees. A careless stroke of a knife can cost a coworker a finger, or an eye . . . or his life. Cattle can get caught in machinery while still alive, requiring that the kill floor shut down for a short time while the animal is removed and killed (and sent onward to be butchered, of course) and the mechanisms cleaned. All of this needs to happen quickly, however — the slaughterhouse processes 400 cattle an hour, and no one wants to fall behind.

Describe a typical day on the line — scent, sights, sound and the endlessness of it all. If you want to put the characters in a tight position, have one of them be injured by a flying blade and see how he handles having to pretend to be hurt. A Promethean can heal the injury easily, so what does he do to keep his cover? Likewise, as the work wears on, the knives get dull, and stopping to sharpen means holding up the line. Do the characters increase their Strength with Pyros or the "Might" Transmutation? If so, how do they cope with their disfigurements becoming visible, even for a second?

Game systems probably aren't necessary for this scene, but if you wish to roll some dice, you might consider: Stamina + Resolve (staying alert through hours of repetitive work); Dexterity + Weaponry (killing cattle; -3 for a specified target); Dexterity + Crafts (stripping meat from a carcass); Dexterity + Firearms (using the knocker's gun). Any of these rolls can be made to represent one hour of work. If the roll fails, something bad happens during that hour — an accident, or possibly just a slowdown (which might result in the character being fired or moved to a different job).

Beyond the possibility of accidents, however, there isn't much that happens during a day on the job. The work is repetitive and so fast that the characters don't have time to talk. They are given 20 minutes to eat lunch and one 10-minute "coffee break" (coffee is available for purchase from vending machines). If the characters talk to their coworkers, or listen to their conversations, the characters might hear some of the following rumors and facts:

- "The pay here's a little better than the mine down by Colorado Springs, but I think I like that job more." (*Several of the workers at the slaughterhouse are former mine employees, let go because the mine's production seems to have stalled.*)
- "I hear those cows in my sleep now. It's fucking creepy."
- "I found cow brains up my sleeve the other day. How the hell did that happen? I always keep my gloves on tight!"
- "Those protester fuckers are coming back next week, and I heard they're going to try to chain up the fence again. College pussy-boys."
- "You know Boyce shills for the mine, too? I swear he enjoys putting people in shitty jobs."
- "I heard they're going to sneak a TV reporter in here some night this month. More power to 'em. Maybe we'll get unionized."
- "Yeah, I've got some reds, but I can only sell you enough for today. I can't get any more until payday, and I sure as shit can't get through the rest of the week on just coffee."

#### **In the World of Darkness . . .**

The true horror and grotesquerie of working in a slaughterhouse are probably enough for most players. In the World of Darkness, however, it stands to reason that some form of the supernatural might take an interest in the abattoir. Presented here are some suggestions for how this might play out:

- A vampire sneaks into the slaughterhouse after hours to feed on the cattle. The vampire is young, and unwilling to slake his blood-thirst on human beings. If the vampire sees that people and cattle are both treated like resources — valuable insofar as they can keep the plant solvent, but ultimately expendable — he might rethink that assessment.
- A pack of werewolves uses the factory as a meat source. These werewolves claim that hunting for their own prey is difficult in a place like Greeley; herds of

buffalo don't exactly run free across the plains. They might see the Prometheans as encroaching upon their territory, especially if Disquiet gets in the way.

- Spirits of cattle move with the herds, subjugated and pathetic. Spirits of death, fear and pain hover inside the kill floor, consuming these steer-spirits as their physical representations die under the sticker's knife. If an Ulgan works near this activity, he can interact with these spirits easily — but to what end?

- The blood seeping into the ground awakens something ancient and terrible. It could be a spirit, but it might just as easily be a monster entombed centuries ago by an earthquake. The scent of blood and death stirs the entity, and it slithers into the plant's basement, gorging on runoff. How long until the entity can attack lone workers after dark?

- The surrounding area is largely rural, and could contain dormant Pandorans. These creatures might be canny enough to lurk in the factory, out of sight, until the characters are alone, at which point the Pandorans spring out and attack. Can the characters escape quickly, or keep the fight quiet enough to avoid drawing notice? Maybe a Pandoran just takes a bite and flees into the factory, knowing it can return at any time.

## Scene Four: The Riot

In this scene, Disquiet gets the better of the slaughterhouse workers, and they ambush the characters after a day of work. Boyce interrupts this melee and, thinking quickly, takes the characters away, offering to send them someplace that they'll be safe from legal repercussions.

The attack comes at the end of another grueling day at the slaughterhouse. The sun has already set when the characters leave the building, caked in blood and excrement, tired but not aching the way some of their coworkers are. As the characters make their way toward their transportation (their own cars, if they have them, or a company van if not), they notice a group of employees following them in a mob.

Have the players roll Wits + Intelligence. If this roll succeeds, the appropriate characters notice that the workers were popping small red pills as they left. Amphetamines are not uncommon on the factory floor, but it's strange to see workers taking them *after* a shift. The reason, of course, is to have the energy to fight. All of the workers receive a +2 to Strength-based rolls during this fight (see p. 177 of the *World of Darkness Rulebook*).

### The Mob

The exact motivations for jumping the characters, of course, vary depending on a number of factors. When Disquiet affects a group, typically it rallies around a leader. The Storyteller should create such a character before running "To the Wastes" and make sure he shows up early enough that the characters can identify him. He need not be antagonistic

the whole way through; maybe he sat with the characters at their dinner in Scene Two when they heard the story of Blood Clot (see p. 128) and chatted with them. Maybe he works with one of the characters pulling innards out of cattle. But now Disquiet has set in severely (the leader is at the third stage of Disquiet; see p. 170 of **Promethean: The Created**), and he has talked the other employees into believing that these coworkers are somehow responsible for their misery. The characters make the line move too slowly. The characters are actually company plants quashing attempts to unionize. The characters are the ones pissing on the line and contaminating meat. The stories get more far-fetched as Disquiet grows — a female character is having an affair with Mr. Stevens, and the tension is what's making him such a bastard. An injured character faked his mishap in an attempt to scam the company, and so on and on.

Remember that the highest Azoth in the group colors the Disquiet. If the Azoth ratings are all equal, the Disquiet's tone might depend on which character has been the most sociable with the other workers, or, conversely, the coworkers might focus on someone who hasn't said a word, wondering what he has to hide. The Lineages of the throng are significant in determining how these people react; some basic ideas follow:

- **Frankenstein:** "We the workers are united — they want unions, better treatment and higher wages, but those guys are the only stumbling block. Management's never going to budge with these assholes around."

- **Galatea:** "These folks are making all of us normal people look bad. They must be on some good drugs to keep working so steady like that, but we're not going to let those pretty bastards drag us down."

- **Osiris:** The mob here has no definable reason for their actions. The leader just yells "Get them!" and the crowd follows suit, lost in anger and hate. You might choose to remove the drug bonus from such a crowd, since they are probably acting spontaneously, but they are more likely to make All-Out Attacks.

- **Tammuz:** "We've got to know how they walk out of here every night looking so fresh. They do the same work as us, but I don't see them stretching their aching muscles or cradling their hands from carpal tunnel. *How do they do it?*"

- **Ulgan:** "It sounds crazy, but those people are wrong. Evil. Maybe they're here because they like killing or they need blood for some Satanic thing they do, but you just watch them a minute and tell me if the shadows don't turn red around them."

These are just examples, of course, and you should tailor the actual motivation not only to the Lineage, but to the *character*, in question.

The mob contains about half-again as many people as Prometheans (so eight workers for a five-member throng), unless the characters are heavily specialized toward combat, in which case you might make the ratio two or even three

to one. Most of the workers are not armed, but one or two brought their knives out to take home and sharpen, and during the fight others might break antennas off cars or pick up rocks to use against the characters.

## The Attack

The mob is not interested in talking. If the characters try, all that means is that the workers get a few free shots in. The mob concentrates on the character upon whom the Disquiet is based (i.e., the one with the highest Azoth), but not so much that other characters are safe. The workers are intelligent enough to grapple a character so that other workers can beat or stab him, and make use of All-Out Attacks (see p. 157 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**), Dodge and the cars and terrain around them. Use the Traits listed for “Gangbangers” on p. 205 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, except that the workers do not carry guns.

The fight might go badly for the characters, or they might end up mopping the ground with these assailants. Combat is a fluid, after all, and much is left to chance. As it happens, the fight doesn’t play out to its conclusion, because Boyce interrupts.

## Deliverance

After three turns of combat, the characters see the gate open, and Boyce’s van drives in. On the following turn, it reaches the melee and Boyce honks the horn and screams for everyone to stop. Depending on the layout of the scene at this point, he might aim his van at a grappled character and slam on the brakes at the last second, to get the attackers to jump clear.

Boyce gets out of the van and looks around, trying to assess the situation. He points at the characters and tells them to get into his van, and then points at the other workers and tells them that he has just called the police on his cell phone and they should get clear of here. The workers scramble, and the characters (hopefully) join Boyce.

In the van, Boyce tells them that he was coming to the slaughterhouse to find them. He shakes his head and says that he knew the characters would be trouble, somehow. Boyce tells them that the company has friends in local government, and that they can expect police harassment soon — unless they find a way to lie low. Boyce, as it happens, has a way to facilitate that, and to get the characters new jobs at the same time. If the characters are tired of standing in cow shit all day, Boyce says, he’s got work for them.

If the players balk, the character(s) who experienced Revelation when Boyce told his story in Scene Two feel a slight quickening from within. Boyce, it seems, might be leading them to the next stop on their Pilgrimages. If the characters seem willing to go along with Boyce’s plan, don’t include this detail — it might make things seem a bit too forced. If the characters feel the nudge of the Revelation but still

aren’t interested, don’t force it. Let them do as they wish (and see the sidebar on p. 127 for some thoughts on how to handle it).

**If the characters do not go with Boyce:** Let them do as they wish. Boyce finds them a day or two later, probably still in Greeley, and tells them the safe information (the police are after them, but he can keep them safe).

**If anyone dies during the fight:** It’s unlikely, but it’s possible for a worker to sustain enough damage to perish. If this happens, have the appropriate player roll to avoid Humanity loss and keep in mind that although a brawl might not incite a police investigation, a death certainly will. This makes it all the more important for the characters to lie low.

## Act One Milestones

The potential for milestones in this act is immense. Characters can find meaning in the act of holding down a job, interacting with humans as co-workers (or employees — especially important for the servitude-prone Golems) or pushing their way through the physical hardships of the job. Learning the truth about Moses Moon, helping the Lost Dog move on or receiving the Tarot reading from Amber might trigger a milestone in mystically inclined characters. Finally, fighting in self-defense or to protect one’s throng-mates in the last scene could very well be a milestone, for practitioners of ferrum, Stannum or Aes in particular.

## Act Two: In Dark Places

In this act, the characters are briefly employed as miners, but are trapped underground by an explosion. Left for dead by the company, they can either try to escape, or see what this subterranean world has to offer.

The end of Act One leaves the characters on the run, probably with Boyce. He lets them stop by wherever they’ve been staying and pick up any personal effects, and then drives them south to Colorado Springs. En route, he tells them a little about the job. The mine was almost closed recently because it wasn’t producing anything. Much of the crew was laid off (the characters might already know this, since some of the mine’s former workers found employment in the slaughterhouse). Now, though, a new vein of silver has been found, and the mining company needs people to do some heavy work. Much of this work involves clearing rocks from the mine to keep the tunnels open, and the shifts, while still long, will not be nearly as grueling as in the slaughterhouse.

The characters might well ask why Boyce came to the slaughterhouse looking for employees rather than pick them up off the street, as he did before. Boyce lies, saying that he knows how unpleasant the work in Greeley is and hoped to make things a little better for the characters. In truth, he was coming to the slaughterhouse to meet with Stevens and find any employees whom the plant considered troublesome — the mine is reopening, true, but it is highly unsafe. The mining company is trying to strip as much silver as possible before the inevitable collapse, and while they don't *think* the tunnels will just cave in unexpectedly, they don't want to take chances with trained personnel or employees who have families (and are therefore likely to sue). A character whose player succeeds in a contested roll of Wits + Subterfuge against Boyce's Oration pool (seven dice) notes that he's not being entirely forthcoming. If they call him on it, he says that he's just freaked out from what happened at the plant (which is true in itself).

It might be better to skip directly from the characters driving away in the van to their first day on the job at the mine. If the players have too much time to think about what has happened, they might balk at going directly from one job to the next. If you begin the next scene *in media res*, you can immerse them in this act before they have a chance to complicate things. Likewise, once the characters reach the mine, it might be wise to find other ways to entice them into the caves. A flicker of Pyros, a strange premonition or a quickening similar to the Revelation to indicate that they are near the Shrine may help to get all of the characters into the mine for the few necessary moments.

## Scene One: Cave-In

The mine is several miles west of Colorado Springs, near the town of Victor. Victor's population is barely 500, and Boyce tells the characters that the mining company (which is locally owned — not a huge corporation like the one that owns the slaughterhouse) has set them up to stay in trailers near the mining site. He cautions them that the mining job is temporary, probably two or three weeks, maybe less, after which the company will attempt to help them find work in the area should they so desire.

Boyce isn't being entirely truthful here, as usual. The mine is technically owned by local businessmen, but this arrangement is a front for one of the larger mining concerns. As mentioned, the mine is unsafe, and the corporation wishes to have some distance (and some plausible deniability) between itself and the inevitable accident. None of this matters much to the characters, however, as a warm Colorado morning finds them donning hardhats with flashlights and being led into the tunnels. More experienced miners use large drills and jackhammers to dig for the gold veins, but the characters are simply expected to pile the rocks into carts on wheels and push them out of the tunnels.

## The Miners

The mine is a small operation. Aside from the characters, only five other people are on site. Two are engineers; the other three operate the heavy machinery. Unlike the slaughterhouse, safety is a serious consideration — one of the workers (choose one, probably Glen or Vern) gives the characters a rundown of the job, the health hazards (methane gas pockets are the chief concern) and even warns them to watch out for snakes.

Have the players roll Azoth to determine Disquiet as usual, but don't worry too much about the effects even if the roll succeeds. Better to present the miners as too busy to stop and interact with the characters just now (with the exception of the foreman who orients them), and therefore not immediately susceptible to Disquiet.

The miners' names and descriptions are presented below. They are not given Traits or even brief write-ups in "Dramatis Personae" because they won't live long enough for such to become important.

- **Glen Cherry:** Glen is the son of a coal miner. His father died of black lung when Glen was a young man, and he considers his career as an engineer a legacy to his father's. He has worked in gold and silver mines for the last 30 years and even survived a cave-in once. Glen is in his early 50s, has a stern, weather-beaten face and wears a gold ring forged from the first vein he ever discovered. He never married, mostly because the demands of his job kept him from forming real relationships. He considers the other miners to be his family.

- **Sam Turman:** The other on-site engineer, Sam is just out of college. His parents moved to Victor, Colorado, recently, but aren't in good health. Sam decided to take a job nearby and help them through their last years, after which he plans move out to the Pacific Northwest. The other miner's call him "Mama's Boy" because he talks about his mother often, but it's mostly in fun; Sam's a good kid and never looks down on his less-educated coworkers. Sam is barely 22 and carries an engraved pocket watch, even down the mine. The watch is engraved with the words "All our love and pride, Mom and Dad" — it was a college graduation present.

- **Hector Ortiz:** Hector moved to Colorado from Los Angeles by way of Mexico 10 years back, and worked in the Greeley slaughterhouse briefly. When a knife slipped from a coworker's hand and nearly killed him, he decided God had given him a sign and quit. He married and took work in Cripple Creek at a casino, but was laid off recently and fell victim to Boyce's blandishments. Hector is the newest member of the team (other than the characters), and is still finding his place in the social hierarchy, but he is polite and hardworking. Hector recently turned 40 and worries about his graying hair a bit. He has four children (Maria, Amelia, Rose and Mateo), and just as most proud fathers, tends to ramble a bit if he starts talking about them.



- **Vern Mollica:** Vern and his brother, Steven, have worked in the mine since it opened. Vern is the older of the two (32 to Steven's 28), and since his brother's "accident" (see below) has worked to better himself — he's been sober for three years now and is working on quitting cigarette smoking as well. A deeply devout Christian, Vern takes it upon himself to make sure that everybody who works in the mine is "okay" — not necessarily church-going, but at least living right. "Vern says he's okay" has become a general affirmation of a man's character down the mines. Standing slightly over six feet tall, Vern is steady, calm and patient.

- **Steven Mollica:** The Mollica family was always deeply suspicious of psychiatric medicine, and so when a doctor ventured a guess that Steven, when he was 12, might be manic-depressive, the family didn't give it much consideration. Steven was moody, sure, but that didn't make him *crazy*. Steven, sadly, never got the treatment he needed, but managed to cope until three years ago, when his father passed away. Depressed, drunk and reckless, Steven drove his car through a guardrail and into a gulch, and survived only by sheer luck. In the hospital, Vern held his brother's hand and told him that if he would get help for his depression, Vern would quit drinking. The two of them both kept their word, took work in the mine together and have looked out for each other ever since. Steven is stable as long as he takes his medication, and doesn't want to do this work forever, but is content for the moment. Taller than his brother, Steven sports livid scars across his forehead (from the accident), but covers them with a bandanna most of the time. He is taciturn, but not unfriendly, and a character who can converse with him about horror fiction has made a friend of him.

## The Explosion

When all of the characters are working underground, an explosion from deeper in the tunnel rocks the mine. The characters are deafened by the noise and blinded by clouds of dust and smoke. The ground gives way beneath them, and both the throng and the miners tumble into blackness.

If you want to chart how much damage the characters take from the fall and the blast, roll seven dice, minus any armor, for each character (not the supporting cast, just the Prometheans) and apply the successes as lethal damage. The other miners suffer similarly, but their specifics injuries are discussed in Scene Two.

When the dust settles, someone turns a light on. The characters realize that all of them — Prometheans and miners — are trapped in a small pit, perhaps 20 feet in diameter and 12 feet high. There are no visible exits, no working radios and the characters hear nothing from above. In a shaking voice, Glen tells the workers not to breathe too deeply, because he has no idea how long a rescue might take.

## Scene Two: Lights Go Out

In this scene, the five miners die, one by one. As they do so, they make their final wishes known to the characters, protected from Disquiet by the darkness.

Once everyone has had a chance to collect his wits, Glen does a quick roll call and asks how badly people are hurt. The characters, of course, are all present, and even if they are injured, they probably aren't too debilitated. Glen is fine, other than some bumps and bruises. Hector is not hurt, but is huddled in a corner shaking, terrified of dying in the dark, far from his family. Sam doesn't respond immediately, but then after a moment gives a low moan; a large rock landed on his right leg, crushing it. He is trapped beneath it.

Vern landed on his shoulder and wrenched it, but says he's fine otherwise. Steven doesn't answer, and Vern, feeling around in panic, discovers his brother unconscious, half-buried in a pile of debris.

The chamber has enough air for about two hours (give or take, depending on how many characters there are). If the characters get up immediately and start trying to move rocks or otherwise escape, Glen tells them to stop. "I lived through one of these," he says, "and if you start doing that, you might cause another cave-in. Sit tight — they'll dig us out." If the characters listen to him and stop trying to find a way out, continue with the scene. If they keep trying to find a way out, go to "Escape Attempts," below.

## Comforting the Miners

The characters can help the miners in a number of ways, if they so desire. Glen is functional, but Hector is nearly hysterical. Calming him down requires five successes on an extended Manipulation + Empathy roll, with each roll representing one minute of talking to him. Apply positive or negative modifiers based on how the character approaches the situation. Telling him that they need his help to find a way to escape so that he can get back to his family is probably worth an extra die or two, while saying something callous such as "if you don't get up, you'll never see your kids again" costs the player at least two dice.

Sam is trapped beneath a large rock. Moving it requires a feat of strength (see p. 47 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). The rock weighs close to 1,000 pounds, so Strength 8 is required to move it. Spending Pyros reveals the characters' disfigurements, unless they make sure that Glen's light isn't trained on them. As long as they take a moment to feel around the edge of the boulder and make sure they have somewhere to safely move it, they can free Sam without revealing their nature. Sam, once the boulder is gone, cries out in pain and slips into shock. He cradles his mangled leg and asks anyone nearby to make sure his father takes his medications, and to check to make sure his mother has enough eggs in the fridge.





Digging Steven out of the debris requires an extended roll of Strength + Athletics, with a  $-3$  modifier for the darkness. Up to two characters (plus Vern) can work on this project at once; Vern's pool is eight dice. Each roll represents five minutes of digging. When the total reaches 10 successes, Vern finds his brother and pulls him out, cradling his head and crying softly. If a character examines him, have the player roll Intelligence + Medicine, with a  $-2$  for the conditions. If this roll succeeds, the character realizes that Sam has a bad concussion, but has no way to know the extent of the damage.

### Human Tragedy

Running a scene like this, in which the chief dramatic element isn't getting attacked by Pandorans or exploring the nature of Pyros but comforting and aiding human beings in their last hours, is not going to appeal to every troupe. Your players might revel in this

kind of role-playing, or they might not be able to contain their snickers when you tell them that Sam calls out for his mother. Some players respond to emotional situations by making inappropriate comments, and some players feel that this kind of scene is out of place in a game that's "supposed to be fun."

*None of these attitudes is wrong.* You need to gauge what's interesting and entertaining (if not "fun," exactly) for your group and play to that level. If that means skipping this scene entirely or narrating it, so be it.

Alternately, you might feel good about some elements but not about others — a storyteller who is also a parent might feel uncomfortable about portraying Hector's anguish as he realizes he will never see his children again. As such, you might decide that Hector died in the explosion or in the fall, and never had a chance to make that realization.

Knowing your players' — and your own — comfort levels is essential for any storytelling game, especially in a story like this. Before running this scene, be sure you have a good idea of how to do it.

If a character knows the "Shock" Transmutation, he can use it to wake Sam (but the roll suffers a  $-2$ ). Sam is delirious for a few moments, and has no memory of the explosion or the fall. If no one knows this Transmutation, Sam wakes up on his own after an hour.

## Escape Attempts

Players being the proactive sorts that they are, they will almost certainly start looking for a way out. They might try some of the following avenues of approach:

- **Climbing the walls:** The walls aren't very high (12 feet), but the rock ceiling is immovable. No matter how strong the characters are, they simply can't get enough leverage or raw power to move the rocks above them.

- **Digging:** Scrabbling through the rocks with bare hands is impossible, and any tools the characters had were lost or buried in the fall. While the characters can eventually dig their way into a lower tunnel, they cannot do so in enough time to save the miners.

- **Transmutations:** Certain alchemical powers might provide egress, the Alchemicus Transmutation "Dissolve" in particular. Using this Transmutation can indeed work away at some of the rock, possibly even the ceiling. Remember, though, that this power costs Pyros, and that Dissolve coats the character in a visible and noxious acid that inflicts damage to anyone the Promethean touches. You might require Dexterity + Composure rolls to avoid touching the other characters in the dark, and even if the character does manage to dissolve part of the wall, she needs to inflict a great deal of damage to burn through several feet of rock (which means maintaining the Transmutation for multiple turns).

The Vitality Transmutation "Fist of Talos" presents a different problem. A Promethean with this power can batter through stone as long as he has Pyros to spend, but risks causing a further cave-in. After the first blow, Glen cries out to stop, and tells everyone to listen. The characters hear rumbling from above them, and then a thin layer of dust falls from the ceiling. Hopefully, the throng takes the hint.

## Passing the Time

The characters should quickly figure out that they aren't going to be able to dig their way out in time, but even if they continue working on escaping, run this section of the scene.

The miners pass on their wishes and prayers before dying. Sam is the first to speak up, still in terrible pain, but less in shock than before. He says that his parents live in Victor, the town nearby, and they aren't in good health. He tells the other miners that, should any of them survive, to give his watch back to his parents and tell them "thank you" for always being there for him. If the characters have not freed him from the boulder, he dies long before this point from the shock and pain, mumbling incoherently.

Hector, if the characters have talked him down, thanks them. He then gets on his knees and begins to pray in Spanish, asking the Virgin Mary to grant him a miracle and bring him home to his children. His words echo in the deep pit, and even if the characters cannot understand him they feel the fear and grief in his voice as he speaks the names of his

children. Unable to complete his prayer, he sits back down repeating "*por favor, Santa Maria, por favor.*" If any character touches him or says his name, he snaps out of it and asks that the characters visit his family and tell them what happened. If the characters do not comfort Hector after the initial fall, however, he slides deeper into madness and grief, eventually going catatonic and dying when the air runs out, curled up in a ball on the cold, stone ground.

Sam moves in and out of consciousness during the first hour. The last time he wakes up, he whispers to his brother that he is sorry for trying to kill himself. "If I hadn't gone off that cliff," he says, "you wouldn't be here." Vern shushes him, telling him that this is God's plan, and he is sure that God has a purpose in this. Sam chuckles ruefully, whispers "I hope you're right" and passes out, never to wake again. He dies of his injuries a few moments later, and Vern's sobs fill the cavern, inchoate, mindless sorrow. He has no request to make of the characters — his brother was his only living family. If the characters did not dig Steven out, he dies while Vern is still trying to move the debris, and Vern sits in a corner quaking with rage and grief. If touched or approached, he attacks whoever is nearest and fights until incapacitated or killed.

Glen, stoic throughout, asks the characters (once Vern calms down) about their own families. The characters are faced now with a difficult proposition. Do they lie, making up the family that none of them ever had? Do they doctor the truth, substituting a creator for a parent? Do they dodge the question? Or do they do the unthinkable and risk Disquiet by telling these people the truth?

How Glen and any surviving miners react is up to you and should depend on the needs of the story. You might decide that Vern, mad with grief, accuses the characters of being demons from Hell who caused the cave-in, or you might decide that he gives them his blessing, telling them to go on and finish their journeys to Humanity. Glen might finally crack at the revelation of the supernatural, dying then and there of a heart attack, or he might take it in stride and endeavor to answer their questions. It's very much in the theme of this story, in fact, if the miners *do* try to give the characters some insight into humanity, but remember that these men aren't scholars or philosophers. Their insights will be practical, experience-based and much less esoteric than the characters are probably used to hearing from other Prometheans. These insights, then, might be just what the characters need.

After about two hours, the miners succumb to suffocation. First Sam passes away, then Hector, then Vern and finally Glen. Before Glen passes out, he reaches out and puts a hand on the nearest character, tries to speak, but cannot catch his breath. He lays his head back against the rock, and dies.

## Scene Three: Secrets in the Dark

In this scene, the characters discover that these caves have housed the Created once before, and he left behind wisdom . . . and danger.

After the miners pass away, the characters need to start worrying about their own lives. They need to breathe, too, although their Promethean constitution means that they will survive a little longer. Let the players discuss a course of action, and when the conversation starts to lag a bit (or when they get close to deciding on something), have them all roll Wits + Composure. If this roll succeeds, the appropriate players hear a scratching sound coming from one of the corners.

The characters might initially think that this is a rescue attempt, but sadly, this is not the case. When the characters dropped into this chamber, their Azothic Radiance awoke a Pandoran — the Leaper, created by the former Promethean inhabitant of these caves (see below) from Dormancy. It has been digging for them ever since. This Pandoran's Traits can be found in “Dramatis Personae,” at the end of this chapter.

If one of the characters uses the “Sense Flux” Transmutation, he senses the creature coming toward the chamber.

The Prometheans don't really have a way to escape, but they can certainly set up an ambush. The Leaper attacks the instant it squirms into the room, but the Pandoran is outnumbered and hungry, and so it should fall quickly. It has, however, made a hole into a lower cavern. If you wish, the Leaper might retreat down the cavern when it realizes the Pandoran is outnumbered, and continue to plague the characters in the next act.

When the characters kill the Pandoran, they can feel cool air rising up from the hole it made. Wriggling down the hole requires a Dexterity + Athletics roll (–1 if the character has the Giant Merit). Failure means the character is stuck and the other characters need to find a way to ease his passage into the cavern below. Horribly, the only lubricant they probably have handy is blood from the miners' corpses, but Transmutations such as Degradation or Dissolve would work, too.

When the characters all descend through the makeshift tunnel, they find that it opens up into a huge underground cavern. The cavern consists of one main chamber about half the size of a football field (but overhung with stalactites, so visibility is poor). A small stream runs through the center. If the characters explore the area, they find tunnels branching off of this main room. Most of these tunnels come to dead ends, but some of them descend further into the mountain.



Most remarkable of all, though, is what the characters find on a large, smooth wall of the cavern. Carvings, mostly Pilgrim Marks but some pictographs that the characters probably don't recognize. In fact, the language is a Chinese writing system, used in modern times only by the Naxi people of Yunnan Province. A character who is familiar with Chinese culture might know that (Intelligence + Wits, -2 for obscurity), but other characters are probably hard-pressed to recognize it as a Chinese language system at all (Intelligence + Academics, -4 modifier). Translating the writing is impossible unless a character is actually from Yunnan and knows the language. Simply knowing Cantonese or Mandarin is not enough; those language systems are not pictographic, and provide no help in translating these carvings (to say nothing of the fact that these carvings are several hundred years old). The only sure way to translate the wall is with the "Translator's Eye" Transmutation. If no one knows it, you might consider letting one of the characters develop it, possibly using experience and Vitriol from this story.

The carvings and what they mean to the characters are discussed in Act Three.

## Act Two Milestones

Obviously, the last hours spent with the dying miners are the characters' best chance for milestones in this act. Comforting these men as they take their last breaths — or even speeding their passage, in the case of the injured Sam or the tormented Hector — might bring new insight into the human condition. Even if the characters don't have milestones specifically related to these conditions, the characters should still come away from this intense scene with some Vitriol. Of course, if the characters behaved callously, not helping the miners and letting them die in pain and misery, the characters should not only fail at appropriate milestones but possibly risk degeneration as well (depending on their Humanity levels). Finally, discovering the Originist's carvings might be worthy of a milestone, especially for Mercurius characters.

## Act Three: Sunlight Again

In this act, the characters can analyze the strange carvings that they found, and discover the Shrine hidden within the mountain. They must also make a choice — will they leave the mountain immediately, or stay here in contemplation, going to the wastes?

## Scene One: Inside the Mountain

This scene consists of any activities the characters take inside the mountain (except for finding the Shrine of the Seer, which demands its own scene). The three most significant events the characters can undertake here are reading and analyzing the carvings, going to the wastes and attempting to create a new Promethean from the body of one (or more) of the miners.

Survival inside the cavern isn't impossible. Finding food and water are simple enough; the characters can drink from the stream and catch and eat bats and snakes. Lichens also grow on some of the cave walls, and these are edible (to Prometheans). The biggest problem for the characters is light. Only one hardhat with a lamp survived the fall, and the batteries won't last long down here. A character with the "Jolt" Transmutation can hold the flashlight and power it as long as he likes (or until the bulb burns out, at least). The characters could build a fire if they can find something to burn — clothes, for instance, or possibly some timbers from the mine that fell into the chamber. Building a fire with no matches is a Wits + Survival roll (-3 penalty).

Remember that the characters do create Wastelands inside the mountain during their stay, but they are so far away from humanity that they don't attract any attention in doing so. Still, take a moment with the players to define exactly what each character's humour does to the cave system, especially if a character goes to the wastes.

## The Carvings

As mentioned in Act Two, the only way the characters are likely to be able to read the carvings is through the use of the "Translator's Eye" Transmutation. If no one has purchased this Transmutation yet, you might rule that the proximity to a Shrine and the possibility of reading the wisdom of a bygone Promethean triggers a character's ability to do so. Alternatively, if a character wishes to use the time in the mountain to undertake the Cuprum Refinement (remember that taking on a new Refinement requires a month of study and practice without a teacher), learning this Transmutation might be an appropriate way to begin. Finally, a character who stands for hours trying to make sense of the carvings can spontaneously manifest this ability.

When the characters translate the writing, they find it to be a long discussion on the nature of the Saturnine Night. The Promethean who carved the writing (never named in the carvings, and referred to here as "the Originist") had spent many years studying everything about the Promethean condition, learning, as he puts it, "the properties of my stony, breathless flesh, this excrement that I wish to change into warm and beautiful humanity." It is obvious to anyone who reads this carving (or listens to someone else read it aloud) that this Promethean pursued a Refinement lost to time,

the Refinement of Source. This Refinement is described in detail in Chapter Two. The carvings describe most of the salient philosophies of the Refinement, and a Promethean reading can certainly take up the Refinement of Lead if he so desires. Doing so would normally take a month without a teacher, but the carvings halve that time.

The last part of the carving states that the Originist is about to attempt the generative act. “If this working succeeds,” the carving reads, “I shall teach my new child everything about her condition. She will understand everything that I did not when my creator left me in the mud of the river. I will not leave her, not even when the New Dawn beckons.” The characters, having already fought the Leaper, might be able to surmise what happened to the Originist.

## Going to the Wastes

The characters have had numerous brushes with Torment during this story, and if any of them succumbed to it he carries that stink on his Azoth. This cave, however, is immense, and a Promethean could find another cavern somewhere and cut himself off from the rest of the throng. Of course, the other throng-members need to know his intent, lest they find him and spoil his attempt at purgation.

Going to the wastes is discussed on pp. 207–208 of **Promethean: The Created**. The impact of this event on the chronicle receives in-depth treatment in Chapter Three of this book. Little attention to the event is required here, however — if the character remains hidden and secluded, even from his fellow Prometheans, for a full month, he loses a dot of Azoth and any Torment he carries is washed away.

## The Generative Act

If one of the characters is nearing the end of his Pilgrimage, he might wish to use the bodies of the miners to fashion a new Promethean. Obviously, this is easier for some Lineages than others. Frankensteins, for example, have no shortage of body parts, but they are lacking in thread, needles and especially lightning. Galateids have much the same problem, and add to that the fact that they need *beautiful* bodies to work with (which might disqualify the miners’ corpses). Ulgans must use the body of someone touched by spirits, which again might leave them without suitable material. An Osiran has river water (the underground stream), but lacks the herbs or the roses he needs.

Golems, however, are very much in their element, so to speak. Surrounded by earth and rock, all a Tammuz must do is inscribe some word of power on his would-be creation’s forehead or on a slip of paper placed into the corpse’s mouth, and hope.

For non-Golems, though, the Storyteller needs to decide how strictly the creation process applies. An Osiran, for instance, normally cuts the corpse of his intended creation into 13 pieces and sews it back together. Does an Osiran character under the mountain have the tools to dismember a body? Does he have a

way to sew it back together again? Maybe one of the characters carries a needle and some thread, and someone probably has a knife. Would lichens replace the herbs, then, or shavings from the wooden timbers replace the roses? Does Steven’s mental condition render him “touched by the spirits” for purposes of becoming an Ulgan? The Storyteller might decide that Sam was young and beautiful, and requires only a new leg to be worthy of being granted the Breath of Life (which still leaves the issue of the scented oils and pearls needed for the ritual, but perhaps the raw gold from the mine would suffice).

In the end, you must decide if any of the Prometheans have the tools necessary to create another of their kind, and if this is something you wish to let one of them pursue (unless the throng contains more than one Golem, it’s not likely that multiple characters can attempt the generative act). The generative act is described on pp. 186–187 of **Promethean: The Created**. If the attempt fails, the characters can share in the tragedy and terror having to destroy the Pandorans thus created. If the attempt succeeds, they welcome a new Promethean into the Saturnine Night.

## Scene Two: The Forgotten Cycle

Somewhere in the cave is the Shrine that Boyce unknowingly alluded to in his story of Blood Clot. The characters can find it if — and only if — they search for it. The Shrines of the Seer’s Pilgrimage carry great rewards, but while Prometheans might hear of them by blind luck, they cannot find them except by looking.

Finding the Shrine requires an extensive search of the caverns. This is an extended action requiring a roll of Intelligence + Survival. Each roll requires 12 hours of searching (be sure to keep an eye on the characters’ activities for purposes of measuring hunger and fatigue, too — it would be unfortunate, if thematically appropriate, for a character to fall into Torment from hunger because he focused too heavily on the search.

Unlike most extended actions, the search yields results at several increments, rather than at one final goal. That means that the characters can stop at any time, or keep questing until they find the Shrine. Feel free to state that the character who experienced Revelation feels the same quickening of Vitriol as the search progresses, just to make sure that the players don’t lose interest.

### Successes

#### Achieved

2

5

10

15

20

#### Discovery

A small chamber with the stream running through it; a good place to go to the wastes

Another such chamber

A third chamber, this one included the bleach-white skeleton of the Originist, bones bitten and gnawed by the Leaper. Tracks indicate that the creature was sleeping here until recently (when the characters awakened it)

A narrow tunnel that leads to the surface — a way to escape the caverns

The Shrine (see below)

When the characters find the Shrine, the Promethean who experienced Revelation goes into a kind of trance. He sees a man crouched by the underground stream, covered in blood and buffalo hides, washing away the gore. The man holds up his hands and says a word in a strange language, but the character recognizes that it means “lead,” the base metal of the Saturnine Night. The Seer walks into the cave and strikes the wall, and rocks fall around him. He turns, now “facing” the character, and in his face the Promethean sees determination — to understand and to transcend. On the wall he struck is a Shrine-mark. This cave is the first in a heretofore-unknown cycle of the Seer’s Pilgrimage, the Bloody Querent Cycle. If you so desire, the characters can go on to discover other tales and Shrines in this Cycle, the series of tales of the Seer’s experiences following Plumbum.

The player of the character who witnessed this vision rolls Wits + Composure + Azoth, with success and failure as described on p. 53.

## Scene Three: Moving On

The characters might choose to leave the mountain at any time. Doing so requires 15 successes on the Intelligence + Survival roll described above, but once they have found the way out, nothing stops the characters from returning to the mountain later to search for other secrets (should you decide it holds any). The tunnel they find empties out onto the foothills, and the Prometheans can see the stunning Colorado landscape stretching out before them.

The only event that demands their immediate attention is to visit the families of the miners (if the characters promised to do so). Sam’s parents can be found in Victor, while Hector’s family lives in Cripple Creek. Glen, Steven and Vern had no living family, but the characters might inform the authorities of their deaths just the same (or not, if the characters used the bodies to create new Prometheans). If the characters perform this task, they see confusion and fear on the faces of Sam’s parents — who will care for them now, as their health declines? Why did they have to outlive their only child? Hector’s family is likewise devastated, his wife breaking down into sobs and collapsing into a character’s arms. The characters can do precious little to comfort these people, and in fact their best bet might be to move on before Disquiet makes the families suspect that these strange folks have something to hide.

### Act Three Milestones

Discovering a relic of an ancient Promethean might be a milestone for a Serpent or a Pariah. finding the Shrine, of course, if not a milestone in itself, allows the character who experiences Revelation to learn one of his milestones, so choose

carefully, because your choice will probably influence what the throng decides to do next. If a character has “cause a Wasteland” as a milestone, the time spent underground might well fulfill it, unless the characters focus on quick escape. The generative act, of course, is nominally a milestone for all Prometheans. Finally, informing the miners’ families of their fate is probably worth a point of Vitriol even if doing so doesn’t fulfill a specific milestone, provided the characters approach the task in a humane manner.

## Aftermath

What to do now depends greatly on your needs for the chronicle. If you plan to run “These Mortal Engines,” the story appearing in **Saturnine Night** (the final installment in the **Promethean: The Created** line), you might wish to point the characters in the direction of Detroit. One way to do that is to use the newly discovered Bloody Querent Cycle to let another character experience Revelation, preferably a new convert to the Refinement of Lead. Another is Moses Moon. His family is from Detroit, and so Amber might send the characters there.

But maybe the characters aren’t so quick to leave the Rockies. They might wish to discover what was behind the explosion that trapped them and killed the other miners (in fact, if one of the miners’ bodies was used to create a new Promethean, it’s reasonable that doing so might be a milestone for him). If they investigate, they can discover that the “locally owned” mining company is a front for a much larger corporation. What, then, are they prepared to do? Will they engage in industrial espionage? They stand to make powerful enemies in this manner, and the search for who really gave the order to expedite the mining under unsafe conditions might take them far from Colorado (possibly even to Detroit, just to raise that possibility again).

Finally, if one of the characters wishes to stay in the mountains, remaining in the wastes for longer than the others wish to wait, what then? If one of the Prometheans fashioned a new Created, the player of the Promethean going to the wastes might take on the role of this newcomer. This situation receives a great deal of attention in Chapter Three of this book.

The characters have seen some degraded, unfortunate and even inspiring examples of humanity. Whether their desire to join the human race is redoubled or greatly reduced after this story, a lesson they might take away from “To the Wastes” is that human existence, while it might be free of the threat of Pandorans and the agony of Disquiet, is by no means simple or idyllic. But the inverse is also true: human life is not paradise, but even with its trials, human gold is greater than Promethean lead by far. The characters have only to look at the perseverance of the slaughterhouse workers and the devotion to family of the miners to realize that.

## Dramatis Personae

In this section, you'll find character descriptions and traits for the important supporting cast of "To the Wastes."

### The Lost Dog

Quote: [panting, sound of embers crackling]

Background: The house fire was just one of those stupid accidents. Some lit a scented candle and set it on top of his dog's crate, and then walked outside to get the mail and wound up chatting with his neighbor. The dog woke up from his nap, stretched and knocked the candle over onto the couch, where it started the fabric burning, and soon the house went up. Tiny fire-spirits, spawned by the blaze, consumed each other until a massive inferno-spirit formed, and it consumed the house and almost everything in it before the fire department arrived.

The dog, though, managed to shove the door to the crate open and tried to escape the house. He only managed to get to the kitchen, though, before blacking out from smoke inhalation. At the same time, one of the smaller fire-spirits split off from the group and became lost. As the dog lay dying, wanting only to escape and find his master, the fire-spirit, wanting only to rejoin the blaze, possessed him.

At that moment, the door opened and the fire fighters rushed in. The dog/spirit hybrid fled, fearing the water that the fire fighters were using to murder the inferno-spirit, and escaped into Denver. The Lost Dog wanders the streets, looking for a way to join the greater blaze — to return home.

Description: The dog is an Irish setter, about 60 pounds, with thick red fur and brown eyes. It wears a collar, but has no tags, and the metal bits of the collar are hot to the touch. Water steams when the dog drinks it, and sounds of crackling embers can be heard when it pants or barks.



Storytelling Hints: The Lost Dog only wants to go home. The spirit reacts to stimuli that a fire-spirit finds interesting — cigarettes lighters, smoke from any source, even pictures of fire. Because the spirit is using a dog's body, however, the way in which it reacts is decidedly canine. The dog pants, jumps up excitedly and "begs" for lit cigarettes. The spirit can feel whatever the dog feels, and so sometimes it remembers to eat, but physical pain doesn't deter the spirit in any way.

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** none

**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Running) 3, Brawl (Bite) 2, Stealth 1, Survival 2

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken (Dogs) 1, Empathy 1, Intimidation 2, Streetwise (Hiding Places) 2

**Merits:** Direction Sense, Fleet of Foot 2, Iron Stomach

**Willpower:** 4

**Essence:** 10

**Health:** 6

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 12 (species factor 6, Fleet of Foot included)

**Size:** 3

**Influence:** Fire ·

**Numina:** Claim, Fiery Bite, Seek

· **Claim:** This Numen allowed the fire-spirit to possess the dog, and could theoretically allow it to possess another being. It cannot possess a Promethean, however, and so no game systems are required for it. If you wish to have the fire-spirit possess a new host, just assume that it requires about an hour of work, after which the spirit melds with the host just as it did with the dog. This process happened much faster during the fire, of course, but that was because the blaze strengthened the spirit.

· **Fiery Bite:** The dog's bite inflicts fire damage instead of simple lethal damage. To most targets, the only difference this makes is cosmetic (the damage is accompanied by blistering and searing rather than just punctures and torn flesh), but to Prometheans, it means the dog inflicts aggravated damage with its bite.

· **Seek:** The spirit can find sources of fire. Normally, the spirit only finds mundane fire, but the Promethean's Inner Fire — Azoth — intrigued the spirit enough to make it approach them.

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Dice Pool	Special
Bite	2 (L)	8	Counts as fire damage

## Joseph Boyce

**Quote:** *It's not easy work, but personally, I think any work worth doing should tax you some.*

**Background:** Born and raised in Los Angeles, Joe Boyce always prided himself on his ability to talk his way out of undesirable situations. He went to college and got a degree in communications, and had aspirations of becoming an agent or a talent scout. He discovered, though, that he didn't have the patience to work up through the Hollywood ranks, so he bought a pair of boots and moved to Colorado, taking a job in human resources with a machine parts factory.

Boyce's talent for talking injured or angry employees out of suing — or even filing worker's compensation claims — brought him to the attention of his superiors. He was never promoted or officially paid to make sure people stayed happy with their employer, but he lived very comfortably for several years. The factory unexpectedly closed down one morning, however, due to government-imposed penalties, and Joe found himself out of a job. His former boss, however, had recently taken a job with a major meat-packing concern, and remembered Joe's ability to sweet-talk people into doing or continuing to do unpleasant work. He offered Joe a job as a "freelance recruiter." Joe was to find employees for the slaughterhouse, and it was a full-time job, given the high turnover rate at such places. While Boyce isn't exactly thrilled to go to work every day, he makes good money and enjoys the travel the work affords him. What's more, mining companies have begun to employ his services as well, and since Boyce doesn't recruit anyone he respects for the work, he sleeps well at night.



**Description:** Boyce is a trim man in his late 30s. He has dark hair that he keeps cut short, and wears dark cotton shirts, as he tends to sweat in the Colorado heat and doesn't wish it to show. When not "on the clock," he's actually fairly dour and even unfriendly, but when he's working he has a smile for all the world.

**Storytelling Hints:** Joe Boyce is a bigot who has refined his bigotry into pure condescension. He says, in safe company, that he is doing the blacks, Mexicans, immigrants, Indians and white poor of the area a favor by giving them work, but his true feeling is that as long as the uneducated minorities of the world are working in slaughterhouses, people like him won't have to.

**Abilities:**

**Oration (7 dice):** People find themselves agreeing with Joe Boyce even if they don't understand what he's saying. He's just got the sort of voice that gets people's heads nodding.

**Local History (6 dice):** Boyce hates television and doesn't like to fiction, but he does like to read. He's developed a taste for history and legendry, in part because it gives him something interesting to talk about to potential marks.

**Strong Willed (7 dice):** It's hard to bully Joe Boyce; he's self-confident and pretty good at projecting a tough exterior. As it happens, this makes him resistant to Disquiet as well.

## The Leaper

**Background:** The Originist found the body of a Ute woman, shot dead by an Army bullet, and decided that she would be his progeny, the culmination of his Pilgrimage. He resolved to teach her well, to show her everything he could about being a Promethean before ever introducing her to the concept of the New Dawn. He didn't count, however, on her body splitting asunder and the pieces crawling off into the dark. He killed two before the last — the strongest, the Leaper — pounced on him from above and consumed him.

**Description:** The Leaper hunches like a frog. Its stance is somewhere between quadruped and biped. The Leaper has large, bulbous white eyes and a mouth full of terrible fangs, and it hisses like an enraged adder when it jumps in for the kill.

**Mockery:** Ishtari

**Rank:** 2

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 2

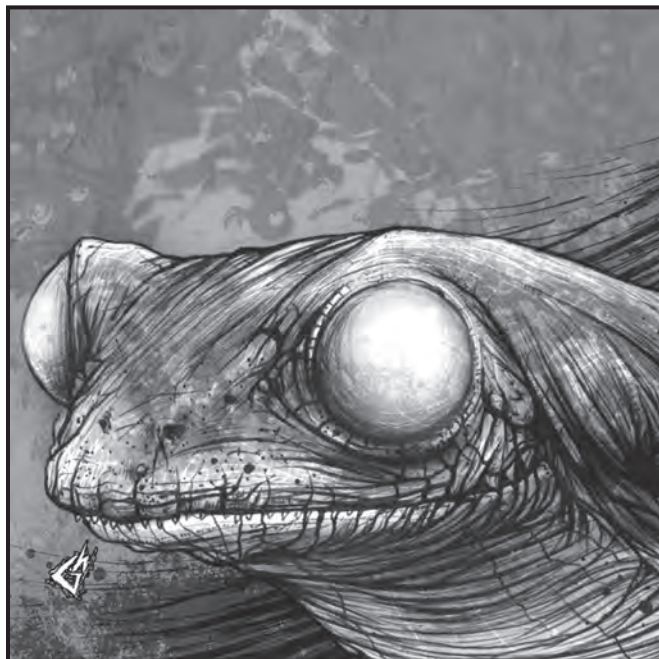
**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 1, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Jumping) 4, Brawl (Claws) 4, Stealth 4, Survival 3







**Willpower:** 5

**Vice:** Wrath

**Initiative:** 8

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 14

**Size:** 4

**Health:** 7

**Transmutations:** *Pandoran* — Bizarre Weaponry (Claws ··), Acid Phlegm (···), Wall-Walking (···)

**Bestowment:** Inertia (····)

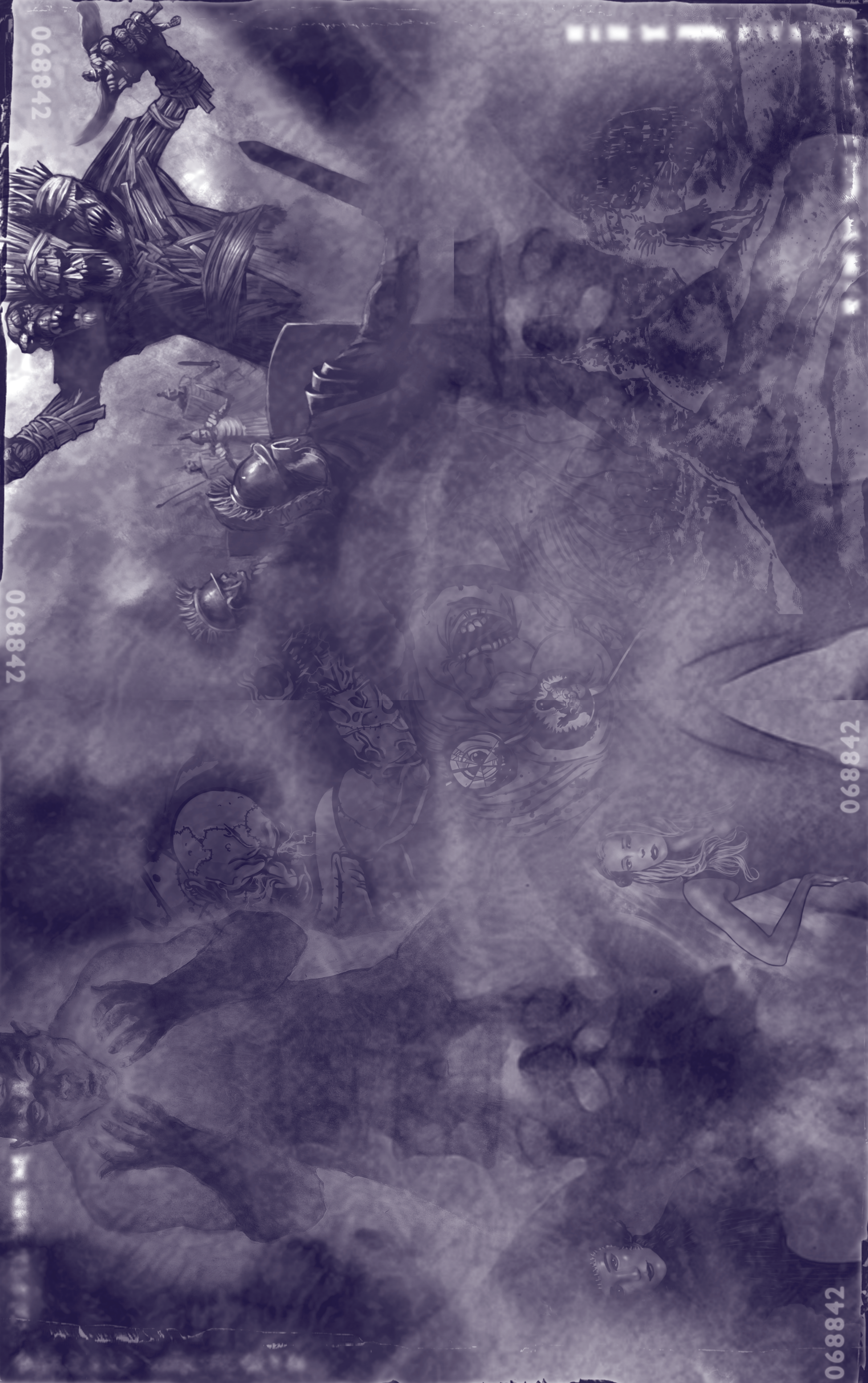
**Pyros/per Turn:** 12/2

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Claws	1(L)	-	9	-
Grapple	-	-	7	(see p. 157 of the <b>World of Darkness Rulebook</b> )



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The beauty of the Great Work  
is that it is never finished.  
Even if each of us  
were granted Mortality today,  
what then?  
We would all  
still have journeys  
to make.

— Zo Malak, Vlgan

This book includes:

- Possibilities on new and different ways in which Prometheans might be created, complete with sample characters
- Four new Refinements, with new Transmutations
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