

Strange alchemies

the
World of Darkness

PROMETHEAN
THE CREATED

"I've watched you ever
since the day I was made.

Watched you love, watched you laugh,
watched you kill and die.

You're perfect, even
though you don't know it. Perfectly wonderful.

Perfectly awful.

Perfectly human.

I've been watching, trying to figure you out.

Trying to figure out how to be you.

I know more about you
than you do.

I know more about you than I
do about myself."

— The Hangman's Beautiful Daughter, Galateid

This book includes:

- Detailed discussion of each of the Lineages and Refinements, including new Transmutations and Bestowments
- Thoughtful essays discussing many issues important to Promethean chronicles
- "Strangers On a Hill", a new story in the "Water of Life" chronicle begun in Promethean: The Created, set in Boston



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PROMETHEAN
THE CREATED

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OUROBOROS

I've heard of others who were visited by angels. They spoke of winged beings of gleaming light, with booming voices and swords of flame. Creatures with many arms and many heads and visages so horribly beautiful the mind swam just to behold them.

My angel was a child, no more than three.

I'd known the first time I set eyes on her that something wasn't right. No children are allowed in the places where they tolerate me to earn my keep. They shield the innocent with one hand, while they use the other to pay me to dress in white stockings and short skirts and fulfill their filthy fantasies.

The paradox there has challenged me for weeks. I try to understand it,

how they want to protect something and defile it at the same time. Sometimes I feel like I'm coming closer to understanding it, but then something happens and it all goes fluid as quicksilver and slips through my grasp.

But logical or not, it is as it is, and regardless of how much they pay me to show them my "young" flesh, true children are not allowed in those hallways. So, when my eyes met hers that night, I knew something out of the ordinary was happening.

I looked again, once the stage lights had dimmed, but the audience was once again a sea of leering smiles and groping paws. Her angelic visage was nowhere to be found.

Behind the ancient velvet curtain, the bouncer refused to

look at me as I passed. The other dancers had no such problems, though, and several pairs of angry eyes glared as I retreated to the far corner of the corral that passed for a locker room to change after my last set. It wouldn't be long before this was just one more in a line of places that I used to work. I'd hoped it would be different; hoped he would be different. But I knew the signs by now.

It seemed, the longer I lived, the faster the changes came. First the moment of surprise when they saw me. I have no false modesty, I know what they see. The looks they give me, at first glance, are the ones they reserve for things of great beauty and wonder. But I know,

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head will spin!*

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as well, that what they see is not the real me. I exist, here beneath their perceptions, like a blighted fruit beneath an unblemished skin. And it does not take long for them to know it as well. I can see the change happen, there beneath their eyes. The surprise turns to resentment, for some. Bright green envy or jealousy, coveting what they think they can never have. For others, the look turns red with anger; they hate me for the beauty they see, or for the looks others give me. The worst are those who take it to heart, who measure themselves against what they perceive in me and find themselves wanting. You can see them die a bit inside, those ones, going wan and jaundiced from the inside out. I move on quickly when I see that happen. Anger you can predict, and what you can predict, you can avoid. But soul-sick folk, they're as likely to burn you down while you sleep as they are to slit your throat — or their own — and you just can't ever tell which way they'll turn.

That was what I was seeing here, that deep-down self-loathing that says the one who's wearing it has nothing left to lose.

And sure enough, I'd barely gotten dressed when Jimmy the sweeper came with the pile of dollar bills the customers had thrown for me. He wasn't smiling.

I'd already started to pack my bag by the time he spoke. "Tanner says he's got to let you go."

The boss's name rang in my ears like I'd been slapped. I nodded, taking the money numbly. Jimmy fidgeted, standing there like he had to explain. "Someone's saying your ID ain't legit, that you're underage. Folks are starting to talk, and Mr. Tanner doesn't want any excuse for the cops to show up."

I nodded again, looking past the sweeper towards the nearest girl. She was a pallid blonde with too much makeup, three kids and a cocaine habit. She had the good graces to drop her gaze, but I knew who'd started those rumors. There's only so much money in any man's pocket, and those who were tucking it in my drawers weren't leaving it for the other girls. Even if they didn't hate me for what I was, knowing it or not, they'd have done the same to anyone who came in and cleared pockets the way I did. It was just a matter of survival and that, if nothing else, was something I'd learned about humanity. They had a powerful strong drive to survive.

“Better get going before he comes on back.” Jimmy glanced toward the curtain that separated the corral from the rest of the club. “He was pretty pissed.”

This was called irony, I thought, as I slipped out the back door and into the alley. My identification was, indeed, falsified. It wasn't because I was too young that I needed a purchased identity, but that I was far, far too old.

The earliest thing I remember was my father's face pulling back from mine, and his voice in my ears. There was the smell of leather and wine, and I thought, as my eyes fell upon him, that he must be the prettiest thing in all creation. I don't reckon I was far from the truth in that matter.

For a time we were happy, or as like unto it as any could be. He'd made me for company and to love him, and I didn't know anything but that to begin. But then a prospector found silver near our cabin, and before we knew it a town had sprung up nearby. My father took to visiting regularly, leaving me alone for longer and longer. We fought, then, when he came home smelling of liquor and toilet water. Then one morning, he came home smelling of blood.

They said they didn't dare leave me there, after they burned down the house and him with it. Looking back, I wonder if they

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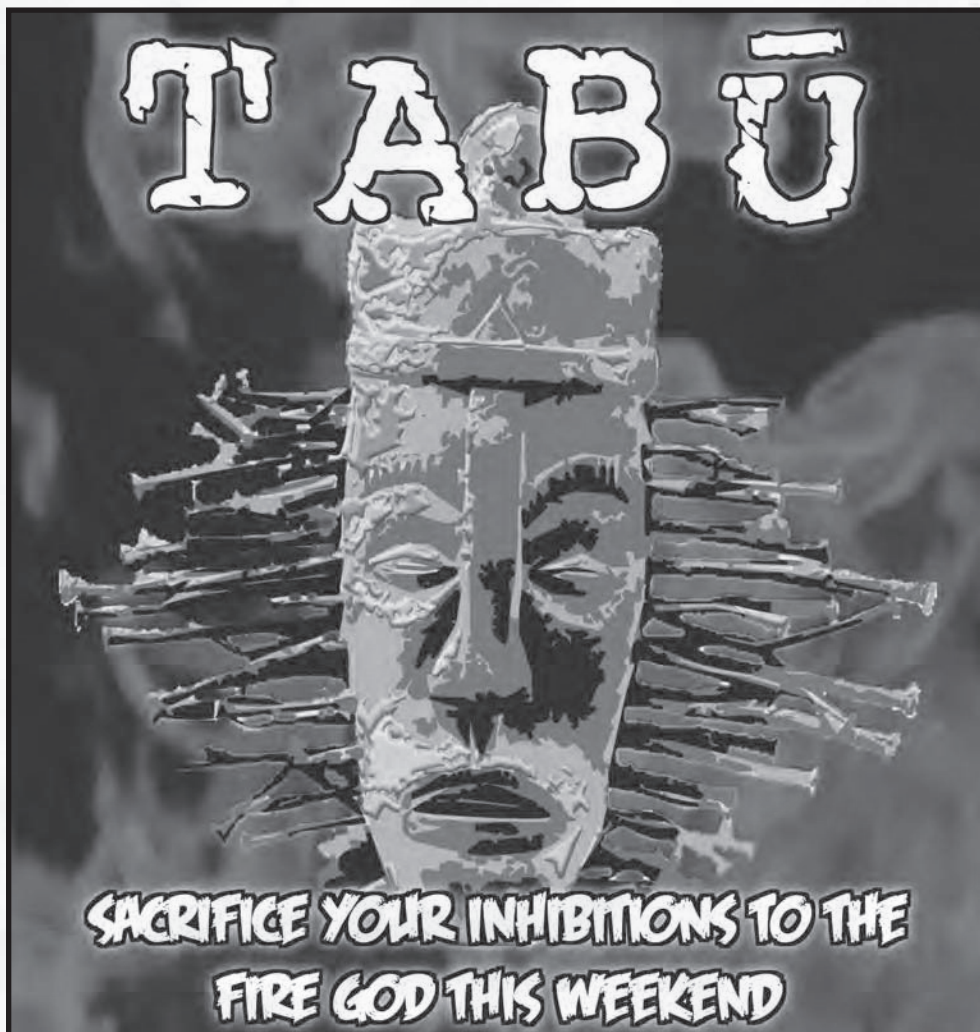
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didn't hate me then, as much as him, and did it for spite. I was still reeling from his death and did what they said, at least at the beginning. They couldn't very well marry me off right away to a stranger, and I looked young, as young as some of the other girls at the orphanage, for all that I'd lived more than a decade with Father after he woke me.

That was long ago, long enough that 16 was a full adult back then, whereas now it was enough to get me kicked out of yet another job, despite my papers saying I was three years older. As I headed down the alley toward the street, I was lost deep enough in my thoughts that I almost didn't see her standing there.

Her hair was curled in ringlets and as dark as her boots. In contrast, the starched apron around her waist was as white as paper and looked just as crisp. She stared at me for a long moment, but before I could think to speak the side door creaked open behind me. I glanced over



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my shoulder to see who was coming out, and when I looked back, the child was gone.

Jake Tanner filled the end of the alley. He was broad at the shoulder and narrow at the hip, built like a man should be built. My heart caught in my throat at the sight of him. He paused to light a cigarette, and that beautiful face was illuminated for one brief moment before the lighter went out. I just stared. I couldn't do anything else. The curls of smoke crept out past his lips as he exhaled, and I wanted nothing more at that moment than to be just as close.

I must have made a noise then, because he looked down the alley at me and frowned. "Hey. I told you to get out."

I shouldn't have said anything. It wasn't his fault he hated me. I'd overstayed my welcome, and his reaction was inevitable. I should have just turned and walked away. But the hatred in his voice was such a stark contrast to what I wanted to hear there, I couldn't help myself.

"Actually, you didn't tell me anything. Jimmy did." I turned to face him, my voice carrying louder in the alley than I'd expected it to. "Kind of you to make him do your dirty work."

"You back talking me, girl?" He took a drag of the cigarette then snuffed it out beneath his shoe. The fluid power of the gesture made my breath catch in my throat, and I couldn't answer.

"I told you to get out. I don't need your kind of trouble around here." He crossed his arms across his chest as if he expected me to try to break back in through the door behind him.

I didn't move. I just closed my eyes, breathing in the tang of his cologne, the sweaty mixture of alcohol and tobacco that reminded me of the way my father smelled when he came back from town. He reminded me a lot of my father.

I heard him step closer. His hands tangled in my hair, and for a second I imagined that he was going to pull me close for the passionate kiss I'd dreamt about.

A second later, I hit the brick wall, so hard it rattled my teeth. I hadn't been prepared, so I took the force of it full on my shoulder. He twisted my arm back behind me until it could go no further and pressed me against the wall in a grip of steel. His voice hissed in my ear like a lover's whisper as he ground the side of my face against the brick.

“I said, get out, girl. If I have to tell you again, you’re going to regret it.” Tobacco flavored his breath as it brushed my skin. I wanted to lean back into him, to feel his lips pressed fully against my cold flesh, even for just a moment, but he held me too firmly.

“I . . . I thought we —” I struggled for words that would let him know how I felt.

“We? There’s no ‘we.’” He pushed harder, and I grunted in pain. “I wouldn’t fuck you with Jimmy’s dick.”

He threw me down and walked back toward the door without turning to look back.

The door slammed shut behind him, and I waited until the echoes died away before I pulled myself to my feet. Blood was trickling down my face. I could have healed

it, but instead I clapped my hand tightly over the wound, cradling it. It was the only thing he’d ever given me.

I ran the rest of the way home, my car abandoned in the club parking lot. Twenty minutes of darting through traffic and avoiding panhandlers, and my shame was still roaring in my ears. I’d practically begged him to hit me, to kiss me, anything. I eschewed the lift for nine flights of stairs taken at a full sprint that did nothing to slake my humiliation. By the time I left the stairs for the dingy hallway of my floor, I knew Tanner was right. I wasn’t worthy of his attention. I wasn’t worthy of anyone’s attention. How could I have ever thought it would be different? How could I have ever thought that —

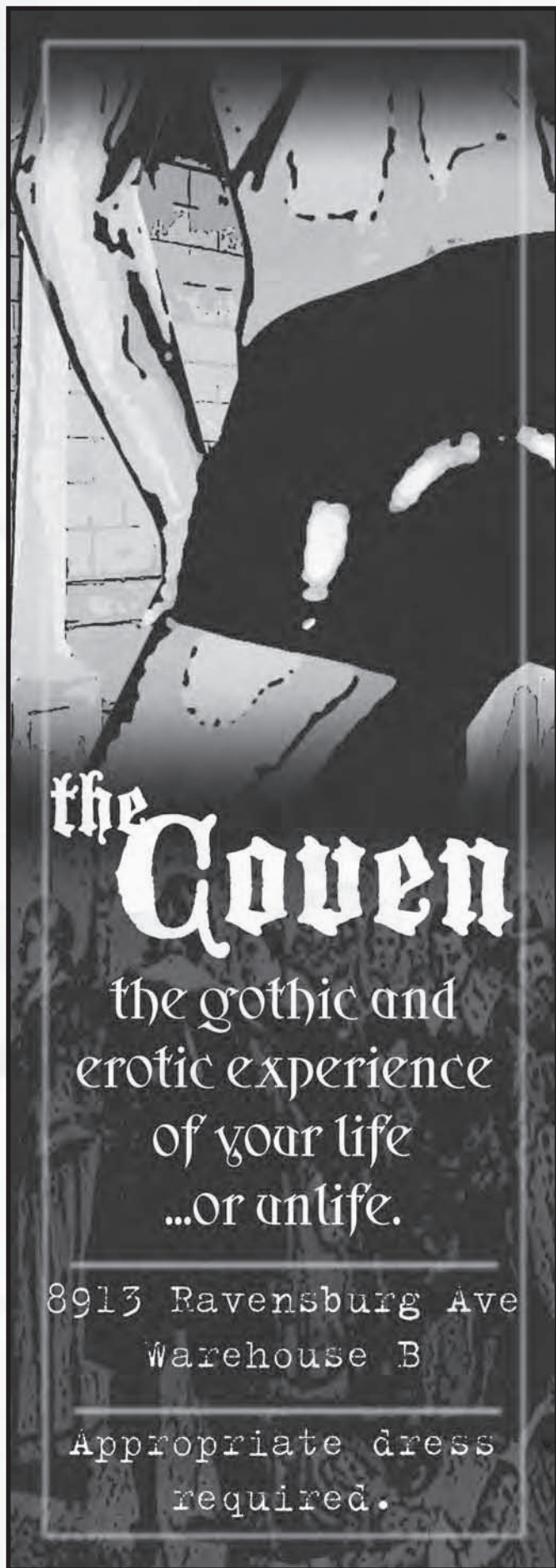
My apartment door was ajar. I started to approach cautiously, but a crash of glass spurred me on, and I was through the door before drawing another breath.

The room was destroyed. Not that it had been much to look at before, secondhand furniture and third-hand belongings all crammed together in a studio the size of a large closet. Now, however, it was knee-deep in debris. I stopped short, stunned by the rampant destruction. I didn’t have much to begin with. I’d gotten used to living with only what I could carry, after having been forced to leave everything behind time after time. But there was nothing whole here, nothing unscathed. The overhead light hung down from the ceiling like a gallows’ noose, the bulb shattered. Even the ancient gray



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required.

mattress had been shredded, polyester stuffing streaming from slash-marks like entrails from a slaughtered thundercloud.

From the kitchen, another explosion of glass announced the vandals hadn't yet fled the scene. Everything went red for a minute as the cauldron of emotion inside of me boiled over. My fists knotted up and ached with a longing to be used, and fire flew through my muscles as my Pyros flared.

I ran for the open doorway to the kitchen. The icebox door was hanging half open, its light apparently the only one still working in the apartment. The contents had been vomited out onto the linoleum. The cupboards had been cleared, turning the floor into a chaotic mosaic of pottery shards and ruined food. In the middle stood a nightmare.

From taloned feet to half-bald head, she was horrific to behold. Her dugs hung half to her waist, a mockery of womanhood. Bony spines stuck out at jarring angles from her flesh, as if there were something even worse under her skin trying to erupt. She looked up from the destruction she'd created, and as my eyes met hers, I knew that whatever monstrosity her body held, her spirit was much worse. Her eyes were flat and dead, set in a face that was raked deep with claw marks.

Her maw opened in a silent scream, and she launched herself at me. I reached out to block her attack, and her claws fastened around my wrists like pinchers. Her wings shed oily feathers that half-blinded me as we struggled. The stench of rotten eggs and sulfur filled the air, repulsing me more than her attack did. She raked for my belly with her claws, but I spun her around, letting the force of the turn flip her talons away and then shaking loose her claws so she flew across the room. She crashed against the rickety chair and sprawled for a moment, stunned. She wasn't any shorter than I, but I was stronger, and besides, I was mighty angry.

When she flew at me again, I was ready. I turned that fire in my belly into a hunger and let it loose on her, sucking out her spark like a man on a marrow bone. I didn't like to do that. Pandoran energy was nasty stuff, harsh as Hell and bitter as dregs. But it worked. She froze up in mid-air, like she was too shocked to move, and I caught her easily. With one fist around her throat, I held her away from me while willing her stinking grubby flesh into stone. She stopped struggling.

I grabbed and yanked hard. Her wing made a wet sucking sound as it pulled loose from her shoulder blade, but it trailed granite dust rather than blood. It had worked.

I turned and threw her at the hardest thing in the room, the gaping icebox. The light exploded, and the harpy shattered, shaking the room. Chunks of stone poured out to mix with the rest of the debris scattered across the floor. I snatched up the largest piece and threw it out the tiny window above the sink. It shattered the glass and sailed out into the darkness. It felt good to watch the glass fall.

“Daughter of the Hangman, you have to go. They will be coming soon.”

I turned to find the angel child standing in the doorway. She fairly glowed, a single point of light in the otherwise dark room. I could only stare.

“Hangman’s Beautiful Daughter, you must get your bag and your car and leave town. You must go now.”

I nodded numbly. I had no idea who this cherub was, but she was right. Even in a building as shabby as mine, a fight like this wouldn’t go unnoticed. I had to get out of here.

I looked around for my bag and then stopped. I remembered the cool leather slipping through my fingers as my face was pressed against the wall. I’d left it in the alley.

My car keys. My identification. My money. Everything was in that bag. “It’s still at the club.”

The angel nodded solemnly. “I have to go get it.”



She nodded again, and then disappeared.

If shame had sped my footsteps on the way home, panic gave me wings returning to the club. It was still hours until dawn. Maybe no one had noticed my bag in the alley. I could just slip in, grab it and be gone before any one noticed.

My luck has never been that good.

Tanner was smoking again when I arrived in the alley. He wasn’t alone. I heard the blonde’s vapid giggle and his answering murmur as I crept toward my abandoned bag. Damn him for using that tone with her. It flowed like bitter honey on the air.

Their conversation stopped,

then began again. “. . . that her?”

“I thought I told you not to come back.”

I crouched to pick up my bag as his footsteps drew near. I didn’t trust myself to look up. “I just came to get my bag. I dropped it before when you —”

“When I what? I didn’t touch you, bitch.”

One hand on the bag, one on my wounded cheek, I paused.

“I said I didn’t touch you.”

“Okay, you didn’t touch me. I just ran into the wall all on my own.”

The blonde giggled.

“You shouldn’t have come back here.”

I started to stand. “I just needed my —”



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His cigarette burned across my cheek as he backhanded me. I reeled back against the wall. I dropped to all fours, barely holding onto my bag with one hand.

“Get out of here before I fuck you up, you worthless little whore. Somebody oughta teach you a lesson —” I could hear his boot pull back to kick me, knew before it landed where it would strike, how the ribs would crack beneath his blow.

The hairs on the back of my neck stood up as I reached deep for the fire bubbling inside me. I felt it flash, like lightning through my muscles, catching my blood on fire as he kicked forward.

What happened next was a blur of red. He kicked forward, hard and fast, but I was faster now. I spun out of the way, vaulting to my feet. The blonde screamed as my leap took me near her. I reached out with my empty hand without thinking, and silenced her. Her neck snapped, and she slumped to the ground as I turned to face Tanner.

“What the hell?” He looked from her fallen form to me and back, the flush of exertion and outrage sending a blush to his bronzed cheeks. I wanted to touch it, to see if it burned as hot as the fire I felt inside right now. I reached for him as his next blow fell toward me.

My fingers looked tiny and white clasped around the meaty hammer of his hand, but only for a moment. Then they were both covered in flame.

He screamed like a little girl, and I spun around behind him. The leather straps of my purse wound round his neck, just below his jaw line. As I tightened the makeshift garrote, his voice died off to a choked whisper.

Fifteen seconds of pressure on the right artery, and the human body crumples. Four minutes, and the brain begins to die; more and they're not likely to come back.

I let go as soon as he hit the pavement. Part of me didn't want to.

As the club shrank in my rearview mirror, I pondered the evening. Perhaps this was what they felt then, when they sodomized the things they claimed to love. This burning mixture of love and hate, of fear and loathing all wrapped in a passionate flame. The quickening inside me told me that I'd learned something here, something important.

And as I drove away from the city with Tanner's bound body in my trunk and his bruises still on my skin, I hoped my next lesson wouldn't be as painful.



strange
alchemistries™

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MAGNUM
OPUS

“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, Ulgan

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
- “To the Wastes,” a continuation of the “Water of Life” story begun in Promethean: The Created, set in the Colorado Rockies



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Strange Alchemies

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INTRODUCTION

Life's full of tough choices, at least that's what they say. Some days I don't know whether to count myself as part of that "life" or not, being what I am, but regardless, the choices are there. To stay a day longer in the safety you built, or to move on before they come for you. To take the blow and risk them not stopping, or to fight back, knowing there's always more of them than you. To end it all, or to keep on struggling toward a goal you sometimes doubt you'll ever reach. No right answers, no black-and-white, just tough choices all the way down the line.

I opened the trunk, and he stirred. Not awake yet, but it wouldn't be long. I'd been debating myself the whole way out here, and now I had to decide.

My father hadn't made any more after me. Maybe he would have, but the woman who betrayed him and the mob that cut him down made sure he didn't have the chance. But he'd told me, when he was teaching me, that eventually I'd have to. When I was still freshly made, he would stroke my hair and tell me how beautiful I was, how perfect, and how he knew, when he got put on to hang me high, that if he did it right I'd be the perfect child for him. He'd worried about it for days, he said, of whether the knot would break me too badly, whether I'd be marred and useless. He warned me of the dangers. I'd listened.

Looking down at Tanner, I couldn't see any damage. But when he woke up, he'd struggle, and he'd hurt himself . . . or make me hurt him . . .

I checked around us, but the dead-end road was so far from anywhere, I could probably have camped there for a week without being disturbed.

He breathed in deep, and I watched him sleeping quiet as a babe. I reached down and brushed away a strand of hair that had strayed across his forehead. He was so very pretty, peaceful, perfect, really.

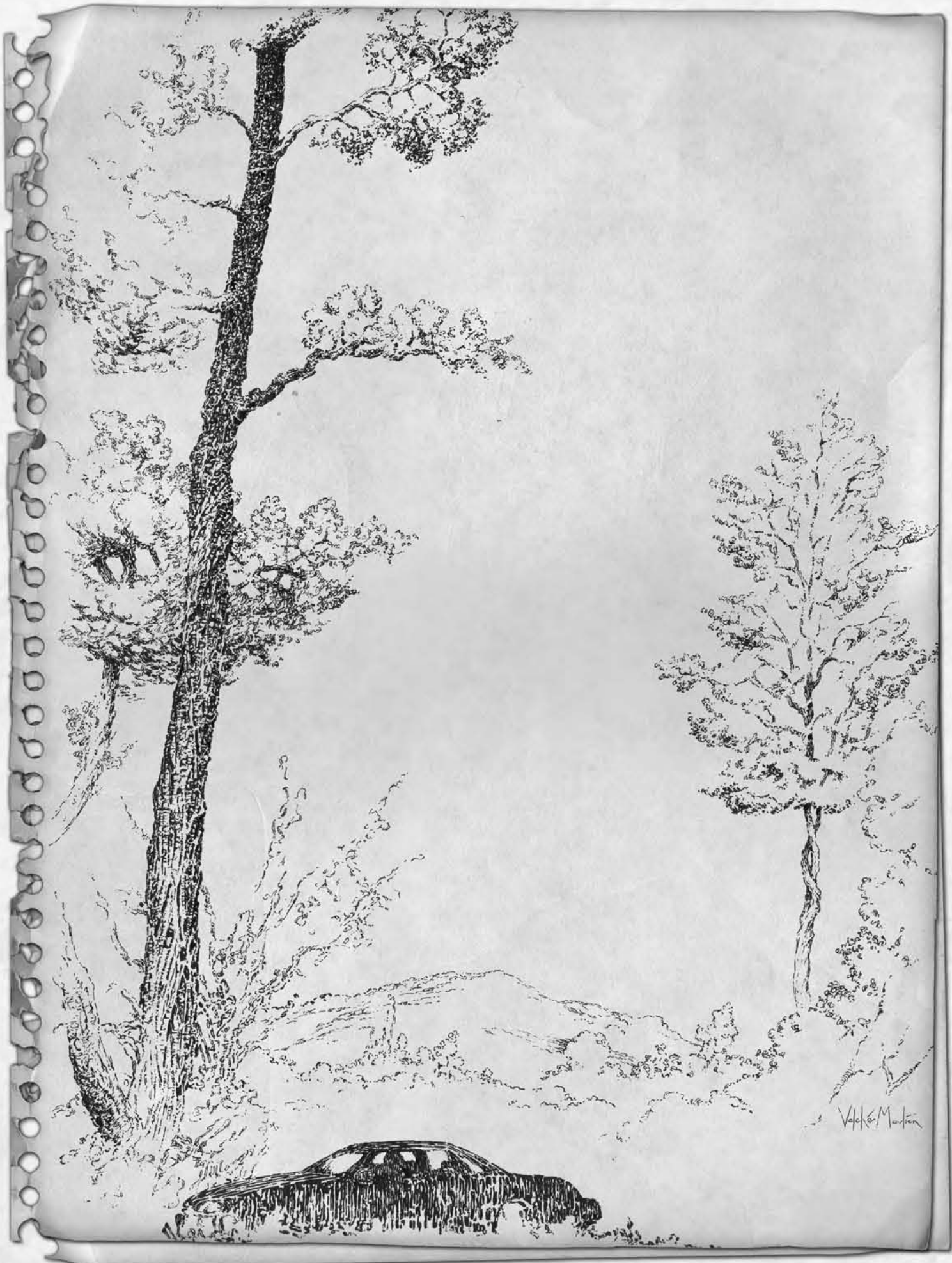
Quietly, so as not to disturb his slumber, I shut the trunk, but only most of the way. I didn't want to kink up the venting that I'd sat in there beside his sleeping body. I taped the big green garbage sack down over the gap, and then fastened the other end of the venting around the exhaust pipe of the car before slipping back in the driver's seat.

The radio started crooning Natalie Cole on the classic station as I started the car.

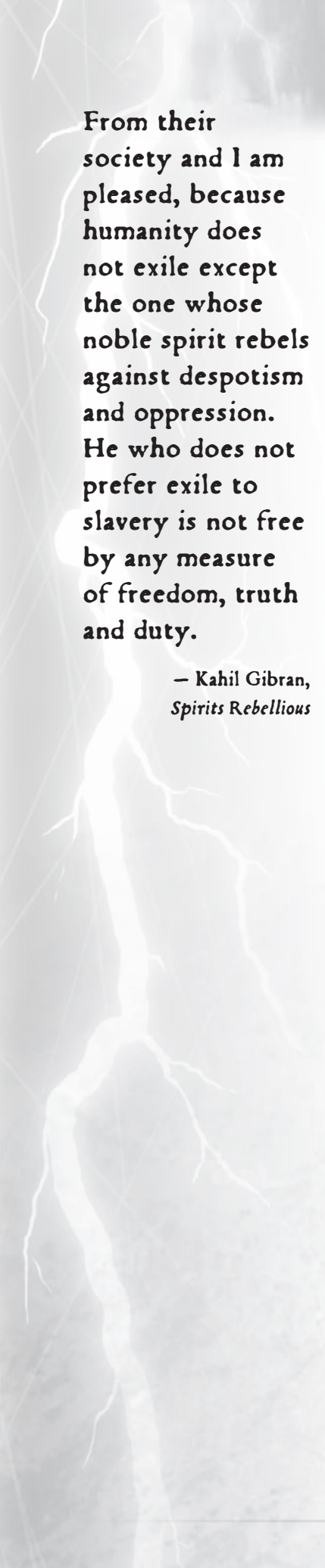
When it comes to love, no pain no gain, I think I'll take a chance on you . . .

I sang along, not knowing how long this would take.

You've captured my heart, and I won't take no for an answer . . .
But then again, I had all the time in the world.
Gonna make you mine . . .




Vicki Martin



From their society and I am pleased, because humanity does not exile except the one whose noble spirit rebels against despotism and oppression. He who does not prefer exile to slavery is not free by any measure of freedom, truth and duty.

— Kahil Gibran,
Spirits Rebellious



Prometheans live lives of solitude, sometimes broken by periods of intense communion with other Prometheans. They are creatures of terrible tragedy, though capable of highlighting beautiful wonders about the nature of the human condition.

Strange Alchemies seeks to expand upon the creation and progression of Promethean characters, discussing Lineage and Refinement, but also presenting some rumination from the writers of the game on areas of **Promethean** chronicles that warrant some further scrutiny. This book is meant to be a kind of toolbox for players (and that includes Storytellers, of course), providing you with ideas, inspirations and some new toys with which to flesh out your chronicles.

The Question of Origin

Before we dive into the first chapter, however, we should consider an important question: Where do Prometheans come from? The **Promethean** book answers this, up to a point: Prometheans create more of their own. But what if a player wants to play a character created by a human demiurge? What does that do to the character's Lineage, if anything? Is such a thing feasible in the game as designed?

The answer: Certainly. It just means the Storyteller and the player have a few extra considerations.

Capturing the Divine Fire

Promethean only recognizes five Lineages. That does not mean, however, that only five times in human history have people caught the Divine Fire and used it to create a living (albeit imperfect) being. That simply means that only five *Progenitors* have successfully created more like themselves: Galatea, the Frankenstein monster, Osiris and the unnamed Progenitors of the Tammuz and Ulgan.

But if we examine even those five Progenitors, we start to see holes in the story. Who *were* the Progenitors of the Ulgan and Tammuz Lineages, anyway? They aren't even given consistent names — indeed, some Ulgans claim descent from Orpheus, eschewing Siberian shamanism entirely. Galatea and Osiris are mythological (if not purely mythical) beings, so how is a modern Promethean to know who *really* started the line? Prometheans have very little sense of their kind's history, and what they do know (or believe) isn't verifiable. So adding modern demiurges to the mix isn't going to damage the game's continuity on that front.

The problem comes with defining the Divine Fire and how to capture it. Presenting a game system for creating Prometheans as a mortal would be problematic simply in terms of mechanics, and besides, reducing the procedure to numbers would cheapen it. (Of course, there has to be a system for Prometheans to create others of their kind, but this process means something very different — it is a passing along of the Divine Fire, not a theft). No Merit or supernatural power governs "Azoth Manipulation." Indeed, supernatural creatures are incapable of wielding the Divine Fire. Why? What is it about humanity that makes this act possible?

The Divine Fire is the result of human obsession. Whatever the lens for that focus — love, curiosity or greed — if a person is focused enough on bringing a being to life, she can. But this obsession is not exactly common. The *desire* to stitch a corpse together and then animate it isn't a normal thing, even in the World of Darkness, and for that desire to become so all-consuming as to facilitate the manipulation of Azoth can justifiably be called a miracle. As such, if demiurges are possible in the modern World of Darkness, they should be even rarer than Prometheans.

Occult Knowledge

Is the capacity for creating Prometheans restricted to occultists and alchemists? Can a mortal pray over a body and create a Promethean? Can a voodoo priestess raise up the body of a dead rival as a Golem? The answer is: Yes, if such a thing works in your chronicle.

Lest that sound like a cop-out, consider the following: We're not providing game systems for the creation of a Promethean by a mortal demiurge. If it happens in your chronicle, it should be something that happens as a major event, not subject to the vagaries of game systems. The Storyteller should look at what the players are suggesting, decide if such an

action plays into what she had planned for the chronicle (and, more importantly, if the players would have more fun with one turn of events than another) and make *that* the basis of her decision. The Divine Fire is fickle, so just because it works once doesn't mean it will work again (meaning you don't have to allow the characters to set up a Promethean factory just because they created one such being).

Having a laboratory with Tesla coils and vats of chemicals is very much in-theme for **Promethean**. But then, so is a body lying in state in the frigid north woods for seven nights while a mortal shaman chants invocations to the spirits. So is a young man stealing pieces of beautiful women to create a bride and being "rewarded" with a Galateid. If the player comes up with a good character concept and is excited about taking this character through the Pilgrimage, that's much more important than any quibbles about how a demiurge learned to manipulate the Divine Fire. Odds are, the demiurge doesn't have it in him to try it again (and historically, bad things tend to happen to demiurges anyway), so the major in-game concern — what happens if these things are mass produced? — isn't going to become a real worry.

New Lineages

Strange Alchemies doesn't discuss the possibility of new Lineages, though **Magnum Opus** and **Saturnine Night**, the last two supplements for **Promethean**, will do so. For right now, though, what if a player wants to play a Promethean created by a mortal demiurge? What Lineage does that character fall under?

Technically, the character is a Progenitor, but that doesn't confer any special status. Other Prometheans might note that they've never seen anything like the character — but then, a Promethean might go his whole life without seeing, say, an Ulgan or a Golem, so there's nothing inherently special about that. From a story perspective, being the first of a new Lineage is no problem. From a game mechanics perspective, you do have some choices to make.

You could decide that the character is functionally the same as a member of one of the other Lineages. If the character came to life under water, for instance, she's an Osiran, and all of the existing traits of the Nepri (the Revivification Bestowment, the phlegmatic humour, the effects of the Wasteland on water, etc.) work just fine for her. Yes, she's not *technically* an Osiran, but in the world of the game, who's keeping track?

On the other hand, you could build a new Lineage from scratch. Create a new Bestowment, decide on a humour and how it affects Torment, the Wasteland, Disquiet and the character's own behavior. If the character wants to design an Athanor, you'll need to decide what's available (but if there are no other members of her Lineage, she's making up her own anyway). Refinements have nothing to do with Lineage beyond some loose notes on predilection, so the character can follow and change Refinements just as any other Promethean.

Finally, you can combine the approaches. If the Unholy Strength Bestowment works well for the character, but you think that she has more of a sanguine feel than a choleric, look at the notes on the Muses' humour but take the Wretched Bestowment. Mix and match to your heart's content and find a character that works with your concept and for the chronicle in question. Just keep notes so that your Storyteller and you know everything about the character that you need to know, so that you have a good idea how she should progress.

How To Use This Book

Ultimately, this book is intended to help the process of Storytelling. Detail fuels interesting stories, so we set out to provide some additional details.

Chapter One: Patchwork Families gives a closer look at the five Lineages of the Created. How are the bodies of progeny chosen by the members of the Lineages? How do they deal with humanity? What exactly is the humour that seems to influence so much of the nature of the Prometheans, and what is going to the Wastes like? There are always little secrets and stories told about the denizens of the World of Darkness; we want to tell you some of the ones about the Prometheans here.

This chapter also includes a new Bestowment for each Lineage, and a collection of Promethean-specific Merits to help enhance your troupe's characters.

Chapter Two: An Expression of Profound Truth looks not at the nature of the Prometheans, but at what they do — at the Refinements. What is the source of their philosophical pursuit? How exactly does pursuing Stannum influence the day-to-day life of one of the Created? What does one of the Aurum seek? How do these outlooks and practices actually help facilitate the mastery of Transmutations? What if the Promethean wishes to leave this Refinement behind for another? We round these sections out with little rumors about these philosophies as well — are they truly harmless? What secrets do their disciplines hold, even from its practitioners — or what do the practitioners keep from others?

Along with the discussion of the Refinements, you'll find an sample character with full traits, for use either as a supporting character or inspiration for a player's character. Each Refinement also gets a few new Transmutations.

Chapter Three: Lightning Strikes, a collection of essays meant to be of use to the Promethean player and Storyteller, explores some of the interesting options and questions surrounding the Created.

Finally, **Chapter Four** presents "Strangers on a Hill," the next installment of the chronicle begun in the **Promethean: The Created** book. This story, set in Boston, highlights what happens when a city becomes a crucible of change for the Created, and hopefully helps the characters make some decisions about their own approaches to the Pilgrimage.

CHAPTER ONE

PATCHWORK FAMILIES

I kissed him then, kissed him long and hard. My breath slipped between his lips and filled his lungs with all the passion and longing that had built up inside me since the first day I'd set eyes on his beautiful face. I could feel it leaving me like a wild thing uncaged, full of power and yet scared at the same time.

His body jumped, and I thought for a moment it hadn't worked. I pulled back, preparing for the worst, but he didn't fall to pieces like the others. He just gulped in air like he was starving for it, and I knew it was going to be all right.


I didn't tell him at first. Didn't tell him what he was, what we were, what his "life" would be like. All that first night I just held him close, stopped up his mouth with mine when he asked questions I didn't want to answer, and spent hours telling him how beautiful he was and how much I loved him. Time would come soon enough, I thought, for him to learn the truth about things. And once you learn, you can't ever not know again.

I woke to catch him staring out the window, though, watching them go by. "They're not like us," he said without looking at me. I knew it had begun already. He'd seen them, and he'd never look at me again like he did last night. Like I was the only thing in his world. I'd lost him already, on his very first day alive.

I taught him the rest of that day, and the next and on until I didn't know what else to say. How do you tell your child that you're rich on alone in the world, that he may never see another of your kind? That everyone around you will come to hate you, and rightfully so? How do you explain to him that you're a monster?



May



What you're looking at is the human being, which is essentially an experiment that failed. It's an evolutionary leap that's probably not going to work, and unfortunately it knows it's not going to work. That's part of the appeal of Frankenstein's monster. You know, the look in the monster's eyes — it knows it's this hideous deformed creature that's going to throw little girls in the river, but it would like to be something better. And that's pretty much us.

— Robyn Hitchcock,
The Believer,
March 2006

Everyday folks spend their lives trying to fit in, trying to be accepted, trying to find a key to becoming complete people. Prometheans do that, too, in a more obvious, visceral, metaphorical sort of way. They're figurative versions of us, in all our tragic, beautiful, hideous glory. That's a big part of what makes them so compelling and interesting to play. This chapter explores that further, taking a closer look at the five commonly recognized Lineages of the Prometheans and examining how exactly players of **Promethean: The Created** can get into these Prometheans' skins.

Here, you'll find discussions of how the Created make more of their own. The act of creation isn't for the unstable of stomach, but the way in which a Promethean comes into being makes all kinds of difference. We are where we came from. It's true for us, and in an abbreviated way, it's true for a Promethean.

We all have to find ways to function in society. Growing into adulthood is a constant process of figuring out how to relate to others and function in human society. The Prometheans have to grow up fast. They're flung innocent into the world, and they have to deal with the alienation of their being. Here, you'll find a description of how a Promethean of each Lineage deals with the challenge of learning how to be a human and how to get past the alienation and loneliness that Disquiet and Torment brings. The humours that drive the Prometheans make them what they are. Humours are the means by which the Prometheans can fight through to the end and the cause of their defeat.

While most Promethean characters might never have to go to the Wastes, those ancient, powerful, lonely figures who do transform the environment as they come to terms with their power.

Each section rounds out with ideas for stories surrounding the Lineage.

New Merits and Bestowments

A number of new Athanors and Bestowments are presented in this chapter. Needless to say, they're all optional. The Storyteller can choose to approve or ban anything presented here. They are presented immediately following the write-up for the appropriate Lineage. The Merits, which are available to all Prometheans, can be found at the end of the chapter.

Similar to other Bestowments, any of the Bestowments can be bought by a Promethean as a Transmutation. Prometheans who belong to the Lineage connected to the Bestowment can choose to take the new Bestowment instead of the usual Bestowment given in **Promethean: The Created**. So, for example, an Ulgan can choose to take Orphean Song instead of Ephemeral Flesh. All Prometheans have only one free Bestowment at character creation. Any other Bestowments, whether they belong to a Promethean's own Lineage or not, must be bought as Transmutations with experience points.

Modern Humours

Though modern science and medicine have outgrown the need to describe things in terms of elemental balance, the fact that there seems to be four very basic elemental expressions of personality has not escaped notice. Certainly, Hippocrates' theory of the four humours and Galen's four temperaments (sanguine, melancholic, choleric and phlegmatic) were melded together and likely one built off the other.

But philosophers and psychologists even into last century were still categorizing human behavior into four categories. The following examples are organized into an order that most closely mimics temperaments associated with air, earth, fire and water, respectively:

Adicke's World Views: formulated in approximately 1905, the German philosopher Adicke proposed that there were four ways in which most people looked upon, interpreted and interacted with the world. These were innovative, traditional, doctrinaire and skeptical.



Erich Fromm's Orientations: German-American psychologist and humanistic philosopher Fromm proposed in 1947 that humans were essentially divided into four primary ways in which they approached the world: exploitative, hoarding, receptive and marketing.

Myers' Cognitive functions: Though the Myers-Briggs tests were intended to track a broad range of personality traits, in 1958, Myers proposed four basic cognitive functions: SP (Sensory-Perceptive), SJ (Sensory-Judgement), NF (Intuitive-Feeling) and NT (Intuitive-Thinking).

David Keirsey's Temperaments: In the 1970s, American psychologist and professor emeritus at California State University Keirsey proposed four basic temperaments of human personality, which were often used to then derive 16 other "types" through combination. These basic temperaments were: artisan, guardian, idealist and rational.

Discussion about the humours isn't simply medieval nonsense. It is simply the use of a medieval symbol set to discuss certain personality traits that have been noticed by many of those who have studied human personalities.

Of course, the astute reader may note that none of these systems of thought touch on the fifth, or ectoplasmic, humor. This is of course because the fifth element is not of the physical, incarnate world — the world that humanity exists and interacts in. While some systems, such as the Asian elemental symbolism sets, usually classify this, most division of human behavior does not. Some simply claim that the fifth element is always present in any expression of the other elements. More than one Promethean has studied these systems of classification and tried to extrapolate out the role of the fifth humor, some with more success than others.

Humour does not define Promethean personality, however. Think of it as more of a natural inclination — when the Promethean is tired, out of control or low on Willpower, his default and unthinking reactions to things are more likely to be tinged by these inclinations. An exhausted Frankenstein may react with sudden anger to surprises, while a confused Tammuz is more inclined to withdraw out of the path of goings-on and just take stock.

FRANKENSTEIN



I sat back down in the armchair. I became aware that my habit smelled of mold. It had been a long time since I had taken it off, a long time since I had washed. I cannot bear to wash. The sight of my body sickens me.

"Forgive me, Father," I said. "I am a piecemeal saint, and my devotion is piecemeal, too."

The priest was silent.

"Father," I said again, "I have sinned and sinned again and again. My hands . . . my eyes . . . they do not do what I wish them to do. If mine eye causes me to sin, I can pluck it out, but its replacement is no better. I have cut off my right hand over and over again, but each new hand has offended me. Over and over again."

For a moment, the bile rose within me again, too soon, much too soon. He had nothing to say, the priest. His eyes were glassy and his flesh was clammy and he stared beyond me, toward the window.

I got up, and I reached across, and with my fingertips I closed the priest's eyes. I ran a finger across his still, wax-cold cheek, and lingered on his throat, over the still-livid marks my hands had left a few minutes before. I flexed my fingers, barely remembering how easily I had squeezed the breath out of that throat.

"Oh, Father," I said. "I am so sorry." I wept, then.

Stitches and Patches

Victor Frankenstein built his first creature from pieces of dead bodies. His intention was to make a perfect man, a new Adam Kadmon. He spent long hours in mortuaries and hospitals, finding the best fragments of humanity, in order to build a perfect, flawless man.

He never really understood that humans are made complete and beautiful by their flaws. Anyone who has played games with a mirror knows that half a face reflected and made symmetrical looks wrong, no matter how beautiful it is. The key is not perfection, the key is harmony. And the problem with Frankenstein's creation was that the creature had no harmony, no unity in its parts. Each part may have been perfect, but the whole was not unified, and, distended by the action of the Pyros, the creature became hideous.

Still, the method Frankenstein used proved workable. It created life, and so persisted. The issue of the creature made more of their own using that same method.

The creation of a Frankenstein is more labor-intensive than the other Lineages, and, depending on the method, needs a whole lot more equipment.



be able to take general rules from, only unique individuals. Take Sister Stitch, for example. She's made from the fragments of 19 women. Some are young and some are old. The smooth neck of a teenager rises above the breasts of a woman in her 50s and the stomach of a mother of three. One hand is smooth and graceful, the other has liverspots. On the right side of the Sister's head, she doesn't have an outer ear, and that side of her face is held together with a stapled-on ring of steel. She has no hair. Even though outsiders can't see what she really is, she prefers to cover her body with a nun's habit. An ordinary human who meets the Sister can't work out how old she is. She could be any age, from 20 to 70. She pulls her hood back, and the witness sees the cropped hair

of a nun, and a scar like a burn covering her right ear.

First, a would-be creator needs to find the pieces. What does she need? What does she want to make? A man or a woman, old or young? The availability of pieces makes a difference. A Wretched creator in Calcutta is going to have a very different sample of corpses to work with compared to a Promethean raiding the morgues of New York or the mortuaries of London.

Baker, on the other hand, is made from a dozen or more fit young men. While they were all more or less equal in size and health, the bodies were of three or four ethnic origins. Most of the Wretched have a patchwork of skin tones, but Baker's skin is like a crazy quilt, finely stitched-together scraps of body fabric in contrasting colors. People who can't see Baker's disfigurements take note of his blotchy skin. They can't tell if he's black, white or Asian.

The amount of time it takes to find fresh pieces is finite. Even if the creator has some means of refrigerating her acquisitions, a creator who takes too long between finding her first fragments and her last might have to start again, as the older pieces become too ripe. Finding the last few pieces can become a rushed affair, and this affects the way a Promethean's disfigurements look, and the way that the Prometheans look to others when their disfigurements are hidden.

The Wretched are rare enough that there isn't really any uniformity. There are simply not enough of them to

Godwin's creator wanted to make a superior being, above issues of gender, age or race. Godwin's body has components from both male and female donors. He has slender, graceful hands sewn onto muscular arms, wide hips and spindly legs, the genitalia of a man and the breasts of a woman. His heart is a man's, his lungs are a woman's. He has an obviously male brow and chin that frame wide, long-lashed eyes and full lips. His voice is too deep to be a woman's, too high-pitched to be a man's. Even when outsiders



cannot see Godwin's disfigurements, they think perhaps he's a preoperative transsexual and react accordingly.

Cynthia Mask's body parts at least have some vestige of harmony, all belonging to young, slim women, but her creator ran out of time and could not find her a suitable face, instead sewing a mask made of flesh-colored plastic onto her skull, taken from a life-size doll. To those who can't see what she really is, her face is immobile and somehow false-looking, like perhaps she's suffered from a stroke, or has been injected with too much Botox.

The parts assembled, the creator needs to give them life. Few Wretched have the resources necessary to build a laboratory like Victor's, and although he didn't realize it, the opening observatory roof, the chemical vats, the globes and the machines are all really superfluous. In the end, all that an aspiring demiurge really needs are an enormous, sudden electrical charge and an obsession adequate to steal Pyros from Heaven, and no matter what the process entails, the electrical charge is the thing that kicks off the Frankenstein's life.

Some creators choose to take the patchwork bodies they've made to high places in a storm. The lightning always strikes, as if it knows that it's needed. For example, the Sister's creator took her to an alpine peak. Baker opened his eyes atop the Empire State Building.

Others find a means to attract lightning. Godwin came to himself beneath the tower of a medieval church, his heart wired to the church's lightning rod. Cynthia was in a vat of chemicals in a basement lab. Her creator had connected the steel wire holding her flesh together to a power line that ran beneath the basement floor. The creator cut into the power line and clipped it to the line, wreathing Cynthia's body with bolts of electricity and boiling the liquid in which she lay.

It doesn't matter how the electricity comes, but it always hurts. The Wretched open their eyes in agony, and while the physical pain slowly fades, the memory of that pain never really does. In Torment, the Frankenstein feels the agony of his birth coursing through him, driving him to acts of spite and vengeance.

It's the pain that causes the pause in understanding and expression that characterizes so many of the Wretched in their first moments of wakefulness. Sometimes the pain interferes with the natural faculty a Promethean has to speak his creator's language, either by making it difficult to physically control the tongue, or by inflicting splitting headaches, making it difficult to learn the words. Some Frankensteins have speech defects. The Progenitor of the Lineage, for example, stutters. Cynthia Mask doesn't have a complete tongue, meaning that her words don't come out fully formed and she is difficult to understand. Often, she doesn't bother to speak at all, and sometimes people she meets mistake her for a mute. It's not always the case, though. Sister Stitch had trouble speaking to begin with, but became perfectly eloquent, if archaic, when she talks. Baker never had any trouble talking at all.

Difficulties in communication, however transient, are the least of their troubles, as the Disquiet they cause can destroy the relationships and community of the people around them.

The Frenzied Mobs

The Tammuz were originally created to serve, the Galateids to love, the Osirans to explore death and the Ulgans to serve as a gateway between humans and the Shadow realm of the spirits. But Frankenstein created his monster just to prove that he could. There wasn't really any other reason.

That's why Frankensteins are often so disconnected, and find it so hard to find meaning and direction when they interact with humanity. The original monster himself has, apparently, been alive for more than 200 years now, but even so, he hasn't even begun to figure out how to deal with people.

The Wretched could hardly be called urbane. Although they learn languages and facts at a frightening speed, there is still something lacking in their interactions with ordinary people. For all of their intelligence and heart, there's something in many Frankensteins that causes social interaction to be somehow lost on them.

For example, Baker has found casual work at a city construction site. He tries, to begin with, to join in with the other men's lunchtime conversations, but he keeps screwing up his idioms. He finds himself confused by the different, complex modes of address the other men use. The complex series of social cues and unsaid rules that otherwise simple men use to govern their conversation are beyond Baker, and every time he tries to chip in, there's an awkward silence. It's the beginnings of Disquiet for the men on the site, and frustration for Baker, as the working relationships of the men disintegrate around him. His colleagues grow more careless and spiteful. Soon, he has to leave.

Sister Stitch's creator wanted her to be close to God. The Sister masquerades as a Catholic nun. While she grasps a lot of the more conceptual, distant points of Catholic doctrine (the Virgin Birth, the Immaculate Conception, the authority of Holy Mother Church and even the Trinity), she's a bit vague on the practical details. For a woman made of disparate pieces and possessed of a sincere, if childish, faith, the words, "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee" can have a somewhat different significance.

Cynthia Mask gets pulled in for vagrancy by a rural policeman, who, slightly freaked out by the strange behavior of the young woman, calls in a psychiatrist. Cynthia has no idea why this person is questioning her, and although she tries as hard as she can to be "normal," it takes the shrink five minutes to conclude that Cynthia is somewhere on the autistic spectrum. Disquiet causes the psychiatrist to add that she's disturbed, and that for her safety and the safety of the general public, she should be admitted to an institution.



The Frankensteins' inability to get the hang of the social graces that take many ordinary humans half a lifetime to grasp, and which even some never master, leads to intense frustration. This is part of the reason why so many Frankensteins are such enthusiastic practitioners of Cuprum. They'd rather hide than face up to the pain of rejection over and over again. It's also a large part of the reason why almost as many practice Stannum. The frustration proves perfect fuel for fighting back.

Bile

The ordinary people are born into this world through pain, but if they're fortunate, it passes, as they grow in love. The Frankensteins are born in pain, too. But they're fully aware when they come into being, their intellect and consciousness fully formed. They remember every ounce of that pain, and the pain plagues them periodically, as Torment takes them. It's small wonder that the other Prometheans who meet them consider them to be irritable and volatile.

Choler is the humour bile, the humour of fire, and pain and anger. Choler is the humour that governs the Wretched. Frankensteins are irritable, but this irritability comes from restlessness, and restlessness and bile can be harnessed for noble ends.

A choleric personality is often an idealistic one. Constantly traveling, desiring change, the Frankenstein often channels her anger and restlessness into a cause.

The choleric personality is often doctrinaire: the enthusiast for a cause can be inflexible in his devotion. A firebrand, once it catches on to something, doesn't turn back. The Wretched can be dogmatic and difficult to reason with. But the consequences for a fanatic who finds that his faith was in something flawed can be extreme. One goes into denial, desperately ignoring the truth. Another enters a deep depression, a spiral of nihilism and possibly even self-destruction. A third finds another cause to espouse, perhaps becoming an equally fanatical opponent of the cause he once so blindly followed: a Frankenstein who begins to practice Centimanus out of disillusionment with the Great Work can be one of the most fervent monsters one could hope never to meet.

Whatever the road the Frankensteins travel on, the Frankensteins' obsessions can be as much a source of tragedy as of hope. Their Progenitor was so fixated with his creator's injustices against himself that he didn't stop until Frankenstein's friends were all dead and his family line extirpated.

Sister Stitch's flawed Catholicism leads her to misguided assaults against those she (sometimes mistakenly) believes to be enemies of the faith. Godwin, however, is a convinced revolutionary Marxist. The fire that drives his personality leads him to loudly, constantly harp on the rights of the "workers." He imagines the Prometheans in his throng as a disenfranchised proletariat, and the humans who reject them as a comfortable, complacent bourgeoisie (and thus, the enemy of the prole-

ariat). Similar to the Sister, his grasp of the doctrine is often less important for him than his enthusiasm.

Baker's cause is his throng. The genuine love he has for the two others he travels with lead him to acts of self-sacrifice and courage, but his belief in his companions doesn't allow him to accept that one day, thanks to Torment or simple selfishness, they'll let him down. When that happens, he may not be able to cope.

Still, ideals lead to heroism, too. The choleric personality finds satisfaction in moral virtue, and a Frankenstein finds that heroism comes to her at least as easily as it does to a member of one of the other Lineages.

Going to the Wastes

When Victor died, his monster retreated, going further into the Arctic Circle. If "Verney," the pathetic creature who claims to be the monster, is to be believed, it seems that the Progenitor came to a halt atop a Greenland glacier. He allowed himself to be covered with the snow, and remained, frozen in the ice for nearly a century, until the day he chose to break out and walk among people once more. Apparently, the monster has returned to the tundra several times in the years since.

The handful of Wretched—a handful out of a handful—who have gone to the Wastes have tended to follow their Progenitor's example. They've chosen the most inhospitable places they can find. Baker spent 20 years in the desert of Arizona. Godwin ended up in Scotland, waiting in a storm-wracked cave on the North Sea coast for his Azoth to cool.

In each of these cases, the inhospitable nature of these places gradually worsened. The storms on that stretch of the North Sea coast became almost constant after a few years. The area became a danger to shipping, and worse, a radio black spot. Electrical storms interfered with radio and navigation equipment. Sea conditions, winds and near-constant driving rain made the region nearly impassable. Baker's sandy refuge became nearly uninhabitable for humans, as the air became so dry that it evaporated sweat from the skin almost instantaneously. A powerful static electrical charge began to afflict everyone who came within a mile of Baker's flimsy handmade shelter. At night, electrical phenomena could be seen coursing across the sky. And in that deathly silent region of Arctic tundra, the sky turned black and the clouds roiled, shifting and clashing. Lightning scoured the land. The few examples of wildlife that lived there gradually left the place behind. Only the monster remained.

There are hardly enough examples of this to draw conclusions, but it seems that this sort of thing could happen to any Frankenstein who chooses to go to the Wastes.

Ounces of Flesh

- **The Organ Thief:** In the local region, or village, or town or in the city, panic grips the ordinary people, as an



unknown individual begins to steal body parts. It's the same body part each time: it could be right hands, right eyes, or livers, or kidneys, or lungs, or left feet. The thief doesn't necessarily have to leave his victims dead, although all are traumatized, and many go mad. The question is, of course, why? Where does the obsessive theft of one body part lead? The thief is a Frankenstein, possibly (but not necessarily) a Centimanus, and he seeks a perfect example of the one particular part. What does he need it for? Is it for the completion of something? Is he missing it himself? And even if he has a dozen perfectly good examples of the part, is he sane enough to know that?

- **The Lover:** A Frankenstein character develops a fierce attachment to a human. Perhaps it's unrequited love. Perhaps it's a strange, awkward kind of friendship with someone who has the strength of will to overcome her Disquiet for a while. Perhaps it's something else entirely. Whatever it is, the human, whose presence has been a constant in the Frankenstein's life, dies, suddenly, violently, painfully. And whatever it was that killed her mutilates her, taking away parts of the body. What does the Promethean do? Does he go out for revenge? Does he find the murderer? And what will he do when he meets, for the first time, a new Frankenstein — or, worse, a Torch-Born *Sublimatus* — wearing a face that the character once loved?

- **Innocence:** A newly made Frankenstein appears, as if out of nowhere, with no knowledge of what made him, or where he's come from or what he was made for. He barely knows how to speak. A throng of Promethean characters find themselves with the frustrated, angry, lonely newborn, playing babysitter, trying to keep him out of trouble, and trying to teach him what little they know about what they are. But where did the new Frankenstein's creator go? Why did the creator abandon him? The fact is, the creator never meant to lose track of the newly minted Frankenstein, who escaped before she could begin teaching him, and she's looking for her progeny. What will she do when she finds him? Will she approve of the throng's instruction? Or will things turn out to be far less amicable?

- **Piecemeal Possession:** A Frankenstein character begins to have nightmares and see things. Under the sway of Torment, she completely loses control of one particular part of her body, probably a hand or an eye. When she recovers, she begins to lose control of the body part again, more and more regularly. A hand refuses to behave as it's commanded by the brain. If it's an eye, she sees things. If it's an ear, she hears things. She's being haunted by the ghost of the person to whom the body part originally belonged. It took the opportunity to possess the body part when the Frankenstein lost control. What will it take to end the haunting?

Rumors: Frankenstein

- "Someone uploaded Victor Frankenstein's notes to the Internet. It's not linked from anywhere, so you can't Google

it or anything, but there's a directory on a site somewhere that no one looks at, and there's a text file with his notes and a dozen or so JPEG scans of the drawings. Anyone can make a monster just like his — or maybe improve on what he was trying to do — if only they know where to look."

- "Frankenstein wasn't the first. There's this story from India. In the time of Shah Jehan, they reckon there was this mad Pir of Old Delhi who dragged people from the streets and murdered them, stealing the best pieces for his creation. He was caught and tried. The Pir said that the Djinnns had told him how to make a man, with Allah's fire, and the Shah executed him for blasphemy. No one found the thing he'd created. Some of us think it's still walking."

- "Frankenstein wasn't the last, either. Every so often, you hear a story about someone who figured it out for himself. There was one I heard about who built himself a *thing* that didn't even look like a man. It was like it was mad with pain and hate, part mechanical, all claws and wires and lights. And it's still alive, and it's made more of its own kind, spitting, hateful things that live somewhere out in a remote place, preparing for something terrible."

New Bestowment: Spare Parts

No Promethean has an idyllic life, but the Wretched are literally born into agony. Some creators, expecting their progeny to suffer, endow them with the ability to use spare parts. A Frankenstein might own a backpack or suitcase full of embalmed limbs and semi-pickled organs, a key to a meat freezer in an abandoned building or access by a tunnel to a morgue. Another might be an expert grave-robbler, or adept at scavenging from her own victims.

However she has access to them, the Frankenstein has the ability to find spare parts and patch herself up, re-making herself any way she wants.

Although it looks like it's just a matter of skill to chop off a hand and sew on a new one, there's more to it. A Promethean who learns this Bestowment learns how to not only rebuild herself with new components of dead flesh, but how to channel the Azoth in her body into the new body parts she's grafted onto herself, bringing them to life and making them part of her body. Without the technique of reworking the Azoth, the dead part grafted onto the Promethean's body would still be dead.

Cost: 1 Pyros

Action: Extended

Transmutation Cost: Dexterity x 7

The Promethean finds a source of spares. Using a mirror, a sharp knife, a hacksaw, a needle and thread, and possibly some other tools (a nail gun, for example, or a roll of wire or an industrial stapler), she gets to work, removing parts of her body and replacing them with new ones. The player rolls Dexterity + Medicine and spends one Pyros. Each roll takes one hour, and the player needs to accumulate five successes.

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: The character is overcome with revulsion at what she is doing and cannot finish her work. The body part is lost until the Promethean works up the courage to try again; the player can make a Resolve + Composure roll for the character every eight hours to do so, after which the character can attempt to use this Bestowment again at a -1 penalty.

Failure: No successes are accumulated.

Success: Successes are counted toward the total. When the player reaches five successes, the character heals all wounds. She can also replace any lost limbs (although she still needs to have at least one hand — or an assistant — to be able to do this), and gets the option of reassigning any dots she has in Strength, Dexterity and Stamina. So, for example, if the Promethean has four dots in Strength, two in Stamina and three in Dexterity, she might decide to alter her body so that she has four dots in Stamina and two in Strength, or change things around so that she has three dots in all three Attributes. Each of the three Attributes must have at least one dot. The Promethean can't raise any Attribute above five dots, except for those that, thanks to another Bestowment or high Azoth, she has already raised above five dots with experience points. Such Attributes cannot be raised any higher than they have been raised in the past, so a Promethean with Azoth 4 and the Unholy Strength Bestowment who has managed to raise his Strength to 7 with experience points can't have more than Strength 7 at any future time (unless he increases it further using experience points).

Use of this Bestowment can erode a Promethean's Humanity — lopping off limbs and replacing them, after all, isn't exactly conducive to becoming human. Every time the character uses this Bestowment, the player must check for Humanity loss. The first time in a week that Spare Parts is used, the player rolls five dice. For every time in the same week after that, the roll suffers a -1 penalty. This penalty is removed after one full week passes without using Spare Parts.

Other Prometheans who haven't been created piecemeal like the Wretched can learn this Bestowment as a Transmutation. Although Spare Parts doesn't initially make any change in the Promethean's appearance, every time he uses it, it adds to the look of being a patchwork, unfinished person.

Athanors

The Athanors made by Frankenstein's inheritors are often extreme in nature, and often deal with the hardest human emotions: courage, fear, frustration, anger. No matter how selfish or altruistic their intention might be, their Athanors have this one thing in common: they *hurt*. Who they hurt depends on the Athanor, but when a Frankenstein creates an Athanor, someone inevitably feels the pain.

Manticore - Spite (Frankenstein)



The Manticore, according to Flaubert, "exhales the horror of the lonely places of the Earth." Its three rows of teeth interwoven like a comb grind the armies of the world into meat. The venomous quills of its tail fly out in every direction. It's an implacable beast, the personification of spite, the

bearer of grudges.

Spite guides the Promethean who takes this Athanor. She chooses not to rise above the psychic pain that Torment and Disquiet cause. She'll pay back rejection and violence tenfold. They want a monster? She'll give them one, and the creativity of her malice will be her road to Mortality.

Trait Affinities: Wits, Intimidation

Promethean Boon: The character gains the following benefits:

- Once a scene, the Promethean can spend one point of Reagent to gain a +3 bonus on any dice pool dedicated to furthering a grudge. The Reagent can be spent in tandem with Willpower, and can break the usual rule limiting bonuses to +5 (so that a Manticore Promethean who spends one Reagent *and* one Willpower point on a dice pool gains a +6 bonus to that dice pool).
- The character can gain one point of Willpower once a scene from indulging the need to take revenge or act on petty spite, in the same way as if she were indulging her Vice. A character can regain Willpower from her Vice *and* the urge to act on spite in any one scene.

Redeemed Boon: A Redeemed Manticore Promethean can still regain Willpower from giving in to the urge to act on spite or take revenge.

Caladrius - Healing (Frankenstein)



According to the ancient bestiary of Pliny, the caladrius, an awkward white bird, had the power of healing. If the caladrius chose to look upon a sick or injured person, it brought healing.

The bird took the sickness upon itself, and flew away to cleanse its ills in the light of the sun.

During the Middle Ages, writers used the caladrius as one of many symbols of the Christ-figure, who by taking the ills of the world upon himself brings healing and redemption.

The Promethean who creates the Athanor of the Caladrius tries to achieve Mortality through the act of healing. She takes the weight of the world on her shoulders, putting others above herself, even those who, driven by Disquiet, want to

kill or harm her. In this way she takes on the role of a little Christ, a suffering servant, bearing the pain of others.

Trait Affinities: Composure, Medicine

Promethean Boon: The Promethean creates a medicinal paste from spittle and clay. Imbuing the paste with Reagent, he smears it on the skin of someone who is ill or who has been injured. Each point of Reagent spent in this way heals two points of bashing damage in the subject, one point of lethal damage or one point of aggravated damage, whether the damage has been caused by violence or disease (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 176). If the damage was caused by a disease, the Promethean cures the disease at the moment that he heals the last point of bashing damage it has caused.

If the disease is of a kind that does not cause damage, one point of Reagent heals the disease if it is mild (such as a cold or a case of diarrhea). A more serious but still curable disease (such as smallpox) costs two Reagent to heal, an incurable and debilitating but non-fatal disease (such

as multiple sclerosis) costs three points of Reagent to heal and a fatal, incurable disease (such as HIV/AIDS) costs four points of Reagent to heal.

The Promethean can only use this Boon to heal others, and only on ordinary humans, not on herself or on other Prometheans.

Redeemed Boon: The Redeemed Promethean can cure diseases, no matter how serious, by taking the disease into herself and suffering from all of its symptoms (roll Stamina + Medicine to do this). Also, the Redeemed Promethean can return from death caused by sickness once, and once only, getting up and walking away a few hours later as if nothing had happened. This means that in order to cure a fatal, incurable disease, the Redeemed can suffer the effects of the malady (including death), and rise up from it, leaving her and the subject alive and well. If she tries to cure such a disease again, however, she might do so, but gives her life — for good this time.



GALATEID



I awoke to the whisper of her breath against my skin and the salty taste of her blood on my lips. Her eyes were glassy and wide, but they drooped closed as she leaned in close.

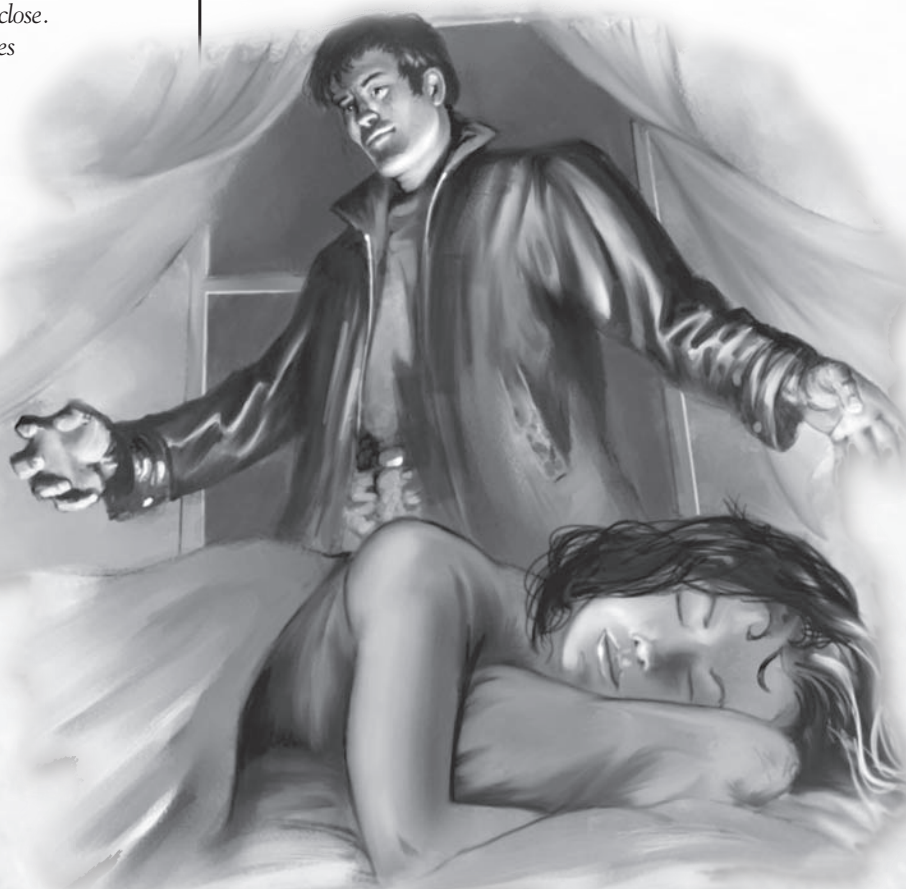
The scent of ripe peaches surrounded her, and my mouth watered as she pressed herself hard against me. She kissed me once, twice, then pulled back to inspect my reaction. Scarlet smears marred the perfection of her lips, holding my gaze as I struggled to speak for the first time.

"Mother?"

She smiled down at me and took me in her arms. It was the first time I knew love. It was also the last.

Perhaps more than any other Lineage, the Muses' quest for Mortality is ironic. While humans spend billions of dollars every year in their quest for inhuman standards of beauty, creatures such as Amore, a Galateid and currently one of New York City's highest paid "escorts," struggle even harder to attain the inherent imperfection of humanity. From the moment the Divine Breath gifts (or curses) her with consciousness, a Galateid

seeks to become one with the mass of humanity that cannot understand or condone her inhuman perfection.





The Wonder of Birth

Lover. Child. Companion. For a Muse, the motivation for creating progeny is perhaps more blurred than for any other Lineage. The Muses' sanguine nature spurs their existence in powerful and often conflicting ways, and the impetus to create another similar to them is no different. Like the legendary Galateid demiurge, Amore created Jamal to be the quintessential consort. She had hoped that he, both her physical equal and immune to the effects of her Disquiet, would be her perfect mate. Jamal, however, had other ideas, leaving her to seek love from humankind once more.

After spending years observing the interactions of orphaned children and their female caregivers in war-torn Eastern Europe, the Galateid who calls herself Lena Calderar longed for a child of her own. Denied the ability to procreate in the human fashion, she used the generative act to attempt to create a child for herself, someone whom she could teach, someone to share her journey and ultimately, someone whom she hoped would love her unconditionally as only a child can. Unfortunately for Lena, the human form she utilized in creating her offspring was far too young for Galateid purposes, and the resulting Pandoran has plagued Lena ever since.

Even the need for simple companionship can spark a Muse to begin the generative process. While nothing (save for his own attitude) prevented Marcus Greene from joining a mixed-Lineage throng, he found that the continued presence of freakishly pieced together Wretched or bestial Ulgans was simply too grating on his aesthetic sensibilities. Unfortunately, while the presence of other Muses was aesthetically more pleasing, he found that his sanguine nature jarred against that of other, equally sanguine, Dolls. Hoping that this conflict was external, he attempted to create his own "clan" of offspring with whom to associate. Over a decade, he dedicated himself to forging what he hoped would be the perfect throng-family. Unfortunately, no sooner had he created a second child than the first grew insanely jealous, and the offspring were at each other's throats.

While some may simply seek a lover, child or companion, more often than not the act of bringing another Muse into being is not motivated by a single impetus. Most seek companionship while also looking to fulfill other needs — needs that, in humanity, may be seen as contradictory in nature. Unlike human children, Promethean offspring come into being fully mature, and the overlap between parental and prurient emotions is not verboten as it is in human societies. No line of taboo exists between creator and created Galateid, and many filial relationships also encompass erotic and romantic elements. Rather than bonding them more tightly, however, each of those layered

elements creates more points at which the Muses' sanguine natures may come into conflict. The creator who obsesses too strongly over her offspring, as Amore did, may find that this attention — and the oft-accompanying drive to control her "child" — only hastens along the likelihood of her progeny's resentment.

Beauty Is Only Skin Deep

Galateid creation rituals are successful only when the most beautiful and unmarried human corpses are used. Many Muses choose to believe this is a mark of their being touched by the Divine, a sign that they are inherently more "perfect" than other members of other Lineages. Such perfection, however, is only skin deep.

Any injury, illness or influence that brings about death in a young adult inherently damages the body. Whether the injury is microscopic cell-death of mitochondria, as comes with some neurotoxins, or the internal poisonings from a ruptured appendix, few circumstances deal death without destruction.

Muses are quick to argue that such damage is inconsequential and "doesn't count," as it is not apparent to observation. This defense, however, only deepens their reputation of shallow-sightedness among other Lineages.

Blank Canvas

Few parents spend as much time getting ready for the birth of their child as a Galateid does preparing for the generative act. In order for the Divine Breath to take hold, the generative ritual must be performed upon a young, beautiful and unflawed corpse. No Muse will accept anything less than a perfect canvas on which to create his masterpiece of progeny, both out of vanity and because any flaw can bring about the ritual's failure, spawning a Pandoran.

Death is hell on the body, however. Among those of the proper age to be considered, motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death, but rarely leave behind a suitable cadaver. While any corpse must be dismembered before the generative act can take place, for the Galateid this process must be done artfully, and the damage caused by most accidental dismemberings renders the body unusable for the Galateid's purposes.

Likewise, many forms of homicide, suicide and most fatal diseases play havoc with a corpse's appearance. Only a few forms of demise leave little enough damage to the body to be considered for the regenerative ritual: organ failure, drowning and poisoning are the most likely candidates.



Heart failures from undiagnosed congenital flaws, along with undiagnosed appendix ruptures, are two of a very small number of “natural” causes of death in young adults that do not ravage the body before killing it. Unfortunately (for the Galateid), pickings have become slimmer in the past 100 years as doctors have become capable of early diagnosis or treatment of the majority of defects that lead to rapid and fatal organ failure in young adults.

With “natural” causes all but eliminated as a potential source for raw material, Muses must look in other directions. Only two “accidental” deaths reliably leave unmarred corpses: oxygen deprivation and poisoning.

Thousands of people die due to oxygen deprivation each year, either through suffocation or drowning. Most, however, are small children or the elderly, neither suitable for Muse purposes. Drowning (technically a form of suffocation) is more likely to claim healthy young adults as victims, and if the body is removed from the water quickly, drowning does not overly mar a corpse. Unfortunately (again, for the Galateid), it is rare that an accidental drowning victim is discovered too late to resuscitate her and yet before the ill effects of her fate takes hold.

By contrast, many inhaled, contact or ingested toxins leave no visible effect on the body. Some kill by stopping cellular function or bringing on cardiac arrest. Others, such as carbon monoxide, replace the oxygen in the blood, depriving the vital organs of necessary fuel. In either case, victims can die in moments, leaving behind peaceful and pretty corpses.

Despite human concerns about the number of individuals who succumb to such accidental deaths every year, however, their numbers are still few and far between when looked at as a potential source for progeny. The chances of a Galateid stumbling across the recently dead, but still unmarred corpse of a beautiful individual of an appropriate age are infinitesimal, a fact that every Muse is well aware of. What then is a prospective “parent” to do?

Left with few options, Muses often decide to take matters into their own hands. Circumventing the need to wait around for conveniently timed accidents, an enterprising Adonis may spend months selecting the soon-to-be corpse for his future child. First from afar, and then moving in quickly, he will parlay his good looks into an admission pass to her life. Before Disquiet has time to build, he strikes — a pillow over the face, a foxglove-laced cocktail or a conveniently located hose from exhaust pipe to bedroom — and the aspiring parent has the first component for his generative ritual.

Beautification of the Dead

As plastic surgery has become a multi-million dollar industry, similar techniques are being utilized in the funerary industry to reconstruct

accident victims and posthumously repair the ravages of age, disease and illness. This would seem to offer an almost endless supply of easily acquirable corpses for prospective Galateid “parents.” In most cases, however, while reconstructive work may be done on hands and faces, little to no effort is made to undo damage done to the rest of the body, and some of the funerary techniques that prepare a corpse for a beautiful showing would ill suit a prospective Promethean.

An enterprising Galateid may actually seek training and employment in the funerary industry, learning skills that will eventually allow him to complete his own “homework project.” By adeptly reworking clumsy autopsy scars, undoing unsuitable funerary preparations, replacing removed organs or even seamlessly joining elements from two or more unsuitable corpses, the adroit tailor can create a proper starting point for his generative act where none existed before.

Through Pearly Gates

Compared to the challenges of obtaining a suitable corpse, locating the materials for the rest of the Galateid generative act seem simple. While only the highest quality pearls, wine vinegar and herbs are used in the ritual, most Muses have no problem bartering their looks for physical wealth when necessary.

Because they believe that the ritual of creating another of their kind is directly tied to the Divine, many Muses enter into preparations for it as if readying themselves for a religious ceremony. A Galateid may undergo ritual bathing, immersing herself in perfumed waters and anointing herself with sweet-smelling oils before repeating the process with the lifeless form that will become her progeny. When both are suitably anointed, she turns her attention to the rest of the rite.

Preparing the material ingredients for the generative ceremony is a nominally a study in alchemical science, but when performed by a Galateid, the ritual can be an act of art as well. The corpse is laid out and bedecked with fresh flowers, surrounded by white candles. The Muse combines measures of pearl, fragrant herbs and other alchemical elements in a shallow bath filled with vinegar made of the finest wine. As the pearls dissolve, a process that can take several hours, the Promethean continues to anoint the corpse with fragrant oils. Muses who are part of a throng sometimes enlist the aid of their throng-mates as guardians over the ritual, for if the rite is disturbed it is ruined entirely. It cannot be restarted and must be begun anew with completely fresh materials — including a new corpse.



When the pearls have been entirely consumed, she immerses the prepared body into the herbal mixture. The liquid grants the flesh a rosy glow, which in turn summons one beneath the Muse's own skin. As if answering an unheard call, her spleen begins to manufacture great quantities of Azoth-infused blood, which rises quickly to the surface. At first, her blush seems that of excitement, but then a thin sheen of pink mist begins to rise forth from her skin as her humour manifests itself too strongly to be contained by her corporeal form. At this point, the Muse is struck with an emotion that those who have experienced it refer to as being "touched by the Divine." The Galateid leans forward and offers forth her breath to the prepared corpse in the form of a deep kiss. As her blood-laced breath flows across his lips, the Divine Wind channels through her, and if her preparations have been completed properly and the materials were suitably pure, it sparks what passes for Promethean life in the Muse's new "child."

Life's Blood

By modern definitions, a sanguine nature is most often thought of as a positive thing, embodying hope, optimism, charisma and confidence. Sanguine personalities are extroverted and outgoing — the epitome of a "people person." Galateids are not people, though, and for them the meaning of "sanguine" is much older and more intense. Medieval scholars believed that the human body contained all four humours and that it was only when all four were in balance that good health and good spirits prevailed. A sanguine man, to them, was simply one in whom the humour of blood was stronger than that of phlegm, yellow or black bile. When a man's sanguine humour came to dominate the other three, his gregarious nature became obsessive, hedonistic and easily moved to anger. A Muse, at best, is as prone to impulsiveness and lasciviousness as great as that of an overly sanguine human. She is capable of great courage, but also of unthinking foolhardiness. She is quick to form emotional bonds with others, but her love just as swiftly transforms into obsession as she seeks to protect, and control, all aspects of those she cares about. At her worst, the sanguine nature drives her from energetic to uncontrollable. Her lust, anger and impulsive bravado take over completely, and those around her feel the bite of Aphrodite's passions spun out of control.

Sanguine Relations

Even without the influence of Disquiet, humans would have difficulty interacting with someone with the intensity that Galateids possess. An Aphrodite, such as Amore, shines with unbridled intensity. Her body language ricochets from frenetic to erotic, and her voice stirs passions that those around her would be more comfortable keeping dormant. This nature, especially when coupled with an almost unnaturally exquisite physical beauty, would make a wholly

sanguine individual uncomfortable to deal with, even were she utterly human.

Muses, however, are not human. And, while their sanguine personalities may damage their relationships with humans, the fact that they are Promethean delivers the *coup de grâce*. The same Divine Breath that grants Amore a semblance of life seeps out from her like a poisonous cloud, tainting everything around her. This insidious toxin strikes deep within the human psyche, using shame, fear and self-doubt as its weapons, and mercilessly slays whatever relationships she may have managed to begin.

Galateid Disquiet is, like the humour that flavors it, a double-edged sword. Galateid Disquiet amplifies whatever weaknesses it finds within the human psyches it affects, starving the already ailing positive attributes within each individual's personality while fertilizing whatever seeds of dissent or destruction Disquiet finds there. While all Muses tend to generate a feeling of unworthiness in those around them, each individual Muse's personality colors her Disquiet. Amore's Disquiet is corporeal, heating passions around her to a fever pitch. Marcus Greene's, on the other hand, inspires dizzying levels of euphoria, triggering addictive habits as those around him seek to reach ever-more-elusive "highs." Lena's Disquiet sparks illicit emotions into full blaze, leaving her constantly at the center of crumbling social circles of licentious affairs and adulterous backstabbing, while Jamal's actually seems to encourage erotic victimization, encouraging those around him to new levels of sadism, sexual servitude and deprivation.

Galateid Disquiet varies not only from Muse to Muse but from victim to victim. Two men interacting with Jamal may manifest extremely different reactions depending on what seeds his Disquiet finds within their human psyches to play upon. One may develop a sense of inadequacy, seeing himself as physically inferior to the strapping Promethean. This man, mentally measuring his own height, muscularity and strength against that of the Muse and finding them lacking, goes on to obsess over his other masculine attribute, which he comes to imagine is also woefully inadequate. As the Disquiet digs deeper, he tears himself apart, meticulously noting every flaw in his own appearance, contrasting them against Jamal's glory. The man stops showering, changing his clothes or performing the basics of daily hygiene, seeing these acts as useless attempts to gild the waste he believes himself to be. He measures himself constantly against the target of his hatred, and comes to loathe Jamal for his "perfection," while hating himself for each inadequacy. He becomes withdrawn, turning increasingly inward, where his self-loathing is equaled only by his desire for revenge. Eventually, his hatred boils over, and he is driven to act. Whether the manifestation of his wrath ends up being suicide or murder, Jamal's Disquiet ensures that the situation can only end in tears and blood.



Another man may manifest entirely different reactions to the same Adonis's Disquiet. For him, Jamal's sensuality and good looks stir latent homoerotic feelings that the man has long suppressed. He grows first confused and then conflicted as he finds himself daydreaming about the Adonis, and as the musings turn erotic, the man's embarrassment grows. He becomes unable to stomach the idea of touching his wife intimately, fearing that if he does, he will imagine Jamal in her place. If the man blocks the Muse from his mind, he finds himself impotent. The man begins seeking out carnal contact with other men, but racked with his own guilt and shame, he hunts for only the most degrading and deprived of connections, which only amplify his ignominy without slaking his lust.

Solitude

Most Prometheans are driven, at one point or another, to eschew the company of humans and other Prometheans. While many other Prometheans are comfortable with solitude — and some, such as the Tammuz, often actively desire it — for Galateids, it is rarely a satisfactory solution.

Once they have gone to the Wastes, Galateids are faced with greater challenge than any other Lineage. Solitude denies Muses not one, but two methods of renewing their Pyros. All Prometheans who have gone to the Wastes temporarily deny themselves the opportunity to recharge by connecting with humans. While an Osiran who goes to the Wastes can still regain Pyros by slumbering immersed in water or the Wretched by sleeping near fire, Muses only regain their divine energy when sleeping near the sound of live voices, rather than simply air or wind. Thus, a solitary Muse, divesting himself of human contact, is much more likely to be vulnerable due to low Pyros levels than a member of any other Lineage.

Were this the Muses' only motivation, it would be enough for them to rarely eschew the company of others. But in truth, it is not logic or danger that keeps Galateids from going to the Wastes more often. It is simply that disconnecting themselves from others is antithetical to the Galateids' nature. Even when interaction brings them nothing but pain, rejection and suffering, they are incapable of divesting themselves entirely of their need for it.

A Sanguine Environment

Just as each Galateid's "flavor" of Disquiet is unique to that individual, when a Galateid's presence begins to waste the land around her, or when she does go to the Wastes to purge herself of dangerously high levels of Azoth, the effects of the Galateid's energy interacting with the environment is influenced by her personality and nature. While all Muses trigger certain similarities in the Wastelands they create (see p. 176 of **Promethean:**

The Created for details on "Muse Wastelands"), each Galateid also has individualized influences that further customize the effects. Amore's Disquiet bears the influence of physical perfection and may cause sterility in an area as animals find all potential mates in the area unworthy of their attentions and mating rituals fail to attract narcissistic partners' attention. Marcus Greene's Disquiet emphasizes fertility and reproduction and spurs a massive overgrowth of harmful insects, plants or bacteria, sending the entire food chain of an area into cataclysmic disorder. These influences, while in moderation, might be seen as blessings, but where Galateids are concerned, the line between enough and too much is one that is quickly crossed, and excess, even of a good thing, quickly adds to the detrimental effects of a Wasteland.

Sanctuary

While a Tammuz may be content to retreat to a lair that is little more than a cave, and many Ulgan seek sanctuary in wilderness locations, for a Galateid sanctuary most often means a place of safety that still allows the Muse to be at the center of things. Townhouse apartments or hotel suites may afford Muses the safety they desire while allowing them to remain in the thick of things, but unlike a hut or a hole in the ground, this type of sanctuary does not come cheap. Fortunately for the Galateids, their physical perfection, so highly prized by humans, often affords them the opportunity to parlay beauty into wealth, and wealth into security.

Where many Prometheans may seek out entry-level employment that allows them to witness humanity while retaining a degree of anonymity, even when a Muse sets out to remain unnoticed, she rarely succeeds for long. Her nature calls out for attention, and, for good or ill, the call rarely goes unanswered. Amore began her existence seeking a simple job waiting tables, but soon found that her presence attracted offers of much more lucrative (if morally ambiguous) employment from customers. The owner's wife noticed her husband's infatuation and schemed to have the girl fired. She quickly abandoned her attempts at mainstream employment and turned instead to a career that exploits her assets while downplaying her social eccentricities. Prostitution, exotic dancing, paid escort offices, modeling, acting, pornography — almost every opportunity for an individual to parlay her looks into profit expects a certain amount of social distance between the "beauty" and those around her. As well, the majority of these opportunities are also more accepting of unconventional behavior from those who move in their circles than the mainstream society would be willing to tolerate.

With the additional resources potentially available to a Galateid comes an opportunity to create a sanctuary that suits his nature. For Jamal, a seedy, overcrowded apartment building feeds his desire for human interaction, and thin walls aid in his recovery of Pyros, allowing him to sleep un-



der the influence of comforting voices. Alternately, Lena has purchased a home in an area near a college where she rents out rooms, ensuring a constant flow of boarders with whom she can interact. Regardless of location, because of the Galateids' appreciation of physical beauty, Muses' homes are frequently well appointed. Amore surrounds herself with mirrors, faceted crystal and other reflective surfaces, which must frequently be repaired or replaced as her temper flares. She orders regular deliveries of fresh-cut flowers to brighten her environment, but her home is conspicuously devoid of pets or living plants. Nothing living can long resist the Wasteland influences that accompany her. Gifts from admirers adorn her sanctuary and fill closets and cupboards, reminders of the earliest stages of interaction with others before her Disquiet

spread to drive them, or her, away. Just as those who dwell there, Galateid sanctuaries are physically remarkable but just below the surface exists a far darker tale.

While a Muse needs to retain the ability to flee, should the literal or proverbial mobs rise up against him, some Muses hold onto an optimistic belief that "this time" things will work out and they will be able to settle into a home for the long-term. They are never correct. More experienced Galateids prefer to frequent hotels, renting by the day, week or month, rather than seeking out longer-term contracts for their lairs. More idealistic Dolls simply forgo one security deposit after another as they are forced out of each new "permanent" residence.

A Face in the Crowd

As a character, there is more to a Galateid than a pretty face. Opportunities abound for Galateids to be integral parts of players' throngs. Their sanguine nature is certain to spur a throng to action. It is not the way of a Muse to sit patiently and wait for something to happen. And while this sometimes leads a Galateid (and those who follow along) into trouble, the Muse Bestowment goes quite a way toward helping her sweet talk her way back out. Likewise, when interacting with human society, while all Prometheans deal with the ill effects of Disquiet, Galateids are better suited to minimizing the damages thereof than other Lineages.

By virtue of the outgoing personalities and open natures common to Galateids, non-Muses often know more about Muses than any other Lineage. Muses are eager participants



in Rambles, and prone to share information freely if they feel it will bring them into a closer relationship with others. Unfortunately, this can have opposite the effect they desire when others see their enthusiasm as overwhelming or even desperate. Nonetheless, a Muse is most often happiest as a part of a throng, and frequently overlooks what others might see as insurmountable differences of viewpoint in order to gain or maintain her place therein.

Whispers

The Galateids' dynamic nature makes them among the easiest characters to involve in story lines, and Storytellers will find Galateids useful both as antagonist characters and story hooks. Their earnest enthusiasm for whatever quest they are currently following can encourage troupe members to follow their lead, whether that's toward their next milestone or into a trap. Their Bestowment makes any Muse hard to resist, a fact that all but the most inexperienced are fully aware of and use to their full advantage. While the opportunities for utilizing Muses in a chronicle are almost endless, some ideas are offered below.

- **Practice Makes Perfect:** Local news teams are dubbing them the "Makeover Murders," and the killer's posthumous corpse beautification is drawing a great deal of press coverage. Police believe the killer may be a former mortician or funeral home employee, but the throng begins to suspect that the killer is a Muse preparing to create a child.

- **Somewhere to Belong:** Jamal, an Ophidian Adonis who seems to be a prime candidate for joining the throng, approaches the characters. Handsome and influential, he seems to have something in common with each of the current members and is, if anything, overly eager to formalize a relationship with them. However, whatever bonds he may forge grow strained when the throng begins to suspect Jamal of lying about his Refinement. Will they be willing to accept him when they discover he is truly one of the Hundred Handed? And how much of his past has he lied about in order to gain their confidence?

- **Brotherly Love:** The throng's Muse receives a missive from her creator. The message, heavy with dire warnings of danger, requests a meeting. Upon arriving at the creator's lair, the throng finds him slain and his viscera torn out, an obvious victim of lacuna. Notes left in his possession seem to indicate that he was concerned about the recent appearance of someone he refers to as his "child." As the throng investigates, the members fall under attack themselves, and it becomes clear that the "sibling" is not Promethean at all, but rather one of the Silent who has gained enough power to be a formidable enemy.

- **Obsession and Possession:** A flamboyant vampire begins stalking the troupe, subtly at first and then more

openly. He has become entranced with the throng's Muse and will stop at nothing to possess her, seeing her as the perfect Retainer. While the throng's first instinct is to protect its comrade, things become confusing when the vampire drops hints that he may be able to give the characters the key to their New Dawn — in exchange for their throng-mate's service.

Rumors: Galateid

- "You know why Muses spend so much time staring into mirrors? It's because of their curse. They don't see what you and I see when we look at them. There's always some little flaw, something that just doesn't look right when they see themselves. Maybe it's a wrinkle that goes away when they try to find it again. Or a gray hair that catches their eye and then disappears. That's why they are always trying to get other folks to look at them. To prove to themselves that they're really just imagining it."

- "When a Muse breathes life into his child, he speaks her true name. If anyone finds out that name, that person can control her. That's why so many Muses rebel against their creators and try to kill them. Muses know that their creators have that secret control over them."

- "So the door slams open and in walks this chick from the night before, Angel or Angie or something. And she starts screaming about how she loves me and I lied to her and shit. Lisa starts screaming back, and they start going at it. I'm trying to calm them down, but she grabs Lisa and then it all goes quiet. I look over, and this chick's lookin' down at Lisa. And Lisa's dead. I mean she just snapped her neck like a twig. And this Angel chick looks over at me and her eyes are like . . . glassy . . . For a minute there, she looked like a zombie or something, all dead and creepy . . . I just ran, man. I couldn't help myself. I knew I was next."

New Bestowment: Heart of Stone

Galatea was, in the stories, originally made of stone, not flesh. While her Galateid children mostly assume that she was just like them, a handful do have something of the statue or the doll about them, suggesting that there may be more to the myth than anyone alive today could possibly know.

A Galateid with this Bestowment channels her Azoth into the fabric of her body, turning for all intents and purposes into a mannequin or statue.

Cost: 1 Pyros

Action: Instant

Transmutation Cost: Stamina x 7

When the Galateid decides to sleep, she channels her Azoth (spending one Pyros) and turns into an inanimate figure. She can do this at will, and can remain in statue form as long as she chooses (deciding when she plans to wake up before she petrifies herself). She could sleep for a few minutes or as long as a year, if she wishes.



It's always the same form. For example, one Galateid might take on the appearance of a white marble statue, while another takes on the greenish sheen of weathered bronze and another looks like a store mannequin.

As a statue, she doesn't cause Disquiet. The Wasteland effect, however, continues to rise.

Her Durability in statue form is the same as her Stamina (meaning that she has the same number of points of Structure as she has Health dots). Any points of Structure lost while in statue form translate into levels of aggravated damage when she changes back.

The Galateid isn't aware of what's going on around her when she's in statue form, although if someone approaches her who isn't a member of her Branded throng (if any) the player can roll Wits + Azoth for the Promethean to become aware. If she wishes to know more than the fact that there's someone near, she must change back into flesh.

Although other Prometheans are not made this way, members of other Promethean Lineages can learn this Bestowment as a Transmutation. The form another Promethean takes when he's sleeping as a statue depends on his Lineage: A Frankenstein could look like something rough, slightly unfinished and weather-beaten. A Tammuz might look like he's made of clay, an Osiran would look like a statue of obsidian or sandstone and an Ulgan could become a statue of gleaming night-black stone.

Athanors

Do the Galateids really *want* to become human? After all, if they completed the Great Work, they would have to age and die, just as humans do. The Galateids would be subject to disfiguring scars and disease, their bodies breaking down over time, losing beauty, ending in dust. Do they really want that?

The answer, of course, is an emphatic yes. The Galateids are created to be beautiful, but the desire to see the New Dawn burns as strongly in their breasts as in any Prometheans'. But perhaps, just perhaps, a desire to hold on to some of the power and beauty of the Saturnine Night lingers. If so, an Athanor can provide a way for the Galateids to stay beautiful, even as mortals.

Gorgon – Ruin (Galatea)



Medusa was once a beautiful maiden, but was cursed to become a hideous snake-haired Gorgon when she desecrated the temple of Athena. Medusa's gaze was said to turn men to stone.

A Promethean who takes this Athanor does so because she longs to cause ruin. She is the embodiment

of something beautiful made horrible, life turned to death. She is a figure of wrath and justice, both enacting those two elements upon the world at large, as well as existing as the accursed embodiment of those forces in action.

Trait Affinities: Stamina or Resolve (pick one at the time the character takes this Athanor), Brawl

Promethean Boon: The Promethean's canine teeth become sharp and curved. By making a successful bite attack (Strength + Brawl; a grapple is necessary first), she injects venom into the bloodstream of the victim. The venom has a toxicity level of 6 (see "Poisons and Toxins," pp. 180–181 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). The poison remains in the victim's bloodstream for a number of days equal to the Promethean's Azoth Rating. At the start of each day, the victim's player must roll to resist the effects of the venom (Stamina + Resolve; the Natural Immunity and Toxin Resistance Merits apply). This toxin affects vampires as well as living creatures, but for vampires, it only does the damage once at the time of bite. Vampires can still resist the damage with a Stamina + Resolve roll. All poison damage to any victim is lethal.

Redeemed Boon: Upon becoming mortal, the character gains the Natural Immunity (•) and Toxin Resistance (••) Merits regardless of any prerequisites.

Seraph – Understanding (Galatea)



In the *Harmony of the Four Evangelists*, Jerome ascribed to the Evangelist Matthew the form of the man, or the seraph, a figure of human form who stands as a messenger of truth seen through the lens of things past.

The Promethean who creates the Athanor of the Seraph understands that lead can become gold, but there are processes and operations that must be performed before this can happen. In the same way, people, nations, objects and institutions are the products of the processes and events that made them. By understanding what makes a person, the Promethean can understand what will make *her* a person. By learning about the past, she shines a light into the future, into *her* future, and the future of those around her.

The Promethean pursues knowledge of all things, never passing up the opportunity to learn causes, the better to understand the effects, and the better to teach others.

Trait Affinities: Intelligence, Academics

Promethean Boon: The character gains the benefit of the 9 again rule on all rolls involving Academics or Intelligence.

If she's using either of these traits to determine cause and effect in order to understand the current situation of a place, person or institution, she gains the benefit of the 8 again rule.

Redeemed Boon: The character still gains the benefit of the 9 again rule when using Intelligence and Academics.

OSIRAN



In my hand, a centipede crawls. A hundred tiny legs softly tickle my flesh. The dim sensation of this soulless little creature walking on my skin makes my flesh itch, which I suppose I should be thankful for. Soon the feeling of its hair-fine legs finding purchase on my fingerprints becomes an annoyance. Since the centipede lacks a soul, I'd feel no guilt for crushing it and staining my hand with black chunks and thin, sticky blood, but instead I deposit the sinuous creature on the bedside table.

The centipede immediately concerns itself with a patch of stagnant, drying fluid that was once water.

The creature tries to drink this thick juice as it crawls through the puddle, not realizing it is now killing itself.

The only sound in the motel room is my own breathing keeping irregular rhythm with the sound of the watery mucous dripping from the bathroom faucet. Two weeks ago, the water ran clear and cold. Now it runs with something else.

"Time to move on."

My own voice scares me, sometimes, because I know it's not really mine. The effect is even worse when I haven't heard myself speak in a while. This being the first time I've opened my mouth in five days; it's like a stranger talking.

I need to leave soon, and I know my absence will bring problems. Simply by moving on, I'll take the scent of rose petals out the door, leaving only a rank, wet, oily smell permeating this cheap, nasty room with its thin walls and the couples who fight and screw on the other side.

I pick up the twisting, dying centipede again, rolling him between my fingers before dropping him into the glass of ruined water. In the silence after I am gone, perhaps some shiftless mortal will ponder over this dead creature floating coiled and dead, in a glass filled with a cloudy liquid that is no longer water.

Of course, I suspect any visitors will be far more concerned with the mess I've left in the bathtub. There isn't enough left for an open-casket funeral, but at least I left the driver's license and ID cards on the body. This way the family of my failure can find some comfort in knowing the fate of the deceased.

Children of the Dead God

The Nepri are created from the resurrection of a single body, though that vessel is meticulously prepared to receive the Divine Fire in ways that most people would describe as a violation or a defilement. After being hacked and cut into 13 separate pieces by a ritual knife (one created by a Promethean specifically for the so-called generative act) the corpse is painstakingly reassembled, sewn together and left

to lie in a body of water before the final infusion of Azoth. The Divine Fire enters the dead shell via a mouthful of rose petals that the corpse chews and swallows. As the corpse eats, the creator submerges the body once more.

The Promethean opens his eyes underwater. This distortion of the senses is at first comforting, feeling natural, akin to the distortion of sound a true child might feel within the womb. But the comfort is momentary at best. The first memory, the very first recalled sensation an Osiran feels is the panic of suffocation: people cannot breathe underwater. Rather than the gradual awakening of rising from a slab or the grinding, grueling effort of clawing from the grave, the Nepri surge from their natural element in a state of shock.

After that first awakening, most Osirans return to their waters each night and wake each day without horror, but some have been known to burst from their slumber gasping for breath each morning. Those who suffer so understandably consider it sick irony.

As the Promethean leaves the water completely, he suffers the effects of physical awkwardness experienced by all of the Created. Unique to him, however, is the discovery that part of his body is missing — an eye, a finger, an ear, a hand, maybe even his genitals. For the first hours, the skin around the missing flesh itches and pulses in time to the Promethean's erratic heartbeat. He might return to the rose petal-scented water to wash or calm himself, stagger around the immediate area, or sit and breathe deeply as he wracks his brain. The end results are the same — he knows nothing about who he is, who he was or what has happened to him.

Method in the Madness

Osirans create others of their Lineage for many of the same reasons any Promethean does, usually in order to pass the Divine Fire onwards as a step on the long Pilgrimage. The Nepri have their own individual reasons as well, perhaps not shared by other Created, and learn different things from their rituals to pass Azoth into the corpse of another.

Most Osirans know they are acting in imitation of Isis resurrecting Osiris from the dead. A little deeper digging reveals the other theories derived from the actions of the family that one day became revered as gods in Old Egypt. What many experienced, educated and well-traveled Nepri also come to learn is that their creation and the gravebirth of future Osirans also imitates another ancient practice, one directly involving the veneration of Osiris as the God of the Dead. A long-forgotten ritual conducted by the peoples of Old Egypt was for initiates, priests and other holy men to create figurines and statues of Osiris to commemorate his death and resurrection.

Some Nepri believe that this lore is all that survives of ancient attempts by Egyptian priests to become demiurges with their own

mystic arts, creating and destroying images of their reborn god in order to channel the Azoth to their own ends. Others simply see this rite as a harmless act of worship and imitation, but doubts remain among the Nepri, especially considering the fact that their origin myths are so distorted. Even the true Progenitor of their line remains unknown.

Osirans responsible for creating others of their kind often leave their “children” to awaken alone and find their own way in the world. Many Nepri are more concerned with their own learning and Pilgrimages than the trials of those they create in their image. If an Osiran feels he has learned all he needs from resurrecting the corpse, he rarely feels qualms about abandoning the creature for the small chance he would learn more by educating it. In cases such as these, the phlegmatic humour is all too pronounced, and Osirans often feel a surge in dispassionate Torment when watching a new Promethean thrashing free of the waters that cradle it.

Alice awoke this way, alone, terrified and believing she

was drowning. Throwing herself from the bathtub, she cried as her fragmented memories reassembled and she ached all over from the straining stitches that bound her ruined body together. There was no guidance. Her Pilgrimage started in that moment, alone and isolated.

Malcolm reared up out of a small pond in an English wood, sputtering and vomiting algae-thickened water while his creator looked on, filming the scene with a camcorder and dictating his observations into a handheld tape recorder.

The Physical Shell

Of the Lineages, perhaps the Osirans care the least about the bodies they choose. The Wretched and the Muses are locked into corpses that appealed to the senses of their creators, but the Nepri stand apart from their Created brethren by rarely spending thought on which body to use. This is commonly represented in the way they speak of their own bodies as “this shell” or “my vessel” as if they were somehow dissociated with it and it were an impersonal or temporary matter. Given their ability to

resurrect by what they perceive as a reflection of their divinity, it is easier to understand why such an attitude is pervasive throughout the Lineage. Soulless they may be, but they are still born of divinity and much more than the stolen flesh they inhabit.

Of course, many Nepri do not share the high opinion of their existence with their fellow Prometheans, sometimes judging even those among their throng as lesser beings.

Many Osirans are, however, still very dignified or graceful — even if their missing body part is visible — unless mortals witness their disfig-





urements. In some bodies, the corpses had commanding and charismatic features in life, which the Prometheans inherited when the Divine Fire reclaimed the flesh. In most cases, the being within the body projects an aura of composure, strength and dignity. Even Nepri who suffer from ghastly missing body parts such as noses or lips still have something about them and the way they carry themselves that suggests a powerful, attention-worthy, presence.

When suffering injuries to (or pain within) their bodies, Nepri frequently refer to the sensation as inconvenient and distracting, rather than threatening. They rarely feel fear from physical dangers, though not from bravado but from the same dissociation that leads them to refer to their bodies as “shells” and “vessels.” Osirans have been known to withstand excruciating torture, because even though they feel the echoes of agony that all Created feel, the Nepri are shielded by the belief that their bodies are the least important pieces of their beings. Rebirth always awaits them should they expire, and in this they are truly as gods.

The Mutilation

Which part of the body is not reassembled with the rest of the corpse is, of course, down to the whims of the individual creator. Unsurprisingly, probably the most common choice is the genitalia on males, in echo of the ancient legend of Isis and Osiris. As inhuman beings incapable of fathering children anyway, this loss of manhood affects the Nepri very little. Their dispassionate nature also goes some way to quelling the natural desire to mate that many Prometheans still instinctively feel, so the loss of the genitals is rarely accompanied by bitterness when the Promethean comes to terms with his condition.

Some creators decide that the more adverse the effects of the mutilation, the more the offspring will learn about human reactions and the sense of self-identity all Prometheans must come to terms with. This explains why some Nepri display distressing injuries such as a puckered eye socket, a lipless forever-grin or twin nasal passages exposed with no nose. Many of these Prometheans refuse to cover up their mutilations due to hints of pride or bitterness, or an eerie curiosity about how others will react. An equal number of those with such deformities mask them as best they can.

Beyond the traditional myth, no standard mutilation exists among the Nepri. Where one lacks something as important as a leg, another is missing only the tip of a finger. Where one lacks only a rib bone, another is missing his right arm on the whim of his creator. In these harsher cases, it's entirely fair for a player to select a Flaw at character creation to represent his character's mutilation.

When Nilan woke under the brown waters of the Ganges and clawed his way up the muddy bank, it took him several seconds to realize he lacked one of his legs below the thigh. He spends his days hobbling around the crowded markets of Dhaka, begging only to fit in and watching the teeming crowds with dispassionate intensity.

McKensie wears a contoured rubber mask of the type given to people after they suffer terrible burn injuries. This covers the fact that he lacks a face, which was stolen by his creator, peeled off by knife blade before McKensie's resurrection.

The Future Dead

One of the driving forces behind any Promethean's interactions with mortals is the need to learn about them, learn from them and feel accepted among them. Created from the different Lineages go about this in individual ways, but while the Muses might be stereotyped into hungering for human affection and companionship, the Nepri possess a chilling, eager curiosity around mortals. This curiosity can unnerve many people, and coupled with the Disquiet an Osiran radiates, the Promethean can appear cold and eerie to the point of seeming psychopathic.

Initial questions can seem harmless enough: “Why do you think that?” and “Why would you say such a thing?” for example. But given a response — or when suffering from Torment — the Nepri's enquiries turn calculating and unnerving. When Alice comes across a homeless man on a winter night, she says, “*You are dying, slowly freezing to death, while hundreds of people drive past in heated cars — does that seem fair to you?*”

Perhaps it's linked to their origins, but many of the Osiran Lineage are preoccupied with the death of mortals and humans' reactions as they pass on. Some suggest this is because the Nepri have been cheated out of true death and burn with the need to learn all they can of it. Others believe it is just another approach for the Osirans to learn what they can about humanity on the Pilgrimage. Nilan passes a car accident, watching the twitching body of the driver as he dies trapped in the wreckage of his old car. For days afterwards, he thinks of the man's last words, “*Help me.*” Nilan wonders why the dying man thought a complete stranger would help him.

The cold Osiran curiosity isn't just focused on learning about death. Members of this Lineage are also powerfully interested in the way human morals and ethics work. Osirans have been known to stalk criminals such as murderers, muggers, fraudsters or rapists for months on end, to learn what they can from observing the mortals' behavior. Osirans seek to know what humans think and why they do it, all in order to better understand themselves and advance along the Pilgrimage. While many simply watch human corruption and vice in order to learn from it, some turn into near-emotionless vigilantes who seek to right the wrongs they witness, punishing the criminals and making reparations for any victims. Of course, the few Osirans who act in such a way rarely do so out of compassion or pity, but as yet another way of learning the way humanity interacts with one another.

The Nepri consider themselves twice removed from humanity, both because of their Promethean nature and their divine heritage. This distance — one they claim even above the supposedly divine-born Galateids — creates a significant divide between mortal human and immortal Osiran.



The Disfigurement

While all of the Created reveal their unique disfigurements when they burn through their Pyros, the Nepri have a special curse on that score. Frankensteins and Galateids look repulsive in their own ways, and Tammuz seem monstrous to any witnesses. The Ulgan are the most clearly supernatural in this revelatory moment, exuding the darkness of the void through the tears in their flesh. But these are all confusing, mystifying as well as horrifying. The human mind has doubting flickers of rejection and confusion within the panic it goes through at such sights.

The Osiran disfigurement is the one that is instantly recognizable to humans all over the world, and the one that immediately burns terror into the mortal heart as well as burning an image into human eyes. Osirans caught at this moment are unarguably decayed, ancient corpses *that are still walking and talking*. There's no moment of confusion or rejection when faced with such a revelation — reaction is immediate, and mortals are horrified on the most primal level. Every man, woman and child fears death, and here it is in the same room as them: a shrunken-skinned, skull-grinning, leathery corpse that looks several years dead.

While Storytellers should take this into consideration, the Osirans' disfigurement isn't mentioned here for the purposes of variant game mechanics. Instead, it's a factor to consider in the way the Nepri see themselves as removed from both humans and other Prometheans. As god-touched, Nepri are above the rest of the Created. As the very image of rotted, mummified, human death, Nepri appear to be the antithesis of natural human life. It should come as no surprise that this aspect to Osiran heritage sits uneasily in the minds of the Nepri.

Silent Lairs

Unlike some Prometheans, Osirans generally tend to prefer lairs removed from humanity. As dispassionate as they are, they rarely seek out human companionship in comparison to members of the other Lineages. The Nepri are acutely aware of their Disquiet and the effect it has on the surrounding area, and do not require the nearby presence of mortals in order to rest as, say, the Galateids do. All an Osiran requires is a body of water, be it a running river or a half-full bathtub. Alice, for example, has trouble falling asleep if humans are nearby, especially if she is able to hear the mortals talking, laughing or moving around. It seems the sounds of life intrude on the sleep of death that the children of Osiris must return to when they rest.

Phlegmatic Disquiet

Mortals afflicted by Osiran Disquiet begin to feel emotionally drawn to the Promethean in their midst. Each person thus affected pinpoints something memorable about the Nepri — something that matters or means something to that person individually — and unconsciously focuses on it, such as a remembered phrase or a particular facial expression, or the way the Osiran dressed and something he insinuated when he spoke. Love, hate, obsession, disgust: whatever the emotion, it begins as the Disquiet takes hold in the human heart and only gets more powerful. At unpredictable moments, the emotion itself swings and changes, though the intensity does not. From obsessive infatuation, a mortal might suddenly feel furious anger in the middle of a conversation. And as the human is affected by the four stages of Disquiet, the emotions intensify and all eventually lead to the grim truth that when humans in the *driven* stage hunt to destroy an Osiran, the mortals feel a loathing that knows no rival intensity in their lives. Ordinary people have been known to abandon their lives completely in order to ruin or kill the Nepri the people have grown to hate.

The Disquiet that emanates Malcolm creates a passionate, chaotic mess in the people around him, in stark contrast to his own cool-hearted nature. He drives a taxi in London, using the job as a way of studying the people in the back seat and occasionally talking to them. As he works in the same area over time, he meets the same people who become familiar with the near-silent driver who always flicks glances at them in the mirror when he believes they are not looking. Ironically, as the mortals around him become more agitated, more excited and emotional, Malcolm's eerie calm works against him, making him stand out all the more.

Disquiet personalized to individual characters can easily take the form of mortal Storyteller characters becoming fixated on specific character traits that a Promethean displays during the course of the chronicle. Storytellers should take notes on notable habits and actions of the Osiran character, especially those tied in with his Virtue and Vice, using such behaviors as springboards to have a mortal obsess over when he begins to suffer the effects of Disquiet.

The Humour

Phlegm, the bodily humour secreted from an animal's mucus membranes, was believed to be a cold and wet fluid used in lubricating the body, as well as aiding digestion. In humans, phlegm is a mucus that aids in the body's defense from infection, as well as providing lubrication for sex. According to the ancient beliefs, pure phlegm, untainted by infection or imbalance, is a white fluid. In the modern world, the Osirans generally look down upon the average mortal comprehension of phlegm as little more than sputum and snot as a degraded understanding. Many Prometheans take



an interest in the way mortals function with their naturally balanced humours, and the Nepri are especially derisive of humans who poison themselves. When a smoker coughs up a mouthful of sticky brown mucous, Malcolm's lips curl at the sight of the smoker's humour fouled.

Alchemically speaking, a phlegmatic person was believed to be calm and unemotional. The belief changed among mortal practitioners as the years passed, and even while the other humours and their associated temperaments remained unchanged, to be phlegmatic soon became considered as a total absence of temperament. Prometheans, naturally, hold to the alchemical explanation, which keeps in line with what they experience in life.

The cold, wet properties of the phlegm that runs through Nepri bodies means that the Prometheans must return to cold water in order to sleep and dream. When Alice gets tired and goes without rest for too long, she aches and feels heavy inside as if her bodily fluids were thickening and beating sluggishly through her veins. Only when slumbering partially or completely submerged in water is she able to awaken refreshed. Malcolm, on the other hand, prefers to sleep in natural bodies of cold water such as the pond in which he was resurrected, and he feels calmed by the life of the frogs and fish squirming around him.

Steps on the Pilgrimage

The dispassion of the Nepri does not prevent them from their Great Works, though many of the Lineage walk the Pilgrimage in ways that could be considered heartless. The strange truth is that while any Promethean can learn from studying death in others and its repercussions, the Osirans have been known to manipulate events in such directions in order to see what they can discover. The revelation of emotion experienced upon learning of a creator's destruction can serve as a milestone and earn Vitriol for one of the Created, but most likely the Nepri in a throng engineers his maker's death, purely for curiosity purposes. Others risk Humanity loss by killing a mortal, all in order to see what can be learned. Perhaps most twisted of all, some Osirans have been known to seek out what revelations can be learned from the creation of Pandorans. This ties in closely with the Nepri penchant for Centimanus, for the Osiran Lineage numbers more practitioners of the Refinement of Flux than any other. Such a desire for power over the Pandorans stems from both emotional and moral distance, as well as from the Osiran legend that Isis, mother of the Lineage, was the first Promethean to practice the Refinement.

Torment

Nepri flooded by their inner Torment are heartless, callous, ruthless beings. No emotion breaks the surface of this cold perception, not even true love or malicious hatred. The ruthlessness and callous behavior is entirely fuelled by a lack of passion, as cited by more modern exponents of the Four Humours theory.

To stand with an Osiran overwhelmed by Torment is to be near a creature who lacks the capacity to care about anyone and anything outside of himself. The obvious comparisons are with someone with a psychopathic disorder, such as a serial killer who murders for his own interests and remains without a conscience, apathetic to others. This is the shroud that falls over the Nepri when they suffer Torment. Sometimes, the human victims of crime or war accuse their tormentors of having no soul, no ability to empathize or understand the damage they inflict on the lives of others. This is the perfect description of Tormented Osirans, who nod at such claims and agree. *Yes, I do indeed have no soul. How perceptive of you.* It can seem to many Nepri that this is further proof of their distance from true mortal life, a distance that even the other Prometheans cannot understand.

Whether McKensie is in the depths of his Torment or not, this plays on his mind constantly and threatens to alienate him even further from humanity and his fellow Prometheans. In appearing as a long-dead body and resembling a "soulless" human when overwhelmed by Torment, he sees the odds against him stacked so high that abandoning the Pilgrimage and becoming a Flux-using Freak were the only options he recognized as sane or remotely achievable. This is why he turned to Centimanus and why he so carefully studies his many failures to create another Promethean. This is why, sometimes, he prays to a God he has never believed in that he will fail again, just so he can see what happens.

Drought

When the Nepri retreat to the Wastes, the results are always ugly. All life near the Promethean is afflicted by the disruption of water in the area, and if the Osiran is in a densely populated location, death will be the curse he inflicts upon living beings nearby.

Alice fled London, where she awoke, and headed out into the woodlands of rural Britain. In the wilderness, the animals that remained in the region were doomed to die of thirst as drinking pools and rivers eventually degraded into tainted ooze, impossible to drink. Alice stayed for months, waiting for her Azoth to burn down, and in the wake of her departure conservationists at a nearby squirrel reserve found dozens of their animals as desiccated corpses, near-mummified with the moisture in their bodies completely drained.

It is said that in the worst stages of Osiran Wastelands, where the Promethean has remained in the same location for years, to swallow the fouled water around him is fatal. Rain ceases entirely, with plants and animals alike dying of thirst in the sun.

In urban areas, the Wasteland effect is devastating. Malcolm lived in an inner-city apartment in London. Throughout the building, water eventually stopped flowing, and the impure muck disgorged by the faucets could not be used to wash or drink. Toilets clogged up, showers were blocked and even standing water

such as in fish tanks and bottled water quickly grew cloudy and thickened into a clear soup-like gel that smelled and tasted awful. When the residents left their homes to fetch or buy water, the effects passed to whatever they brought home with them. Those in the apartments closest to Malcolm's suffered even worse, as their sweat and urine began to stink with a metallic, oily stench. Sure enough, disease wasn't far behind, and the apartment building was the site of a thorough investigation by the local council when the bodies started to leave in black bags in the back of ambulances.

Egypt

Egypt, the spiritual home of the Lineage, is rumored to be a land infested with ancient Pandorans who hunger for the blood of the Osirans. It's certainly true that few Nepri venture there by choice, and many who do never return to speak of what they encountered. What's noteworthy is that sometimes a Nepri seeking to go into reclusion for many months or years chooses Egypt as the place to enter his hermitage. Many of these daring Prometheans choose the Sahara Desert, for obvious reasons, and walk out onto the endless sands in order to find out what ancient legacies await members of the Lineage in their ancestral homeland, and bleed out their Azoth without risk of discovery by humans.

Memento Mori

The Nepri can add a dose of the cold-hearted macabre to Promethean games. At the heart of the Lineage is perhaps the greatest fodder for a good horror story, because the Osirans are just plain creepy. All the other Created show some imbalanced semblance of human emotion along with their monstrous natures. The Nepri are categorized by their inability to show even that. Handled well, that can be scary without even starting on their penchant for Centimanus.

- **Cult of Personality:** The arrogance of the Nepri is well-known even among the tiny bands of Prometheans that roam the world. One such believer in the divinity of his Lineage is Kartik Ramachandran, a traveling Osiran who tours the world with the millions of dollars his body had access to in true life as an Indian businessman. He makes trips to anywhere in the world (flying by personal jet), seeking out throngs that might be worthy of his patronage and potential membership. Though he earnestly wants to help out his fellow Created of other Lineages, he also wants them to admit their pathetic nature compared to the Nepri.

- **Missing Piece:** A strangely passionate Osiran tags along with the characters for a while. He's humble (for a Nepri) and pleasant to be around, as well as possessing a few useful skills and

contacts that the group lacks. The only thing he asks in return is that they help him find his hand, which was the body part his creator removed. The Osiran insists that he will be able to reattach it. After a few days, news reports of serious muggings start to sweep the city, describing a hooded, machete-wielding man attacking people and hacking off their right hands at the wrist. Soon after this, the new guy in town admits that he thinks any hand will suffice, as long as he can make the attempt within a few seconds of the amputation. The mutilations continue unabated, and the characters' new friend is beginning to build up significant Torment . . .

- **Family Curse:** A Nepri character is attacked by another of his Lineage, though the assailant breaks off the assault before it goes too far. He angrily claims to be the Osiran character's "brother," created by the same being, and that the "family" labors under a curse. Every Promethean that this mysterious creator fashioned eventually becomes a *Sublimatus* (though the assailant just says that they all "become monsters"). Unlike most failed creations, the transformation to Pandoran takes months or years. Even if this assailant is mistaken, the Nepri character can probably look forward to extra scrutiny from his throng. And what happens when the assailant vanishes and a powerful *Sublimatus* starts hunting the characters down?

- **Return from Death:** An Osiran character dies and returns from death with critical information about one of his own milestones — or perhaps even with the knowledge of the Scrutiny Bestowment (see p. 54). He recalls being dead, traveling down a long river in a land dotted with crypts and moaning souls, and remembers feeling that wisdom and answers about the Great Work were there for the taking — but he ran out of time. Are the characters willing to die and let him resurrect them using Revivification? Or will they attempt to learn the Bestowment themselves? How will they acquire the Vitriol to help learn it?

Rumors: Osirans

- "Prometheans are all infertile; we're only able to pass on our legacy by infusing bodies with the Divine Fire. So how do you explain Osiris fathering a son — a true son — even after his death and resurrection? I'll tell you how. The Nepri calling themselves the Patriarchal Court have got it into their heads that Horus wasn't a Promethean at all, and Osiris managed to somehow create a mortal child. By looking into the ancient sorceries of Egypt and the Middle East, these Osirans are hoping to find some mystical means to create human children of their own. Maybe the Osirans think it'll bring their Pilgrimages to successful finishes. Maybe they just want some control over their natural conditions. Of course, they could just want power and respect. I wouldn't rule that out."

- "Every Lineage tells the story of their first ever Progenitor still walking the world. If that's true of us, then Osiris, Horus or whoever it was that started our line is probably the oldest being in the entire world. Think of the advice and guidance either could give. Think of the stories they know and the things they've seen. Of course, if it were true, it means that they've traveled



the Earth as immortals for thousands of years and still haven't made it to Redemption. On one hand, the power they would have by now is insane. On the other hand, you'd have to wonder why they never made it through their Pilgrimages yet. If they've found something better, they could share it. If they're just failing it over and over again, well, I doubt they resemble whatever they were at the start any more. That's why I won't go to Egypt even if Osiris himself is there waiting for me."

• "One of us stayed far too long in one place, and his Wasteland ravaged the world around him. The way he ruined the water meant that he wasn't only killing the people when they drank it, but it was somehow reanimating them after death. Every mortal who died with a bellyful of that corrupted water became infused with fragments of the Divine Fire and awakened after death as something else: zombies, Pandorans, perhaps even a member of some Mockery we'd not seen yet."

Corpse Tongue (Osiris)

The Osirans explore what it means to die and return. They are made from the dead, and although they're now living, the circumstances of their creation imbue them with an affinity for the dead, or specifically for that small trace of life, the echoes of a person that exist within every corpse.

Cost: None or 1 Pyros

Action: Instant

Transmutation Cost: Intelligence x 7

The Osiran can ask three questions of a corpse. He touches it, reaching out into the corpse's body with his Azoth and finding the electrochemical echoes of the human being this once was. The player rolls Intelligence + Azoth. Success allows the Nepri to ask three questions of the dead person. The questions can only be asked in such a way that they require a straight yes/no answer. The corpse answers honestly, according to what it knows. The Osiran hears the corpse's answers as whispers inside his head. If the player spends one Pyros, the character can ask one more question of the corpse, which can be answered more completely (that is, with more than a simple "yes" or "no," but still not in more detail than a sentence or two). An Osiran can use this Bestowment on any corpse only once.

Although this Bestowment is not part of their creation, other Prometheans can learn this Bestowment as a Transmutation. A Promethean who learns this begins to experience a rise in phlegmatic humour within him, becoming colder in temperament, harder in the eye, as if something has been lost with the gaining of the power.

Athanors

Osiran Athanors are often appropriate to the Nepri's methodical and pragmatic nature. While these Athanors might be esoteric in the understanding that they require, the benefits they confer are immediately useful to the Osiran. It does no good to prepare the furnace if one has nothing to burn, after all.

Some Nepri Athanors capitalize on the Lineage's divine heritage. These crucibles are more like birthrights than alchemical acquisitions.

Eel - Grace (Osiris)



The eel, long and languid, lurks in undersea caves and grottoes. The lonely creature slides effortlessly through the water, a fearsome snake with sharp teeth and slick skin.

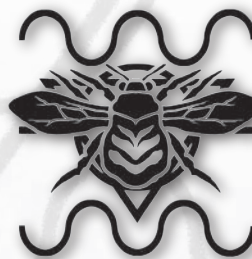
The Promethean who chooses Eel as an Athanor wishes to become like the eel: eerily graceful, nearly undetectable, and more than a little scary. While an eel might not seem a royal king of the sea, many Nepri recognize the power intrinsic to being hidden and frightful. Authority needn't be obvious, after all.

Trait Affinities: Dexterity, Stealth

Promethean Boon: The Promethean gains +1 to Defense and Initiative Modifier, and +3 to Speed.

Redeemed Boon: Upon becoming mortal, the character gains either the Fleet of Foot Merit (•) or the Fresh Start Merit (•). She doesn't gain both, but whichever the player chooses, prerequisites don't apply.

Honey bee - Unity (Osiris)



The honeybee seems a simple creature, too simple perhaps to be a proper Athanor. But bees represent the bond between like-minded creatures. In the hive, bees are nothing as individuals, but everything as the group. They are a unified force, working to build something for themselves. And any who stand in their way are stung to death by not one, but many.

Prometheans who choose this Athanor are more accustomed to the workings of the throng than others. These Prometheans know that they must work together, like the materials in an alchemical reaction, to achieve the Magnum Opus.

Trait Affinities: Presence, Socialize

Promethean Boon: Once per day, the character may reflexively draw upon the Skill set of one of the characters in her Branded throng. The player may add the same Skill possessed by a throng-member (who must be in line of sight) to her own roll. (This may also negate the unskilled penalty for that roll.) For example, when Lighthouse makes an Intelligence + Computer roll, he can draw upon the Computer Skill of his throng-mate, Ulysses (whose Computer Skill is a 3). Lighthouse then can add +3 to that single roll (and ignore the normal -3 penalty he would take for unskilled use of Computer).

Redeemed Boon: When making a teamwork-based roll, whether as primary or secondary actor, the character gets a +1 bonus. (See "Teamwork," p.134 of the *World of Darkness Rulebook*.)

TAMMUZ



Oh, how they hunted her.

Swamp Sarah, the Bayou Lady, watched from the small hollow beneath the cypress, hidden from their sight by the tangled roots that clung desperately to the wet bayou mud. Of course, it wasn't as though she were innocent.

She glanced down at her hands, and found that there was still some blood under her fingernails.

She plunged her hands into the cool, pure mud under her, savoring its ability to smooth away the frailties and mistakes that she always seemed to make. She always came back here, it seemed. Back to the sweet black mud of the Mississippi.

The dogs raised up their baying voices then, and she knew that they'd scented her — no small feat, that, given that she smelled like mud and loam. No matter. She'd told that old bitch that there was no way she was going to serve anyone, even if she was some hoodoo-priestess armed with binding vevs and old pieces of Jewish magic she'd bartered for long ago.

She'd still tried to bind Swamp Sarah's will, and paid the price that any would-be master who didn't have the strength to subjugate another paid: you didn't try to enslave one of the Golems and make a mistake. Or rather, if you did, you only did it once.

And now her redneck kin were after Swamp Sarah for killing their Gramma, with their dogs and shotguns. Let them come, then. She'd had time to rest, and she was back in her swamps. With that thought, she was moving. It wasn't long after that the screams began.

Risen from Clay

God made humans from clay, and humankind has been trying to duplicate that feat ever since. Most of the time, the endeavors are symbolic: tiny dolls made by tribal folk to symbolize the children they hoped to have, or small statues to represent someone who is hurt and needs healing or who is bothersome and needs cursing. Magicians have long known the power that resides in the earth, though, often creating material bodies of clay for the intelligences





they create from their own divine urge, or that they bring forth from the deep places behind and beneath the world.

Clay is the stuff of humanity made manifest. It is the physical body, the strength and adaptability of the form. Unfortunately, the Tammuz know that the clay is also only that — it is only the body, only strength.

Clay is not the soul. The breath of God, the wind from the Divine Fire, provides that, and without it Adam would have remained but an interesting shape in the mud. This is how many Tammuz feel: incomplete, unwhole, a thing of physical existence.

Emet

According to the old legends of the Golem of Prague, the Golem was created from clay, holy scripture placed beneath the Golem's tongue and the word *emet* ("Truth") written upon the Golem's brow. Then, the Golem's maker, who was called the Maharal, circled the Golem seven times with the Torah and then spoke the words from Genesis 2:7 that brought the Golem to life: "The Lord God formed a man from the dust of the earth, and He blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."

When creating progeny, many Tammuz follow this process. Only when the body is prepared with a mark of slavery, surrounded by earth, does the Word of Creation come to the creator, who must write this word on a slip of paper and place it beneath the tongue of the body. Then, it is covered. Some creators even write a Word of Life upon the brow of their progeny, knowing that this will make the creation more simple, even as it makes the new Golem somewhat vulnerable.

New flaw: Word of Life

Some Golems possess a Word of Life on their brow. Two of the most common varieties of this Word are the Hebrew words *emet* ("truth") and *Adam* ("red clay"). Scribing this word helps to "target" the Divine fire. In game terms, a creator (who must possess at least three dots in Occult) who scribes a Word of Power into the head of his progeny at Step Two of creating progeny (see **Pro-methean: The Created**, p. 186) gains a +1 bonus to his Humanity roll during Step five of the process, and if this roll fails, a -1 to his effective *Azoth* for determining the creation of Pandorans.

Though these words help to define the purpose and origins of the Golem, the words are also a weakness. Should the words be damaged in a specific way, so that the words now express a different meaning, the Golem falls into a death-like state for the scene. For instance, if the word *emet* has its first symbol removed, the word becomes *met*, or "death." Likewise, if the first letter of *Adam* is marred, it becomes *dam*, the Hebrew word for

"blood." Though these are not the only possible Words of Life — indeed, a Word of Life may be taken from any language — they are the ones most commonly known to Tammuz. The effect of distorting the Word is the same, regardless of what specific word is used or how it is defaced.

Normally, this mark appears as some kind of weird discoloration, tattoo or other strange mark on the Tammuz' forehead. It may draw attention, but little else. Any kind of supernatural scrutiny, whether aura reading, divination or even heightened senses used to spot the hidden Tammuz reveals dark letters against the Golem's forehead. When the Tammuz' disfigurements stand revealed, the letters blaze with a dull, white luminance, as though the Divine fire within him were radiating from behind the burning words on his brow.

A called shot to the forehead (a -3 penalty to an attack roll; see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p.165) with any attack that inflicts lethal damage can mar the symbol, but the attack must be performed with that intention. Those who manage to see the letters properly may make an Intelligence + Occult roll, at a -2 penalty, to recognize the symbols for what they are.

According to Tammuz folklore, the story about the Golem of Prague's creation highlights the truths necessary to the creation of their progeny. The circling of the Golem with the Torah seven times is symbolic of allowing at least seven days within the earth to pass, and then returning to speak to the progeny and call them forth. In fact, many Tammuz prefer to use precisely that Genesis passage to first speak to their progeny, and many Golems look fondly on it, for those were the first words they ever heard.

A Life of Slavery

The process of creating progeny is known to all Tammuz with more than a few years behind them. Whether they learn of it from their creators, from others or simply by instinct and happenstance, they discover it. It is not knowledge of the process, then, that causes many Tammuz to hesitate, but knowledge of its implications.

To create a new Tammuz is to create a new slave in the world. As opposed to slavery as many Golems are, it is no wonder that many of them resist creating progeny for as long as they might, until the increasing demands of either their own solitude or the Pilgrimage overcome this hesitation.

As a result, many of the first interactions young Tammuz have with their creators are tinged in guilt. The creator cannot help but feel terribly guilty, and her progeny cannot help but sense it. The young Tammuz finds his first interactions with another creature tainted: his creator is kindly and knowledgeable, but something is wrong. Sometimes



she flinches when he speaks, or she looks away from him quickly, but not before her progeny has seen the sadness and loathing — in the manner of the young, he assumes the loathing is for him, when it is actually self-loathing for what she has done. For what she has had to do.

It is a strange cycle that serves only to instill in the young Tammuz a sense of self-loathing. Ironically, this very thing often makes a Tammuz susceptible to the commands of others — the creator's sense of guilt creates the hollowness in the progeny that enables them to be a slave. Thus, the destiny of the Tammuz reinforces itself, generation after generation.

Cub was born in the Sleeping Bear Sand Dunes in northern Michigan. He rose up under the full moon, spitting sand from his mouth, and growled like a bear in the darkness. His creator found him and helped him remove the sharpened sticks from his cheeks, but the puncture wounds remain. They remind Cub that he is unfinished and not his own; like the baby bear in the legend of the dunes, he is adrift, ever in danger of drowning.

The Unspoiled, on the other hand, was made to be free. His creator fashioned him out of the most perfect body she could find (free of imperfection), and planned to raise him far from humanity so as to be free of Disquiet and the prying eyes of mortals. Of course, to create a new Golem, the creator had to make some concession to slavery, and so bound the corpse tightly with thick rope before lowering it into a deep pit of mud.

In Service to the Flock

Tammuz interaction with mortals is tinged with envy and fear. Tammuz know that of all the creatures that haunt the World of Darkness, they are the most likely to lose their freedom and their existences to humans. Humans seem helpless, and Golems wish to help mortals, only to look up one day and find themselves having somehow become the very thing they fear most becoming: slaves.

Instinctual Service

Instilled with an appreciation — even envy — for humans, Golems know that their weakness is humanity. They cannot help but desire to be near them, to experience their dynamic nature, their souls. Tammuz are so often filled with self-loathing and the fear that they lack purpose that they will latch on to those who seem to have purpose.

Surely those with souls know what is useful and human in the world, don't they? Deep down, on some level, the Golem desires to do the wishes of mortals, because the presence of a soul shows that they have a higher purpose, one that the lowly Tammuz may himself share by bending his existence to that purpose. Swamp Sarah, for instance, was born in the mud of the Mississippi, but her creator was snatched away by Pandorans not even a day

afterwards. Sarah wandered alone until a voodoo priestess found her and called to her using the same Biblical passage her creator had spoken. Sarah responded — and found herself a slave to this woman's will.

Soon, the Disquiet and the Tammuz' own self-loathing begin to play off one another. The Golem seems more menial. It is easier for those the Tammuz has set himself up to aid to simply order him about, dismiss his own concerns and take him for granted. At the same time, the Golem understands the short-temperedness of those around him as frustration with him — if only he understood things better, if only he had a soul to allow him to see subtle nuances they way they do. Surely they understand what is going on, and if they become angry with him, then it's clearly his own fault. He tries to help as best he can, but he is quite the burden.

Then, it happens. Sometimes, the Tammuz realizes what he's doing . . . again. He extricates himself from the situation before they grow to hate him, and before he is driven to mad resentment and destruction. Sadly, all too often, this enlightenment does not come until Disquiet crests and breaks in those he is trying to help, and they try to control him utterly, enslaving or imprisoning him. Worst yet, sometimes it doesn't happen until Torment sets in and he rises up in mute fury, shattering the shackles they are upon him, lashing out at those around him, despite the fact that of those most eager to enslave him, he is the worst offender.

The player and Storyteller are encouraged to work together to create a personalized progression of Disquiet for each Tammuz. All manifestations of Disquiet involve some desire to control the Tammuz, but where one may start with the desire to hire the Tammuz as an employee and slowly come to think of his as a slave, another may create the urge in people around him to imprison him — crimes are blamed on him, he is watched for any sign of strange behavior that can be reported to the police and similar effects.

The Echo

Many Tammuz refer to a concept they call the Echo, which is their term for the longing for a human soul. According to those who experience the Echo, it is like an echo that sounds from deep within them, a sound that is made by emptiness, a reverberation of the life and spiritual nature of the world that resonates within them because of their own lack of a soul. To many Tammuz, the Echo becomes louder the longer they remain around humanity, as though the emptiness inside them — the hollow place where a soul should be — is resounding with the sounds of the true souls around him.

The closer the Tammuz draw to full Torment, the louder this Echo is in their ears. Though normally tranquil and calm, its constant inner cacophony drives the Golem to distraction. It is the sound of grief and jealousy and hate, and the chaos sets the usually sedate Tammuz on edge. Then, the Echo becomes too loud. It becomes too much, and the Tammuz can resist it no longer. His self-control crumbles like clay left too long in



the hot, dry sun, and he goes berserk, lashing out. He only wishes for the Echo to quiet within him, and if that means destroying the source of the Echo, if that means snuffing out the lives of those around him, or frightening them away with acts of violence, then that is what will happen, whether he truly wants it to or not.

Of course, after a time away from humans, whether he has gone to the Wastes, or simply been forced to flee for his life, the Echo begins to gnaw at him. Its silence and emptiness seem to swallow his own words, his thoughts, until he seeks out those who truly have souls, desperate to know once more what they sound like reverberating warmly through him.

Israel Hands rarely spends time around humans. He feels the Echo gnaw at him — to him, it is the endless whisper of the sea, and it calls to him with a longing that he doesn't have words to express. But to find people, to find mortals to take that longing away, requires him to move inland, and he feels danger mounting as he does so. It might be prudence or cowardice, but either way Israel feels safer letting the Echo be his constant companion, however tempting it might be to quiet it.

Hearts of Stone

It is in the earthen humour of the Tammuz that much of their nature shines through. Earth is lasting. It is silent. Earth is constant, slow and the absolute element of physicality. All of these traits are shared by the Golems: they are stereotyped as the strong silent type, and this is because in many cases they are. Indeed, most of the bodies chosen for Tammuz progeny tend to be physically robust, and for the first few hours of their existence, most Golems cannot even speak. When they give in to Torment, they can only lash out physically at the world around them in mute, bull-like anger.

The Melancholic Humour

The melancholic humour is associated with the element of earth. Understood by medieval alchemists and healers to be generated within the lungs, the melancholic humour—or black bile—was said to be responsible for the part of the personality that dealt with calm, analytical approaches to the world. An overabundance of black bile, however, could cause melancholy, characterized by tremendous sadness and listlessness.

This is not simply a symbolic language used to describe personalities—or rather, it isn't when Prometheans are discussed. The melancholic humour is an actual force in the Golem, and it taints everything they do and experience. The emotions that the Tammuz experience are usually “flavored” by this humor, so that even the most spontaneous and gregariously outgoing of the Golems is still somewhat resolute and introverted.

As a result of this, Tammuz tend to be more prone to derangements such as Fugue and Melancholy. Even without these derangements, Tammuz are introspective, sometimes to the point of staring off in the distance, unaware of their surroundings

when deep in thought. All of these traits contribute to the image of the Golems as statues brought to life—nothing is so still and unmoving as a Tammuz who is contemplating something intensely. Those in a throng with a Golem sometimes joke that the Golem has to be reminded to breathe sometimes.

Earth-Gods

The Tammuz are named for an earth-god, a dying-and-resurrecting deity of old Babylon. When Inanna descended into the Underworld, her consort Tammuz took her throne in her absence. When she returned, she grew angry at finding him having usurped her place and tore him to pieces.

Some Golems teach that this myth is a cautionary tale. Inanna was the queen of Babylon, the goddess of its people. Tammuz was simply the earth. When a creature of the earth attempts to sit in the throne of humanity, those who truly belong there will not permit it. To the Tammuz, this tale is a warning story of Disquiet: when they remain among humans for too long, long enough to become comfortable and fool themselves into thinking they are human, humanity will rise up and rend them.

The melancholy of the Golems is also part of the tradition of this earth-god. At the height of the summer solstice, there was a tradition in Babylon and other areas of the ancient Near East to hold a six-day time of mourning for Tammuz. Grief and Tammuz are inexorably intertwined, so strongly that it was even remarked on in the Bible: “Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord's house which was toward the north; and behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz. Then said he unto me, ‘Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these.’” (Ezekiel 8:14-15).

Ultimately, though, the Golems teach that the story of Tammuz is most valuable not in its lessons of Disquiet or grief, but for its theme of eventual redemption. Though he is torn apart, Inanna's sister prophecies that he will return, and eventually Inanna relents of her anger and returns him to life.

To one of the Tammuz Prometheans, this story holds promise. Not simply the return to life that Prometheans experience when they have been destroyed, but the promise of mortality. From a corpse, Inanna (the Queen of Heaven as a symbol of the Divine Fire) shall see their sacrifice and grant them mortality.

But Tammuz was the vegetation of the people; the citizenry mourned him because he gave them so much. Therefore, Golems comprehend that in sacrifice and giving of the self to humanity is earned Redemption.

Humour and the Wasteland Effect

Though the humour is contained in the Tammuz, its effects do not remain solely in him. When the Wasteland is created, he can see his humour at work in the world around him. Just as unbalance of the humour in a person may create illness and disease, when the Tammuz remains in one place for too long, he may poison his environs with that humour.



Where men become melancholy and morose when the black bile builds within them, the earth itself is likewise changed. Stagnancy sets in, and stone becomes dry and dusty. It ceases to serve a function other than to exist — where the melancholy humour holds sway, duty and motion give way to stillness and disintegration. This is true for people as well as the place so tainted by the Tammuz's humour.

Eventually, everything becomes inert: people are listless, the soil does not provide nutrients, animals stop moving. Change becomes so difficult to instill that only dust gathers, the very symbol of inactivity.

Some Prometheans have wondered why this earthly humour has such a negative effect on life and stone as well. Shouldn't the life become more vibrant, as earth is the source of nutrients and plant life? If something becomes more earth-like, shouldn't it become harder, like mighty stone?

But this isn't so. The poisoning of the land with the Tammuz humour is the poisoning of purest earth. Most manifestations of earth that humans deal with are considered mixtures of the elements, in metaphysical terms. Soil is not pure earth — there is water there, and the fire of life. Likewise, the hardness of stone is rarely a result of earth alone — great mountains are the result of fiery volcanic activity, and concrete is made through the addition of water.

In truth, the Tammuz understand that the purest form of earth is dust. It collapses inward on itself, denied the form that fire or water may give it. "From dust to dust" is the phrase, and the Tammuz know that is where they themselves originate, and where their humour attempts to return them, starting with the world around them.

Swamp Sarah hides in the bayou of Louisiana from the relatives of her (now deceased) mistress. As the Tammuz lurks in the swamps, the water dries up. The swamp sinks downward, creating a depression, but the rains don't fill this sinkhole. Animals leave or become mired in the mud, and inertia sets in. This part of the bayou becomes silent, and Swamp Sarah's breath is the only sound an intruder can hear if he stays still.

Cub, meanwhile, lurks in Detroit, making his lair across the street from a hospice. As the Wasteland spreads, the floors in the place become dusty, no matter how often they are swept. Glassware and windows become streaked and smudged, and washing them only serves to move the streaks around a bit. As the effect worsens, the patients in the hospice stabilize. They don't improve, but they don't die, and as the area becomes more resistant to change, these unfortunate people remain trapped an inch from the release of death. Cub, of course, has no idea what he is doing to them.

Solace Within the Earth

When the Golems go to the Wastes, they seek the dark, cold places of the world. Deep beneath the earth, they are happiest,

cut away from Heaven. When Tammuz was cast away from humanity, did he not descend into the Underworld, to dwell in the darkness, separated from Inanna and her people? This is the inclination that the Tammuz share.

As such, Golems naturally seek subterranean places for their retreats from humanity. Humans do not like the deep, dark places of the world. Mortals hold such places in dread — it is perhaps only proper that these are the places that nourish the Tammuz, which return their calmness and sanity to them. In these places, Golems return to their center, embracing their first moments of existence, where they came to consciousness in a place without light, without air, without sound. Israel Hands dwelled in a seaside cave for years, walking on sand and tasting salt for so long that he thinks of himself as *made* from sand and rock salt. The Unspoiled, conditioned from the time of his creation to distrust any place where mortals gather, rowed to a tiny island to go to the Wastes and hid in a hollow, letting the cool mud seep into his skin.

The Tammuz do not always seek out natural environments when they go to the Wastes. Caves are perfect for their purposes, of course, but such things are rare enough to make it unfeasible to truly delve into their depths for true sanctuary. As a result, many Tammuz seek out old ruins, preferably those with extensive underground construction. They go to ground here, relying on the fact that few come to these places once they are discovered, and fewer are willing to brave the potentially dangerous subterranean portions of the ruins.

Some Golems prefer to go to dwell among the dead, in mausoleums and ossuaries. It is not out of any morbid nature, though. Tammuz descended to the Underworld to await his return to humanity. These are simply the deep, cold places of the earth, set aside by the living for the dead, who rarely use them at all.

Finally, those who do not have these sorts of options simply go into the wilderness, traveling either high into the mountains or low into the valleys. There, they sit, unmoving, until a layer of dust and dirt covers them, blending in with their clay-hued skin, until they are like a statue — unmoving, unseeing and apart. In this state, the Tammuz are lost within their own heads, stealing hours of peace that are so rare in their normal lives. Here, they have the luxury of quiet introspection and thought, away from the demands of trying to fit in with humanity, avoiding Torment and Disquiet and the perils of the Pilgrimage.

Stories of Clay and Rage

Many stories are told of the Tammuz; some true, and some less so. Their resolve, their silence, their strange outlook on humanity, the Pilgrimage and the world draw the attention of others. The following are a handful of ideas for using the Tammuz in **Promethean** chronicles.

- **Dust Bowl:** Somewhere in the local agricultural area, the locals are worried. The soil is drying out, plants are

withering at the root and the animals are doing poorly. The locals can't quite figure out what is going on, but the Prometheans know. There is clearly a Tammuz in the area, and his Wasteland effect is going to cause a localized dust bowl effect when the windy season hits in the coming weeks. There's just one problem, though: he's not there of his own accord. Captured by a pack of Pandorans, perhaps led by an Ishtari *Sublimatus*, the Tammuz is clapped in irons and exists as a food source for the pack.

- **Affection's Bonds:** A Tammuz character encounters a young blind woman being mugged, and steps in to help. She is greatly appreciative, inviting him back for conversation, which may perhaps bloom into something more. What happens when the young woman begins to suffer from Disquiet, though, coming to rely on his help more and more, until he finds himself a virtual slave to her supposed helplessness? How does he break this cycle of dependence without giving in to Torment?

- **The Loyal Servant:** When the throng arrives in a new area, the call of Azoth leads them to another Promethean: a Tammuz. This Tammuz bids them be gone from the area, and the throng may soon learn why: he is locked in slavery to a sorcerer, a practitioner of Qabbalistic magics, who has bound the will of this Golem.

- **Jail Break:** In their travels, the throng-members pass by a prison bus on the side of the road. Prisoners are escaping into the countryside, and one or more may even attempt to carjack the throng. The throng finds that the bus was forced off the road by a Tammuz, who seems bound to free everyone: he himself just broke his bonds, and refuses to see anyone else in them. Unfortunately, he's already facilitated a jail break at the county jail, freed the prisoners aboard the prison bus and is now on his way to the state penitentiary. Will the throng try and stop this powerful Tammuz, deep in the throes of Torment?

Rumors: Tammuz

- "Did you know that at the entrance to Prague's old Jewish ghetto, they have erected a statue of Yossele, the Golem of the Maharal? Well, that's not a statue. That's one of us, child, one of us who'd gone to the Wastes and simply stood there, stone to the elements. The pedestal upon which he stands is inscribed with magic symbols that keep him there, trapped as a symbol of the very thing he actually is. When you go to the Wastes, make sure you go where they can't stumble across you."

- "You did not destroy the clay in which you were made? You poor fool. Did your maker not tell you? Clay helps to purify, to draw out impurities, and when it births one of us, it is rich in Flux. If one of our own comes near the stuff, it will rise up and consume the nearest living creature, turning it into a monster that feeds on us the way Pandorans do. And its ultimate goal is to consume you."

- "You ever seen a Golem get that glassy-eyed look. The one where they look like they're a million miles away, or

something? Did you know that all Tammuz do that? I'm not talking just time to time — they all do it at the same time. Nobody knows what it is they're hearing, or thinking or anything, but anyone who's seen a bunch of these stone-heads get together at the same time knows that there's something weird going on with them."



New Bestowment: Unbreakable Will

The Tammuz are made to seek freedom. Their paradox is that they're made as slaves whose very purpose in being is not to be slaves. Many have an unconquerable will to be free, fueled by the Divine Fire within them.

Cost: None or 1 Pyros

Action: Reflexive

Transmutation Cost: Composure x 7

The Promethean benefits from the 9 again rule on any Resolve-based rolls. In addition, if he fails a roll, he can spend one Pyros to re-roll. (These re-rolled dice do not gain the 9 again benefit, although 10s may be re-rolled as usual.) He also doubles his Resolve whenever it would serve as a Resistance Attribute against supernatural attacks. For example, another Promethean's Transmutation might require its user to subtract the target's Resolve from his dice pool. If the Tammuz' Resolve is normally 2, it is considered to be 4 when subtracting it from his opponent's dice pool.

The Promethean can raise Resolve up to the usual limit of five dots more easily than he can with other Attributes, being able to raise it by spending experience points equal to new dots x 4 (instead of new dots x 5). He cannot raise his resolve above five dots (unless his Azoth allows it).

Other Prometheans can buy this Bestowment as a Transmutation. A Promethean who buys this Bestowment experiences a rise in the melancholic humour within him, becoming quieter, more sullen and much more stubborn.

Athanors

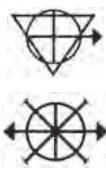
The Golems despise slavery, and yet are bound to it, at least in a symbolic sense. Their Athanors often take the forms of creatures known for being self-sufficient, indomitable or, conversely, for being good and loyal servants.

Crab - Persistence (Tammuz)

According to myth, the gods sent a crab to nip at the heels of Heracles as he fought the Hydra. The hero stamped on the creature, but the gods resurrected it and placed it in the heavens, where it can still be seen as the constellation of Cancer. The crab, then, is the emblem of one who hides and



who fights against the impossible, who tries to defeat the undefeatable.



A Promethean who creates the Athanor of the Crab tries never to give up in his chosen task, no matter how apparently insurmountable the odds against his success.

Trait Affinities: Stamina, Survival

Promethean Boon: The Promethean gains the following benefits:

- The character gets an extra dot of Health.
- The character's skin becomes leathery and hard.

When his disfigurements are visible, his skin takes on a reddish tinge. When they aren't, his skin just looks as if he's spent a lot of time in the sun. He gains one point of armor (with no penalty to Defense) because of the thickness of his skin.

Redeemed Boon: The Redeemed character retains the extra dot of Health he had as a Promethean.

Humbaba — Threat (Tammuz)

In Babylonian myth, the Humbaba guarded an old cedar forest where the gods lived. He was a giant lion-faced, man-bodied creature, full of bluff and bluster.



A Promethean who assumes the Humbaba Athanor wishes to not so much to be a guardian as a creature who appears powerful and dominant, swollen with god-given authority. Those of this Athanor are frightening to behold, but their bark is often worse than their bite.

Trait Affinities: Presence, Intimidation

Promethean Boon: By spending two Reagent points, the Promethean's Size Rating increases by 1 for the remainder of the scene. This bestows the usual +1 Health, but also confers a +2 to any attacks made with Brawl or Weaponry.

Redeemed Boon: While the character can no longer call on the supernatural power of a Promethean, even as a mortal he retains some of his supernatural menace. The 9 again rule applies to all Intimidation rolls made for this character, and anyone wishing to pick a fight with the character must pluck up the courage to do so. (This requires a contested action of the aggressors Resolve + Composure vs. the Redeemed Promethean's Presence + Intimidation; supernatural beings are immune to this effect.)

ULGAN



He sat on the ledge, looking down on the city that crawled beneath him. How far up he was — he'd never dreamed he'd live in a place where the sky was not the Eternal Blue Sky.

No wonder the people of the city were corrupt and evil: they'd built a place where they could hide from the sight of Heaven. But here he was, for the spirits whispered to him that

secrets might be found here.

He understood his quest. Too well. Though he recalled the horrible experience of being ripped apart, he'd truly awakened to existence in the arms of his creator, who told the Ulgan that he'd once been a young shaman. He did not remember this, but his creator assured him it was so — he'd dared much and tried to climb the great birch tree in the spirit world. The spirits had taken offense and ripped him apart, to get at the soul within.

He was without a soul, now and he knew his climb was even greater now. His creator — one like himself — had taught him to deal with the spirits, but to remember to fear them always. The spirits of this city were strange and wicked, hidden as they were from Heaven. But he'd connived and threatened what he needed out of them.

And now, the doors far below opened, and the men emerged with the crate. Within that crate was a relic of his people, an artifact of the religion he'd once adhered to before the spirits had eaten his soul. He could not understand and practice that religion truly until he had a soul again, but tonight he'd be one step closer to it.

With a smile, he planted his palms on the very edge of the ledge, hoisted himself up on his arms and kicked his legs out over the open space. With the sound of the small bells at his wrists tinkling, he plummeted.

Legacy of Torn Flesh

Rent flesh. This is where the Ulgan begins. This is also where the Ulgan is different. No other Promethean measures existence in this fashion. Every Ulgan can remember the horrible sensation of being ripped apart by the spirits, the screams of a shaman or sacrificed horse ringing in his ears while they are whole, and the horrible gibbering mockery of spirits that are sick of humanity and express their frustration as rending talons through unresisting meat.

Ancient Practices

Over the centuries, there have been many strange ecstatic practices that led to men and women being torn apart. The first of the Ulgan is said to have been from among the horse-tribes who worshipped the Sky Father and the Earth Mother, who visited desolation and ruin on those who huddled behind walls, in cities, hoping that the horse-lords would pass them by. But once the secret was out, once the spark of the sun had been plucked and



placed within the patchwork body of a Riven shaman, the Ulgan found others like them.

In Tibet, they found Buddhist monks who engaged in a meditation practice while wielding wide-edged chopping blades. Though the practice was supposed to simply involve the vivid imagining of cutting away the pieces of one's body, chopping away the Ego as part of the search for enlightenment, sometimes the demons came and carried away those pieces anyway.

In Greece, they found the Dionysian cults, where Maenad-priestesses drank deeply of the grape-god's gift and were possessed by the primal spirits of those Arcadian glades. They ran, swift and terrible, through the green hills, and tore apart any man they found.

In northern Europe, they found the kings of the tribes. Their health was the health of the land, and when the land was sickly, it was time for a new king. And so the king became John Barleycorn, ripped apart to feed the land and the people again, the old stag of the wood giving way to the new one.

The Ulgan found that they did not need religious or spiritual overtones to do what they did — the savagery of the spirits was all that was necessary. They were *bearsark* Vikings driven mad by their war-spirits, gifting their enemies with the blood eagle. They were heretics subjected to the rack and torn apart rather than accept the religion of their invaders, or old women accused of being witches. They were white men dismembered by being tied to four horses in the Old West, executed for getting in the Army's way while dealing with the "native problem."

All that was necessary to create another Ulgan was that the body be that of a person with some kind of spiritual strength or connection to Twilight, and that it be ripped apart by spirits. In ancient days, it was simple enough to coerce spirits into possessing those rending the body — suddenly, Vikings were possessed by raging bear-spirits, or witch-hunters ridden by spirits of lust and greed.

Then, the body was gathered up by the Ulgan and taken to some place under the sky. In that place, the Ulgan sang songs he remembered from his own creation, and disgorged the stuff of spirits, to bind the body back together. Where the soul once sat, ectoplasm settled and, ignited by a spark from the creator's own Azoth, burst into the Divine Flame.

The Modern Ulgan

In these days, it is harder to find situations in which a body is rent and dismembered, and harder still to find spirits willing or able to possess those performing such an act. Thus, rather than being stymied by modern difficulties, the Ulgan simply turn to even more ancient practices.

The body must still be that of one who had an affinity for spirits: the descendent of shamans, someone with red hair and the Second Sight, one born with the signs of witch-folk or someone who was particularly devout. Those who have experienced interaction with spirits are also likely candidates. Possession victims, someone who has been haunted or sim-

ply wandered too far into the wilderness one full moon and seen strange things that the rest of the world tells him could not possibly have happened. Likewise, the wolf-blooded, whose ancestors and perhaps even children are werewolves, bear the mark of the moon on their souls. Savagery is their legacy, and they are often easy to reach for spirits angry at the depredations of the mighty wolf-men.

These are the candidates. The Riven one takes the body and breathes a miasma of ectoplasm over it, infusing the flesh with the stuff of spirits. As the ectoplasm dissolves, it takes the body into Twilight with it. There, the work of the shaman becomes hard, for now spirits must be called up to rend the body. He screams, or he sacrifices a golden-haired dog or riding horse, and the spirits come in response to their shrill dying cries.

The spirits know what this is. It is part of their intrinsic nature to understand this rite, for it is as old as they are. They rip apart the body, filthy matter left in the world of spirit. They hate its presence there, and they know that if they rend it, the shaman will snatch it back through. It is an old chiminage.

Once the body has been rent and the spirits have lost their interest in it any longer, the Riven shaman reaches out and takes up the pieces, returning them to the material world. There, he puts them back together, a patchwork jigsaw puzzle of a human. The Riven breathes ectoplasm over the pieces once more, but it does not dissolve the body again — the body has already been to the world of spirit, and brought some of that back.

The ectoplasm binds the body with bonds of spirit into a whole thing again, a vessel. The ectoplasm gathers in the hole where the soul is supposed to be, and the Azoth is kindled, birthing a new Ulgan, who awakens screaming, for he remembers — somehow — being torn apart.

Before he was a Promethean, he was an amateur occultist, performing a ritual to gain spiritual power. An Ulgan disrupted that ritual, and the spirits tore the man apart. The first thing he remembers is darkness, a darkness so pervasive and complete that it had substance and will. *Black*, was his first thought upon awakening as a new Promethean, and so he took his name — Marty Black.

It was the spirits of the city, though, that tore Amadeo to pieces. His creator slaughtered a yellow-haired dog in a dingy Paris flat, and the spirits that came out of the walls looked like rats, roaches and other vermin. They chewed Amadeo into pieces and left his head on the table, staring out at the river.

Apprenticeship

To many Prometheans, the creation of progeny is an act worthy of guilt. They see themselves as damning another to a horrible fate, a lifetime of anguish and solitude. The Ulgan are different in this: to the Ulgan, to create a new Promethean is to potentially create an entirely new *soul*.

The soul has already fled the body that an Ulgan uses to create his progeny, sent already to its reward or fate, to the



cycle of reincarnation, to Heaven or Hell. The body is but meat. An empty vessel. But vessels that have been emptied of their contents may be filled anew, the Ulgan understands.

This is what a Riven shaman does when he creates progeny. He reaches into the stuff of the spirit worlds and sets it alight with Divine Fire, and sets that new shaman on the Pilgrimage to creating a whole new soul. What better purpose in all of the world can one fulfill? What better gift can one give to this soulless world, in this age of despair, than a brand new soul, crafted of hard work, sacrifice and dedication?

The vision of the Ulgan is not bound up in earthly humours — his eyes see beyond the world of flesh. The Riven understands that, at the end of the Long Trek, when he at last becomes mortal, his soul will be forever touched by the passage of the spirit world, and he will have accomplished what shamans desire to do: to bridge the world of men and the world of spirits, and make a better place, perhaps, for both.

This means that most Ulgan take their roles as creators and mentors very seriously. Those Ulgan who do create progeny generally try to stick with them and teach them what the creators have to offer. The Riven are shamans, and they understand the danger of leaving someone sensitive to the world of spirits to try and find her own way. It is too easy for mischievous or malicious spirits to try and take advantage of those who walk between both worlds.

In general, it is tradition among the Ulgan to look upon the period of training after the creation of a progeny as an apprenticeship, similar in tone to that of any mystic teaching. The master poses riddles and tasks for his apprentice, and teaches as much through success as through failure. He seeks to instill in his apprentice a burning desire to fulfill his destiny, even though that means finding out what that destiny is first.

And, as with all apprenticeships, there comes a time when the training is over. Those Ulgan with the inclination to do so often perform a ritual of some sort, acknowledging the accomplishments of the young Riven and then the two part ways.

Of course, this is the ideal. Rarely do things work out in such a perfect, Carlos Castaneda-esque fashion. The fact is, Ulgan are individuals, and there is no telling what the personality of the progeny will be like. The body of a devoted spiritualist, when subjected to the creation process, resulted in a violent cynic calling herself Lash. Lash had no use for spirits other than what they can be bullied into doing for her, and devoted herself to learning their Bans to push them into service. When last her mentor saw her, she was rapidly becoming surrounded by ephemeral beings more powerful than her, all of whom wanted this young Riven to perform favors for her but intelligent enough to let her think she was in charge.

Likewise, a would-be wise mentor may be too infatuated with his own supposed insights, and frustrated when his

new progeny proves more insightful, or simply resistant to his mumbo-jumbo. The mentor may fall victim to Disquiet-inspired violence, angry spirits or simply boredom and dissatisfaction with his student.

But somehow, even despite these “deficiencies,” the Ulgan progeny ends up being what he was meant to be. He walks between the world. He sees spirits, aids them, binds them, bargains with them and helps bring their world a little closer to this one, whether he does so using the wise teachings of his master, or bumbles his way through it.

It is simply the way of things.

The World of Men

The terror in men is not strange to the Ulgan. He knows that there is much to be terrified of, in this world and beyond. He understands the horror that mortals feel for him, because he is a magnet for those horrors that come from beyond. Perhaps he does intend only the best for them. His intentions do not matter — it is not intention that makes a monster, but nature.

The nature of the Ulgan is to draw spirits, demons and little gods to him, to erode the veil between the worlds, to permit the unspoken horrors that dwell in the space behind the world to come through. *Of course* humankind fears him — he is fearsome.

Shamans

But this isn't new or strange. The tribe has always feared its shaman. He has never been a beloved priest, kissing babies and smiling reassurances to his tribe. He is terrifying, dealing with spirits and strange things that mortals want no truck with, yet he seeks them out eagerly. His interaction with them changes him, and he is odd in speech, action and appearance.

People understand this instinctively. He is given a place to live away from the places where people gather and food to eat, so that he does not need to come down and try to live and work among those who wish to think of the world as normal and predictable. The shaman's tent of the past is often the monastery or asylum of the present. As society becomes better at convincing itself that only the material world exists, society also becomes better at relegating the role of the shaman to one to be shut away, fettered if possible, forgotten when feasible. The shaman, therefore, must sometimes remind people of the importance of the spirit world, even in a roundabout way. Marty Black works as an environmental violations inspector. He travels, never seeing his superiors (just as well, for Disquiet would probably cost him his job, otherwise) and finding the violence that businesses commit against the natural world as they cut corners. Of course the businessmen hate him — they hate all such inspectors, but where Marty is concerned, Disquiet makes the hatred worse.

This is never more obvious than when Disquiet sets in. Though broad generalizations can be made about the nature



of a Riven's Disquiet, each is different. The things that are laid bare reflect the nature of the Ulgan himself.

The martial shaman begins to draw spirits of war and conflict, and the mortals around her begin seeing scenes of past violence re-enacted around them. They become edgy and upset, they hold grudges and they soon are forced to acknowledge the dog-eat-dog world in which they live in the only way they know how: through violence. And though she is clearly a foe to be reckoned with, they see her for what she is — the biggest threat.

The Ulgan who tries to heal the places of the world unfortunately begins to show those wounds to those around him. He cannot help it — so intense is his focus and dedication that the spirits of corruption despise him and take it out on those around him. Filth and pain seems to be ever-present to those affected by the Ulgan's Disquiet, and his own attempts to ease their suffering only make them angrier. After all, instinctively, they know it's his fault.

A Masterpiece Examined

To the Ulgan, humanity is a source of fascination. The Great Work is like trying to cut a diamond when you've never seen a diamond before, and are trying to cut the stone while your hands and the stone are deep in a bag. The process is fumbling, the sheerest guess work.

The Ulgans, for all their understanding of spirits, have never seen the actual human soul. Some Prometheans believe the Ulgans to perhaps have some sort of wisdom when it comes to the Great Work, but the honest Ulgan must admit that he is as in the dark as his brethren. Just as any of the Created, Ulgans cannot see souls in the humans around them — Ulgans can only see the results of having a soul.

To the shaman who can practically see the soul of everything in the world — trees, places, things — the inability to see the soul that he himself wishes most to interact with can be frustrating. But, shamans seek to glean truths about the nature of the human soul through their interaction with spirits. In understanding spirits, shamans understand the soul — or so they hope.

For instance, it is well-known that when the physicality of a thing is destroyed, the spirit of the thing flees. Likewise, when a person is damaged significantly, the soul flees. The reverse is true as well: when the spirit of a thing is destroyed, it is only a matter of time before its physical reflection begins to wither and die. Humans deprived of their souls (generally by foul sorcery) cease to be the people they once were, barely capable of surviving and, in many cases, soon dying. Lash, for all her contempt for and manipulation of spirits, never tries to take advantage of ghosts or living people. Spirits, she feels, are simple creatures, but humans are complex, constructed of more than essence and drive. She feels imperfect next to them, and that is perhaps why she seeks to enslave spirits.

From observations of spirits and correlating these things with observations of humanity, the Ulgan may come to un-

derstand more of the nature of the human soul — thus giving them a glimpse of the diamond that they seek to craft.

The World of Spirits

The humour of the Ulgan is strange. Beyond the scheme of terrestrial, material humours, the Ulgan are infused with the stuff of the ether, with the essence of the spirit world. As is usually the way with shamans, Ulgans walk apart from the concerns (thus, the humours) of the material world. Only the stuff of spirits impels them.

The Ectoplasmic Humour

The ectoplasmic humour is aligned with the element of spirit. The quintessential merging of the terrestrial elements, this fifth element is understood by occultists to be “transcended matter” — the physical stuff of the world when it goes beyond physicality.

The spiritual element is intuition and instinct. This element is without the flawed conflict and polarity of terrestrial elements: this humour causes purest action without thought, and instinct unstained by the confusion of reason.

Normally, only spirits themselves are composed of this humour, and it shows. Ghosts are purest emotion, acting in accordance with the terrible passions that drive them, transcending hesitation and morality. Likewise, spirits are absolutely pure in purpose: a hate-spirit seeks to foster hate, and hate only, while a spirit of deer has no concern other than deer, and does not hesitate to consider the “bigger picture.”

Unfortunately, incarnate beings were never meant to be infused with ectoplasmic humour. Ulgan understand that it is the nature of incarnate beings to possess will and choice, rather than have their natures driven by the instinct of absolute intuitive purpose. Ulgan also understand that this is why their Torment manifests as it does. In many ways, they are driven by purest purpose at these times — but it is a terrifying and inhuman purpose. Each Ulgan possesses what some of them call a totem, or fetch. This is some kind of spirit that is most closely associated with the Ulgan's nature.

A particularly martial Ulgan may possess a war-spirit fetch, which encourages him to seek out places of imminent violence and act as the spark to ignite such conflict powder kegs. Alternately, in the absence of that kind of opportunity, the Ulgan might find himself lurking near places where tremendous violence has occurred.

Likewise, an Ulgan with an interest in wetlands will seek out the nearest swampy area and go there, as quickly as possible. This may manifest strangely, though — marshes are few and far in between in some places. In such circumstances, the Ulgan might haunt a display of wetlands ecology at a local museum, try to infiltrate a swamp animals display at



the zoo (potentially even leaping into the alligator pit) or demonstrate similar strange behavior.

Spirits do not simply wish to accomplish goals in accordance to their nature. They desire to be surrounded by those things appropriate to their purpose in existence, and Ulgan in the throes of Torment are no different. The Storyteller and player should take the time to determine precisely what the nature of the Ulgan's fetch is as part of character creation.

The Walkers-Between

Ulgan are, at their core, shamans. Birthed by shamanic magic and inseparably part of the spirit world, it is in the Ulgan's nature to look in both worlds for the answers to problems. In this regard, Ulgan serve in the same capacity that shamans and medicine men have in other cultures all over the world.

They understand the subtle interplay between the world of humans and the world of spirits, capable of seeing

the blind spots that the denizens of both so often possess. Humans look to the realm of spirits only when something spurs them to do so in this era. Even most modern manifestations of religion and spirituality do not look to the world of immanent spirits: religion seeks the numinous things on a transcendent level. Generally speaking, only when a person sees evidence of some kind of spiritual activity will the thought of looking in that domain ever occur to her — if even then.

Likewise, spirits maintain very myopic views of the world as well. Everything in a spirit's surroundings is viewed through the lens of its conceptual attributes: spirits of hate try and clumsily fit even acts of charity into their spiteful world-view, and the concept of a desert is utterly foreign to a spirit of the forests.

Ulgan, then, are among the few in the world in a position to take all of these things into account. They understand that there are some things in the physical world that have their origins in the spirit realm. Moreover, they are capable of understanding the nuanced variety inherent in material and spiritual existence.

Of course, this tends to make Ulgan strangers in all places. Their views are rarely welcome, unless others have run out of options and are willing to consider *anything*. Ulgan speak of the spirits of strange places and things, and — present as they are in both material and spiritual contexts — struggle to interact with both things. They walk around obstacles that are not there, refuse to enter an abandoned building without performing the small ritual that they see others on the spirit plane performing and routinely address those that cannot be seen with mundane senses.

Certainly, Ulgan are aware of how strange they seem to others. Paying attention to both worlds at the same time is



tremendously taxing. If Amadeo suddenly “spaces out,” staring off into the distance while he watches the city-light-spirits rise in a dance rebirth that is played out every dusk when the street lights come on, well, who can blame him?

The Humour and the Wasteland Effect

There is a danger in walking between the worlds, however. Sometimes the ripples that one of the Riven makes in one world can be felt in the other, and by his very presence, the worlds are drawn closer together.

Ectoplasm is not, strictly speaking, a substance in the spiritual plane. Rather, ectoplasm is the stuff that the spiritual essence of the otherworld becomes when entering the manifest world. Mediums have dealt in ectoplasm for years, because it is capable of covering the things of the spirit world, clinging to it and making it visible to human eyes the way smoke shows the presence of sunbeams.

Clearly, then, this humour is the means by which the spiritual world and the physical world interact, on however minute a level. Ulgan teach their progeny that they are constantly trailing minute amounts of ectoplasm into their surroundings. Though this has no real discernable effect in the short term, eventually, the ectoplasm begins to affect the world around the Riven, creating the Ulgan’s Wasteland effect.

Soon, the difference between “physical world” and “spiritual world” begins to blur. For quick moments, things in Twilight might appear, glanced out of the corner of the eye. In the meantime, spirits in Twilight begin to see the world much more clearly, with tremendous definition. It seems more real, and they are in turn intrigued.

Spirits understand the world only in terms of their concepts. Normally, spirits only see the manifest world clearly and distinctly when it has to do with their nature: a highway is indistinct, a streak of a blur, to a spirit of the hills, but to the travel-spirit that walks the highway, it is the only genuine thing in its sight. Therefore, in areas affected by the Ulgan Wasteland effect, things that the spirits have literally never seen or experienced before suddenly come into crystal clarity. For these spirits, it is as though they were suddenly propelled to the level of spirits whose domains make up larger concepts — suddenly an oak-spirit can see what the spirit of the city experiences. Spirits being what they are, however, they do not understand that they are suddenly seeing things beyond their purview. Instead, they believe that many thousands of things that were once beyond their purview are now suddenly in it.

Therefore, they struggle to make sense of this new sight. They speak to the people they see clearly and the cars and the mailboxes in the way they once whispered to their hedges, streams or telephone lines. And because the two worlds are much closer, those in that area can hear the whispers of the spirits.

But this isn’t simply a time of sudden joy for spirits. Many of them understand, on some instinctive level, that the separation between their world and the physical world is being

worn away. This is a source of terror for spirits that dwell in Twilight, for they know that there is an ancient punishment set in store for spirits that dabble in the affairs of mortals and the physical world. Wiser spirits understand the source of this corrosion, and are willing to cause those whose ears they whisper in to work against the Ulgan, and quickly.

For there is no forgiveness in the spirit realms when the wardens come, baying at the full moon, bringing only judgment. Rarely do they ask questions, and they are all too willing to assume that those spirits that are benefiting from the corrosion are its source.

Ulgans understand the effect that their humour has on the world around them, and they are careful to keep an eye out for those who begin seeing strange things. Marty Black’s creator taught him many useful tricks for existing as a Promethean, but perhaps the most important was: “When you begin to seem normal in your ability to see the spirits, it is time to go.”

Seeking Visions

When the Ulgan go to the Wastes, they are seeking peace. The constant conflict between the physical world and the spiritual world, the struggle to accomplish their Great Work — all of these things are exhausting. If theirs is a shamanic existence, sometimes they must flee it for a while.

As a result, an Ulgan who goes to the Wastes travels far from humanity, into the depths of the truly wild places. Often, drawing on old shamanic traditions, they pack with them some manner of tent or other portable shelter. In these places, the Ulgan seeks out a locus, a place of power where the physical world and the spiritual world are already close together.

After setting up shelters, many Ulgan perform a ritual of some sort. Often, this looks like some sort of daredevil feat of bravery, or a tremendous drug trip. But whether they begin their time of asceticism by conquering the drop over 300 feet of waterfall, or by ingesting enough ayahuasca to kill a human, this time becomes not just one of retreat, but of questing for visions of their path.

Generally speaking, Ulgan return from these retreats inspired and with a better understanding of how to continue on the Pilgrimage. A great number of Ulgan who return from going to the Wastes report having spoken with a swarthy-skinned, dark haired warrior with a broad, flat nose and eyes the color of the Eternal Blue Sky. He offers wisdom, challenge or sometimes simply company and then is gone, but the Riven is always the richer for the vision.

The Tatter-Flesh Mystics

Many of the stories involving the Ulgan also involve Twilight in some fashion. But more than this, the Ulgan are strange and otherworldly, to both spirits and humans. Walkers between the worlds, they see nuances few can — and most resent or fear their understanding.



- **The Cuthburg Killer:** The throng's attention is drawn to what the police are calling a possible serial killer. He seems to be targeting health care workers, and killing them in gruesome ritualistic fashions, including disembowelment and beheading. When a member of the throng spots a nurse snatched up, they may also discover the truth: the serial killer is an Ulgan, and he is targeting those who have been possessed by strange spirits, which are the spawn of a more powerful entity that sits in the bowels of the local university hospital. Will the throng help him destroy it, thus ending the need to kill the vessels? Or is he simply insane, seeing spirits where there are none, and giving in to his murder-spirit Torment?

- **Sight from Beyond:** An Ulgan character receives a visit from the spirits of a nearby major landmark. Some change in the Twilight there foretells a tremendous upheaval; perhaps in the Twilight, a mountain has begun to spew phantasmal magma, presaging an eruption, or great winds have begun to howl through the trees of a great glade, predicting the coming of a terrible storm. Worse, though, is that with these changes have come invader spirits — spirits of magma and fire with the eruption's warning, or terrible thunderbirds and cyclone spirits in the forest. What does the Ulgan choose to do with this knowledge, and do others believe him?

- **The Seeker Comes:** An Ulgan comes to the throng, asking for their aid. He possesses a small jar, decorated in simple gewgaws glued to its surface, its lid wax-sealed shut and tied with a small bit of hemp cord. He claims this is a piece of magic, which contains a human soul. He believes that it can help Prometheans understand the human soul, but they must retain the jar for long enough to study it, as it was stolen from a mortal Necromancer of some sort, and the magician is furiously attempting to recover it.

- **Stolen Body:** An Ulgan of the throng's acquaintance goes to the Wastes for a short while (a month or two), and then returns changed. At first the characters might just think he changed Refinements, but it becomes clear that not only have his goals and priorities shifted (become much more specific and narrow, rather than any thought of attaining Mortality), but he barely knows the throng at all. In fact, he managed to displace his own Azoth during his time in the Wastes, and a powerful spirit inhabited his flesh. Can the characters brave the Wasteland he created and retrieve his soul? Can they find a way to force or coax the invading spirit out long enough to replace it?

Rumors: Ulgan

- “Watch out for those Ulgans. Oh, they're nice enough — if a little creepy — on their own, but one thing you have to understand about them is that the Ulgan Pilgrimage isn't our Pilgrimage. Our Great Work is in the hopes of one day having souls. The Riven want to be *become* spirits, not just see them. They want to throw aside their bodies and become the sorts of demons and

weird fucking things they babble about all the time. It's why they know so much about them. One of those spirits offers to give them a little hint as to how that's done, and they'll turn on you, if that's what the spirit wants. And, in my experience . . . it usually does.”

- “Watch yourself, whelp. I've seen these monsters before. More than the sons of Father Wolf and spirits haunt the *Hisil*, you know. Oh, he's not a mortal magician. He's wrong, somehow, something torn apart by spirits and come back to life. They're never up to any good — poison the world around them, pulling Twilight and the physical world together. You let them stay in one area for too long, they'll rip apart the Gauntlet there, and wreak all sorts of hell. You see one of those things, you kill it, and you kill it fast.”

- “You should count yourself among the fortunate ones. Some of our Lineage are made through foul rites. Rites that involve animal sacrifice. It is said that those among us who are born from this chiminage find that they have a single, final task in common, just before they embrace Elpis: human sacrifice. Beware of those made by this method.”

New Bestowment: Orphean Song

Some Ulgans claim that their Progenitor was not some *kara kam* from Siberia, but the Thracian bard Orpheus. Orpheus' voice was sweet enough to charm the guardians of Hell themselves to sleep.

Of the handful of Prometheans who identify themselves as “Orpheans” rather than as Ulgans, one or two are created with that same sweet voice, which charms demons, spirits and the dead to peaceful slumber.

Cost: 1 Pyros

Action: Instant and contested

Transmutation Cost: Presence x 7

The Ulgan knows a strange, ancient song. When he sings it, it charms ghosts and spirits to sleep. The player spends one Pyros and rolls Presence + Azoth, contested by the spirit or ghost's Resistance. If he succeeds, the spirit or ghost falls into a deep sleep for 24 hours. This works on spirits and ghosts in Twilight, as well as those that have Materialized or possessed a human, animal or object.

Spirits and ghosts in Twilight remain where they are, sleeping peacefully. Materialized spirits dissolve back into Twilight and spend the next 24 hours sleeping there. Spirits or ghosts possessing humans or animals or embodied in objects don't leave their hosts, but they do relinquish control over their hosts until they wake up, meaning that the possessed regain control of their faculties for the next day.

Although other Prometheans aren't made to know how to sing the Orphean song and infuse it with Pyros,

they can learn this Bestowment as a Transmutation. Each Lineage sings the song in its own way. A Frankenstein sings with a hoarse, slightly off-tune voice. A Galateid sings it with technical beauty, but without the force of an Orphean. An Osiran sings his own song, with added phrases and a more complex melody. A Tammuz, on the other hand, sings it simply and directly.

Athanors

Ulgan Athanors are largely geared toward understanding the spirit world or taking on the best aspects of a chosen “totem.” Of all of the Lineages, Ulgans are probably the most likely to create new Athanors without benefit of a tutor.

Dragon – Knowledge (Ulgan)



While the Nepri have their own draconic Athanor (see p. 263 of **Promethean: The Created**), there are dragon myths from all over the world, and not all of them presented the great serpents as fire-breathing monsters. The Ulgan who takes on this Athanor sees dragons as the guardians of knowledge, among the wisest creatures of the spirit worlds. The Athanor enables the Riven to draw upon this knowledge.

Trait Affinities: Intelligence, Manipulation

Promethean Boon: The Promethean has managed to gain the trust and companionship of a spirit of knowledge, in the form of a small dragon. By attaching itself to the Promethean, and basking in the glow of the Divine Fire, the spirit is able to remain in Twilight without requiring an actual host body or having to spend Essence.

Of course, dragons are lazy and apt to horde both knowledge and wealth. If the Promethean has no Reagent, the spirit slumbers, and is impossible to awaken until the Promethean has Reagent again. When the dragon is awake, the Promethean may offer it a coin (any kind) in return for information about a ghost or spirit. The dragon can always tell the Promethean what kind of spirit he is dealing with, and the dragons whispered instructions provide +2 dice bonus to any Social actions dealing with that ghost or spirit. If the Promethean pays the dragon a point of Reagent, the dragon tells the Promethean not only the spirit’s name, but its Ban and the answer to one question regarding the spirit’s capabilities or desires.

Redeemed Boon: The dragon departs when the Promethean completes his Pilgrimage, but has grown fond of the Promethean during their time together. When the Promethean becomes human, the dragon marks the new soul, making the human body immune to being possessed by spirits or ghosts.

La Llorona – Sorrow (Ulgan)



La Llorona, or the Crying Woman, is a ghost who weeps for the loss of her children (whom she murdered, according to some legends). Her wailing disturbs even the most resolute, and it cuts to the marrow with its howling grief.

Prometheans who take this Athanor are intimately tied to the nature of sadness. They understand loss, and feel a tremendous burden which they long to alleviate with the achievement of the Great Work. They can also take the deep pit of grief within, and use it to their advantage.

Trait Affinities: Manipulation, Resolve

Promethean Boon: The aforementioned “deep pit of grief” can act as a hungry sucking mouth for those the Promethean wishes to harm. By succeeding on a “touch attack” (see “Touching an Opponent,” p. 157 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) and whispering some kind of curse or insult, the Riven can drain away the will of a target. The Promethean’s player reflexively rolls Manipulation + Intimidation. Successes on this roll consume the target’s Willpower, conferring it to the Promethean. The target, as a result, feels depressed and confused, dizzied by despair. The Promethean can only do this once per chapter against a given target.

Redeemed Boon: By looking into another human’s eyes, the character may curse that person with the Depression derangement (mild), which lasts until that person sleeps a full eight hours. If that target already possesses the mild version, it is upgraded to Melancholia (severe). See p. 97 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

New Traits

The rest of this chapter is devoted mostly to new Merits. These Merits are available to any Promethean character, provided she has the prerequisites (and Storyteller approval, of course). These prerequisites may make purchasing these Merits easier on characters of a particular Lineage, but that doesn’t mean, for instance, that a Golem who learns the Revivification Bestowment couldn’t then determine how to create a Shabti. This kind of progression should make sense for the character in question, not just be an excuse to pick up all the best toys.

Before we get to Merits, however, one final Bestowment is presented. This Bestowment isn’t named as being the province of any of the Lineages, because its history and role in the chronicle is yours to decide. The central plot hook of the story presented in Chapter Four, a Promethean called Lighthouse, knows a version of this Bestowment, but if your Storyteller wishes to use the “pure” version in your chronicles,

she should simply decide which Lineage (if any) might favor it and how it might come to your throng's attention.

New Bestowment: The Scrutiny

Some Prometheans are driven to know. They collect lore, knowledge and what passes for wisdom among the half-living. Some are possessed of keen insight, a preternatural ability to gaze into the darkness and withdraw truth from the shadows. A few have the rare ability to gaze into the very Azoth of another Promethean and see the *Quinta Essentia* of what guides them unseen. In doing so, they open themselves, as well, barring their Azoth for one other to see.

Cost: 2 Pyros

Action: Instant

Transmutation Cost: Intelligence x 7

The character can open himself up to another Promethean so that Azoth is bared to Azoth. Azoth is powerful. It draws together, seeks itself out, and the Promethean can open up his perceptions along the lines of shared power. This allows him to glimpse one milestone from another Promethean, and it also allows that target to glimpse one of the character's own milestones.

The player rolls Intelligence + Azoth versus the target's Resolve + Azoth. Resistance is automatic and cannot be stifled. If the scrutinized Created belongs to the same Branded throng as the Bestowment user, the user gets a +2 to his roll. If either Promethean during the exchange practices the Refinement of Flux, the user's roll suffers -1 die. And, if either Promethean has entered Torment during the last month, the user's roll suffers a -1 penalty.

If the Bestowment's user wins the contest, the Scrutiny is considered successful. The Storyteller chooses a milestone for each Promethean involved in the Scrutiny. The Storyteller then writes down two words, ideally a verb-noun phrase, regarding these milestones. Each two-word phrase should be meaningful and carry weight, and not be so ambiguous or obvious that it provides no help at all. It is a distillation of the two Prometheans' milestones and should reflect that. (Note that each Promethean likely possesses the milestones to finish the Great Work, create a new Promethean and become mortal. Providing the two-word phrase, "Become human" or "Create child" is a waste of the power.) The Storyteller can use this event as an opportunity to hint toward a perhaps more inscrutable milestone, or one that the examined characters seem to be circumnavigating without actually discovering.

For example, if a milestone is "Save creator from his own self-destruction," the two-word phrase might simply be, "Save Creator." If the milestone is, "Find a mortal and fall in love with her," then success on the Scrutiny may provide the short answer: "Find Love."

An exceptional success on the user's roll gains the Prometheans involved one Vitriol apiece. A dramatic failure on the part of this character causes one point of aggravated damage to both characters as Azoth flares and sears their flesh from the inside.

Note that this only works between two Prometheans at any given time, and the Scrutiny must be initiated by the possessor of the Bestowment. During the Scrutiny, which takes three turns, the two characters seem lost in one another. If interrupted during these three turns, the Scrutiny fails.

The character can only bond successfully in this way once with a given Promethean. Also, this Bestowment can only be used once per game session (meaning that the user can't just flit from character to character, writing down milestones — it probably takes at least a full story to gain a hint of a milestone from every member of a throng).

Creativity is Awesome

It's time to show, not tell. If you're the one with the character performing the Scrutiny, don't hesitate to get creative. The Storyteller's job is to hand you two words. Your job is to make those two words mean something.

Yes, you can just read off the two words and be done with it, but that's not all that interesting, is it? Instead, describe the experience. As the player, you're creating the story as much as (if not more than) the Storyteller. So, act like it. Describe the Azoth with authority. If the two words are "find love," maybe your character explains to the examined character that "Your Azoth shimmers with a red metal hue, like sun-burnished brass or bronze. I see darkness, oily and thick around the edges, but in the center I see a yearning to find something deeper, something meant only for the living." Then, if you want, you can follow it up with, "I think you must find someone to love," or whatever interpretation your character so decides.

And, of course, you can misinterpret the words on purpose. Or lie. Or simply refuse to give an answer at all. Conflict can come from the Scrutiny, not just revelation. A milestone needn't produce only hope and promise; fear and loathing may lurk within, as well. The motive for lying or misrepresenting a milestone can vary. Maybe your character sees that a fellow Promethean must die and be resurrected as part of her Pilgrimage, and you don't have the heart to tell her. Maybe your character feels jealous that the subject of the Scrutiny has an easy or benign milestone while she is stuck with destroying her creator (or something equally unpleasant).

New Merits

Any Promethean can take any of the Merits presented here, as long as the character fulfills any necessary prerequi-

sites, and the Promethean has a compelling and interesting in-character reason for having the Merit.

For example, it's quite possible for a Galateid to take the Weatherproof Merit . . . but *why* does he have it? Perhaps his creator brought him to life in the open, in an inhospitable place. Perhaps he awakened to life alone in the middle of the desert, digging himself out of the sand with his bare hands. Perhaps he was literally put on ice shortly after his creation, spending 100 years frozen in a block of ice before being freed by the Prometheans of his throng.

Acid Stomach (•)

Effect: A Promethean's "Superlative Constitution" already guarantees that she can eat nearly any kind of organic matter, from filet mignon to a car-crushed raccoon. With this Merit, the Promethean can eat most *inorganic* matter, too. Whether the "food" is a roll of quarters, a handful of sand or a broken bottle, if the Promethean can get it into his mouth and down his throat, then it counts as food.

Drawback: This Merit doesn't give any bonuses to chewing. The object has to be small enough to fit in her mouth and for peristalsis to carry the item down her throat. The Storyteller may also deem that an object's composition does damage to the mouth and throat. Glass shards or jagged metal, for instance, could hurt the Promethean. Still, this Merit grants some resistance to this punishment; any damage sustained from eating non-organic material is limited to one point of bashing damage.

Azothic Object (• to •••••)

Effect: The generative act would, upon initial examination, have one effect: the flare of Azoth within a once-dead body. This moment, in which a Promethean awakens "on the slab," can have residual effect upon the monster's immediate surroundings, too. That initial blaze of Radiance within can lash out, like a sun-flare or an arc of electricity, and imbue an object in the room with unique properties. A crude and rusted straight-razor may suddenly gleam with a newly-sharpened edge. A brittle antique bottle that once held a draught of bitter vinegar and antimony may suddenly become nearly unbreakable. A Stradivarius violin may call to the Promethean, and when he wields it, it sings and keens with eerie beauty.

This object, whatever it may be, is attuned to the Promethean. Equipment bonuses, if any, apply only to the character; a flicker of his Azoth waits within that item. If another tries to use it, be that person Promethean or mortal, the object's bonus not only does not apply, but the user suffers a -2 penalty.

The Merit's cost depends on the Azothic Object's unique properties:

Property	Merit Cost
Increased Durability	1 dot per +2 Durability
Increased Structure	1 dot per +2 Structure
Increased equipment bonus	1 dot per +1 die modifier*
? again	5 dots

*The Azothic Object's equipment bonus cannot be more than double the item's normal equipment bonus.

Example: *Vox Vulgus'* creator broke into the sewers beneath Philadelphia to give her perfect body life. When the spark of Azoth blazed within, the Divine Flare lashed out and touched the creator's set of lock picks. At character creation, *Vox's* player gives her four dots in this Merit. The lock picks would normally add +2 dice to appropriate Larceny rolls, but with the flare of Azoth, the picks improve dramatically. The player spends two of the four points on the equipment bonus, granting the lock picks an additional +2 bonus (for a total of a +4 equipment bonus). She also spends two dots on Durability, granting the picks +4 Durability, thus making them inordinately resilient to damage.

Drawback: The Azothic Object is supernaturally tied to the Promethean character who takes this Merit. If the character loses the object, her player must make a Resolve + Composure roll every time she sleeps. Failure on that roll means she suffers nightmares about the object, and for 12 hours upon waking, suffers a -1 penalty on all rolls. (A dramatic failure incurs a -2 penalty.) This ends once the object is found. If the object is ever *destroyed*, the character's Azoth flares up within her and burns her from the inside. At the moment the object is destroyed, the character suffers lethal damage equal to the dots spent originally in this Merit.

Companion (••• or •••••)

Prerequisite: Ephemeral Flesh Bestowment

Effect: Whether he wants it or not, the Promethean has a bond with a spirit that aids him and supports him. The ectoplasmic humour within the Promethean attracts the spirit. Like calls to like. The kind of spirit that would follow something as grotesque as a Promethean is not always the kind of spirit that a Promethean would have following him. Many are revolting or demonic in appearance and behavior, a small imp that does its master's bidding, but cannot be commanded to leave. At rest, it sits invisibly on its master's shoulder and whispers obscenities, lies and unpleasant truths into his ear.

The companion being is either in Twilight, invisible and immaterial, or it is embodied. A companion in Twilight has no body. An embodied companion possesses the body of an animal or bird in the material world. The spirit doesn't suffer from Disquiet, even in the form of an animal or bird.

It costs three dots to buy a Twilight spirit as a companion. A Twilight spirit can manifest like a ghost (see "Manifestations," the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 210), but only the Promethean whom the spirit follows can see it or talk to it. The Promethean can always see the spirit. It's like a (hideous and sometimes unwelcome) imaginary friend for the Promethean.

Embodied companions cost four dots. The animal an embodied companion possesses is ordinary, but as the spirit

enters the creature, seizes its brain and takes control of its body, the creature takes on a distinctly unhealthy look. A dog becomes yellow-toothed, mangy and flea-bitten. A rat grows to enormous size and develops an evil glint in its eye. A cat gains scars and weals in its fur. A crow's feathers become matted and stinking.

The spirit can embody itself in any animal up to the size of a large dog. Whatever the animal is, the Promethean can understand anything the companion says to him in this form. To everyone else, the companion's talk just sounds like animal noises.

A companion is a Rank 1 spirit (see **Promethean: The Created**, p. 255), whether it is immaterial or embodied. The Storyteller and the Promethean's player should work together to design the spirit's Traits. A companion begins play with at least one dot in each Attribute, with extra dots as listed below. See **Promethean: The Created**, pp. 255–256 for the rules that govern spirit Traits.

Twilight Companion Traits

Attributes: 3/3/2 (allocate dots in any order among Power, Finesse and Resistance)

Willpower: Equal to Power + Resistance

Essence: 10 (10 max)

Initiative: Equal to Finesse + Resistance

Defense: Equal to highest of Power and Finesse

Speed: Equal to Power + Finesse + "species factor" (usually 5)

Size: 3 or less

Corpus: Equal to Resistance + Size

Influences: 2 dots (choose one)

Numina: Choose one Numen. These can be picked from the following Ghost Numina: Ghost Sign, Ghost Speech, Magnetic Disruption, Phantasm or Telekinesis (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 211).

When a companion manifests, use the following modifiers:

Location	Modifier
Its master's lair	+2
Wasteland	+1 for each level of the Wasteland effect
In front of people suffering from Disquiet	+1 for each level of Disquiet

Although the companion obeys its master without hesitation, the companion finds its powers are easier to use if Disquiet or Flux have affected the area around the Promethean. The companion, if left to its own devices, tries to convince its master to stay in one place and interact with humans, allowing Disquiet to build up and the Wasteland to spread.

Embodied Companion Traits

Attributes: 4/4/3

Skills: 8/5/3

Willpower: Equal to Resolve + Composure

Essence: 10 (10 max)

Initiative: Equal to Dexterity + Composure

Defense: Equal to highest of Dexterity and Wits

Speed: Strength + Dexterity + "species factor" (based on its animal type)

Size: 4 or less (based on its animal type)

Health: Equal to Stamina + Size

Influence: 2 dots (choose one)

Numina: Choose one of the same Ghost Numina available to Twilight companions.

A companion can travel as far as it wants away from its master, although its master (or rather, the ectoplasmic humour within its master) is its anchor in the material world. No matter how far away the companion wanders, it knows when its master needs it.

The companion loses one Essence per day, and needs to feed on Essence to survive. The companion gains one Essence per day from being close to something it reflects (so a spirit born of trees gains a single point every day it stays near trees, and a spirit that reflects violence gains a single point by being close to a place where violence regularly happens, such as a street in a particularly bad neighborhood, or a boxing ring or the house of a man who beats his wife).

Once a day, the companion can draw Essence from an appropriate source. Roll Power + Finesse. This roll is modified by the same modifiers that affect manifestations. The companion gets one Essence for every success.

A Promethean can also spend Pyros to give the companion Essence, channeling the Divine Fire through his ectoplasmic humour. Each point of Pyros the Promethean spends gives the companion one Essence.

If the companion loses all of its Essence, the companion falls into slumber. A Twilight companion vanishes, absorbed into the Promethean's ectoplasmic humour until the Promethean awakens it by spending a point of Pyros.

On the other hand, the Promethean can spend his companion's Essence points as Pyros, using his companion's Essence to draw the Divine Fire back down through his humours.

Improvement: A Promethean's player can improve his companion's Traits by spending some of his character's experience points on the companion. It costs the same number of experience points to raise a companion's Traits as it does a Promethean's. Power, Finesse and Resistance are Attributes, and cost (new dots x 5) experience points to raise.

Famous Face (• to •••)

Effect: The Promethean's body (or at least the face) used to belong to someone well-known. Prometheans are often ignorant of the nuances of human culture, and don't often take into account who owned the bodies

they use to create their progeny.

The Promethean gains a +1 die pool bonus on Persuasion and Intimidation rolls when dealing with people who knew who the dead person was. Reminded of a famous (or infamous) figure, they feel an involuntary shiver, especially since a Promethean who has no idea who his body once belonged to acts as if there's nothing weird. Meeting a dead idol (or a dead serial killer) can be a creepy experience, although most people will rationalize the meeting: "Man, didn't she look like that supermodel chick who killed herself a couple months ago?"

Drawback: Elvis is dead. No one used Elvis' body to make a Promethean (the same goes for Kurt Cobain, Marion Monroe and Princess Di). Still, stories about Elvis turning up in supermarkets and out-of-the-ways diners have circulated for years.

The supermarket tabloids lap up Elvis sightings, and a report could have an out-of-the-way area crawling with hack journalists. Although a Promethean with a familiar face might find it easier to scare people, all it needs is for someone *not* to be sensible and rational when he meets the Promethean, and decide that yes, she really *was* a dead celebrity.

Fighting Style: Brute Force (• to ••••)

Prerequisites: Strength •••, Brawl •••

Effect: This fighting style isn't a trained style. Promethean characters do not learn it so much as embrace the monster within, and use the monster's pent-up rage to unleash brutal, powerful attacks. This so-called style is particularly common among Frankenstein and Tamuz Prometheans, but all Created possess Torment. Even when Torment isn't affecting the Promethean at



a specific moment, he always possesses it as a dormant but persistent fury.

Dots purchased in this Merit allow characters access to specific combat maneuvers. Each maneuver is a prerequisite for the subsequent maneuver. So, your character cannot possess "Crush and Bite" before he has "Falling Pillar." The Merit's maneuvers and their effects are described below. All Maneuvers are based on the Brawl Skill.

Falling Pillar (•): With this move, the Promethean holds both hands together in a single fist, and drops both arms upon his victim — the motion is like a stone pillar crashing down. The attack, made with a Strength + Brawl roll, gains the 9 again bonus. **Drawback:** Spend one Willpower point to activate this attack. This point does not confer three additional dice to the attack. Also, both hands must be free for the attack to be successful.

Crush and Bite (••): This maneuver is used only during a successfully maintained grapple. If the character succeeds on a grapple with his opponent, any Strength + Brawl rolls made in an effort to do damage to the subdued opponent inflicts lethal damage, not bashing. (The character needn't truly "crush and bite," and may instead choke, head-butt or even smother. The damage is still lethal.)

Juggernaut (•••): The character uses his entire body as a weapon. He barrels forward, smashing his head into his opponent and throwing the rest of his weight into the attack. This is an "all-out attack" per p. 157 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. The character foregoes his Defense, but gains a +4 bonus to the roll as opposed to the normal +2 bonus. Normal all-out attack rules apply. **Drawback:** The Promethean puts everything into the attack. If the player fails this roll (i.e., the attack misses), she must check for the character to resist Torment.

Bone Cracker (••••): The character grabs a foe's limb with both hands, twisting as if wringing water from a dish rag. This is a targeted attack, and is made at -2 dice (due to targeting an arm or leg). If the attack does damage equal to or exceeding the target's Stamina, however, the bone breaks and the damage becomes lethal. A broken bone also forces the target to lose a dot of Dexterity until those lethal levels heal. Lowered Dexterity also takes away from the target's Initiative modifier, Speed, and possibly Defense. **Drawback:** Both hands must be free for this attack to succeed. Also, the attacker loses his Defense for the remainder of the turn.

Fresh Corpse (••)

Effect: The cadaver(s) used in the generative act were particularly fresh. The transfer of Azoth to the vessel happened within an hour after all parts perished. Thus, the body is capable of a level of physicality that other Prometheans may not be able to achieve. While perhaps not precisely skilled, the character with this Merit can ignore the -1 unskilled penalty associated with a lack of Physical Skills. *Available at character creation only.*

Good Brain (•••)

Effect: The brain housed in the Promethean's body is above average. It may have come from a particularly smart person, or may instead be affected positively by a strange physical anomaly (a tumor, or perhaps a uniquely damaged corpus callosum). Therefore, the character is capable of a level of mental ability that other Prometheans may not be able to achieve. While perhaps not precisely skilled, a character with this Merit can ignore the -3 unskilled penalty associated with a lack of Mental Skills. *Available at character creation only.*

Hideous Anyway (••)

Effect: During certain moments, others can glimpse your character's true grotesqueness, but the fact is . . . he's ugly

anyway. The flesh used to give your character life is in some way hideous. He may be deformed, disfigured or outright awful-looking. Intimidation rolls are made with the 9 again rule in place; that unsightly countenance ensures the potency of your character's threats.

Drawback: The 10 again rule does not apply to Persuasion rolls. Galateids may not take this Merit.

Pilgrim (•••••)

Prerequisites: Elpis ••, Humanity 6

Effect: The character has a kind of destiny. He can feel it in his Azoth, in the way that it stirs his humours within the crucible of his dead body. The Divine Fire within seems to drive him more purposefully than it does others. This feeling may exist within from the moment he is created, or may dawn slowly over time like a slowly stoked flame.

The result is that, whenever the character completes a milestone, he gains one more Vitriol for the act than normal.

Drawback: The character must maintain a Humanity 6 or above to keep this Merit. If his Humanity drops below that, the Merit is lost and can only be regained when the character's Humanity becomes 6 again. *A character may not possess both the Pilgrim and Shepherd Merits at the same time.*

Shabti (•••)

Prerequisite: Revivification Bestowment

Effect: The Promethean — most likely an Osiran — owns a "Shabti," a small, fairly intelligent creature that follows his commands and guards him when he rests. It takes the form of a little unformed man, maybe a foot tall, made of clay or of some kind of ceramic. It might be the color of blue faience, or brightly painted, like an Egyptian tomb ornament.

The Shabti has been animated with the same Azoth that created the Promethean, channeled through his conceptual journey to the land of the dead. The Shabti has an empathic link with its master. No matter how far away the Shabti is from its master, it knows what the Promethean is feeling. The Shabti can say a few words, and can repeat perfectly things it has heard said, even if it doesn't understand what it has heard. It has grasping hands, and can, if its master wishes, bear small objects or use weapons. A less scrupulous Promethean could use his Shabti as an assassin, able to enter an enemy's home through small cracks, and strangling him in his sleep.

The Promethean can spend one Pyros to be able to see through the Shabti's eyes for a scene. While sharing the creature's perceptions, the character can't perform any other action, but is aware of what's going on around him and can choose to abandon looking through the Shabti's eyes.

A Shabti, being made of inanimate material, doesn't heal naturally, but its master can heal any wounds the Shabti has

taken using Pyros. One Pyros heals one point of aggravated damage, or two points of lethal or bashing damage.

If the Shabti dies, the Promethean loses the Merit, although he can use the Revivification Bestowment to resurrect the Shabti in the same way that he could resurrect another Promethean.

Making a new Shabti involves a great deal of effort, as the Promethean spends days crafting a new Shabti figure out of faience, metal or clay, contemplating its shape and design, and infusing it with tiny amounts of Azoth (in game terms, he's just spending the 12 experience points necessary to buy the Merit over again).

The player and the Storyteller should work together to create the Shabti's Traits, using the following as a guide.

Shabti Traits

Attributes: 4/3/3

Skills: 6/5/3

Willpower: Equal to Resolve + Composure

Initiative: Equal to Dexterity + Composure

Defense: Equal to lower of Dexterity and Wits

Speed: Strength + Dexterity + species factor 2

Size: 1

Health: Equal to Stamina + Size

Improvement: A Promethean's player can improve his Shabti's Traits by spending some of his character's experience points on the Shabti. It costs the same number of experience points to raise a Shabti's traits as it does a Promethean's.

Shepherd (**)**

Prerequisites: Elpis •, Repute ••, Humanity 6

Effect: The character's very presence is a stable guiding hand. His throng recognizes it, though perhaps not consciously. The character may appear wise and particularly astute when it comes to helping others along the Pilgrimage, but he may appear as confused as the rest. Something within him, however — a yearning, transformative part of his Azoth — helps urge others

along. Your character is likely to offer more help than other Created when it comes to the throng seeking out the completion of new milestones. He may not always be right, but he's always on point and concerned with the shift from half-souled creature to human being. This generally means the character is less concerned with his own Pilgrimage, however. It is possible that a Shepherd character *chooses* to forego the New Dawn, staying in Saturnine Night and acting as a bodhisattva for other Prometheans.

As a result, whenever a Promethean completes a milestone using the Shepherd's advice or aid, that character gains one more Vitriol than is normal. Note that this does not apply to the character who *possesses* this Merit. The Shepherd must help the character with the milestone in some way — guiding him into the situation, assisting in the fight, helping to choose the body for a new Promethean.

Drawback: The character must maintain a Humanity 6 or above to keep this Merit. If his Humanity drops below that, the Merit is lost and can only be regained if repurchased when the character's Humanity raises above 6. *A character may not possess both the Pilgrim and Shepherd Merits at the same time.*

Weatherproof (•)

Effect: Although Prometheans don't really age and can go almost indefinitely with only bugs, roots and tree bark for food, most still feel the cold and the heat. Most still have to keep warm.

A Promethean with this Merit doesn't feel the cold or heat at all. Extremes of temperature cause no penalties. A plunge into arctic seawater and a mid-August afternoon walk in Death Valley are all the same to the Promethean. The Promethean suffers no penalties from extremes of cold and heat. Penalties that don't depend on the Promethean being directly affected by the weather (such as from poor visibility, for example) still affect the Promethean. *Available at character creation only.*



CHAPTER TWO

AN EXPRESSION OF PROFOUND TRUTH

"I can't!" What I meant as a protest came out as a whine. It wasn't a sound I liked, but she seemed to bring it out in me. It made me lose patience with myself.

"You can. Try again."

She never lost patience with me. That only made it worse. I hated that about her, hated it when she just looked at me with that hard black stare, her eyes like little pools of oil with nothing behind them. Pools of pity. Pools of disappointment.

I looked away, but I could feel her gaze on the back of my neck. Watching. Waiting.

I was so sick of this. Sick of learning, sick of trying, sick of failing. Sick of her. I didn't want to do this any more.

"Try again." Her voice was smooth as silk, and its very softness chafed at me like concrete across bare knees. She was doing it on purpose. I could tell.

"I don't want to! I can't!"

"You can. Try again."

I howled, and the light overhead exploded. The television flickered and went black, and darkness spread out from me like a shadowy wave.

Now her eyes flew open, shining in the crackling energy aura around me. Now I'd surprised her. Now I had her attention. "What are you doing? You can't do that! I didn't teach you that!"

"Did you ever think that maybe there was more to me than what you taught me, Mother?" The energy arced around me. It danced on my skin and shot out in angry sparks from my fingertips. The flashes jumped toward her, as if they were as angry as I was. Like they wanted to leap across the room and hurt her, shock her, catch her on fire.

I wanted that.

I needed that.

I reached for her, and the lightning leapt across the motel room, eager to do my bidding.

She screamed as the bolts struck her eyes, lighting those oily pools aflame.

I was hurting her.

It felt good.



“You seek for knowledge and wisdom, as I once did; and I ardently hope that the gratification of your wishes may not be a serpent to sting you, as mine has been.”

*— Mary Shelley,
Frankenstein, or
The Modern Prometheus*

For Prometheans, Refinements are more than simple philosophies. They are expressions of the profound alchemical truth of the nature of reality. Whether through physical trials, human emulation or the Divine Fire, when a Promethean follows a certain Refinement he is seeing the world through that profound truth. It colors not only his view of humanity, but of himself and his fellow Prometheans, as well as his perception of how the universe as a whole works around him.

This chapter explores each of the five most common Refinements in depth, giving players a glimpse into some of broad range of world-views taken by those who follow each Refinement as well as what might lead a Promethean to or away from each of them. As well, this chapter offers some new Transmutations to complement those detailed in **Promethean: The Created** and investigates in greater detail what utilizing those Transmutations is like for a Promethean. We end each section with a sample character who follows the Refinement in question, some story hooks and rumors concerning the practice and a couple of new Transmutations for the Refinement’s favored categories. We also include a few sample milestones appropriate to the practice of the Refinement, which your Storyteller can use as springboards for your characters.

AURUM



It’s break time, and it’s now that the daily ordeal begins.

It’s been happening for a while. The bullying began a few days after Reuben came here. He went to Mr. Boulding, the math teacher, and told him, and Mr. Boulding didn’t believe him, and told Reuben that he had some growing up to do.

Reuben wanted to tell him that he didn’t know the half of it, that growing up was the whole point of his enrolling in the first place, that being 13 for another 80, 90 — God, how long has it been? — 105 years is no desire of his. Reuben thinks that it’s high time he got on with the rest of his life.

He keeps telling himself that now, as he stands in the corner of the schoolyard. Reuben keeps on saying it to himself when the other kids start with the names, and he repeats it to himself, almost like a mantra, when the first stone hits him on the chest, and the teacher on duty sees it, and turns a blind eye.

It’s worth it, he thinks. It has to be worth it, he thinks.

Please, God, make it worth it, he thinks.

Roads Paved with Gold

The Prometheans who practice Aurum believe that they have it hardest. Not for them the easy surrender to fury that Stannum brings, or the eremitic seclusion of Cuprum. Not for them the sweet surrender to Flux and taint that empowers the Centimani.

Their goal is the most difficult of Promethean goals, the final completion of the Great Work, the end of the Pilgrimage. They search for a way to transmute Promethean lead directly into Mortal gold. They set their eyes on the goal and, as long as they practice it, look nowhere else.

In some ways, the so-called Mimics or Adamists pre-empt their transition to humanity. They try to have a taste of the goal now. They try to walk among the ordinary people.

Aurum is the most common Refinement a Promethean practices at the beginning of his Pilgrimage, or close to its end. A Promethean who has just begun, who was only recently created, seizes on the idea that he can be human. So he practices the Refinement of Gold as if that’s going to make it work for him. *How hard can it be?* he thinks. When he finds out just how hard it can be, it’s likely that he’ll move on to another Refinement out of disillusionment. Until then, he tries to be human.

On the other hand, a Promethean who has, after many years and many trials and sorrows, drawn near to that point where he knows he will soon Redeem himself, begins to practice Aurum in readiness for his inevitable transition into the human race. The rare

Promethean practices Aurum for a while after leaving one Refinement and beginning another, but more begin or end their Pilgrimages as Adamists.

Mimics work well in Promethean throngs. It's hard to avoid human contact, and when meeting people is inevitable, the practitioner of Aurum is best suited to dealing with them, because he's the one who's better than the others at pretending to be human. Practitioners of Aurum are the ones who try to hold down jobs, gaining a few precious dollars to buy clothes and better food than leaves, bugs and roadkill.

Disquiet inevitably affects the humans whom Mimics ape, meaning that they can only stay in one place for so long. It seems to make their efforts moot, but a perceptive practitioner of Aurum argues that this is beside the point. In the brief time they have spent among humans, they've gained valuable insights into what it is to be human.

Golden Ways

Since Prometheans are rare, drawing generalizations about the practice of any Refinement is impossible. There are as many ways to practice Aurum as there are practitioners.

For example, Reuben Trimby, a Galateid created from the body of a boy of 13, has enrolled in a number of schools in the last few years. He uses his command of Mesmerism to convince people that his background is in order, and gets the two other members of his throng to pose as his parents when it's absolutely necessary. Each time, he tries to fit in as a member of class. In the end, the bullying at the

hands of fellow pupils and teachers gets so bad that he has to leave. Reuben has been a pupil in 12 schools in the space of five years. Each time, he's left under a cloud, but each time, he's decided that it has been worth it. Whether his experiment will end in disillusionment or triumph has yet to be established.

Baker, one of the Wretched, has managed to get casual work on a number of construction sites. It's a manual job that doesn't require talking too much with the others, but it's a role in society.

Likewise, there's a Golem who is reputed to have taken a job as a gravedigger in several areas, all along the Eastern seaboard of the United States. When the grass starts dying in the graveyard, he has to move on, but until then, he's still just about part of society. Although his job is antisocial, it doesn't stop him from gaining insights into the doings of humans, as he watches the way in which people behave at burials. He





might not yet know what it is to be human, but he has a fair amount of insight into how humans react to mortality.

Some practitioners of Aurum have realized that the part of the outsider is as much a role in society as the worker or the student. The homeless person, the seeker of asylum, the member of a persecuted community: they are all part of society, because society defines who is within its bounds by who is not. Prometheans aren't even outsiders. They're not even afforded the status of the invisible. But the dispossessed, the forgotten and the persecuted at least offer to a Promethean a role to adopt that isn't a million miles away from what he faces daily. A Mimic plays the part of a homeless person or a member of a despised ethnic minority with ease. It's a good way to move around without attracting the notice of society at large. It doesn't mean that it's safe. The problem is that those parts of society that are ignored and despised are still human, and even if society at large ignores them, the sub-society of the forgotten, which often has its own rules and own laws, does not.

An English Promethean tries to mimic the so-called chavs, Britain's despised, disenfranchised urban poor. The squalor and urban decay of the bad parts of a decaying provincial town serve as something of a Wasteland to begin with. But when the forgotten, dehumanized urban poor come for her, she's still forced to leave. A Promethean in the United States, meanwhile, tries to live among the "trailer trash," with much the same result.

Moving Across the Periodic Table

The ability to perform Transmutations on the self and the environment is one of the attributes that distinguishes the Prometheans from the human race. The ability to turn entirely transparent at will, to generate bolts of lethal electricity from the fingertips or to make one's skin as hard as steel are not human attributes. Yet, rather than deny these powers as inhuman, the Adamists learn these powers through contact with humans.

Through proximity with humanity, a practitioner of Aurum learns about humans. She learns what she is not, and so gains a better understanding of what she is. The Pyros rises in all Prometheans when they are close to humans, and it's no surprise that new powers manifest themselves when Adamists are close to humans.

A Promethean trying to convince a human policeman not to arrest him, or trying to convince the head teacher of a school to allow his "son" to enroll suddenly feels his Pyros rise. His words have a supernatural effect. For the first time, he manifests Suggestion.

An Adamist finds herself chased by a group of local people who have arbitrarily decided she's the monster who killed

all those children. She rushes into a crowd of people in the middle of town. Her Pyros surrounds her. For the first time, she vanishes into the crowd. Her pursuers rush past her. She's just discovered that she knows the Incognito Transmutation.

Manifesting new powers not limited to the Mimics' Affinity Transmutations. Although other Transmutations don't come quite as naturally to the practitioners of Aurum, the Transmutations can still come through the same method.

Another Promethean, pursued by that same gang of concerned but hysterical citizens, finds himself driven into a dead-end alley. He turns around. They approach with their broom handles and cricket bats. His panic and their rage causes his Pyros to channel itself into his hands, and manifests itself as bolts of electricity arcing across his fingers (Shock).

Yet another, locked in a basement and desperate to escape before his captor comes back with friends, begins in desperation to bang her fists against the door, and finds, to her surprise, that it splinters like matchwood. She's just discovered she has the Fist of Talos.

"Hey! I can deliver electric shocks!"

Obviously, when a player spends the experience points necessary for his character to gain a power, the character has the use of that power. But *how* she gains that power needs to be addressed in the story. Why does she have that power? Even though a player knows his character has a power, it doesn't necessarily mean that the character knows until the first time she uses it. A fun way to show the way that a Promethean gains her powers is to simply roleplay the character's reaction when she uses her new power for the first time (and, of course, it's up to the Storyteller to help create dramatic situations in which these powers can prove useful).

Another option is for the player to simply spend the experience points and buy those powers during the course of play when these situations come up. The player of the Aurum Promethean who suddenly discovers he knows Shock, for example, has enough experience points and/or Vitriol to spare, and spends them then and there on the Transmutation, using the situation as a rationale for having the power.

Retrograde Development

Prometheans rarely spend their entire Pilgrimages practicing the same Refinement. Aurum is a tough Refinement to practice and often easier to leave than the others.

Stannum, on the other hand, is the easiest Refinement to join and the hardest to leave. Wrath and Torment come easily to the Created, and disillusionment is a constant temptation for the practitioners of Aurum. An Adamist who finds his honest attempts at humanity met with violence too often, too quickly can easily lash out. He externalizes his failure. His anger drives him in a new direction, and perhaps not even realizing it, he's practicing Stannum.

Disillusionment doesn't always lead to anger. Finding that his efforts to fit in don't bear fruit, the Promethean gives in to disappointment, and sadness. He gives up the pursuit of Gold, and lets the world change him as it will, retreating from human society as best he can. He begins to practice Cuprum.

Of course, leaving the Refinement of Gold doesn't necessarily always have to be out of disillusionment. Just as often, an Adamist can abandon Aurum in order to concentrate on aspects of his Pilgrimage that have intrigued him. A Promethean on the path of the Refinement of Gold becomes distracted from his pursuit of humanity. He concentrates more on the philosophical aspects of the Pilgrimage, and begins inquiring into what actually makes a soul. He forgets to try so hard to imitate the ordinary people. He embarks on the practice of Mercurius.

Another becomes more interested in the workings of his body. He discovers, as he tries to make himself human, that he can perform physical feats that others cannot. For example: a Promethean who joins the Marines, brutalized by his drill sergeant and his supposed comrades in the platoon, finds that he can take the kind of muscle-shredding punishment that causes other squaddies to collapse in tears. He begins to investigate why his body does this when a human body can't. He begins to perfect his body. He takes pride in it, and then he finds he's practicing the Refinement of Iron.

A Mimic is unlikely to join the Centimani, at least not before first practicing another Refinement for a while. Although disillusionment is a constant danger, even the most disillusioned Adamists balk at the Refinement of Flux. It's too much of a leap. Lashing out in wrath and frustration is one thing, but (apparently) abandoning the Pilgrimage altogether and embracing the role of monster? That's another thing entirely.

Tales of Gold

The danger with Aurum-centered milestones and story hooks is that dealing with humans is something that we,

the players, do on a daily basis. How, then, to make the interactions interesting? The fun should come in seeing otherwise mundane activities through the eyes of your character. Standing in line at the DMV probably isn't very interesting even from a Promethean's childlike perspective, but working a day in a garden certainly might be.



Milestones

- Obtaining, holding down and even quitting a job
- Being arrested
- Having sex with a mortal
- Having a mortal friend (pen pals count)
- Participating in a religious service (taking communion, sitting in a sweat lodge, etc.)
- Learning about human irrationality (religious zealotry, racism, sexism, objectification of women, etc.)
- Performing charitable works
- Hosting a dinner for a group, at least some of whom are mortal
- Acting or otherwise performing in front of people
- Helping another Promethean complete a milestone

Story Hooks

• **Peeping Tom:** Not all humans are paragons of decency. Why, then, should practitioners of Aurum always be so very good? The throng comes across a Mimic who would rather ape something darker, something less wholesome. Maybe he's a serial killer, or a child killer. Maybe he's a voyeur, or a rapist. He might not even realize that what he's doing is wrong. His actions put the throng in peril, as the throng-members find themselves framed for his crimes. Confronting this figure could be a milestone for the throng, as the group realizes that continuing along the Pilgrimage doesn't necessarily mean achieving moral perfection. What do the characters do with him? Do they simply meet him with violence, or is there hope for redemption? Is it possible for them to disprove their guilt (and even if they do, will it make any difference)?

• **The Replacement (take one):** A Promethean practitioner of Aurum kills an individual, a human, and takes her place (perhaps using the "Body Double" Transmutation). Her attempts at taking another person's identity are flawed, and they inevitably fail. She's forced to flee. She tries again, somewhere else. She fails, and has to flee. She tries again. And again. Gradually, her carelessness and callousness cause all sorts of trouble, as paranoia, partly fueled by largely inaccurate stories in the press, begins to grip the communities in which she has passed. A throng of Promethean characters is caught up in the wave of hysteria. Can they end her cycle of charade, failure and death before it's too late?

• **The Replacement (take two):** The throng of Prometheans, one of them a Mimic, arrives in a remote community. The people mistake the Aurum practitioner for someone they've been expecting: a new doctor maybe, or a church



minister. Or maybe there has been a murder, and the locals think the Promethean is the out-of-town detective or federal agent. What to do? Will the Promethean — with the help of his friends — take up the challenge and fill the role, at least for a while, until the truth comes out, or Disquiet takes its toll, or both? Taking the role could help the Promethean pass a milestone. Doing it well (actually solving a murder, for example) could bring the Mimic closer to the completion of his Great Work than he could have possibly thought. But he has to get out alive when it's time to go. But wait: this all seems a bit far-fetched. Could such a thing like this actually happen? Why would it happen? What's happened to the people in this town to make such an error? Has someone (or something) tampered with the inhabitants' perceptions? Are they human at all? Is this all a trap? And what happened to the *real* doctor (or minister or whatever) whom the character inadvertently replaced?

Rumors: Aurum

- “There’s a tiny monastery, out in the mountains of Europe, in the Alps or maybe the Pyrenees, and although it’s this vast old building from the Middle Ages, there’s only three monks there, and they’re all like us. It’s a compromise, see: they’ve taken this role in society and managed to keep away from it. They say you can see them sometimes in the village at the bottom of the mountain, trying to buy food. I heard different stories about what they’re like. I met one of us, who said that they’d welcome any one of us who was on the Pilgrimage, and give whatever help they could. But then there was another, who swore to me that Created people have found their way there and never left, that the monks were working on something that required some kind of raw material.”

- “There was one practitioner of the Refinement of Gold who decided that what was missing in the way he mimicked humans was Disquiet. He began to ape the way that humans reject us. Here’s the strangest thing: somehow he managed to create a Transmutation allowing him to create Disquiet, real Disquiet, in other Prometheans, not just in himself, but in Prometheans he met. He’s dead now, probably killed by someone he worked his alchemy on, but I’ve heard over the years of a Promethean who always acts really, really strangely when it comes to the Measure. And you have to wonder.”

- “Someone made a Promethean from a crow. Yeah, a crow. A bird. Hundreds of years ago. So Great-Grandfather Crow, he’s still out and about, and he’s aware and intelligent, and he can even say a few words, and all he wants, they say, is to finish the Pilgrimage and to stop being awake. He just wants to be an ordinary bird, and live a couple of years maybe and then die, like an ordinary, stupid bird. Except he doesn’t know how to get to the end. You might meet a crow one night, begging for your help, and if you do, don’t let him down, because he’s old and sad and just about ready to give up and go mad.”

New Transmutations — Aurum

Transmutations are alchemical operations. They require a certain amount of precision and form, and yet Prometheans are continually finding new ways to express them. The Mimics’ “research” tends to include new ways to blend in with humanity.

Mimic's Voice (Deception •)

With this Transmutation, a Promethean can alter the shape and size of his vocal cords so as to perfectly mimic any voice he has ever heard. While he doesn’t look any different, Mimic’s Voice is tremendously useful in situations in which the Promethean can’t be seen.

For example, a Promethean hides in a dark cellar. One of a mob of people comes down into the cellar, looking for him. The Promethean knocks the poor devil unconscious. The man’s friends shout for him, and the Promethean, mimicking the man’s voice, says he’s all right and that there’s nothing down here. He just tripped over something. They look elsewhere. The Promethean makes his escape.

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Expression vs. Wits + Azoth

Action: Instant and contested

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Promethean believes that he has been note-perfect in his rendition of the voice. Actually, he sounds nothing like the person he wants to sound like.

Failure: The Transmutation fails to convince, and the Promethean knows it.

Success: The Promethean successfully fools the listener.

Exceptional Success: The Promethean not only convinces the subject, but the Promethean is able to “throw” the voice, making it appear to come from somewhere else in the immediate vicinity (within a radius of five yards of the Promethean).

Possible Modifiers: The subject doesn’t know the real owner of the voice well (+1), the subject knows the real owner of the voice reasonably well (–1), the subject knows the real owner of the voice intimately (–3)

Lullaby (Mesmerism ••)

The Promethean who learns the Lullaby knows how to use her voice to create in a subject, either human or animal, a false kind of comfort. She sings sweetly, or talks in calm, gentle tones. Her victim becomes overpowered with drowsiness, falling asleep where he stands.

Cost: 1 Pyros

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Expression vs. Resolve + Azoth
Action: Instant and contested

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Promethean strikes a note so discordant that the subject is instantly on his guard. The Promethean can't attempt this Transmutation on the same subject for the rest of the scene.

Failure: The Transmutation fails.

Success: The subject sits or lies down and falls into a deep sleep for the rest of the scene. Anyone can wake him up in the same way she'd wake up someone who fell asleep normally (shaking him, for example, dousing him with water or making loud noises).

Exceptional Success: Not only does the subject fall asleep for the rest of the scene, but he is very difficult to wake up. Anyone trying to wake up the subject needs to roll Presence + Medicine before the person will wake up from the Promethean's spell of sleep.

Possible Modifiers: The subject is very tired (+1), the subject is an animal (+1), the subject is trying to harm the Promethean (-2), the subject has recently slept and is fresh and alert (-1)

Sister Stitch

Quote: *The Lord giveth; the Lord taketh away. Mostly, the Lord taketh away.*

Background: The Sister's creator had turned to God. That is all she knows. When the Sister opened her eyes in that mountain cell in Austria, surrounded by dusty bottles and rotting books, she was completely alone, and had been for what looked like decades. A damp leather case hung around her neck contained a 19th-century German Bible, a rosary, a copy of the catechism. Tucked inside the Bible was a letter telling her that her name was Abishag Stitch, and that she was made to seek God.

She stumbled naked down the mountain. She found her way to an Austrian convent, and it was there she decided to join the nuns who initially took this strange, ageless woman in. When the convent's harmony began to fall apart and the nuns directed their suppressed spite against her, the new Sister fled in a stolen habit. That was 30 years ago.

Since then, she's traveled back and forth across Europe. She practiced the Refinement of Gold at the beginning of her Pilgrimage, and recently, she began to do so again.

Sister Stitch has met a handful of Prometheans on her travels. She's fairly well-known, as these things are reckoned. This isn't necessarily good. Torment has taken control of the Sister far too many times, and she's hurt too many people. She's had to evade the police on many occasions. A tall, skinny woman in a filthy, threadbare habit is difficult to miss, but she won't change it, not now, not until the day she doesn't need to hide behind it.

Description: The Sister is made from no fewer than 19 different women, young and old. When her disfigurements



aren't visible, she appears as a tall, skinny, gaunt woman with close-cropped dark hair, pale skin and wide, heavy-lashed, gray eyes. There is a large, livid scar across her right ear.

In truth, she's grotesque, and her disfigurements make that clear. She has no hair and no right ear — a ring of steel holds the side of her face together, and reveals the inside of her face. Metal staples and thick metal wire hold her flesh together. Stapled seams run across her cheeks from the corners of her mouth to where her ears should be. Her lips are blue-black. Different parts of her body are made from women of wildly varying ages.

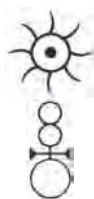
She wears an old nun's habit, although she often uncovers her head. She hasn't taken the habit off to wash in years. It's filthy and covered with patches and mends. It smells sour and moldy.

In a tool roll hidden in the habit's folds, she keeps a number of scalpels and a small roll of wire.

Storytelling Hints: The Sister is desperately trying to become human. The goal consumes her, and as a practitioner of Aurum, her attempts at acting human grow increasingly desperate with every passing year.

Sister Stitch believes utterly in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and prays to the Virgin every day. She knows full well that she's not part of God's creation, however, and knows that she'll get no help from Him until that day she achieves mortality. She keeps the faith because she believes that she has to. It's part of her Pilgrimage, to come under the sight of God. Her body is a constant "thorn in the flesh" to her: she loathes her own physicality, seeing it as the fount of all her sin, which is why she cannot bear to take her habit off, even to wash.

The Sister's native language is German. She hasn't been to Germany for a long time, but she still speaks with a slight German accent. Whatever language she's speaking, she uses archaisms and slightly garbled religious language. She's got the general principles



of Catholic religion down, and knows the different saints' days by heart. Unfortunately, the finer points of religion elude her, and her literal reading of the scriptures and the catechism sometimes cause her to indulge in very odd behavior.

Lineage: Frankenstein

Refinement: Aurum

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics (Religion) 1, Crafts 1, Investigation 2, Medicine 2, Occult (Demonology) 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Stealth 2, Survival 2, Weaponry (Scalpels) 3

Social Skills: Expression 1, Intimidation 1, Persuasion (Preaching) 1, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Contacts (Catholic Church) 1, Fleet of Foot 1, Fighting Style: Two Weapons 1, Languages (Church Latin, English, French, Italian), Repute 2, Weatherproof (see p. 59)

Humanity: 5

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 6

Defense: 3

Speed: 11

Health: 7

Azoth: 3

Bestowment: Spare Parts

Transmutations: *Deception* — Mimic's Voice (·); *Electrification* — Shock (··); *Mesmerism* — Fixed Stare (·), Firebringer (··)

Pyros/per Turn: 12/3

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Size	Dice Pool
Scalpel	1L	1	7
Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool
Thrown Scalpel	1	L	12/24/486

CUPRUM



The sun shines down on all God's creatures. And Israel Hands. The man with the rock salt skin smiles, remembering the Sister's words, and lies back. He wonders momentarily when she's coming back, but then thinks no more of it. When she's done dealing with the people, she'll return. It's his way to stay far from where the people are. He's fine with letting the Sister do the talking.

He feels the damp coolness of the grass under his shoulders, the warmth of the sun on his eyelids. Down there at the bottom of the hill is the town with the people and the yelling and the running and the stones and the cricket bats (and Israel Hands has seen many a cricket bat, and even knows what it's called, but he's never seen a game of cricket, doesn't know what cricket is).

Here are the sky and the grass and the sunshine, and it's free to all God's creatures.

The first time the hoarse voice demands to know what Israel is doing on his land, Israel hardly hears it. It's nearly drowned out by the barking of a dog.

Israel sighs. Free to all God's creatures. Not to him.

Working with Copper

A practitioner of Cuprum, a "Pariah" or "Eremite," is simply this: a Promethean who hides. More strictly, a practitioner of Cuprum is one who hides from the human race. In other respects, he does not hide. Far from it: although the Pariahs hide from people, these Prometheans do not hide from

themselves. The Refinement of Copper is the Refinement of Self, and it's self-knowledge that the Pariahs value. A Pariah doesn't always hide from people for the sake of hiding. Even if she does in the beginning, after a while hiding becomes secondary to what she might find out about herself.

Pariahs don't hide from the world, either. Awareness of the self leads to an awareness of the changes that the world can inflict. Pariahs watch their environment give way to Flux. They feel their Azoth leaking into the world around them.

Take the example of a practitioner of Cuprum who lives in a remote, rough area of land. The weather erodes him. The loneliness changes his perceptions. He learns how to see into the Twilight world of spirits and to make his body obey his commands. He changes, blown by the wind, altered by the cycle of seasons, witness to the land's blight as it increases because of his presence.

He's retreated from humanity, but now he realizes that he knows himself better than he ever has before. He's aware of every pore in his skin, every hair on his body, every speck of dirt under his fingernails, every breath on his lips.

The Eremite hides from humans, but this doesn't mean that he has necessarily retreated from humanity. He's still on the Pilgrimage. After hiding comes the finding of the seeds of future redemption within the alchemical balance of the body. Eventually, with a little help, he can reach his New Dawn and become mortal.

It's that little help that's important. Although our practitioner of Cuprum has isolated himself from the human race, he doesn't have to hide from other Prometheans, and in fact, it's better if he doesn't. Few Prometheans achieve Mortality.



Fewer still achieve it without the help of a throng. This goes for a Pariah as much as it does for any other Promethean. The Pariahs hide from humans. Some Pariahs hide from their own, but not all. Joining a throng, sharing a lair with a throng and traveling with a throng does not mean that a Pariah has to abandon his Refinement.

In one traveling throng, the practitioner of Cuprum always goes on ahead. Skilled in the art of staying hidden and possessed of Transmutations granting him uncanny senses, he makes an ideal scout. He checks out the lie of the land, and then he goes back to tell the others.

Another throng decides to separate. Ironically, the Pariah is the one who keeps open lines of communication among the others. While they're forced to go to ground, the practitioner of Cuprum knows how to keep people from following him, and how to avoid interaction. He grows taller or shorter, fatter or thinner. He turns into an enormous stray dog. He hides in plain sight. He sees, hears and smells further than any of his colleagues. He knows how not to be followed.

Israel Hands, a Tammuz, lived in a seaside cave for many years. Even after having bonded himself with another Promethean, he avoids meeting ordinary people. He allows his traveling companion to meet with humans, when it has to be done. Israel keeps out of the way. Sometimes he stays out of town and waits for her to come back. Sometimes he watches his companion at work from around a corner or the other side of the street. Mostly, he stays within sight and within earshot. He rarely talks to humans and rarely allows himself to be seen, but he protects his friend, because she's all he's got.

Chrysantha, an Osiran, plays the part of mother in the weird dysfunctional family that composes her throng. She keeps their meager home — currently a room in a tenement basement — safe. She scares off the local kids who want to look at the weird people in the basement. She keeps watch. She doesn't go out as often as the others, but when she does, she never looks the same twice. The urban decay that surrounds her informs her and gives her a context in which to change. She passes messages on to the few contacts her throng has with the vampires who share the city. Vampires, not being human, don't really count as far as interaction goes, although she never looks the same when she meets them. She's the only contact the vampires have ever had with any of the Created, and thanks to her, the vampires still don't have the faintest idea what she is, only that they can leave her alone, and that they still owe her and her "people" (whoever they are) a few favors.

Being in a throng still allows a Pariah plenty of time on his own. Just as any group of family and friends, members of a throng are not together every hour of every day, and there's opportunity for the practitioner of Cuprum to take some time alone to contemplate who and what he is.

"Meditation" encapsulates several kind of psychological disciplines. A Pariah can find, paradoxically, that modes of

meditation created by humans prove as effective as anything else. One Promethean contemplates Zen koans. Another adopts yoga. Another follows the strictures of Ignatian prayer, another *Lectio Divina* and a third Hesychasm. An Eremite is likely to try several different kinds of meditative discipline during the course of his Pilgrimage. It's not the style that matters, it's the result. Contemplation and self-examination lead to change and development, brought on by greater self-knowledge. Greater self-knowledge leads to a greater opportunity of escape for the Pariah from the Promethean condition.

Malleable Powers

Through spending time alone, a Pariah gains her powers, but she finds out what to do with them through action. Contemplation allows the Promethean to refine the Pyros within her, governing the rise and fall of the different humours, molding the Divine Fire that infects every part of her body. But knowing that she has passed an alchemical threshold and developed a new Transmutation is quite different from knowing what exactly that Transmutation does. Sometimes the effects of the new Transmutation can come as a surprise to the Promethean of the Refinement of Copper.

The most natural Transmutations for the Pariahs are those that come under the categories of Sensorium and Metamorphosis, reflecting the changes the Promethean becomes party to when he reflects on the mutability of the world around him and the perceptions that grow as the Promethean learns to know himself.

For example: A Pariah, caught unawares by some kids, snarls at them. He feels the Pyros rise to his face, and the shape of his face shifts. Suddenly, he's terrifying to look at. He's just found out he knows how to create the Mask of Medusa. Next time, he'll know exactly how to create it.

An Eremite spends a day and a night meditating in the rain. At sunrise, on a whim, he dives into the river, and finds, as he gulps in algae-strewn water, that the Pyros fills his lungs and that now he can breathe underwater (Blessing of Tethys).

A Promethean spends days examining her own body. She counts her bones until they glow. When she's done, she washes. She doesn't feel any different. One of the other members of her throng comes into her tenement. Suddenly the Promethean realizes that she can see a colored aura around her friend's body. With practice, she realizes that the aura is the key to discovering the nature of another's mind (Aura Sight).

Although Transmutations that aren't Affinities for a Pariah are somewhat harder to learn, they come to a Pariah in much the same way.

A Cuprum practitioner finds himself trapped in a mine by a rockslide. Unsure of what to do, he begins to pray, focusing his Pyros, attempting to bring about a Transmutation. He



gets up and begins to move the boulders with relative ease (which represents the Vitality Transmutation “Might”).

On the other hand, the same Pariah could spend those same hours in prayer and might just as easily put his hand against the stones and watch as he secretes an acid that quickly dissolves the largest rocks away to nothing (exhibiting the Alchemicus Transmutation “Dissolve”).

Leaving Cuprum

By the time a Promethean acquires a decade or two of life experience, he usually spends at least some time following Copper. Going to the Wastes can often lead to (or from) Cuprum, although practicing Cuprum and retreating into that strange social hibernation are not the same thing — a Promethean can become a Pariah without abandoning anything except human interaction. Still, even if he doesn’t retreat altogether, a Promethean can find himself tiring of the constant rebuttal of his attempts to court human sympathy and the frustration of being hated and pursued. Disillusionment can lead to Cuprum, that and disappointment.

On the other hand, a Promethean who leaves Cuprum behind isn’t very likely to do so because he’s bored, or because he feels he’s failed in the practicing the Refinement. No, he ceases to practice Cuprum because he feels that it’s time to develop the Refinement into another area, and in so doing takes on a different Refinement entirely.

A Promethean feels that he’s hidden long enough, and that it’s time to try and take the bull by the horns and meet people once again. He goes back into the world, feeling ready to at least pretend to humanity once more. Soon, he’s practicing Aurum. A Pariah of similar temperament finds humans drawing near where he’s hiding. Soon he can’t avoid interacting with them, but to his surprise, and despite the Disquiet he causes, he enjoys being around the ordinary people. He likes taking on a human role. This Pariah moves into Aurum without even thinking about it.

Another Pariah, however, finds the endangerment of his seclusion frustrating. He grows more and more impatient with it. He lashes out. Lashing out becomes easy for him. It feels natural and right. It becomes his way, and he’s practicing the Refinement of Tin, that easiest of alchemical developments. On the other hand, a more contemplative Promethean might still fall into the practice of Stannum, as he simply decides that it’s time to stop stagnating and raise some hell.

If Stannum is an easy practice to begin for a Pariah, Mercurius is not. The practitioners of Cuprum see themselves, despite their inward-looking nature, as products of the world that surrounds them. On the other hand, the Serpents seem to the Pariahs to abandon the world altogether, the Serpents’ metaphysical conceits being difficult for the less academic but no less subtle practice of Cuprum. Still, that rare Pariah who finds himself enjoying the discussion of

metaphysics with others in his throng can still find his way to the Refinement of Quicksilver. He’s more likely to travel through other Refinements on the way, though.

The simple physicality of a Pariah and her recognition that her body is her tool and work can lead her to the Refinement of Iron easily. She begins to concentrate on her body, examines its contours and its powers. She hardens herself. Seclusion becomes less important to her and contemplation less useful. Soon, she is a practitioner of Ferrum.

The practitioners of Cuprum are as likely as any other Promethean to give up on the Pilgrimage and join the Centimani. A Pariah can see firsthand what Flux does to the world. All he needs is to conceive the idea that the Flux he bleeds into the world is part of him, a product of the change that refines and transforms him, and the seed is planted. Then comes experimentation. Soon, he’s transforming his body in ever more grotesque ways, delighting in his abandonment of any pretense at humanity. He’s a Centimanus before he even realizes.

Copper Wires

The challenge for players of Pariahs (and Storytellers with such players in their troupes) is remaining true to the precepts of the Refinement while remaining in the action. Hopefully, the milestones and story hooks listed here provide some inspiration on that front.

Milestones

- Meet and learn from another supernatural being (werewolf, ghost, vampire, mage, etc.)
- Live among humanity without being noticed for a certain period of time
- Provide support and comfort to each member of the throng
- Begin and maintain a long-distance relationship (professional or otherwise) with a human
- Cause a Wasteland of at least third-stage severity
- Fight to protect a lair
- Stimulate enlightening discussion between others (Promethean or human)
- Force a Pandoran into Dormancy rather than destroying it
- Write a detailed (and useful) account of the Ramble and distribute it to other Prometheans
- Master the Pilgrim Marks

Story Hooks

- **The Reappearance:** A practitioner of Cuprum can’t always hide. A Pariah character finds himself in a quandary when, due to a slip, he’s sighted by a human who recognizes the character’s face. It belonged to someone the individual in question knew and loved (a child, a spouse, a lover, a sibling, a parent) or hated (a wanted criminal, an ex-husband

who fell way behind on his alimony and child support). The person vanished under bizarre circumstances not long ago and wasn't ever heard of again — until now. Obviously, she died, but the human doesn't know that, and is convinced that the Promethean is the person he lost. The individual won't let the Promethean go, even going so far as to alert law enforcement to get her back. The Promethean is going to have to find a way to escape.

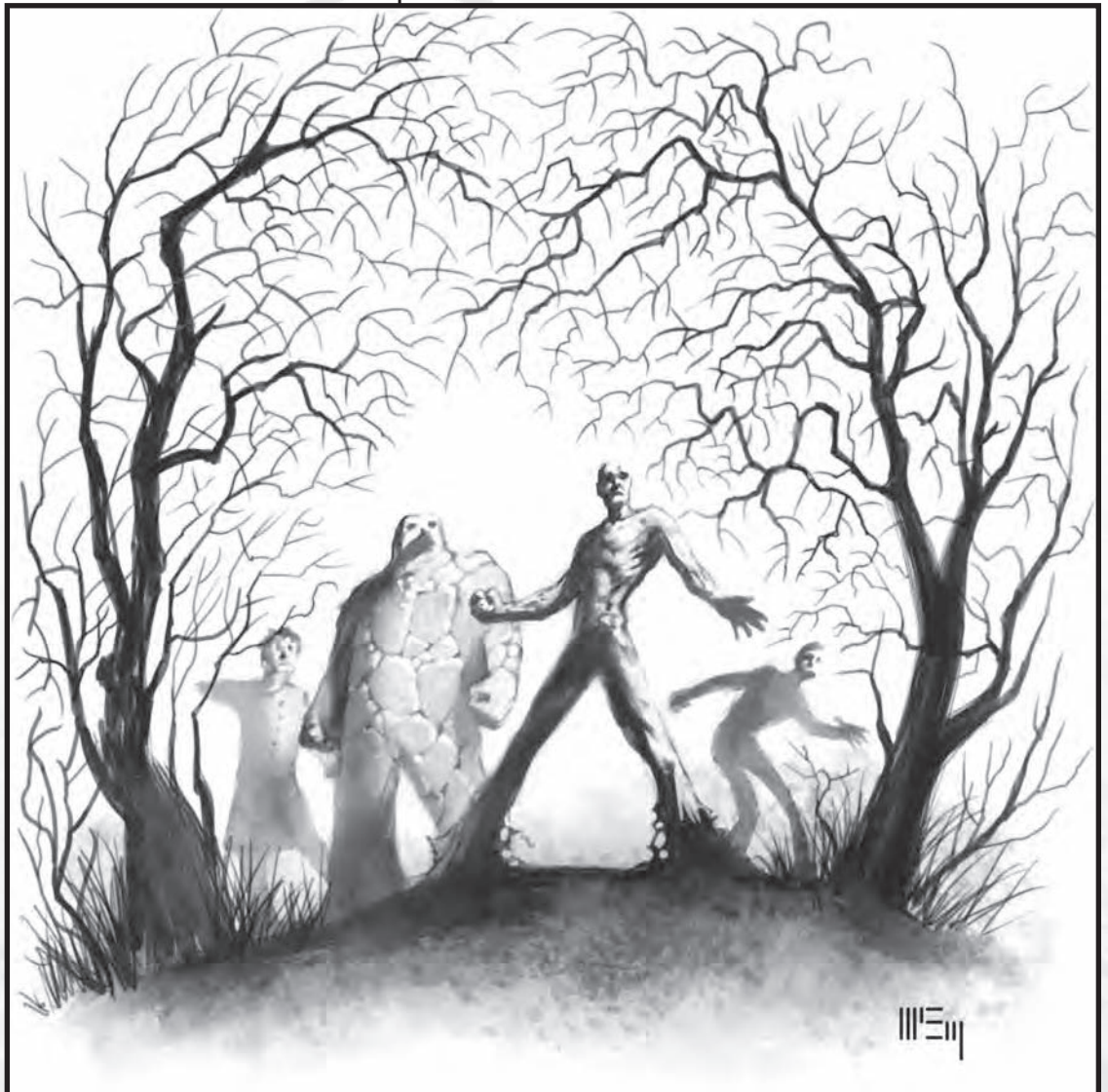
- **No Rest for the Wicked:** A Pariah character has made a lair, possibly with some other Prometheans with whom he's joined in a Branded throng. Within a very short time, the Cuprum practitioner and his friends find there is no peace for very long. The humans are coming. Perhaps they're going to develop the place, sticking a subdivision on top of where the Pariah and his friends are hidden. Perhaps the Prometheans are in the Rockies or Appalachians, and they picked the side of a mountain that's going to be strip-mined. Either way, the heavy machinery is on its way, and the Eremite and his friends are going to have to escape or deal with people — ordinary people — who just want to make a living. Or do they? Perhaps the very reason they're coming is because the Prometheans are there. What's the truth?

- **The Beast:** A group of Promethean characters find themselves lost in some unhealthy and supposedly haunted woods. Or in a blasted patch of desert where people are supposed to have disappeared. Or on a deserted moor or fen with a beast-legend attached to it. Or an area of scrubland with a history of UFO sightings. Gradually, they realize that they're being followed. There really is a beast. It's a brutal Pariah with almost no Humanity left. He gave up on the Pilgrimage ages ago. He wants nothing more than to be left alone, and he'll

kill to keep his privacy. He's close to dying, but powerful in many ways, and he's everywhere: in the trees, under the sand, in the bog. He knows the land intimately. How the characters deal with him depends upon who they are. Destroying him might save their secondhand skins, but finding some other way out could fulfill milestones for more than one of them.

Rumors: Cuprum

- “There's an old, old story about some ancient Greek hero who got caught by this one-eyed monster that was going to eat him, except he blinded the thing, and he escaped. Except that the story is wrong, and all the bad press the monster got was just Disquiet doing its work. And that maybe the monster was just some Pariah who was trying to help and somehow communication got all screwed up and the humans did what the humans always do. And this is the best part: he's still there, on that tiny little island somewhere, lonely and blind, a forgotten Pariah waiting for someone to lead him onto the final stage of his Pilgrimage.”





• “I heard a story of this Promethean who perfected Copper. She hid in the wilderness and found a completely different finish to her Great Work. She didn’t become a human. She became a tree, this vast, beautiful tree that the Flux can’t touch and that speaks in dreams to anyone who sleeps beneath its branches. No, I don’t know where it is.”

• “And then there’s the story of the Eremite who retreated so far from the world, he vanished into another world entirely, like a shadow world next to ours where there’s no Disquiet and no Flux, and there he is, master of his own kingdom, in some distant dream world. It sounds far too good to be true, doesn’t it?”

New Transmutations

It stands to reason that a Pariah, who allows himself to be molded by his environment, should discover new alchemical operations during the course of his Pilgrimage. There are endless variations of change and sensation waiting to be discovered by the Promethean practicing the Refinement of Self.

Clayflesh (Metamorphosis ●●●)

The Promethean with this Transmutation takes his cue from the substance of the earth, making his flesh as cold and unfeeling as the ground all life comes from. The flesh of the Promethean doesn’t feel pain, but with this Transformation, his flesh becomes able to shrug off bullets.

Cost: 1 Pyros

Dice Pool: None

Action: Reflexive

For the rest of the scene, the kinetic properties of the Promethean’s changed flesh are such that bullets do hardly any damage, meaning that he only takes bashing damage from firearms. It’s like firing a bullet into loam: it slows the projectile down to such an extent that it hardly causes damage at all.

This Transmutation can be combined with the five-dot Alchemicus Transmutation “Hard Body.”

Hearing the Inner Voice (Sensorium ●●●●)

A Promethean who knows how to see auras can see what can’t be seen. By extension, a Promethean who knows this Transmutation can hear what can’t be heard. Using it, the Promethean can, just for a moment, hear the thoughts running through someone’s head.

Prerequisite: Aura Sight

Cost: 1 Pyros

Dice Pool: Wits + Composure vs. Composure + Azoth

Action: Instant and contested

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Promethean hears a jumble of thoughts and ideas from miles around, disorienting him enough to incur a –1 penalty on all dice pools for the next scene.

Failure: The Promethean doesn’t hear a thing.

Success: For one turn, the Promethean can hear exactly what is running through the subject’s head.

Exceptional Success: The Promethean can hear exactly what is running through the subject’s head for the next three turns.

Possible Modifiers: Subject is current suffering from Disquiet (–1), subject is aware that the Promethean can hear thoughts (–3)

Israel Hands

Quote: *You can take your chances with dead men’s ghosts, but I’ll not aid you.*

Background: Israel was made to sail. He knows that. His body was washed ashore from a shipwrecked smuggling vessel on the Cornish coast in the first quarter of the 19th century. His creator, a man of tin and clay from the Cornish mines, had long desired to travel the waves. Israel doesn’t remember clearly what happened to his creator. Israel thinks he may have become human. He remembers, one night, seeing the creator walk down the beach into the sea. That was the last he saw of him. For decades, all Israel knew was that he was made to see the sea.

He sat in his Cornish cave watching the sea in a dream-like existence. Eventually, as the Wasteland spread around him, he decided to move on, always sticking to coasts and harbors. Sometimes he stole provisions and clothes from humans. He went without a name for more than 80 years, finally picking a name at random from a battered copy of *Treasure Island* he found on a rubbish dump.



He learned quite early on that he was not human, but he only found out that there were other Prometheans recently, when a vision revealed to him the existence of Sister Stitch, whom he found and joined with. Now, Israel is accompanying and protecting the Sister on her Pilgrimage.

Description: Usually, Israel looks like a craggy, muscular man in his 40s, with cropped gray hair, gray eyes and weather-beaten skin. He wears simple, hard-wearing clothes, which show the marks of heavy use. They're covered with stains and patches.

When his disfigurements are visible, Israel's skin looks like it's made of rock salt and sand. His skin reflects the light in odd ways and has cracks that look like ancient seams found in Cornish sandstone.

Storytelling Hints: Israel talks in the slightly labored, archaic syntax of a 19th-century Cornishman. Although he's aware of such things as cars, planes and computers, he's not really comfortable around the paraphernalia of the modern world. The sea is his enthusiasm, and he gets antsy and irritable if he's too far from the coast for too long. Usually, he affects optimism and cheer, even when his true feelings don't reflect it. He is nearly always more friendly toward the people he meets than they are toward him, a fact that secretly causes him a great deal of distress.

He respects and admires his companion. She's made him wonder if he, too, could one day become human, and he's decided he wants it desperately.

Lineage: Tammuz

Refinement: Cuprum

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Crafts (Navigation, Knot-Tying) 1, Investigation (Map Reading) 1, Medicine 1

Physical Skills: Athletics (Sailing) 2, Stealth 1, Survival 1, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Animal Ken 1, Empathy 2, Expression 2, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 2, Socialize (Holding Drink) 1, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Elpis 2, Strong Back, Weatherproof (see p. 59)

Willpower: 5

Humanity: 6

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 4

Defense: 2

Speed: 9

Health: 9

Azoth: 1

Bestowment: Unholy Stamina

Transmutations: *Metamorphosis* — Blessing of Tethys (··); *Sensorium* — Sensitive Ears (·), Aura Sight (··), Nightsight (··); *Vitality* — Might (··)

Pyros/per Turn: 10/1



FERRUM



We'd had a hell of a time finding that pack of Pandorans that'd been hunting the area. They'd attacked members of my throng a time or two already, but only when they were alone.

This was the first time I'd seen them, though.

"Hey, boys," I said to the kids I was hanging out with, some of the members of the local parkour club. "Shit's about to hit the fan. I think the cops found me." I'd cooked up a story earlier this week about how the cops were looking for me, and they'd agreed to all scatter if we saw them. They scattered, ostensibly to make the cops' job harder.

Mainly, though, it was to keep them safe when these fuckers found me. I took off at a sprint, hit the railing at just the right angle to vault it smoothly and then spun, monkey-jumping my way down to the street below. I heard the sounds of scrabbling claw on concrete and knew they were after me.

Follow me if you can, you little bastards, I thought, reveling in the way my body and Pyros worked together: smooth, sleek, almost perfect. Maybe it wasn't a soul, but it was close enough for now.

The Great Forge

The body is not yet iron, but it may yet be made so. This is the understanding of every Promethean who walks the Refinement of Ferrum. These Prometheans understand that in their current state, both body and soul are impure. Through tremendous exercise and pushing the body to develop to its limits and beyond, the practitioner of Ferrum can cause the mass of Divine Fire within him to purify and approach perfection as well: Titans, as those who practice this Refinement are called, seek to perfect the soul through perfection of the body.

This concept is not unique to the Prometheans. It is, in fact, very old. More than one culture attributes incredible spiritual powers to its most skilled athletes and martial artists. Whether it is the Irish Cu Chulainn, Davey Crockett in the Americas or the warrior-heroes of a hundred Chinese or Japanese legends, humanity understands one thing: refining the body leads to the refinement of the soul.



On any given day, one who practices this Refinement undertakes some kind of physical activity. Generally speaking, some sort of hard exertion forms the core of a Titan's day, and Titans often eagerly anticipate their exercise. Whether they are athletes or martial artists, in sweaty communion with their bodies the Titans find their souls.

Those who seek Iron do have a couple of traits in common, though. First and foremost, they rarely engage in endeavors that require the participation of others. The need to rely on others for the honing of the body is a weakness. Thus, Titans are less likely to be found engaged in team sports and similar pursuits as their central discipline — though, of course, they are more than happy to take up a basketball or attend a martial arts exhibition when given the chance. Disquiet simply makes any extended participation in such things difficult to manage.

Extreme Sports

Many Titans practice various forms of extreme sports, for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, the majority of extreme sports are solitary endeavors. Base jumping, parkour and rock climbing all test the athlete, and the athlete alone — they can depend on no one but themselves. Their victories are their own alone; likewise, the blame for failure and defeats lies with only them. Amadeo practices parkour in the streets of Paris. The Muse simply called Singer drifts through the American West, singing in bars by night and climbing rocks and mountains by day.

New Merit: Parkour (* to *****)

Prerequisites: Dexterity ***, Athletics **

The sport of parkour began in France, and has quickly spread to other parts of the world. Parkour demands a level of athleticism from its practitioners that few other sports do. The purpose of parkour, which is also called “free running” or “urban running,” is to move as quickly as possible through an environment with a variety of obstacles, sprinting through the terrain and using a variety of climbing techniques, leaps, rolls and other athletic movements to navigate.

Watching an expert traceur (one of the terms for someone who practices parkour) at work is awe-inspiring, like something out of an action film. Though the technique comes from well-disciplined training, imbedding a certain body of movements and techniques into the parkour's instinctive reactions, the goal is a flawless, seamless flow of movement from one obstacle to the next, with hardly any pause in speed or movement.

This “flow” is the goal of traceurs — it is the highest achievement of a practitioner of parkour to

achieve a Zen-like state of lack of thought, where purest instinct and reaction drives the movement. Skilled traceurs speak of sometimes being aware that they've accomplished a tremendously difficult feat heartbeats after they've accomplished it. Through intensive training to drive home certain actions when confronted with certain obstacles, the traceur can depend on his instincts, rather than his thoughts — which are vulnerable to fears and doubts — when moving through the urban environment.

Traceurs gather in clubs. Though the sport has begun to catch on, and some of these clubs are receiving corporate sponsorship, the clubs tend to be quite informal, with members gathering in a given place on a given day of the week to work on their techniques.

Dots purchased in this Merit allow access to special athletic maneuvers. Each maneuver is a prerequisite for the next. So, your character can't have “Cat Leap” until he has “Flow.” The maneuvers and their effects are described below, most of which are based on the Athletics Skill.

Flow (*): Your character has some basic training in the techniques of parkour, allowing him to act instinctively to obstacles and jumps. When using running or using the Foot Chase rules (see the *World of Darkness Rulebook*, p. 65), your character may negate hazardous terrain penalties equal to his Rating in the Parkour Merit. Additionally, the roll to gauge a jump distance (see the *World of Darkness Rulebook*, p. 67) is a reflexive action.

Cat Leap ():** Your character has mastered some of the twisting leaps, landing rolls and wall taps used by traceurs. When using a Dexterity + Athletics roll to mitigate damage from falling (see the *World of Darkness Rulebook*, p. 179), your character gains one automatic success. Additionally, add one per dot in this Merit to the threshold of damage that can be removed through this roll. Thus, if the Storyteller decrees that only three successes may be garnered to reduce falling damage, the traceur with three dots in this Merit may actually use six successes (assuming the player accumulates that many, including his automatic success).

Wall Run (*):** Your character has mastered the quick wall-run and leaping climb techniques of parkour. When using Athletics to climb (see the *World of Darkness Rulebook*, p. 64), your character is capable of scaling heights of 10 feet + 5 feet per dot in Athletics as an instant action (rather than the normal 10 feet), though every full 10 feet beyond the first imposes a -1 die penalty.

Expert Traceur (**):** Your character has trained so extensively in this athletic discipline that its maneuvers are normal and instinctive for him. Your character may designate any Athletics roll that involves running, jumping and climbing as being a Rote Action (see the *World of Darkness Rulebook*, p. 134). However, when doing so, he is less able to react to events that don't have to do with navigating the environment, causing him to lose his Defense for that turn.

Freeflow (***):** Your character has achieved the freeflow that is the holy grail of traceurs everywhere — he acts without thinking, his movements flowing, graceful and quick when he enters “the zone.” He can perform any Athletics action that involves running, jumping or climbing as a reflexive action, rather than an instant action. Doing so requires that the character has been running for at least a full minute previously; any use of this ability before that minute mark requires the expenditure of one point of Willpower, however.

Mythology and Legends

Titans also find a great deal of inspiration in old legends, particularly those that involve heroes of great physical power. Legends of Archer Yi, Paul Bunyan, Heracles and other figures have something to say about the way those who told those stories viewed their discipline, skill and abilities. These are almost invariably based on some real person — or at least, some cultural ideal — that tends to say something about those who accomplish great things.

Titans seek to understand these by emulating these legends, insofar as anyone can. The story of Paul Bunyan says something about the honing that comes from being a lumberjack; similarly, the martial practice of archery has much to benefit one who pursues the Refinement of Iron.

Fight Clubs

Though there have always been places where men and women, looking for the chance to demonstrate their combat prowess, could go to do so, only in the last decade or so have these sorts of “clubs” sprung up. Inspired by the work of an Oregon author, the purpose of these fight clubs isn't simply violence — it is primal release, a means of working off stress in a world that has less and less room for such expressions of frustrations and anger. Everyone is there voluntarily, and everyone sets aside social constraints and assumptions.

Many Titans believe in the liberating nature of these clubs, holding that in pain and violence, one who survives the experience is honed and refined, made stronger, faster and more acutely aware of his body's potential. As such, there are more than a few of these fight clubs that were started by practitioners of the Ferrum Refinement.

Calculated Risk

Those who practice the Refinement of Ferrum understand that the body is simply the vessel — the crucible, if you will — in which Transmutation takes place. The body serves to contain the Divine Fire until, through a series of endeavors, the body can be transmuted into an actual soul.

Some Titans understand that tremendous pressure upon the crucible of the body can make this happen much more quickly. To this end, they deliberately place themselves in harm's way. Some deliberately exposing themselves to diseases, poisons and injury. Others undertake methods of extreme body mutilation that no human could survive, or place themselves in situations of tremendous violence. Big Dan, refusing to risk turning his Golem wrath on a human being, sneaks into junkyards at night and smashes windows with his hands, feet and head.

Embracing Iron

Prometheans on the path of Iron focus on their bodies as a source of strength, the vehicle by which they travel the road along their Pilgrimage. Thus, they become tremendously adept in the mastery of Transmutations to the body. Corporeum, the Transmutations of the body, and Vitality, the Transmutations of strength, are the base tools of Ferrum Prometheans.

Learning the Transmutations of Corporeum can be a grueling task. It is a process of driving the body's capability beyond its limitations, and then pushing it yet further, making up for the body's lack through the liberal application of Pyros.

For the lower-ranked Transmutations, this process is simpler. Whether the Promethean is holding his breath for extended periods of time, until it feels as though his lungs might burst and then just a bit longer, sprinting at full speed until his leg muscles cramp and then flooding his legs with Pyros to keep running anyway or deliberately bruising himself and focusing Pyros to “burn away” the damage beneath, the Promethean is capable of literally driving his body to new heights.

Learning the mid-level Corporeum Transmutations takes longer and is more arduous. Whether forcing himself, again and again, to walk across surfaces he cannot possibly balance on, meditating on the imperfections of his Promethean flesh and driving himself to tears through his visualization of having smooth, perfect skin and human features or moving from a crouched, seated position to a place across the room, faster and faster each time, this process is difficult and sometimes painful. Fortunately, those who have mastered lesser techniques along the same lines have an easier time of embracing more powerful expressions of Pyros over flesh.

Finally, the heights of Corporeum are tremendously difficult on the body — throng-mates may have to sometimes be recruited to help the Promethean find his way back to a safe bed to recuperate.





Whether mastering Hard Body through repeatedly subjecting himself to violence, or mastering Rarified Grace through strenuous agility exercises and the accomplishment of nearly impossible tasks until the Promethean literally cannot move, clearly, learning these most powerful of Transmutations comes only by driving oneself not simply to one's limits and beyond, but further still, beyond even the limits of the Pyros that sustains flesh long after the flesh itself is overcome.

Using Corporeum Transmutations is the Promethean equivalent of the runner's high. A Corporeum Transmutation is exhilarating and energizing, and can be quite addictive. It is the flush of victory and the elation of winning an important sporting event, the glow of a great orgasm and absolute feeling of mastery over the body.

The Transmutations of Vitality lend tremendous strength to the Promethean who learns them. The process of learning and using these Transmutations is strange, though, for it involves the channeling of the Created's humours in new fashions.

Part of mastery of the body includes mastery of the humours that course through the Promethean form. Through Vitality, these humours are put to direct and meaningful use. The process of learning Vitality Transmutations always feels strange, for it is literally learning to drive humours into parts of the body they do not normally inhabit, and in sufficient amounts to alter the effectiveness of the body.

Prometheans learning these techniques learn to literally wring out their internal organs of their humours, squeezing the organs like a sponge and forcing the resultant surge of that humour into the relevant areas to accomplish what they wish. This practice leaves most Prometheans feeling ill for an hour or so afterwards, depending on their humour.

Frankensteins may experience a sharp pain in the lower back, and feel sluggish and emotionless for a while, having milked their livers of all the choleric humour that can be mustered. Galateids often suffer a strong pain in the upper left-hand side of the abdomen, along with feelings of slight fear and emotional fragility, as they have forced all the sanguine humour from their spleens.

Tammuz may experience lung pain, a wracking cough and a curious sense of elation as they squeeze the melancholic humour for their experiments. Osirans sometimes experience a dull, intense abdominal pain and a sense of strange distraction and inability to focus when driving their gall bladders to empty themselves of the phlegmatic humour. Finally, Ulgan are known to suffer tremendous migraines and other head pain, and to become quite inattentive and confused, having flooded the ectoplasmic humour from their brains.

By the time the Promethean has learned the Transmutation, he has usually mastered the flow of humour necessary to enable him to activate the Transmutation without the symptoms above, but extensive use of Vitality Transmutations in a given scene can still sometimes trigger unpleasant side effects (none of which have any game effects).

Once the Promethean has mastered her Vitality Transmutations, their use can trigger strong expressions of her humour. A Frankenstein is likely to be more short-tempered, a Galatea more flirtatious and daring. The Tammuz is likely to withdraw into himself, the Osiran becomes more calculating and thoughtful and the Ulgan, having paid a spiritual price for power in the physical world, becomes far more interested in the goings-on in Twilight around him.

A Titan No More

For the dedicated Titan, the Refinement of Ferrum is all he'll ever need — or so he believes. But the fact is, eventually, some Prometheans find that they've honed their bodies into tremendous, powerful machines of skill and strength, but their insides don't feel any less hollow. Sometimes they wonder if they shouldn't have been spending this time meditating, or doing good deeds, or seeking enlightenment or *something* besides doing pushups and beating up thugs and training buddies.

Sometimes, they look around them and see that humans aren't powerhouses and incredible athletes. In fact, many humans are tremendously frail and undisciplined, wracked with sickness, addictions and treating their bodies like hell because they just don't know any better. For some Titans, this is a moment of realization, and the Promethean seeks out the Refinement of Gold, desiring to understand mortality.

Others suddenly find the goals of the Titans to be hollow — is the development of the body really the development of the soul, or is development of the body a distraction from development of the soul? Those who decide to look more directly toward their spiritual existences find the Refinement of Copper, with its mysticism and peace-seeking.

Those who turn to the Refinement of Quicksilver often do so not as a denial of Iron, but as a progression from it. After all, if the Promethean body is enhanced and improved by the mastery of the Pyros, what might be gained from focusing on the Divine Fire itself, rather than the what it can do for the body?

Situations can change the outlook of a Titan as well, though. One who grows weary of the world's hate can turn easily to the Refinement of Tin. Sometimes, this change in outlook can simply come as a result of strange fascinations; more than one Ferrum has turned to the practice of Centimanus after seeing the changes *that* Refinement can make to the body of the Promethean.

Tales of Iron

The sheer physicality of those who practice Ferrum means they are often the most willing to throw themselves into difficult or dangerous situations. Chases, fights and other physical endeavors do nothing to give them pause; in fact, many of those on the Refinement of Ferrum seem to eagerly anticipate such times.

Milestones

- Earn recognition for a physical achievement (boxing or wrestling belt, winning a marathon, etc.)
- Set and achieve an “impossible” goal (free climbing a skyscraper)
- Reach the point of physical collapse from exhaustion
- Die and resurrect (either through Azoth flaring or the Revivification Bestowment)
- Chase down and best a Pandoran
- Fight to protect a human being or another Promethean
- Do battle with a non-Pandoran supernatural being
- Learn about human anatomy and physiology (either through academic or more hands-on pursuits)
- Cheat at a game or contest (or refuse to cheat even though opponent does so)
- Endure hours or days of physical punishment without complaint

Story Hooks

- **The First Rule:** The throng’s Titan meets another Promethean on the path of Ferrum. After she finds out that the throng-member is another Titan, she invites him to attend a “special gathering” — in the next month, in a nearby city, she is hosting a special Prometheans-only tournament style competition, as a way of testing one another. What happens when so many Prometheans are gathered into one spot — and she stands revealed as a *Sublimatus* or Centimanus looking to gather a feeding herd for her Pandorans?

- **Angel of Conflict:** A Titan begins experiencing wave after wave of assailants — people who want him dead. They don’t seem to have much in common: cops, street gangs, mob hit men, ex-soldiers. With some investigation, he finds that these attacks are being motivated by a *qashmal*. Things hit a new level when the vampires begin attacking. What is the *qashmal* trying to accomplish? His destruction, or is it trying to send him some sort of message? What do the assailants all have in common — is it a key to one of his milestones?

- **The Limits of Strength:** A Titan approaches the throng, seeking the throng’s help. As part of his Great Work, he knows that he needs to find a way to save a single mother from the life she is leading, which includes drug abuse. He is at a loss for how to do so — his normal methods (generally including quite a bit of violence) aren’t really working for him, and are in fact, driving her further down a road of despair. Can they aid him? What happens if it is revealed that she has already begun to succumb to Disquiet, and it will soon worsen?

Rumors: Ferrum

- “You know why we train the way we do? I know your creator didn’t tell you this, because not all of us are aware of the truth, but I’m going to give you an edge up: the Great

Culling. Sometimes, when a Titan has gone beyond the second wind, when he’s pushed himself so hard physically, taken it beyond what any human could manage, just before he collapses from exhaustion, he has a vision. I’ve never experienced it myself, but I know at least two others who have. In this vision — and they all describe it the same way — a wave of Flux passes over the world, and all the Pandorans awaken instantly and permanently, and begin to hunt us. When that happens, we’re the only thing that is going to stand between them and the rest of our kind. You better hope you’re ready for it when it comes.”

- “You stick with your training, and your dedication to Ferrum. Even when it gets hard, and it seems like it would be so much easier to embrace Stannum, or find solace in Aurum, you hold to it. Because a Promethean who completes the Magnum Opus while holding tight to Iron achieves great things, my boy. When you finally seize that Elpis, and in the moment when your Azoth changes, it leaves behind the cold power of Iron you’ve built up in it, and your human body will be strong — stronger than other men. They say that the greatest of heroes — folks like Hercules and mythical heroes like that — are the result of one of us finding Mortality. That’s what they mean when they said a hero has the blood of the gods in his veins: he was kin to the Divine Fire.”

- “You’ve heard about the Clancy Street Brothers, right? Yeah, they’re that ‘fight club’ that meets in that old warehouse. The big guy who leads them — broad shoulders, smashed-in face, no hair, kinda mottled skin — yeah, they say there’s something going on with him. He says he runs his little fight club to help people ‘liberate’ themselves, and to ‘unleash something primal.’ But they also say that the best of the Clancy Street Brothers just kinda disappear. Oh, you hear that they moved away, or got a promotion or just lost interest or something, but I dunno . . . all I know is that my cousin Mikey was part of his crew, and he disappeared. I went down there and found that big guy working on the punching bag — and on his right shoulder was the tattoo Mikey got when he turned 18, from the comic book we both used to love so much as kids. I just booked it out of there, it scared me so bad.”

New Transmutations

The following are new expressions of Corporeum and Vitality, found most commonly among those who practice the Refinement of Ferrum.

Ingrained Reflexes (Corporeum ••)

Body memory is a powerful tool for the Promethean who knows how to use it. Through practice and training,





the normal motions of a given physical discipline become deeply ingrained, so that the Promethean may act without thought.

Cost: 1 Pyros

Dice Pool: None

Action: Reflexive

When this power is purchased, the Promethean chooses a single Physical Skill he possesses at •• or greater. By spending a point of Pyros when making a roll using that Skill, that use of the Skill is considered a Rote Action (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 134). This power may not be invoked when the roll is used to activate a Transmutation or other supernatural power — the power may only be used for mundane uses of that Skill (though, attacking with claws or other physical weaponry is considered a mundane use).

This Transmutation may be purchased multiple times. Each time it is purchased, it applies to a new Physical Skill.

Titan's Fist (Vitality •• to ••••)

Those who master this power strike blows of such tremendous force that they are not limited by armor. The force of their blows travel through such impediments, pulping flesh and shattering bone beneath such protections.

There are three “Titan’s Fist” Transmutations, ranging from two to four dots, and must be learned in sequential order beginning with the two-dot version.

Prerequisite: Might •

Cost: 1 Pyros

Dice Pool: None

Action: Reflexive

As the Promethean makes a Brawl attack, this Transmutation is activated, reducing the effectiveness of the target’s Armor. This must be activated before the attack is made. With the two-dot version of this power, armor is reduced by 1 against Brawl attacks made by the Promethean. The three-dot version reduces armor by 2, and the four-dot version reduces it by 3. This applies only to living creatures (that is, it doesn’t help in destroying inanimate objects; the Transmutation can be used to bypass artificial armor such as Kevlar), and regardless of the level of the Transmutation, the Promethean’s player need only spend one Pyros to activate it.

Amadeo

Quote: *Hey, no sweat. You don’t understand me — that’s cool. We don’t need to be like one another, you know. You got God; I’ve got the City. Those seem an awful lot alike to me, some days.*

Background: Amadeo first awoke with a view of a river. The woman at his side was very glad to see him, and welcomed him to the world. She taught him for a while, speaking of sky gods, the spirits and ancient traditions of the steppes. He was so distracted, though — she kept snapping her fingers to get his attention away from the window, where

it seemed like wonders lay just beyond the dirty glass. She told him not to be afraid, that they’d be gone from the filthy city shortly enough.

He tried to listen to her, but he was so glad when she finally left, off on some errand or another, and he could finally creep out that window, onto the fire escape outside. The city of Paris stretched out before him, glittering at him, winking, suggesting it had all the mysteries of the world. He climbed the fire escape then, onto the roof, and began to explore the city from the rooftops.

He first saw the spirits from up there — spirits of twinkling lights and filthy air and old stone edifices. The spirits of Notre Dame called out to him as he passed, but he was too busy moving, too busy moving from one place to the next. His mother had tried to teach him of the ancient horse-lords that were their mutual heritage, but it was clear that he knew of them by instinct, for the city was his mount that night, and he rode it fast and hard, leaping from one building to the next, scaling walls to get higher, ever higher, until he was atop the Eiffel Tower, clinging to its vast iron bones, when the sun rose.

That was the first time he wept. He never returned to his mother. She’d promised to take him away from the city, and he couldn’t bear the thought of ever being separated. While Amadeo eventually encountered other Prometheans, who told him of Refinements, the Pilgrimage and the cautions he must take, he learns his true lessons from the city.

Three years ago, he was startled to discover a handful of mortal children moving through the back alleys and rooftops, running, leaping and climbing as though they loved the city as much as he. He eventually warily approached them, and though he doesn’t spend much time around them, he’s learned their techniques. Practicing with them sometimes, or watching them work out from afar, Amadeo has become incredibly adept at parkour, and considers it a form of spiritual communion.

Description: Amadeo is tall and athletic, with a thinly muscled build appropriate to someone engaged in a high-energy, acrobatic endeavor such as parkour. His skin is somewhat dark; the body that was used to create him was likely of mixed heritage. He wears his hair in long dreadlocks that trail after him as he flies through the city, and he has a variety of piercings and weird tattoos. His eyes are an unsettling light color, however, and there is something uncanny and intense about his gaze.

When his disfigurements show, the Pyros crawls across his body, revealing terrible rent flesh held together by whitish, ghostly material that arcs with unnatural lightning. Through the gaps, the city can be seen somehow, strangely out of focus and odd, as though the viewer were seeing the soul of the city through Amadeo.

Storytelling Hints: Amadeo is in love with the city. He’s never left it, and doesn’t ever intend to. When he is moving through the city, his hands scraping against concrete, his feet

running, leaping, climbing, he is in the flow. Problems fall away, the fact that he's some kind of monster is left behind in the sheer ecstasy of movement. Amadeo recently joined a throng of young Prometheans in Paris, appreciating the help in dealing with an infestation of Pandorans. He knows they'll have to part ways eventually, but it can be nice having someone around to talk to.

Lineage: Ulgan

Refinement: Ferrum

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Crafts 2, Investigation 2, Medicine 1

Physical Skills: Athletics (Parkour) 4, Brawl 2, Larceny 1, Stealth 2, Survival 1, Weaponry (Knife) 2

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Expression 1, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 1, Streetwise (Crash Spaces) 2

Merits: Allies (Paris Parkour Scene) 3, Contacts (Paris Parkour Scene) 1, Danger Sense, Fast Reflexes 2, Fighting Finesse, Fighting Style: Boxing 2, Fleet of Foot 2, Parkour 4

Willpower: 4

Humanity: 7

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 8

Defense: 3

Speed: 13

Health: 8

Azoth: 2



Bestowment: Ephemeral Flesh

Transmutations: Corporeum — Swift Feet (·), Ingrained Reflexes: Athletics (··), Athletic Grace (···); Vitality — Might (··), Vault (··), Hyperion's Flight (···)

Pyros/per Turn: 11/2

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Brawl	(B)	—	4	—
Knife	1(L)	—	8	—

MERCURIUS



I watched from a distance, walking when he walked, resting only when he rested. I'd heard the Hundred Handed spawned storms left and right, and I knew if I wanted to find the truth within the storm, they were my best bet. I'd been following him for days, but I'd seen no truth to it, not until now.

The sky had been growing darker, and there was a feeling in the air. Hot. Heavy. Electric. A thunderstorm, perhaps, but I was hoping not.

The Freak cut across the field, green wheat clutching around his thighs as he waded through. I stayed behind, working my way through the edge of the trees where I could keep an eye on him but remain hidden.

I knew when the storm hit that it wasn't anything natural. The clouds broke open, like someone had taken a hammer to them, and the air just exploded. I turned just in time to see the first lightning bolt hit him.

It seemed like hours that the bolts came crashing down. The Freak shook, arms lifted up to the sky, although in protest or supplication I couldn't tell. The Pyros rippled through the field, chasing white-hot patterns in the half-ripe grain. I stood, mouth gaping open, trying to read the message the Pyros was leaving there.

Then the storm moved toward me. I couldn't do anything but watch it rolling toward me like a shimmering wave of light. It was so beautiful, so powerful, I don't know that I'd have moved if I could have.

It stopped, maybe 10 feet in front of me, too far for me to reach it. Tendrils of crackling energy reached out for me, teasing me with their proximity.

I reached out for the closest one. Fire flowed through my veins like a white-hot flood, and I knew Power. It roared in my ears like a battle cry, and I knew Bravery. Fire blazed in my eyes, and I knew Wrath.

And as the Fire licked at my flesh and the acrid smoke burned my nostrils, I strode forward to meet it, hoping to know Peace.

Seeking Enlightenment

The soul is elusive, and its study has led humans to the furthest reaches of the Earth and the innermost depths of their own minds. In our attempts to come to an understanding of the nature of our inner spirit, we have used every extreme from torture to sensory deprivation, and plumbed the range of human experiences. We have sought the secrets of the soul in life and in death and every experience between. And, in an attempt to understand the Divine Fire and the role it may or may not play as the Promethean soul, Ophidians have followed every one of our footsteps on those journeys. In fact, some theorize that one of the Serpents was present on many of humankind's deepest sojourns into soul-searching territory, sharing, leading or recording the results.

History

According to oral tradition still shared at Rambles, Plato's early philosophical dissection of the soul into three parts (reason, emotion and appetite) was inspirational to the early followers of Mercurius who drew connections from his theories to the nature of Pyros, Elpis and Flux. Stories identify Ariston of Argos, an early Osiran Serpent who served briefly as Plato's coach in the physical studies of wrestling and boxing, and was reported to have sparred with him on philosophical matters as well.

Both Thomas Aquinas, during his study of the nature of the human soul, and Voltaire, who disputed many of Aquinas' statements on the subject, were attended by students who, some believe, guided the philosophers' studies in the field through their insightful questions. Promethean legends state that Aquinas and Voltaire's students, both young men who shared the name of James, were actually the same person: a Galateid by the name of James Beaufont. Others deny this. Certainly, as the philosophers lived several hundred years apart, were one Promethean to have attended both of them he would have likely had to have spent a great deal of time bleeding off Azoth in order to extend his lifespan. Proponents of the Beaufont Theory point to the rampant periods of famine, disease and plague in the areas between modern-day Italy and France during the time period between the men's lives as possible proof of the influence of James's time gone to the Wastes.

Recent History

In more modern times, tales link followers of Mercurius to the inception or inspiration of many spiritual concepts conceived or re-popularized in modern times. From the foundation of the Jehovah's Witnesses, Scientology and

the modern pagan movement to the psychology concepts of Jungian individuation, and from science fiction explorations of robotic "souls" to links between the physical body and the soul (yoga, martial arts and tantric studies), if stories are to be believed, Mercurius followers either instigated or aided in the conception of many of the modern spiritual movements. Certainly large gatherings such as Burning Man, powwows, Rainbow Gatherings and the like, afford even Promethean with powerful Azoth to interact closely with human soul-seekers with much less difficulty than was possible for them 50 years ago. The short-term but large-scale nature of these festivities provides the perfect cover for Serpents to slip into human society and interact with individuals who are exploring a wide variety of methods of investigating the nature of the human spirit. The fact that these gatherings are held across the world also afford the Serpent the opportunity to build whatever sense of community she can, while not staying in any one location long enough to too strongly impact her physical environment. Unfortunately, while the Wasteland effect may not get the chance to build for a nomadic Ophidian, the impact of Disquiet still affects those she interacts with.

Many of today's alternative cultures, in which sex, drugs, body modification, and experimental music are often linked with spirituality, also provide ample space for a Serpent to explore. Performance artists such as the highly tattooed and pierced Wretched known as "Cypher," renowned for driving spikes through his tongue and swallowing flaming lengths of rope, can make a place for themselves on stage in a crowd of humans who may, at least for a time, see him as just another freak like themselves. Likewise, a spiritual guru or a recorder of the philosophical wanderings and musings of others can find a place to be tolerated, if not wholly accepted, in the various alternative cultures that abound in modern society, more easily than in mainstream culture. Among those who often seem intent on creating discomfort in others through their words, deeds and dress, it is far less likely for Disquiet cause problems than in the more ascetic environments traditionally associated with soul-searching.

Beyond the Soul

But, regardless of what opportunities await an Ophidian in today's human society, Mercurius goes far beyond the study of the human soul and its possible ramifications about the nature of Pyros as a Promethean soul. Some aspects of the Quicksilver path are not related at all to humanity, save in the most esoteric and tangential senses.

The direct study of Pyros can be an arduous and intoxicating one, a dabbling in divine energy the likes of which few others will ever experience. Those who devote themselves predominantly to the study of Pyros may sequester themselves away in order to protect themselves from interruption and to shield others from the sometimes devastating effects of their experimentation.

There is a limit to how much any Ophidian can learn while sequestered, however. Inevitably, after a time, Ophidians' studies take them out into the world in search of other manifestations of Pyros to increase their knowledge and understanding of the Divine Fire. Whether they study it broadly or narrow their focus to Prometheans, *qashmallim*, Wastelands, the after-effects of Firestorms or even Pandorans, there is no aspect of Pyros that is taboo for the Ophidians' insatiable curiosities to draw them.

Dangerous Experimentation

In the early 20th century, an Ulgan Serpent by the name of Black Leshii, was reportedly experimenting with attempts to summon *qashmallim*. The last Promethean to have encountered Leshii, in mid-June of 1908, claimed later that during a Ramble the Ophidian had bragged of finding a method of attracting the

attention of a *qashmal* who had already manifested, and felt he was close to being able to summon them whole cloth from the Divine fire. Soon thereafter, however, a massive explosion occurred in the remote area where Black Leshii's forest retreat once stood. Scientists now claim the blast, the equivalent of 15 megatons of TNT, was the result of a meteorite striking the area, or perhaps the air shock of a meteor or comet that passed dangerously close to Earth.

The testimony of those who were just outside the blast radius, however, paint another story. Eyewitness reports of local nomads spoke of a column of blue light appearing, followed by lightning and thunder out of the clear sky and the manifestation of a huge cloud emitting strangely shaped flames. Perhaps it was just a coincidental astronomical occurrence, and not the hand of the Principle slapping down a Promethean who had overstepped





his bounds. To this day, however, no Ophidian has successfully picked up where Leshii left off, and the *qashmallim* remain un-summoned.

Opened Doors

Similar to the followers of other Refinements, Ophidians are most likely to learn the Transmutations of their Refinement through experimentation rather than more esoteric teaching methods. No book, no matter how elegantly penned, can truly contain the uncanny magic of using a Transmutation, and few Created would have access to such an item (or leisure to pore over it) if it did. Far more often, necessity births discovery, and a Promethean in need finds his call answered by Pyros in the form of a newly developed Transmutation.

A Serpent who is attempting to protect himself while barricaded inside a room may find himself adding to the durability of the walls between him and a maddened crowd, or may find the plank of wood he's grabbed to defend himself has become stronger: two different spontaneous developments of the Alchemicus Transmutation "Fortification." Likewise, an Ophidian who has found a child's dead body (or accidentally killed someone in a Torment-driven rage) and is about to be discovered by a Disquiet-fuelled mob may desire the corpse to come to life so strongly that his Pyros gives it a Spark of Life. While this may allow the Promethean to escape, he may be quite devastated to realize that the Transmutation was only temporary trickery, and the victim is still quite dead.

Vulcanus Transmutations are, if anything, even more likely to be developed spontaneously. By virtue of the Ophidians' Refinement's interest in Pyros, the "knack" for sensing when it (or Flux) is present is a Transmutation frequently discovered early on in an Ophidian's Pilgrimage. More advanced Transmutations, while more difficult, likewise often spring forth unexpectedly in response to challenges the Serpent encounters. Dire situations of need of an ally or throng-mate can spark the ability to Share Pyros, while attack by Pandorans or other Created can spawn a Promethean's ability to Steal or Drain Pyros.

The Nascents

An entire field of study within the Mercurius is devoted to the development of new Transmutations. Those who follow this study sometimes refer to themselves as the Nascent, although they are not a formal organization; their numbers are simply too small. At times there have been as many as a half-dozen self-identified Nascents scattered across the globe, and at other times decades pass without the word being mentioned. While there may not be a single Nascent in existence at any given moment, their texts remain.

Passed down when possible and carefully sequestered away when not, these tomes are written in almost indecipherable combinations of ancient languages and alchemical sigils and have been lost and rediscovered over and over throughout the centuries. The knowledge and inspiration these texts hold are a starting ground for those who are interested in forging new Transmutations. Some Promethaans hear rumors of the books and spend part of their Pilgrimage seeking out their hidden resting places. Others stumble across one of the tomes and chose to focus on the works within on their own. Rarely, a Promethean hears tales of encounters with an Ophidian who is already researching Transmutation variants and is mentored into the study through him, although so few Nascent exist at any given time that this is almost a legendary happening. However Prometheans come to this study, the dangerous but heady experience of creating new Transmutations can be an addictive one. The search for new variations of Transmutations has even led some Prometheans to Mercurius from other Refinements as they find their interest becoming an ever-larger aspect of how they view the world and their Pilgrimage.

Extra Sensory Perception

As a dedicated apprentice of the study of Pyros, an Ophidian may, over time, become more in touch with Pyros than any other Promethean. While wielding Pyros is not necessarily any easier as a Serpent, or any more effective when she does so, her concentrated awareness of the Divine Fire manifests an opening of her senses and an intensifying of the experience to her own perceptions. Whether it is this intense focus or some mystical benefit of the Refinement, a Serpent often finds that time on the Refinement of Quicksilver grants her a more in-depth sensory experience in relation to Pyros than she had before joining the Refinement. This experience differs from individual to individual, but there seem to be certain trends that manifest more or less reliably.

The Sweetest Nectar (Pyros and Azoth)

Just as many human beings take the amazing physical, chemical and neuro-electrical happenings of their bodies for granted, many Prometheans do not take sufficient time to be awestruck by the wonder of the Divine Fire animating them. As a Serpent progresses upon his studies, however, he finds this is more difficult to do, as he becomes more aware of the alchemical energy within him. He may describe the sensation as a furnace within him, with fire flowing beneath his skin, or as if the center of his Azothic energy is constantly bubbling cauldron deep within him or electric power surging through his muscles with every movement. Regardless of the form the Divine Fire manifests in, those who follow the Refinement of Mercurius are generally more aware of the power manifested in them than other Prometheans.

Wielding the Power

When Pyros is called upon, either to fuel Transformations, to heal or to be used in any other way, an Ophidian is well aware of it being spent. Likewise, when her body regains Pyros, she feels the change.

Utilizing Vulcanus Transmutations may feel to the Serpent like lava is flowing through her body, hot and powerful as the Pyros surges to accomplish the task before it. She may feel a hot wind on her skin, or the world may take on a reddish-orange hue while the Transmutation is taking place. Alchemicus Transmutations frequently manifest with a slight smell of sulfur for the Ophidian using them, or a faint bubbling sound that is audible only to her. Likewise, Consortium Transmutations (see p. 96) may bring her a feeling of the presence of her throng-mates, even if they are far away at the time. For some, these influences eventually become visible to other Promethean as well. The Serpent may begin to manifest a reddish hue in her hair or skin when attempting to manipulate Pyros using the Vulcanus Transmutations, or a chemical odor when using Alchemicus. Among the more disturbing manifestations of this affinity with their Transmutations was displayed by Mariya Two-Tongues, a Tammuz Ophidian who, after many years studying the Refinement of Quicksilver, began speaking with an echo (said to be the voice of one of her fallen throng-mates) for several days after utilizing any of the Consortium Transmutations.

Generating Pyros, whether through human interaction, the coming of a new day or other means, energizes the Serpent like a human who has just consumed caffeine. Taking on a Pyros Brand burns not only her flesh, but deep within, marking whatever passes for a soul in a Promethean just as deeply as her skin. Any way that Pyros touches her, she sense it deeply, a fact that sometimes fuels her to greater insight, but, if the feelings are painful, may also drive her deep into Torment.

Bitter Dregs

Every privilege has its price, and Ophidians' increased awareness of the wonder of Pyros is no exception to this rule. There is no taste as bitter as that of rising Torment, no scent as acrid as its taint in the nostrils, and as Serpents fight to resist the buildup of Torment they must contend also with these extra pieces of sensory input. For some, it can serve as a warning that their Torment is building, and they must take action to slow it before it overwhelms them. For others, unfortunately, it only serves to goad them deeper.

Cypher, for example, when driven to Torment by having his performances rejected by a Disquiet-tainted crowd, not only begins planning revenge upon their ringleader but can feel the man's bones breaking in his mind, smell the acrid smoke of his home burning and hear his wife and children's plaintive cries for help before any act of revenge is ever begun. Likewise, a Riven such as Persephone not only covets the item that has become the object of her obsession, she hungers for it with a drive that fills her senses. She can hear

people whispering about it on the edge of every conversation, catches glimpses of others tucking it away out of her sight in her peripheral vision and even may believe she can smell it on the air around her.

The Quicksilver Path

Like the ouroboros serpent that clutches its tail in its mouth, many Ophidians see the alchemical process as a cyclic one. In order for a Promethean to come into being, a human being must die, and the driving goal of a Promethean is to return to that human state. But along that path exist many branches, and most Ophidians recognize that the Quicksilver Path is neither the be-all nor the end-all of their road to enlightenment.

On to the Quicksilver Path

The Divine Fire is at the heart of what it is to be Promethean. Pyros is what differentiates a Promethean from a human corpse and lends each Promethean whatever semblance of life he possesses. While each Lineage has its own nature, its own humour, the Divine Fire drives them all, and it is difficult to imagine a Promethean not spending time contemplating something that is so much at the core of his being at some point along his Pilgrimage. While not all Prometheans spend time on the Refinement of Quicksilver, most do.

While it is not unheard of for a Promethean to begin his existence with the Refinement of Quicksilver, it is a rarity. Most often, when one of the Created wakes for the first time, he is faced with challenges of survival that are, for the time being, far more pressing than the nature of the Divine Fire that fuels him. This is more likely to motivate him toward Aurum (to attempt to blend into humanity) or Ferrum (to protect himself physically) as a beginning philosophy. If brought into being in a place and situation of relative safety, however, a Promethean might be afforded the opportunity to begin contemplating such esoteric concepts from the beginning of his existence. Most often, this will come about when the new Promethean's creator is also following Mercurius, and is able to inspire similar thoughts and curiosities in her new child. An Ophidian creator is no guarantee that the newly Created will follow the same Refinement, though. While it sometimes happens, the inherent resentment between creator and created sometimes spurs a backlash of rebellion that drives the new child to seek out a diametrically opposed viewpoint.

Away from the Quicksilver Path

Just as many pathways lead to the Refinement of Quicksilver, many lead away from it. One of the Created could

become Redeemed from Mercurius, but it is likewise not unusual for him to move to other Refinements first.

While it is not unheard of for a Serpent to come to the Refinement of Quicksilver from that of Flux, it more commonly happens the other way around. Having spent time studying the power of Pyros and its effects both within and without, Ophidians often turn their attention more directly to the chaotic side of Pyros and dabble deeper in the power of “undoing.” Some Serpents do transition to becoming Freaks from Mercurius, a move that non-Centimani often refer to as being seduced by Flux.

The use of Transmutations and the expenditure of Pyros do not directly increase a Promethean’s Torment, but any defeat or disappointment can do so. The study of Pyros, especially when focusing on the development of new Transmutations, is a challenging one, replete with opportunities for failure. When the smoky taint of Torment becomes so thick upon the Quicksilver path that a Serpent can no longer see her goals before her, she may be driven to purge them on the Refinement of Tin.

Pyros is a double-edged sword. The contemplation of its nature is an often convoluted and slippery course of study and one where solid answers are hard to come by. The study of Pyros leads a Serpent into situations and encounters in which his essence and morality are as much endangered as his body, and a sundered spirit is much more difficult to repair than a broken bone. It is not surprising then that a Created would flee the challenges of Pyros for the more straightforward Refinement of Iron. While many former Ophidians do not stay long on the Iron Path, it can seem to be a comforting simplicity after the mercurial Quicksilver one.

It is more common for a Serpent transitions to the Refinement of Copper than it is for a Pariah to come to the Refinement of Quicksilver. The reasons for this vary, but certainly some Ophidians, after pursuing the secrets of Pyros, discover that they truly are not knowable in anything other than a shallow level. Regardless of how many alchemical formulas and theories are applied, Pyros, at its heart, is a divine mystery that cannot be precisely quantified. This realization may send a Serpent reeling into uncertainty or may gently divert her to a more philosophical world view that may lead her to a Pariah’s Pilgrimage.

Those who leave Mercurius for Aurum most often do after having begun to study how Pyros may or may not mirror the human soul for Prometheans. Some manage to find a niche for themselves among the alternative cultures that may be more accepting of them despite their Disquiet. Fortunate Serpents may even find the companionship of the rare human who is more resistant to Disquiet than most, at least for a time, and through that bond, come to the Gold Refinement. Of all the possible Refinements, the followers of Mercurius who see Pyros as the Promethean “soul” and the followers of Aurum who attempt to understand the nature of the human soul may be the most closely linked, and thus it is not surprising that Serpents may find their path leading toward that of Gold.

Tales of Quicksilver

With their mutable morality, Serpents make useful story hooks, whether they are players’ characters or not. An Ophidian’s search for understanding of the nature of Pyros may take him directly into conflict, or company, with vampires, mages, werewolves and other Prometheans, including Centimani. Some of the almost limitless opportunities for bringing followers of the Refinement of Quicksilver into storylines are detailed below.

Milestones

- Participate in an alchemical endeavor (making an elixir, for instance)
- Meet and converse with a mage
- Learn to fix and manipulate electronics
- Survive a Firestorm
- Learn an esoteric Transmutation (probably high-level Vulcanus or Alchemicus, but Electrification might also apply)
- Help a ghost pass on
- Create a new Transmutation
- Teach other Prometheans to wield Pyros more effectively
- Meet a *qashmal*
- Write an autobiography

Story Hooks

- **Which Side of the Bars?:** When their Ophidian throng-member goes missing, his companions fear the worst. But when they finally track him down to where he’s being imprisoned by a mage scholar, he refuses to leave, having come to believe that his captor’s studies may hold the key to a new level of understanding of the Divine Fire. Unfortunately, now the mage won’t allow them to leave either. Can they convince their companion to aid in their escape, or will he rat them out to get closer to the information he believes the mage to possess?
- **The First One’s Always Free:** During a Ramble with a wandering Serpent, the visitor makes mention of a Transmutation none of the rest have heard of. This ability, a variation of the Consortium Transmutations, would allow the throng-mates to share their Pyros and Transmutations among themselves freely at all times. However, the Serpent insists the only way he can teach them the secret of this ability is by becoming part of the throng himself. Are the throng-members willing to accept the stranger into their numbers in exchange for the gift, and how will they react when they discover he has lied to him about the Transmutation’s effect? (For details on this Transmutation, see “The Greater Need,” p. 88.)
- **Low on Ammo and Under Fire:** The troupe’s Ophidian throng-member directs the group into an area that has been over-

Notable Temperatures

All temperatures are calculated in approximate Celsius degrees and are given with the assumption that the actions are taking place at sea level and normal Earth atmospheric pressure. (To convert from Fahrenheit from Celsius, multiply the Celsius temperature by 1.8 and add 32.)

Absolute zero	-273.15°C
Lowest recorded temperature on Earth	-89.2°C (Vostok, Antarctica)
Car antifreeze freezes	-37°C
Water freezes	0°C
Average room temperature	20°C
Average human body temperature	37°C
Mercury melts	38°C
Hottest recorded temperature on Earth	58°C (El Azizia, Libya)
Water boils	100°C
Water causes third degree burns	140°C (exposure duration 6 seconds)
Water causes third degree burns	160°C (exposure duration 1 second)
Tin melts	231°C
Flashpoint of paper	233°C
Lead melts	327°C
Most rocks melt	600-1000°C depending on composition
Average crematorium	760-1000°C (2-3 hours to cremate human remains)
Silver melts	961°C
Gold melts	1064°C
Copper melts	1083°C
Iron melts	1535°C
Titanium melts	1660°C
Carbon melts	3550°C
Surface of the Sun	5668°C

run by Pandorans, following a powerful Firestorm. Upon entering the area, however, something begins sapping the throng's Pyros, leaving them vulnerable to the Mockeries' predation. The only unaffected member is the Ophidian who brought them here. Is this weakening effect a result of the Firestorm, or are they under attack? And if so, is the enemy one of their number?

Rumors: Mercurius

- "There's no such thing as an Ophidian. It's just a cover the Centimani use to get in close to those who wouldn't trust them any other way. If you're studying Pyros, you're studying Flux. There's no way to avoid it."
- "The most powerful Serpents don't really have Transmutations, per se. They know enough about Pyros to just be able to use it to do whatever they want it to do, kind of off the cuff. You don't wanna mess with someone who's been studying that stuff for decades, man. They can fry you by just looking at you."
- "I heard that some of them aren't looking to become human any more. One of them figured out a way to become pure Elpis, and ended up some sort of Pyros-god. Now a bunch of the rest of them are trying to do the same thing. Skip right over the human thing and become immortal."

New Transmutations

Mercurius leads its followers to find new and unique ways of using Pyros, making it the most common Refinement to develop new Transmutations. Other Prometheans speak, with either awe or warning, of Ophidians developing Transmutations that combine or modify other Transmutations, as well as creating entire Transmutation categories.

Temperature Modification (Alchemicus••)

Temperature, at its most basic level, is a quality of the speed of atoms. By increasing or decreasing their speed in an object, the Created can influence the temperature of an object and cause it to melt, boil or freeze.

Cost: 1-5 Pyros

Dice Pool: Azoth + Science

Action: Instant

By influencing the speed at which the atoms inside an item are moving, the Created can increase or decrease the object's temperature to a drastic degree. The Promethean must touch



an object, which cannot be a living (or unliving) creature, to manipulate its temperature. The object must be of a Size less than the character's Size + Azoth. The Promethean may utilize Temperature Modification more than once per scene to increase or decrease the same object's temperature, but at the end of the scene the object begins to revert naturally back to its normal temperature (i.e., ice begins to melt, heated metals begins to cool). Objects that have combusted by being heated with Temperature Modification will continue to burn or extinguish as they would if set aflame by mundane means.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The object's temperature moves 10 degrees Celsius in the opposite direction of that which was intended per point of Pyros spent.

Failure: The object's temperature does not change.

Success: The object's temperature changes up to 10 degrees Celsius in the intended direction per point of Pyros spent.

Dramatic Success: The object's temperature changes up to 20 degrees Celsius in the intended direction per point of Pyros spent.

Resize (Alchemicus ••••)

The Created can manipulate the size of an object by transmuting its material structure into inert vapor (i.e., air) or supplementing it with Pyros.

Cost: 1–5 Pyros

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant

The Promethean must touch an object, which may not be a living (or unliving) creature, to resize it. The object's Size may be increased or decreased by one Size Rating per Pyros spent. The player cannot spend more than five points of Pyros per activation. The smallest size attainable by any object utilizing this Transmutation is a Rating of 0, approximately a one inch cube. The largest size attainable by any object utilizing this Transmutation is a Rating of 20, approximately the size of a dump truck. Objects that begin smaller or larger than this range cannot be modified with this Transmutation. While this Transmutation may be used multiple times to increase or decrease the object's size in the same scene, once the Resizing is completed the change lasts for the remainder of the scene. The duration of this Transmutation may be boosted by the use of Persistent Change.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The object's Size changes in the opposite direction as intended, the number of Size Ratings equal to the points of Pyros spent.

Failure: There is no change in the object's Size, but the expended Pyros is lost.

Success: The object increases or decreases in Size one Rating level in the desired direction per point of Pyros spent. Any mass removed from the object is transformed into an inert vapor and dissipates.

Dramatic Success: The object resizes to the goal Size with no further expenditure of Pyros required.

Sense Refinement (Vulcanus •)

Sometimes it is to a Promethean's advantage to understand a little about another before their interaction goes too far. Through the use of this Transmutation, a Created may read the Refinement of another just as clearly as she can read his Lineage through his disfigurements.

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Wits + Azoth

Action: Reflexive

The Promethean is gifted with subtle physical clues as to the nature of the target's current Refinement. These clues may appear visually, such as metallic flecks or swirling that disappears when directly observed or a slight colored undertone to the Promethean's skin, hair or nails or as other sensory clues, such as the slight taste of iron in the air near the target or a tinny vibrato in his voice. This Transmutation does not tell the character that a given Promethean "follows Aurum" or "practices Centimanus," but as a Promethean encounters different Refinements, she can learn to recognize them. If she meets a Promethean following a Refinement she has never encountered, the Storyteller should limit the information to the sensory cues mentioned above (but perhaps allow an Intelligence + Occult roll to glean some information about the subject's potential Refinement, based on those cues).

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Created observes signs in the target that lead her to believe the target is a Refinement other than the correct one.

Failure: The Created notices no indication as to the target's Refinement.

Success: Subtle clues indicate to the Promethean which Refinement the target is currently following.

Exceptional Success: Not only does the Promethean know what Refinement the target is currently following, but the Promethean is given subtle hints as to any previous Refinements the target may have followed as well.

Possible Modifiers: Created is touching target (+3), Created and target are same Refinement (+1)

Sigils on the Wind (Vulcanus ••)

Using Pyros as a messenger, the Promethean is able to send simple messages over great distances.

Prerequisite: Firebrand (•)

Cost: 1 Pyros

Dice Pool: Wits + Azoth

Action: Instant

Not content with utilizing stationary Pilgrim Marks and Firebrands to leave messages for one another, enterprising Ophidians have developed a method of long-distance communication. By using the Divine Wind that touches all Promethean to send the same mystical brands generated with the "Firebrand" Transmu-

tation (see p. 154 of **Promethean: The Created**), Created are able to send simple messages to other Prometheans despite being separated by many miles.

The sending Created may choose either to send out a general message broadcast out over his general area or to attempt to send the message to a particular individual. General messages may be received by any Promethean, Pandoran, *qashmal* or creature connected to Pyros or Flux within an area equal to (half-mile times the sender's Azoth Rating). Specific messages may be targeted toward any of the same creature types who are within line of sight, or, with more difficulty, those at a distance with whom the Promethean has had at least 15 minutes of conversation with. **Note:** Because of the nature of the failures possible with this Transmutation, it is recommended that the Storyteller make the appropriate rolls, rather than the player.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: If the message was intended for a particular target, the message does not reach the target. Instead, the message is broadcast to all Pyros- or Flux-based creatures within an area equal to (one mile times the sender's Azoth Rating). The sending Promethean does not realize the message has been missent. If the message was intended for general broadcast, the meaning is garbled or distorted, and while the message is received by all applicable creatures in the target area, the message serves only as a beacon to them, allowing them to know the sender's precise location.

Failure: The message, whether general or specific, is not delivered. The sending Promethean does not realize the message has not reached its target(s).

Success: The message is successfully delivered. The sending Promethean does not realize the message has reached its target.

Exceptional Success: The message is delivered successfully and was transmitted so clearly that the sending Promethean is certain it has reached its target. The targeted Promethean receives not only the mental image of the Firebrands but also the general mood of the sender at the time the message was sent.

Possible Modifiers for Specifically Targeted Messages: Target is visible (+3), target also possesses this Transmutation (+1), target and sender have utilized this method of communication before (+1)

Pyros Imp (Vulcanus ●●●)

While the Transmutation "Animate Firetouched" allows a Promethean to animate a physical object, sometimes another type of assistance is more useful. By animating a bit of Pyros without investing it into a material object, the Created creates a non-tangible servant to temporarily do the Promethean's bidding.

Prerequisite: Animate Firetouched (●●●)

Cost: 2 Pyros

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Azoth

Action: Instant

By expending some of her own Divine Fire, the Created may create an entity of pure Pyros. The creature is transparent and intangible; when visible at all, it appears as a slight shimmer in the air outlined with tiny electric sparks, but the creature can dampen this shimmer when desirable to fulfill its assigned task.

This imp has no will of its own, being a manifestation of the character's will and energy. The imp can answer simple questions as long as they require nothing more than repeating back information it has overheard, communicating in a whispered voice. The imp is likewise capable of performing any simple task that does not require a physical form. These may include, but are not limited to, guarding an area and alerting the Created if it is entered, scouting into spying and reporting back up to 15 minutes of happenings and conversation or carrying messages up to 15 minutes in duration.

As the imp is intangible, it is capable of passing through solid structures, entering locked rooms and traveling swiftly (Speed 20). As a manifestation of the Promethean's will, the imp only knows what the Promethean knows at the time of creation. The imp cannot speak any languages its creator does not know, or have any information she does not possess. The imp can seek out any location its creator is aware of or any individual whose location the creator currently knows. The imp cannot, however, carry a message to a site or locate an individual unknown to the Promethean.

The imp, once brought into being, exists until its given task is completed or 24 hours have elapsed, whichever comes first. Tasks may be no more than two degrees of complexity. "Go here and tell this person this message" is fine, as is "Wait here and come tell me if anyone enters this area," but more complex orders are beyond the imp's capacity to follow.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Created fails to properly channel her Pyros, and rather than creating a Pyros imp, her Pyros backlashes upon her, aggravating her humours and sending them out of balance. The Promethean's player must immediately roll for the character to resist Torment.

Failure: The Pyros fails to coalesce properly. The imp does not manifest, and the expended Pyros is lost.

Success: The Created fashions the imp that manifests near her and awaits her orders.

Exceptional Success: The imp is created, but is more potent than a normal imp and manifests in a more impressive fashion, which may clue in its creator as to the imp's stronger nature. The imp exists for twice the normal duration of the Transmutation, 48 hours or until two consecutive tasks are completed, whichever is less. The imp is still incapable of completing more complex



tasks, but returns to its creator at the completion of the first task to await a second.

The Greater Need (Vulcanus ●●●●)

Just as Steal Pyros allows one Promethean to take spiritual energy from another, this powerful Transmutation allows one of the Created to steal another Promethean's Transmutations.

Cost: 2 Pyros

Dice Pool: Azoth vs. Azoth + Resolve + Composure

Action: Instant and contested; resistance is reflexive

Without the power of his Transmutations, a Promethean loses a vital way to protect himself against a hostile and violent world. The power to strip them away is a fickle and sometimes fatal one, which is as dangerous to attempt for the wielder as it can be for the target.

Sometimes, however, most often to aid a throng-member, a Promethean is prepared to sacrifice his own safety and power for the well-being of another. In this case, the scales of fate tip, and the willing surrender removes much of the danger from the situation.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Desperate acts sometimes lead to harsh consequences. Rather than stripping the target's Transmutations from him, the Promethean attempting to take the other's Transmutations loses the ability to use his own for 24 hours. This includes even Transmutations that are normally always activated. The Greater Need does not remove extra organs or limbs but makes them ineffective and immobile for the time period. The expended Pyros is lost.

Failure: The Transmutation fails. The expended Pyros is lost.

Success: The targeted Promethean loses the ability to activate all Transmutations for a full hour. The targeting Promethean gains access to these Transmutations and may use them as if they belonged to her. She must still pay all the appropriate costs to activate them, but for one hour it is as if she had purchased them herself. After the effects of this Transmutation have worn off, the targeting Promethean may purchase any of the stolen Transmutations (but not other non-stolen Transmutations of the same category) as if she were of the associated Refinement, as she has already established a deep connection with them. If the target knew any Pandoran Transmutations, the user can activate them, but risks degeneration as described on p. 236 of **Promethean: The Created**. She does *not* risk degeneration if she chooses not to use these Transmutations, however, and only needs to roll for degeneration once per scene when using them in any case.

Exceptional Success: The effects of the Transmutation last for 24 hours rather than one.

NOTE: This Transmutation can be devastating as an offensive weapon and, fortunately, is rarely successful unless the targeted Promethean is willingly offering up her Transmutations. Nothing stops the individual from lying, manipulating or even torturing his target to garner her "willingness" to offer them, though.

Trigger Firestorm (Vulcanus ●●●●)

Using Pyros as the spark that ignites it, the character can summon a devastating Firestorm down upon his target and the surrounding area.

Cost: 5 Pyros

Dice Pool: Azoth

Action: Instant

By burning Pyros in a particularly explosive fashion, the Promethean triggers a Firestorm centered around another creature of Pyros or Flux that is within the Promethean's line of sight. Once triggered, the Firestorm is not under the Promethean's control. He cannot end the Firestorm before it runs its course, and he is not immune to the Firestorm's damaging effects. (For information on modifiers and Firestorms, see p. 253 of **Promethean: The Created**.)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The expended Pyros does not trigger a Firestorm, but instead backlashes upon the Promethean, causing two points of aggravated damage. In addition, the Promethean's player must roll for the character to resist Torment.

Failure: The Firestorm does not manifest. The spent Pyros is lost.

Success: Per the damage and success chart on p. 254 of **Promethean: The Created**.

Exceptional Success: No special effect.

Aspected Firestorms

The given rules for the "Trigger Firestorm" Transmutation are perfectly serviceable. If you have access to **Pandora's Book**, however, you can use the rules given in Chapter Three of that book to craft more detailed firestorms. If you wish to do so, use the following system for this Transmutation. Firestorms summoned in this manner are considered Praxidikae for purposes of trigger.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The expended Pyros does not trigger a firestorm, but instead backlashes upon the Promethean, causing two points of aggravated damage. In addition, the Promethean's player must roll for the character to resist Torment.

Failure: The firestorm does not manifest. The spent Pyros is lost.

Success: The Created triggers a firestorm equal in Rating to number of successes. Specific aspects are chosen by the Storyteller to suit the particular situation.

Exceptional Success: The firestorm triggered is two Rating levels higher than the amount of Pyros the Promethean spent to trigger it.

Persephone

Quote: *Everyone has his own Hell. The question is whether you are content there or not.*

Background: Persephone's first memory is white-hot fire as her tissue was torn away, bit by bit. For what seemed like an eternity, the spirits sundered her limbs from her body, her flesh from her bones and her consciousness from her physical self.

She awoke deep in a cave, where she stayed until the next spring brought spelunkers whose voices she followed out of the darkness. Suspicious of the un-equipped individual who emerged from what they knew to be a dead-end cave, the explorers used their cell phone to call the sheriff once they emerged from the stony depths, but Persephone disappeared into the forest well before the authorities could arrive to investigate.

Description: Persephone is tall and wiry, and moves with a utilitarian grace. Her skin is swarthy, and her short-cropped hair is jet black, betraying the Mediterranean heritage of the body she was created from. She normally wears utilitarian clothing — hiking boots, jeans and T-shirts or button-down flannels. She frequently travels to powwows, Mountain Man rendezvous and other spiritual gatherings or re-enactment activities and is as comfortable in leathers, tunics or togas as any other fashion. Persephone has been mistaken for a transgendered individual, due both to her strength and awkwardness in her own skin, but she's as frequently mistaken for a man in a woman's body as for a woman in a man's. Neither idea is offensive to her.

When her disfigurements become apparent, Persephone's dark skin turns pale as faded leather, and her bright blue eyes go clear white, lending her an altogether ghostly pallor. On closer examination, her skin is rippled with fist-sized markings where her once-human body was torn apart mouthful by bloody mouthful.

Storytelling Hints: Persephone divides her time between society and wilderness, not wholly comfortable in either. She tends to spend time on the fringes between the two worlds, interacting in places where wildness and civilization overlap. Her travels take her to Burning Man each year, and she's frequently seen discussing the nature of spirituality with rune casters at Pennsic, tarot readers at Free Spirit and shamans and medicine men at a wide variety of traditional spiritual gatherings. In lieu of employment, she barter for materials and creates handcrafted utilitarian or decorative devices out of natural objects she finds on her travels. The



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only items she will not take commissions for or create are things of spiritual significance: athames, chalices, ceremonial pipes and the like.

While she rarely stays in any one place or with any group of people long enough for Disquiet to build too highly, no Promethean is able to completely avoid its effects. When pressed, however, Persephone will do everything within her power to avoid a fight, rather than come to physical blows with any human or Created.

Her own indecisive nature keeps her constantly striving to learn, certain that the answer to all of her questions lies just around the next bend or in the next philosophical conversation. Likewise, she frequently seeks out other Prometheans to Ramble, listening intently to the stories they have to tell. She will offer her own, but they are always couched in third-party terms. "I heard of a Mimic once who said that . . ." She never offers forth her own beliefs, perhaps because she's not certain what they are.

Lineage: Ulgan

Refinement: Mercurius

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Crafts 3, Investigation 1, Occult 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl (Defense) 1, Stealth 2, Survival 4

Social Skills: Animal Ken 1, Empathy 2, Persuasion (Bartering) 2, Socialize (Around the Campfire) 2, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Contacts (SCA, Burning Man, Pagan Community) 3, Direction Sense, Eidetic Memory, Meditative Mind

Willpower: 5



Humanity: 7
Virtue: Faith
Vice: Sloth
Initiative: 5
Defense: 2
Speed: 8

Health: 8

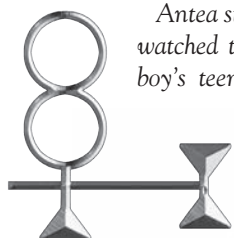
Azoth: 2

Bestowment: Ephemeral Flesh

Transmutations: *Vulcanus* — Firebrand (·), Sense Flux (·), Sense Pyros (·)

Pyros/per Turn: 11/2

STANNUM



Antea stood in the doorway to the nursery, and watched the toddler sleep. Behind her, the little boy's teenaged babysitter slumped in the sofa, unconscious. The little one's parents weren't due home for hours yet, so there was no need to rush.

Something inside of her hoped that this little one's mommy had taken the time to say she loved him before she left.

Antea doubted it — that bitch was far too involved in everyone else's business to tend to her own.

Antea had taken the house next door for a while, just to get her bearings, and to have a place to construct her progeny, her lovely boy Martin. But she hadn't counted on having a neighbor of such . . . curiosity. Or of that neighbor having a husband of such passion, passionate enough to risk a tryst with his new neighbor.

Antea knew the vindictive busybody was the one who'd called the police. She probably told them that they were dealing drugs, or something. Her poor Martin — it must have been terrifying to him when they burst down the door. He fought, and they killed him.

Antea squeezed her eyes shut for a moment, and clenched her jaw. She opened her eyes then, looking down coldly on the toddler still asleep in his crib. This little one's mother had taken Antea's child from her. It was only fitting, then, that Antea take hers. Antea reached down, and gathered up the blankets, wrapping them around the little one, and scooped him into her arms.

Years. She'd found a lovely home, a faraway home, for him. That bitch would never find him. And each year, on the anniversary of her Martin's death, the bitch would receive photos of her little boy, growing up, raised by someone else. Antea smiled, imagining the busybody's reaction — the tears, the hysterics, the anger. But most of all, the feeling of helplessness.

Antea could hardly wait.

The Philosophy of Rage

Vindictive. Cruel. Determined. There are many terms used to describe the Furies, those who adhere to the philosophy of revenge and retribution that is Stannum. Truly dedicated adherents to this philosophy, however, say that

this isn't enough. Being angry isn't enough. Wanting to dole out some payback isn't sufficient. It takes a powerful level of dedication to live the life of a Fury, rather than simply using anger to take refuge from grief and solitude. Few have the stomach for it. But those who do have the genuine dedication to Stannum are terrifying, leaving retribution behind them like footprints.

Stannum believe that what they do isn't simply vengeance — it is justice. Trying to somehow separate emotions from justice is foolish. Doing so belittles the hurt that such harms cause. Furies don't kill a murderer because he killed someone; there is nothing intrinsic in the act of killing someone that somehow cosmically calls out for one's own death. The Stannum feel it correct to kill a murderer because he has destroyed the lives of the people whom loved the ones murdered, and to keep him from doing that to anyone else. Justice should bring peace to those who were wronged, not simply punish the criminal. Otherwise, the Furies say, the criminal becomes important, rather than the victims.

Unfortunately, to outsiders, Furies seem to dwell on the injuries done to them, even once they've achieved their vengeance. That isn't so, though. To a serious follower of Stannum, the act of taking vengeance is more than simply righting a wrong. The act of taking vengeance is learning a lesson. Revenge is a tremendously universal human trait, and one that exists, in some form or another, in every culture. It is clearly a primal human drive.

Critics sometimes point out that the drive for revenge is something that most systems of philosophy and enlightenment urge their adherents to rise above. That is fine, state the Furies. When they achieve humanity, that'll probably be the next step.

Elaborate Vengeance

Those who walk the Path of Stannum often show a flair for the dramatic and ironic when it comes to their plans for revenge. It is not simply enough that those who have wronged the Furies are in return wronged. To many Furies, the punishment must fit the crime. A practitioner of Stannum's throng-mates may find this one of her most disturbing traits — the way she lovingly spends hours crafting just the perfect revenge, setting up situations and plans that span hundreds of hours to come to fruition.

Galatea and Osirans in particular are notorious for this practice, though even the vengeance of the Frankensteins often shows some measure of ironic appropriateness in its savage vindictiveness. Tammuz and Ulgan are the least likely to spend too much time in this regard: their revenges tend toward primal, furious payback, rather than deathtraps, overlapping arcs of betrayal and intrigue and eventual devastation of everything their foe knows and loves.

Vigilantism

Some Stannum seek revenge for its own sake. Certainly, they are brought onto this Path by a need for their own vengeance, but what happens when they have accomplished their goals? When they don't feel that there is anyone else in the world who needs to be made to pay for hurting them, when all the plans have been played out and all the guilty punished?

Most who reach this point simply find another Refinement to embrace, purging the bitter hate from the hollow place where their soul should be, and hopefully filling it with something else. Some, however, choose a different tack. These Furies see plenty of victims in the world who don't have the same benefits the Furies do. Too many victims aren't able to see their tormentors punished and simply have to hope that mundane authorities see that justice is done. All too often, these victims are disappointed.

These Furies embrace a larger vision of revenge and fury. They punish not simply those who have wronged them, but who have wronged those the Stannum seeks to protect. Whether the Stannum has decided to help single mothers, gypsies, gays or the poor is irrelevant — the fact is, the Stannum looks beyond his own revenge and seeks to help those who cannot find vengeance for themselves.

It is said that those Stannum who remain on the Path of Tin and manage to find the New Dawn have all embraced this practice. Some Stannum practitioners believe that the ability to find the good in the act of vengeance is an important role in becoming human. Being willing to look beyond oneself and aid those who have no aid is an intrinsic secret to the enlightenment that the pursuit of vengeance can bring, though few ever find it.

Bitter Discipline

The Transmutations of the Stannum are strange and uncanny. When Stannum speak of “harnessing his rage” or “using her anger,” this is almost always what they referring to. The Transmutations of Stannum are best learned by those with fury in their souls to spare, and the bitter wormwood of Torment on their tongues.

The arts of Disquietism are nothing less than the manipulation of Disquiet itself, of following the psychic contagion they create into the minds of those around them and using it. It is an irony not lost on other Prometheans that those who dwell in a state of Torment (or very near it) are those who are the most capable of avoiding the fury and fear of mortals. To the Furies, this is understandable: they are creatures of anger and revenge. They are punishers, not the punished.

Learning Disquietism is no small task, requiring the deliberate invocation of Disquiet in those around them. A Promethean learning to wield one of these Transmutations understands that there is one thing that will deflect and set aside the Disquiet, and that is the Promethean's own rage. It is as though the very psychic taint of Disquiet recognizes in the Fury's rage a master, flowing where the Stannum practitioner would direct it.





The techniques of actually learning Disquietism often involve vivid mental imagery, picturing the force of Disquiet as an ambient electrical charge. Stannum mentors liken the slow buildup of Disquiet to that of static electricity — the friction between the human soul and the Divine Fire builds a charge, until it becomes too much and discharges, arcing hatred and anger into the environment, and sometimes triggering the discharge of other, similar static buildups.

Learning the basic techniques of Disquietism is often fairly simple, involving mental exercises visualizing Disquiet as simple sparks of electricity. Whether those sparks are simply being ground out harmlessly (as in *Alembic* and *Soothe Disquiet*), transferred to another by touch (as in *Scapegoat*), shunted through a target into an animal (as in *Rabid Rage*) or subtly released as small motes of diffuse electricity (*Tension in the Air*), the practitioner of Stannum learns to shape the flow of that “spiritual static.”

The intermediate levels of Disquietism are learned involving mentally visualized arcs of electricity. The practitioner of Disquietism visualizes his own charge of Disquiet building in himself as though he were a generator, until he can feel the hair on the back of his neck rise in the psychic static. Then, in a flash, the build discharges in a lightning-like arc of purest psychic levin, striking his intended target. Sometimes, as with *Iago’s Whisper* and *Nameless Dread*, this simply strikes the target, infusing her with Disquiet. Other times, however, this may “jumpstart” the Disquiet within another Promethean, particularly in applications of *Progenitor’s Curse*. In at least one other application, the Promethean visualizes the building charge as actually attracting ambient psychic static and grounding out in him harmlessly, such as in the use of *Safe Sojourn*.

The most powerful manifestations of Disquietism can only be described in terms of terrible lightning storms of Disquiet, roiling tempests of spiritual ill-ease. The Promethean himself often stands at the eye of this storm. For the purposes of *Shape Disquiet*, this storm radiates outward, washing over those the Promethean targets with that *Transmutation*; for *Quell Disquiet*, however, the storm is more tornado-like, pulling Disquiet into itself and projecting it away, dispelling its expression from the area.

Those who do not understand their mythology often have a difficult time understanding why the Stannum are masters of Electrification. But in those cultures that worshipped gods of the sky, the lightning bolt was nearly always the instrument of their wrath. With the very fire of the gods within them, it is perhaps only fitting that the symbol of divine fury arcs at the fingertips of the Furies.

The rage of the Promethean is not fire — the rage is electricity, which strikes suddenly. Thus, those who are taught to master these *Transmutations* are capable of channeling their rage. Young Prometheans only just learning these techniques sometimes learn to visualize their rage as arcs of electricity, projecting it from their bodies with a great roar of anger. Strangely enough, this technique works well, and is quite telling. After all, most of Electrification’s electrical effects cannot be used by Prometheans for healing, due to this infusion of *Torment*.

Practitioners of Electrification teach themselves to harness and use small angers in the creation of its lower-powered effects. She might simply search her soul for small grudges and find them reflected as electricity in the world around her (as with *Feel the Spark*), or she might channel her irritation at an object not working (*Jolt*) or at a person (*Shock*). Practitioners are sometimes taught to clamp down on their building resentment as well, centering and calming themselves while allowing this control to flow into an object to protect it (*Insulator*).

Mid-level Electrification techniques need more than simple irritation. They demand anger. In order to use *Arc*, *Blackout* or *Generator* appropriately, practitioners allow their anger to build and then force it out of themselves, letting their fury manifest as electricity. Techniques of fine control are more difficult to master, in some ways — deliberately recalling and then dismissing incidences of frustration and anger allows techniques such as *Regulator*, but require more discipline from the practitioner. They are a mark of pride for those who master them, though.

A terrible control over one’s anger is implicit in the highest manifestations of Electrification. A consuming fury or righteous indignation is necessary for the *Divine Lightning* technique, permitting the Promethean to lash out at the world around him. Conversely, however, perhaps Electrification’s highest refinement is also a powerful tool of enlightenment for Prometheans: the understanding that anger can accomplish great good, if used properly. It is in this way that the “*Lightning Therapy*” *Transmutation* is mastered.

When Rage Grows Cold

Sometimes, though, rage is not enough. Revenge is insufficient. More often than not, those who take on the *Refinement of Tin* leave it behind once their revenge is had. As demanding as it is to hold a grudge against individuals for a long time, maintaining resentment against the world is simply too much for most.

Many of those who’ve embraced Stannum find this glimpse into the human soul — however dark it may be — to be enlightening. In the reflection on their revenge, some Prometheans realize that they’ve enacted punishment on people who may very well have been wonderful people, save for their sins against the Created, particularly if Disquiet was involved. In this reflection, some Prometheans turn to studying the human soul, embracing the *Refinement of Gold* to understand how it can possibly contain such nuance and texture, to contain wickedness and wonder all at once.

Others, however, turn inward. If the self is important enough that one’s life can be devoted to avenging slights made against it, surely the self is important enough to be studied on its own? Those who find themselves seeking to understand themselves and their place in the world find a

curious peace settles over them — the Refinement of Copper is often a welcome respite. These are the practitioners of Cuprum who are most likely to preach peace with the self as a means of escaping fury with the world.

Some Furies become spiritually exhausted with the demands of Stannum. It is, after all, a lot to maintain, and dwelling on revenge takes its toll. These Furies discover a secret that the military has long known — aggression can be effectively channeled into the perfection of the body. Those who seek to sate their anger by throwing themselves headlong into refinement of the body have discovered the path to Ferrum.

Some Stannum, in pursuit of their revenge, discover a fascination with the inner flame that seems to burn the world they touch. In seeking something once revenge is spent — or when seeking meaning when vengeance is forever denied them — the esotericism of Mercurius can provide a welcome relief, allowing former Furies to turn inward, to look into the source of their rage, rather than its targets.

Finally, there are those for whom Stannum's lesson results in tremendous bitterness. For those who seek revenge, humanity is simply a target for hatred, and the source of all outrages. Sometimes, the Fury asks himself, "Why would I ever want to be like these?" Such questions occasionally lead to Centimanus, the Refinement of Flux.

Tales of Tin

Many of the greatest stories in the expanse of humanity's legends, myths and fiction are, in some way or another, tales of revenge. Whether there is a wicked stepmother getting what is coming to her, a lost count who seems to come back from the dead for revenge on those who wronged him or the shy girl in glasses who shows up to the prom with the cutest boy in school and a great gown, humanity seems obsessed with the concept of payback. It is perhaps only fitting that some Prometheans, who desire nothing more than humanity, embrace that as well.

Milestones

- Kill a human being and resist degeneration
- Exact revenge upon creator
- Succumb to Torment
- Swear and fulfill a blood oath
- Bring a killer (or perpetrator of another inhumane act) to justice without involving the mortals' justice system
- Construct and maintain a list of wrongdoers and decide on appropriate punishments
- Fight out of pure anger
- Exact revenge on a target without ever revealing who is responsible
- Construct a personal lair
- Incite mortals to violence and escape without having to harm them

Story Hooks

- **Other Side of the Coin:** A Fury has targeted one of the throng. Perhaps the throng-members were careless in their dealings with mortals, and someone was hurt who didn't deserve to be. Perhaps the vengeance is just — some Prometheans are less than kind or cautious in their dealings with mortals. Regardless, this Fury is clever and determined, and has some power to turn against her target. What happens when the police raid the throng's hideout, looking for drugs? Or when the local pimp and his gang hear that the Galateid is another whore trying to move into his territory?

- **Unexpected Complications:** It was all going so well, really. The plans, the setup. The trap was laid, and then — nothing. Something happened, and someone else got involved. The throng's Fury finds his carefully laid plans of revenge stymied by the interference of someone else. As it turns out, the Fury's target is the servant of a vampire. How does this change things, and what happens when the bloodsucker realizes that some supernatural horror is stalking his little Renfield?

- **Taken to Extremes:** Sometimes Furies find the vigilante urge a little too much to resist, and when they get into that role, they do so with full vigor. Unfortunately, someone saw something she shouldn't have, and the local detectives are looking for the vigilante who has demonstrated more than human abilities in front of witnesses. What happens when that investigation draws the authorities to the throng's door? Do the members of the throng betray the Fury, who has been doing good, even if he's been doing it a little too enthusiastically? Or do they help cover for him?

Rumors: Stannum

- "All Prometheans must take up our Refinement before they achieve Redemption. This is a simple fact. It is not possible to have a human soul until you've seen the darkness that lies at the center of that soul. Resentment, bitterness, pettiness, vindictiveness — that's our enlightenment. Learn them well, and you're one step closer to being human."

- "Anyone who knows our condition knows that Stannum isn't actually a Refinement. It's the default Promethean condition, wallowing around in anger and resentment. It's the Refinement that isn't. It's the only one whose practitioners don't seek to better themselves; even the Centimani are interested in becoming better monsters. Stannum teaches us to be trapped by what our creators intended for us, rather than what we can become."

- "It is said that there are creatures in the world that were made by human hands. My sire once told me of such a creature, a ravishing beauty, save when she was forced to unveil her true nature. He told me that the best way of controlling such a creature — which is filled with bitterness and resentment — is to enmesh its own petty hatreds with your own goals. Find out how it has been hurt, and present it with your enemies as the





responsible parties. Lavish it with care and understanding, but nurture its hatred. Find out what outrages it, and arrange for word to reach it that those whom you hate are guilty of just that. Then, sit back and let your monster rend them utterly.”

New Transmutations

The following are new Transmutations: one for Disquietism and another for Electrification. They are most common among those who practice the Refinement of Stannum.

Mass Hysteria (Disquietism ●●●)

This power causes mass hysteria in those around the Promethean, filling people with panic, dread and outright terror. Individual derangements come to the fore while this power is in effect: phobias give in to their fears, even imagining the things they are most afraid of are present, panic attacks strike those prone to them and sufferers of trauma are likely to experience flashbacks. The world goes a little bit insane for a while, and later, authorities are often at a loss to explain it.

Prometheans with this ability are loathe to use it, as it can trigger Torment in themselves, but sometimes it is better to risk that than to have the mortals present witness a Pandoran attack, or to remember how three strangers were revealed as monsters while a terrible storm of strange lightning-fire crackled around them.

This power affects all of the mortals who can see the Promethean when he activates the power, out to a maximum of (10 yards per dot of Azoth).

Cost: 2 Pyros

Dice Pool: Presence + Intimidation + Azoth vs. Resolve + Composure

Action: Instant

If more than one person is subjected to the power, the Storyteller rolls the highest Resolve + Composure pool present in the group.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Not only does this power not instill panic and hysteria in the gathered crowd, but the power instills full Disquiet in them, with the Promethean as the target. The targets are immune to his uses of Disquietism for the rest of the scene.

Failure: Nothing happens, though the targets present gain a +1 die bonus to all rolls against the Promethean's Disquietism for the rest of the scene.

Success: Those in the area of effect give in to the power. Those with derangements immediately manifest those traits. Others begin to act with a variety of panicked and fearful reactions, from suffering panic attacks to experiencing flashbacks of childhood or severe traumas to simply seeking to flee the area as quickly as possible. This lasts for a single scene.

Exceptional Success: Not only do subjects fall victim to the power, but they are also immediately purged of any Disquiet they may have accumulated.

Whether the use of this power is a success or failure, at the end of the scene, the Promethean must roll against Torment.

Power Sink (Electrification ●●)

Electricity does not exist only in showers of sparks and arcs of white-hot lightning. The Promethean who has developed this Transmutation understands this, and his body is attuned to the small gradations of static electricity around him, drawing such charges into himself. His body drinks in the local raw currents and slowly heals him, and augments his power when unleashing electricity — he simply always seems to have more juice.

Prerequisite: Insulator (●●)

Cost: None

Dice Pool: None

Action: Reflexive

With this ability, the Promethean naturally attracts ambient flows of electricity to himself, absorbing static discharges in the area around him. Normally, his body simply assimilates this as healing, allowing him to heal a point of bashing damage every 30 minutes, or a point of lethal damage every hour (aggravated damage heals at the normal rate). It also grants him an additional source of power when using Electrification powers, however. All damage inflicted by Electrification powers is increased by one success (though the player must roll at least one success on the appropriate roll to gain this benefit).

Antea

Quote: *Ah, littling. Don't worry. Your auntie is here for you. It sounds like daddy has been quite wicked to you. There, there; he shan't hurt you any more. We know what happens when we are wicked, don't we? That's right — we are punished. Yes, my heart. Even daddies.*

Background: As most Furies, Antea's walk on the Path of Tin began with hate and revenge. A nosy neighbor, likely suffering from Disquiet and the betrayal that comes with knowing one's husband has been unfaithful with some strange woman who has just moved in next door, called the police and made false accusations. Though the police did not find any drugs, they did find someone home: Martin, Antea's newly created progeny, who'd never before met anyone other than his creator.

The interaction did not go well. Martin resisted the police's commands and a struggle ensued. Martin became furious and killed one of the police officers; his partner killed Martin. Antea returned to find her home a police crime scene. She fled, and in her grief embraced Stannum.

Her revenge was wonderfully planned and appropriately subtle. A year later, her neighbor had a baby. Antea contemplated killing the baby the way her own child had been murdered, but in

her experience, humans experience grief so quickly. Not like her own grief — Antea was sure she'd be mourning for years, and felt that this woman must as well. So, she found a good family looking to adopt. Subtly, she approached them, pretending to be a mother in over her head and looking for a home for her baby. Finally, she kidnapped the baby, and in a short while, left the child with the family.

She exulted in the woman's horror and grief, which Antea watched many nights for weeks. Then, a year later, as their hurt had begun to fade, Antea stole into their kitchen and left a photo of Martin — her only photo of his beautiful face — along with a photo of the toddler, playing in the anonymous yard of his new home. If it were possible, the woman's grief at discovering this was even more intense.

Soon, though, the game began to fade. Her revenge grew cold and dull, no longer warming her heart. Only occasionally visiting the child from afar interested her, and she watched as the child grew. Then, one day in his fifth year, she could not help but notice a change in the little boy. He began to withdraw and act out. So, she watched.

What she saw peering through a window froze her heart solid. The little one clearly didn't wish to play his daddy's "game," but daddy was of course an authority figure, and not one inclined to take "No" for an answer. She fled the scene, sobbing.

She'd done this. She was responsible for this, and there was no way she could atone for it. She could never make it better, but she could certainly keep it from happening again.

Later that night, for the second time, she kidnapped him and spirited him away. Something burned within her again, and she remembered that feeling: the joy of anticipation. Soon, he would pay, and there would be tears and anger and recrimination. And then, finally, death.

As for the little one, she returned him to his mother, with only a small note pinned to his lapel. It said, "You are forgiven — care for him well. I shall be watching."

Description: Antea is a beautiful woman, with a long neck and glamorous profile. Hers is an elegant, European beauty, with deep red hair often piled atop her head. She wears simple, functional clothing, preferring pants (though never jeans) over skirts and dresses.

When her disfigurement shows, her skin seems terrible and strange, as though it were covered in a thin patina of cloudy glass. Individual details seem to fade into a murky, vague blur.

Storytelling Hints: Since her first lesson on the Path of Stannum, Antea has chosen to protect children. She knows that she can never keep them with her. The results of Disquiet would be too horrible. But more than one child has memories of an "auntie" appearing suddenly out of nowhere and fixing things, somehow, of making the bad people stop. She is still firmly dedicated to the path of vengeance, especially as a tool to improving the lives of others.



Lineage: Galatea

Refinement: Stannum

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Investigation (Children) 3, Medicine 2, Politics 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 3, Drive 2, Firearms 1, Stealth 2, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Expression 2, Intimidation (Veiled Threats) 3, Persuasion (Calming Children) 3, Socialize 3, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 4

Merits: Contacts (Child Welfare Services, Private Investigators, High Society) 3, Direction Sense, Elpis 2, Resources 4

Willpower: 4

Humanity: 5

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 4

Defense: 2

Speed: 9

Health: 8

Azoth: 3

Bestowment: Mesmerizing Appearance

Transmutations: *Corporeum* — Human Flesh (···); Deception — Incognito (··); Disquietism — Scapegoat (·); Rabid Rage (··), Iago's Whisper (···), Soothe Disquiet (···); *Electrification* — Shock (··), Arc (···); *Mesmerism* — Suggestion (··)

Pyros/per Turn: 12/3

Consortium Transmutations

Among the most interesting and useful Transmutations are those that benefit Prometheans who have undertaken alchemical pacts to become part of a throng. This category of Transmutations, known as Consortium, is most commonly practiced by Prometheans following either Quicksilver (their intense study of the nature of Pyros makes it easier for them to learn) or Copper (their focus on interactions among Prometheans facilitates these Transmutations). Consortium Transmutations work only among members of a Branded throng, and any Promethean currently part of such a throng is considered to have an affinity for Consortium Transmutations (and thus can purchase them for [new dots x 5]).

Note: It is impossible to use any of the Consortium Transmutations to target throng-members who are currently dead. Consortium Transmutations may be used to target characters who are returned to life with the Revivification Bestowment or by the resurrection process (see p. 163 of **Promethean: The Created**) once they have actually awakened again, but not while they are dead, even if it is only temporary state.

Never Too Far (•)

Much as some Vulcanus Transmutations allow Prometheans to locate sources of Flux or Pyros in their general area, Never Too Far allows a member of a Branded throng to sense the presence of other members by honing in on their particular Azoth.

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Azoth + Wits

Action: Instant

The Created may automatically sense the location of all nearby members of his Branded throng. This effect is a radius of (one mile times the targeting Promethean's Azoth). In addition, he may attempt to locate the presence of any particular member of the throng beyond that area. To do so, the Promethean must concentrate on the particular throng-member, and the character's player must make a successful roll. Note: This information is given for the target's location at the time. Location changes that happen after triggering Never Too Far are not known unless the Transmutation is used again.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Created gets an erroneous result. This can include pinpointing the targeted throng-member in the wrong location or targeting a Pandoran rather than the intended target.

Failure: The Promethean fails to locate the throng-member.

Success: The Promethean senses the location of her chosen target. This location is given in the form of a direction and general distance.

Exceptional Success: The Created knows the location of the throng-member he has detected. Rather than a single flash of insight, this locative connection lasts for an entire scene and updates the Created if the targeted throng-member moves.

My Brother's Burden (••)

Much as Never Too Far allows Prometheans to sense the location of a throng-mate, My Brother's Burden gifts them with the ability to sense their companion's condition.

Prerequisite: Never Too Far (•)

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Azoth + Wits

Action: Instant

With a single instant action (and the player's successful roll), the Created may automatically sense the general condition and emotion of all members of their Branded throng who are within a radius of (one mile times the targeting character's Azoth). Additionally, as a separate action, the Created may attempt to discern the condition and emotional state of any particular member of the throng beyond that area. To do so, the Created must concentrate on the particular throng-member, and the targeting Created's player must make a successful roll. This information is given for the target's condition at the time. Changes to her condition after the Transmutation is triggered will not be known unless the Transmutation is successfully used again to determine the new condition. The targeting Created does not need to know the target's location to utilize My Brother's Burden, and the Transmutation does give him the target's location.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Created gets an erroneous result, sensing health and joy when the throng-member(s) are in pain or injured, or receiving input of fear and near-death when the target(s) are fine.

Failure: The Promethean fails to discern anything.

Success: The Created senses the general state of the target(s). This includes whether the target(s) is (are) currently injured, and how severely, as well as his (their) current emotional state, including several of his (their) most prominent current emotions (as expressed in several one- or two-word descriptions) and any currently active derangements.

Exceptional Success: The bond is so well established that rather than fading after an instant, the bond remains for the next 24 hours, allowing the targeting Created "check on" the target at will, gleaning updates automatically when any significant change to the target's health or emotional state occurs.

We Are One (•••)

The bond between the Created and the rest of his throng is so strong that, for certain purposes, it is as if they are

constantly in physical contact with each other, as long as they share line of sight.

Cost: None

Dice Pool: None

Action: Reflexive

The Created may target a throng-mate at a distance with any Transmutation or effect that normally requires touch, as long as he has line of sight to his target.

Unspoken Words (****)

The bond between the Promethean and the rest of her Branded throng becomes so strong that she can share her thoughts with them and hear those that they are willing to share with her.

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Socialize + Azoth

Action: Instant

Having ascertained the location of members of the throng via line of sight or use of the "Never Too Far" Transmutation, the Created may establish a mental line of communication with any one Branded throng-mate within a radius of (half-mile per dot of Azoth). Connected characters gain a +3 bonus to Initiative and +1 bonus to attack (including offensive Transmutation use) to any mutual enemies, as they are able to coordinate their offense more clearly.

Either connected party may dissolve the connection at will at any time. Otherwise, the connection lasts for one scene. Moving out of the establishing location does not break the mental connection.

Unspoken Words only links two individuals with any single application, but may be attempted multiple times with different targets during the course of any one scene. Connecting with a second individual does not break successful connectivity with the first, once it is established, but the two targets do not share connection with each other, only with the sending Promethean.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Rather than establishing a mental connection, the sending Created receives a feedback signal directly tapped into the intended target's Torment. The Promethean's player must roll to resist Torment, per p. 182 of **Promethean: The Created**.

Failure: The sending Promethean fails to establish a connection with the target. No communication is established.

Success: The sender and target are connected mentally to each other and may "speak" mind to mind.

Exceptional Success: The sender establishes mental connection with the target. As well, should the sender already be

in mental connection with other Prometheans, the target is connected to them as well in a mental "conference call."

Possible Modifiers: Target is visible (+1), target and sender are physically touching (+1), target is moving (-1 to -3 depending on speed/intensity of activity), sender is currently in other mental connections (-1 for each connection already currently established)

What's Mine Is Yours (*****)

The alchemical pact among members of a Branded throng is great enough that they are able to connect in ways unknown to other Prometheans. While all throng-members may share Pyros with one another, Created with this Transmutation are able to lend one another other supernatural aspects and abilities that would be impossible without it.

Cost: 1 Pyros

Dice Pool: Azoth + Wits

Action: Instant

With a single touch and the expenditure of a point of Pyros, the lending Created may gift his Bestowment or any single Transmutation he knows to a member of his Branded throng. The recipient receives the Bestowment or Transmutation as if it were her own and can use it as such for the remainder of the scene. The lender may not lend his Bestowment or the same Transmutation to more than one individual at a time. In the case of Revivification, should the recipient die while "borrowing" a throng-mate's Revivification Bestowment, the lending Promethean loses it just as if she had died, and must purchase it at normal experience cost to regain the Bestowment. Because of this, it is rare for any but the most devoted throng-members to lend this powerful Bestowment. Note: This Transmutation can be used with *We Are One* to lend at a distance.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The lending Promethean not only fails to lend the Bestowment or Transmutation, but the effort strips him of the use of it for the remainder of the scene.

Failure: The Promethean fails to lend the Bestowment or Transmutation but retains the use of it himself.

Success: The loan proceeds properly. The recipient gains use of the Bestowment or Transmutation as if it were her own. If the Bestowment is lent, it supplements the recipient's inherent Bestowment rather than replacing it.

Exceptional Success: The recipient throng-member successfully receives the use of the Bestowment or Transmutation for the scene. The new power "takes" so well in the recipient that she retains use of the Bestowment or Transmutation for a 24-hour period, rather than a single scene.

Possible Modifiers: Recipient is aware of the intended loan and willing to receive it (+2), recipient is aware and unwilling (-3)

CHAPTER THREE

LIGHTNING STRIKES

"I don't know how you do it." He ran his hands through his hair, then buried his face in them. His shoulders rounded forward, spine bent as if it could barely support his weight. Around us, people averted their eyes, unwilling to bear witness to the intensity of his emotion.

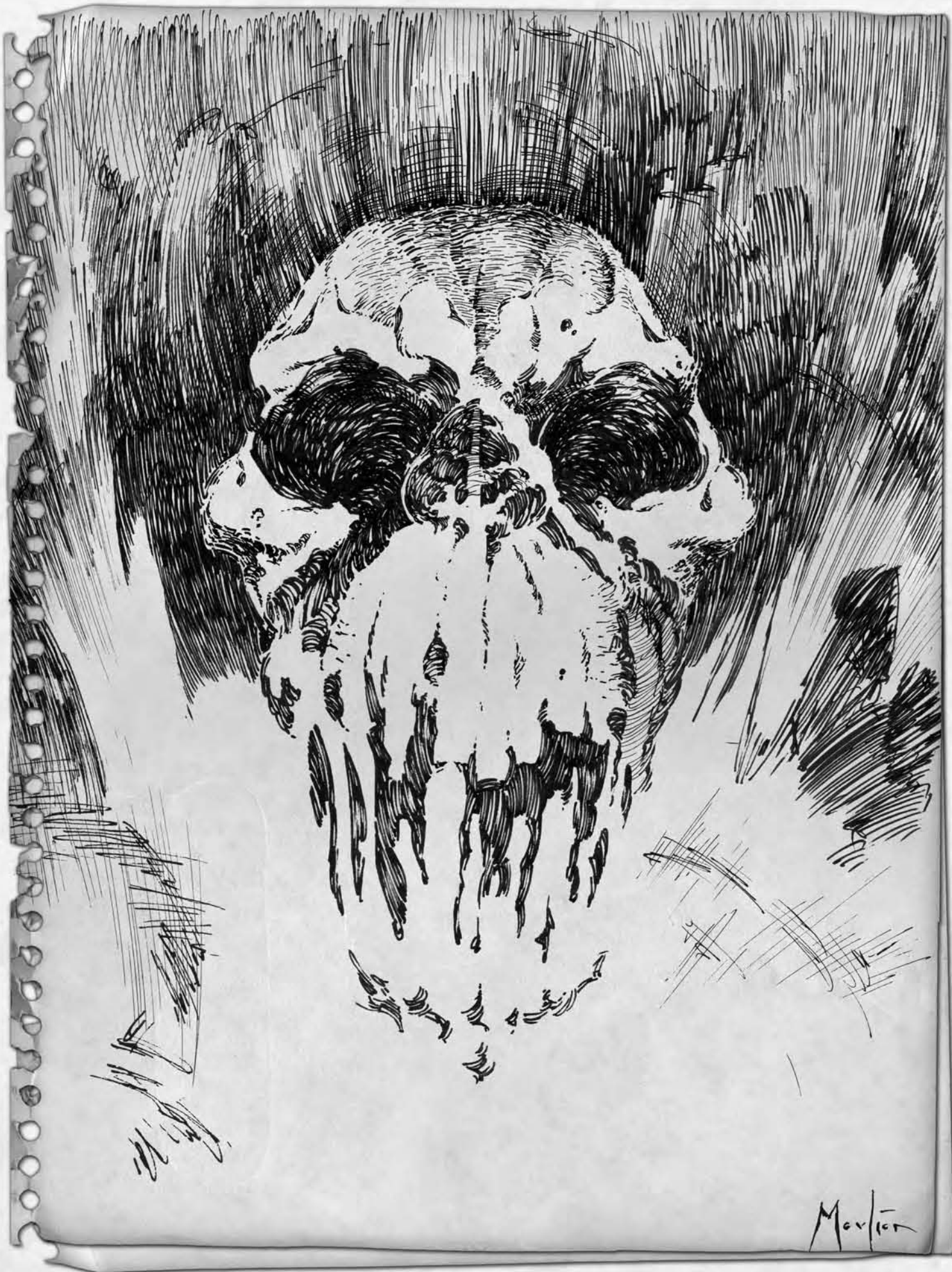
I shrugged. Really, what was there to say. What choices were there? Wander off to spend the rest of eternity in a cave somewhere? I'd spent enough time gone to the Wastes; solitude wasn't for me. I suppose suicide was always an option, but who knew what came afterwards? I wasn't betting everything on the chance it would be better.

Whirring wheels neared. A young mother pushed a stroller down the sidewalk, her path destined to intersect with ours. I watched as she, involved in her cell phone conversation, wheeled her offspring nearer. The child, not yet old enough to walk, met my gaze. He scrutinized my face before bursting into tears. His mother, jarred out of her conversation, scowled in our direction and hurried away.

Beauregard didn't look up. I'd named him, when he wouldn't name himself. It was hard not to think of him as Tanner, but he deserved a fresh start. Our time together had been full of fresh starts. I had thought he'd leave after the fight in the motel room. The way he looked when he hurt me made me think maybe it was best if he did. But he'd stayed. Said he'd learned something there, not about fighting or Transmutations or the like. But when I forgave him, when I said I'd understood, he'd gotten all wide-eyed and you could see it come on inside like a light there in the darkness.

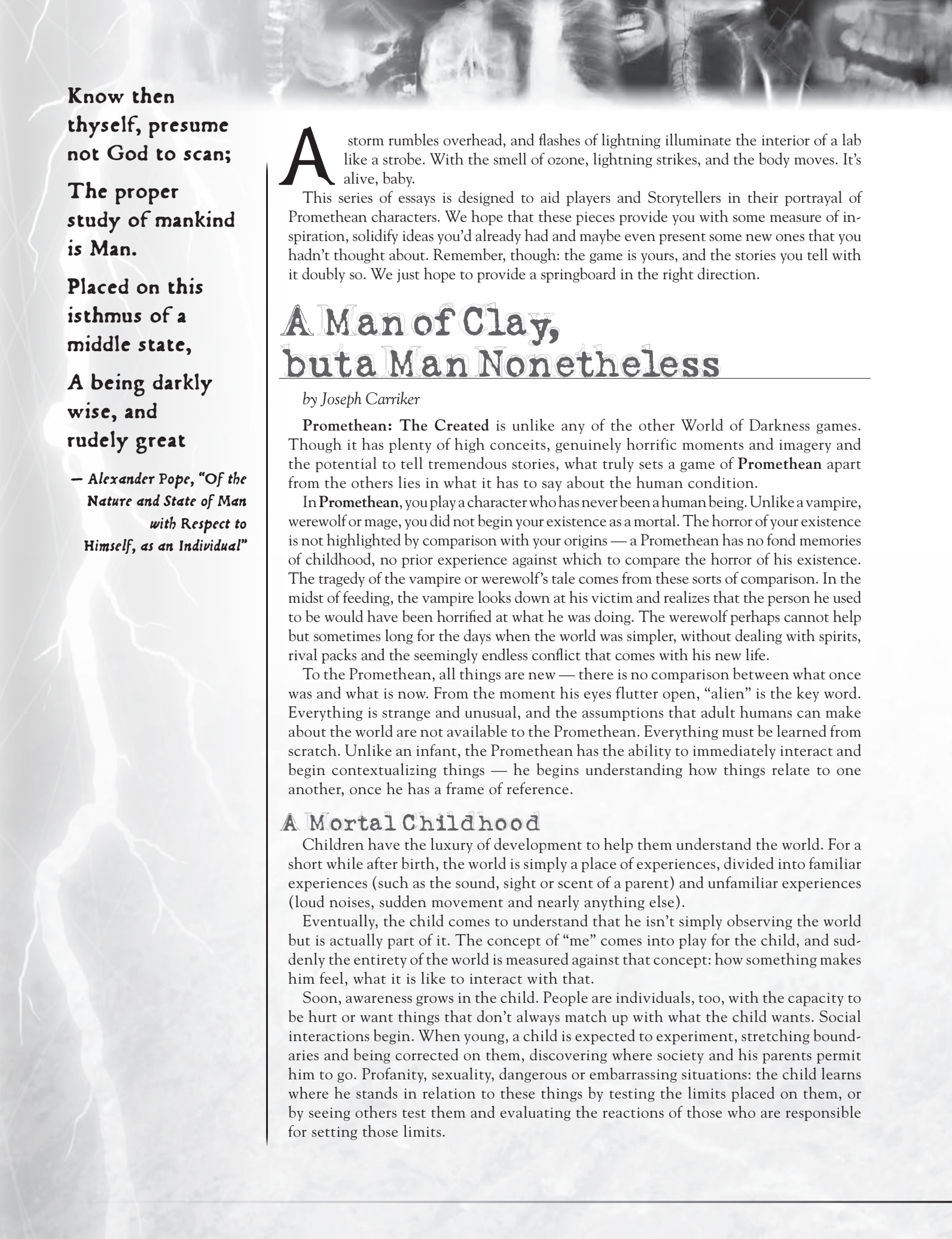
How could I explain it to him, when I didn't quite understand it myself? We didn't keep going just because there were no other options. That wasn't enough to keep trying, to keep striving. But it was those moments, like the one he'd had in the motel room, when things become clear, if only for a little while. Those times when we get a glimpse of what it is we could be, or when we see in the humans what they could be if they let themselves.

That's why we do it. That's why we keep going. Something just keeps us following that little spark of hope.



1972
11/12

Martin



Know then
thyself, presume
not God to scan;

The proper
study of mankind
is Man.

Placed on this
isthmus of a
middle state,

A being darkly
wise, and
rudely great

— Alexander Pope, *“Of the
Nature and State of Man
with Respect to
Himself, as an Individual”*

A storm rumbles overhead, and flashes of lightning illuminate the interior of a lab like a strobe. With the smell of ozone, lightning strikes, and the body moves. It's alive, baby.

This series of essays is designed to aid players and Storytellers in their portrayal of Promethean characters. We hope that these pieces provide you with some measure of inspiration, solidify ideas you'd already had and maybe even present some new ones that you hadn't thought about. Remember, though: the game is yours, and the stories you tell with it doubly so. We just hope to provide a springboard in the right direction.

A Man of Clay, but a Man Nonetheless

by Joseph Carriker

Promethean: The Created is unlike any of the other World of Darkness games. Though it has plenty of high conceits, genuinely horrific moments and imagery and the potential to tell tremendous stories, what truly sets a game of **Promethean** apart from the others lies in what it has to say about the human condition.

In **Promethean**, you play a character who has never been a human being. Unlike a vampire, werewolf or mage, you did not begin your existence as a mortal. The horror of your existence is not highlighted by comparison with your origins — a Promethean has no fond memories of childhood, no prior experience against which to compare the horror of his existence. The tragedy of the vampire or werewolf's tale comes from these sorts of comparison. In the midst of feeding, the vampire looks down at his victim and realizes that the person he used to be would have been horrified at what he was doing. The werewolf perhaps cannot help but sometimes long for the days when the world was simpler, without dealing with spirits, rival packs and the seemingly endless conflict that comes with his new life.

To the Promethean, all things are new — there is no comparison between what once was and what is now. From the moment his eyes flutter open, “alien” is the key word. Everything is strange and unusual, and the assumptions that adult humans can make about the world are not available to the Promethean. Everything must be learned from scratch. Unlike an infant, the Promethean has the ability to immediately interact and begin contextualizing things — he begins understanding how things relate to one another, once he has a frame of reference.

A Mortal Childhood

Children have the luxury of development to help them understand the world. For a short while after birth, the world is simply a place of experiences, divided into familiar experiences (such as the sound, sight or scent of a parent) and unfamiliar experiences (loud noises, sudden movement and nearly anything else).

Eventually, the child comes to understand that he isn't simply observing the world but is actually part of it. The concept of “me” comes into play for the child, and suddenly the entirety of the world is measured against that concept: how something makes him feel, what it is like to interact with that.

Soon, awareness grows in the child. People are individuals, too, with the capacity to be hurt or want things that don't always match up with what the child wants. Social interactions begin. When young, a child is expected to experiment, stretching boundaries and being corrected on them, discovering where society and his parents permit him to go. Profanity, sexuality, dangerous or embarrassing situations: the child learns where he stands in relation to these things by testing the limits placed on them, or by seeing others test them and evaluating the reactions of those who are responsible for setting those limits.

Eventually, the child passes the point where people forgive social mistakes because of youth. At that point, transgression of those boundaries does not equal curiosity but rebellion or defiance.

Social patterns begin to develop in the child, especially during school-aged years. Many of the decisions he makes during these times set the precedent for the course of his life well into adulthood: the sort of people he surrounds himself with, the ways in which they interact, social roles he creates for himself or allows others to create for him.

Occasionally, the child can break out of these assumed roles; it is assumed that someone going through adolescence deliberately takes action to reshape his identity as part of the process of defining the self. An adolescent begins to learn and explore who he is once more, generally by pushing at boundaries. Society begins to expect different things of children at this age, and society pushes back — granting approval for certain behavior types, and disapproval for others.

At this point, though, individualism becomes the primary motivation: the adolescent wishes to be his own person, damn the rest of the world. If he can find happiness in a role or identity, he is more likely to remain there, but sometimes the teenager cycles rapidly through re-creations of identity, until he find one that fits.

These cycles will have an impact long into adulthood. Many adults continue to be motivated by behavior and experiences from childhood and adolescence; driven to



never be mocked again, convinced of an identity as a failure by bullies and neglectful parents or having learned how to get away with dominating others and being given social approval for it. This is why adults who seek to escape their lives and identities in mid-life crises tend to seek particularly juvenile methods of doing so: dramatically remaking their appearances and outward presentations, purchasing “toys” or finding younger lovers.

Bereft of a Childhood

None of the assumptions above apply to Prometheans.

From the moment a Promethean’s eyes flutter open and she becomes fully conscious, she is a fully developed creature, capable of understanding herself in context with others. A newly aware Created understands cause and effect; she simply has little experience in seeing what the results are of various actions in the world.

As such, the early days of Promethean existence tend to be quite exploratory. Fire bad. Beer good. The Promethean immediately begins testing the environment as it exists in comparison to her, forming associations both positive and negative.

As a result, a Promethean often spends as much time as possible exploring her environment, learning about textures, colors, tastes and a hundred other experiences. She learns quickly, as she possesses the full cognitive ability of adults, without any of the experience to draw upon. But she gives herself that experience in short order.

The Promethean, unfortunately, is not given the time children are to make mistakes and explore without repercussion. The Created generally appear as adults to mortals, and mortals expect the Created to behave as adults. Those Prometheans who display strange curiosities or a lack of basic social understandings are assumed to be rude, insane or stupid, and people generally have no tolerance for any of those, even before Disquiet enters the equation.

As a result, Promethean development tends to stall when it comes to other human beings. Even if her creator is kindly and loving (and sometimes, that's too much of an assumption), the Created isn't likely to experience too much kindness in her first few human encounters. At best, the Promethean's strange ways embarrass other people on her behalf, and they ignore her and her oddness, politely. At worst, they respond with anger, ridicule or irritation.

A Promethean's first experience with mortals is always noteworthy. Her initial interactions with mortals color her future interactions. If she encounters kindness, she is more likely to assume mortals are kind. An encounter with hate, anger or fear is more likely to motivate her to be wary of mortals in the future. Most Prometheans, for all their physical might, are very young, emotionally speaking, when they encounter mortals for the first time, and their sensitive spirits are easily buoyed or wounded by those first experiences.

The first time a Promethean experiences Disquiet is noteworthy, as well. The better the Promethean's experience with mortals is, the deeper the scarring after Disquiet first rears its head. Those who have come to be suspicious or fearful of mortals are rarely surprised when they gather to destroy, imprison or otherwise rise up against the Promethean. Those Prometheans who have interacted in a benign fashion with mortals, however, are often left with a deep sense of betrayal. They do not understand why this happened.

The realization that Disquiet emanates from the Promethean is also important. The pain of the first Disquiet experience is made all the more vivid when the Promethean realizes that, in fact, something innate to herself causes mortals to treat her thus. Those who

have negative experiences to draw upon are often crushed to learn of this fact as well. Believing that mortals are simply inherently hateful is so much easier for those Prometheans. To discover that they themselves are the source of the hate, rather than simply its target, is almost too much to bear.

Playing the Difference

All of that is well and good, but how exactly does it apply to your character?

First, understanding these simple facts can help tremendously in portraying the character. Below are a few questions the player of a Promethean character may find useful to answer, as all of them reflect formative events of some sort.

- **Who was the Promethean's creator?** A Promethean's first experience with another sentient being is often with his creator. Associations built during this time are among the strongest a Promethean experiences. If his early development was spent in the care of a cruel or callous creator, things associated with the creator may engender anger or fear from the Promethean. Likewise, if his early days were spent with a kindly creator, the Promethean may have a fondness for things associated with that creator.

Are there smells that remind the Promethean of that time? A Promethean who awoke to the scent of roses and spent her early days with a gentle, loving creator in a country chateau with a vast rose garden is likely to seek out the scent of roses when she is troubled or in need of solace. By the same token, waking to an existence of torment and a cruelly capricious creator in the same environment may arouse in the Promethean a dislike of roses and their scent.

What about habits that people may exhibit, preferred foods or drinks? If the Created's mentor found calm only after he'd allowed himself a pipe, the Created might associate smoking with relief of stress, perhaps to the point of taking up the habit himself. Alternately, if his neglectful creator always smelled of liver and onions, the Created's likely not going to entertain thoughts of such a meal himself.

What sort of environment did the Promethean first develop in? Has it left him with a fear of such places, or does the Promethean instinctively seek out similar places when he is distraught and in need of comfort and security? If a warehouse originally provided sanctuary while the Promethean struggled to understand her new existence, she might seek out such places as her preferred lair, particularly when she is new to an area and everything is a little confusing. Having wakened to a life of pain and torture at the hands of a mad creator in an abandoned hospital, on the other hand, might predispose the Promethean to avoiding such places entirely.

• **What, if anything, does the Promethean “remember” from before her animation?** This is a question that must be answered carefully. **Promethean** isn't about people who die and then return to life. A Promethean's story and journey doesn't concern the person whose body (or bodies) were used to create her. Not to say that such stories can't be compelling, but that's not where this game's focus is.

And yet, the Created obviously *can* retain some of the memories from their bodies' former lives; that's what the Residual Memory Merit is based upon. Such memories, however, should serve to enhance the Pilgrimage, not distract from it. A Galateid made from the body of a married man might occasionally feel a weight on his ring finger when he sees a young, red-haired woman, but not know why. A Frankenstein constructed from the bodies of skinheads who made the mistake of attacking his creator might feel an unreasoning flare of anger when he sees a black person. These little details remind the players that someone used the flesh that currently houses the Promethean's Azoth, and indeed, a character's milestones might well involve discovering something about that person's life and how it ended. That, however, is the pertinent point: the life *did* end. That person is no more, and the Promethean is a new being entirely.

• **When did the Promethean leave her creator?** Under what circumstances did this parting of ways occur? Did the character simply flee the first opportunity she got? Did she go exploring on her own and return to find their lair abandoned, her creator vanished like a thief in the night? The circumstances under which a Promethean and her creator part ways can have a tremendous effect on the Promethean's outlook — she may assume the people she cares about are simply going to disappear, and so does not like to let them out of her sight. She may be driven to find her creator.

If they parted ways in conflict, the Promethean may desire never to see her creator again — or she may have vowed to kill him one day, though she wasn't strong enough to do so when they parted ways originally. She may be seeking her creator, or she may be fleeing him. If they parted ways amiably, are they still in contact? Was that the beginning of a valued friendship that is still maintained to this day, or did their parting mark the last time she ever saw her creator?

Alternately, the Promethean and her creator may never have parted ways — her creator may very well still be around in the form of a mentor. How does this relationship affect the Promethean's interaction with the world? Is she eager to prove herself to her mentor? Does the Promethean depend a great deal on her mentor, or is the Promethean anxious to prove her independence? Perhaps she cares for her mentor now, making sure he is left alone and has food and supplies, while he works through his own Pilgrimage?

• **What are some associations the Promethean has with his early days?** Prometheans build very strong repertoires of likes and dislikes, based on their early experiences. Objects may become symbols for experiences, so that a Promethean who was attacked early on by a mob led by the local priest may despise crosses and the signs of faith, while another Promethean who was given sanctuary by a kindly nun may look upon religion with affection (if not true belief).

Likewise, are there things that remind your character of pivotal moments? Perhaps the first time he ever tasted strawberries was the picnic he spent with his creator, before she left him alone to go seek out her Great Work. In such an instance, strawberries might instill in the Promethean a sense of melancholy and solitude. The view of a certain corporate logo may be the only thing the Promethean was able to see from his hiding place from a mob while he hid from them for days, and so the sight of that logo may bring vague feelings of security, tinged with desperation.

• **What was the Promethean's first encounter with a mortal?** The first encounter with a mortal is always tremendously important, as it can set the tone for future interactions for the rest of the Promethean's life. A kindly street man who takes the young, newly abandoned Promethean under his wing for a few days, showing her the best places to sleep and eat, may engender in a Promethean the view of mortals as teachers. In contrast, a Promethean whose first encounter with a mortal amounts to a mugging attempt is likely to look on humans as a source of potential danger, especially if it resulted in violence.

• **Has the Promethean ever had sex?** Sex is tremendously intimate, unlike any other experience. Though Prometheans cannot procreate through the sexual act, they use sex just as any human being would: for pleasure, to forge a connection with another person, out of pity or for self-discovery. Others may learn of sex's use as a weapon, for revenge or spite.

Under what circumstances did the Promethean's first sexual encounter occur? Was the Promethean aware of what it actually meant, or did someone take advantage of her ignorance? Some creators shy away from the topic, but most likely a creator who leaves it unmentioned simply doesn't think about it — in the face of all the other things a new Promethean must learn, the specifics of sexual intimacy most likely weighs in fairly low on the list.

Did the Promethean ever see someone have sex before he had sex himself? Was his first lover someone who cared for him, or was it a one-night stand (or even completely anonymous encounter)? Did the Promethean approach her prospective lover, or was she the propositioned party? Was it tender and intimate? Primal and animalistic? Dirty

and degrading? Or was the sex perfunctory, the sort of thing to be endured until it ends? What was the result of this encounter? Did the lover disappear, never to be seen again, or fall victim to Disquiet?

A Promethean has not grown up in greater society, and so is likely to establish his own opinions on things such as sex with someone of his own gender. What is his opinion likely to be when he encounters phenomena such as homophobia, or sexism? These are all topics to think about, as they help to further define not only the Promethean himself, but how he interacts with humanity.

• **What was the Promethean's first experience with Disquiet?** The first time a Promethean instills Disquiet in the mortals around him is utterly memorable as much as many Prometheans would like to forget it. Once they know it exists, Prometheans are wary, ever watching for signs of Disquiet, often ready to leave if they spot it in time. But chances are, the first time Disquiet cropped up, it caught the Promethean completely by surprise, even if she'd been warned by another Promethean what to look out for. The sudden quality of Disquiet is remarkable. One moment, it just seems as though people are quirky, or tired or stressed out. The next — insanity.

The situation around which Disquiet first affected the Promethean is important. Did he have a creator or other Promethean to turn to for help and perhaps an explanation? Was he all alone? The Promethean may very well not even understand what Disquiet is — what has this ignorance done to his thoughts about humans? How does he perceive them?

If his first experience with Disquiet involves humans attempting to utterly possess him, as may happen to a Tammuz or Galateid, he may find humanity frightening and suspiciously watch for any signs of that jealousy or possessiveness. Alternately, he may consider himself a terrible monster — after all, do they not always see through his charade, and attempt to kill him?

These experiences are very likely to influence the first Refinement a Promethean adopts. A Promethean forced to stay one step ahead of a hunting party of some sort, and fight his way out when they catch up to him, may very well treasure the lessons of Ferrum, while a Promethean who comes away bitter and angry is likely to take up the Stannum philosophy.

• **When did the Promethean first understand that Disquiet emanates from him, and how did this understanding affect him?** Assuming that the Promethean does understand the fact that Disquiet emanates from him, how did this realization affect him? Many Prometheans react with horror and self-loathing: those people who hated him were normal, sane people after all. It is simply the Promethean's nature that he must be hated, despised and cast out. What does that make him feel?

• **When did the Promethean first encounter another Promethean who was not his creator?** A Promethean's first encounter with another of the Created can tint all of the new Promethean's future interactions. If the first one he encountered was a friend or throng-mate of the Promethean's creator, whatever opinion the Promethean has of his creator is likely to extend somewhat to others. If the Promethean didn't encounter another until after he'd left his creator, their initial interaction sets the tone similarly.

Generally speaking, Prometheans aren't necessarily any more forgiving about social slights and mistakes than humans are; Prometheans simply *understand* that the new Promethean is struggling to understand these nuances. Whether this encounter is with a warm Promethean who acts as a peer or mentor, or with one anxious to defend his territory or take advantage of a young Promethean, this encounter is important.

• **When did the Promethean first learn about the Pilgrimage?** Some Prometheans hear about the Great Work from the moment they are able to understand the concept, or even before. Others hear about it only as they are about to undertake their independence from their creators. Still others only hear their creator talk of it occasionally, or to other people, and they are never given any context for what it means. Some hear absolutely nothing about the Pilgrimage from their creators, and have to discover its existence from other Prometheans. The circumstances under which the Promethean hears of it, and from whom he hears it, can set the tone for his Pilgrimage. Those who hear of it from a cruel creator may walk it with hesitation, while others may consider the Pilgrimage the thing that took their beloved creators from them.

Other Prometheans simply find themselves on the Pilgrimage. For some, they've somehow always known that their goal was to become human; it simply took someone else putting it into words for them. Others seek to be near humans, to emulate them, but do not understand why they do these things. The Pilgrimage is an innate part of the Promethean existence — the Divine Fire is transformative, and rare is the Promethean who is simply content as he is. Prometheans are all driven by the desire for change, to become something else, and most of them find their role models in humanity.

• **When did the Promethean choose his current Refinement?** Another important note is the source of the Promethean's current Refinement: from whom did he learn those practices and philosophy? Did his creator instill it in him, or did he embrace it out of hate of or rebellion from him? What does the Promethean know of the other Refinements?

• **What was the first Transmutation the Promethean ever used?** Everything else aside, the use of a Transmu-

tation is definitive proof that the Promethean is not human. The first time the Promethean focuses on the roiling body of Divine Fire at the center of her being, stokes it to white hotness and then channels it to accomplish something impossible for mortals to do, there is absolutely no doubt that she is Other. What was the first Transmutation the Promethean used? Was it something she was taught, or did it come about as a result of a moment of sudden, intense emotion? Likewise, has the Promethean ever used his Bestowment? What sort of situation did this occur in, and how does this affect the outlook of the character?

Bolts and Stitches: Welcome to the Throng

by Chuck Wendig

It's cold. It's raining. Thunder grumbles overhead. You've come into the city — a rare excursion, to be sure — for reasons that remain unclear. Part of it is the tug of humanity. No, these people don't like you. They look in your direction, examining you like one gazes upon a nugget of shit caught in the tread of a boot. And yet, their disdain and shame fascinates you. They move around you in crowds, past the buzzing neon, beneath the spidery shadows of the train trestles, and you know *intimately* how much you don't belong. You're a dog with distemper. A lamppost on the fritz. A suspicious shadow.

And then you get that tickle. The hairs on the back of your neck (and those encircling the porcelain insulator sticking out of your spine that nobody seems to see) stand at attention. Your throat tightens. Azoth calls to Azoth, and you know that you're soon to be in the presence of another of your kind. Soon, you see her: perfect in all the ways of a made-up corpse sitting in a beautiful silk-lined casket. For just this moment, you're not alone. Maybe that's why you came to the city tonight. Maybe its time to end this solitary life and join with others.

Amalgamation

Every Created is fundamentally on the same page. The Created are monsters who have never been human, but who have a slim chance of gaining that distant reward. Disquiet dogs the Created's every step, with mortals urged toward derision and violence because of the walking aberration that waits nearby. The Wasteland effect leeches the vitality and stability out of any region where Prometheans wait too long. The universe is stacked against them. In short, life (or what passes for it) sucks for a Promethean.

Because of that, characters in **Promethean** have every reason to be together. In most cases, they needn't be forced or cajoled into traveling together. Even with disparate personalities or Lineages, they can't help but recognize a few elementary facts about their existence. A few months dwelling in this world will show any Promethean that he is a stranger in a strange land. Upon finding others of his kind, it becomes painfully clear that they are *rara avis*, and the old saying about birds of a feather flocking together certainly holds some truth. Azoth flares, calling to Azoth. If you, as a human, were alone in a foreign country and did not speak the language, but met another of your kind a few days later, wouldn't you glom onto him, grasping whatever solidarity you can manage? It's like that for the Created. The only ones who really understand them are others like them.

This essay is all about bringing the throng together. How is it done? How can they stay together? What reasons keep them together, and what situations force them apart? In alchemy, part of the transmutation process is about amalgamation: forming a union of metals and alloys. The throng is that very thing, a union formed of metals for the purpose of achieving the Great Work.

Cementation

Mixing various substances together with a volatile and or corrosive material (such as lime) and then applying heat causes an intense alchemical reaction. The substances fuse together. The reaction welds them, cements them, bonds them. How, and why, do such materials come together? The same questions apply to those Prometheans who come together in a throng. How? Why?

Some suggestions about the origins of a throng follow. These origins may be played out over the course of a story, or may be relegated instead to a prelude. The bonds of throng are intimate and significant: how does one Promethean become affixed to another?

Proximity

Prometheans are rare enough that they don't have the liberty to be overly picky when it comes to finding new friends. In the early stages of the journey, a Promethean may come across only a handful of other Created. Shared geographical space means a lot in this context. Meeting another Promethean, whether as a part of a throng or wandering alone, can be momentous. It's akin to seeing a sign on the highway that says, "Next exit, 100 miles." The character should recognize that he has a *lot* of traveling to do before he likely meets another potential throng. Proximity can therefore be the common bond that forges the pact. That said, is it *enough* of a bond? On one hand, a throng that comes together in this way has some good in-built tension, the kind that enlivens a game. The characters are together because of need, but not so much because they

share common purposes. This may put the members of the throng at odds with one another, which can create good, story-worth tension.

On the other hand, such tension can cause a throng to implode. Prometheans are volatile. Their humours rise and fall with Torment. Azoth flicks out like a whip of fire. If the pact-sharing Created are only together because they've little other choice, it might not be long before friction starts a mean, all-consuming conflagration. The throng is, of course, the kindling reduced to ashes.

Purpose

Players can, in joint creation, forge characters who belong together in ways that go above and beyond shared space. If the characters are tied together in common purpose, they've likely created a throng that will go the distance in taking them toward the Great Work or whatever other goals drive them. What can such a purpose be?

For starters, it shouldn't be obtaining humanity. Yes, that's a common goal, but in theory, the majority of Prometheans share that purpose. Humans don't hang out together because they have an overarching goal of "not dying," so, too, should a throng have a more specific purpose in mind when Branded with an alchemical pact.

The binding purpose can be just about anything. A Promethean's creator is often an excellent focal point (particularly if some or all members of the throng come from the same Lineage). It doesn't matter whether the throng shares a single creator, only that the members have a vested interest in finding (whether to question or destroy) one another's creators. Perhaps the throng's creators belong to a single throng, and the game becomes one throng (the characters) hunting another (their creators). Alternately, perhaps the characters have parent issues and seek to hunt *any* creator, not just their own. Their intense loathing of the process, likely driven by their own traumatic "births" and subsequently bizarre "lives," forces them onto a path of vengeance-by-proxy.

A throng might be just coming out of the Wastes and trying to acclimate once again to the world. Other purposes might be hunting Pandorans, or helping a community of humans in trouble or *destroying* a troubled community, sending it on to some greater reward. Consider, too, the option of a common enemy. Are the characters dogged by a cruel Centimanus? A passel of inexorable Pandorans? Mortal hunters? Another throng that seems to stand in the characters' way at every turn? A mad creator bent on destroying his handiwork?

Storytellers, take heed as to what common purpose a group selects as its bonding element. This purpose should help to inform the milestones necessary on each character's path to humanity. The characters' milestones should not be entirely about this purpose (the metaphysi-

cal flow chart should offer a variety of tasks), but giving the group similar milestones will help them to feel more like a throng. If characters all gain Vitriol at roughly the same time for resolving a plot point, they will see just how tightly the pact truly binds them.

Belonging

This one is pretty simple: the characters simply get along. They may not have an overarching purpose shared among Prometheans, but they just plain work well together. Basically, this means the throng isn't together because of necessity or because the characters each are traveling the same road. As much as Prometheans can manage the thing, it means they're together because they're *friends*. They understand one another. Whether they are from one Lineage or from various, they know they can count on one another. Existence as a Promethean requires a great deal of assumed truths and confused presumptions. If characters share one another's beliefs and assumptions, then that might be the bond that keeps them together.

Note that "getting along," does not equate to "tension-free relationships." Friendships can be strained. Allies are not automatons, blindly agreeing. This is true among Prometheans as it is with everybody else. Prometheans can be headstrong, conniving and altogether strange. Torment drives them to destruction. This gets worse the further one moves toward the Great Work. At what point do friendships stand at cross-purposes with a character's ultimate objective?

Guidance

Characters or Storytellers are welcome to come up with a tent-pole figure that shepherds the characters together. This guiding hand can be seemingly gentle and benevolent (another Promethean, perhaps, who wishes for company on his own journey). This guide might be antagonistic and aggressive (enslaved by a mad demiurge who parcels out morsels of knowledge as if they're nuggets of gold). Alternately, consider something just plain weird, such as a *qashmal* of the Elpidos Choir. These "angel" entities seem to act in a lunatic fashion, performing tasks that have little rhyme or reason beyond what they claim is fulfilling their Missions. If "fulfilling the Mission" means ushering a throng into an alchemical pact — and keeping the throng Branded — then that is what the *qashmal* will do at any cost.

Players and Storytellers should work together to design any figure central to the throng's pact. Players, feel free to make things hard on your characters; even a seemingly beneficent shepherd may drag the throng down a hard and painful road. Storytellers, have fun giving this figure, be he protagonist or antagonist, various motivations and needs that remain hidden from characters (until of course the time is right to reveal them).

Well, Maybe Not

OK, sure, new idea. These aren't humans with labyrinthine tangles of motives and wants. Prometheans can certainly be complex in their desires, but they're also given over to hard instincts and urges. Let's face it, a Promethean's existence is weird. So, consider:

What happens if the members of the throng simply . . . exists together? They don't know how they came to stand with one another. They don't know why they're together. The game simply begins, and the throng is an established entity with little to no memory of how the members came together.

That doesn't mean such an event should be meaningless. They came together somehow, even if the characters and players don't know it. Part of the game will likely therefore become solving the mystery of their throng (especially if they begin already Branded in an alchemical pact). Uncovering the back story isn't just about the physical mystery of coming together, it's the actual metaphysical purpose that binds them. That is a far greater enigma to these literally soul-searching creatures. Such a deep mystery can be the glue that holds the members of a throng together for the long journey.

Lixiviation

Masters of alchemy could, by combining elements with sulfide ores, produce the crucial vitriol necessary for the transmutation of metals. This, called lixiviation, is similar to what happens in a throng. Various Prometheans come together, all of whom should, in theory, stir one another toward the Great Work. Their actions, presumably pointing them toward the various milestones necessary to achieve mortality, help bring Vitriol out of their bodies like liquid condensing on the glass ceiling of an alembic.

This section provides some thought toward just what a throng does with its pact. These suggestions are by no means exhaustive, but may help a burgeoning group of Created understand where it's headed, even if that direction differs from the original intention of forming the throng in the first place.

Albification

Uncovering one's own milestones can be tricky. In game, the Promethean must struggle against a host of impulses and circumstance, all of which can stand in the way of his milestone accomplishments. Out of game, the player and Storyteller must be at least partly in-sync to feel for

one another's needs and direction with the story and its characters. The Storyteller sets up milestones. The player must move his character toward these unspoken objectives. Certainly there are clues, but clues do not guarantee that a character will move in the proper direction.

The throng can help with that. The members may not share milestones, but if they are Branded with an alchemical pact, there's no reason that they cannot help to guide one another toward each individual's Great Work. Consider that this is perhaps the key function of a throng. It's similar to how, in alchemy, various materials come together to form a whole new material (or transmute one material into another). Here, the throng represents various Prometheans coming together to help transmute dead flesh and half-souls into living bodies with real souls.

On one level, a character should feel encouraged to offer help and guidance to the Prometheans within her throng. The advice doesn't have to be right (and, in fact, may be more interesting if it's at least a little wrong). It's possible, too, that a character may attempt to predict another's milestone — and then steer her clear of it. Certain milestones ("Die and resurrect") are frightening, and if it seems like a throng-mate is headed down such a grim road, another throng-mate may attempt to force the deluded throng-mate away from such a destiny. Milestones are not firmly affixed, however. The Pilgrimage is mutable. One Promethean may have an effect on another's milestones. By steering her away from her one milestone, he may drive her to another (which may be more palatable, or even more grotesque).

Albification, in alchemy, was the act of making a material totally white, or *albedo*. Alchemical writers represented this in various sacred alchemical texts as a baptism, as a releasing of doves. Within the Promethean, albification is a kind of cleansing in that it clears away a lot of the detritus and impurity, allowing a particular piece of information (in this case, a milestone) to stand out, blazing white. That is part of what the throng provides: a conflict of materials (i.e., each Created) stirring together to help clean the impurities away from one another. If the throng does its work, the materials agitate and milestones become clear (*albedo*). If the throng-members fail to work together, the materials only grow turbid and disturbed, and the hope of helping one another toward new milestones grows dark.

Branded

Being part of a Branded throng is not as simple as having a group of friends or traveling with like-minded wanderers. Within the throng, each Promethean is connected to the next by his Azoth. This supernatural bond allows for the transfer of Pyros as well as the mitigation (or exacerbation) of both the Wasteland effect and Torment. But the Brand is more than just a systems effect. The Brand literally ties what passes for each other's souls to one another.



Consider that the pact may allow for certain shared *impressions*, similar to that revealed by the Scrutiny (see p. 54), but less concrete, less extreme. Obviously, the Brand helps moderate or aggravate Torment, but consider how the Brand might be able to do the same to other, lesser emotions. Can the bond help one Promethean identify the emotional state of one of his throng-mates? Does the Azoth shared by the group suddenly taste like roses (love), ashes (sorrow) or bitter vomit (anger)? Are only extreme emotions shared in this way, or can subtler stirrings of Azoth be felt? Should the Storyteller allow, when applying Empathy to a roll dealing with another Promethean in the throng, the roll is subject to a +1 to +3 modifier, depending on the severity of the emotion. Concealed emotions (a stoic face hiding fear) may warrant a lesser +1 bonus, while overt and obvious displays (punching a doorframe into splinters) a larger +3 bonus.

Of course, all of this doesn't automatically make the Brand a *good* thing. It may seem fine in theory, but individual Prometheans are given over to fickle whims and regretful feelings. While one Created may feel reinforced by the Brand, believing that the throng is a bulwark against all the bad things in the world, another may feel wholly different about the experience. Another Promethean may find that, because she shares the throng with others from her Lineage, some of the negative effects of Created existence are made worse and not better. The pact suddenly becomes as much a burden as it is a gift. Perhaps she grows weary of fighting Torment,

or of seeing the land around her grow turbulent and given to brutal storms. Maybe she's simply fed up with the fact that they cannot conceal their emotions from one another, and that she can practically taste their emotions from day to day. While one Promethean may believe that the throng is freeing, another could see it as the manacles and chains that bind a line of slaves. Yes, the chain brings everybody closer, but sometimes at the cost of one's freedom.

The throng can be positive, but it shouldn't ever be easy. Prometheans can be lost to their humours and to Torment. The alchemical pact, in a way, can intensify the bad just as much as the good.

Corrosion

The throng may help to stir the Vitriol of its members, pushing them toward milestones and, ineluctably, the Great Work. But that's not always good, or easy. Vitriol, in both the

alchemy of metals and the alchemy of the Created body, is acidic. Vitriol burns, eating through anything — except, of course, gold. While the Vitriol within the Promethean's body isn't acid in the sense that it sears through his dead organs and muscle, Vitriol *can* eat away at other more intangible things. It can consume his sanity. Vitriol can burn away any other purposes he may have held. And, it can consume the bond that holds a throng together. While Vitriol doesn't technically disintegrate the alchemical Brand that holds the pact together, Vitriol can corrode a Promethean's need to stay together. There comes a time for some when the throng appears no longer necessary. Leaving a throng without moving to another one can be dangerous, because once again the Promethean is forced to be alone. And, in solitude, he becomes an easier target for Pandorans, Centimani, Disquiet and even his own Torment.

Still, it happens. When a player truly feels that his character no longer belongs to the throng, there's not much to be done. Hopefully, the rest of the throng can adapt and bring him back into the fold, but if not? The game hits a point where everybody has to decide what happens next. Is this the end of the game? Does the throng go its separate ways? Does the one player create a new Promethean to join the old throng, or do the rest of the players cobble together a whole new throng to accommodate the one character? It's up to the troupe. Whatever feels the most fun and the most meaningful is the route to choose.

Entflourage

Entflourage was the old alchemical process used to create perfumes, and is based on how easily fat absorbs odors: butter sitting next to garlic will soon taste of garlic. Alchemists and perfume-makers would boil down lard and tallow (removing all that gummy blood and skin) and then pepper the distillation with flower blossoms. Once the fat absorbs the essence, distill with alcohol — and presto, perfume.

With a group of players acting in a **Promethean** game, that's what you have. Over time, the game absorbs the essence of every player sitting around the table, and the game takes on a fragrance all its own.

The thing is, it isn't always easy to gather a group around the table for **Promethean**. And, on the surface, the nature of the throng and the Pilgrimage seems to make that perhaps more necessary than in other games. Still, just because you can't physically meet doesn't mean the process of gaming *entflourage* cannot occur. Here are some quick options to keep the game going even when you can't all meet face-to-face to roll the bones. These

options can be used as a substitute for a single session, or may make up the entire game.

• **Internet game:** IRC chat, IM chat, play-by-email, play-by-web-forum.

• **Journal entries:** Take the time apart to write journal entries from the perspective of your characters. These can be legitimate journal entries (i.e., something your Promethean literally writes down during the course of the story) or may be something that exists only in his head — and therefore, maybe starts to bleed across the shared, Branded Azoth. If journal writing makes up the entire game, perhaps each session is simply a reading of and response to one another's entries. A story can grow out of this process.

• **Parallel Story:** if only some of the group can meet and all would prefer to tell the main story only when all can be present, quick-create a group of characters who are somehow tied to the "main characters." Are these newer characters younger Prometheans trailing the group, witnessing the aftermath of the main characters' actions? Could these newer characters be a throng of Created who are actually the true creators of the primary characters? Maybe the newer characters are Centimani hunters (this'll let some of the players taste the darkly wild side). Finally, consider a mortals game — when Prometheans move through a town, there's no telling what they leave behind. Mortals may have to pick up the pieces — or go after those itinerant strangers to uncover the truth of what happened, no matter the cost. The players could even control other supernatural beings looking into the odd phenomena of what the Created bring to their city or territory.

Tragedy Without Angst

by Jess Hartley

"So, we're playing zombies whom the entire world hates, and our big goal is to lose all our superpowers?"

They've made up their mind about this new game without having ever played it, and I cringe for a moment, realizing that I've got about 12 seconds to make my pitch or lose the chance to sell this group on **Promethean** forever.

Not an easy task, considering that, on some levels, they are right.

Promethean characters exist in a world full of danger. They awaken "on the slab," knowing little. Their presence breeds

hatred in humans, wakens nightmares from their slumber and poisons the very ground beneath their feet. Prometheans are monsters, at the mercy of their Torment, faced with a goal that few will survive to attain, and have no souls.

Where vampires stalk a world of gothic horror, mages explore the Gnostic mysteries of the forgotten past and werewolves hunt the night in bloody savagery, Prometheans seem doomed to classic tragedy. Their story seems fated to end poorly before it even begins.

So, to verbalize my would-be-player's unspoken question:

"Where's the fun in that?"

A Classic Tragedy

Classic tragedy is more than a story that doesn't end happily. In fact, in many Greek tragedies, the hero prevails in the end, although that victory is never without a price. What makes a classic tragedy a tragedy is a standard set of characteristics: a dramatic piece with a serious tone wherein a hero is in conflict with a higher power, be it society, nature, fate or the gods.

By this definition, **Promethean** is a game of classic tragedy. Our hero, regardless of his Lineage and Refinement, exists in a world with little time for jovial frivolity. He is faced with many challenges. His fate has left him with little knowledge and less experience to draw upon. Society detests him. Humans are consistently repelled by his presence, and even those of his own kind grow uncomfortable with him as he becomes more powerful. Nature has turned its back on him. The grass curls up and dies where he walks, and faithful hounds cower or snarl when he comes near. The most godlike beings he encounters, the *qashmallim* who appear like angels to deliver messages from on high, are as likely to give him advice that ends in his own death as to aid him. While he has a firm goal, there is no sure path to achieve it, and he is more likely to perish than to prosper. His existence is, literally, one long series of challenges. What then makes a tragedy a story worth telling, or, in this case, worth playing? Those same challenges.

The Joys of Challenge

The Promethean existence is an ongoing series of ordeals. Unlike other games in which the trials before the characters are most often antagonists to defeat, however, **Promethean** challenges are an integral part of the Prometheans' journey. Milestones are not the army of spirits attempting to invade the characters' territory or the search for some new magical treasure. Milestones are the treasure itself, hidden along their path, waiting for them to look in the right direction at the right time to uncover their riches. Each milestone offers the Created the opportunity to gain insight into the nature of humankind, to learn positive lessons from negative interactions and to know that each of those lessons successfully learned brings him a step closer to his ultimate goal.

Likewise, these challenges afford **Promethean** players the prospect of roleplaying aspects that rarely profit World of Darkness characters. Prometheans benefit demonstrably from learning, from showing increased maturity and from demonstrating humane qualities as they aspire to their Mortality. In short, **Promethean** players have the opportunity to play the "good guys" in a very real sense, and to see their characters grow more powerful and closer to their goal by doing so, despite the daunting odds.

Avoiding Angst

And how about those daunting odds? It's easy to talk about overcoming challenges and looking at problems as opportunities, but practically speaking, what is stopping the game from turning into a raging angst fest? And, do we want to?

In order to address this, we should figure out exactly what it is we're trying to avoid. Angst, by definition, is a strong but unspecific anxiety, usually pertaining to general concern about the world around us or our personal freedom. In this sense, it's a perfectly acceptable emotion for Promethean characters to experience. Angst could be seen as admirable even, in the sense of attempting to feel empathy for and concern about a world that, at best, turns its back on them. This kind of angst can lead the Created (and their players) to insights about the failings of humanity and spur the characters to action to attempt to correct, or at least counterbalance, the sources of their concern.

In more common usage, however, angst is quite different and much less desirable. As a pejorative term, angst has taken on the meaning of gloomy whining about the situation around oneself without taking any actions to fix or change it. As such, angst is the luxury of those who have the freedom to sit around and mope about their fates. Angst is not the territory of slaves who struggle daily with their enforced servitude, oppressed patriots striving for freedom or shipwrecked travelers struggling against a hostile environment. They have neither the time nor the energy to devote to this type of angst as they struggle for freedom, safety and survival.

And neither should a Promethean.

While a Promethean's situation is worthy of inspiring angst, this same situation keeps him from angst by demanding that he deal with challenges. It is nigh on impossible to slip into a brooding pity party while struggling forward to meet a challenge. Only impossible, rather than improbable, situations should give characters the leisure to lie about and bemoan their fates. Ideally, as long as there is a route forward, despite the odds, the characters should be driven onward. Therefore, the key to preventing **Promethean** from transitioning from an epic tragedy to something far more petulant is presenting the challenges in a way that provides opportunities, rather than dead ends, as the characters work their way towards their ultimate goal.

The Big Win

As a classic tragedy, **Promethean** also offers its characters and players a unique opportunity. Other characters in the World of Darkness begin play with their fate set before them and can only aspire to follow it, or rebel against it, as they may. A werewolf comes into play a werewolf and will end play the same way. Ditto for a vampire or a mage; embrace their nature or rebel against it, they are what they are and no actions they take will change that. The best they can hope for is to not slide further away from their ideal, to avoid slipping further into the darkness. In many ways, these characters are fighting a losing battle and struggling toward something that they can rarely attain and never retain for long.

In contrast, **Promethean** players are given the chance to “win” in a way that no other World of Darkness character affords them. Their characters’ ultimate goal — to attain their Mortality — is not a theoretical pipe dream. Mortality is an attainable aspiration. Each challenge they face, each milestone they complete, makes them not only more powerful as Prometheans but also brings them one step closer to attaining their end goal: humanity. While the odds may be against them, and the challenges they face may seem daunting, they have the one thing that has kept every classic tragedy hero striving forward in the face of similar adversity — hope.

Telling Tales

My players are waiting. I think for a moment, and then make my pitch:

“Picture this. You awake to the scent of roses, surrounded by candles. You sit up and find yourself in a shadowy building with a gorgeous woman staring back at you. She looks at you with an intense adoration, and as she moves forward, you realize she’s not just beautiful. She’s inhuman. Her skin is like wax, almost translucent, and her eyes shine like glass beads. She reaches for you, calling you by a name that you don’t recognize. Her voice sends chills down your spine. As you try to back away, her expression changes from rapture to rage at your rejection. You stand, naked, and look around for an escape route. Your eyes meet with those of a clean-cut man. He’s no more familiar to you than she. His eyes are dark, like hers, but his skin is swarthy where hers is pale. His features are chiseled, with a strong brow and high cheekbones. You call out to him, hoping for aid, but as his mouth moves in twin with yours, you realize that the handsome stranger is your own reflection.”

Their expressions have changed. They’re not yet hooked, but they’re listening. I turn to the nearest. “You don’t know your name, you don’t know your face. There’s a woman here who looks like something out of a wax museum. What do you do?”

He looks confused, but beside him, his girlfriend pipes up. “I get the hell out of there.”

“No, wait! I want to see who she is. Maybe she can help us.”

As the players start to squabble over their best course of action, I realize that one of the biggest challenges to the story has just been overcome. The players have been given their first set of challenges, their first opportunities for action, and despite their misgivings, they’re going forward. Rather than spending time debating whether a classic tragedy setting could be anything but angst-filled, by taking action and facing the challenges before them, they’ve already begun to prove that it can. And, as they continue to face, and overcome, challenges, that same forward action will spur their characters forward, gaining insights and moving them closer to their ultimate goal.

A New World of Gods and Monsters

by Wood Ingham

The greats of horror have met many times in movies, TV shows and comic books. The vampire, the werewolf and the pitiable offspring of the madman’s experiments bump into each other over and over again in the stories. Sometimes they team up for evil’s sake. Sometimes they fight. Sometimes their meeting forms the background to the story of a group of innocents who have to get *the hell out of their way*.

Regardless of the somewhat variable quality of these legendary crossovers, the meeting of monsters is a genre trope, and that means it’s a fabulous element for a story.

In a World of Darkness that plays host to bloodsucking undead parasites, bestial shape-changing savages and bizarre occult miracle-workers, it seems inevitable that the Prometheans and the others will meet one fateful night. The real question is, what is the result of this meeting likely to be?

The simple, obvious answer is conflict, but that raises almost as many questions as it answers. Of course, conflict isn’t confined to violence. There’s the conflict that comes from a new experience that causes you to question your assumptions. There’s the conflict that comes from making an allegiance that turns out to be a deal-breaker for other potential relationships.

And then there’s conflict against a shared enemy. Just as in the real world, people in the World of Darkness often think that the enemy of one’s enemy is a friend. This goes double in the uncertain world of the supernatural. A Promethean might end up throwing his lot in with the undead, the magically skilled or the supernaturally savage out of simple shared adversity. No matter how mystified, horrified or just downright grossed out the werewolves (or mages or vampires) are, if the adversary, whether Pandoran, *qashmal*, Centimanus or something much worse, is bad enough, this strange, repellent creature is as good an ally as any.

Naming Names

This essay is about mixing and matching the different games in the World of Darkness line. Obviously, you don't need these games to play **Promethean**, but if you do have these other games, this essay gives you some pointers on how to do it.

A small amount of terminology from the other games pops up in this article, and it might prove confusing if you don't have the other games. Here's a quick rundown.

Vampires call themselves the *Kindred*. All (or nearly all) belongs to one of five *clans*, and many owe allegiance to political groups they call *covenants*.

The word werewolves use for themselves is *Uraetha*. 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*.

Mages often describe themselves as *Awakened*. All mages walk one of five mystical *Paths*. Most belong to an ancient mystical *order*.

Rarity

There aren't enough Prometheans to form any real society. The vampires have a society, held together in a fragile kind of equilibrium by ancient covenants. The werewolves have their tribes. The mages hide in human society, but gather in mystic orders. But Prometheans don't have a society. They are a bunch of individuals who exchange stories with others of their kind when they meet, and that's it. The Refinements are really just points of view. Although a mage probably doesn't have much idea of what makes werewolves and vampires tick, she knows that they're out there, and she'll most probably know them if she ever sees them. But the day she meets a Promethean (or even a throng of Prometheans) — that's unique, and it's unlikely that it's ever going to happen to her again.

Even if a werewolf, vampire or mage realizes that he's met something new and bizarre, it's pretty likely that he won't have a clue what it is he's seeing. All of the supernatural beings of the World of Darkness have the means to see a Promethean's aura and possibly discern the creature's nature (see **Promethean: The Created**, p. 147), but that only really works if they know what a Promethean is. If they've never heard of Prometheans, how are the werewolves, vampires or mages going to know what they're looking at when they see it?

Likewise, it doesn't necessarily follow that any given Promethean is going to be able to articulate what he is, or even if he's going to be able to explain his nature and his powers using the terms in the rulebook. True, old Verney is aware of the terminology and the names of the Promethean Lineages, but he's old and he's well-traveled. He's also Frankenstein's Monster, the Progenitor of his own Lineage. Given that some Prometheans never meet another of their own kind, it's all too likely that a Promethean might have a very good idea of what he is and what he's got to do to become human but at the same time has no real grasp of the language. Even if a Promethean talks at same length with a vampire, werewolf or mage, even if the Promethean ends up teaming up with these night-people, the chances are that he isn't ever going to make his nature clear to them.

By the Book

In the World of Darkness, Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* is like *Dracula*. It's a real book. It can be bought in bookstores and found in libraries.

How much of it is true?

One possibility is that Mary Shelley's version is entirely fiction. The words put into the mouths of Frankenstein and the Monster are wholly made up. Captain Walton, whose papers tell the story of Frankenstein and his sad, nameless creation, never even existed. Walton's just a literary conceit, a means of telling a story whose only correspondences with the "real" world are the name of the man and the fact he made a man from bits of dead people. The rest is fiction.

Another option is that it's all true. The story, as Walton wrote it down, fell into Mary Shelley's hands, and she, with a little embellishment (particularly in the dialogue), published it as her novel.

Perhaps the "truth" falls somewhere between the two extremes. Did Walton exist or not? Are his original papers still extant? It's up to the storyteller what the truth actually is, and how much of *Frankenstein* contains relevant detail.

Characters who meet Frankenstein's (or any other Prometheans, for that matter) might find themselves directed to Mary Shelley's novel. Outside of the game, the players could be given the chance to read it as a blue-booking exercise, if they haven't already.



The Hungry Dead

Vampires are dead. Prometheans may have once been dead flesh, but it's important to remember

that they're not dead. They're not zombies or revenants (the word "revenant," by the way, means "one who returns," and Prometheans haven't "returned" from anything). They're living, breathing beings, without souls. They have authentic life, and unlike vampires, Prometheans have a tangible, achievable, concrete chance of gaining Mortality.

Both vampires and Prometheans attempt to live up to the constraints of Humanity, but come at it from different directions. The funny thing about the Humanity Trait is that it's limited to characters who are not human at all. Werewolves are part human, and mages are true humans with supernatural powers, but vampires and Prometheans aren't human at all. Vampires are *ex*-humans; Prometheans are *pre*-humans. Both are inhuman, but they're still trying to act like humans. Humanity isn't a measure of how human a character is; it's a measure of how well a character can convince the rest of the world — and himself — that he can play human. Vampires and Prometheans approach the Trait differently.

Vampires try to live up to Humanity in a vain attempt to stop falling away from what they once were. They're not human. They don't feel emotion the way that humans do. Vampires only ape human feeling, based on what they remember it being like, but the memory of feeling is not feeling, and their fall is inevitable. They pretend to be human to stop going mad, to slow down their descent into monstrosity. Their souls are static and dead.

On the other hand, Prometheans were never human, but pretend to be human so that they can one day *become* human more easily. They work on their ersatz Humanity as a trial run for the real thing. Their own emotions are unfinished, prey to the humours that drive them. They have no souls to refine or control what they feel.

How a vampire reacts when she meets a Promethean really depends on the vampire. A young, relatively humane vampire might help the Promethean on his Pilgrimage, at least for a time. Perhaps the vampire has found some half-remembered vestige of sympathy within her. On the other hand, she might reason (however inaccurately) that if this strange, sad *thing* could gain Mortality, she could also. After all, it's unlikely that she's going to understand the working of Azoth. When she finds out that it doesn't work this way for the dead, and that hope for a Promethean is no hope for a vampire, what's her reaction going to be? What would it mean to a creature like that to see another being find the Grail, and then be told that she can never drink from it? As the man sang, we hate it when our friends become successful. It's a rare, truly decent individual who can see her friends reach the prize and take pleasure in that alone, even if she shares in none of it. A lesser person might seethe. A dead

person, whose finer feelings are at best numb, could react in a much more negative, spiteful or even violent way.

The social relations of the vampires could be a minefield for a Promethean or a throng of Prometheans who find themselves caught up in the dead man's world. The undead take part in their *Danse Macabre* with great skill and grace. A Promethean has (figuratively, if not literally) two left feet when it comes to dancing. The social dance confuses and loses the Prometheans, whose interactions work on much more basic principles.

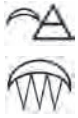
The more powerful vampires maintain strictly controlled areas where they control (or think they do) the movements of the undead, and wield varying influence over human lives. Powerful vampires are often paranoid. An elder vampire might react with fear, as the ancient bloodsucker latches onto the idea that a creature such as this can only have been sent by one of the Kindred's rivals to kill him. A descendant of Frankenstein's Monster? Ha! A likely story. No, one of the elder's rivals sent this thing. But which one? And how did he find this creature? Did the rival make it? How?

Fear gives way to intense curiosity. The elder might still be convinced that the Promethean is an enemy. It's the kind of *idée fixe* to which old mass murderers with residual but guilty consciences are especially prone. But he wants to know who's responsible. He needs to catch the creature and get the answers out of it. Or if he's of a more subtle bent, to follow the creature and whoever (whatever) it consorts with until he finds out its origin. And if his agents follow the creature and find something interesting about what the creature wants or what it can do, what then?

Even if the elder is convinced that the thing isn't after his blood, his curiosity is likely to be piqued. He might be a couple of centuries old, but this is something new. What does it want? What can it do? And more importantly, what can he get out of it?

Having begun with curiosity tempered with self-interest, the vampire moves on to manipulation. Perhaps he tries to cut a deal with the visitor. Prometheans have a lot that could interest a vampire. Their very nature is so bizarre, so unexpected that for many vampires, the chance to meet and examine such a creature might be enough. On the other hand, having met a Promethean and having seen what he can do, an elder vampire could just as easily decide that this strange thing has its uses. The elder offers help if the Promethean runs a few errands, not explaining whom those errands might offend or harm. Or, more subtly, as a vampire realizes that her hunting ground is being tainted by the Promethean's continued presence, she could find the newcomer a "safe" place to stay — in another vampire's territory. A Promethean could do a few favors and get some valuable help, not realizing that the consequences of his actions and movements have shifted the balance of power among the Kindred. Suddenly, a Promethean in a city where the vampires hold court becomes the eye in the center of a political storm.

Older vampires try to use everyone they meet to their advantage, and a Promethean will be no exception. But vampires,



unable in their arrogance to imagine that a creature like this could be smarter than he looks, could be in for some shocks when the Promethean realizes that he is being used.

The very coming of a Promethean, his raw power multiplied by his novelty and strangeness, can cause the blocks of the society of vampires to topple like dominoes, and can be a source of torment and tragedy. Prometheans make for dangerous players in the world of vampire politics, and powerful reminders of what a vampire is not and what he can never be.

Night Howlers and Man-Eaters



The werewolves play on physicality, territoriality and sensuality. They see, they hear and they feel things in this world and the world that borders this world. They know every crease, every corner of the lands they protect and hunt. They know their own bodies intimately, reveling in the feeling of change, the

growth of muscle, the heat of breath, the rasp of tongue against teeth.

A Promethean causes sensation to revolt, causes the fabric of the material realm and the Shadow alike to react badly. A Promethean's Azoth is simply *wrong*, and a werewolf knows this. The Uratha don't take kindly to the violation of their territory, and a Promethean violates the land itself just by staying there. Suddenly, the water goes foul. Plants die. Animals cease to be able to breed. And the spirits of the land begin to cry out.

A werewolf pack that has something approaching reasonable relations with the spirits of the region (as in, they're in a state of truce) might find the spirits blame the pack for failing to protect the land adequately. A pack with less cordial relations might find the spirits becoming antsy, breaking through the Gauntlet more often. Eventually, angry nature spirits, poisoned by Azothic Radiance and wracked with psychic pain, begin to attack humans and werewolves. It becomes up to the werewolves to do something. A sharp pack will want to know why the spirits have gone mad and want to do something about the root cause of the problem, a Promethean who likely doesn't have a clue about the werewolves.

A pack of werewolves probably won't understand a Promethean's goal. Werewolves spend their lives trying to come to terms with what they are and strive to achieve an equilibrium. A creature that wants to try and become human is puzzling, at best, for them. It's quite possible that a werewolf pack will find a Promethean the object of intense curiosity — strange powers, inexplicable phenomena and an alien philosophy all work together to make the Created strange and new. The werewolves might at the end decide to put down the *thing* as an abomination, but not before finding out more.

Violence isn't automatically the result of Promethean/werewolf interaction. Werewolves have a great deal of knowledge about spirits, but only in a limited sphere. Many Prometheans, especially Ulgans, treat with spirits, too, and have access to information that werewolves don't (and *vice versa*). A werewolf pack might be forced to join with a Promethean, just to find out what the pack needs to know. Likewise, a Promethean plagued by spirit foes might need the help of the werewolves, since only they know how to fight the spirits. Either way, negotiation can be fraught with difficulties, since deals have to be made. What would a Promethean and a werewolf require the other to do or give before he can give his help?

Spirits, Disquiet and the Wasteland Effect



Spirits don't suffer from Disquiet. However, some spirits are tied to the land — animistic spirits of the plants, the earth and the animals that inhabit any given region. Most of these spirits slumber for most of the time.

Some awaken. The wakeful spirits find the Wasteland infuriating. It doesn't change anything about them (and there are no game effects). It just makes them antsy. Antsy spirits are bad news.

The "Shadow," the realm of the spirits that overlaps with the material realm, is closed off to Prometheans. Conceivably, a Promethean could find a way (or develop a new Transmutation) to take him into the Shadow (or get a powerful mage or werewolf to take him), but mostly, Prometheans have no idea what Flux does to the Shadow.

The Shadow mirrors the material world. It's a hazy, notional reflection. Some things in the material world aren't there in the Shadow. Some are similar to their material realm counterparts, but their defining attributes are much more intense. (This is especially true of natural phenomena; if there's a snowstorm in the material world, there's likely a blizzard in the Shadow.) The Wasteland effect comes into this latter category.

A Frankenstein's Wasteland begins to look blasted. Spirits of lightning and electricity begin to gather. They're tortured and mean. If spirits needed sleep as humans do, the spirits would be behaving as if they'd not slept for days and they'd been kept awake by amphetamines and coffee.

The landmark-warping effect of a Galateid Wasteland is vastly more pronounced in the Shadow, and spirits of knowledge and information must spend Essence on a daily basis just to maintain their identity. Spirits of wind and air grow carnivorous and hungry.

In the Shadow of an Osiran's Wasteland, the spirits of water awaken, warp and become huge and forbidding. Spirits of age and earth act in much the same way in a Tammuz Wasteland.

In an Ulgan Wasteland, Twilight infects the material realm. Rents open in the air. In Twilight, rents open through to the Shadow, letting more spirits through into Twilight. And in the Shadow, holes open in the air leading to *somewhere else*, somewhere terrible and dark and beyond anything a mage or werewolf has ever experienced. The spirits that come out of those rents are hungry and ancient, and are not at all particular about what or who they consume.

Magicians and Monsters



Mages investigate. In their curiosity and arrogance, they delve into the mysteries of every level of being. Life, death, Heaven, Hell, love, hate, birth, spirit: none of them is a closed book to an Awakened miracle-worker with the time and skill to lay bare the secrets of the universe.

A Promethean is a new challenge for the mystic. The mages think that they have access to all things, but the workings of the Pyros are completely alien to them. Try as they might, their spells won't duplicate the feat. The power that drives the Created resists the mages' efforts to steal and harness it. The celestial beings who pursue these strange, tragic, soulless people don't seem to come from any realm belonging to Awakened cosmology. There are more things in Heaven and Earth than could be dreamed of even in their rather broad philosophy, and a mage learns a valuable lesson when he meets a Promethean: the world is not the mage's sandbox. The curiosity is enough to make a mage want to find out more.

Many mages would jump at the chance to seek out a Promethean and find out what makes him tick. An honorable mage will offer something in return for the chance to examine one of the Created, a valuable object, perhaps, or aid in reaching a milestone.

A less scrupulous mage or one, perhaps influenced by Disquiet, who has less sympathy for a creature the mage sees as a monster, doesn't bother with making nice: he gets his friends or lackeys to help him take the Promethean by force, and then tries to dissect (or vivisection) the misbegotten creature at his leisure. Another Promethean, or a throng of Prometheans, might try to rescue the prisoner, but they'll need the help of the kidnapper's rival mages to find him and effect his escape. The rival mages, meanwhile, get to observe a being they might never have heard of, and gain points on their enemy.





The problem with supernatural phenomena such as the Prometheans is that they're difficult to keep secret. Rival cabals of mages, all of whom are on the trail of their Promethean visitor, could well end up in a race to be the first to discern his secrets. Mages of the Mysterium, a mystical order dedicated to finding and archiving supernatural secrets, would probably give up anything to get their hands on such a secret. Mages who belong to the Guardians of the Veil, whose aim is to keep the secrets of the supernatural realm hidden from humans, would react in horror if they ever thought that there could be an inhuman being who could cause open changes to the environment simply by staying somewhere. The chances are that most mages, urged on by Disquiet, would do their damndest to rid the world of such a thing. Others still might, just as vampires, see an opportunity to make a weapon of a creature whose intelligence and creativity they badly underestimate.

This isn't to say that mages and Prometheans can't work together. An altruistic mage who manages to overcome Disquiet and converse with a Promethean can find a way into a whole world of secrets. For some mages, simply following a Promethean through his Saturnine Night is enough. Seeing the alchemical journey (or even part of the alchemical journey) can be enough

for some. It can provide valuable life lessons for those who would wield transforming, Supernal power.

Similar to the werewolves, many mages have access to the spirit realm, or can at least perceive it. An Ulgan (or another Promethean who can make use of Ephemeral Flesh) could prove a great help to a mage, if only to serve as a guide to realms unfamiliar. And then there are the *qashmallim*. These bizarre quasi-angelic creatures can appear to any intelligent being. Mages are particularly powerless against *qashmallim*. Prometheans, on the other hand, share their power. Although a Promethean might not be able to express what the thing is in words, his presence can make a real difference to what could otherwise be a random manifestation.

Bizarre angelic presences swim in the air with increasing frequency in a rundown part of town. The inhabitants begin to suffer from falls of frogs and fish, and strange, quasi-Biblical plagues. The inhabitants' confusion is overpowering when, at the center of this mini-apocalypse, they find a single,

strange derelict who can tell them more about what they're facing than any amount of magic could reveal.

Using Magic to Quell Disquiet

A mage can use his own magic to lessen Disquiet in himself and others, if he so chooses. Doing so requires that he be aware of the problem, which is typically the major hurdle to overcome. Disquiet isn't an outside effect that takes hold of the mortal mind: Disquiet is the inclination of the mortal mind.

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.

Supernatural Beings as Demiurges

Prometheans are created when someone steals (or passes on) the Divine Fire. It's usually another Promethean who does this, but humans can do it, too, ordinary mortals whose obsessions, curiosity, loneliness or simple need to create gives them the psychic push necessary to break into the fabric of everything and bring real life to dead meat. (The topic of human demiurges is discussed in the Introduction to this book.)

Can a supernatural being create a Promethean? No. Or, at least, no supernatural being has to date created a Promethean.

A werewolf lives according to the dictates of his nature — dead beings stay dead, and the only way to create life is the old-school way. If you're infertile, you're infertile. If you're dead, the worms eat you. There's no place for meddling with this kind of thing.

Meanwhile, vampires are quite capable of creating beings like themselves. Why would any vampire want to create life? Some vampires, though, thrive on experimentation. Some might find the creation of beings who could serve them quite an attractive prospect.

And then there are the mages. To create life! What a thing that could be! What an amazing achievement! To build a man or woman, fully formed, ready to see the world with new eyes! Oh, yes, that could be a thing that others would talk about for centuries to come.

The problem is, the vampires and mages who would try such a thing don't get it. Unlike ordinary humans, who have only their creativity, intuition and obsession to drive them, mages and vampires possess a great deal of supernatural power. They think that this power is enough to steal the Divine Fire. It isn't. Magic cannot create a Promethean, and neither can the Disciplines of the most powerful vampire.

This isn't to say that it couldn't happen, but for a vampire, mage or (at a stretch) a werewolf to really have a chance of creating a Promethean, the supernatural being would have to put aside her powers for the entire period of research and entirely trust on the powers of her obsession. It's the most counterintuitive thing any supernatural being could ever do. The powers are always there, a constant temptation to make things easier.

Except that her powers don't make it easier, they stifle the process entirely. The Pyros resists theft from any agency other than human obsession. It's one of the things that makes humans special. Mortality is a precious, brief thing. It's a terribly short, urgent blaze of life that every human has that makes humans unique and important. In fact, it's just possible that this — this urgency, this finite burst of life we all share — is what the Pyros actually is.

And there's the secret, the lesson that any supernatural being can learn from Prometheans. In the end, unlike the others, Prometheans have never been human. And yet, they

are so closely tied to humanity. It was human creativity, and pride, and life that first brought them into being. And Mortality is their destination. Vampires have lost their humanity forever. Werewolves have to come to terms with their own unique state, finding a place in nature. Mages struggle to *know* things that no one else could ever know, to reach up and hold the stars in their hands. But Prometheans, no matter how monstrous they are, want nothing more than to achieve simple humanity. And they can. And they do. In meeting the others, Prometheans show these supernatural beings what they are missing, and Prometheans alone transcend their state by joining mundane human life.

frankenstein's Crossovers

Movies and books in which frankenstein's Monster meets Dracula and/or the Wolfman (or some other vampire or werewolf) aren't exactly thin on the ground. Mostly, they're absolutely terrible. Since we use the introduction of these books as a way to pass along genuine inspiration for Promethean chronicles, we'll sneak a few purely nonsensical ones in while no one's watching. Here's a few:

frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man (Lon and Bela meet for the first time in 1943.)

House of frankenstein (There are two completely different films with the same name here: the Universal film made in 1944 and the TV movie in 1997. In the first, Dracula, the Werewolf and the Mad Doctor mix it up Universal-style. The 1997 one, which isn't all that bad as these things go, has the sympathetic monster in the modern day, facing up against several vampires and werewolves. In fact, it's reasonable Promethean inspiration.)

House of Dracula (Dracula returns the hospitality duties in 1945. The monster and the wolf man join the party again.)

Van Helsing (2004, and we'll abstain from any further judgments.)

frankenstein vs. the Creature from Blood Cove (An indie, made in 2005. And this isn't remotely the silliest movie title out there.)

Abbott and Costello Meet frankenstein (and the Wolf Man, and Dracula. No list would be complete without this 1948 classic.)

Monster Mash: The Movie (1995. It's a musical, directed in part by Joel Cohen! OK, not that Joel Cohen . . .)

Monster Squad (1987. Fred Dekker film in which 12-year-old kids fight the greats, including Dracula, the Wolfman and the Mummy, Frankenstein, you'll notice, teams up with the kids with no hesitation.)

... and best of all:

Alvin and the Chipmunks Meet Frankenstein (1999. Look, it counts. They're creepy, and they have animal heads.)

If that lot hasn't given you a migraine, check out Marvel's *Essential Monster of Frankenstein* comics collection for all the vampire, werewolf and mage crossovers a fan could ever need. It's kind of fun in the daft, goofy sort of way that the Marvel horrors of the 1970s captured, and that no one has been able to duplicate since. The collection is full of Pandorans, androids, other created things and ridiculous plot reversals. A change of writers at one point leads to the monster walking into Vincent (yes, Vincent) Frankenstein's mansion in London in one issue and walking out of it in Switzerland!

Ignorance and Discovery

by Aaron Dembski-Bowden

Under Promethean characters' macabre surfaces are elements of childlike innocence and ignorance. Coming into the world as grown adults, but lacking everything a human has learned over the course of his life makes for some frighteningly inhuman perspectives.

Life without a soul might be what defines many Prometheans in the setting, but life without normal human experience is a serious aspect in defining a character in the game. A player is portraying someone with endless potential for discovery, even down to the finest details of human existence, and this is what separates Promethean characters from those in other World of Darkness games. It's a pretty big divide.

Learning is supposed to be fun. Ignore the "Stay in School" sentiment for a moment and just dwell on the notion that learning and discovering things is fun. Everything we read and watch is essentially learning, taking in new information, even if it doesn't always feel like it when we're staring wide-eyed for two hours at the latest summer blockbuster.

Pretty much all of the fiction and non-fiction in what we read and watch is about finding out what happens to characters, people, places and so on. We learn what happens and how the people and characters react to events and their surroundings. The plots in most videogames are

based on uncovering more and more of the storyline as you go further into the setting. Every book we finish or series on TV that we eat up in weekly installments has an appeal founded in the fact that we want to know more. In a very real sense, that's learning. We enjoy finding out more about the things that interest us.

The driving force behind the Created is that the thing that interests them the most is us.

That can be hard to take in at first. After all, part of the appeal in playing these games is to get away from who we are for a few hours, and get involved in someone else's story. It's like a reflection, of sorts. We enjoy discovering who these inhuman characters are, and they're staring right back, watching humanity with just as much intensity.

What the Created most enjoy learning about is us and our impact on the world we live in. Understanding that is a key element in playing Promethean characters. We should never underestimate the emotional and psychological impact of marveling at things we understand implicitly or take for granted. The ignorance felt by all Prometheans, even when tempered by years of observation and experience, can create bitterness or wonder in their hearts.

Of course, it's easy to say this, but harder to envision it. How does it feel to marvel over things humanity considers mundane? How does that translate into a roleplaying game? The answer is found in what we, as human beings, find most interesting in the Promethean condition.

The Appeal of Inhumanity

As players, we are drawn to the inhuman qualities of the Created. Prometheans are monsters, straight off the bat. While there's often a part of us that roots for the bad guy, the appeal of Prometheans doesn't necessarily come from their wickedness, but rather from their inhumanity. We're dealing with macabre creatures animated by a strange and unnatural (even disgusting) simulacrum of life, and hence we're drawn to know more of their mysterious existences. Part of that appeal is because we are so repulsed by them, which is a common trait in this particular genre. In fact, that paradoxical appeal is at the heart of almost all the great horror stories.

The inhumanity of the Created might be the most immediately fascinating thing about them, but it's also the one thing they are trying to hide from us. It's also the one thing they most loathe about themselves. This means there's a lot of emotion hidden in the actions of a Promethean trying to fit in. When a player portrays that, he might not want to stoop to melodrama, but it pays to remember that his character is probably placing an intense amount of import on most interactions with a human. When roleplaying such scenes, it's the little slips that count and make a character all the more real: the awkward posture as he talks, the hesitant speech

with a language he still isn't sure he fully knows and that hideous drawn-out moment when he's not sure what to say next but can't break eye contact. This is the repulsive fascination at work.

Reconciling these conflicting aspects in Promethean existence is the key to presenting a Created character in an interesting light. Most players don't want to roleplay through the mundane aspects of mortal life: arguments at work, tough relationships and so forth. But by adding a mixture of the eerie, faintly grotesque atmosphere that's at the heart of the game, the players will begin to see through the eyes of their characters and share in a Promethean's twisted wonder at what we take for granted.

A relationship becomes a great deal less mundane in a roleplaying context when one of the partners is an inhuman construct obsessed with achieving life. A Galateid who catches sight of herself in the mirror while having sex might be repulsed by the true self she's hiding, but is unable to stop going through the motions for fear of losing the fragile, shallow connection she's built up over the course of the night. Likewise, the Frankenstein who tries to hold down a job doing dock work might have

significantly more interesting scenes when his co-workers start to feel his Disquiet and generate reasons to loathe him. 'Accidents' at work in such a place can be inventive, to say the least. Even an Osiran who watches children playing on a school field, marveling at their carefree existences, is in for a great deal more trouble than a normal woman might be if confronted by angry parents. Underneath a thin disguise, she is a monster. Her very presence near kids would terrify the parents much more than anything they could imagine if they knew the truth.

Perception is the key here. First things first: the Created are simply not aware of the things we are. As humans with a lifetime of experience to recall and learn from, our mindsets are far cries from the shattered psyches of Prometheans. When they awaken and arise for the first time, they possess fragmented knowledge and unreliable memories of what their mortal shells once knew in life. A newly created Promethean is not necessarily stupid, but he is at the mercy of his ignorance. Every little social slip is a chink in his disguise. Every forgotten aspect of true life is another danger to eventual exposure.



He is driven to understand more, though. At the core of the Pilgrimage is the need to understand humanity, though the quest itself is driven by an inhuman heart. The lessons learned will be alien and confusing, and repeated failure might even threaten the Promethean's sanity in a flood of Torment. Storytellers should always bear in mind that what they are presenting is not what is happening to the character, but *how the character perceives what is happening*. Take scenes from a Promethean's point of view, for example, a conversation in a bus shelter or a confrontation in a bar, and put the twist of inhuman perception on it. The swaggering biker who keeps his thumbs tucked into his pockets might appear to the Promethean to be hiding something. A weapon, perhaps? So he pays additional attention to the man's hands, which the guy soon notices and gets angry about. A conversation with a cop about speeding takes on a whole new tone when the Promethean knows only that the man is talking a language the Promethean doesn't understand into his radio, using strange number patterns and hasn't switched off his flashing sirens yet. To a human, this is just getting pulled over. To a Promethean, especially a newly arisen one, it has dark, worrying undertones. In fact, almost every social interaction does — except those with other Created.

The ebb and flow of relationships and human interaction are always viewed through a Promethean's tainted vision. For characters, the ignorance they must overcome means they are at a significant disadvantage over mortals in many situations. What Created characters do have, however, is instinct. *Human* instinct. Ultimately, it's up to players to decide how much their characters recall from their host bodies and what their characters have learned in the time since their creation, but when faced with something they don't comprehend, the Created can always fall back on their instincts. This isn't always an advantage, but it certainly makes things interesting.

Instinct

Human instinct can be tapped at will, just by asking yourself, "What would I do?" in any given situation that arises in game. That's the honest and easy answer, but not the whole of the story. A Promethean reacts instinctively in most situations, reacting in ways any human might in the same circumstances. The differences will be subtle, but potentially unsettling. That's the way it should be, of course; that's what taps the underlying theme of cold grotesquery in the game. A Promethean facing a mugger who suddenly pulls out a gun might, for the first second, close his eyes and turn away like a terrified child, or simply stare and ask why this is happening. After the character's instincts kick in, then he reacts as any human would, with panic or anger, tackling the mugger, begging for his life or trying to run. But in some situations, the

Promethean's first instinctive reaction will be something a normal human might consider childish, ignorant and almost certainly unsettling.

Take the example of a Promethean involved in a relationship that grows steadily more sour and bitterer each day. The Created desire affection and companionship just like anyone, though their nature poisons most possibilities. When people suffer through relationships and friendships that turn sour, the instinctive reactions might be to hurt the other person out of revenge or to ignore that person completely and seek out others with whom to build a bond. A Promethean thinks the same thoughts as any human would at such a time and suffers the same painful emotions, but his instincts might drive him to extreme measures. Instead of not calling for a few days, his silence will be a threatening, eerie thing that promises rage if it is broken for whatever reason. His revenge against a disloyal partner will be, by human standards, an overreaction that could lead to harm and even death.

Any emotion is at risk of becoming an obsessive focus, because human instinct not tempered by society's structure and laws can be a dangerous thing. Added to this is the fact that Prometheans can learn from almost anything. While they seek Mortality (and in game terms, Humanity), lessons can be learned and milestones achieved even through degenerative acts. This can set a dangerous precedent for some characters who don't temper their human instinct with reason.

It's fair to say that the Created hunger after much of what seems mundane to us, but these desires aren't as banal as a steady career or a mortgage. Their drives are broad, but still focused. A character doesn't want a four-bedroom condo with easy access to a swimming pool; he craves only a place to spend time without poisoning the surrounding area. That same character might be stalking a specific mortal out of fascination, but the character is not looking to spend his life with the one woman he loves. Not really. On a more basic, primal level, he is wishing for a way to feel love itself, without tainting the woman and driving her away.

This character wants what we all want, but he hungers for these things on a more basic level than most humans will ever know. His instincts drive him to find these things, to feel them and enjoy them, even if such experiences are destined to slip through his fingers and breed more sorrow than joy. Similar to us, the Created learn a great deal by making mistakes during the course of life — and a Promethean has a lot longer to make mistakes. He also has that much more to lose if he never gets it right.

In these errors, these failures to imitate and understand true life, much of the game's horror lies. Players tapping into this aspect of their characters are perhaps the ones most likely to shiver at the cold and hidden eeriness

inherent in the setting, and have some memorable, thematic scenes that stay with them after the chronicle is completed. The scenes of blood and gore in “May” are certainly atmospheric and disturbingly well-choreographed, but the really instructive scenes, for **Promethean** purposes, are those in which May simply tries to interact normally with people and only succeeds in alienating herself, while disgusting and repelling her audience.

Discovery

One of the keys to roleplaying this eerie ignorance is the sense of childlike wonder about certain new discoveries. Note that *childlike* isn’t the same as *childish*. The former implies a naivety that will eventually fade under the pressure of experience. The latter implies immaturity and potential silliness. The childlike nature of the Created is expressed in the way they react to new things and their ignorance of normal human behavior.

Consider the discomfort of some discoveries, especially when you have not been privy to information that those around you knew all about: the sickness in the stomach, the worry of embarrassment and of drawing attention to yourself. Think of the uncomfortable sensation when those around know something you don’t, whether it was something important like a girlfriend cheating or a job interview result, or even something as minor as when all your friends knew what a podcast was and you still weren’t sure. Prometheans live with that uncomfortable fear in their thoughts at all times. That’s another factor in their reactions. The fact that they must hide their ignorance from mortals while seeking to learn more about the Created’s own potential for humanity is a daunting task. It can make even calm-hearted Prometheans react badly, whether it’s through sudden retreat from scrutiny, a cold desire for revenge, an outburst of violence or one

of 100 human reactions to social difficulty. Ironically, many of these reactions can threaten to reveal to witnesses that the Promethean is not what he appears to be, and should the truth surface at such a time, it’s bound to provoke a further feeling of despondency within the character.

Unfortunately for the Created, bitterness and depression are often closely bound to the Pilgrimage. While few troupes will want to spend their sessions in melodramatic whining, lamenting their inhuman state, inhumanity is still a strong theme in the game, and there’s a lot to be said about scenes involving poignant interactions that highlight the divide between the born and the Created. *Frankenstein* provided no shortage of such scenes, after all, and remained a story with compelling, macabre characters.

The greatest conflict is derived from what it means to be human. Prometheans, during the course of their lives, develop inhuman powers that separate them from mortals, as well as copy human mannerisms in order to fit in. The Created come to understand relationships by experiencing them, but are destined only to know how relationships degrade and die rather than how they can flower into something more than they were at the beginning. Of course, Prometheans can observe mortals to see how things naturally progress, but that steals the richness that experience provides.

These are all aspects of life that we, as humans, learn from childhood to adulthood. Thrust into life as fully grown (if not developed) beings, the Created learn things the hard way, and react as best they are able in the aftermath.

Just how your characters delve into these discoveries and how they react to them is up to you, but the stage is set for an eerie and thrilling show.



CHAPTER FOUR

STRANGERS ON A HILL

It didn't take long to find work in Albany. I wasn't surprised. One thing I'd found over the years is that wherever you got more than a handful of folks together, someone was going to want to see women taking off their clothes. Inside of a week, I'd been hired at two clubs, neither one much to speak of, but they'd bring in enough to put a roof over our heads. It felt good, being the one to take care of Beauregard, to teach him and protect him — even if he didn't seem to like it much.

We fell into a routine fairly quickly. I'd work all night and come home when the last customer was gone. Beauregard was always waiting for me when I got back to the motel, and we'd sit up until dawn talking. I tried to share the things I'd learned, but he seemed more concerned with where I'd learned them than the lessons themselves. He'd developed a jealous streak, asking about whether I'd done things with any of the men at the club. It was kinda sweet, seeing him get all possessive and red-faced if he thought someone might be getting too close. Sure, we fought some, but we always made up after, and he never did any damage I couldn't mend before my next shift.

Afterwards, we'd sleep for a few hours, curled up on the tiny motel bed with our neighbors fighting or making up themselves just a thin wall away. It's funny how fast you get used to something, how it starts to seem like it was always this way, like you were always together. Like maybe it could last.

Then one night I came back and the door swung open on a dark room. Fumbling for the light switch, I panicked. Had we stayed too long? Had someone broken in and caught him unawares? Maybe I hadn't warned him enough, maybe he'd not listened. Oh, why wouldn't he listen?

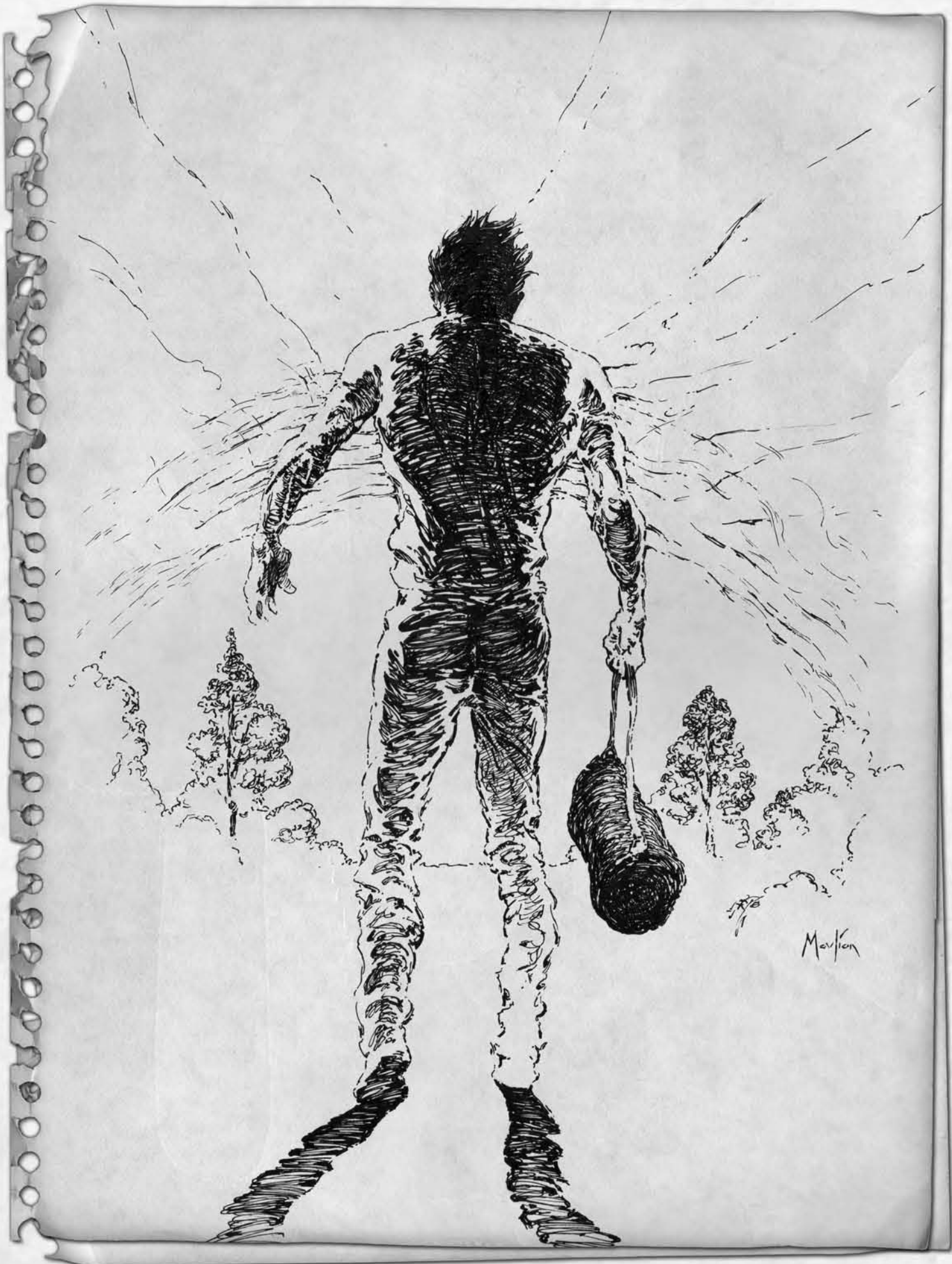
I expected to see carnage, but the room looked sterile. The maids had made up the bed and everything was as tidy as the day we'd checked in. The only thing out of place was a yellow sheet of paper propped on the fake wood desk next to the phone. I snatched it up, thinking to find a ransom note. I was already making plans on how I could raise whatever they demanded.


The words scrawled across it made me wish someone had stolen him.

"Gone to Boston. Fuck you."

I blinked away the tears, then read them again, hoping I'd misunderstood the first time. But there was no mistaking the signature he'd left.

"Tanner"





Why not? Since
through life's
little day

Our heads such
sad effects
produce;

Redeemed from
worms and
wasting clay,

This chance is
theirs, to be of
use.

— Lord Byron

*“Lines Inscribed Upon A
Cup Formed From A Skull”*

In this story, characters confront a rumor: a Promethean called Lighthouse has abilities unseen by other Created. If the stories are true, not only does he know unique Transmutations but he also can help guide another Promethean along toward his Pilgrimage with secret and sacred insight.

Pursuing the legend brings characters to Boston, the New England “City on a Hill” instrumental in the fiery revolution that gave America its liberty. Their quest to find Lighthouse takes them through a city on the brink of mad discontent. They are not alone in their hunt for the sacred Promethean. Others come, bringing the terrible unease of Disquiet with them. Is it enough to tip the city over the edge? Will the throng find itself swallowed by the human tempest that threatens to explode from its cracked and shuddering teacup?

Theme

The predominant theme of this chronicle is “division born of prejudice.” Humankind has an innate distaste for the Created. Disquiet stirs as loathsome instinct, and the Prometheans are its target. The very heart and soul of humans are driven unconsciously toward hating these monsters. This prejudice sits deep, like a septic infection.

And yet, the Created aren't alone. While human prejudice toward each other is more conscious and less intuitive, humans find plenty of reason to distrust or hate their fellow humans. Issues of skin color, economic background and national origin continue to push humanity toward petty tribalism. A homeless man is doused with lighter fluid and set afire. An upstanding middle-class man can't get a loan because he's black. A white woman gets hassled and pushed around when she volunteers at an urban shelter.

This is exemplified in Boston, where ethnic and economic separations are obvious, yet largely unchallenged. The characters must confront the fact that for as much as they are unlike human beings, they also share a number of traits. Can the Created relate to the abused homeless, the dismissed African American, the harassed white woman? Absolutely.

And yet, that likely makes them wonder: is it worth it? Lighthouse represents a signpost on the way to the Great Work, and yet the road is lined with the strife born of human cruelty. A Promethean wants to be human, but why? The Created know they are monsters, but this chronicle forces them to see the hurtful truth: humans can be monsters, too.

Mood

The mood of this chronicle is one of paranoia and suspicion. Nobody in this town trusts anybody. The city's residents undermine one another constantly, attempting to earn a win for their own little social groups. The Prometheans, who should be united in their trials and tribulations, seek to compete instead of cooperate. Racism and prejudice create an atmosphere of pervasive distrust, as grossly invasive as the seeping effects of Disquiet.

Make the characters feel it. Are they being followed? Do eyes watch them from the shadows? Is that man staring at them because he plans on hunting them later with a 9mm pistol packed in his waistband? Or will his hate and distrust remain passive? Take characters on a mad journey through the labyrinthine circles of suspicion. Finding someone they can trust requires a dangerous search down a path of thorns.

Beneath it all is a duel of tragedy versus hope. Lighthouse represents a powerful possibility to help characters on their Pilgrimages. But by trying to find him, are they damning themselves and others? Is the hunt Sisyphean, as painfully redundant as pushing a boulder up a hill only to have it tumble back down again? Tragedy isn't just about sadness. Dramatic tragedy involves a character inadvertently working toward his own undoing. Oedipus tries to avoid bedding his mother and murdering his father, and by attempting to steer clear of fate he turns right into it. Do the characters, by trying to accomplish one thing, undermine the possibility of doing so? By trying to find Lighthouse, are they actually destroying him?

Structure

Similar to a film or theatrical production, this chronicle plays out according to a three-act structure. Each act is tailored toward escalation and revelation. In each, things get worse. In each, new discoveries are made.

Unlike in a film or play, however, these acts do not provide a hard-and-fast “plot” for players and Storytellers to follow. Each throng is different, and as such, players and their characters are tailored toward different experiences and interests. The story is about them, after all, and so this chronicle will provide you with the tools necessary to shape this tale accordingly.

Welcome to Boston

This **Promethean** story uses Boston as the setting. Boston is suited toward a Created chronicle, the city itself a kind of patchwork beast of odd neighborhoods stitched together at the borders. It's a city of liberty, with the irony being that many of its residents certainly don't feel free. They're fettered by territory, money and prejudice. Boston is also a city with an “off-the-books” immigrant population. For instance, the city has what is perhaps the highest population of Brazilians outside of Brazil, and yet the census doesn't count them. Prometheans are emblematic of not only the immigrant experience but also the themes of prejudice posited by this tale.

If you have the **Mage: The Awakening** supplement, **Boston Unveiled**, you can use that to enliven this story. That said, this chapter will give you all the pertinent information you need. The Boston supplement — or, for that matter, a *Fetlor's Guide* to the city — only helps to give additional material.

Don't feel chained to Boston as the setting. Boston isn't the only city in the world that suffers from racial oppression and an immigration problem. Philadelphia, for instance, has many of the same qualities (including ties to liberty and revolution). Or, consider the anti-Muslim sentiment (and subsequent riots) present in a city such as Paris.

Before the Game

This section includes events that occur before the “main plot” ensues. What brings the characters here? What motives do they possess when beginning this journey? What events happen before they arrive to affect the city and its inhabitants? Answering all of these questions will help you gain a greater foothold on how to run the story, and furthermore, how to tweak it to the needs of your group.

Character and Motive

This chronicle may continue one or both of **Promethean's** earlier stories (see “Water of Life” from **Promethean: The**

Created and “A Sheltering Storm” from **Pandora's Book**), or may remain unconnected to those prior tales. Whether the characters are new or well traveled, this chronicle is geared toward Created of at least the “established throng” level (minimum 35 experience points spent). Feel free to use less or more powerful characters, but some of the opponents' Traits and challenges may need to be adjusted when doing so.

What gets the characters to Boston? Wherever they are, feel free to drop the rumor in their laps that Boston is home to Lighthouse, a Promethean who can act as a shepherd and guide the Created toward becoming human. Some stories may suggest he's a crazy messianic figure. Others offer him as a bodhisattva, forestalling his own Great Work so he may guide others toward theirs. Botherud rumor may indicate that he is a demonic figure, stealing Pyros and contaminating Azoth.

That said, the characters' motives needn't be bound solely to this purportedly powerful Promethean. If the throng has personal reasons to come to Boston, rely on those reasons instead. The more intimately you can tie characters to this story, the better the experience will be. What follows are a number of potential motives that could bring characters to the city of Boston during this turbulent time. Note that the throng needn't share one motive; each Promethean may have her own reasons to enter this tale, be they overt or secret.

- Characters decide to find Lighthouse to seek his help. If he can truly guide them toward the light of Mortality (or teach them new Transmutations), then they will do whatever it takes to find him and beg his aid.
- They decide to exploit him. If he's so powerful, they can use him as a bargaining chip or a bribe. He who controls the holy Promethean gains a great deal of power among his own kind.
- Lighthouse needs to be destroyed! Perhaps characters feel that he must be a ruse or sham, giving false hope. Or maybe they just don't want him to help others to achieve the Great Work. This is, of course, a very Botherud perspective, which may tie characters to the antagonists of this and previous stories.

- Characters may have their own reasons for coming to Boston. Perhaps a long-hunted creator has fled to the city, and now the throng follows. Maybe they're tracking an enemy or a friend who is following the Lighthouse story, and thus the characters are caught in the wake.

Keep in mind, too, that the characters may already be in Boston. If the players generate Boston-based Created, fine. Give them the option to be more intimately tied to the story, should they choose. Admittedly, this casts the game in a slightly different hue (now they're protecting and dealing with home territory instead of wading into unfamiliar waters), but the themes and mood remain the same.

Milestones

The characters likely have milestones you haven't yet decided upon. That's good. Tie them to the unfolding events in this story. Characters shouldn't go through this tale without achieving one or several milestones. This story features plenty of opportunity for this: helping or hurting humankind, aiding other Created on their Great Works, saving Prometheans from themselves, whatever. Along the way, we've marked these potential milestones, but because you know the characters involved, keep your eyes peeled for unique milestone opportunities.

The Ongoing Story

A few quick ideas to tie characters to the two previous Promethean stories ("Water of Life" and "A Sheltering Storm") are presented here. The Botherú faction is one plot thread that connects all the stories. Characters continuing from one or both of the previous stories are likely to have some opinion of that faction, and may even have enough of an opinion to hate the Botherú — or want to join them (after all, in New Orleans, the faction wasn't violent, unlike that in Boston).

Also, if characters are in any way tied to characters from the previous stories, use those characters as well. Is Cassius relentless, showing up here to cause them harm? Or is he a part of the Unknown Soldier's throng (see below), coincidentally standing in the throng's way? If Carla Two is still around, how does she figure into the Botherú plot? Is she still doing their bidding, or have the characters talked some sense into her? Do Created "monks" from the Mutus Liber in New Orleans come seeking the holy one called Lighthouse (or maybe they direct the characters to do so)?

Alternately, should you have the luxury of reading all the stories before running them, you can plant bits from *this* story into the previous tales as you run them, thus establishing a natural flow for the stories to follow. Consider foreshadowing legends about Lighthouse all the way back to "Water of Life," as well as seeding Elpis-visions with glimpses of the future. Or, in New Orleans, did antiquarian Jerry Havelock have contact information for Moses Moon, Lighthouse's mortal alchemist? Planting seeds in the earlier stories that will grow to fruition in the later tales is a great way to give the characters context and unity.

Disquiet

A number of Prometheans come to Boston, seeking out the one called Lighthouse. Disquiet is a foregone conclusion. Very few parts of the city are actually abandoned. People are everywhere, and they come to loathe

or distrust the Created. Remember that Disquiet slowly grows to plague the city's populace. As the story goes on, the unsettling effects spread. Even if the characters are careful to avoid engendering deep Disquiet, other Prometheans are not. As the story progresses, Disquiet worsens. Through the three acts, Disquiet moves from the first stage through to the fourth.

To fit the mood of the story, derangements spawned as a result of Disquiet in Boston could be Phobia/Hysteria or Suspicion/Paranoia. Disquiet also helps result in the explosive riots that overtake the city in Act Three. When the mobs don't have Created upon which to pin their troubles, the disharmony of the city becomes strikingly apparent. As the populace divides deeper into its warring tribes, uncontrollable rage and violence result.

Wasteland Effect

The Wasteland is a fast and brutal effect. While it can be ameliorated a little by the nature of a diverse throng, that doesn't stop the Wasteland effect from spreading like cancer. Yes, the effect might slow after that first week, but its resonance can be damning even in this initial period. The throng has to settle down eventually, even if it's just finding a place to sleep.

Consider, too, that Boston proper is a city shoved together in a space of approximately 50 square miles. Some neighborhoods, for example, Beacon Hill, consist of only one or two square miles by themselves. The characters can easily affect one of these areas, but more important is that the characters' throng is not alone. Rumors of Lighthouse and his miraculous abilities draw a number of other Created to the area. Considering how quickly a Promethean's Azoth mystically marks the area in which he lingers, the city can suddenly begin to suffer a massive agglomerate Wasteland effect.

That said, it isn't all negative. Characters may be able to discern where the Wasteland effect has taken hold in the city, which naturally can lead them to those Created who caused such effect. A successful Intelligence + Occult roll can help a character identify a tainted area as a particular Lineage's Wasteland.

Preliminary Events

The following events — some related to the mortal side of the city, some tied to Prometheans — take place before the story begins, and ideally, before the characters arrive in Boston. Characters may learn such information through minimal research (picking up a newspaper) or listening in on the conversations of passersby. In most cases, no roll is necessary to discover such information.

Gentrification

The last year has seen a sudden surge in the gentrification of Boston's poorer neighborhoods and suburbs. Boston, in

a way, suffers the reverse of “white flight.” Here, affluent whites seek the restoration and improvement of deteriorated urban properties. Supposedly, it’s to make a more “historical” Boston. Areas become more tourist-friendly, land values increase and developers make big money. This plan doesn’t take into account the people who already live in these areas, however. The poorer residents (often of various ethnicities and nationalities) can’t afford the sudden surge in property values, and gentrification results in their displacement. The neighborhoods affected include Roxbury and Dorchester, as well as the suburb of Somerville.

Already, construction crews have come into these neighborhoods to gut various buildings and turn them into condominiums, coffee shops or boutiques. Even local community centers have been targeted as “prime” real estate. The crews contend daily with mobs of protesters. So far, the protests haven’t become violent, though they can be loud. Police haven’t had to forcibly break up the demonstrations, but many residents are prepared for that inevitability.

As a counterpoint, a Boston Globe reporter, José Redman, published an article in his paper that claims gentrification’s effects on the poor are nearly all positive. Better jobs in the area allow for residents to find greater opportunity nearby, and federal subsidies and Massachusetts law will help residents pay for increased rent. Displacement, he promises, will be minimal. As someone’s response to the article, three hooded men bludgeoned Redman in a parking garage. They broke several of his bones — collarbones, one femur, his jaw — with heavy wrenches, and he now lies in a coma.

Busing

Racially, Boston is not a well-integrated city. To speed integration, judges have demanded that the school district begin busing students from poorer ethnic neighborhoods to more middle- and upper-class (and predominantly white) neighborhoods. Violence and vandalism resulted. White teens threw a brick through the window of a bus carrying bused-in blacks and Hispanics, giving one of the students a concussion. Cousins of the wounded attacked the supposed brick-thrower and put the offender — the *wrong* offender — in the hospital with two broken arms. Boston has attempted busing in the past; it never produced wholly positive results.

Dirty Bomb

Arabs don’t have an easy time in Boston. Violence against them is at an all-time high. To make things worse, just three weeks ago police and air marshals foiled a “terrorist plot” at the Logan Airport. They found an unnamed man (described in most reports and in the media as a “foreign insurgent”) holding a “suspicious suitcase” while sitting outside the airport on a bench. The suitcase held an RDD, or Radiological Dispersal Device. The case was

stuffed with plastic explosives and cesium-137 (radioactive material used in nuclear medicine such as radiation therapy). The attack was thwarted before the dirty bomb went off. The suspect, held without bail or due process, is reportedly at the Suffolk County Jail, though a few media outlets suggest he may have been taken to a “black site” by the FBI or Homeland Security. The same media sites (labeled mostly as “left-wing propaganda”) note that the terrorist is apparently Brazilian, not Arab.

Gangs

Racial tensions are made worse by the presence of gangs. Every racial group has representation among the gangs: neo-Nazis among the whites, banger thugs among the blacks and machete-wielding “honor” gangs among the Salvadorans. Beyond the actual crime and fear spread by such gangs, Boston’s citizens also continue to spread urban legends about the gangs and their practices. Some fear horrible initiations in which gang members cut off the penises of men and boys who go into out-of-the-way public restrooms. Others fear violent reprisals for making the wrong hand signal or crossing the wrong street. Some stories even suggest that the gangs kidnap teenaged white girls after murdering the families, and then sell the girls to Middle Eastern slavery rings. It doesn’t matter that no evidence — particularly bodies — remain to prove these stories true. Urban legends require little verification to remain alive amidst a frightened populace.

Magic and Madness

The **Boston Unveiled** supplement is focused predominantly on the city’s mage population. The supplement provides a good geographic guide, but only in relation to the society of mages that dwells there. If you want to involve mages in this story (and you may, as their Faustian curiosity may draw them near to the Promethean phenomenon), you have a few options.

* **Cheat:** By concocting your own idea of what a “mage” is, you can intimately tie mages to the game’s story. A rough-and-tumble guide is: create a mortal character. Give her a smattering of Promethean powers (Transmutations, Bestowments, etc.). Presto! Now you have a mage. Include these homebrewed sorcerers however best complements your game.

* **Use the Core:** If you don’t have the **Boston Unveiled** supplement, but do possess the **Mage: The Awakening** core book, use it. Make your own mage society in Boston using the information presented in this chapter. Maybe the free Council is still intimately tied to ideas of revolution, and some splinter groups are fomenting the riots that

will appear in Act Three. Do the mages of the *Mysterium* want to meet some Prometheans so that the mages can take the Created apart at the stitches for the sake of knowledge?

• **Use the Supplement:** The *Boston Unveiled* book has Boston's mage society all hammered out, and you can scan the book to pick and choose good antagonists or plotlines. The mage population shouldn't dominate this story (it is, after all, a *Promethean* game), but some of the characters may play important roles (Mama Desta, for instance, serves as an excellent foil for Lighthouse).

• **The Others:** When the Created come to town, all kinds of nastiness crawl out of the woodwork to find out what's going on. Disquiet and the Wasteland are noticeable by other supernatural populations, so if you want to include vampires or werewolves, just follow the above ideas and apply them as you see fit.

Act One: Bright Beacon

In this first act, characters come to Boston and are drawn into the search for the mysterious Promethean known as Lighthouse. Before they find him, however, they find the remains of an unfortunate Promethean named Sorry Charlie.

Sorry Charlie's Last Epistle

Characters come to Boston, likely not knowing where to start. Boston is a big city, a tangle of streets and neighborhoods. They are given no clues as to how to find this enigmatic Lighthouse, and thus are cast adrift. However the characters decide to tackle the problem is fine. Do they go to the library, hoping to find some kind of clue? Do they approach the actual Boston Lighthouse out on Little Brewster Island in the harbor? Perhaps the throng rides the 'T' train, hoping that Azoth calls to Azoth and draws the characters closer to another Promethean, one who might have better direction than they do.

They meet with little success. Library research grants them no actual information on Lighthouse. A visit to Little Brewster Island gives them an example of a historic lighthouse, but provides them with little else. Blindly searching for other Prometheans may work, as others are coming to town at roughly the same time to pursue the rumors of Lighthouse's powerful abilities. Most other Created are as lost as the characters. You might give the characters some rumors about Lighthouse (or about

unrelated topics; this book alone contained more than a score of handy bits of biased information for exactly this purpose), but no one really *knows* anything.

In any case, the characters soon receive a letter that offers them direction. No matter what part of town they're in, a homeless man shambles behind them, following and watching intently. Noticing him requires success on a Wits + Composure roll; he's not attempting to be stealthy. If they approach him, he acts nervous and may even have a violent physical reaction (dry heaves, nearly fainting). If they don't approach, he finally comes to them after about an hour of following them.

He'll tell them that his name is Maestro. Pale and pock-marked, Maestro has long, unkempt hair, and walks with a bit of a stoop. He's swaddled in various coat parts regardless of the weather, and around his waist he wears a hemp-cord belt with various woodwind instruments hanging from it. A brown plastic recorder, a rusted flute, a set of brass pan pipes and half of an oboe dangle. A ratty laptop bag hangs at his shoulder.

From the bag, he pulls out a photocopied letter, which he thrusts at them as if he just wants to be rid of it. The letter appears to have been written in a shaky scrawl. The cursive lettering would've been elegant, had it not been written in such a trembling script. The message reads:

Dearest Strangers:

I'm not a part of this world, but I want to be very badly. I don't belong here any more than you do, and I have been here for a very long time. But I cannot be quiet any longer. You are here looking for Lighthouse, I know, but things are terrible and strange right now. Something is wrong. My dreams are awful and tell me that things are breaking apart and breaking down and I don't know that I can stop it. I see everything from afar, and I think that it is time I see things from up close. I keep writing things down and putting them on my walls and I know it's all connected but I just can't see how.

Lighthouse is in danger, but from whom I don't know. I only know that they almost killed him and that he has gone into hiding. I think you may be in danger, too. Maybe the whole city. Come and find me in Beacon Hill tomorrow night. I'll be on the second floor of the African Methodist Episcopal Church waiting at midnight. Together we can find answers.

*Regards,
Sorry Charlie*

As characters read the letter, Maestro Mikey decides that he doesn't want to hang around. As soon as he's a few feet away from them, he breaks into an erratic, stumbling run.

If characters pursue him, begin the Foot Chase (see p. 65, the *World of Darkness Rulebook*). Maestro only has four dice in his Stamina + Athletics pool, with a Speed of 9. In fact, assume that Maestro has no more than four dice in any given pool. If stopped or grappled, he doesn't resist. He only becomes combative if injured.

He can't tell the characters much about Sorry Charlie, only that he's a weird, chubby black dude who showed up in Boston about a week ago. Charlie found Maestro outside the Suffolk Bookstore in Beacon Hill. Charlie begged Maestro to do him a favor and to "be his friend," something that the ersatz musician didn't really want to do. But Sorry Charlie paid Maestro with a satchel of loose change and a broken oboe. His only job — aside from sitting and listening to Charlie ramble on about "bad things coming" — was to hand out this letter to those whom Charlie deemed necessary. Charlie explained that the targets were "those he dreamed about," and he could direct Maestro to the general areas as to where they'd be.

Maestro has nine copies of the letter, but under threats (Intimidation) or kind words (Persuasion) explains that Sorry Charlie only has three targets for them so far. Charlie hasn't told Maestro where to go to hand out all the other letters.

The other intended letter recipients belong to a throng of Created led by a Frankenstein calling himself the Unknown Soldier. Maestro knows their names because Charlie told him. He does not, however, know where they are, only that they've recently come into Boston to find Lighthouse.

Beacon Hill

Beacon Hill sits trapped in a history that, in many ways, never existed. The neighborhood, which occupies a single square mile of land just north of Boston Common, contains some of the wealthiest addresses in the entire United States. Old money sits tied to homes from the Victorian and Greek Revival periods, which themselves line streets marked by gaslights and secret gardens. The neighborhood's 10,000 residents are, frankly, rich and white.

The irony here is that Beacon Hill used to be a rather progressive part of Boston. This neighborhood was once the center of the abolitionist movement in New England, and operated as a neighborhood where blacks and whites lived in relative harmony. Before the Civil War, Beacon Hill was a nexus for the Underground Railroad. After the war, Beacon Hill continued as a safe haven for African Americans who came and founded churches and businesses. During the first half of the 20th century, however, gentrification took hold in the old neighborhood. Heavy renovations and an effort to maintain an expensive historical façade incurred an astronomical cost of living. Most blacks were forced out by high costs, and moved into other neighborhoods. They brought most of their churches and businesses with them. Beacon Hill still sports a few historical reminders of the area's contribution to African-American history (plaques, trails, museums) but it has very few *actual* African Americans.

African Methodist Episcopal Church

The last church to leave Beacon Hill was the African Methodist Episcopal Church. It left the neighborhood

in 1939 due to a costly widening of Charles Street (upon which the church sat), forcing the church's mortgage to become too unwieldy for parishioners' pockets. The church moved to Elm Hill, an area of Roxbury, and the Beacon Hill building in which it once sat became the Charles Street Meeting House.

Characters searching Beacon Hill for the African Methodist Episcopal Church are initially out of luck, as it no longer exists as such here. Should they persist in searching for it, a successful Persuasion or Intimidation roll may earn them the information from one of the neighborhood inhabitants. Moreover, characters may certainly perform Research rolls at a local library (five successes required) to glean such information. (If characters leave Beacon Hill and check out the church in Roxbury, one of the parishioners or ministers there can explain how the church once occupied the Charles Street Meeting House.)

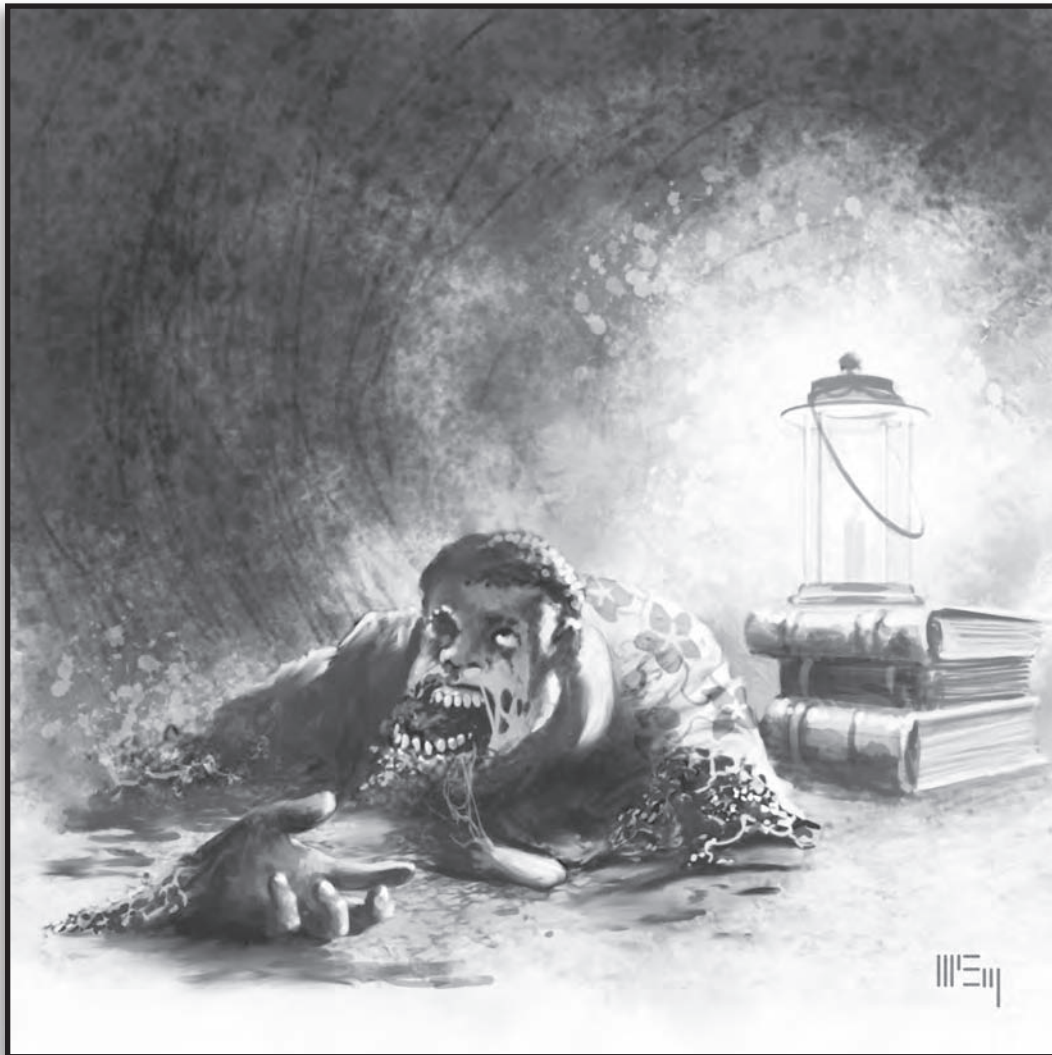
The Charles Street Meeting House now contains a café and various shops on the street level (antiques, mostly), as well as offices and a small art gallery on the second floor. The upstairs closes at six o'clock, and the downstairs closes at eight. The outer doors to the Meeting House are locked, but only the individual shop doors on the inside are gated or set with alarms. Gaining entrance requires a Lockpicking roll (see pp. 74–75, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**), with seven total successes required. Alternately, characters may break down the door (Metal Security Door stats found on p. 136, **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

A set of steps takes characters to the second floor. The door to the art gallery and offices is ajar. From outside, they can make out a faintly guttering glow. Inside, in the art gallery, the room is illuminated by a red Coleman lantern sitting on the floor. The art on the walls are oil paintings of mundane Boston cityscapes and New England lighthouses.

They find Sorry Charlie on the floor by the lantern, hacked to pieces. A portly black man in a blue Hawaiian shirt (now soaked red) and cargo shorts, Charlie's all over the room. His hands are chopped off, his legs cut into chum. His tongue lies near his open mouth, which has been forced open by breaking the jaw. Blood has soaked the gray carpet, and flies are already beginning to feast. Greasy red clay sticks to all parts of him, including the wounds. It lies clumped in his mouth, and fills the room with a sour, heady aroma. Note that this is sadly not Charlie's first death. As such, he has little chance of resurrection unless a character possesses the Revivification Bestowment and is willing to expend the Azoth for a Promethean he has never met.

Investigation

The characters don't have long. The police are on their way, called by the perpetrator of this crime (though the characters don't know that). If a player succeeds on an Wits + Investigation roll, the character finds a list crumpled in one of Charlie's severed hands. Upon the



Sirens Wail

About five minutes after the characters discover the gory scene, the cops show in a scene of great bluster. Several cars pull up out front of the building on Charles Street and into the adjacent alley and lot. Sirens wail, tires screech. They want this bust to be public (their tip-off led them to believe they're about to catch the Salvadoran LL-13 gang in the midst of some "reprisal killing," and a public bust might put the populace at ease).

Characters can escape a number of ways. Fire code requires a fire escape despite the historical nature of the building. The fire escape is through the offices, through another door that appears ajar. The offices (belonging to art importers) offer a series of cubicles that end at a window, beyond which lies the fire escape. The window is already open, intimating that this is how

list are all the characters' names, as well as the following names: Unknown Soldier, Vox Vulgus and Ti Puenez (plus any others that you wish Charlie to have identified before his murder). Characters investigating the body and its parts also find a key in the ratty sneaker that hangs off a severed foot. Taped to the key is a small quarter-sized slip of paper, and written on it in Charlie's shaky script is: "Water Door." An exceptional success on the Investigation roll leads characters to find a golden ring on his finger beneath a clod of clay. Scratched upon this ring in the same shaky script as the letter the characters received is the text: *Endymion. H.W.L.*

A successful Wits + Medicine roll determines that Sorry Charlie has been dead since about eight or nine o'clock. His wounds seem caused by a heavy sword, knife or cleaver. Medicine rolls are hampered, however, by a -3 penalty as the result of dim light, no equipment and the fact that the muddy body isn't mortal but Promethean.

The following tidbit doesn't require any roll at all: mingled in with the stink of blood and death is the distinct odor of fish.

the perpetrator potentially escaped.

Characters may also find that a locked metal security door (five successes on a Lockpicking roll) will also take them to the bell tower of the church (the bell has since been replaced with an electronic "bell ringer"), but from there they may end up trapped on the roof.

Characters only have about three minutes before the police grow tired of yelling through bullhorns and enter the Meeting House with tear gas canisters and weapons drawn. The characters can, of course, attempt to assault the police. On the first turn, the throng-members may have the element of surprise on their side (see "Surprise," pp. 151–152, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

he's Alive!

Does Sorry Charlie have to die? Absolutely not. Characters may be able to keep him alive, and that's just fine.

Consider, for instance, what happens if they enter the Meeting house before it closes — and before Charlie gets chopped into gobbets — and manage to stay hidden until the workers leave? The characters may come upon a scene in which Charlie is in the midst of being attacked by the frankenstein known as La Tempestad (see “Dramatis Personae,” p. 152). Charlie sneaks in via the fire escape, and there the other Promethean attacks him.

Alternately, consider that one of the characters may possess the Revivification Bestowment and be willing to expend a dot of Azoth for this Golem. They're pressed for time and may not decide to drag him back to the land of the living by the time the cops show, but anything's possible.

Of course, Sorry Charlie isn't given full Traits, and we don't have room to detail every contingency plan. But, if they do save him, he's a stubborn, mumbling, inscrutable Golem. He has no real facts to support his theories of conspiracy, but a high Elpis score has supplied him with a number of images and theories that he'll share with characters. (See “Sorry Charlie's Secret Room,” below.) Once he helps them, it's likely he'll leave the city, feeling satisfied that he has set a course of actions in motion to help save Lighthouse and Boston. It may even be one of his milestones.

Azoth to Azoth

As they flee (or fight cops or get dragged away in cuffs), the characters will get a taste of Azothic Radiance: Unknown Soldier's throng was on its way to the meeting (Maestro apparently found the throng) with the intention of watching the meeting from afar. Characters might only feel the thrumming Radiance without spying its source. Alternately, if they run far and fast enough, they may catch a glimpse of the throng retreating into the shadows at a distance. Soldier is practical, and won't let his “army” get anywhere near the characters or the cops.

Sorry Charlie's Secret Room

The throng should realize that their one and only connection to this whole mess — and, more importantly, their only real avenue to find Lighthouse — just got hewn into various muddy, bloody hunks. Obviously, Sorry Charlie was onto *something*. And now he's dead. Even if the characters aren't terribly interested in finding Lighthouse, they might be interested in solving Charlie's murder (this might be a milestone, especially for a Stannum character). What do they do from here?

A few clues add up to Charlie having a lair in Boston. His letter indicated that he was posting things on his “walls.” Characters may have also found a key in his shoe (see above). Armed with that suspicion, what do characters do?

Finding the Lair

Characters have a number of options when it comes to discovering Sorry Charlie's lair. These options are by no means exhaustive, and players may have their own ideas on how to do things that aren't mentioned here.

- Maestro knows. He is Beacon Hill's one resident homeless guy: an eccentric, erratic “musician” who hangs out in front of stores and T stations butchering the very concept of music on his various woodwinds (his Expression rolls are usually the result of a chance die). The throng may find him in and around Beacon Hill. He's been to Sorry Charlie's lair once a few days ago, and can take them there again (but will only do so if they get him a new woodwind instrument for his collection — or if they beat it out of him). For added conflict, feel free to have cops be dragging him away at just the moment the characters show. Maestro, while accepted by Beacon Hill's more liberal residents, still draws enough ire to summon the occasional cop. Instead, maybe they come upon the police beating Maestro in one of Beacon Hill's secret gardens or little alleyways. (The homeless attract their own kind of Disquiet, it seems, a realization that may be worthy of a minor milestone for some Created.)

- Characters can guess that Charlie was a Golem. As such, his Lineage gives off a particular kind of Wasteland effect: crumbling buildings, potholes, rust, pallid people, pervasive decay. The throng may wander the area in and around Beacon Hill looking for the particular “resonance” of the Tammuz Wasteland. Doing so requires an extended Intelligence + Occult roll. Ten total successes are required, and each roll represents an hour's worth of wandering and searching. Success allows them not to pinpoint his lair precisely but instead suggests that his lair is in or around the Longfellow Bridge (which crosses the Charles River, connecting Beacon Hill to Cambridge). Only an exceptional success on the extended roll allows them to pinpoint the door exactly. Otherwise, the bridge seems a nexus of Golem decay.

- Charlie knew the “Fireband” Transmutation (see p. 154, **Promethean: The Created**). Characters can make a Wits + Composure roll in the middle of the Longfellow to be drawn to his mark (which sits on a door below the bridge). The mark is a fish and three wavy lines (symbolizing water).

- They know what Sorry Charlie looks like — or, at least, can discern what he *did* look like before being hacked to bits. Therefore, they can wander Beacon Hill and its environs, asking passersby and residents if they can help provide information about the Golem. This isn't easy. Doing so requires 10 successes on a Presence + Socialize roll, with each roll representing one hour's worth of work. Remember the effects of Disquiet: any mortal the throng comes in contact with may begin to suffer the effects.

- The ring on Charlie's finger, if characters find it, is a reference to the poem "Endymion" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. A successful Research roll (see pp. 55–56, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) tells them this. Three successes are required. His lair sits beneath the bridge named after the poet.

Entering the Lair

At the midpoint of the Longfellow Bridge (the entire bridge is nearly 1,800 feet long, with various stone abutments along the way), two main pier towers stand. These Neoclassical towers give the bridge its nickname, the "Salt-and-Pepper Bridge," because the towers look rather like salt-and-peppershakers. On each tower is a dark door, but these doors don't lead to Sorry Charlie's lair (and the key doesn't work on them). His lair is *under* the bridge, at the water's edge. Characters noting the message on the key, "Water Door," may look down and see a small four-foot dock half-collapsed in the water, with a waterlogged rowboat moored. The water is about 100 feet down off the edge of the bridge.

Characters have multiple options for getting there, none of which is particularly easy, though some are more straightforward than others. Jumping off the bridge and into the water causes up to 10 lethal points of damage (terminal velocity), depending on distance — see p. 179 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) and also draws attention to the plummeting character. Characters can also swim out or use a boat.

Once down upon the rickety dock (which creaks and shakes precariously beneath their feet), they find a rusted metal door. The key, if they have it, opens this door.

The Lair

Sorry Charlie's lair is a single room. This room beneath the bridge once acted as a storehouse for boating supplies, but has gone unused for nearly two decades.

The concrete-walled room is disgusting. The floor is thick with at least a foot of river-dredged mud. It stinks. Dead fish, Charlie's typical repast, lie half-eaten and rotten in the muck. The sound from the bridge above (the walls groan with every car that passes) is deafening. Worse, the T's Red Line train travels down the middle of the bridge several times a day — when the train passes, the room shudders and grumbles, coughing stony dust into the greasy mud.

Wisdom on the Walls

Weirdest of all are Sorry Charlie's notes. The porous concrete walls are covered at nearly every square inch with notes, photos and drawings, each held to the wall with a swatch of duct or electrical tape. Characters see the following:

- A tattered slice of notebook paper on the west wall reads: "Janus. God of beginnings and endings. Two faces? Janus = January = Mister January?" Two more Post-It notes near it read: "What does Mister January know?" (All notes are handwritten in Charlie's quaking scrawl.)
- Two stanzas from Longfellow's poem, "Endymion" are painted directly on the wall in tar, mud or feces: "O weary

hearts! O slumbering eyes! / O drooping souls whose destinies / Are fraught with fear and pain, / Ye shall be loved again! / No one is so accursed by fate / No one so utterly desolate / But some heart, though unknown / Responds unto his own."

- Seven index cards taped around the room all read the same thing in frustrated, shakier-than-normal script: "WHO IS THE BROTHERHOOD?"

- Another index card reads: "Is he Fool's Gold, True Gold or *Aurum Fulminans* (concussive gold)? Antimony or arsenic? What do my dreams say?"

- A notebook sheet lying atop the mud reads: "Unknown Soldier, to trust or not? Dancing on the head of a pin bullet? His 'people' listen to him. Wrong things for the right reasons? Right things for the wrong reasons? His body is a warrior's crucible. Whose orders does he follow? His own, or someone else's?"

- Notebook pages also mention the characters. Some feature rough sketches of the members, and ask similarly strange questions about them. Feel free to expose as much to make at least one of the characters uncomfortable. While no 'dark secrets' are totally revealed, Sorry Charlie's rambling notes hint at hidden history and traits.

Treasure

What's on the walls seems to provide little to no information about the mysterious Lighthouse character. A little searching goes a long way, however: a Perception roll (either Wits + Investigation, or Wits + Composure, though the latter may be penalized because it involves a somewhat 'accidental' search in the half-darkness of the muddy room) reveals that the wall is weak in the northeast corner of the room. The concrete wall has actually been dug out, but piled back up to make it appear unbroken.

Inside the hollowed-out hunk of bridge abutment, characters will find a rusted red toolbox, locked with a corroded padlock. They can either search for a key with an extended Wits + Investigation roll (five successes necessary, with each roll equaling one minute) or simply break the lock. The padlock key is actually taped to the wall *behind* the note about "Fool's Gold" (see above). The padlock's stats for purposes of breaking it are Durability 2, Size 1, Structure 3, and Damage 1.

Scratched deep into the top of the red toolbox is a crude-but-obvious image of a lighthouse. Opening the box reveals a bevy of information about the Promethean of the same name. Many of the erratic notes are fastened together by brittle paperclips that break when touched. The information in the box includes the following:

- Note: "Moses Moon. Not his real name? Valchenko knows. Does he have the Emerald Tablet completed? (Emerald Necklace in Fenway Fens?) He knows the Egyptian *kemi*, the secrets of the black land, black metals into precious metals. Was Lighthouse a success or a failure?"

- Note: “Is he pacted? Is he bound to Love Child? What about Ulysses? May be a fourth. I’ve seen him with another, a tall woman with empty eyes and long, cold legs. Only seen them together in my dreams.”

- Characters find a map of Boston. Four locations in the city are marked with drawn stars: Dorchester, Roxbury, Chinatown, Fenway-Kenmore. Two outside the city are marked indirectly, as arrows and stars pointing toward their respective suburbs. Black text written over the arrows indicates where Charlie meant: Somerville and “World’s End Island.” The map is otherwise smudged with dirt.

- Note: “Love Child: Elm Hill? Ulysses: Wanderer? I-93 Thru Big Dig? Gatekeepers, both of them.”

- Three index cards, each written in shaky scrawl, read: “HE HAS DIED BEFORE.”

- At the very bottom is a fading Polaroid picture. The picture shows a young black teenager, thin and ropy, with haunted eyes and a tattered Red Sox jersey hanging over a pair of baggy shorts. The boy’s image is circled in both blue and red pen. Charlie has scribbled the word “HIM” on the picture. The back of the photo offers a note in non-cursive handwriting different than Charlie’s: “You wanted a picture of him. Here it is. You can meet him soon if you’d like. — Love.” Characters must now confront the fact that the supposed “miracle” Promethean, the great bodhisattva who could help them achieve Mortality, looks like nothing more than a scared kid. (Or, at least, a Created whose *body* is that of a scared kid.)

Charlie’s Insight

For the record, Sorry Charlie built his little “room of information” because he had an abnormally high Elpis score (****). Should the characters keep him alive (either thwarting his attacker or through Revivification), he still possesses that high level of prophetic insight. Note that characters with high Elpis may start tapping into the same channels of mgstic information as Charlie.

Conflict

Discovering Sorry Charlie’s secret room is meant to be the end of Act One. Various little revelations (i.e., all of Charlie’s wall-taped “musings”) pave the way for the likely surprise that their target, Lighthouse, looks like a kid. While that alone may not be enough to shake their faith in the hunt, the additional questions (Is he for real? Who is Moses Moon, Mister January? Is any of this lunacy to be trusted?) likely dog them.

You may feel that the information found in the room is enough of a hook upon which to hang the end of Act One. Alternately, you may want something more, perhaps a bit physical, to close the book on this part of the chronicle.

If so, consider one of the following scenarios. These scenarios are meant to end Act One with a bit more of a “bang.”

Army of the Unknown Soldier

The Unknown Soldier and his two throng-mates show up, possibly before the characters have finished their search. As it turns out, Soldier’s been following them this whole time (and may remain unconvinced that the characters *didn’t* kill Sorry Charlie).

Soldier takes everything out from under the characters. The throng rips all the notes down, finds the toolbox and takes it all away before the characters can get a good look at any of it. The throng is cold and militaristic about the whole affair, provided the characters stay out of the throng’s way. If they don’t, then characters should expect a scuffle. (Fighting in this little room or out on the crumbling dock probably confers a –3 penalty to all combat-related rolls.)

Should the characters gain an obvious advantage, Soldier relents; he considers himself very pragmatic. He’ll make offers to share the material and “work together” (though his cooperation has a limited shelf life). If characters refuse such a deal and dominate the combat, fine. But Solder and his “army” can come back later to cause problems for the characters at the worst possible moment.

Flight of the Mockeries

Minutes after showing up and getting into Charlie’s lair, characters begin to hear heavy splashing sounds at variable intervals and distances — as if, all over, small hunks of bridge might be dropping into the Charles River.

That’s exactly what’s happening. Several dormant Pandorans have been hanging from the underside of the bridge, clinging to curved steel and stone masonry. These Ishtari monstrosities are actually Sorry Charlie’s last legacy: before bringing others to help him with Lighthouse, he decided instead to make his own companion. He failed. The resultant Pandorans — legless, fleshy things with human faces and stretched skin that lets them swim *and* fly — have been searching out Sorry Charlie for months now. The throng’s presence wakes them from Dormancy, and what once were hunks of osseous mortar gripping the bridge’s underbelly are now vicious attackers, desperate for a taste of Azoth.

These Ishtari do their best to trap the characters in Sorry Charlie’s little room. The Ishtari swarm the door to herd the throng inside, and from there hammer enough of the stone (left weakened by Charlie’s Wasteland effect) down in front of the door so that it traps the characters inside. If that doesn’t work, the Pandorans settle for a quick meal.

This scenario is all about horror and struggle. If the throng by itself can’t seem to defeat the Ishtari, feel free to have the Unknown Soldier and his throng show up to contribute to the fight (and then take advantage of the weakened throng).

Charlie’s Ishtari can be found detailed at the end of this chapter.

Human Intervention

With the terrorist threat against Logan Airport, security in Boston is at an all-time high. The Coast Guard diligently patrols the waters in and around Boston, paying special attention to bridges.

Charlie knew this, and knew to hide from them. The characters may not be so wise. While they're entering or exiting Charlie's lair, the Guard spots them. A boat approaches.

If you want a milder encounter, the Coast Guard Auxiliary shows up. The Auxiliary members are volunteers, and use their own vessels. They wear the uniforms, but are unarmed and unprepared to deal with violence or lawbreakers. (Though, if the Auxiliary members suspect danger, they'll call the *real* Coast Guard.) The boat the Auxiliary brings is likely a small single outboard security boat, with two to four members (Durability 2, Size 9, Structure 11, Acceleration 4, Safe Speed 7, Max Speed 22, Handling 2).

Alternately, the Coast Guard may deploy in a fast, 38-foot pursuit boat, with four to six *armed* guardsmen in the vehicle (Durability 3, Size 14, Structure 17, Acceleration 10, Safe Speed 45, Max Speed 75, Handling 3). If characters can't deal with the situation or escape before it escalates, they're probably going to make the news (maybe for the second time) that night. Disquiet makes the situation worse than it already is.

Act One Milestones

The first act can provide a number of smaller milestones (each of which probably provide five or less Vitriol). By seeing Sorry Charlie's death, characters may come to recognize their own (for lack of a better term) mortality. The potential Pandoran raid at the end may show them the lesson of failed creation. If Soldier shows up instead of the Pandorans, his appearance may reveal the depths to which another Created will sink to get what he wants. This first act is also a good time for characters to change their Refinements. Confronted by a city full of people (and burgeoning Disquiet), a character may reassess what she wants or needs from this so-called life.

Act Two: Gathering Clouds

In the second act, characters remain in and around the city, hunting for the Promethean known as Lighthouse. Lighthouse, it seems, is on the run from forces unknown, and won't come out of hiding for just anybody. The throng's

search is compounded with other problems: more Created have come to the city, increasing the spread of Disquiet and the Wasteland effect.

Decisions, Decisions

Act Two is more flexible than Act One, for both characters and the Storyteller. The middle of the story has two primary goals: first, find Lighthouse, and second, earn or demand his help. Along the way, characters are likely to solve a number of the little mysteries that plague the tale, as well as encounter some of the odd Prometheans who are now in Boston.

Instead of providing a linear scene-by-scene course of events, this act offers a number of encounters and locations to help players navigate the story as they see fit for their characters.

Also, never hesitate to tailor the story to the characters' needs and back-stories. If they have a prominent Pandoran enemy or a persistent *gashmal* who hounds them with odd demands, throw these into the mix. Even if it means cutting out some of the other characters presented, it will go a long way toward binding the throng more personally to the tale at hand.

Finding Lighthouse

Lighthouse is hiding. He knows he's a target. Only rarely in the last several weeks has he pulled his head out of the sand, which is going to make it all the harder for characters to find him. Lighthouse appears from time to time in one of three areas. He spends most of his time out on World's End, a peninsula jutting out into Boston Harbor, southeast of the city proper. Here, he can effectively hide and contemplate his own Pilgrimage at the same time (what he's actually trying to do is go the Wastes, but he can't do that and retain contact with his throng, and just at present his throng is still a priority). While he isn't the boy whose body he wears, his flesh seems to have a certain inclination toward the trappings of city and civilization that World's End cannot provide. Thus, it's possible that Lighthouse enters the city periodically, taking small trips that do not incur the Wasteland effect. While most clues below lead characters to Lighthouse, don't hesitate to give them glimpses of him in neighborhoods such as Roxbury or Fenway. The glimpses may just be that; Lighthouse knows the city intimately, and any Foot Chase or Stealth rolls he makes are made with a +4 bonus as he ducks into a concealed alleyway or disappears beneath a footbridge.

Below, various locations in the city are detailed with at least one potential encounter that the throng might experience there. These locations are determined largely by Charlie's inclusion. He felt they were important, so characters may, too.

Roxbury/North Dorchester

Roxbury and North Dorchester are two of Boston's poorest areas. The neighborhoods are predominantly black and Hispanic, with other ethnic groups rounding out the population. This region is by no means uniform in its condition, however, and a clash of various interests makes this a place of quiet social disorder. On one hand, crime thrives amidst the various blocks: drug dealers, rapists, prostitutes, black and El Salvadoran gangbangers. And yet, the community rallies against criminal corruption, banding together to guard against the "bad seeds." Many residents have founded various initiative programs within the churches, libraries and schools to provide both kids and adults with strong educations and a solid work background. From the outside, however, gentrification seems hell-bent on whittling away these initiatives. Land and commercial interests care little for the moral struggle of Roxbury's citizens, hoping instead to simply buy up lucrative property and turn it into hotels, malls or tourist venues. The neighborhood initiatives fight a war on two fronts. Among their own, they wrestle with the criminal element, trying to beat back the lure of violence and easy money. But they must also keep their neighborhoods from falling into the hands of uncaring developers. The initiatives desperately seek to control their own development, ensuring that all benefits stay inside the neighborhood.

In some parts, the neighborhood is beautifully kept, with historical buildings sitting next to new storefronts. In other parts, lots have fallen into grave disrepair, and abandoned tenements are now nests of addicts and prostitutes. Some areas don't even have buildings; fires in the '60s and '70s burned out parts of Dudley Street and Blue Hill Avenue. These lots remain empty and desolate.

Roxbury was Lighthouse's old haunt. The body used to create him was born here, and Lighthouse has a lingering pull to this place. That body was once the flesh of young Curtis Dewmar, a Roxbury student beaten to death by a gang of drunken skinheads.

As a Promethean, Lighthouse acted as something of a "slum saint," saving residents from gang attacks or other dangers. Many of the locals share stories about how "the ghost of Curtis Dewmar" came and pulled them from an accident or saved them from an assault or suicide attempt. Characters who ask around may find that while some recall this in a positive manner, just as many seem to feel that the ghost was angry, haunting the area and doing the "Devil's business."

Lighthouse still comes to the neighborhood once every couple of weeks, but he no longer gets involved. He stays to

the edges, watching, waiting, then leaving. Most residents claim to have not seen or heard the ghost for a while, though a few may note that they caught sight of him in an abandoned building or "just 'round the corner."

Humanity Milestones

Roxbury, along with other parts of the city, really forces the human element into the characters' faces. Humankind's best and worst sides live side-by-side in places like these, from piss-scented methamphetamine addicts to strong community leaders to greedy, fat-bellied developers.

In the second and third act, Roxbury presents the possibility for Prometheans to understand the human condition and the prejudice that plagues people almost as easily as it can plague the Created. Milestones may involve these revelations. A character may need to spend some time with the human element, and from there may come to commiserate with humans — or despise them. Examining humanity is like holding up a circus mirror, and the Created may see himself, warped and distorted. This is particularly true of those on the Aurum Refinement. Mimics are very likely to have milestones that can be fulfilled by the human conditions found in Boston.

Love Child

Love Child, Lighthouse's Riven right-hand woman, still frequents the Roxbury neighborhood at the request of Lighthouse. Characters might find her hanging around the various churches on Elm Hill (while she has little interest in the Christian faith in particular, she is reverent of faith in general, believing it to be the one thing worth a damn about humanity). If the characters don't find her, she finds them if they come poking around.

Love Child, ironically, isn't loving at all. She's curt and brief, and has little interest in helping the characters. Her job, as she sees it, is to watch over the "old neighborhood" as well as keep an eye out for potential Judases. The characters, like it or not, look like enemies to her, because Love Child sees *everybody* as an enemy. If the characters trouble her enough, she'll cause trouble in return. She may call the cops, or spread whispers about the "strangers" who don't belong (thus hoping to elicit Disquiet against the characters). It's unlikely, however, that she'll attack the characters directly, both because physical violence doesn't suit and because they probably have her outnumbered.

Love Child can be a gateway to Lighthouse, despite her wishes to stand as an insurmountable roadblock. First, she's likelier to listen to another Ulgan, should the throng in-

clude one. She believes that Riven share a bond that other Lineages do not. Second, if the throng seems to genuinely ask for her mercy, she may demand the characters pass a preliminary test of loyalty to earn her trust. This test involves violence against the neighborhood's criminal element: put the beat-down on a local gang, clear an abandoned building of violent crackheads or protect a neighborhood market from the thieves who besiege it nightly. It doesn't matter so much that the characters succeed in whatever task Love Child lays out. She only cares that they make a sincere effort in doing so.

If they earn her trust, she'll agree to take a message to Lighthouse. From there, she'll return with the offer to meet him if the throng passes another test of loyalty — this one demanded by Lighthouse himself. (See "Tests of Loyalty," below.)

Even if the characters don't earn her trust entirely, she may be willing to spill a few of the details surrounding Lighthouse's self-imposed exile. See "The Truth About Lighthouse," below.

Civil Disobedience, For Now

Not far from Elm Hill, a prominent community center (The Elm Hill Family Collective) is in danger. The city has put the center on the market for the highest bidder. Developers believe this area, rich with religion and history, will make a great draw, one that can be purchased cheaply.

The center, long a nexus of employment assistance, education and youth services, helps hold the neighborhood together. Therefore, residents have been gathering to protest the sale of the center's land to outside developers. When the characters come to search for Lighthouse, they find that the protesters seem to swell and spill out of every street and alley. The characters likely appear to be outsiders, and might earn the ire of residents due to this fact alone. The characters are also Created, however, and draw down upon themselves a whole heap of potential Disquiet. The mob of protesters — currently peaceful — may suddenly act together and focus all their negative attention on the passing throng. The characters make for excellent scapegoats, upon which the sins of all strangers sit until sacrifice.

Mama Desta

If you own *Boston Unveiled*, you might want to make use of Mama Desta, the seemingly nice lady who is one of the neighborhood's central figures. Desta seems sweet, a pillar of the African-American community, providing comfort and education to the children.

Except, that's not exactly true. She's a lich — a life-sucking, accursed sorcerer who uses the neighborhood's young boys as her eyes, ears and hands. They do her business, working as unwitting

pawns. She fills their heads with nonsense and can "rite" their perceptions, using their eyes as her eyes. Lighthouse made her work difficult. With him gone, she once again has unfettered access to the children. If the characters come along and threaten her operations, even accidentally, she will sweep down upon them with vengeance.

Assume that she possesses many of the powers present in the Mesmerism and Sensorium Transmutation classes, and also can, just as an Ulgan, deal with ghosts as if they were physically present. Unlike Ulgan characters, however, Mama Desta can command ghosts to do her bidding, and even regain strength (Willpower, Health or Pyros) by magically consuming them.

Fenway-Kenmore

The Fenway-Kenmore area is one of Boston's few middle-class neighborhoods. The area, bordered by both the Mass Pike and the Back Bay Fens, is home to a number of dusty old brownstone apartments, each a three- or four-flight walk-up. The area is also the site of a number of small, independently owned bars, stores and stands. Many of these hope to capitalize on the fact that the neighborhood's biggest draw is the Fenway Park ballpark, where the Boston Red Sox play.

Lighthouse doesn't come here anymore, not since he was put in danger. This was, however, where he was made. His mortal demiurge, Moses Moon, created Lighthouse in the waters of the Back Bay Fens. Once, Lighthouse would come to the park to sleep in its river, but he has stopped doing so. Another Promethean has set up shop in his place.

The Professor

The Back Bay Fens are one of six parks that connect in what is called the "Emerald Necklace." The Emerald Necklace consists of nine parks strung together over a distance of approximately six miles. The Back Bay Fens in particular was once a brackish, noxious marsh that the city transformed in the early part of the 20th century with judicious use of dams and draining. Now, the Fens are a popular and beautiful park, populated with various gardens and trails — at least, during the day. At night, the Fens become dangerous. When darkness falls, the criminal element comes out. Predators and addicts stalk the trails and paths.

One of the park's notable personalities is the Professor. Humans think of him as a grotesque bum, a half-naked madman swaddled in newspaper and other garbage. They're partly right. In truth, the Professor is a zealot, a Nepri driven to total obsession on the subject of Lighthouse. The Osiran doesn't seem to know much about himself, but he knows quite a bit about Lighthouse. Moreover, he knows a lot about Lighthouse's creator, the mortal alchemist known as Moses

Moon (see below, under “The Truth About Lighthouse”). The Professor isn’t too keen to share his information, though. He waits in the Fens to catch a glimpse of the fabled Promethean, and maybe touch him, follow him, even protect him. So far, the Professor’s waited for naught and never caught up with Lighthouse, but the Osiran willing to wait until the galaxy dies and the stars go dark.

He may view the characters as enemies of Lighthouse, or alternately, roadblocks to his own Great Work. The Professor will never attack them directly, but may instead set odd traps for them. Characters capable of subduing him may be able to get information out of him. Alternately, if they promise him a meeting with Lighthouse (whether or not they actually can), the Professor turns from enemy to ally.

Disquiet and the Wasteland effect plague him. He has earned the negative ire of many of the park’s residents, particularly the criminal element. They abuse him nightly and with profound cruelty. Also, several parts of the Fens and the other connecting parks suffer blasted dead areas of oily, malodorous marsh waters. These are his mystical marks (see p. 174 of **Promethean: The Created**), left by his Wasteland.

Hint of Things to Come

Fenway is a mostly white neighborhood, with a small percentage of blacks living in and around the area. The characters may come upon a sudden, explosive fight between two men, one white and one black. The fight can be about anything, but is probably over busing, which affects a neighborhood like Kenmore. Neither man really “starts” the fight — a heated discussion over the subject simply explodes. One man takes to the other with a fire extinguisher off the wall. The other fights back with fists. A scuffle ensues, launching itself out of the bar and into the street. Others get involved, and before too long the fight encompasses a small crowd.

The characters can choose to get involved or stay the hell out of the way. Getting involved, they might be able to stop the fight before it gets too out of hand — it can end with one man in the hospital, beaten severely or even stabbed. If they hang around too long, the cops are going to show, and with Disquiet potentially plaguing them, the characters may be targeted as the troublemakers (even if they watched quietly from the margins).

The fight exemplifies the worst in humanity, its violence and divisiveness. Moreover, it is a glimpse of what will come in Act Three, when a full-bore race riot consumes the city.

The Emerald What?

Sorry Charlie’s lair made mention of Moses Moon (Lighthouse’s demiurge) and whether or not he’s completed the “Emerald Tablet.” A Research

roll (seven successes required) allows characters to discover that the Tablet is a key alchemical text with Arabic origins (though some crazy theories may place it earlier, back to the fantasy of lost Atlantis). The book, sometimes called the *Kitab Sirr al-Asrar*, was a meditation on alchemy written supposedly by Hermes Trismegistus, carved on tablets of emerald or green jasper. Some say that the translations that exist for the tablets are all wrong, and that apocryphal tablets provide the secrets of real alchemy, or as some might suggest, the recipe for a Promethean.

Characters may draw connections with the “Emerald Necklace,” i.e., the chain of wetland parks that ring Boston. This is no coincidence. Moon created Lighthouse in these waters, hoping to stir a special kind of life into his creation. (And, given Lighthouse’s supposed abilities, Moon may have been successful.)

Of course, if you own **Mage: The Awakening** and **Boston Unveiled**, you may want to make reference to the “Emerald Scroll,” which is an old cabal of mages as well as a new mage haunt in Roxbury (see p. 389, **Mage: The Awakening**). The Scroll has no connection to the Emerald Tablet or Necklace, but might provide an interesting red herring.

Chinatown

Boston’s Chinatown is a bustling, congested mess. Heavy foot and automobile traffic are thick at every intersection. The entire neighborhood is a tight cluster of Asian-American businesses: Chinese, Japanese, Thai, Vietnamese, Cambodian, South Korean. Open-air markets advertise the smells of tilapia, the sights of lambs stripped of skin, the flavor of jasmine rice and exotic fruit. Most of the residents live in jam-packed brick apartment buildings, each no greater than five stories in height. Similar to much of Boston, however, Chinatown is under threat from development. Already, construction has begun on several tall luxury towers meant to offer high-dollar condominiums to a swollen upper class. Many initiatives and community activists feel that this process is swallowing the cultural heart of the neighborhood’s people, and that the high costs coming into the area are purposefully outpacing the locals to get them out of the way. The locals don’t fight gentrification as they do elsewhere in the city, however. Characters won’t find mobs of protesters or rioters here. Dissent is quiet, passive.

Paifang Pandorans

The traditional Chinatown gate, called *paifang*, marks the entrance of many a Chinatown, often gifted to a country by the People’s Republic of China. Boston is no different. The *paifang* here stands tall and red, two thick pillars on stone

bases stand topped with a tiled roof. Next to the gate are four “foo dogs,” the Chinese stone lions meant to protect a palace or neighborhood from evil. History suggests that most foo dogs come in pairs, and once, Boston’s gateway was no different. But for as long as the residents remember, *four* foo dogs have stood sentinel at the *paifang* arch.

Two of them are Render Pandorans. They’ve been there for more than 20 years now, the remnants of a failed creation by a confused Ulgan. They tore him apart before he could even leave the building, but once they stepped outside and found an awful clot of humanity, they fell quickly into Dormancy, making it *just* to the *paifang* gate before calcifying. These two Renders awaken if characters come near enough. This time, however, the Renders are smart enough to get away from people as fast as possible. They might hide under an idling bus, sneak into an alleyway or jump through the window of a basement apartment. Anything to get away.

They’re patient hunters. They hunger to rip the throng to pieces, and lurk in the shadows until nightfall, or until any point at which the throng finds itself without a human audience. Traits for the foo dogs can be found under “Dramatis Personae.”

Big Dig

Boston’s “Big Dig” — officially the Central Artery/Tunnel Project — nears completion after 15 years and \$15 billion of work. The plan aimed to significantly reduce Boston’s traffic congestion by digging out massive underground highways beneath buildings and skyscrapers. The plan worked, but not before accelerating costs, scandals involving fraudulent paperwork and inferior materials and general frustration threatened to kill it. Now, the project is about 95% finished — or so the city says.

The truth is, while many of the tunnels are now open 24 hours a day and have made Boston’s traffic situation far more palatable to its residents, problems lurk. The concrete forming the tunnels is of lower quality than the job demanded. Moreover, the slurry of soggy gravel that forms the land beneath the city pushes against the tunnel walls and ceilings, springing minor leaks.

Plus, underground obstacles caused planners to remap and reroute the digging. Several ancillary tunnels were never filled in (the tunnel itself was the priority, not repairing damage from poor planning). As a result, a number of subterranean passages still exist beneath the city, some big enough to drive trucks through, others suited for crouching or crawling adults.

Ulysses

The Tammuz known as Ulysses is the other member in Lighthouse’s throng. Ulysses is a ceaseless nomad. He doesn’t like to be in any one place for more than a few hours, paranoid about the effects his presence will have on the land and its people. So, itinerant, he wanders. One of the places he wanders most often is the tunnels of the Big

Dig, ambling around the actual highway as well as the maze of errant passageways.

Characters who approach him find that he walks quickly from them or ignores them outright. If caught, however, he’s as tight-lipped a foe as they’ve ever encountered. Ulysses is profoundly stubborn, both physically (he’s built like a fire-plug) and mentally (he can resist all manner of coercion). That’s not to say such an effort is automatically impossible, but his attitude makes it very difficult for characters to intimidate or compel him in any way. He is fiercely protective of Lighthouse, so much so that Ulysses is willing to die (though not necessarily kill) for his throng-mate.

Here’s why: Ulysses is close to the New Dawn. He has developed the Cerberus Athanor (see p. 262 of **Promethean: The Created**), and is on the cusp of bringing life to another Created. He credits *all* of this to Lighthouse. As such, he represents evidence that the characters’ search for Lighthouse may be worth it. After all, if Lighthouse can help *this* guy, maybe Lighthouse can really help them, too. With Ulysses on the cusp of creating another Promethean, characters can (as noted below) help him or hinder him. Either path may lead them to the completion of a milestone — one character may have a milestone involving witnessing or aiding in another Promethean’s generative act, while another character may need to *stop* the creation of another monster (especially if that character maintains Botherúð sympathies). If characters involve themselves in the Ulysses side of the story, it shouldn’t ever feel like a distracting side quest. He is intimately tied to Lighthouse, and exemplifies the Promethean on the cusp of humanity. This portion of the game has the potential to be very significant.

When first encountering Ulysses, characters have a number of options. Offering him help (and meaning it, for he’ll attempt to gauge their honesty with an Empathy roll) grants a +2 roll on any Social roll meant to convince him to take them to Lighthouse. Ulysses, ready to create another of his kind, could use the help. He claims this is what Lighthouse told him to do, and so Ulysses must do it. The problem is, he can’t decide on what kind of body deserves the name of God (and thus, the “life” of Azoth). He will ask characters to procure him three bodies. At least one male, one female. One needs to be young, another middle-aged and another old. All should be strong.

The bodies must of course be somewhat freshly dead for him to use. If the characters procure the bodies, he’ll take the corpses and the throng through a doorway in the tunnel of the subterranean I-93. The doorway goes nowhere except into a muddy labyrinth that dead-ends in a clay-walled grotto. The grotto is home to several decaying (and stinking) bodies, each taken by Ulysses. He’ll explain that he couldn’t decide on which to animate, and thus lost his chance as they decomposed. He keeps them around because, according to him, he “feels bad” and has grown accustomed to their presence. At this point, he’ll pick one of the three

bodies the throng brought, provided the throng followed his original demands. It's at this point that the characters witness the generative act and the "birth" of another Golem. Again, this may involve one or several characters' milestones. Also, helping Ulysses do this is a surefire way to get close to Lighthouse. Of course, don't discount the possibility that Ulysses isn't ready for this. His dice pool for the act, including appropriate modifiers, is six. The generative act *can* fail. Pandorans may be born, exploding violently from the muck in which Ulysses buries the body. What does this do to the characters? If Ulysses claims Lighthouse got him this far, and then the act fails, does that shake their own faith in this journey? Alternately, if the breathless anticipation leads to the body shuddering to life in the slurry, does that enliven the throng, or repulse them? (Incidentally, if you have a new player joining your troupe or if an established player wishes to retire her character for a while, it's possible that Ulysses' creation might join the troupe's throng.)

If characters don't get involved in that generative act, they have another option, which is to follow him. Doing so is tricky. The tunnels have spare foot traffic, so he'll easily notice other walkers (and a car can't drive slowly enough on I-93 to track him accurately). Attempts to shadow him are made at a -2 penalty, and this penalty is made worse if characters have already scared him. If they've already made contact and failed to salve his suspicion, he'll be on the lookout, incurring an additional -3 penalty. Of course, if they get too close, Ulysses can feel their Azoth Radiance. If he does feel their presence (likely, considering the amplification effect of multiple Prometheans, unless of course the characters have formed an alchemical pact), he stays on guard. This increases the penalty to shadow him from -2 to -4.

In following him (see "Shadowing," p. 76, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**), they'll note that the journey takes a long time. He wanders down into the Big Dig tunnels and disappears through the doorway mentioned above. He may linger at the site of his collected corpses for a while, bemoaning their fate as a result of his indecision. Then he wanders back out and takes a circuitous route to I-95 South. From there, he travels the approximately 20 miles to get to Hingham, Massachusetts, where he wanders out onto the walking trails and heads to World's End, where Lighthouse is staying. Per Shadowing rules, characters must make the roll to shadow him approximately every half-mile. In this case, that would equate to about 60 rolls. Instead, assume that his journey comprises six legs — Big Dig, Ulysses' Lair, Chinatown, South Boston, I-95 and World's End. Each "leg" requires success on the roll to shadow.

If they follow him all the way to Lighthouse, skip to "World's End," below.

Somerville

Somerville sits outside the city proper, just past Cambridge. Somerville is the most densely populated city in

New England: nearly 80,000 people crammed into four square miles. The city, once referred to as "Slummerville" due to its lower-class (and occasionally criminal) leanings, has been repackaged as a down-and-dirty haven for young liberal intellectualism. The gentrification here has only been half-successful, however. Yes, parts of the town are certainly less dodgy than they used to be, but many of the areas still wear decay like a grave blanket. Crime still thrives, albeit in smaller pockets. While the neighborhood was once a strong Irish and Italian immigrant community, the city has seen a recent influx of Hispanic immigrants (particularly Salvadorans). This displeases the "old guard" of European families, increasing tensions.

The Winter Hill Throng

Characters who succeed on a reflexive Intelligence + Occult roll may note that parts of Somerville seem heavily affected by some kind of Wasteland effect. The air seems still and stale. Birds putter around on the ground, not the sky. People wander aimlessly, staring at nothing as if confused or suspicious. Sunlight looks bleached, long shadows seem cruel and unforgiving and everything feels *disconnected* from everything else. An extended Intelligence + Occult roll after the fact (10 successes necessary, each roll equals 10 minutes of time) may allow characters to track the supposed nexus of this effect, tracking the source by its worsening effect.

A two-member throng dwells in the Winter Hill neighborhood, a part of Somerville that remains undecided as to whether it wants hip, upscale bookstores or downtrodden, aluminum-sided row-homes. The two Prometheans dwell in a busted-out carpet store ("The Carpetorium"), which is a single-floor cement building with paint peeling like leprous skin. The parking lot in the back is a cratered mess, and the entire back wall of the building is decorated with a fading mural of John F. Kennedy. A quote next to his head, now barely legible, reads: "Or, in the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal."

The throng resides inside the carpet building during the day, staving off Disquiet by traveling under cover of darkness and staying away from people. The throng locks the place up tight, with several deadbolts and a light security system in place. (Characters hoping to break in will have to deal first with picking the locks, second, with bypassing the security system. Both rolls require six successes apiece on extended rolls, and each roll represents one turn's worth of work. See p. 74 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook** for more information on these systems.)

If the characters go snooping around or attempt to break in while the Winter Hill throng is present, they'll be attacked on sight. The two Prometheans who belong to this throng — the Muse called Ice Blue and the violent Frankenstein, La Tempestad — care next to nothing for other Created, and won't hesitate to attack with the full capacity of their rather significant weapons

arsenal. If Ice Blue believes she can sway and deceive the characters and garner their aid, however, she resists attacking and instead attempts to influence them. She offers to reward them if they can get in Lighthouse's inner circle. She claims she's met with him, but with limited success. (Note that Ice Blue will manipulate the characters, offering them whatever they want, even if she can't or won't deliver.)

Should the characters enter the building while the Prometheans are away (a rare window between about midnight and three in the morning), the characters find a very clean, well-kept lair. Books sit on shelves, a small nook table stands in the back with a white tablecloth and silver candlesticks, a new television rests on a stand in the corner. And yet, it all seems very sterile, as if these Created hope to appear human even though they are clearly not.

A door in the back, marked with a peeling "Employees Only" sticker, may draw the characters. The door isn't locked, but it is booby-trapped. The character opening the door should make a Wits + Composure roll to sense the trap before it's triggered (the Danger Sense Merit confers its bonus to this roll). The trap is simple, but deadly: a string connected to the doorknob on the other side of the door runs through a small pulley bolted to the far wall, and then connects to the trigger of a shotgun mounted in a vice. Once the door has opened halfway, the string tugs the trigger and the shotgun goes off. It's aimed at the door, so whoever triggers the trap suffers five levels of lethal damage. Success on the above roll, however, allows a character to see the string before the trap is triggered. He can cut the string and save himself a chest-full of buckshot.

Once inside, characters find a 10' x 10' room loaded with weapons. A rack on the wall has three pump-action shotguns. A few AR-22 assault rifles sit stacked in the corner. A metal toolbox drawer is filled with cheap light revolvers and knives. Below the drawer are several boxes of random ammunition, and next to that sits a few machetes shoved in a wire umbrella basket. The *pièce de résistance* is a ratty vintage suitcase in the back hidden beneath several rags and old jackets.

The suitcase is not a dirty bomb, like the one used at Logan Airport. The suitcase is, however, a nuclear weapon. Opening the suitcase reveals a dusty, partly corroded nuclear device. Three coffee-can-sized aluminum containers sit in the center of the suitcase, padded together and chained by red and blue wires. Connected to this center mass are two flat batteries (also corroded). A simple switch sits at the bottom. Everything is marked with black Cyrillic text. Characters capable of reading Russian note that these are warnings, identification marks and instructions.

The bomb has a Blast Area of 150, a Damage of 10 and a Size of 2. All damage that comes from the bomb is aggravated to both humans and Prometheans. See "Explosives," pp. 178–179 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. The bomb can, at your discretion, be a dud.

Storytelling the Suitcase Nuke

A nuclear weapon can be a game-breaker. Putting it in the hands of characters or antagonists can be rather damning. If handled adeptly, fine; characters certainly don't want to blow themselves up, and the Winter Hill throng in particular has a plan for the bomb and doesn't intend to set it off randomly. Once in play, the nuke can change the story. Can the nuke be a bartering device? A constant threat? Can characters sic Homeland Security on the Winter Hill throng, or if the characters steal it, vice versa?

It's important to decide just how much this device could and should change your game. The discovery of the bomb is certainly a big moment, but can be a moment more of bluster than of actual threat. Consider what happens if the bomb doesn't work. It's an old, 1960s Soviet device — imperfect even before it began to corrode.

If the bomb *does* go off at any point, assume that the nuclear weapon is very light, around one to two kilotons. Damage is significant, harming buildings and maybe one city block. The bomb will kill people, but in the hundreds or thousands, not in the hundred thousands, for whatever it's worth.

If characters do abscond with the nuke away from the other Prometheans, the Winter Hill throng will do whatever it takes to get it back. *Anything*.

The Rape of Julie Rourke

Somerville is home to several gangs. Many are El Salvadoran, though at least one is white (neo-Nazi). A week before the characters arrive, a white girl claimed she was raped behind the skating rink in the once-industrial Conway Park. The girl, Julie Rourke, says that one of the local Salvadorans, an upstanding honor student named Gonzolo Delgado, was her rapist. He wasn't; she was actually raped by her own brother, Chase. But she loves her brother too much to let that information out, and it seemed convenient to blame the immigrant boy.

Racial tensions between immigrants and the older residents have long been tense. The Hispanic population jumped from two to nine percent in just a couple of years, leaving the paranoid whites afraid (for little reason). Now, two gangs unconnected to the event of Julie's rape have come together as the champions of their respective ethnic sides. The neo-Nazi gang, the Angels of White Pride, wants Delgado's head on a stick. The El Salvadoran gang, LL-13 (or *La Libertad* 13), wants war with the Angels. The gang-bangers don't care about Delgado, but they'd love to chop those skinheads into bits.

The characters end up caught in the middle of all of this. Disquiet, unkind as it is, draws both sides down upon them. If the characters seem white, the Salvadorans may think them sided with the neo-Nazis. If the characters are not white, the skinheads may think that being brown-skinned is the same as being LL-13 or a terrorist. Alternately, it's possible that characters may actually avert the crisis. If they are able to get Julie Rourke (who hides in her house and no longer goes to school, claiming to be sick with mono) to accuse her brother, it might go far enough to dissolve some of the tensions that threaten to explode. Otherwise, the throng may very well witness an open-air, in-the-streets brawl: LL-13 with machetes, hacking away at the skinheads who carry bats, chains and hunting knives. Neither side uses guns. Guns draw quick attention, and both sides ascribe to the primal, bloody awfulness of chopping each other to bits in the middle of the street. Stray bullets can take a brother down. A well-aimed knife won't.

World's End

While some consider World's End a part of the Harbor Islands, World's End is actually a peninsula jutting out into the harbor south of the city (in Hingham). World's End is a hilly conservation area, providing habitat for birds and butterflies. Several miles of back roads and trails crisscross the area, leading to the coastal cliffs, little farmhouses and old mansions that dot the region. Getting into the conservation area to the trails themselves costs a small entrance fee, but since the area isn't fenced in, characters can sneak in away from the roads with a Stealth roll.

The only encounter worth mentioning in World's End is with Lighthouse. No matter how characters come to find him (led there by Ulysses or Love Child, or stumbling upon Lighthouse themselves), the characters find him at one of the northernmost points of the peninsula. Close to the edge of one of the cliffs, at the end of a walking trail, sits a dilapidated bench. A Perception roll allows a character to see that someone has carved into the wood a number of crude lighthouse icons. Also, Lighthouse's Azoth calls to the throng's own.

A small trail just past the bench leads down the cliff toward the coast. The trail is incredibly steep, and requires agile hands (to grab onto roots and rocks) and feet. Characters climbing down must succeed on an extended Strength + Athletics roll. It's approximately 60 feet down, so six total successes are required (see "Climbing," pp. 64–65, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

At the bottom of the trail, 10 feet above the waterline, the characters find a cave. It's not particularly deep, no more than 20 yards or so from its mouth. Lighthouse is likely here. (If he's not, he's out in the city somewhere and will be back within the next eight hours. Even in his absence though are the reminders of his presence: a few ceramic lighthouse *tchotchkes*, various remnants of food and drink, a pile of clothes in grocery bags.)

World's End Wasteland

Lighthouse has certainly marked the area with his Wasteland effect. All around the northern tip of the peninsula, the water has taken on a scummy, oily look. Ugly piss-yellow foam washes up on the beach, and some of the birds (gulls, ducks, terns) have feathers slick with some kind of noxious residue. The harbor here stinks, a heady malodor of algae and sewage.

In the distance, characters can see the Boston skyline, but it's often cast in a grotesque vapor, as if seen through a sepia haze. This mist stings the eyes and nose, and at times may cause a -1 penalty to all rolls due to this effect.

Lighthouse

Meeting Lighthouse should be both momentous and anti-climactic. On one hand, here he is! The mythic Lighthouse! The paragon of future sight, the keeper of secret powers, the Sherpa who can lead other Created to the peaks of the New Dawn! And yet . . . he's in the body of a gangly teenager. Worse, he's angry, sarcastic and more than a little off-putting. He doesn't seem concerned with spiritual matters, and instead acts pissed off, claiming to just want to be left alone. (For more on Lighthouse's physical appearance and stats, see "Dramatis Personae," below.) When the characters first meet Lighthouse, you may be able to tailor milestones depending on individual character reactions. If one Created believes Lighthouse to truly be a messiah, then perhaps it's time to come up with a mid-game milestone involving understanding Lighthouse or even saving him from harm. If a character reacts negatively, then the milestone could be to "walk a mile in Lighthouse's shoes" or simply to prove that he's nothing special.

The Truth About Lighthouse

It won't take much to get Lighthouse to spill the beans on his story. He knows he's trapped. Whether the characters demand the truth through violence or through kind words matters little; he'll grudgingly give up the goods. Through conversation, Lighthouse divulges the following about his "life" so far. Most of this is peppered with profanity and bits of stinging, sardonic invective made at the characters' expense.

- He was "made" a few years back in the Back Bay Fens in Boston. He remembers little about that night, only the bitter taste of rose petals and marsh water, and the moon-lit face of a black man with a tattoo of a "sideways eight" (a lemniscate, the sign of infinity) on the inside of his lower lip. The man wept, dropping a bronze knife, then fled.
- Later, Lighthouse would discover that his creator was not a Promethean but a mortal demiurge calling himself "Moses Moon." Fearing that he had done the wrong thing,

Moon, an adherent of forbidden Arabic alchemy, left the city after creating Lighthouse.

- At some point, Lighthouse might make casual reference to “dying again.” He won’t explain it unless characters ask. When they ask, he’ll give them some lip about minding their own business, but then he’ll tell them anyway: he tried to create another Promethean far too early. It resulted in a series of Pandorans, horrible eyeless things that belched some kind of corrosive vomit. They overtook him and destroyed him—and then, the next day, he found himself crawling free from the hole to which they dragged him and left him.

- Lighthouse, while protecting the Roxbury neighborhood from “bad people” (if you’re incorporating **Boston Unveiled**, he names “that bitch, Mama Desta”), tracked down and made contact with Moon (through letters). Moon, then living in the ass-end of Maine outside a dinky town called Presque Isle, reluctantly agreed to come meet his creation.

- Lighthouse went to the airport to meet Moon, who was flying in from Bangor. Around the time Moon’s flight was landing, security found the dirty bomb in the hands of a “foreign insurgent.” Lighthouse claims it was no terrorist, and was instead a Patchwork Man named Mister January. Lighthouse claims to have known January for several months before the incident, and believed him to be a sweet and simple creature, not the assassin he turned out to be. Lighthouse firmly believes that the bomb was meant for him and his creator. He claims his dreams back that up.

- From that point forward, Lighthouse decided to get away from the city and other Prometheans. He doesn’t know who’s trying to kill him, but there are very few people he trusts anymore, except his own throng-mates (whom he won’t let come near him for protracted periods).

- If asked about his supposed special powers, he’ll agree to all of it. He claims that yes, he has powers that no other Created he knows of possess. He’ll also cop to the fact that he can, given the right circumstances, help an individual Promethean identify one or several of the milestones that will help her complete the Great Work.

The Real Truth?

The decision that you, as the Storyteller, have to make is whether Lighthouse is what he claims he is. If Moses Moon, a mortal alchemist, really did create Lighthouse, then he isn’t just some gifted Promethean, he’s a *Progenitor*. He’s the first in a new Lineage, perhaps the only new Lineage in 200 years (unless you count the nuclear Prometheans). That’s not an insignificant thing, and it stands to throw many of the assumptions that the characters probably have — indeed, many of the assumptions that **Promethean** makes — out the window. That, however, is no reason for it not to be true. You just need to decide if this momentous occurrence works for your chronicle or not.

If it *does*, then Lighthouse is the first of a new Lineage. Moses Moon, using his own research, created Lighthouse after witnessing the Professor’s creation. You need to make some decisions about what would happen if Moon created new Prometheans (such as their automatic Bestowment, disfigurements, manifestation of Disquiet and humour). Because Lighthouse was created using some of the same procedures as the Osirans, he bears some similarities, but doesn’t now, or ever, possess Revivification. The Introduction to this book discusses the process of making up a new Lineage in a bit more detail.

If it *doesn’t*, that’s fine, too. Assume that Lighthouse is an Osiran, and that the Professor actually created him with Moses Moon’s help. Moon, however, being only human, succumbed to the Professor’s Disquiet and formed the delusion that he created Lighthouse. The Professor, somewhere along the way, started subscribing to that belief as well, and does not remember creating or, indeed, ever meeting Lighthouse.

Test of Loyalty

Lighthouse agrees to help the characters, either by uncovering milestones or teaching them Transmutations. But he won’t do it for free, and no amount of coercion works to truly earn his aid. Instead, he’ll ask for a “test of loyalty” to see how serious they are. Once upon a time, he says, he might’ve done it for free. Now, times have changed, and they’re going to have to work for their treats.

How this plays out is up to you, as Storyteller. Lighthouse wants a number of things, and if the characters fulfill any of these desires, he helps them.

Uncover the Conspiracy

Lighthouse believes someone’s trying to kill him. He’ll tell characters that, if they can find out who’s behind all of this, then he’ll give them the guidance they seek.

Only three individuals in and around Boston actually *know* what’s going on. Mister January, the Frankenstein assassin sent to Logan Airport with a dirty bomb, obviously knows. The other two are those who sent him to do the job in the first place: Ice Blue and La Tempestad of the Winter Hill throng.

Mister January

January, described in the media and most governmental records as a nameless “foreign insurgent,” isn’t easy to track down. While ideally the press would have a field day with the fact that the United States government is holding a suspect without trial, this time, the suspect is a Promethean. Nobody cares. The populace seems, for the most part, glad that the government stopped a terrorist from blowing up the

airport, and that's that. The story has since disappeared from most major news outlets, and only continues to tread water in various left-leaning fringe journals, zines and websites. These smaller media venues are the only ones reporting a glimmer of truth: the government isn't holding him at the local prison (Suffolk County), or any satellite prisons. They're keeping him at one of three suspected "black sites," none of which is actually listed. The characters must track down one of the fringe journalists, or instead may contact the one civil rights lawyer who seems interested in the case (as noted in articles).

The lawyer, Annabelle Gibson, lives in a tiny, but expensive apartment in Beacon Hill with her fiancée, a broker named Josh Zwitek. Gibson doesn't have an office, and is only a few years out of law school with very few official cases under her belt. Despite the fact her fiancée considers her practice of law more a hobby than a job, she has become something of a champion of the city's underclass, providing a lot of advice *pro bono*. If the characters can get past her fiancée (who won't let them through the front door), she'll likely be able to look past her Disquiet (assume she has a high Resolve + Composure pool, at least seven dice) to help the throng.

Any number of journalists may be willing to provide information, whether from the *Freedom Gazette*, *Libertylist.com* or the *Free Harbor Paper*. Fringe journalists might supply information that they didn't (or were afraid to) put in their articles. The characters may learn where the three suspected black sites are located within the city. Only one address out of the three actually matters: a two-floor brick house in the Mattapan neighborhood. (Mattapan is a predominantly ethnic neighborhood that, so far, has seen the exact opposite of gentrification. Rumor suggests that a Boston banking consortium has been purposefully lowering prices and property values in the area to pave the way for future developers to be able to snatch pieces of the neighborhood at bargain prices.) The neighborhood is plagued by a bad storm, and all the street and traffic lights are on the fritz. The house sits by itself on a desolate corner a few blocks from the Franklin Park Zoo.

The house, from appearances, appears rundown and unoccupied. No cars sit out front. The curtains are drawn. January's Azothic Radiance bleeds beyond the house, however, and the characters can easily determine that at least some manner of Created is held within. Six Homeland Security agents watch over the area: four "regular" agents, one interrogator and one "Special Projects Coordinator." This cell of agents operates off the reservation, so to speak. Their primary function is to hold the so-called terrorist and mine him for information. They believe that while he's not Arab, he's certainly Muslim (he's not), and can provide information on other terrorist cells. January has tried telling them the truth. They don't want to hear it. Disquiet has affected these men so profoundly that they are bonded by paranoia.

They rarely sleep or eat. They have come to believe that the entire world is under threat from outside forces, and are willing to shoot first in response to any incursion.

If characters ping the agents' overly suspicious radar, the agents assume that they're under attack from terrorist forces (no matter how friendly or peaceful the throng may appear). In combat, assume that each agent has stats equivalent to the SWAT Officer template found on pp. 206–207 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, except without the grenades or flak jacket armor. The agents fight with uncharacteristic brutality, seething and spitting in a frenzy of hatred. Characters can try to sneak in, but doing so requires Wits + Stealth rolls contested against the agents' Wits + Composure.

January is held in the house's attic. The attic is unfurnished except for three bright heat lamps plugged in and aimed right at January's bloody, battered mug. January is bound to a metal chair and interrogation table with both handcuffs (wrists and ankles) and rusted heavy gauge chain (neck, torso, biceps, thighs). His flesh wears terrible bruises and cuts. In the far corner of the room sit several portable propane tanks. His hands show scarring from burns. Most of his braided hair has been burned away.

Without hesitation, January tells characters the truth about what happened. He speaks in slow, simple terms, explaining that another of their kind (a "pretty" named Ice Blue) told him that she had something for him to do, something that would help him reach the New Dawn. She said she had a suitcase with Lighthouse's clothes in it, and that Lighthouse had forgotten to take his suitcase with him to the airport. Would January mind taking the suitcase to Lighthouse? January said he would do it, but when he got to the airport he became afraid because of all the people going in and out. People, January explains, frighten him terribly. And so, he sat outside eating a sandwich somebody had thrown away on the ground, trying to muster his courage to go inside. While he doesn't explain it in such direct terms, it becomes obvious that, when security agents mobbed him, it was because of the Disquiet affecting them.

January may die during a potential escape (besieged agents, if not seen to before the characters get to January, shoot to kill), though within 24 hours he resurrects unless you decide he has died once before. If the characters are around for his resurrection, he'll be loyal to them, even to a fault. If they're not, and he is reborn alone, he flees the city.

Elpis

Remember that, if frustrated with questions, characters can draw on Elpis. Even a single dot in the Merit can answer troubling questions through preternatural insight.

Yes, Elpis only answers questions related to an individual's Pilgrimage. But, if Lighthouse can

really help usher them toward their Great Works, then Elpis will still provide guiding answers to such questions. Such answers should never be obvious, but wreathed in phantasmagoric imagery and metaphor.

Winter Hill Throng

The characters may or may not have already encountered the Winter Hill throng. (See “Somerville,” above.) Depending on the attitudes of the characters and based upon the outcome of earlier encounters, the Winter Hill throng may react in a few different ways:

- If the characters previously met the Winter Hill throng with violence, Ice Blue and La Tempestad have abandoned their Winter Hill lair and moved on to somewhere else in Somerville or surrounding environs. Ice Blue, however, may hunt the characters from afar, taking aim at them with a powerful, long-range rifle.

- If the characters come across as suspicious, Ice Blue may attempt to steer them toward considering another throng as the enemy. A good choice would be Unknown Soldier’s throng, but it depends on who else is in the city (Storyteller’s discretion). Ice Blue feigns ignorance, and affects a great deal of love and respect for Lighthouse. If the characters continue to push, violence is swift and sudden. Ice Blue and La Tempestad are ready for war, attacking with concealed weapons. Ice Blue may try to escape while La Tempestad holds off the characters, if it becomes clear that the Winter Hill throng won’t win the fight.

- If the characters can be at all convinced of the Winter Hill throng’s innocence, Ice Blue tries to further convince them to let her meet with Lighthouse. She’s had meetings previously, she says, but she doesn’t know where he’s holed up. She may even play it that she has information for him regarding the conspiracy, but she’ll give it *only* to him. (She won’t actually be allowed to meet with him due to events that occur in the beginning of Act Three.)

- If driven to extreme violence or held captive, La Tempestad may break his normally stoic (and eerie) silence to let fly with a few choice words. He may cry, “This is for the Botherúd!” Or if locked in combat with another character, he may seethe something along the lines of, “You drag us all down. You consume the source! You don’t deserve the New Dawn.” He may say it in English, Spanish or both.

None of this *confirms* that the Winter Hill throng is trying to destroy Lighthouse (only Mister January can and will do that), but it may convince the characters, correctly, that these Prometheans are behind it.

Protect Roxbury

The Roxbury neighborhood is Lighthouse’s old protectorate. Unfortunately, he can’t watch over it as well as he’d like. Yes, his ally Love Child is there, but she’s only one

Promethean. The characters can demonstrate their loyalty by protecting some aspect of Roxbury. Any of the following avenues of “protection” work, though characters are certainly encouraged to come up with their own solutions:

- Lighthouse has people he cares about, even if they don’t care about him. In particular, he admires Curtis Dewmar’s mother, Charlene, a single woman who struggles every month to pay her ever-increasing rent. She lives in a small efficiency over a pharmacy in the middle of the neighborhood, and works in a tollbooth just south of the city. She also remains active in neighborhood initiatives. Lighthouse always made sure she was safe, giving her whatever money he could scabble together, and scaring away any gangs or thugs who looked at her the wrong way. Love Child stands vigil to a point, but the characters may find that Mrs. Dewmar is struggling to make ends meet, and is robbed once every couple of weeks by a trio of teen gangbangers. To Lighthouse, protecting Charlene Dewmar is the same as protecting Roxbury.

- Racial tensions in Roxbury threaten to explode. The gentrification of the area (especially the expected demolition of the Elm Hill community center) has pushed protests to the brink of violence. Nobody’s thrown a rock at a cop yet, but it’ll happen soon (and the riot police are standing guard, increasing tensions by dint of their presence). What can the characters do? Their task is to help the residents, not the developers. That might mean sabotaging city equipment and disrupting operations. Maybe it means getting the neighborhood leaders to negotiate effectively with city officials. Even if the characters stand in the way of one bad fight between whites and blacks, calming both sides down, the characters might have something to show for their efforts. They might even be able to use their Disquiet as a lightning rod, diverting existing tensions to themselves. Love Child is watching. She’ll report their good deeds (and bad ones) to Lighthouse.

- The gangs don’t have all the power in Roxbury, but they damn sure have some of it, and any power is too much. If the throng takes on one of the gangs, and either destroys the gang or scares the gangbangers out of the neighborhood, that’s a win. Better still is if the characters can manage to send a message to *other* gangs in the area, as well. (Particularly violent acts may earn a character a drop in Humanity, of course.)

Find Moses Moon

One unspoken option available to the characters is to find out where Moon is hiding. That was Lighthouse’s original desire, and fulfilling it earns grudging respect.

Moon fled Logan Airport upon hearing about the bomb threat. He assumed incorrectly that his creation had lured him here and was trying to kill him. Rather than stick around and find out, Moon headed west, to Colorado.

In certain circles (New Age and occult), Moon is something of a celebrity. He frequented the city’s eclectic bookstores, and was a regular patron at just about every

weird, esoteric shop in the area code. He was popular, friendly, definitely no hermit. Characters who ask around and investigate may discover that he has a friend (or at least a contact) in the city — a dealer in strange artifacts and alchemical reagents named Stoyan Valchenko. Valchenko, a Russian so emaciated he looks like a human skin-kite, still keeps in contact with Moon. Valchenko's Chinatown-based shop isn't open to the public. He accepts customers only by appointment, and keeps the place closed with a metal security gate (Durability 3, Size 7, Structure 10, Damage 3).

Valchenko won't tell characters where Moon is without them meeting his price. He'll ask for money: a thousand dollars. Characters can obtain the cash, but Valchenko is also susceptible to Intimidation rolls. Assume that any Intimidation rolls made against him are done with a +1 bonus. He resists coercion with five dice. If the characters are successful, Stoyan tells the characters that Moon has a "girlfriend" (Stoyan makes air quotes as he says it) named Paulina Bird. Bird has her own bookstore in Marlborough, a suburb about an hour west of the city.

Moon was staying above the bookstore ("The Half-Moon Library") with Paulina. The "girl" — actually a transsexual male (who passes well as a woman, except for the Adam's apple) — only gives information to characters who pass a successful Persuasion roll (either "Fast-Talk" or "Seduction," both in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). Paulina has six resistance dice. Beating it out of her earns the characters misinformation. She sends them on a wild goose chase and attempts to make herself scarce during that time.

If the roll is successful, she tells characters that Moon woke up just a few nights before, and had "bad dreams" about Boston. He wouldn't say what they were about, only muttering something about "fire and light." With that, he packed his gear and left. He did leave behind an address in Denver of another New Age bookstore. The characters can give this address to Lighthouse to earn his trust. (With an exceptional success on the Persuasion roll, characters convince Bird to tell them Moon's real name: Moustafa Jaymes.)

Passing the Test

The characters learn that they passed Lighthouse's test because one of his thron-mates — either Love Child or Ulysses — comes to the characters and tells them it's time to meet with him again, and then accompanies the thron back to World's End.

When they return to Lighthouse's lair, they find that he's gone. The area, however, is scattered with notes written in an angry scrawl. The notes all say the same thing:

"Want Lighthouse's help? It'll cost you. Come to the auction, tomorrow night, midnight. Location: Boston Harbor Light."

Act Three: Aurum Fulminans

In the third act, conflict erupts. Lighthouse has been taken by forces unknown while the city and its populace slip into a days-long race riot. While racial tensions are high because of external causes, the presence of various Prometheans in the city only exacerbates the situation and is what pushes the people over the edge. Disquiet, affecting the people and the land, sets people on edge, and the clash of tribes becomes inevitable.

Race Riots

The night that the characters find the note about Lighthouse, across town something else happens: a black pre-teen girl is shot by a black male police officer in the Roxbury neighborhood.

In the midst of angry protesters, riot police line up out front of the community center while the mob of protesters pushes closer and closer. The girl, Bettina Henry, approaches police with a candy bar, holding it out as an offering. The police yell at her to stop; she doesn't. The cops continue to yell, but the girl keeps on coming. The black cop fires a rubber bullet from his stopper gun (in the chaos, he believes the girl is holding a weapon).

The bullet strikes her in the temple, breaking the bone and killing her on impact. The crowd becomes a single entity, swarming forward over the police, who are powerless to stop the sudden advancement.

This happens in the evening. By nightfall, word spreads of Bettina Henry's death at the hands of police (called "murder" by at least one media outlet). The news makes it worse by getting one fact wrong: all stories falsely claim a *white* officer pulled the trigger. The news brings more rioting. Some crowds are driven by long-repressed anger and honest indignation. Others see an opportunity to loot and cause chaos.

Sequence of Events

On the first night, riots consume the following three neighborhoods: Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan. In these predominantly black neighborhoods, the rioting and looting overwhelms the police, who are unprepared for such a tempest. Some police are wounded, as are many rioting residents. For a few hours, the police retreat, but return *en masse* not long before midnight with better equipment and greater organization. The police are brutal, needlessly so; the crowd responds with its own brutality. By two in the morning, the cops have managed to deflate the riots and disperse the people temporarily. Violence simmers beneath the surface, however, and occasionally flares up in pockets of sudden aggression (thrown bottles, garbage fires, random violence against passersby).



The next day, mobs of protesters gather in the plaza out front of City Hall in Boston's Government Center. Mostly ethnic, the protesters do feature a number of whites who resent the treatment by the police. The mob is angry, but not yet violent. That is, until the police start firing teargas and rubber bullets into the crowd. As a response, the mob turns swiftly aggressive. Suddenly, the city has a race riot in the center of its urban life, where tourism, business and government form a nexus. The riots overtake the city's heart. The brutality on both sides is no longer restricted to causing injury. People die. Some are trampled. A handful of cops are dragged to the ground, helmets removed and beaten to death with hunks of broken sidewalk. Other police decide that rubber weapons aren't enough, and begin firing into the mob with their service revolvers.

By noon, the riots are quelled again. Crowds disperse. Each side licks its wounds. The mayor announces

that businesses will close and that, beginning that night, the residents must obey a 7 P.M. curfew. Those out past that hour are to be arrested.

Upon nightfall, the riots begin anew. The second night's rioting is worse than the first. They are also more widespread in terms of area covered. Neighborhoods that don't expect rioting see it anyway: in Fenway, a crowd of drunken white construction workers clashes with a mob of black protesters. The police attack both sides. In Jamaica Plain,

crowds battle police, and the ensuing fight spills over onto the shores of the Jamaica Pond. Some drown in the waters. The riots even threaten Beacon Hill. Looters and vandals of all races take to the wealthy district with a seething hunger to do damage to some of the nicest homes and storefronts in America.

The next day, the riots dissipate. A heavy storm overtakes the area, and pounds the city with rain, wind and even hail. It's enough to quell the riots for good.

Save Roxbury?

Roxbury is one of the centers of the riot (or "uprising," as some call it). If the characters attended to Roxbury's racial tensions in the previous act, however, you can feel free to instead make

Roxbury one of the few sane places in the city. Certainly, Disquiet and the Wasteland can have an effect, and it doesn't mean that the characters themselves would be safe there. It only means that the riots seem to stay clear of that neighborhood, and the residents seem far saner and safer here than in other places. The riots shouldn't defeat the characters' early efforts, were they successful.

Rules of the Riot

Assume that the following rules are true after the riots begin:

- Social rolls are hampered. Any character's Social rolls suffer a -2 penalty. This applies to anybody caught near the riots: mortal, Promethean or other character. Nerves are frayed. Everybody's on edge. It shows in mannerisms and body language.
- Resolve + Composure against Disquiet suffer a -1 penalty.
- When trying to affect a mob, or when considering how a mass of people resists Disquiet, roll the highest Resolve + Composure of the group. Note that this dice pool likely tops out at five for most groups. Those with higher Resolve and Composure scores are less likely to be involved in the mob dynamic.
- Every cop has armor. About three-quarters have Kevlar vests, and the rest have full riot gear. (See "Armor Chart," p. 170, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.) Police are also armed with bean bag and rubber bullet shotguns. Stats are the same as a regular shotgun, except that the weapon does not benefit from the 9 again rule, and the damage is bashing, not lethal (see p. 169, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). Some police eschew use of non-lethal weapons, and instead use real shotguns or pistols.

Riot Encounters

While the characters wade into the city to find Lighthouse or attend this "auction" (or even just get out of the city), you might offer some encounters unique to these conditions:

- The throng finds a group of children huddled in an alleyway, abandoned by parents lost to the mob mentality. The children are frightened and want to be taken to safety. Moreover, some of them have brothers and sisters who may be out in the crowd somewhere. Do the characters help the kids? Do the characters go to rescue the kids' siblings, some of whom may be in the midst of violent crowds, about to be trampled or shot? (If appropriate, this can also work as a milestone for a compassionate Promethean, or for a Promethean who must learn compassion to regain Humanity.)
- The characters find themselves pinned down. At the far end of the street, someone took a garbage truck and emptied its rancid contents, sprayed it with gasoline and lit it on fire. At the other end is a massive clash between rioters and

police where the chatter of gunfire and the screams of the dying play on endlessly. The fire is spreading, and the riot is moving closer. The characters have to figure a way past.

- Disquiet takes hold of an entire mob. Most eerie is the fact that Disquiet seems to have eradicated the barrier between rioters and riot police, and they've now found a common enemy: the throng. The throng can escape the mob, but it isn't that easy, because now they're out there, *hunting* the characters as a single, desperate entity.

Riot Milestones

The riot provides a number of opportunities for characters to fulfill potential milestones. During this time, a Promethean can perform acts of great heroism (carrying a child out of a burning building past a frothing Disquiet-laden mob) or villainy (carelessly destroying those rioters who stand in the Promethean's way). Characters may defend one another from the masses of humanity, or may make an emotional discovery about the nature of people (probably a negative one, but good things can come out of a riot, including the realization of human fragility).

The Auction

The Unknown Soldier, with help from his throng, kidnaps Lighthouse for the purpose of auctioning the Nepri off to the highest bidder. Soldier seems to care little for his own Pilgrimage, and he won't let his fellow throng-mates partake of Lighthouse's supposed gifts.

Soldier sets the auction up at the Boston Harbor Light, the lighthouse found on Little Brewster Island (also the first lighthouse in America). The white tower stands nearly 100 feet tall, and still flashes its bright light every 10 seconds (visible for 30 miles). The island itself has five empty historical buildings, each built in the late 19th century: the fog signal building, the cistern, the keeper's house, the boathouse and the oil house. (The island has electricity, a subject relevant to the Created.) The lighthouse is under the protection of the Coast Guard, but they are otherwise occupied with fears of terrorism and now, full-scale race riots. The Prometheans coming to the island are alone, with no fear of Disquiet from crazed humans.

Getting to the island requires crossing the harbor waters, likely via boat or swimming. Soldier and his throng arrive in a garbage-hauling tugboat, piloted by Soldier himself, just after midnight. Some throngs gather before he arrives. La Tempestad of the Winter Hill throng arrives very early—the night prior, when he stays hidden in the boathouse with his suitcase nuke. If the nuke has been taken, then he

has a case full of grenades and guns that he plans on using. Similarly, if he's dead, then Ice Blue dupes another assassin into doing the job.

The Prometheans who gather do so in a surprising number. Those the characters have met are all present, as are a number of Created who are new to the city. The final number is up to you, but the collected Created likely total 10 to 20. If the characters have played through "A Sheltering Storm," they likely recognize a few faces.

Soldier stands on a high rock, while his throng-mates wait on the ground to each side of the stone "dais." Vox Vulgus aims a pistol at the head of a prominent mortal from the Roxbury neighborhood—someone Lighthouse cares about. The mortal character of Charlene Dewmar is likely the best choice (see above, under "Protect Roxbury"), as she was the mother of Lighthouse's mortal body. (Charlene is probably quite shaken, seeing her "son" again after his death. If you don't want to deal with the question of how much of Curtis Dewmar remains in Lighthouse, introduce some other civic leader in Roxbury earlier in the story and assume that this person now serves as insurance.) Lighthouse kneels, bound with coils of barbed wire, with an X of electrical tape over his mouth. Soldier has a shotgun to the back of Lighthouse's head, but as soon as all of the Promethean "bidders" arrive, Soldier tips a canister of gasoline to his captive's head and holds up a butane lighter.

The auction does not begin immediately; the collected Created have questions, objections and angry protests. Soldier seems a practical sort, and answers all questions as honestly as possible. One of the questions is how Soldier can guarantee Lighthouse's compliance. The answer comes when Vox hits Lighthouse's ally in the back of the head with the pistol and Lighthouse tries to cry out. "Insurance," Soldier replies. Any other objections or protests he'll explain away if he can, and if he can't, then he'll be sure to let the protesters know that he merely needs to flick the lighter to void all objections. By this point, the characters likely suspect or even know that Lighthouse has died once before, killed by his own botched creation (Pandorans). Death can be impermanent for the Created, but Soldier seems confident enough. If the characters confront him about this, he'll voice the fact that he knows Lighthouse has already been reborn once, and won't get up a second time. And if anybody tries to resurrect him, they'll end up shot in the head and tossed into the harbor. Even if Lighthouse *could* be resurrected somehow, clearly Soldier has the upper hand for now, and the murmuring crowd realizes it.

At this point, offers start rolling in. The bids start small. One Promethean offers money, which Soldier waves off. Another offers to be his slave for a month, and another offers a year. The characters hear various shouted bids: offers of finding Soldier's creator, of teaching him new Transmutations, of murdering seven — eight, nine! — of his enemies. Soldier will allow some to stand and be trumped; others he dismisses with an angry wave of his hand.

In the middle of the bidding, La Tempestad tries to make a bid with a raise of his hand, but he purposefully mumbles the bid. Soldier tries to hush everybody, then waves La Tempestad forward. La Tempestad approaches with the suitcase, still mumbling his "offer." When finally he's closer to the stone dais and in the midst of the gathered Prometheans, he'll finally make his bid:

"There is no offer! Bow your heads and die for the Both-erúd!" Upon saying this, he'll pop the latch on the suitcase, hoping to nuke Little Brewster Island and its assemblage of Created.

Switching It Up

Feel free to customize this "end-game" scenario to your own liking. Maybe you want to set the auction somewhere inside the city, where the auction runs the risk of having the biggest impact on both human and Promethean? What if Soldier sets the meeting on the T, taking control of, say, the Green Line train? Maybe instead he sets the meeting on one of the as-yet-unopened exits of I-93 in the Big Dig tunnel beneath the city. If a bomb goes off there, or if the riot spills into the tunnels, there's no telling what manner of chaos will occur. The location needn't be fixed.

Also, it doesn't have to be Soldier who kidnaps Lighthouse. Perhaps the characters have made friends with Soldier and his throng, or have defeated (or even destroyed) them. Maybe the characters a persistent enemy from previous stories that would make better sense (and have greater impact). It could be that the Winter hill throng is actually responsible for the auction: the throng set the auction up with zero intention of holding an actual auction. Instead, La Tempestad simply plans to blow Lighthouse and the collected Prometheans to atoms. Again, this story is as customizable as you need it. Nothing is written in stone until you say that it is.

Nuclear Fire

What happens? La Tempestad is making an effort to burn the island in nuclear fire. Is he successful? Below are a number of options as to how this can play out.

- The characters are somehow able to stop him before he hits the switch on the inside of that bomb. If this happens, La Tempestad doesn't go down easily, and will start throwing the grenades that he has in his pockets. His ultimate goal is to kill Lighthouse, but any collateral damage is perfectly acceptable.

- La Tempestad hits the switch. Unbeknownst to him, the bomb has a 30-second delay. The bomb makes a deep thrumming noise. Characters can try to dispose of the bomb or disarm it. Disposing of it probably means throwing it into the water. The bomb will still go off, but it halves the Blast Area and Damage Ratings of the bomb. Disarming it requires an extended Wits + Craft + equipment roll. Ten total successes are required, with each roll equivalent to a single turn. (A turn is about three seconds, so after 10 rolls, the bomb goes off. The Russian writing on the bomb is the only thing indicating this 30-second window.) Suggested penalties include a -2 for distractions (which can be mitigated by the Meditative Mind Merit), a -2 for having improvised tools or a -3 for having no tools at all. Many Prometheans try to run, which remains an option for characters. The Blast Area is 150, so the characters have 10 turns to escape that radius in yards (which requires swimming).

- La Tempestad hits the switch, and *nothing happens*. It's an old bomb. The wires are worn. The batteries, corroded. Sure, it's still got nuclear material in there, but the thing fizzles. The gathered Prometheans don't wait long to turn this anticlimax into a violent frenzy. Some hang back, but many choose to wade in and tear him apart.

- La Tempestad hits the switch, and the bomb goes off instantly. Aggravated damage hits the collected mob of Prometheans. Nuclear fire sweeps over the island. Certainly, some may survive the blast, given a Promethean's ability to potentially boost Stamina beyond normal limits (as well as any other benefits gained through Transmutations and Bestowments), but many perish. Lighthouse likely dies. See below for other consequences of his demise. It's up to you whether or not Prometheans can resurrect from nuclear damage or if the Revivification Bestowment works. One possibility is that they can, but are reborn with a permanent wound or a damaged Attribute (probably Stamina). When appropriate, don't forget that some of the Created are going to need to check for Torment. Many of the Prometheans on the island are going to suffer fire, pain or failure: all elements that can cause Torment to rise (see p. 182 of **Promethean: The Created**).

Lighthouse's Fate

If Lighthouse dies, whether from the bomb or a grenade or something else, a number of events can occur as a result. Maybe it's purely tragic — he dies, others live and his potential is now gone. Perhaps his death, in some messianic fashion, still helps the collected Prometheans: upon his demise, an electrochemical burst affects all nearby Created. This burst may do anything from save them from the nuclear blast or give each a concrete vision of a milestone on his Pilgrimage. Perhaps all of Lighthouse's unusual powers transfer suddenly to one of the other surviving Prometheans (perhaps even one of the characters). Maybe they simply gain sudden Vitriol, as if completing a milestone. (Note that, should such benefits occur, Lighthouse should remain wholly dead. He does not resurrect, and his body is vaporized, leaving nothing upon which to use the Revivification Bestowment.)

Upon Lighthouse's death, Soldier and his throng make every effort to escape—a difficult task on an island where the only option

is swimming or stealing a boat. The characters may help to ensure he does or doesn't escape, depending upon their actions.

If Lighthouse *lives*, Soldier dumps him and attempt to flee, seeing the situation has gone outside his locus of control. Lighthouse offers his help to all the collected Created he deems worthy. He even encourages them to let Soldier escape.

After the debacle on the island, Lighthouse finally decides to retreat from the world (i.e., go to the Wastes). He takes one of the boats, and simply paddles out to sea, becoming a speck on the horizon until even that disappears.

Aftermath

The physical aftermath is simple: the riots in the city gutter and cease. Lighthouse is either dead or gone. Soldier has either fled or has been brought to justice in some manner. The gathered Prometheans know that they have helped to break Boston, poisoning the City on the Hill with massive Disquiet, and so most of them go far away.

The characters are likely left with hanging questions, some about what happened, but most about the nature of their existence. They likely want to know just who the Botherüd are (if the characters haven't discovered it by now), and may have lingering questions about their own creators and Pilgrimages.

But the greater questions are all internal. A Promethean's presence and path are ironic. They want leave the cursed artificiality and gain a human life, but to be human they must do what is ostensibly inhuman: create another of their kind. And while the goal is humanity, all around the Prometheans humanity seems terribly disappointing: racism, cruelty, anger. Is it worth it, this transition? Do the characters leave this story more aware of their path but less certain that they wish to walk upon it?

Endgame Milestones

The climax and aftermath of the auction present a number of possible milestones, especially if characters had milestones involving Lighthouse specifically. Even so, the characters can learn a lot about their fellow Created. Prometheans can be selfish and petty, just as humans. The Created are also capable of great altruism and heroism. Characters may also have their Refinements confirmed (saving Lighthouse by annihilating Soldier may bolster a Promethean practicing the Stannum Refinement) or may force a character to find a Refinement more appropriate (after the madness of the riots and the auction, a character realizes that she must walk the path of Mortality and begins practicing the Aurum Refinement).

Dramatis Personae

Below are some of the Storyteller characters found in this story. Full Traits are only provided for characters likely to engage in combat with the throng.

Lighthouse

Quote: *Fuck you lookin' at? I see that twinkle in your eye. You want my help? Fine. You got my help. Then maybe you'll leave me the fuck alone.*

Background: Created just shy of 10 years back, Lighthouse isn't the holy guide everyone seems to think or hope he is. Given life by the alchemist Moses Moon in the murky nighttime waters of the Back Bay Fens, Lighthouse has been kicking around Boston since that time, compelled to help the down-and-out with little understanding why.

(More information on Lighthouse's background can be found in "The Truth About Lighthouse," p. 142.)

Description: Lighthouse is a gangly black adolescent with long legs and close-cropped hair. He wears a pair of baggy shorts, and an even baggier Red Sox jersey (David Ortiz, #34). Most of the time, Lighthouse walks around barefoot. His callused, scabbed feet look as if they've been run across a cheese grater, even when his disfigurement is hidden.

When his disfigurement is revealed, he looks like a waterlogged corpse: his brown skin turns bloated and gray, his eyes grow bloodshot and push to the edges of their sockets. He gives off an aroma of moldy grass and brackish water.

Storytelling Hints: Lighthouse isn't sure why everybody thinks he's some kind of messiah or spiritual shepherd. Sure, he has the ability to help people along on their journeys, but he didn't ask for that power, and he frankly doesn't want it. He's sharp-tongued and acerbic, and gets even surlier when people



assume he has answers that he most certainly does not have. All of that bluster conceals a generally kind soul — unless his Torment takes him, at which point he becomes bitterly methodical, pragmatic to the point of hurting others.

Right now, Lighthouse is having his own crisis of faith. He's not sure about the world around him, both human and Created. He doesn't trust anybody, much less himself. Does he deserve to be on the path to humanity? Does he even want that so-called reward?

Lineage: Special, see p. 142

Refinement: Mercurius

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Investigation 2, Occult 2

Physical Skills: Athletics (Foot Chase) 3, Brawl 1, Larceny 1, Stealth 2, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Empathy (Read Intention) 4, Expression 1, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 3, Socialize 2, Streetwise (Roxbury) 3

Merits: Elpis 3, Fleet of Foot 2, Meditative Mind, Repute 3

Willpower: 4

Humanity: 8

Virtue: Charity

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 6

Defense: 3

Speed: 13

Health: 7

Azoth: 4

Bestowment: The Scrutiny (but see below)

Transmutations: *Consortium* — Never Too Far (·), My Brother's Burden (··), We Are One (···), Unspoken Words (····); *Vulcanus* — Firebrand (·), Sense Refinement (·), Sigils on the Wind (··)

Pyros/per Turn: 13/4

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Baseball Bat	1(B)	N/A	4	N/A

Armor: None

Unique Bestowment: The Scrutiny

Part of Lighthouse's tragedy is that he possesses a limited version of the Osiran Bestowment found on p. 54 of this book, "The Scrutiny." For Lighthouse, however, the rules are a little different.

On one hand, he can see more clearly another's milestone. Lighthouse gleans more than just the two-word phrase about someone's milestone. He can dictate one milestone completely, exactly as the Storyteller intends it (but Lighthouse can only

do so once per character). On the other hand, Lighthouse's version of the Scrutiny isn't a two-way street. The Promethean Lighthouse scrutinizes cannot see inside Lighthouse's soul. Therefore, Lighthouse's own milestones remain a private mystery and a persistent torture.

The Unknown Soldier

Quote: *Nothing personal, but it's everybody for themselves. This is war, man. Don't you forget it.*

Background: Soldier's creator, a Wretched called the Poor Man, got more than he bargained for when he decided to give life to a warrior. Poor Man knew he was hunted by his own failed creations, but now, *now* he was ready to create again. And so he cobbled together various parts from today's modern warriors, the soldiers coming home from Iraq in pinewood boxes. But he didn't expect the rage that would seize upon his creation, and Poor Man's "protector" rose up and tore his creator limb from limb.

Since then, Soldier's been finding his way in this world. He can still feel the sand in his boots, and hear the chatter of gunfire, even though the body is no longer "over there" fighting. He can speak Arabic, an odd remnant of the old body, especially considering that he can't use a gun worth a shit (though he'll never let anybody *know* that).

He's traveled up and down the East Coast, trying to figure out his place, gathering other so-called soldiers along the way. He and his throng believe that there's more to this existence than simply trying to leave it. Certainly at some point he'll actively seek his Great Work, but for now, it's every man for himself. He's tired of getting beaten down, shot at, spit on. He wants power. Luxury. Something to help him get through this kind-of-life.

Description: Soldier is a big man, stuffed with muscle. A thick-jawed face sits squat on a pair of broad, corded shoulders, and his arms look like cannons. On first glance, he might be a light-skinned black man, or even a mulatto, though his disfigurement reveals the truth. In reality, his creator made him of parts both black and white, and those who see through his human veneer witness these various body parts sutured together with torn strips of boot leather and barbed wire.

He never changes out of his dusty, blood-drizzled Army jacket and slashed-up corduroy pants. He finds them — along with his steel-toed boots — comforting.

Storytelling Hints: Soldier is discontent, angry, and confused, but he hides these feelings whenever possible. He pretends to do things according to some concrete sense of pragmatism, as if he lives by a code of war in which the ends justify the means. The reality is, that's all a ruse. Hints occasionally surface that he does what he does because he's lost and more than a little selfish. But it's not something he'll admit — to himself or anybody else.

Lineage: Frankenstein



Refinement: Ferrum

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Computer 1, Crafts 1, Investigation 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Stealth 1, Survival 2, Weaponry (Found Weapons) 3

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Intimidation (Good Cop, Bad Cop) 3, Persuasion (Pragmatic Explanation) 2, Streetwise 1

Merits: Fast Reflexes 2, Language (Arabic), Repute 1, Residual Memory (Firearms) 1, Unpalatable Aura

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 6

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 7

Defense: 2

Speed: 12

Health: 8

Azoth: 3

Bestowment: Unholy Strength

Transmutations: *Corporeum* — Regeneration (••); *Vitality* — Might (•••)

Pyros/per Turn: 12/3

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Pump-Action Shotgun	4(L)	20/40/80	5	? Again
Brass Knuckles	1(B)	—	? Uses Brawl Skill	

Armor: Heavy jacket (Rating 1/0)

Soldier's Army

Soldier's throng comprises the following Created: Vox Vulgus, a Muse in a tattered, blood-stained, peach-colored power-suit, and Ti Puenez (or "Stinkbug"), a muscular, black, female Golem born in the hurricane-swept swamp waters outside New Orleans. Soldier may also have Cassius (from the story "A Sheltering Storm" in *Pandora's Book*) in his throng, if Cassius survived that story. Cassius is impressionable enough to be taken in by Soldier's rhetoric.

We don't have room to detail each of the characters here. Assume that each is only mildly competent in combat. Each has a Defense of 2, a Speed of 9, an Initiative of 6. Exceptions are Vox's unusual firearms score (six dice) and Puenez's Grappling pool (seven dice).

La Tempestad

Quote: (*long, steely glare*)

Background: La Tempestad — "The Storm" — woke up in a fire-gutted New York City warehouse almost 20 years ago. Electricity coursed through him, alternating hot and cold, as his shadowed creator stared on. Blood from beheaded chickens (still lying nearby) smelled strong in La Tempestad's nose. Wild drum music played from a tinny cassette player in the corner. A man calling himself Ocho said that he had plans, and that La Tempestad would be a part of them. Ocho explained his own fidelity to a local gang, and how Tempestad would help Ocho destroy that gang's enemies.

And, for nearly 10 years, that is what La Tempestad did. He helped Ocho annihilate other gangs, believing that this man was his creator. La Tempestad was a brute, a dog on a leash who was abused as much as he was rewarded. But he did as he was told, because despite the stirrings within, he knew nothing else.

That changed the day Ice Blue stepped into his life. She burned Tempestad's warehouse prison to the ground, freeing him and allowing him to escape Ocho and the gang. She explained that human beings could not create Prometheans, and that Ocho was just a liar with a few parlor tricks, able to compel La Tempestad's service, but that was all. The Great Work, she explained, was to become human, but to do so, the Prometheans must first destroy those who seek to gain the reward ahead of them. Azoth, she explained, was a limited resource, and other Created were like carrion birds, picking away at an otherwise good meal. With that, she inducted him into the Botherúd. They operate now as a two-person cell, working out of the Boston suburb of Somerville.



Description: Tall, thin and terrible-looking, La Tempestad is an intensely focused killing machine. His long reedy arms look almost unnatural without a machete, meat cleaver or handgun in the grip of his fists. His wide eyes rarely blink, and his thin lips never leave the perpetual scowl that scars his face.

It only gets worse when his disfigurements become apparent. His coffee-colored flesh grows dark with mottled blotches, and the gross copper-wire stitching shows clearly. Various metal plates and ceramic conductors pepper his body in no discernable pattern, each marked with the rusty stains of old, old blood.

Storytelling Hints: La Tempestad rarely speaks, preferring instead act quickly and decisively. He is ceaseless in whatever he does, stopping only when his legs are knocked (or dismembered) out from under him. On those rare occasions that words *do* come out of his mouth, they're often a form of threat or Botherúd propaganda (sometimes in English, sometimes in Spanish, often both).

Rumors that Lighthouse was created by a mortal demiurge have reached La Tempestad, and that thought infuriates him. If it's false, it means that other Prometheans have been duped by the same lies that he was. If it's true, it means Ice Blue has been lying to him. Either possibility fills him with rage, and his Torment-addled mind can conceive of only one acceptable course of action: kill Lighthouse.

Lineage: Frankenstein

Refinement: Stannum

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 1, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Crafts (Demolitions) 3, Occult 2
Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Firearms 3, Stealth 3, Survival 1, Weaponry (Machete) 3
Social Skills: Intimidation (Silent Threat) 4, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 1
Merits: Allies (Salvadoran Gang) 2, Ambidextrous, Danger Sense, Lair (Shared; Winter Hill store) 3, Language (Spanish)
Willpower: 7
Humanity: 3
Virtue: Faith
Vice: Wrath
Initiative: 7
Defense: 2
Speed: 12
Health: 9
Azoth: 3
Bestowment: Unholy Strength
Transmutations: *Deception* — Chameleon Skin (·), Leave No Trace (··); *Electrification* — Jolt (·), Shock (··); *Vitality* — Vault (··)
Derangements: Suspicion (mild), Megalomania (severe)
Pyros/per Turn: 12/3
Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Machete	2(L)	—	10	—

Armor: None

Ice Blue

Quote: *And here I thought we could be friends.*

Background: Sometimes, the Botherúd creates or recruits Prometheans who are considered expendable. Such ignorant beasts can be used for a purpose, exhausted like ammunition. Ice Blue is *not* among the expendable.

Ice Blue's creator, Rose, brought Ice Blue into this world nearly three decades ago, seeking both a lover and a co-conspirator in the ranks of the Botherúd. (Creating new Prometheans is against Botherúd philosophy, but many are able to forgive themselves the luxury as they consider themselves "above" others. This is part of the philosophy's core hypocrisy.) Stealing the body of an up-and-coming poet, Rose sought companionship in the form of another Muse. Together they traveled the country, a pair of vicious manipulators eerily gifted toward making other Prometheans destroy themselves. Along came the day, however, that Rose began to change. She no longer wanted to be the heartless spider at the center of the web, realizing that their path toward humanity was all wrong, a wicked trail, a gauntlet of thorns. Rose begged Ice Blue to come with her, to leave the Botherúd behind and to forge a new trail on the quest for a mortal soul. Ice Blue, sickened by betrayal, could do no such thing. She let her lover and creator go.



Since that time, Ice Blue has become more proactive in her activities for the Botherúd. She travels from city to city, forming expendable throngs of confused Created. They help her achieve the Botherúd's goals, and then she leaves them behind (if they survive). She recognizes that she appears to be making no progress toward the Great Work, but she has become so good at lying to others that lying to herself is nearly as easy (the very fact that she practices Aurum instead of Stannum or even Centimanus is proof of her capable self-deception). She reminds herself daily that soon her reward shall come.

Description: Ice Blue is so pale, one almost expects to see a red heart thumping beneath the thin crust of ice that is her skin. Her beauty is unnerving. Those lithesome limbs seem not crudely carved of stone but instead *drawn* from stone, as if once liquid and now solid. Long, blonde hair, like yellow straw affixed with frost, goes down past her waist. Her striking (and eerie) appearance is magnified during moments when her disfigurements are revealed. Her skin no longer appears icy, but instead looks like bleached bone. Her blue eyes lose their color and become nearly without pupils. She looks like a ragged scarecrow formed of bone and straw, made as a mockery of something beautiful.

Storytelling Hints: Ice Blue tailors her conversation to whomever she speaks. If she expects that they will respond to weakness, then she appears as frail and as vulnerable as she can. If they will cower beneath her strength, then she projects an aura of authority. She will speak any lie and make any false promise, sometimes with alarming aloofness. Her ability to deceive is no longer a conscious effort; it's now pure instinct.

Lineage: Galatea

Refinement: Aurum



Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 3
Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2
Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 4 Composure 3
Mental Skills: Academics 2, Computer 1, Investigation 3, Politics 1
Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Firearms (Long Range) 3, Stealth 1
Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression 1, Intimidation (Threats) 3, Persuasion 3, Subterfuge (Improvised) 5
Merits: Contacts (Botherúid) 1, Elpis 2, Lair (Shared: Winter Hill Store) 3, Residual Memory (Expression, Socialize) 2, Resources 2, Striking Looks 2
Willpower: 6
Humanity: 4
Virtue: Hope
Vice: Lust
Initiative: 5
Defense: 2
Speed: 9
Health: 7
Azoth: 5
Bestowment: Mesmerizing Appearance
Transmutations: *Mesmerism* — Fixed Stare (·), Suggestion (··), In Vino Veritas (···), Waters of Lethe (····)
Derangements: Narcissism (mild)
Pyros/per Turn: 14/5
Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
7mm Rifle	5(L)	200/400/800	10	+1 at long range for Specialty

Armor: None

Pandorans

Following are the Pandorans that characters may encounter in Boston.

Fleshbats Under the Bridge

Quote: (*muddy sputters and hisses*)

Background: These beasts, clinging to the underside of the bridge, are the failed creation of Sorry Charlie. They've been hunting him for a while, but will gladly trap, torture and feast upon whatever Pyros comes their way.

Description: They look like legless upper torsos with flaps of patagia skin hanging between arms and trunk. These flaps let them glide and swim more easily (walking, though, is difficult on two hands). Their faces are mud-smearred and nearly featureless (except for mouths of jagged, rock-like teeth).

Storytelling Hints: They're barely intelligent, but possess a level of hunting instinct — they seek to herd and trap the characters when possible. If that's not possible, the beasts attack mindlessly. They'll speak only rarely, and even then they only chuff the misspoken name of their creator: "Sollychally, sollychally."



Mockery: Ishtari

Rank: 1

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 0, Wits 3, Resolve 1

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 0, Composure 2

Physical Skills: Athletics (Swim, Fly) 3, Brawl (Bite) 2, Stealth 2, Survival 2

Willpower: 3

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 6

Defense: 4

Speed: 12

Size: 3

Health: 7

Transmutations: *Pandoran* — Bizarre Weaponry (Fangs ··), Small Stature (·), Scurry (·)

Bestowment: Inertia (····)

Pyros/per Turn: 10/1

Weapons/Attacks:

Foo Dogs (Chang and Eng)

Quote: (*eerie howls and guttural barks*)

Background: These monstrous creations wait on each side of Chinatown's *paifang* gateway. They didn't always look like dog-lions, of course, once appearing as a body rent into two by a vicious whip of ectoplasm, but the cultural context of the neighborhood allowed them to adapt in their Dormancy.

Description: The two foo dogs look nearly identical: each as big as a mother lion, with paws like human hands. Their fur drips red ectoplasm, dropping to the earth like spatters of clotted blood. The only difference between them is their eyes: Chang's are emerald green, and Eng's are dark like opals.

Storytelling Hints: These two Pandorans are not careless or mindless hunters. They wait. They stalk. They communicate with one another in strange barks (and, occasionally, Mandarin Chinese).

Mockery: Render

Rank: 3

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Occult 1

Physical Skills: Athletics (Running) 3, Brawl (Claws) 3, Stealth 4, Survival 1

Social Skills: Animal Ken 1, Intimidation 1

Willpower: 5

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 6

Defense: 3

Speed: 13

Size: 4

Health: 9

Transmutations: *Pandoran* — Bizarre Weaponry (Breath Weapon ..), Perfected Bezoar (Blunt Weapons ..)

Bestowment: Bizarre Weaponry (Claws ..), Scurry (..)

Pyros/per Turn: 14/3

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Breath	0(L)	—	7	—
Claw	1(L)	—	8	—

Armor: None, but see Perfected Bezoar



Non-Combatants

Below are Storyteller characters not meant for combat. Certainly the characters and flow of the story may suddenly involve these individuals in a fight. If that's the case, assume low combat dice pools, around three to four dice.



Love Child (Azoth 3)

Quote: *You ain't gettin' past me. Go ahead. Try.*

Background: Love Child gets her name from the Supremes song of the same name (1968 #1 single), which was playing on a record player when she was drawn back into this world after getting dismembered by spirits. Her Riven creator fled before the process was finished, and so Love Child came into this world alone. That is, until Lighthouse found her and accepted her without question. She respects him mightily, and will do what she must to protect him.

Description: Love Child is a stocky, brutish black woman with close-cropped hair and a pair of cat's-eye glasses. When her disfigurement is viewable, those glasses barely conceal the tendrils of ectoplasm that leak from her eyes and seem to lash out at those staring upon her.

Storytelling Hints: Love Child is a no-nonsense, plain-speaking woman with little interest in small talk. She speaks without tact (though rarely is she insulting). The only people deserving of her unconditional respect are her throng-mates, Lighthouse and Ulysses.

Abilities:

First Aid (6 dice) — Her old body was a nurse, and the hands still seem to know what to do when it comes to patching up wounds.



Streetwise (6 dice) — She may not be on friendly terms with all of Roxbury’s criminal miscreants, but she knows exactly where they hang out, what they talk about and what they’re probably up to.

Ulysses (Azoth 4)

Quote: *It’ll be torches and pitchforks before long.*

Background: Given life in the slurry of muck beneath Boston, Ulysses was made at the hands of another Tam-muz when the city’s Big Dig first began, some 14 years ago. Ulysses’ creator has since left him (Ulysses loves people, but his “father” Leopold followed the Cuprum Refinement), but still sends postcards from time to time. Leopold left behind a dog-eared copy of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, a book that the Golem cherishes but has never read. He only joined Lighthouse’s through a few years ago, when the boy saved Ulysses from a vicious Pandoran attack. He loves Lighthouse like family.

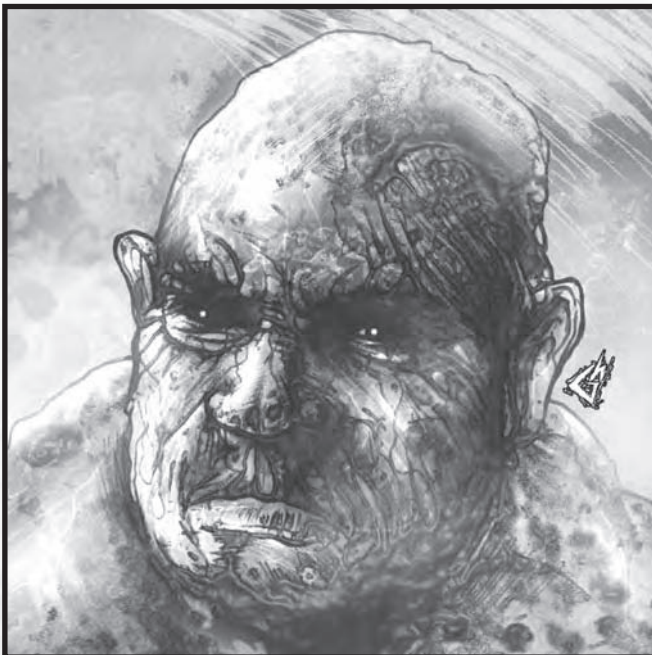
Description: Ulysses is a hunched-over, growth-stunted lug, his big face too large for the tiny pair of round-rim glasses that hang off his elephantine ears. His disfigurement shows him constantly sloughing off a skin made of runny mud and wet scree.

Storytelling Hints: Stubborn, sullen and more than a little paranoid, Ulysses likes his isolation. He’s not cruel or mean, and even in his obstructionist ways comes off being nicer than he probably intends.

Abilities:

Hiding (7 dice) — Ulysses knows how to hide from people, clinging to the shadows, ducking under a bridge, whatever.

Resist Coercion (8 dice) — He’s a tough cookie, unflappable in his defense of others. He takes any kind of intimidation (threats, torture) with grim passivity.



The Professor (Azoth 2)

Quote: *Seen the beacon? Found the light? Fuck you! You’re blind! You’re all goddamn blind!*

Background: The Professor was created in the Back Bay Fens by an unknown Osiran. Moses Moon, already an accomplished alchemist researching the possibility of creating new life, witnessed this Promethean rising from the muddy waters and in that moment found his own inspiration to create Lighthouse. The Professor, though, was left to his own devices, both by Moon and his creator, a poor, raving lunatic.

Description: The Professor, naked save his newspapers-and-garbage toga, is already a bony-faced fellow with a shock of white hair upon his head. His disfigurement makes his flesh seem dry like old parchment, and his rag-swaddled body suddenly looks more “mummy” than “bum.”

Storytelling Hints: The Professor babbles, teaching “lessons” (which make little sense) to any who will listen. On the subject of Lighthouse, the Professor is obsessed, focused like a stalker. This makes him unpredictable and dangerous.

Abilities:

Traps (6 dice) — The Professor sets up all number of weird traps: snares, deadfalls, pit traps. Assume that successes on his trap-making roll can be split between concealing the trap and causing damage with it. Concealment successes must be surpassed with the prey’s Perception roll. If they fail to see the trap and set it off, then damage successes go toward causing points of damage (bashing or lethal depending on type of trap) to the victim.

Weird Info (7 dice) — Somehow, Moon’s Occult knowledge passed down to the Professor. It’s nigh-useless in his hands, however, as he rants on about (often true) Occult secrets with little context or understanding.

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BEST TO SHUT OUR EYES, PRETEND IT'S NOT THERE.
IF WE DON'T SEE IT, IT MIGHT NOT SEE US.

PRETENDING SOMETHING IS NOT THERE,
HOWEVER, DOES NOT MAKE IT GO AWAY.

IT ONLY HELPS IT TO HIDE BETTER,
AND PREDATORS LIKE TO HIDE FROM THEIR PREY,
LEST IT BE SCARED AWAY.

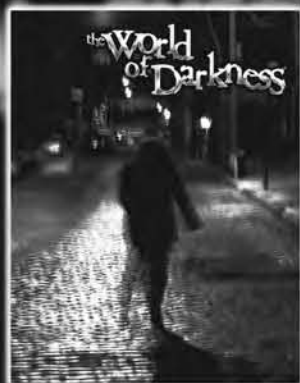
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