

THE LIVE-ACTION GAMING MAGAZINE

Mind's Eye Theatre™ JOURNAL

BECAUSE THE MIND'S EYE NEVER BLINKS



ISSUE no.5

Mind's Eye Theatre™ JOURNAL

BECAUSE THE MIND'S EYE NEVER BLINKS

WELCOME TO THE
MIND'S EYE THEATRE JOURNAL,
THE MAGAZINE THAT PICKS UP WHERE OTHER
MIND'S EYE PUBLICATIONS LEAVE OFF.

THIS ISSUE PRESENTS:

- THE FIRST PART OF MET'S LOOK AT WRAITH:
THE GREAT WAR.
- A LOOK AT THE BUNYIP FOR LAWS OF THE
WYLD WEST.
- THE EINHERJAR OF THE DARK AGES.
- WORLD OF DARKNESS FICTION.
- TOPICAL ISSUES ON LIVE-ACTION ROLEPLAYING
AND MORE.

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Mind's Eye Theatre

THE LIVE-ACTION GAMING MAGAZINE



Mind's Eye Theatre
JOURNAL

BECAUSE THE MIND'S EYE NEVER BLINKS



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WHAT YOU'VE MISSED

Issue #2

- Live-action Nunnehi rules
- Tips on starting and maintaining a long-running chronicle
- Articles on the Camarilla organization and One World by Night
- A look at how **Mind's Eye Theatre** has changed and grown over time

Issue #3

- Live-action rules for playing the Thallain of the Shadow Court
- World of Darkness Fiction
- A human's perspective on the terrors that stalk the World of Darkness
- A look ahead at one of the most eagerly anticipated **Mind's Eye Theatre** releases of the year

Issue #4

- The secrets of the wraiths of the Jade Empire.
- The conclusion of the *Mayday!* Chronicle.
- Live-Action **Mage** rules... sort of.



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Mind's Eye Theatre JOURNAL

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

WELCOME TO THE MIND'S EYE THEATRE JOURNAL	4
from Yours Truly	
DEADGUY SPEAKS	6
by Richard E. Dansky	
MEMORIES AND EXCUSES	11
by James A. Moore	
THE WOLVES OF THE SEA	21
by Jason Langlois	
BUNYIP IN THE SAVAGE WEST	31
by Peter Woodworth	
WRAITH: THE GREAT WAR	44
by Bruce Baugh	
DARK WATERS DISTANT	60
by Steve McDonald	
COSTUMING FOR LIVE-ACTION PLAY	65
by Laura Hanson	
EVENT HORIZON	72



WELCOME TO THE MIND'S EYE THEATRE JOURNAL!

Hello again, everybody, and welcome to the fifth issue of the **MET Journal**; the first issue of the year 2000! If you're reading these pages, chances are good that civilization didn't actually come to an end when our computerized clocks turned over at midnight January 1st. If it *did* end and you're still reading, I applaud your dedication. For those of you who are new to the publication, let me take a second to acquaint you with just what you've got here. (For those who've read this before, you may skip ahead to "Deadguy Speaks." If you do, however, you'll miss the big news at the end.)

The **Journal** is a quarterly publication dedicated to filling in the gaps in your White Wolf LARP environment. We offer rules for new character types, original story lines to work into your chronicles, guides for keeping your games under control and running smoothly and rules updates you won't find in any other **Mind's Eye** release. Plus, you'll find answers to the questions that have plagued you, original World of Darkness fiction and columns from people who've been LARPing or working here at White Wolf (or both) for years.

In this issue, we take a look at the wraithly environment of the Great War era, the dying Bunyip of the Savage West and vampire Vikings known as the *einherjar*. And that's just a sample of what's in store for you here. We'll also take a look at what you've missed in previous issues (if you're joining us late) and what to expect in the future of **Mind's Eye Theatre** and White Wolf in general.

In future issues of the **Journal**, we'll present some of the material that had to be left out of **Laws of the East**, tips on how to deal with character death and some expanded information on the hideous fomori.

And you can help make the **Journal** even better. Send us letters on your opinions about the state of live-action roleplaying today. Send us questions about the features and rules you see here, as well as notes about the broken rules you come across in different **MET** publications. Send us horror stories about games gone wrong and how your player characters fixed them. We're interested in all aspects of live-action roleplaying, and we want to know what you think.

Stick around. The **Journal** is on the cutting edge of the live-action genre; we've got something for everybody. And if we don't have it yet, let us know. We'll get it for you.

Carl Bowen, Developer

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White Wolf

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**THIS JUST IN!****Mind's Eye Theatre Journal Subscriptions**

We are now offering a subscription to the **Mind's Eye Theatre Journal** series. This service is slightly different from the standard game and fiction services we offer, since it's more like a conventional magazine subscription. You pay a one-time price for a year's subscription of four issues, published quarterly. The standard subscription costs \$31.80, but members of the Camarilla fan club pay only \$25.44.

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DEADGUY SPEAKS

YOUR FANGS ARE RIGHT PURTY

by Richard Dansky

I can't dance with them. I'm Toreador. They're Nosferatu.

— An unnamed LARPer at the first ICC

It's spring, and young LARPer's thoughts are turning to love. Actually, as I'm writing this it's early fall and North Carolina is bilge-pumping its way out from under Hurricane Floyd's drooling problem. So while I wait for the floodwaters to recede, now is as good a time as any to discuss something that's been weighing on my mind for a while.

One of the most remarkable things about live-action roleplaying, and **Mind's Eye Theatre** in particular, is that it is about as gender balanced as the roleplaying industry gets. (Yes, I know that there are exceptions to the rule out there, unfortunately they're exceptions. Don't write in with angry comments about your all-female Warhammer 40K game. I'd be forced to post the letter, and then you'd be inundated with hordes of desperate guys who'd want to show you their Gorkamorkas). The sad fact of the matter is that people who play hobby games are still predominantly male, despite a slow trend toward gender balance over the last decade or so. The lone real exception to this slant toward the surging seas of testosterone is, strangely enough, live-action roleplaying. (And again, just because your game doesn't follow this trend doesn't mean that it's representative, honest — there are plenty of other people out there who just aren't as cool as you are.) Depending on whom you ask, **MET** games average anywhere from 35% to 50% female, which is really remarkable for an outgrowth of an industry whose stereotypical image is five guys huddling around a table in someone's parents' basement.

Of course, there's been one unforeseen outgrowth of the fact that a growing number of women are using **MET** as their first tentative step into the gudgeon-infested waters of roleplaying. Namely, it's that a growing number of women are using **MET** as their first tentative step into the gudgeon-infested waters of roleplaying, and the guys who were formerly lords of the game preserve have no idea what to do now that their game has been infiltrated by (Gasp! Shudder!) *gurruls*. While most men who roleplay are genuinely glad to see more gender balance in their hobby — for one thing, it cuts down on the number of heavily bearded bikers who are claiming to be waiflike Toreador named Mitzi — there are a few adjustments that have to be made by folks who just can't get used to the notion that roleplaying isn't just a boys' club anymore. For one thing, they have to leave that dog-eared copy of **Cult of Ecstasy** home instead of passing it around during Storyteller breaks. For another, naming characters "Benjamin Dover," "Richard Dover" and "Eileen Dover" is right out, as is spending endless hours trying to convince the Storyteller that you really do need to create a *Brothels Influence* for your character because "he's one bad mack daddy of a vampire pimp who needs his hos." (If the Storyteller is wise, he'll flip the player in question a box of ho-hos at this point, which often serves as a suitable distraction, as well as an in-game prop that doesn't violate the no-weapons policy.)

Thankfully, gender integration of a **Mind's Eye Theatre** game usually flenses much of the middle-school-level bathroom humor out of the game's foundation (although not always — there's inevitably some genius who thinks that he's getting away with something because he's given his Garou a name like "Licks-Own-Eyebrows"). Unfortunately, in addition to removing that particular flavor of idiocy, the growing gender-integration of LARPs brings with it an entirely new and terrifying problem.

That problem is romance, or the imagined possibility thereof.

And let's head the next controversy off at the pass: This column is in no way, shape or form intended to dismiss the possibility or worthwhile nature of same-sex romance in the LARPing community. I will say, however, that this column concerns itself with the romantic entanglements arising from the influx of women into MET, which means we're primarily talking about those wacky breeders here.

Seriously, let's look at the situation. Roleplaying can become a profoundly intense activity. Intense activities produce intense emotions, and seasoning the whole mess with hormones percolated by stylish costumes and low-cut dresses doesn't help. The line between a character's feelings and a player's feelings can get a trifle blurred, particularly when people indulge in romantic plot lines in an effort to make their games more adult. It can get tricky, to say the least. People mistake in-character feelings for out-of-character ones. Character conflicts can spill over into out-of-play relationships, or out-of-play squabbles can be brought into play with disastrous consequences. Let's face it, do you really want to be playing the character your best friend's SO decides to have an in-character affair with on the night they have a big fight? Or how about seeing the gentleman who's had a crush on your lady love for months trying to initiate a romantic "plot" with her that just *might* be an attempt to get closer to her in preparation for making an actual play in real life? And let's not even get into the possibility of a couple of players having a bitter breakup and splitting the game down the middle. After all, Isaac's friends don't want to roleplay with Ginny's friends, and Ginny's friends don't want to roleplay with Isaac's, and suddenly the Storyteller is running twice as many games because her marvelous, tight-knit little LARP has been split in two.

In short, then, romantic entanglements gone wrong can wreak a world of harm on a game. There are preventative measures that can be taken, of course. Warning players before each game to keep their in-game and out-of-game affairs separate at least makes them think twice before trundling off for an "In-character nekkid Thaumaturgy lesson" in the broom closet. Keeping an eye out for inappropriate behavior during games (yes, the "No Touching" rule applies even to consensual fondling of the one-eyed trouser snake, and don't try to tell me it's a "new kind of animal ghoul") is also important. In addition, players should remember that there's a world of difference between playing a character who's an unrepentant sexist (or worse) in-game and offending other players for real with that sort of behavior. At no point should the verisimilitude of roleplaying take precedence over the very real concerns of the people behind the characters. I don't care if it's "in character" to indulge in nonconsensual scenarios or the like. There are just some lines you don't cross, even in a game situation.

Still, once all of the minefields have been crossed and the potential tiger pits dodged, there's every chance that at any given game, a couple of folks are going to — for lack of a better term — hook up. The concept makes a great deal of sense, actually. I mean, when a LARPer meets a LARPer a-comin' through the rye (or the arts center or the basement of the local YMCA or wherever), they've got a step up on any other potential relationship they might have. After all, they're already assured of being past the necessity of trying to explain their weird roleplaying hobby to a prospective sweetie. Even better, they've got at least one shared interest, not to mention a nigh-infinite source of cheap dates. There's less chance than usual that there's going to be relationship strife over spending money on, say, roleplaying books rather than roses, and you can always explain away that case of wandering eye as the result of the Toreador clan weakness. (Note: Make sure you're actually playing a Toreador when you try that one. Otherwise, you're liable to discover precisely how thick the new edition of *Laws of the Night* is when your *former* sweetie makes you eat it.)

Still, even with all of these advantages, there are still tremendous obstacles standing in the way of true MET romance. The LARPer themselves lovingly erect most of those obstacles, but then again, the course of true love ne'er did run smooth. In all honesty, where

LARP is concerned, the course of true love tends to stagger drunkenly and carom off the occasional wall, but even so, the point's the same. It's not easy.

A big part of the problem is communication. After all, it's hard enough to tell when someone's attracted to you in real life. When you slather characters over that, the confusion factor increases exponentially. Just to test this theory, the fine folks at White Wolf hooked electrodes up to the cranium of a fresh-faced young male LARPer of more than standard attractiveness and then recorded his thoughts. What they got was quite enlightening:

"She digs me. She really digs me. No, wait, she doesn't dig me, she digs my character. Good thing I took *Studly* as a Social Trait. Hmm. Maybe she really digs me. I dig her. Well, I dig her character. I haven't actually met her. If she's anything like her character, I would dig her, though. I wonder if she's anything like her character. I wonder if she's wondering if I'm anything like my character. I wonder if she's wondering about my wondering about her wondering. She winked. I think her character digs me. I think I need to go sit in a dark corner and shake for half an hour. I wonder if she digs shaking in dark corners..."

Unfortunately, the test subject's head exploded at this point, and any further data was lost as the valiant researchers were forced to scrape his brains off the ceiling tiles lest they lose the deposit on the lab. The point, however, is clear. Communication on the ever-toughy matter of attraction is extremely, extremely difficult even at the best of times.

(In case you were wondering, by the way, she really did dig him, which is pretty much a tribute to the poor kid's remarkable personality. After all, no one looks all that studly with electrodes sticking out of his brain.)

With that in mind, here are a few basic tips to make communication in matters like this a bit more straightforward and prevent the loss of more perfectly innocent ceiling tiles.

Guys, if a woman at the game says "Hi," she means (and I know you're not going to believe me when I say this, but trust me here) "hi." She's being polite. She's making a socially acceptable greeting with the minimum number of syllables possible. She most emphatically does not mean "Shanghai me to your lair in the Scottish Highlands, you ravishing black-clad brute, and help me to raise a litter of sturdy little hellions to someday wear your adopted clan tartan." Be thankful she's actually using a spoken syllable, rather than a curt nod. The best thing to do is to say "Hi" back.

Trust me here. If she actually wants to hold a discussion with you or spend more time in your company, she'll demonstrate it with (Gasp!) multi-syllabic words. However, if you take a simple greeting as anything more than what it actually is, you instantly get yourself filed under "Do Not Speak To, Even if the Fate of the Human Race Depends on It." Don't think I'm kidding, either. Desperation is not an attractive personality trait, and seizing on a simple greeting as an expression of a barely contained lascivious longing is pretty much equivalent to tattooing the word *Desperate* on your forehead, pectorals and inner thighs as far as indicators go.

However, gents, if you do respond in a manner that proves that you don't think *savoir faire* is the next town over from Perth Amboy, you might actually put yourself in a position to have a meaningful, interesting conversation. Mind you, that's not the same as guaranteeing that you'll be an irresistible studmuffin, but owning your own Lear Jet is about the only thing that can guarantee that. While you're waiting for your first billion to accrue, though, decent conversation with someone who thinks that you're more highly evolved than a foraminifera isn't necessarily too shabby. Besides, it can make a great starting point — it's always nice when the woman you're interested in doesn't automatically look at you like you're a month-old bowl of egg salad.

On the other hand, ladies, bear in mind that any gentleman worth his salt is desperately trying to avoid looking, well, desperate. He's going to do everything in his power to separate

himself from the drooling cape-clad hordes. Mostly, that translates to being willfully chivalrous above and beyond the call of duty. Because it would be the lizard-brained horn-dog thing to do to notice when someone is expressing interest in him, your basic Decent Gent is going to go out of his way not to notice when someone's flashing the come-hither sign. It doesn't matter if the sign is 40 feet tall and made of neon and depleted uranium; he's going to make a manful, chivalrous effort not to notice it.

Unfortunately, there's no quick and easy way around that sort of deliberate self-flagellation. (Figurative, folks, it's figurative. Put the riding crops down and relax.) The best thing to do is simply to open up a friendly conversation and let the poor boy's own baser instincts betray him. After all, it's a lot easier to ask forgiveness than permission, and it's a lot harder for even the most self-sacrificing LARPer to flog himself over his self-described boorish behavior when it's bloody obvious that any expressed interest is mutual.

Of course, the big mistake that most LARPer's make when trying to win themselves dates is one that's actually quite easy to avoid. Unfortunately, once the fake fangs go in, the common sense goes out, at least on this issue. Simply put, when it comes time to strut their best stuff, entirely too many MET players instead chose to show how witty, talented, powerful and attractive their characters are. Now a man more snide than myself (if such a man exists) might say that this is why it's really called fantasy roleplaying, but I think it's just a matter of folks wanting to show off something they're proud of.

Unfortunately, there's no easy way to say this: **They Can't Date Your Character Instead Of You.** Ahem. Sorry about that, but it needed to be said. Seriously though, think about it. Why on earth would you waste your time showing off how butch your character (the personality you borrow on the occasional weekend) is, when you really want someone to be interested in you? Sure, it's fun to show off and tell war stories, but if you ever think your character stands a better chance of going home from the game with company than you do, it's time to stop working on advancing your character and start working on advancing yourself.

Then again, getting the relationship going is only half the battle. Sustaining it in the face of overwhelming odds is the hard part. It's a truism that one of the most attractive qualities a person can have is to be attached. That means that the first game after a romantic connection is established is liable to look like an outtake from the new Fox special, "World's Most Desperate Swarms," as newly interested parties of all genders and orientations descend on the happy couple. The attention can be head turning, and God help the poor fool whose head actually does get turned. If he's lucky, he'll just get slapped. If he's not, he'll suddenly acquire a reputation as a "LARP slut" that he won't be able to remove with anything short of joining the Federal Witness Protection Program.

One of the most common strategies used to ward off the swarms of would-be paramours is exaggerated affectionate behavior. Technically known as "PDA," or "Public Displays of Affection," this technique includes (but is not limited to) cuddling, using of pet names even in character, game breaks for smooches and quickies in the broom closet. While this approach definitely lets the world know that someone is taken, it runs a definite risk. After all, there's only so much sickly sweet romanticism that immortal lords of the night can endure. After one too many "Sweeties" or "Snooky Lumpums," other players might be willing to test the boundaries of the "no touching" rule with buckets of ice water. Conversely, they may mistake, "Get a tomb," for, "Get a room," and stake the cute couple just to shut them up.

Still, excessive uses of Chill of the Windsaber can't halt true love (although excessive Peter Cook imitations can come close). Every so often, luck, skill, devotion and love triumph, and a couple of soul mates find each other through MET. If you are one of the lucky few to find marital bliss with someone you met at a game, I just have one humble request for you:

For the love of God, do *not* have a Vampire-themed wedding. Yeah, yeah, it commemorates how you met. It's certain to be a big hit with your friends from the game. It'll freak your parents, and it might even cut down on the catering bill, depending on how far you take the gag. But remember, in *10 years*, you're going to have to explain it to your kids, and they're going to want to know why you two looked like such rampaging dorks. Trust me, you'll look back at your wedding pictures and they'll look as hip and edgy as the wedding scene in the **Rocky Horror Picture Show**, hopefully with fewer instances of Tim Curry. The fact that you and your SO found each other through the game is heartening, charming and (ultimately) a reaffirmation of everything good about the game. But frankly, even the folks who make the game wouldn't get that excited about it. Cherish the memory, but make sure the new ones you make are ones you can live with.

— the deadguy —





MEMORIES AND EXCUSES

by James A. Moore

Jim Moore has written for many White Wolf books in the company's history. He has covered all manner of subjects from hunters to fomori to the mysterious Shih. In this story, Jim brings his considerable range to bear, showing us how the times may change, but the things that make us who we are never do.

It's cold here. But then, most places seem cold to me.

I remember the warmth of the Valley of the Kings, and in comparison to the glory of the sun on the Nile, most places seem chilled and desolate. Kristin liked to call me a romantic, but even after all these years, I fear I am merely a sentimentalist. I like to remember better times and warmer hearts than the ones I encounter in the modern age.



Even those few I can call friends — those whom I've encountered again and again over the centuries — seem to have lost the warmth and passion that once made them so vibrant and alive. Of my own kind, the Reborn, there are only a few I would even consider speaking to. Even then, my association with them would be a courtesy, not because I care for them. We might fight for the same things, but we have nothing in common except a long-standing hatred for Set and his ilk. But even that dulls with time.

There was a time when I was more adventurous, more enthusiastic than I am these days. I made many friends in that distant past and, from time to time, I still have occasion to meet with old acquaintances.

And they too have grown colder, those few who were not taken by Death in the course of the last 5,000 years. Or perhaps it is I who have forgotten the passions of life. I cannot judge the truth in these matters. I am simply not capable of deciphering the facts from my memories. Sometimes the truth hides behind fond memories and other times it remains buried beneath the nightmares that have haunted me for as long as I can remember.

The first time I met Kristin Breiner was one of the golden moments for me, one of those rare, almost magical times when I ran across a kindred spirit. I had never met anyone quite like her. However, at the time, I did not immediately realize that she was in fact a woman. All I saw was the armor she wore, the weapons she carried and the rage in her eyes as she struck down her foes in the name of the Christian god. She rode with the crusaders, tearing into Jerusalem with a fury that was admirable, and a thirst for blood that was terrifying.

I was in Jerusalem, visiting with another of my kind whom I had last seen a lifetime ago, when the Christians came to claim the city as their own. Their righteous indignation was real in some cases, but in others it was obviously a simple veil to obscure the greed with which they came to plunder what they had no legitimate claim to. Greed. It's always there, always waiting to suck the minds and morals away from anyone who dares get too close and make even the most civilized of us revert to barbarism. Greed may die in individuals, but it lives on in the human spirit.



The Crusades were one of the worst of possible times to be alive. I think that for the first time in the history of the world, not only people but whole nations became obsessed with the belief that anyone who lived a different lifestyle must surely be evil and therefore expendable. Never mind that the people might have rich cultures filled with beautiful stories and wonderful wisdom. Put aside that these others also had lives, loves and ambitions. They were different, and that was excuse enough. Many were the creatures other than human that met with death in those times. The fae vanished from the world and took with them the best parts of the past. They left behind a world filled with bitter, frustrated souls looking to lash out and return the pain and loss they experienced.

Those souls were very successful in spreading the misery and woe around for all to share. And the force that held these opposing forces apart, cementing them as enemies and fueling their passion for blood and death was the name that almost always seems to drive mortals to such extremes. Religion was the culprit.

The year was 1099, I believe, and the Crusaders came into the city with a battle cry that must surely have echoed through every corner of the world. Their hatred of the Muslims was a living, seething thing, and the greed that drove them was at least as vile. They swarmed through the city, killing anyone — regardless of age, sex or religious conviction — as if their sole purpose was to free the Christians within the city. I found it rather odd that these saviors came without request and killed the very Christians they'd allegedly come to save along with the rest of the people living in the place they all claimed was holy.

For their part, I suspect they found it odd that I did not flee. Kristin certainly did. She approached me on her black charger with drawn, bloody sword, ready to cut me down where I stood, but all I did was look at her. I had already killed several of the Crusaders who were not wise enough to leave me in peace. I am short in stature, but even then, I had already spent hundreds of years learning to defend myself from attackers.

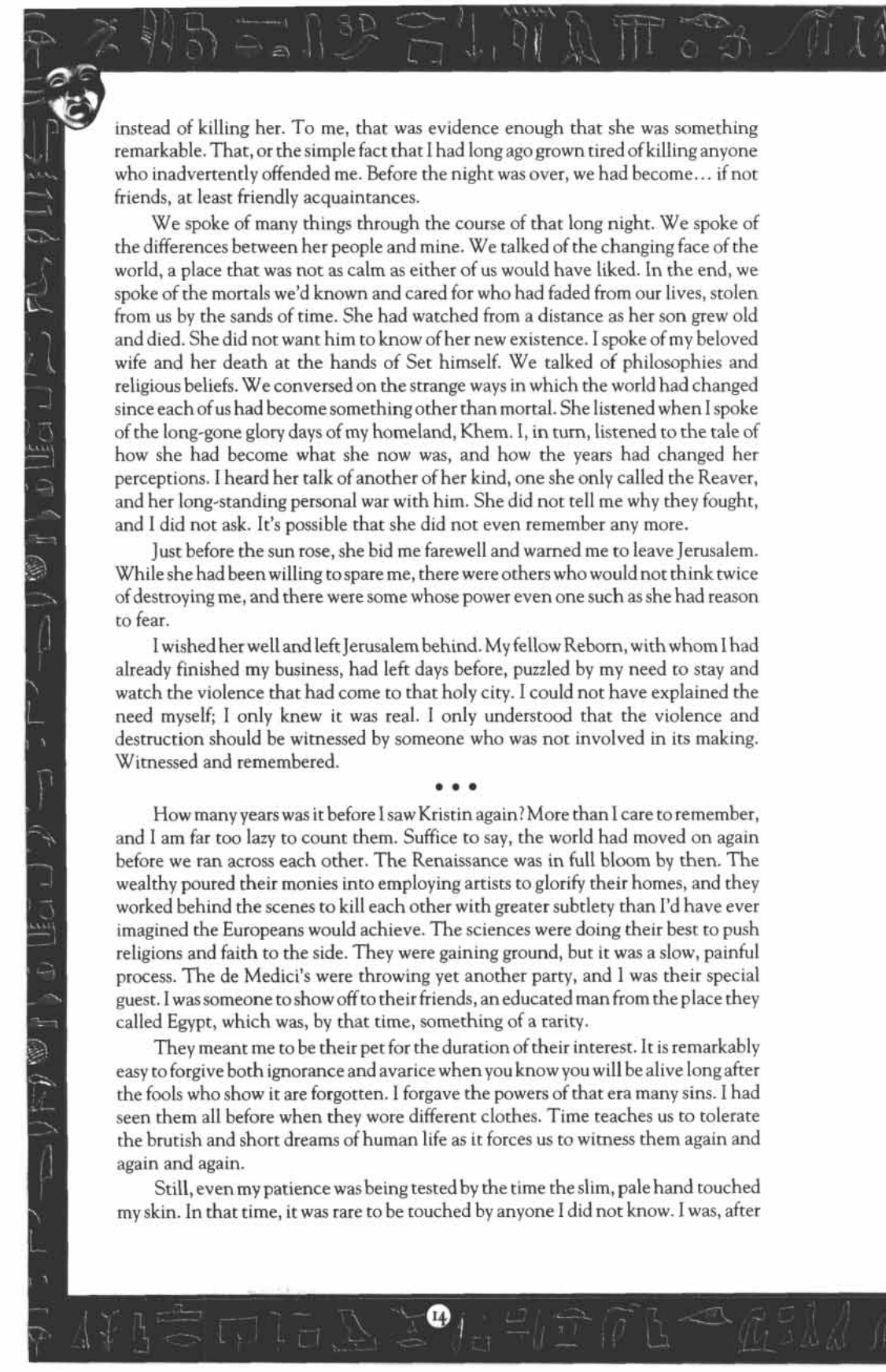
I suppose *she* could have killed *me* then, but she chose not to. Instead, she looked into my eyes and recognized me for what I was. She saw that I, like her, was not quite human. For my part, I saw only the faintest hint of eyes beneath the helmet she wore, a great visored thing that must surely have been too large for her.

"Why don't you run?" she asked me, her voice hoarse from endless battle cries.

"Why don't you attack?" was my simple answer.

She had to think about that one. Certainly, a great number of people had fallen victim to her sword in the nights before. The streets themselves were sticky with the blood of the slain, and their heads often adorned the walls surrounding the city. How odd it must have seemed to her that I, far smaller than the average person, was not among the dead. It was obvious that I'd made no attempt to hide myself. Finally, she laughed and shook her head, taking her helmet off and looking at me with eyes as bright as the noonday sun. "Because you are braver than you should be, or more foolish than most. Either way, stranger, you are not mine to take."

I thanked her for her kindness. She knew as well as I did that the thanks was as mocking as the courtesy she afforded me. She laughed again, a soft, melodic sound from so savage a warrior. And in that moment I knew I'd found a kindred spirit, another who had seen too much and done too much in a very short time. She asked me if I was a Follower of Set, and in a return of her earlier courtesy, I merely said no



instead of killing her. To me, that was evidence enough that she was something remarkable. That, or the simple fact that I had long ago grown tired of killing anyone who inadvertently offended me. Before the night was over, we had become... if not friends, at least friendly acquaintances.

We spoke of many things through the course of that long night. We spoke of the differences between her people and mine. We talked of the changing face of the world, a place that was not as calm as either of us would have liked. In the end, we spoke of the mortals we'd known and cared for who had faded from our lives, stolen from us by the sands of time. She had watched from a distance as her son grew old and died. She did not want him to know of her new existence. I spoke of my beloved wife and her death at the hands of Set himself. We talked of philosophies and religious beliefs. We conversed on the strange ways in which the world had changed since each of us had become something other than mortal. She listened when I spoke of the long-gone glory days of my homeland, Khem. I, in turn, listened to the tale of how she had become what she now was, and how the years had changed her perceptions. I heard her talk of another of her kind, one she only called the Reaver, and her long-standing personal war with him. She did not tell me why they fought, and I did not ask. It's possible that she did not even remember any more.

Just before the sun rose, she bid me farewell and warned me to leave Jerusalem. While she had been willing to spare me, there were others who would not think twice of destroying me, and there were some whose power even one such as she had reason to fear.



I wished her well and left Jerusalem behind. My fellow Reborn, with whom I had already finished my business, had left days before, puzzled by my need to stay and watch the violence that had come to that holy city. I could not have explained the need myself; I only knew it was real. I only understood that the violence and destruction should be witnessed by someone who was not involved in its making. Witnessed and remembered.

• • •

How many years was it before I saw Kristin again? More than I care to remember, and I am far too lazy to count them. Suffice to say, the world had moved on again before we ran across each other. The Renaissance was in full bloom by then. The wealthy poured their monies into employing artists to glorify their homes, and they worked behind the scenes to kill each other with greater subtlety than I'd have ever imagined the Europeans would achieve. The sciences were doing their best to push religions and faith to the side. They were gaining ground, but it was a slow, painful process. The de Medici's were throwing yet another party, and I was their special guest. I was someone to show off to their friends, an educated man from the place they called Egypt, which was, by that time, something of a rarity.

They meant me to be their pet for the duration of their interest. It is remarkably easy to forgive both ignorance and avarice when you know you will be alive long after the fools who show it are forgotten. I forgave the powers of that era many sins. I had seen them all before when they wore different clothes. Time teaches us to tolerate the brutish and short dreams of human life as it forces us to witness them again and again and again.

Still, even my patience was being tested by the time the slim, pale hand touched my skin. In that time, it was rare to be touched by anyone I did not know. I was, after



all, merely a plaything, a prize to display. Contact was normally reserved for those a person had feelings for or had purchased for the night.

Although centuries had passed, I looked into Kristin's eyes and recognized her immediately. The face I had last seen covered in soot and blood was clean and heavily painted with make up. Still, she had lost none of her intensity. I must confess to being a bit surprised that she recognized me. I have never considered myself a remarkable or striking figure. Yet, she had seen me across a crowded room and made her way to my side in a matter of minutes.

As I said before, the party had grown boring for me, and my hosts had lost interest in what I was doing. We moved away from their palatial estates and through the streets of Florence. She was dressed in finery that made it hard for me to believe she had once been a crusader, but then, I was hardly dressed as a follower of the Shemsu-heru philosophies myself.

We spent a week together. Every night we talked and debated about the changes that had taken place in the world since last we met. To her way of thinking, the changes were all for the better. To me, they merely reflected the intellectual growth of a society finally moving from childhood into puberty. Surely, the power of the Church was as great as ever, and from her own perspective, the time of her people being feared had faded to distant memory. How then could this be progress?

I wish I could explain how hard it is to find an intellectual equal when you are immortal. You might find sharp, even brilliant minds among the mortals, but discussing matters of significance with them is rather like debating the importance of the world's economy with a prepubescent. They might grasp the concepts of the discussion, they might even get the general ideas you are approaching and find them insightful, but they lack the experience to truly comprehend the nuances of the conversation. Spending that week with Kristin made me realize how lonely I was for true companionship. And although neither of us had planned it, before our time together was over we had become lovers. Of a sort.

Kristin had to move on. She meant her time in Florence to be brief, and the Reaver, whom she had once pursued, now returned the favor with a ferocious determination. Again, I refused to ask about him for fear of invading Kristin's privacy. Perhaps I should have said something or become involved sooner, but she made it clear that such was not my place.

Nonetheless, she had plans of her own, back in her homelands of Austria. I too would be leaving soon, as I had been feeling the siren call of Khem in my heart for many months and been weakening in my resolve never to return to the place where I was born. I could no longer even remember why I had chosen to stay away from Egypt for all time. And there were matters I had to attend to that she, despite her wisdom, could never know about — just as surely as there were events in her life that were beyond my comprehension. Although we had been intimate, although we had surely become friends, we still had our secrets from each other. We are, after all, from two breeds that believe in the power of secrets.

I have often looked back on that time with a fondness that is almost unsettling. To scan back over the years and reflect on a few chance encounters is unnerving in light of the centuries I have walked the earth. We resolved to remain in contact, and as so often happens, we let the strength of our resolution falter as the decades moved past. The friends we think we can never live without, the loves who make our world bright and keep us safe from our personal demons fade to dim reminders of a time



when the world seemed almost innocent. I remain awed by the power of those feelings, that they can hold sway over an intellect and crush reason with their glorious, powerful energies. Love and friendship, it seems to me, are capable of making even the worst possible situations seem not only survivable, but pleasant. I mention this merely to make a point. In my long, long life, I have only ever had a handful of friends. Of all of them, only Kristin remained constant.

Yet, when we met again, we did so as enemies.

• • •

I had moved to the New World. I traveled through the lands that had never been known to exist during my first life, and I gathered information along the way.

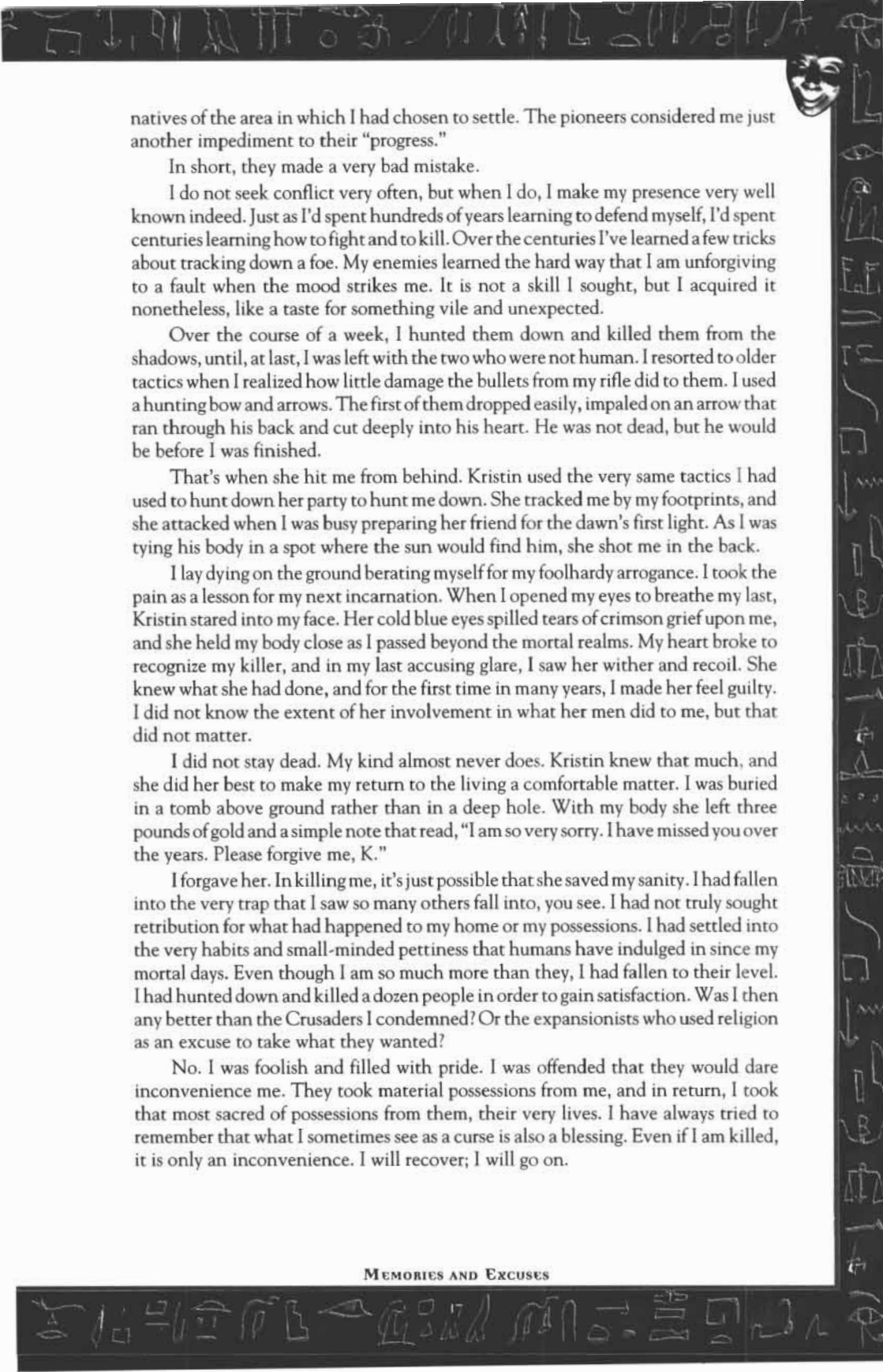
I spent almost 40 years in the region called Mexico, and during that time I learned things I had never expected to learn from the native Reborn — who called themselves the Xibabla, a name I have long since adopted for them.

I met two others like myself. One was a vile creature, filled with hatred and sadistic glee. The other was a woman of rare beauty who learned of my people as I learned of hers. It was in her defense that I warred against the vampires coming from the north, spilling into the region like vermin. The strange part about it was that we didn't realize it was the vampires moving into the area. They are subtle creatures when the need arises, and we foolishly thought it was only the citizens of the United States doing what they could to conquer still more land for their endless appetite. I had seen greed often enough, I thought, to recognize its new attire.

We learned the error of our ways quickly enough. The vampires were indeed invading, and they were warring amongst themselves. What we'd thought was a simple expansionist movement was actually a civil war. Those of the undead who wanted to live in harmony with humans fought against those who wanted to raise humans as cattle and slaughter them freely. In all honesty, we had trouble telling one group from another.

I suppose it was simple naiveté that made me believe that a continent with so few people would actually be big enough to make wars a thing of the past. The indigenous tribes already peopled the "New World." The Europeans who came into the area weren't happy to find more of the "godless" heathens in their way. Even 300 or more years after the land had been discovered in the first place, there were still plenty of good "God-fearing Christians" who wanted to convert the ignorant masses to their way of thinking. It didn't matter that the very people they wished to educate had already been converted centuries before. It only mattered that they be taught the error of their ways... and that they be willing to accept their new teachers as landlords. Centuries, millennia had passed since I was Reborn, but this did not change: the greedy still used religion as an excuse to commit atrocities. The Crusades, the Inquisition and now the pioneers and their Manifest Destiny. I didn't mean to be amused by the whole sordid business, but I was just the same.

I wasn't laughing when they attacked the hacienda where I was staying. I didn't laugh at all when they burned my home to the ground and destroyed many precious artifacts from my distant past. My home was destroyed, and I was dragged behind a horse for several miles before they cut me loose. If I'd been a mortal, I'd have surely died. As I had a few magics of my own, I was saved that inconvenience. I was scraped, bloodied and left for dead. In retrospect, I realized why they had attacked me. In coming from the land of the Nile, my body had taken on a hue much like that of the



natives of the area in which I had chosen to settle. The pioneers considered me just another impediment to their "progress."

In short, they made a very bad mistake.

I do not seek conflict very often, but when I do, I make my presence very well known indeed. Just as I'd spent hundreds of years learning to defend myself, I'd spent centuries learning how to fight and to kill. Over the centuries I've learned a few tricks about tracking down a foe. My enemies learned the hard way that I am unforgiving to a fault when the mood strikes me. It is not a skill I sought, but I acquired it nonetheless, like a taste for something vile and unexpected.

Over the course of a week, I hunted them down and killed them from the shadows, until, at last, I was left with the two who were not human. I resorted to older tactics when I realized how little damage the bullets from my rifle did to them. I used a hunting bow and arrows. The first of them dropped easily, impaled on an arrow that ran through his back and cut deeply into his heart. He was not dead, but he would be before I was finished.


That's when she hit me from behind. Kristin used the very same tactics I had used to hunt down her party to hunt me down. She tracked me by my footprints, and she attacked when I was busy preparing her friend for the dawn's first light. As I was tying his body in a spot where the sun would find him, she shot me in the back.

I lay dying on the ground berating myself for my foolhardy arrogance. I took the pain as a lesson for my next incarnation. When I opened my eyes to breathe my last, Kristin stared into my face. Her cold blue eyes spilled tears of crimson grief upon me, and she held my body close as I passed beyond the mortal realms. My heart broke to recognize my killer, and in my last accusing glare, I saw her wither and recoil. She knew what she had done, and for the first time in many years, I made her feel guilty. I did not know the extent of her involvement in what her men did to me, but that did not matter.

I did not stay dead. My kind almost never does. Kristin knew that much, and she did her best to make my return to the living a comfortable matter. I was buried in a tomb above ground rather than in a deep hole. With my body she left three pounds of gold and a simple note that read, "I am so very sorry. I have missed you over the years. Please forgive me, K."

I forgave her. In killing me, it's just possible that she saved my sanity. I had fallen into the very trap that I saw so many others fall into, you see. I had not truly sought retribution for what had happened to my home or my possessions. I had settled into the very habits and small-minded pettiness that humans have indulged in since my mortal days. Even though I am so much more than they, I had fallen to their level. I had hunted down and killed a dozen people in order to gain satisfaction. Was I then any better than the Crusaders I condemned? Or the expansionists who used religion as an excuse to take what they wanted?

No. I was foolish and filled with pride. I was offended that they would dare inconvenience me. They took material possessions from me, and in return, I took that most sacred of possessions from them, their very lives. I have always tried to remember that what I sometimes see as a curse is also a blessing. Even if I am killed, it is only an inconvenience. I will recover; I will go on.



So, I forgave Kristin, and I got on with my life. In the end, I could not afford not to. To do otherwise in an existence devoid of anything lasting that is truly good would be worse than foolish.

• • •

We met again in the next century, sooner than I'd anticipated. I remained in the New World and eventually located in California. The heat of the desert sun was comforting. Even after years and centuries away from the warmth of the Nile, I still preferred the warmth of the barren places and the heat that Ra shone down upon me in such locales. Los Angeles was a melting pot even back then. Despite the growing war in Europe, the people of the United States were still optimistic. They remained certain that the Kaiser would be defeated and that the beliefs of their young country would be upheld. The war was nothing new. The optimism of the young and far-removed was nothing new either. All that had changed was the setting and the costumes.


I found Kristin that time, instead of her finding me. She was in a bar singing songs for a crowd that was getting uglier by the minute. It seems that despite having changed her last name to Williams, someone somewhere had learned of her Germanic origins. That was enough to cause her grief. Even the fact that she had apparently owned the club and had been a popular local figure in Los Angeles for years by that point did not matter.

She was dressed in a dark blue gown, and her voice carried across the room, lifted by angels one could almost believe, as I could hear her singing even in the farthest corners of the hidden den of delights. I watched her, studied her and remembered our previous encounters. We had met three times, and each of those encounters remained with me. Odd though it sounds, I still felt a connection with her, a desire to be near her. In a world of revolving constants, she was a familiar landmark that I was actually glad to see again.

I went into the nightclub every night to hear her sing, and I wondered if I would ever get up the courage to make my presence known. One of the many tricks I learned in Mexico from the strange Reborn I met there was how to hide my true face. That was a talent that saved me from many a conflict over the years, and one I still employ regularly. Unless one can see past the extra foot of height and the change in eye hair and skin color, one can't easily see any connection between the person I become and the person I am. If Kristin had that talent, she hid it well.

I had finally decided to let her see me for who I am when the fight erupted. Kristin was between sets, talking to a couple of rather drunken mortals when one of them decided to have his way with her right there in the bar. Kristin very calmly knocked him unconscious. That was when the trouble began. The fool had friends, and they did not take well to his injury, despite the fact that he had brought it on himself.

I realized another sad fact about human nature at that moment. Religion is not the only excuse used when battle is in the air. There are always other justifications. Although the US was not yet at war with Germany, everyone knew that it was only a matter of time before they stepped into the whole sordid affair. The louts in the bar were no exception. There were comments made about Kristin being an agent of the Kaiser, and then there were noises about her being a spy.



I ask you, can you imagine any place less likely for a spy than in a nightclub in Los Angeles an entire ocean away from the theater of war? That didn't seem to matter. All that any of the fools cared about was showing their dissatisfaction with the woman who'd injured their cohort. The political accusations merely gave them an excuse to assault her. Their actions gave me an excuse to come to her defense.

Oh, I know she didn't need my help. I had seen her in Jerusalem, I knew full well the sheer carnage she was capable of. Still, I moved to her aid just the same, and thrashed the three of them soundly. All the while, Kristin looked on with a mixture of gratitude and amusement. Afterward, Kristin took my advice and left with me, only discovering after the fact that I was an old acquaintance.

Once again we talked of the past — a situation made more awkward by her continued insistence on apologizing for killing me. For a change, we actually spent time together. Really spent time together. We lived in comfort with each other for almost 15 years. However, it seems such bliss as I knew at that time wasn't meant to last. I died again, taken by a gun, when a man desperate to drink the poorly made liquors of the time decided that my money was best for getting him inebriated. He didn't even try to rob me before he shot me. I still remember the stench coming from his body as he pulled my wallet from my jacket pocket. I still remember the look on his face when he found I carried a great deal of cash. He looked triumphant. If there was guilt in his soul, it did not show. However, as I made my return, something about the man's attack comforted me. He had made no excuses for his action. He had not dressed up his greed in ill-fitting self-righteousness. I almost wish he had had a chance to spend the money he took from me. His honesty was refreshing.


How can I possibly know what he did with the money? That is easy enough to explain. Kristin left me another note. It remained in my jacket pocket along with \$500.00 for when I once again crawled back to the land of the living from the darkness of the afterlife. Once again she'd been forced to leave. Her note spoke of the Reaver coming for her again. I didn't know who the Reaver was, or why he pursued her so fanatically, but I knew I hated him. Twice he'd separated us. That was two times too many. But beneath that dull hatred, I knew that I was fooling myself once again. I did not hate this Reaver because he tormented the one I loved. I hated him because I was jealous of him. In his enmity, he shared with Kristin something to which I was not privy. She never spoke of why the Reaver made her his enemy, and that secret built a wall between us. I wonder now if she even realized that it was there....

• • •

I was without her for more years than I care to think about. By the time World War II had come around, Kristin was back in Europe, dealing with other members of her clan and enmeshing herself in the world of vampiric politics again. To this day I do not understand those politics. I don't really want to comprehend them. They are not a part of my world. They could have been once, but Kristin saw that such was not to be. That was another part of her existence she kept secret.

We met again last week. Kristin was in Washington D.C. for reasons I do not yet know and may never have a chance to understand. She looked me up in the phone book. After we exchanged pleasantries, we agreed to meet and talk. She had missed me as surely as I had missed her.

We spent four days and nights in her hotel room. We talked, we ate — she left a few times to handle her particular dietary needs, but beyond that she almost



never left my side — and we got to know each other again. The days went too slowly with her sleeping near me, close by and yet as distant as death. The nights were never long enough.

I cannot say for certain if I love Kristin. I no longer know if I am even capable of that emotion. When you measure your life in centuries, it is difficult to know if the emotions you feel are real or if they are only habits and rote. When you see a behavior pattern expressed again and again, you adopt it as your own. When your only emotional contact comes from the unchanging repetition of patterns you learned long ago, you embrace it or make your break altogether. Be it love, greed or the need to make excuses, I have taken on the quality of the humans around me.

Are they mine? Kristin would say so, I suppose. Her kind believes that the person you are when you become immortal is the person you remain for all eternity. I do not believe that. Human beings are the ones who never change. Their lives are too short to give them the necessary perspective. Ones like Kristin and I have that perspective. And yet, even Kristin's existence will end one night. Perhaps it will come at the hands of this Reaver or the ravages of the sun or just the long, dreamless sleep of those who have no other reason to go on. I must not love her if I can look on this realization so calmly. In time, I will say goodbye to Kristin for a final time, and my life will go on. I will have no choice but to proceed.

I don't think I do love Kristin. She is a kindred spirit, but that is all. Like the rest of humanity, I have fallen into a pattern. I have created the hollow moniker of "love" to express the simple fact that Kristin is so very different than all else I have experienced. Like myself, she remains a pleasant constant in a world caught in a stagnant cycle. While she never changes, I can recognize that without the disappointment I feel when I see that the humanity all around her has not changed as well. I do not expect her to change like I keep expecting humanity to change.

I should leave her soon. Should I stay by her side, I would only fall deeper into the pattern I have created. I would be no better than human should I let myself believe that I have found someone with whom I can pass the coming procession of years. I know that I am becoming more like the changing tides of humanity the longer I wade among them — set in my ways, unable to change — and staying with Kristin only exacerbates that static mire. I need to get away from that which is familiar and comfortable. I need to proceed. I have to move on just as the world tries to move on. People do not change, but perhaps I can. I have the perspective to become something more. I will leave Kristin in the morning, once I have said a proper goodbye.

Or perhaps the morning after that... I have missed her so, after all.





THE WOLVES OF THE SEA

VIKING VAMPIRES IN THE LONG NIGHT

by Jason Langlois

Known as the einherjar, the vampires of Scandinavian descent are part of a fascinating and exciting culture. One of the authors of White Wolf's Wolves of the Sea supplement for Vampire: The Dark Ages, Jason Langlois helps bring that culture to visceral unlife in live-action play with this article.

ODIN'S CHOSEN

Fiercely individualistic and proud, the *einherjar* lead unlices very different from their European counterparts. They do not believe in the myth of Caine, nor do they believe themselves to be cursed. Nordic vampires come from a culture that traditionally praises bravery and passion in battle, and they see their state as an outgrowth of that tradition. As far as they are concerned, the *einherjar* are warriors Odin himself has chosen to carry on the battles they led in life and to uphold their religion against the spread of Christian (and Cainite) culture. Although the Scandinavian culture had been all but crushed under the heel of Christianity's expansive influence by the "present" **Long Night** setting, the *einherjar* still carry out the existence for which Odin has selected them.

THE GOOD GUYS

A chronicle centered on the Vikings has its appeal. If your group is small, playing a ship's crew or the population of a hall during the height of the Viking Age (around 900 CE) can be a great deal of fun. Each session should have boasts, grand adventures and dangerous raids. Such a chronicle could be a wonderful break from an intensely political and social game, as the Norse culture emphasizes victory through physical achievement.

A large group may have trouble accommodating a Norse chronicle, unless the players split into different (possibly competing) halls. Doing so has some advantages, as it would allow the different halls to work against each other and to form alliances — a built-in source for plots and stories.

THE BAD GUYS

A good use for the Norse in an ongoing, pre-established **Long Night** chronicle is as antagonists. The Norse roamed to many points in Europe during the Dark Ages, even traveling inland on horses. (The Norse were passable riders who dismounted to fight.) Their arrival could come as part of a raid, and thus lead to violent confrontation. However, the Norse were also active traders. A merchant visit could be a real opportunity for the Storyteller. She can have the traders spread rumors and bring exotic goods from far off lands, or offer to carry the characters off on a long ocean voyage. The Norse were expert hagglers — there are methods other than a raid to steal the shirt off someone's back, after all.



Used as antagonists, the Norse can give otherwise shy players and Narrators a chance to blow off steam and play primarily physical characters. The potential for violence is always close to the surface with the Norse since it is an accepted part of the culture. When using them as antagonists, emphasize this quick temper. While not every scene involving the *einherjar* should end in a fight, make it clear that it might.

VIKINGS IN THE SHINING HOST

It is possible to add the Norse to a **Shining Host** chronicle set in the far past. Elves, dwarves, giants and trolls all play prominent roles in many of the Norse legends of gods and heroes. Used as antagonists, the Norse make compelling foes in a medieval **Shining Host** game. Alternatively, the fae can appear in a **Long Night** chronicle. Both the *einherjar* and the fae have to struggle in their own ways against the tide of Christian influence, and playing those struggles against one another allows for poignant roleplaying and epic themes.

SETTING UP THE GAME

The basis of Norse society is a combination of quests: a quest for individual glory, ardent wealth, immortality in song and tale, and a way to deal with fatalism. Each Norse warrior strives to achieve these quests, even after death, in the case of the *einherjar*. Be it through grand deeds, aggressive capitalism or nighttime raids, the Norse will do anything to achieve greatness. The *einherjar* know that even they will be destroyed one night so fear and hesitation profit them nothing.

This motivation can make for a very chaotic game, however, involving a great deal of combat. While combat is an appropriate facet of this culture, it can also undermine some of the potential fun. Combat should not be the center of every **Wolves of the Sea** chronicle. The Norse culture, while focused mostly on individual accomplishment, also includes some good opportunity for social interaction.

THE HALL


Norse society centers around the hall, a large building located in the middle of the farms that make up the community. It is in the hall that the *jarl* and his *huskarls* make their haven. The community gathers here to celebrate its successes and to discuss important matters. A great hall can support a handful of vampires, dozens of their ghouls, and more than a hundred mortals. Halls are symbolic of the community, and the burning of a hall is a great insult to its owners and a not so uncommon result of a feud.

THE VIKINGS

Another common collection of Norse characters is a ship's crew. A typical *drakkar* longship can carry anywhere from 25 to 50 warriors. Since the longship sustains itself through raiding, looting the area near a landing, it is possible for a longship to carry a higher percentage of vampires than would initially seem wise. Add to that the fact that the *einherjar* do not fear exposing the truth of their nature to the mortals around them, and such a crew would be a frightening prospect indeed.

THE THING

The Norse have a tradition of calling a *thing* to discuss issues of law, diplomacy, trade and feuding. A *thing* can last as little as one night or extend for as much as a week. *Things* are occasions of under-the-table deal-making, alliance shifting, arguing and



boasting. The *jarl* of each hall in the area attends, bringing an entourage—the bigger the entourage, the more powerful the *jarl*. This competition can often spark bigger arguments that can spiral into blood feuds of legendary levels.

As well as discussion, the *thing* is often the site of the *holmgang* and *einvigi*. The *holmgang* is a strict one-on-one duel with limited weapons and no active Discipline use. The two involved parties stand within weapon range, and the accused takes the first swing. The two trade blows until one of them collapses, surrenders or dies. The winner is the last one standing.

The *einvigi* is a more traditional duel in which the opponents are allowed to use armor and weapons of any type. The combatants fight it out in a circle of their comrades, who usually cheer them on and shove them back into the fight if they try to stray too far. Occasionally, there are rules—only three shields, bare hands, no swords, etc.—but otherwise this type of duel is truly unlimited.

SOCIETY

Norse society has a loose hierarchy, with plenty of possibility for advancement (and descent). There are effectively three levels to the society: *Thralls* were at the bottom, *jarls* were at the top, and the freemen were in between. A *jarl* is effectively any Norse leader powerful enough and rich enough to maintain a hall and table for his followers. A powerful *jarl*, with many halls under his control, could even earn the title of King. *Thralls* are the slaves or bondsmen who serve the *jarl*. *Einherjar jarls* took prisoners captured in raids for a herd, and these slaves did the drudge-work of the Norse. If a freeman or *jarl* was to fall on hard times, he might voluntarily become a *thrall*, to ensure himself of a meal and roof.

Freemen make up the bulk of Norse society. Freemen are the warrior farmers and fishermen who follow the *jarls* and mix trading, raiding and harvesting in equal parts. Freemen sworn to a *jarl* become *huskarls*, the dedicated warriors of the hall. These men and women are free from the responsibility to farm. Instead, they are expected only to fight when their *jarl* commands. This position is an honored one, and it is the goal of many young warriors to achieve it.

Norse society treats women as different, but equal. While there are gender-roles, the Norse take a pragmatic view. Women hold the keys to the hall, and they often direct the work of the farm or enclave. Occasionally, a woman can even become a *jarl*, leading the warriors of her clan on raids and expeditions. Before taking action, a *jarl* or warrior will consult with the women.

Outside the normal status of Norse society are the Outlaws (or *vargr*) and the Berserks. *Einherjar Berserks* are the warriors dedicated to drawing on the Beast to rage in battle and destroy their enemies. They eschew armor and work themselves to a high anger before a battle. This frenzy allows them to accomplish amazing feats, and many fear the Berserks—friend and foe. The *vargr* are individuals banished from Norse society (and in some case, even the clan) to fend for themselves in the wilds. Some *vargr* band together to form bandit groups to prey on merchants. Others sign on with vampire crews to escape the dangers of the wilds.



STATIONS

King & Jarl

The King and *jarl* gain the additional three Status Traits: *Exalted*, *Well known* and *Battle-scarred*. These Traits cannot be removed as long as the vampire remains *jarl*.

The King/*jarl* has the power to bestow or remove Status Traits at the cost of temporary Status Traits, on a one-for-one basis.

The King/*jarl* decides who is a member of the *huskarl*, and he appoints individuals to that status. A *jarl* can never have more *huskarl* than his number of Social Traits.

Skald

A *skald* gains the additional two Status Traits: *Influential* and *Revered*. These Traits cannot be removed as long as the vampire remains *skald*.

The *skald* can bestow or remove the Status Traits: *Brave*, *Heroic*, *Vowkeeper* and *Sagaman*. To bestow the Trait, the *skald* composes a saga or poems involving the recipient and the deserving deed.

Huskarl

A *huskarl* gains the additional Status Trait of *Loyal* when she joins a *jarl's* hall, and she cannot lose this Status Trait as long as she is a member.

Ghouls and mortals can be appointed *huskarls*.

Berserk

Once accepted, an individual becomes part of the circle and a berserk. He gains the additional Status Trait *Fearful*. If the new berserk shows cowardice at any time, he loses the Trait.

Ghouls and mortals can be accepted as Berserks.

STORY IDEAS

Vikings are not simply ax- and sword-wielding raiders. They have a developed culture and society, and good stories will take this culture into account. However, the Norse also make good antagonists for a more typical **Long Night** game.

A SCRATCHING AT THE DOOR

A tribe of Lupines has moved into the area and declared an open feud with the local hall. The reasons for the feud are unclear at first, and the Lupines are less than forthcoming about the matter. Some possible reasons for the feud include the following: One of the vampire's *thralls* is a Kinfolk to the lupines; the vampire hall is on territory sacred to the tribe; it's a case of mistaken identity (all vampires are the same to Lupines, after all). The solution could be all-out war or something as simple as arguing the case at a *thing*. However, considering the temperament of both types of beings, even peace will be hard-fought.

BLOOD ON THE SNOW

For a larger game, divide the players into multiple halls, each with a different *jarl*. The game begins with an *Althing* and an exchange of boasts. Encourage the players to make big boasts, and to challenge one another. The rest of the chronicle consists of attempting to fulfill these boasts, in competition with the other hall, possibly even inside the hall. A typical boast might be to promise to kill a lupine



in single combat, or to swim a fjord in armor. At the next *Althing*, name the leader of the hall with the most fulfilled boasts King.

CONVERSION

A missionary group of European vampires arrives to convert the local area to feudalism and Christianity. This influx typically threatens local *einherjar* enclaves, stealing away their followers and forcing them to become *vargr*. Or, to flip matters, the Norse vampires raid into Europe, threatening the holdings of the Church or nobles in a quest for plunder. The conflict here is between the old ways of the Norse and the new ways of Europe, and it is a good way to introduce the Norse into an existing chronicle.

RESCUE MISSION?

As the result of one of the Norse raids, perhaps an important character falls into the hands of the *einherjar* who hold her for ransom. The characters can attempt to chase down the raiders or to seek them out in their halls to attempt a rescue of the kidnapped vampire. Or, perhaps the characters act as envoys sent to pay the ransom and open communication with the Vikings.

BRINGING IT TOGETHER

It is important, when running a *Wolves of the Sea* chronicle, to focus on the differences between the Norse and the Europeans. While the Norse have a much more coarse attitude toward life (or unlife, for that matter), they are not without culture and society. The two groups clash over matters of faith, predestination and interaction with the mortals on whom they prey. Neither side is inherently more "right" or justified in its actions than the other, and both types of vampires are driven by compelling motivations.

RULES

Setting a game in the High North means taking into account a variety of local factors. During the winter, the temperatures drop and the night gets progressively longer. At the same time, the mortals will hide themselves behind the doors of their halls. The summer will see days that seem to last forever and the migration of many Norse vampires to the south.

A vampire begins each session down a Blood Trait, as normal, despite the extended length of the night. Keep in mind the fact that a night is longer during winter and vampires will be capable of more activity. Hunting tests during the winter requires twice as much work, since prey is harder to find.

In the summer, the night gets shorter and shorter. A possible way to reflect this property in the game would be to have a session represent more than one evening. During the summer, a vampire finds it more difficult to accomplish tasks since the sun rises sooner.

AT SEA

If the game is to include sea travel, it is recommended that a room or area be designated as the "ship." Storytellers can limit access to the ship, considering its overall size (a *drakkar* longship can carry up to 50 or so people; a *knorr* trade ship



can carry a crew of around 25). While aboard the ship, the crew should be out of contact with the other players, at least until it makes landfall.

Fighting at sea is difficult, requiring those involved to bid an extra Physical Trait (to reflect their attempts to maintain balance). This Trait does not add to the total bid for the attack or defense itself. A player can choose not to bid the extra Trait, but his character will fall overboard if he loses the challenge. Characters in the water will have to Test to avoid sinking. While drowning is not concern for the *einherjar*, it can be a long walk back to land along the ocean's floor.

NEW COMBINED DISCIPLINES

The *einherjar* have developed unique uses for their Disciplines, adapting them to their harsh realm. To develop these special powers requires both experience and a certain level of proficiency in the normal Disciplines.

BEAR'S SKIN

(Basic Animalism, Intermediate Protean)

The hairy warrior roared with primal anger, tugging the ax from his shoulder. Hengist had only a moment to register shock before being yanked from his saddle. In the dim light of the burning hall, he could see his opponent's shape change. The attacker grew larger and roared again. Struggling to his feet, Hengist cursed the heavens and prepared to fight the bear-creature before him.

In the heat of anger, some *einherjar* find themselves able to take the visage of a raging bear. Doing so involves adding both muscle and fur, giving added protection in their fury. When a vampire with this Discipline enters Frenzy, his player can expend a Blood Trait to activate *Bear's Skin*. Once activated, the power adds the bonus Physical Traits *Brawny* x2 and *Tough* x2, as well as the negative Social Trait *Bestial*. In addition, *Bear's Skin* gives a retest to soak damage from sunlight. Once invoked, it remains until the vampire leaves Frenzy.

Learning this power requires studying with the Berserks who practice it, and it costs nine Experience Traits.

FENRIR'S TALONS

(Basic Fortitude, Basic Protean)

Starkad laughed at the Norman knight hiding behind his teardrop shield. He flexed his hand, and his six-inch long talons caught the faint moonlight. The knight thrust out with his sword, and Starkad stepped left. His claws reached out and split the shield with what seemed nothing more than a caress.

Sometimes, it is not enough to rely on weapons. The *vargr* in the wild have augmented their claws, making them more dangerous and effective tools for hunting. *Fenrir's Talons* are half a foot long, unbreakable and possessed of a metallic sheen. When activated, the vampire gains the bonus Trait *Sharp*, and the player can make a Simple Test to inflict an additional health level of damage. The *Talons* also have the special ability *Destroy Shield*, which renders any shield useless after only a single blow. On the down side, the vampire's player must bid an additional Trait on any Physical Test requiring fine manipulation, and the character cannot wield weapons or shields with *Fenrir's Talons* active.

This power costs six Experience Traits to develop.



NEW ROADS

The vampires of the North have developed Paths of Morality that reflect their own culture and perceived nature as Odin's Chosen. These Paths should only be available to those vampires originally raised in a Norse culture.

VIA EINHERJAR

The Road of the Slain is a difficult path to follow. It stresses the Norse virtues: personal responsibility, individual initiative, courage and honor. Norse vampires who wish to cling to the trappings of a dying culture and, in turn, honor the All-Father follow this Path. By adhering to his codes of behavior and developing an iron-will, an *einherjar* can master the Beast.

Vampires on the Via Einherjar are no more "good" than any other vampire. While they are loyal to their friends, they treat everyone else with brutality, scorn and intolerance. They will beat, rob and challenge any who have not proven themselves worthy of respect. For many, getting along with a follower of this path can be difficult.

The Via Einherjar teaches the Virtues of Self-Control and Conviction.

Trait	Violation
1	Refusing a Challenge
2	Breaking an Oath
3	Showing fear (including Röttschreck)
4	Failing to fulfill a boast
5	Hoarding goods
6	Not boasting of your actions
7	Failing to kill because of guilt or pity
8	Begging or asking for help
9	Suffering weak leadership
10	Cheating

VIA ÆSIRGARD

Some vampires of the High North fully believe that the gods have touched them in some way. This belief requires the vampires to live in a world filled with spirits and portents, with rules laid down in the old lays and sagas. The vampires are subject to the weavings of the Norns, and they feel they must maintain the old traditions and ways.

A vampire who follows the Via Æsirgard embraces the power of the runes, believes in the inevitability of the fate, accepts the machinations of the gods and prepares himself for Ragnarök. The enemies of men and gods are his enemies. He will seek out the trolls, giants, werewolves and others to give them battle. At the end, if the vampire has performed in accordance with the virtues of the sagas, Valhalla will accept her in the end-times.

The Via Æsirgard teaches the Virtues Self-Control and Conviction.



Trait	Violation
1	Aiding a servant of evil
2	Betraying allies, committing hidden murder
3	Allowing treachery to go unpunished
4	Performing heretical acts
5	Feeding from the devout
6	Causing harm to the devout
7	Stealing, lying or cheating friends and allies
8	Being motivated by compassion, fear or gluttony
9	Failing to speak out against cowards, traitors, etc.
10	Failing to respect the gods and men of wisdom

MERITS & FLAWS

There are a few Merits and Flaws useful for a *Wolves of the Sea* chronicle. With Storyteller permission, they could see use in other games as well.

KENNING-WISE (1 TRAIT MERIT)

You are a master of the wisdom and stock phrases of Norse poetry. In dealings with other Norse, you gain the Bonus Trait *Kenning-wise* for Social Challenges. If presented with a problem, you can make a Simple Test to recall some appropriate aphorism (and get a hint about what to do from an available Storyteller).

VENGEFUL KIN (2 TRAIT MERIT)

You have an extended mortal family of cousins, uncles, grand-nephews and such who will stick with you through anything. In dealings with other Norse, you gain the bonus Trait *Intimidating*. If captured or made a *thrall*, your kin will try to buy your freedom. If you suffer Final Death, the family will pursue a blood feud with your murderer.

WALKURIE (1 TRAIT MERIT)

Only female characters may take this Merit.

You have taken the role of a male warrior in Norse society, and you have proven your right to it. Others accept your status as a full warrior, and they respect for your prowess and bravery. You start with the Status Trait *Brave*.

FORESIGHTED (3 TRAIT MERIT)

You understand the weavings of the Norns, and you can see how the skein of fate will play out. This Merit is a mixed blessing, for while you can see what events are in your future, you often feel powerless to prevent them. To see some event in your future, you expend a Willpower Trait and ask the Storyteller a question about the future. If you succeed in a simple test, the Storyteller must answer to the best of her ability. You should do your best to fulfill the outcome presented, though you can change things.

When recovering the Willpower spent, you must make a Simple Test. If you fail, you do not recover the Willpower for that session.



VOW (1 TRAIT MERIT)

You have made a great vow and lived up to it. Others see you as particularly trustworthy, and they believe your word over others. The nature of the vow should be something epic, if not always achievable — a vow to drive the Christians from the land, for example, or a promise to lead an expedition into the heart of Rome. The requirement here is that you do your best each session to fulfill that vow, otherwise you become an Oathbreaker. A character with a vow begins with the Status Trait *Vow-Keeper*.

LANDLUBBER (2 TRAIT FLAW)

You simply do not have sea-legs. While other Norse seem born to the sea, you crave only solid land under your feet. If you are at sea, you will become violently ill despite your Cainite nature. While you won't throw up, you find yourself unable to feed; you cannot use Herd or hunt while at sea. This is embarrassing, and in dealings with the Norse, you have the Negative Social Trait *Weaking*.

OATHBREAKER (3 TRAIT FLAW)

Sometime in the past, you broke an important oath. Perhaps you failed to come when an ally summoned you, or you betrayed a close friend. Whatever you did (or failed to do), the Norse will not trust you. You will not attract followers, and you are never given positions of importance. Most other Norse will treat any promise or boast you make with derision, and some who hold to the old ways may actively persecute you. On the slight upside, however, no one expects much of you, and you do not have to live up to the virtues of Norse society.

ABILITIES

SEAMANSHIP

You are skilled in the arts of ship-handling and sea lore, as well as minor arts like swimming, rope use, load-balancing and such. Without *Seamanship*, a vampire will have difficulty operating at sea or on a boat, or worse, surviving a dunk into the ocean.

PERFORMANCE (SAGA)

The telling of grand stories, poems and sagas is your specialty. Someone skilled in *Saga* gains respect as a *skald*, and may find herself seated in a place of honor in the hall. This Ability is a specialization of *Performance* available only to a Norse character.

NEW TRAITS AND STATUS

Norse society has developed a few different ideas of what gives a vampire Status. The following Status Traits are available to the *einherjar*: *Sagaman*, *Vow-keeper*, *Brave*, *Heroic*.





BUNYIP IN THE SAVAGE WEST

by Peter Woodworth

While many Garou proudly claim that Gaia's chosen have taken the battle to the Wyrn wherever it may be found, very few of them truly know much of what lies beyond the Savage West itself, let alone outside their ancestral homelands across the sea. Some automatically assume the unfamiliar lands beyond Western civilization must also therefore lack strong warriors to defend Gaia. Therefore, they seek to spread the dominion of the Garou to these "backward" territories. Other, more progressive elements think to the first encounters with the Pure Ones and wonder what other Changing Breeds might yet be undiscovered elsewhere. Colonization in Australia proved that both factions were more correct than they would have imagined. While many Garou in the Savage West are less knowledgeable about the land down under, recent events may very well bring the bloody conflict down there into sharp focus for those blind to the current truth.

Initially used as a settlement for British convicts in the 18th century, Australia became a home to a number of European Garou following their kin and seeking an escape from the rigid order in their homelands. What they found was a land rich in natural beauty and natural resources — as well as possessing its own Gaian defenders. First contact with the Bunyip was a strange experience for the Europeans. The Bunyip were very different from anything they'd ever seen, and the differences quickly became points of contention among the newcomers. Garou have pack instincts; Bunyip are solitary hunters. Garou are mammals; Bunyip are actually marsupials. Garou are born to do battle for Gaia; Bunyip, while still fierce fighters, are ordained to fill a different role, serving as ambassadors to the Umbra — perhaps the best living link the Changing Breeds have to the worlds beyond. Perhaps most importantly, the Garou believe that they have a right to possess and "protect" the new lands they see... the Bunyip disagree. They even dare to claim they have done well enough on their own!

At first, these differences remained relatively cordial, and the Europeans signed treaties with the natives to avoid hostility. But, as happened with the Pure Ones in America, the sight of so much natural wealth proved too tempting. Time and again, European Garou or their mortal kin broke the treaty. The Bunyip eventually had no choice but to fight back, and the battle has raged ever since. (For a more detailed account of the relations of the Bunyip to the Garou, see **Rage Across the World Volume 2.**)

Now, the conflict that one day soon will be known as the War of Tears nears its end. Courageous as they are, the Bunyip are dwindling to extinction. Only a handful of them are found on the trails of the Savage West, and not many more linger even on their native soil. Given their scarcity and their bloody history at the hands of the tribes, it may seem hard to picture why most players would desire Bunyip characters, let alone why Storytellers would construct stories around them. However, when handled capably and prepared for appropriately, Bunyip stand to offer a rich new dimension to **Laws of the Wyld West** games — that of living witnesses to history. In the modern day, the Bunyip are long gone, leaving nothing but a ghost race to



haunt their former persecutors. However, the *Savage West* offers players a unique opportunity to see the Bunyip as not just a footnote in the legends of the Garou, but as the living, breathing changers they rightfully deserve to be remembered as. All *Savage West* games involve a resurrection of the past, but perhaps only chronicles with the Bunyip can truly realize the full extent of that idea.

There is no other time for them than these last days, but perhaps a few of them can still make a difference against the longest odds of all — extinction.

BUNYIP CHARACTERISTICS

Initial Willpower: 2

Advantage: Paths of the Dreamtime

Bunyip are even more linked than most Garou to the spirit world around them. Their long focus on the Umbra as opposed to the warrior within them has given them certain advantages when dealing with spirits. First of all, by performing a basic penance rite (approximately 15 minutes or so of game time), the Bunyip may remove a Notoriety Trait from himself or another, provided the apology is sincere and the cause was just. Second, all Bunyip begin play with a free level of the *Meditation* and *Occult* Abilities, reflecting their deep spiritual roots. Finally, Bunyip receive a free retest on all spirit-summoning challenges, provided they have had time to acclimate themselves to the local Umbral conditions. Doing so is no problem in Australia, but it often takes at least a week or so in such a strange place as the *Savage West*.

Drawback: Fading to Extinction

As the Bunyip are all too aware, they are on the losing end of the battle for survival. In a generation, they will be but a handful; they will be gone by a generation after that. The sense of pain and hopelessness this process engenders, as well as the outrages committed against them both in Australia and abroad, makes the Bunyip even more prone to Harano than Garou, dragging them down even faster. At the beginning of each story (not each session), the player must win a Simple Test, lest his character begin sliding immediately into Harano as the emptiness of impending extinction overcomes him. This Test may be overcome with Willpower, but any Willpower spent in this fashion are not recovered until the end of the story, as the Bunyip exerts constant determination to quell the rising tide of despair within himself.

For purposes of character creation, all Bunyip must be of pure Aboriginal or thylacine stock, or very nearly so. No Bunyip of more than first-generation interbreeding are known to exist, and that fact is unlikely to change given the current state of affairs. The Bunyip spirit is intimately linked to Australia and its people, and in time, it will die completely beyond its borders.

Backgrounds: Bunyip have no restrictions on Backgrounds, although they only gain benefits from *Pure Breed* when dealing with other Bunyip and related Kinfolk. It is also unlikely that most Bunyip in the *Savage West* would have a high number of Influence Traits, given their rootless nature and their distrust of human affairs.

Gifts: Dreamwalk, Leap of the Kangaroo, Possum's Feet

Thylacinus Form: The Thylacinus form is extremely nimble compared to most lupus Garou, but it is not terribly fast or well suited to distance running.



THYLACINE? WHAT'S THAT?

A quick glance through this article turns up many references to thylacines, so a quick explanation is in order. As indicated, Bunyip are not actually related to wolves at all, but to marsupials known as thylacines, close relatives of the kangaroo that are believed to have become extinct during the early part of the 20th century. Although roughly dog- or wolf-like in appearance, Bunyip have several pronounced differences from their "cousins." First of all, their back legs are extremely powerful, allowing them to perform great feats of leaping, agility and short bursts of speed. These powerful legs allow them bipedal motion for short lengths of time as well. Thylacines move with a curious half-walking, half-hopping gait, and they are not particularly fast runners. However, they are extremely single-minded, capable of stalking the same animal for many hours at a time.

They are ambush hunters by nature, surprising their prey and quickly immobilizing it with their powerful jaws. Thylacine jaws can open extremely widely as well (up to 120 degrees), exerting an incredible amount of pressure on anything unlucky enough to be caught between them when they close. Both male and female thylacines have pouches for carrying young located on the underside of the belly. These pouches face backward to prevent underbrush from harming the pup while traveling through the underbrush. Thylacine communication consists of cough-like barks and high-pitched yapping sounds. As of the Savage West, true thylacines are virtually extinct outside of Tasmania, and many Australian Bunyip have some dingo blood to compensate for the vanishing species.

Lighter and leaner than an average wolf, thylacines are sandy-colored, with darker stripes that led Europeans to nickname the thylacines "Tasmanian tigers."

Organization: One major difference between thylacines and wolves is the fact that thylacines are not pack animals by nature. They typically hunt alone or in bonded pairs. This social style extends to their tribal structure as well. Bunyip defer to elders and others with experience when necessary, but otherwise, they are largely solitary. However, the rage of the Garou has been directed against them, and teamwork is necessary for survival. However, unlike Garou most Bunyip work very well alone, a fact they exploit to their advantage whenever possible.

Territory: Bunyip are most often encountered in Australia. They consider those lands their own, and they take badly to the "magnanimous" offers of the Silver Fangs to "share" in protection of their homeland. Those few Bunyip who have traveled across the sea are typically found among the rootless or outcast populations of an area, where they can live away from the eyes of their persecutors. If possible, Bunyip living abroad choose to dwell in areas that remind them of their native land, but they are a very hardy breed and can adapt easily to almost any territorial conditions in the Savage West.

Protectorate: Traditionally all of Australia, its lands, animals and peoples were the Bunyip's protectorate. However, the incursion of European Garou has made the Bunyip hard-pressed to retain their ancestral lands at all, let alone uphold their sacred charge as well. In the Savage West, the Bunyip tend to adopt other oppressed minorities as their protectorate, hiding in the shadows until their aid is



necessary, then fading away into obscurity again when the need for them has passed. Many Bunyip consider the Pure Ones cousins in spirit, and they will aid them when they can, although not to the extent that they are contributors to genocide themselves.

Outlook: The Bunyip are a breed at war, and whether they are found in their native land or in the wilds of the Savage West, this reality is never far from their minds. Once largely solitary and at peace with the spirit kingdom around them, they have been forced into a martial existence. Most harbor a strong grudge against the Garou who have disturbed their ancestral order. However, most Bunyip are still much more at home with their spiritual side than their inner Rage, which is reflected in their personal life as well as their military tactics. Most prefer learned discussion and quick, effective strikes to the raucous rhetoric and full-on slaughter of the Garou. Finally, the Bunyip are a dying race, and all of them know it. Whether they choose to accept or deny this truth, to rage or retreat, the sadness of this truth strikes to the bone of every living member.


Quote: "You who have driven our spirits from the world and ancestors from their land, hear my words. Gaia is howling and only we hear her cries. If you do not stop this foolish purge, we will stop it for you. I assure you, it's in your best interest to reconsider."

STEREOTYPES

• **SILVER FANGS — ARROGANT, SHORTSIGHTED MONSTERS!** THEY STAND FOR EVERYTHING WE CANNOT ABIDE. THEY CLAIM A SPIRITUAL SANCTION IN ORDER TO MASK THE WICKEDNESS OF THEIR OWN FOUL DEEDS. BEFORE WE LISTENED TO THEIR WORDS, BUT NOTHING EXCEPT SORROW EVER CAME FROM THEM. WE CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO SHARE OUR COUNCIL FIRES WITH THEM.

• **OTHER EUROPEAN GAROU — MANY OF THEM CLAIM TO SYMPATHIZE WITH OUR PLIGHT, AND YET ALL TOO OFTEN WE FIND THEM ACTING AS SOLDIERS AND PAWNS IN THE SILVER FANG'S PLANS. UNTIL THEY GIVE US SOME SIGN THAT THEY ARE WILLING TO ACT TO UPHOLD GAIA'S TRUE WILL, THEN I'M AFRAID WE CANNOT TRUST THEM ANY MORE THAN WE TRUST THEIR MASTERS.**

• **PURE ONES — THEY TOO CLAIM TO SYMPATHIZE WITH OUR CAUSE, BUT THEY THEMSELVES ARE TOO INVOLVED IN BATTLING THE EUROPEANS TO AID US. THIS IS SAD, BECAUSE WE MIGHT HAVE SHARED MUCH WITH THESE NOBLE GAROU IN BETTER TIMES. ASSIST THEM WHENEVER YOU CAN. PERHAPS THEN IT**



WILL NOT HAVE BEEN TOO LATE TO BRING SOME GOOD FROM THIS TERRIBLE WAR.

• **NUWISHA** — THEY ARE ONLY TOO FEW, BUT THEY ARE WISE IN THE WAYS OF THE SPIRIT WORLD AS WE ARE, AND THEY SEEM TO REALIZE THE DAMAGE THEIR WOLF BROTHERS ARE DOING TO THE LANDS THEY SEEK TO CONQUER. SO WHY WON'T YOU STOP YOUR JOKING AND LAUGHING, COUSIN COYOTE, AND HELP US IN OUR FIGHT? THAT IS WHAT WE CANNOT UNDERSTAND.

• **CORAX** — THE KINGDOM OF THE AIR WAS NEVER MUCH OUR CONCERN, AND WHILE THE RAVEN-FOLK ARE NOT WELL-KNOWN TO US, THEY DON'T SEEM TO SHARE THE PREJUDICES OF THEIR EUROPEAN COUSINS. IN THE ANCIENT PAST WE HAD SOME DEALINGS WITH THE GREATEST TENGU OF JAPAN. REMIND THEM OF THIS BOND WHEN YOU SPEAK TO THEM, AND YOU CAN BE ASSURED THAT THEY SPEAK THE TRUTH.

• **BASTET** — THESE POOR CREATURES ARE HAVING EVEN WORSE TROUBLE THAN THEIR PURE ONE ALLIES, AND THEY UNDERSTAND OUR SOLITARY WAYS EVEN BETTER THAN OUR FELLOW GAROU MOST OF THE TIME. DO YOUR BEST TO EASE THEIR SUFFERING WHEN YOU CAN. IF YOU CANNOT, MAKE SURE THEIR INJURIES DO NOT GO UNAVENGED.

• **GURAH** — SO WISE, SO GENTLE, AND SO THE EUROPEANS SOUGHT THEIR DESTRUCTION. WE HAVE YET TO MEET ONE OF THESE MIGHTY FOLK, BUT IF WE EVER DO, I EXPECT WE WILL BE ABLE TO SHARE MUCH WISDOM WITH THEM. NO MATTER WHAT, ALWAYS TREAT THEM WITH THE RESPECT THEY DESERVE, FOR THEY FACE EXTINCTION AS WE DO.

• **ROKEA** — LIKE THE CORAX, WE DO NOT SHARE THEIR TERRITORY OR THEIR VIEWS, BUT THAT HAS NOT MADE US ENEMIES. THERE IS A LESSON THERE FOR THE EUROPEANS TO LEARN, BUT I DOUBT THEY WILL EVER SEE IT.

• **OTHER CHANGING BREEDS** — LIKE OURSELVES, THE OTHER CHILDREN OF GAIA GO HUNTED IN THESE DARK DAYS, AND WHILE WE LACK THE RESOURCES TO COME TO THEIR AID MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, REST ASSURED, BROTHERS AND SISTERS, YOUR CRIES DO NOT GO UNHEARD BY THE NIGHT.



TAKING THE FINAL TRAIL: USING BUNYIP IN THE SAVAGE WEST

Adding Bunyip characters presents more of a challenge than most Storytellers realize when they first develop their chronicle concept. While breathing life into the tragedy that faces members of this dying breed should be a theme in any story involving the Bunyip, there are a dozen other matters which deviate from the standard Garou experience and require some extra consideration on the Storyteller's part to really portray well. Here's a rundown of the important plot considerations to bear in mind when using the elusive thylacine shapeshifters:

HOW DID THEY GET HERE?


This material assumes that most games are taking place in the Savage West, with the Bunyip characters as the exotic minority. Handling games actually set in Australia is covered later. Very, very few Bunyip have been born in the Savage West, so start with the simple logistical questions. Even today, travel from Australia to North America requires a large expenditure of time and effort — in the days of the Savage West, the trip was much more grueling. How did the character make the journey? Did anyone come with him or meet him when he arrived? Does he still owe anyone for his passage, or is he in the country free and clear?

A Moon Bridge is another possible means of transportation, perhaps, but the Savage West is enemy territory as far as the Bunyip are concerned, which makes it unlikely they'd be able to enter a caern openly without serious repercussions. The important thing is to make sure the passage is memorable in some way. No Bunyip simply arrives in the Savage West. There should always be a story involved.

Once you've established the greater means of getting the character into the plot, work on why the Bunyip would choose to live in the area in which the chronicle is going to be set. Few things kill a good story faster than having a well-detailed setting and absolutely no reason for the characters to remain there other than "it's where everyone starts out." Bunyip in particular seldom get tied down to a particular location unless some truly pressing reason exists for them to stay. Such is doubly true if a lot of Garou from tribes normally hostile to the Bunyip are found in the area. However, there are a few common reasons a Bunyip could find an area worth investing himself in.

Sensitive as they are, the turmoil in the Storm Umbra affects Bunyip deeply, and it could provide any number of story hooks. Their talent with the spirit world goes a long way toward making even the most reluctant of European Garou recognize their value in dealing with this growing threat. The Bunyip may also be searching for something in the area, such as a fetish that's been stolen or a European upon whom they seek vengeance for some past misdeed. Quest motives work well, because they not only supply a means of explaining how and why a character arrived in a location, but they also give that character freedom to travel if the chronicle decides to shift settings later on.

Of course, simple friendship is perhaps the strongest motive of all. Chances are good that a Bunyip character will at least befriend a local pack, if not join it outright, and few Bunyip would leave behind a group of Garou who understand and



support them, especially in the hostile lands of the Savage West. The trials, both within and without, that such characters would have to endure to preserve such a foreign bond would be monumental. The stories gained from such struggles have the potential to be great indeed.

COMMON THEMES

Although many of them have been touched on here and there so far, it bears stressing and repeating that games involving the Bunyip should always contain at least a measure of some essential themes. The first and most obvious of these themes is the archetypal "stranger in a strange land" theme. If the Bunyip simply seem like Garou with pouches and funny accents, then there's something deeply wrong. Every story a Bunyip appears in should add some element of the exotic to the game: Normal Garou re-evaluate their beliefs based on the behavior of the strange outsiders, and the Bunyip learn more about the Europeans and their bizarre customs.

Of course, the Bunyip need not behave like she's on her way to toss a bottle off the edge of the world every time she runs into "civilization." Any Bunyip cunning enough to survive in the Savage West quickly learns what's expected by those around her, even if she doesn't agree with it. However, Bunyip have been raised within a very different paradigm than even most Pure One Garou, and this difference should be reflected in ways both large and small throughout the game.

The second most prevalent theme is "hope versus desperation." While the battle of the Garou is growing more challenging all the time, the Bunyip have already passed the edge of desperation and are fighting with all their might to hang on to even the tiniest shreds of hope. Bunyip stories should always contain elements of this precarious state. All periods of action are that much more intense, edged with a sense of manic determination to make a difference. Even the lightest social interludes can never completely escape the shadow of loss that darkens the heart of the Bunyip.

Finally, particularly inspired and far-seeing Storytellers can also use the Bunyip to create a theme of dark prophecy, giving the Garou an ominous taste of the future they're creating with their own foolish pride. If the game involves mostly Bunyip characters (a truly special circumstance), the theme of bitter omens and the dark harvest the Garou are sowing can simply be seen from the other side for a change. The characters must struggle to make a difference in the time remaining and perhaps even pass on some kind of legacy before the void swallows them at last.

USING BUNYIP CHARACTERS AS VILLAINS

Hey, nobody said the Bunyip always have to be good guys! There are plenty of Bunyip out there who are more than willing to commit an atrocity or two to avenge the deaths of their kin. As time passes and extinction approaches, many Bunyip care little for their own lives, as long as they're paid for in the blood of their persecutors. Storytellers who wish to use Bunyip as villains in their game add an interesting antagonist to their repertoire. Unlike many typical villains in the Savage West, Bunyip don't put much stock in toe-to-toe slugfests. They prefer to use ambushes and guerrilla raids to harass and demoralize their enemy. What's more, since they work alone or in small groups, Bunyip are even more cautious than veteran Pure One scouts. Unless the Garou are especially vigilant or take extraordinary precautionary measures, most Bunyip raids are over and the damage




done before the pack even has a chance to realize what's going on. Storytellers are encouraged to play up the menace and cunning of the Bunyip as much as possible, and never let the characters feel entirely comfortable as long as the Bunyip are stalking them.

Of course, to gain the full value of the Bunyip as antagonists, the tragic angle of the conflict must be preserved as well. No matter what one side did to provoke the other, the ultimate result is Breed pitted against Breed in a world that needs all the defenders it can find, with one whole Breed eventually driven to extinction in the end. Characters who care to learn even a whit about their Bunyip foes may soon find themselves questioning their elders and perhaps even siding with the oppressed shapechangers in some fashion. Even if the Bunyip are presented simply as savage killers who attack an innocent pack or settlement, the underlying bitter irony should never be allowed to escape the characters entirely. In the white-hat/black-hat politics of the Savage West, it's easy to dismiss the villains as heartless, remorseless monsters and thereby justify nearly any action on the part of the characters as "heroic." After all, when one's traditional racial enemy is the metaphysical embodiment of all the physical and spiritual decay in the universe, it's pretty easy to tell who the good guys are. But when the enemies are others like the characters themselves, with many of the same hopes and dreams, and from a society whose recent history has been nothing but bloodshed and betrayal at the hands of the character's own society.... There lies the material for some truly gripping, emotionally charged stories.

GUNSLINGIN' DOWN UNDER

Of course, the game can always put the shoe on the other foot and be set somewhere in Australia. No one said the Savage West was limited to the left side of the Mississippi, after all! However, there is simply too much material to reprint here to provide even a rough sketch of playing Down Under. Players are thereby again advised to consult **Rage Across the World Volume 2, The Wild West Companion** and **A World of Darkness: Second Edition** for a look at Australia in the World of Darkness, past and present. For the relevant real-world details of history and geography, any number of reputable scholarly texts exist for consultation, although a comprehensive encyclopedia is often a good start. Just remember as you do your research that much of the power of a historical setting comes from the way that setting is brought to life. Players will always forgive you if some details are off, provided you capture the right "feel" of the time period. But if it seems to them as though your Aboriginal village or tiny Outback town could just as easily be set somewhere else, you're in trouble.

That said, stories run in the Australia of the Savage West tend to be constructed along a few basic lines. In one, the players' characters make up a Bunyip pack (or packs), learning to work together and trying to thwart the ambitions of the Wyrms and wicked Europeans alike. In another, the players are European Garou exploring a new land and dealing with the strange shapeshifters they encounter there, perhaps with a friendly Bunyip or two in the midst to act as ambassadors and guides. In a third, the two cultures are incorporated more completely, with mixed Garou-Bunyip packs as the norm. The latter games tend to be built around themes like "everyone must band together to deal with some



great big threat X" or "a tentative peace treaty Y has been signed and we're trying to live it out." However, these games are no less powerful if approached correctly. The important thing to remember, no matter what the formulation may be, is that the characters must not only have some reason to be where they are, but they also need a compelling reason to work together (or not to!). Otherwise, the character relationships will feel hollow, and an essential dynamic of the chronicle will be lost. The key lies in balancing the stereotypes the characters all grew up with to the experiences they've had with the culture they're coming in contact with, and realizing just what sort of person comes out of such a mix.

In essence, if the Bunyip feel like they're fighting the newcomers just because that's what the Storyteller wants them to do, or the Europeans are just perpetrating the cliché "great white hunters exploring the big dark continent" as they travel, something is deeply amiss. However, if they players feel the rage and frustration of the Bunyip as they watch the Wyrms sink its claws into their land, or the first tentative but lasting ties of friendship forming with an understanding foreign Garou, the Storyteller is doing his job. If the Europeans wonder at the glory of pure Gaia as they step foot onto the continent, or watch in horror as their brothers dishonor the name Garou with their selfish pride, then the essence of the theme has been captured right in the beginning.

FORMS

HOMID

Trait Adjustments: None.

Change Description: All Bunyip are of Aboriginal stock, with dark eyes, hair and skin tone, although their hair turns light gray or even white as they age. Bunyip tend to be rather lean and wiry, but this descriptor doesn't hold true for all of them.

GLABRO

Trait Adjustments: While in this form, the Bunyip gains the bonus Traits: *Tenacious*, *Wiry*. He is also afflicted with the Negative Traits: *Clumsy* and *Tactless*.

Change Description: Bunyip do not like their intermediate forms, and they seldom spend much time in them. Their shape is hunched and awkward, making movement more difficult. They are not as bestial as most Garou, but the weird nature of their appearance sets them apart just the same.

CRINOS

Trait Adjustments: The Bunyip gains the bonus Traits: *Athletic*, *Rugged* x2, *Tenacious* and *Wiry* x2. However, the Bunyip also gains the Negative Traits: *Bestial* x2 and *Clumsy*.

Change Description: Brutish and efficient, this form stands is as big as most Garou Crinos when fully upright, although Bunyip tend to move in a slightly hunched gait that makes them appear slightly smaller than they are. The Delirium affects most creatures who see the Bunyip in this form, although those affected are considered to be two steps higher on the Delirium chart due to the fact that Bunyip played no role in the Impergium.

HISPO

Trait Adjustments: The Bunyip gains the bonus Traits: *Tireless* x2 and *Wiry* x2. The Bunyip also gains the Negative Traits: *Bestial* x2 and *Impatient*.



Change Description: The awkward form of the thylacine is exaggerated to menacing size, although most Bunyip consider this form like their Glabro state and shun it whenever possible. What they gain in intimidation, they lose in mobility.

THYLACINUS

Trait Adjustments: The Bunyip gains the bonus Traits: *Nimble* x2, *Quick*, *Rugged* and *Tenacious* x2. He also incurs the Negative Trait: *Bestial*.

Change Description: The Thylacinus form is indistinguishable from a regular thylacine — not that most people in the Savage West will know what one is anyway. The character's weight decreases, making him much more lean and wiry.

BUNYIP GIFTS

Bunyip may choose tribal Gifts just as Garou do, but finding teachers is becoming more and more difficult as their numbers dwindle. Learning high-level Bunyip Gifts in the Savage West would require a journey of epic proportions. Storytellers should take care to remind prospective Bunyip players that they will likely have a tough time locating spirits or elders able to teach them any but the most basic Gifts, and to plan their character's development accordingly.

BASIC GIFTS

- **Leap of the Kangaroo** — When his player expends a Physical Trait, the Bunyip may double his jumping distances for the remainder of the scene/hour, whichever lasts longer. The Garou later adopt this Gift and its name, perhaps out of respect for the Bunyip.


- **Dreamwalk** — Bunyip have a deep bond with the Umbra, unfathomable even to the most learned Uktena sages and Stargazer mystics, and this Gift is a recognition of that fact. As long as the moon is visible in the sky, the Bunyip may reduce the level of the Gauntlet by two. This effect applies only to the Bunyip himself, it does not count as an action on the Bunyip's part, and it extends for a radius of no more than three steps. Also, Bunyip with this Gift never have a need for a reflective surface to cross into the Umbra, visible moon or otherwise. They need only concentrate on the passage, although stepping sideways still takes the normal amount of time.

- **Possum's Feet** — See the Gift: *Catfeet*, in *Laws of the Wild*, p. 97.

- **Measured Step** — See the Gift: *Surface Attunement*, in *Laws of the Wild*, p. 121.

INTERMEDIATE GIFTS

- **Lonesome Voice of the Bunyip** — As the last hope of their race, the Bunyip are aware that they are losing the battle for their homeland and their very identity. This Gift stems from the deep loss that Bunyip himself feels when looking on the brave struggles of his outnumbered children. Characters who learn this Gift can channel some of the terrible sadness of their Totem into a booming, haunting cry, sending those around them fleeing from a combination of loneliness and terror. The player must announce the use of this Gift (actual wailing is discouraged, unless you happen to be proficient at expressing the bleak nihilism of encroaching extinction in a few syllables) and spend a Gnosis Trait. The players of all non-Bunyip characters in the area must then defeat the character in a Simple Test (Social Traits compared on a tie) or lose a Willpower Trait and retreat for the remainder of the scene.



- **Landspeak** — Tied as deeply as they are to their land of origin, the Bunyip are able to commune with the spirits easily to learn any number of things the Earth has seen, simply by placing their ear against a natural feature and listening. Treat this Gift the same as the Gift: *Attunement* in **Laws of the Wild**, p. 109, except that the Bunyip has an effective range of dozens of miles, and he may learn about such general patterns as coming weather, distant settlements and the like. The down side of this Gift is that, linked as it is to the Bunyip's ancestral lands, this Gift will not function in most foreign locales (such as the Savage West), although the Storyteller may make an exception in certain special circumstances.

- **Vice-Jaw** — See the Lupus Gift: *Gnaw*, in **Laws of the Wild**, p. 97.

ADVANCED GIFTS

- **Guardians of the Dreamtime** — Bunyip with this bond to the spirit world need never worry about any restrictions on their ability to step sideways. To them, both worlds are as one, and crossing between the two is as easy as drawing breath. They cannot fight in and out of the Umbra simultaneously (that is the province of the Gift: *Ghost Dance*, in **Laws of the Wyld West**, p. 285), but day or night, the Gauntlet is always considered two lower for the Bunyip. They may even extend this advantage to others in a 10-foot radius with a Static Mental Challenge (difficulty seven). If successful, they may reduce the Gauntlet by one for every Mental Trait they spend. This reduction lasts until the end of the session/ night, whichever comes first.

- **Bloody-Mindedness** — Named after an Australian expression denoting an unswerving commitment to reaching a particular goal, this fearsome Gift allows a Bunyip to pursue the target of his dedication with inhuman efficiency. When the player spends two Willpower Traits and declares his chosen objective (to a Narrator), the Bunyip does not need to eat or sleep until his quest is completed. He is also one Trait up on all Challenges related to his task, and he is completely immune to all supernatural mind- or emotion-control attempts that try to sway him from his objective. Furthermore, if used in combat, the Bunyip may not attempt to dodge attacks from sources other than his chosen target (although he may still soak them normally), but he is considered to have two extra Healthy health levels when soaking such attacks. He also gains an additional attack against his sworn foe at the end of every turn. Note that the objective must be specific and attainable: "Destroy all European Garou" is not a permissible oath, but "Get revenge on the Silver Fang who burned my tribe's village" would be. If in doubt, consult a Narrator about which oaths are permissible. Only one sacred vow may be sworn at a time.

- **Billabong Bridge** — Ancient uses of this Gift are what allowed the Bunyip to patrol their vast protectorate efficiently, and its use is still a means of rapid transportation in an era when many of the Moon Bridges are being claimed by the European Garou. Bunyip using this Gift may enter one body of water and emerge at another such body any distance away, simply by spending two Gnosis Traits and envisioning their destination (therefore both locations must be fairly well-known to the Bunyip before this Gift will function). The only other restriction is that salt water cannot be involved at either end of the trip, or the Gift will not activate. Only the Gift user may make the journey. No other "passengers" may hitch a ride this way.



NEW TOTEMS OF RESPECT

Mu-ru-bul Tu-ru-dun, the Bunyip

Cost: 6

A mysterious totem for an enigmatic race, Bunyip appears as a furred, flippered, and scaled beast with a long beard or mane and burning eyes. Bunyip has never been sighted outside of a body of water, and he favors deep streams and billabongs. His deep bellow terrifies even the bravest of warriors, and his words bear the eternal wisdom of the rivers.

Bunyip gives his children access to the Gifts: *Measured Step* and *Lonesome Voice of the Bunyip* once per session. If the characters are non-Bunyip, the Breed will be favorably disposed to them, but they will also expect them to take their side in any disputes with the Europeans, which can put the characters in a difficult position very quickly.

Ban: Bunyip asks that his children honor him by drowning at least one enemy in fresh water every year. Due to his anger at their past ignorance and current blood thirst, Bunyip will not accept packs that contain European Garou. Only Silent Striders, Stargazers and Pure Ones have a chance of receiving his patronage, and even they must perform a great service for him before he will consider adopting them. Bunyip may not be taken by any packs operating outside of Australia due to his weakening condition.

Ngalyod the Rainbow Serpent

Cost: 7

The chief totem of the Bunyip, although almost entirely unheard of by the Europeans, Ngalyod appears as a tremendous rainbow-colored serpent. No one has ever been tall or high enough to see both Ngalyod's head and his tail at once. Once a joyous spirit, Ngalyod has grown moody and withdrawn of late, grieving for her vanishing children and searching for answers to the problems facing them.

Ngalyod gives each of her children a permanent Trait of Honor Renown, as well as one permanent Gnosis Trait. Bunyip will be extremely impressed by any Garou who receive Ngalyod's blessing, but they will expect them to act the part as well. Ngalyod's Children will never be attacked by Dreamtime spirits, although these spirits can and will defend themselves if attacked.

Ban: Children of the Rainbow Serpent must become parents as soon as possible, since the Rainbow Serpent is a spirit of birth and creation. More forgiving than her cousin Mu-ru-bul Tu-ru-dun, Ngalyod will accept Garou of all tribes, although Europeans will still be required to perform some extra service and demonstrate exceptional dedication to defending Australia and its people before receiving her blessing. Ngalyod's power is weakening, however, and it cannot be taken outside of Australia, just like her cousin.



WRAITH: THE GREAT WAR

by Bruce Baugh

This article is part one of a two-part feature. In part one, you'll find:

- An overview of the **Great War** era, including the *Insurrection*.
- The *Legions and Guilds* during the *Fourth Great Maelstrom*, along with a general sense of existence during the **Great War**.
- Character creation, including new *Archetypes*, *Abilities*, *Thorns* and the like for the era, along with period versions of some *Arcanoi*.

Part two will include:

- Rules for *Maelstrom* behavior and survival.
- Guidelines on using *Charon* in **Great War** games.
- *Arcanoi* of other *Dark Kingdoms*, for use by wraiths stranded in *Stygian* territory by the storm.
- *Mortwrights* as characters, including revised versions of some *Dark Arcanoi*.
- *Tempering Arcanoi* — ways of combining arts to produce new effects.
- Some prominent places and people of the era.

JUST MORE OF THE SAME?

In some ways the **Great War** wasn't that long ago, certainly not as far back as (say) the Middle Ages. Nor is everything different about the wraithly society of the era. However, **The Great War** isn't just an *Oblivion* game in different hats.

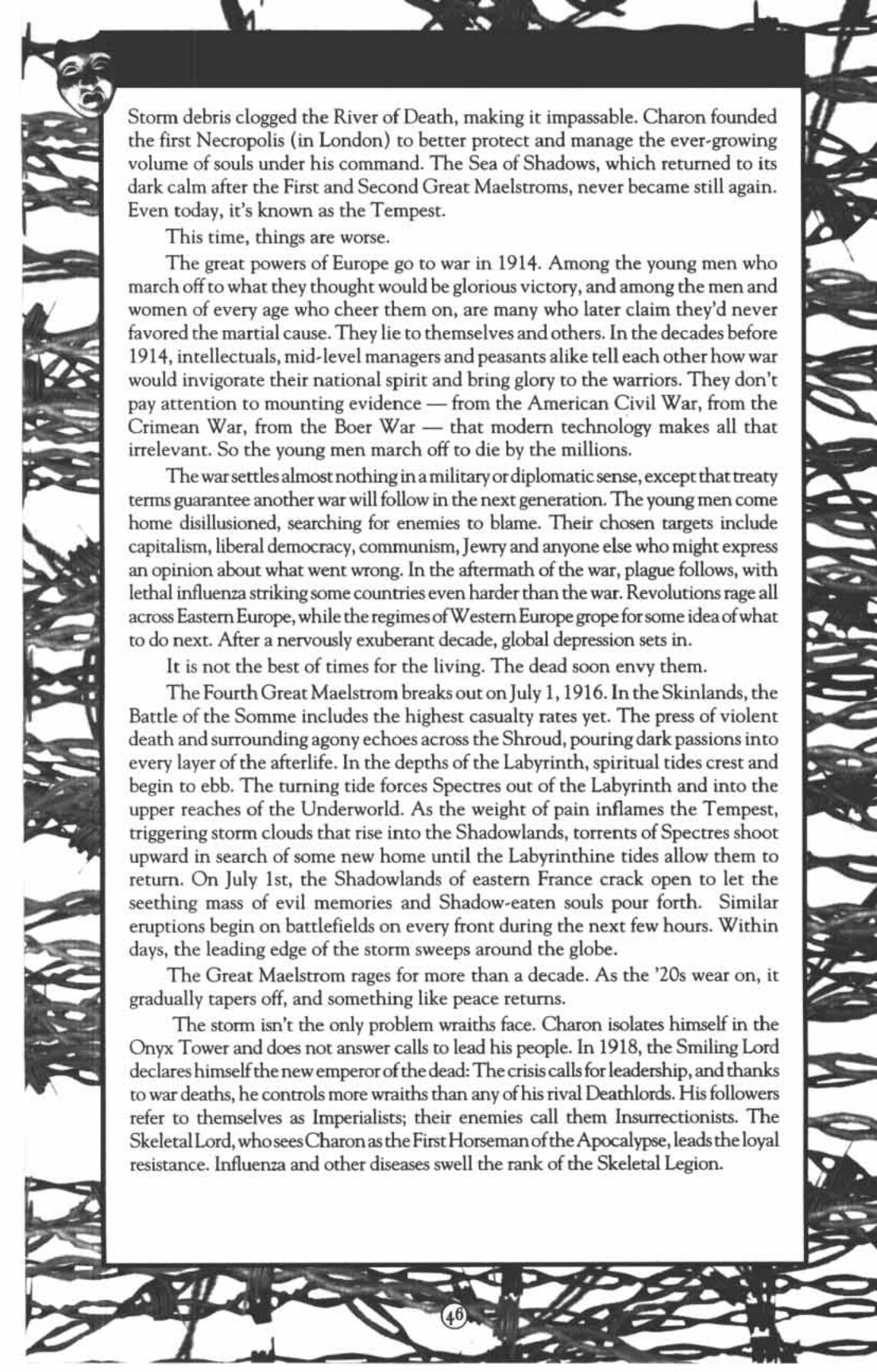
In this period, *Charon* rules his empire, or at least he's out there. On the other hand, the empire's engulfed by civil war, with *Legion* pitted against *Legion*. All around the combatants, and everyone else, a *Great Maelstrom* blows. Wraiths who died in other lands can't get home... and wraiths who would normally go to other *Dark Kingdoms* remain in *Stygian* territory for the duration.

In a **Great War** chronicle, you can play wraiths with African and Indian *Arcanoi*, take sides in the greatest conflict within the empire since the *Three Abominations* centuries ago, roleplay the stresses within every *Necropolis* while the storm winds blow and meet the man who built the empire. Some of the usual powers work differently. You'll find new *Natures*, new *Shadow Archetypes*, new *Thorns* and more here.

You can certainly use a lot of this information in a modern-day *Oblivion* game, particularly if you incorporate **Ends of Empire** and unleash the *Sixth Great Maelstrom*. But the **Great War** era has a tone all its own, too.

THE GREAT WAR

Three hundred years ago, the *Third Great Maelstrom* ripped through the *Underworld*. The *Labyrinth* shuddered and spat out centuries' accumulation of angry *Spectres* while the vast seas below the *Shadowlands* churned into storms that lasted for years. All of *Stygia's* armies and all the wraiths who reject *Stygian* authority, fighting together in the crisis, took more than a decade to beat down the storm and the spirits moving inside it. The battle left the empire changed forever.



Storm debris clogged the River of Death, making it impassable. Charon founded the first Necropolis (in London) to better protect and manage the ever-growing volume of souls under his command. The Sea of Shadows, which returned to its dark calm after the First and Second Great Maelstroms, never became still again. Even today, it's known as the Tempest.

This time, things are worse.

The great powers of Europe go to war in 1914. Among the young men who march off to what they thought would be glorious victory, and among the men and women of every age who cheer them on, are many who later claim they'd never favored the martial cause. They lie to themselves and others. In the decades before 1914, intellectuals, mid-level managers and peasants alike tell each other how war would invigorate their national spirit and bring glory to the warriors. They don't pay attention to mounting evidence — from the American Civil War, from the Crimean War, from the Boer War — that modern technology makes all that irrelevant. So the young men march off to die by the millions.

The war settles almost nothing in a military or diplomatic sense, except that treaty terms guarantee another war will follow in the next generation. The young men come home disillusioned, searching for enemies to blame. Their chosen targets include capitalism, liberal democracy, communism, Jewry and anyone else who might express an opinion about what went wrong. In the aftermath of the war, plague follows, with lethal influenza striking some countries even harder than the war. Revolutions rage all across Eastern Europe, while the regimes of Western Europe grope for some idea of what to do next. After a nervously exuberant decade, global depression sets in.

It is not the best of times for the living. The dead soon envy them.

The Fourth Great Maelstrom breaks out on July 1, 1916. In the Skinlands, the Battle of the Somme includes the highest casualty rates yet. The press of violent death and surrounding agony echoes across the Shroud, pouring dark passions into every layer of the afterlife. In the depths of the Labyrinth, spiritual tides crest and begin to ebb. The turning tide forces Spectres out of the Labyrinth and into the upper reaches of the Underworld. As the weight of pain inflames the Tempest, triggering storm clouds that rise into the Shadowlands, torrents of Spectres shoot upward in search of some new home until the Labyrinthine tides allow them to return. On July 1st, the Shadowlands of eastern France crack open to let the seething mass of evil memories and Shadow-eaten souls pour forth. Similar eruptions begin on battlefields on every front during the next few hours. Within days, the leading edge of the storm sweeps around the globe.

The Great Maelstrom rages for more than a decade. As the '20s wear on, it gradually tapers off, and something like peace returns.

The storm isn't the only problem wraiths face. Charon isolates himself in the Onyx Tower and does not answer calls to lead his people. In 1918, the Smiling Lord declares himself the new emperor of the dead: The crisis calls for leadership, and thanks to war deaths, he controls more wraiths than any of his rival Deathlords. His followers refer to themselves as Imperialists; their enemies call them Insurrectionists. The Skeletal Lord, who sees Charon as the First Horseman of the Apocalypse, leads the loyal resistance. Influenza and other diseases swell the rank of the Skeletal Legion.

THE POWERS THAT BE

For a full decade, the Stygian Empire functions erratically, without consistency. Between the corporeal challenge of the storm and the social challenge of the Insurrection, most Necropoli must rely on their own resources. Independent governments spring up as "free cities," city-states, regional alliances and the like. Some cities cater to the Imperialist or Loyalist factions in exchange for the freedom to run their own affairs. In St. Petersburg, for instance, glib-sounding Anacreons keep inspectors appeased and breed monsters behind the scenes.

The Legions are the basic building blocks of wraithly society. They Reap souls and instruct the new Restless Dead in the fundamentals of their condition. Most wraiths aren't soldiers, but the Legions provide a sense of identity for many wraiths nonetheless. The vast majority of wraiths follow the lead set by the higher-ups in their respective Legions, not so much out of deep conviction as because they take it for granted and have no real alternatives. Common attitudes include "my bosses seem to know what they're doing, and I'm not impressed by the other guys" and "I owe these people for helping me survive, so I'll back them even if I don't really understand what's going on."

THE LEGIONS

The Skeletal Legion: Victims of Pestilence

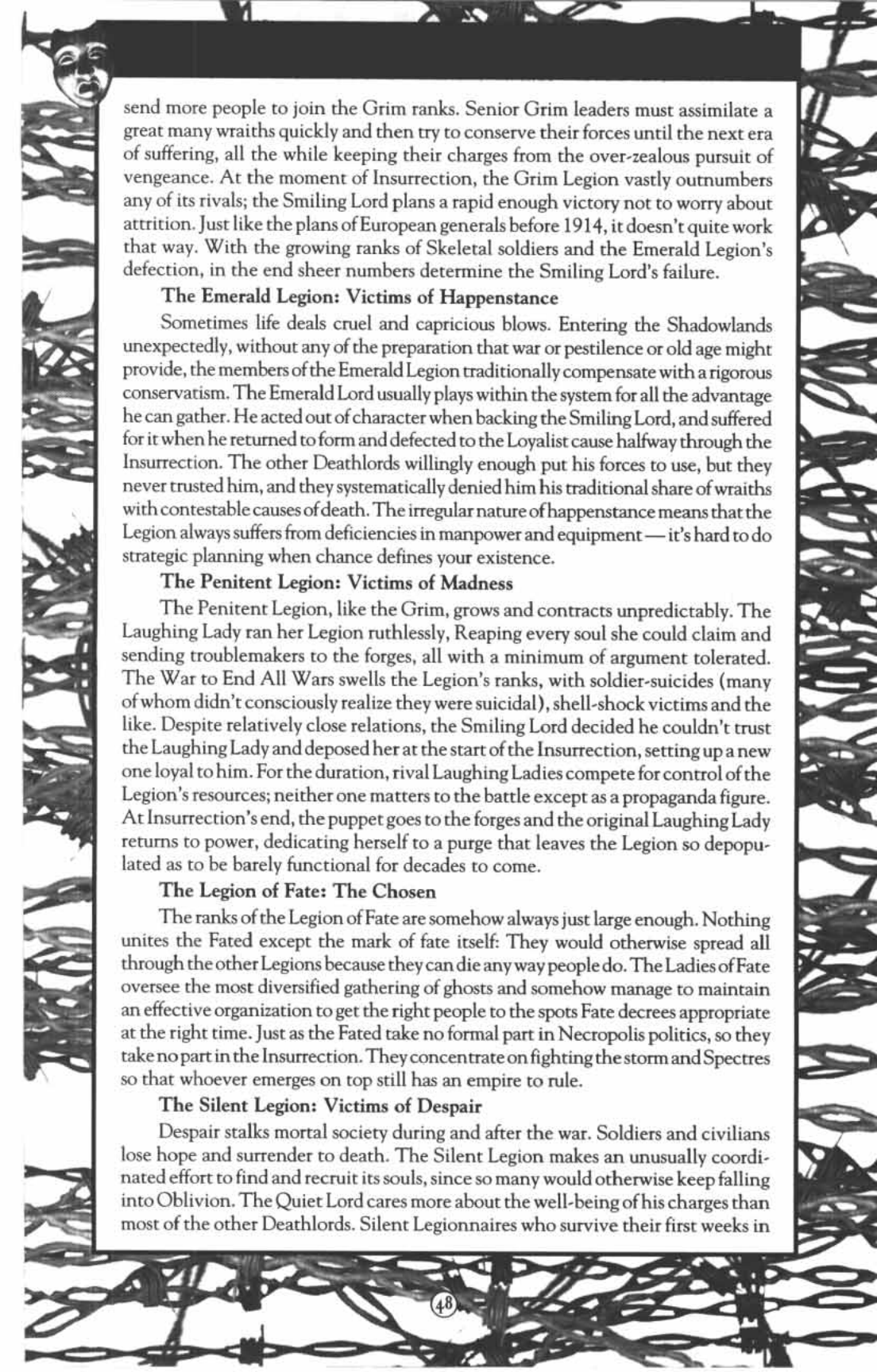
The Skeletal Legion leads the Loyalist faction. The Skeletal Lord is utterly insane. He believes himself to be one of the Horsemen of the Apocalypse, and he fights to protect the realm of Charon, whom he regards as Death incarnate. The Skeletal Lord's madness doesn't prevent him from running one of the most efficient Legions. Disease strikes all ages and social classes, and the Skeletal Lord staffs his offices with the finest administrators he can find. Skeletal Legionnaires tend to know a lot more about what assets they have at any given time than their counterparts in other Legions. In 1918, when the Smiling Lord revolts, the Skeletal Legion badly lags behind the Grim in manpower. However, the Spanish Flu and various other post-war diseases close the gap. It takes most of a decade for the Skeletal Legion to fully assimilate and train its new recruits, so the Skeletal Legion fights an uphill battle throughout the '20s, holding its gains but expanding much more slowly than its commanders would like.

The Iron Legion: Victims of Old Age

Like pestilence, old age strikes people at every level of society. The Iron Legion's recruits all enter the Shadowlands with the benefits (and disadvantages) of a full life's experience. Iron Legion administrators get surprised by less, since they really have seen it before. The Legion's diplomats and spies know tricks that even centuries in the Shadowlands can't match. Mortals live more intensely than wraiths do, and they pack a lot of insight into a century. Unfortunately, Iron Legionnaires often rely too much on mortal insights and not enough on wraithly ones: When the Insurrection begins, many Iron Legion officers and spies fall to Grim Legion jailers. The Legion spends the rest of the decade fighting to survive as well as rebuild. Fortunately, while wars and disease both come and go, old age remains, and the Iron Legion grows again just as it has after past tragedies. Very few Iron Legionnaires defy their superiors to join the Insurrection. They include many of the wartime leaders that angry young Grim Legionnaires would love to punish.

The Grim Legion: Victims of Violence

The population of the Grim Legion rises and falls in big steps. Wars, genocides and the like kill many people in short order. In more peaceful times, only murders



send more people to join the Grim ranks. Senior Grim leaders must assimilate a great many wraiths quickly and then try to conserve their forces until the next era of suffering, all the while keeping their charges from the over-zealous pursuit of vengeance. At the moment of Insurrection, the Grim Legion vastly outnumbers any of its rivals; the Smiling Lord plans a rapid enough victory not to worry about attrition. Just like the plans of European generals before 1914, it doesn't quite work that way. With the growing ranks of Skeletal soldiers and the Emerald Legion's defection, in the end sheer numbers determine the Smiling Lord's failure.

The Emerald Legion: Victims of Happenstance

Sometimes life deals cruel and capricious blows. Entering the Shadowlands unexpectedly, without any of the preparation that war or pestilence or old age might provide, the members of the Emerald Legion traditionally compensate with a rigorous conservatism. The Emerald Lord usually plays within the system for all the advantage he can gather. He acted out of character when backing the Smiling Lord, and suffered for it when he returned to form and defected to the Loyalist cause halfway through the Insurrection. The other Deathlords willingly enough put his forces to use, but they never trusted him, and they systematically denied him his traditional share of wraiths with contestable causes of death. The irregular nature of happenstance means that the Legion always suffers from deficiencies in manpower and equipment — it's hard to do strategic planning when chance defines your existence.

The Penitent Legion: Victims of Madness

The Penitent Legion, like the Grim, grows and contracts unpredictably. The Laughing Lady ran her Legion ruthlessly, Reaping every soul she could claim and sending troublemakers to the forges, all with a minimum of argument tolerated. The War to End All Wars swells the Legion's ranks, with soldier-suicides (many of whom didn't consciously realize they were suicidal), shell-shock victims and the like. Despite relatively close relations, the Smiling Lord decided he couldn't trust the Laughing Lady and deposed her at the start of the Insurrection, setting up a new one loyal to him. For the duration, rival Laughing Ladies compete for control of the Legion's resources; neither one matters to the battle except as a propaganda figure. At Insurrection's end, the puppet goes to the forges and the original Laughing Lady returns to power, dedicating herself to a purge that leaves the Legion so depopulated as to be barely functional for decades to come.

The Legion of Fate: The Chosen

The ranks of the Legion of Fate are somehow always just large enough. Nothing unites the Fated except the mark of fate itself: They would otherwise spread all through the other Legions because they can die any way people do. The Ladies of Fate oversee the most diversified gathering of ghosts and somehow manage to maintain an effective organization to get the right people to the spots Fate decrees appropriate at the right time. Just as the Fated take no formal part in Necropolis politics, so they take no part in the Insurrection. They concentrate on fighting the storm and Spectres so that whoever emerges on top still has an empire to rule.

The Silent Legion: Victims of Despair

Despair stalks mortal society during and after the war. Soldiers and civilians lose hope and surrender to death. The Silent Legion makes an unusually coordinated effort to find and recruit its souls, since so many would otherwise keep falling into Oblivion. The Quiet Lord cares more about the well-being of his charges than most of the other Deathlords. Silent Legionnaires who survive their first weeks in

the Underworld go on to last longer, on average, than the members of any other Legion, but the early failure rate is hellishly high. The Quiet Lord recently instituted the Steel Martyrs order for wraiths willing to give themselves to the forges rather than to Oblivion, which at least addresses resource shortages and does less harm to Stygia's ability to survive. Like the Legion of Fate, the Silent Legion plays little part in the Insurrection. Silent Legionnaires often serve as acting Anacreons, trusted by both sides, as well as fighting the storm.

The Legion of Paupers: Victims of Mystery

The only Legion smaller than the Paupers is the Legion of Fate, yet the Beggar Lord compensates for his thin ranks with overwhelming ambition. He's one of the most thorough deal-makers and conspirators in the Dark Kingdom of Iron. Popular opinion portrays the Paupers as a Legion of the clueless. Its members compensate much as their Lord does, through diligent effort to win power and influence. Little unites them except the shared isolation of an unknown or incomprehensible death. This link could be a liability, but the Beggar Lord tries to capitalize on the diversity in his ranks. Outsiders who stereotype the Legion too far end up embarrassed (or worse) when they find themselves outmaneuvered in complex social ploys. During the Insurrection, the Legion of Paupers remains neutral, collecting payments from both sides to stay out of the conflict and building its own power base all the while.

THE GUILDS

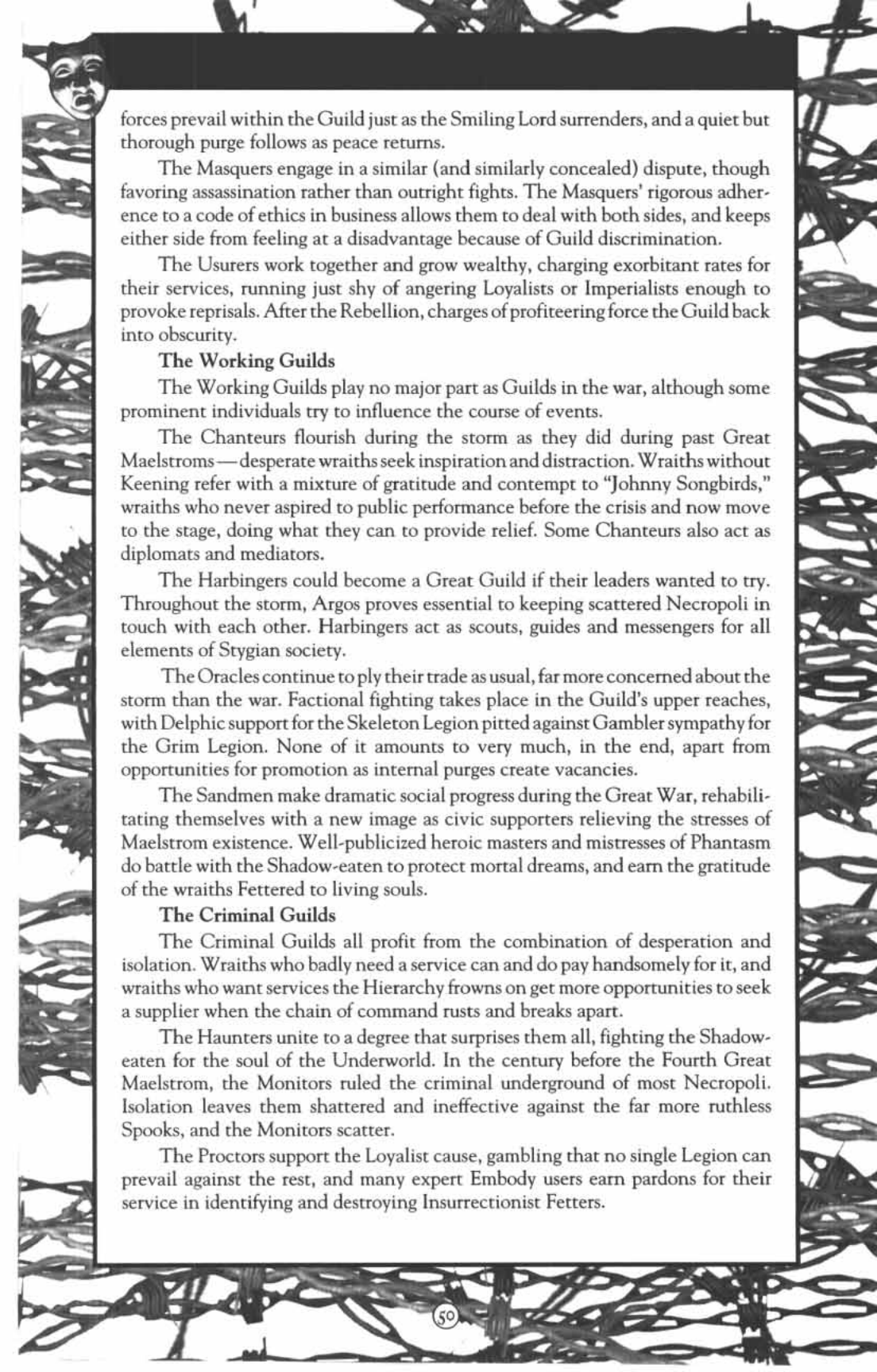
When the usual foundations of Stygian society prove unreliable, other groups move in to prop up the society and keep it running. In some Necropoli, the Guilds remain largely suppressed and out of sight, but in many parts of the empire they provide more practical governance than the Hierarchy.

Stygians often divide the Guilds into four categories. The Great Guilds matter as much to the survival of the empire as any Legion, providing essential services. No leader or would-be leader with a clue risks tampering with the Artificers, Masquers, Pardoners or Usurers. A faction cut off by one or more of the Great Guilds must fall, and sooner rather than later. The Working Guilds provide useful services and operate almost in public behind a variety of flimsy guises that satisfy the letter of the law. A few Working Guildwraiths become prominent players in the games of Stygian politics. Most try, like the wraiths around them, mostly to stay out of the way. The Chanteurs, Harbingers, Oracles and Sandmen all confront the same mix of opportunity and risk facing all wraiths during the Great War. The Criminal Guilds provide services that warrant instant slavery and forging... services often so useful that prominent Criminal Guildwraiths enjoy significant social status, and nobody rudely broaches the question of just how those wraiths acquired their power and influence. The war and storm matter less to the Criminal Guilds, forming opportunity and backdrop rather than all-consuming goals for the Hunters, Monitors, Proctors, Puppeteers and Spooks. Finally, the Forbidden Guilds operate altogether outside the sanction of Stygian society, and the Insurrection doesn't change much for the Alchemists, Mnemoi or Solicitors.

The Great Guilds

Loyalists and Imperialists alike court the Great Guilds, and try to avoid drawing the Guilds' anger.

An internal civil war rages throughout the Great War within the Artificers. Nhudri's detachment and the Guild's public neutrality mask a vicious struggle to tie the Guild's fortunes to the faction deemed most likely to win the war. Loyalist



forces prevail within the Guild just as the Smiling Lord surrenders, and a quiet but thorough purge follows as peace returns.

The Masquers engage in a similar (and similarly concealed) dispute, though favoring assassination rather than outright fights. The Masquers' rigorous adherence to a code of ethics in business allows them to deal with both sides, and keeps either side from feeling at a disadvantage because of Guild discrimination.

The Usurers work together and grow wealthy, charging exorbitant rates for their services, running just shy of angering Loyalists or Imperialists enough to provoke reprisals. After the Rebellion, charges of profiteering force the Guild back into obscurity.

The Working Guilds

The Working Guilds play no major part as Guilds in the war, although some prominent individuals try to influence the course of events.

The Chanteurs flourish during the storm as they did during past Great Maelstroms—desperate wraiths seek inspiration and distraction. Wraiths without Keening refer with a mixture of gratitude and contempt to “Johnny Songbirds,” wraiths who never aspired to public performance before the crisis and now move to the stage, doing what they can to provide relief. Some Chanteurs also act as diplomats and mediators.

The Harbingers could become a Great Guild if their leaders wanted to try. Throughout the storm, Argos proves essential to keeping scattered Necropoli in touch with each other. Harbingers act as scouts, guides and messengers for all elements of Stygian society.

The Oracles continue to ply their trade as usual, far more concerned about the storm than the war. Factional fighting takes place in the Guild's upper reaches, with Delphic support for the Skeleton Legion pitted against Gambler sympathy for the Grim Legion. None of it amounts to very much, in the end, apart from opportunities for promotion as internal purges create vacancies.

The Sandmen make dramatic social progress during the Great War, rehabilitating themselves with a new image as civic supporters relieving the stresses of Maelstrom existence. Well-publicized heroic masters and mistresses of Phantasm do battle with the Shadow-eaten to protect mortal dreams, and earn the gratitude of the wraiths Fettered to living souls.

The Criminal Guilds

The Criminal Guilds all profit from the combination of desperation and isolation. Wraiths who badly need a service can and do pay handsomely for it, and wraiths who want services the Hierarchy frowns on get more opportunities to seek a supplier when the chain of command rusts and breaks apart.

The Hunters unite to a degree that surprises them all, fighting the Shadow-eaten for the soul of the Underworld. In the century before the Fourth Great Maelstrom, the Monitors ruled the criminal underground of most Necropoli. Isolation leaves them shattered and ineffective against the far more ruthless Spooks, and the Monitors scatter.

The Proctors support the Loyalist cause, gambling that no single Legion can prevail against the rest, and many expert Embody users earn pardons for their service in identifying and destroying Insurrectionist Fetters.

The Puppeteers, the most persecuted Guild not actually forbidden like the Solicitors and Mnemoi, exploit their long-standing ties to the Grim Legion to earn a much more free hand. Risen proliferate; inadequately trained souls quickly fall to their Shadows as careless manipulators of the living. The Puppeteers generally aim to ride out the storm years in comfort, across the Shroud. When the Insurrection fails, charges of Puppetry send a sizable fraction of the Guild's members to the forges.

The Spooks prosper tremendously. Their traditional rivals weakened or distracted and their clients desperate in the face of war and storm, Guildwraiths reap huge profits. For many small Necropoli, the Spooks become a de facto government, earning good will that sustains them through post-Great War tribulations. Spooks don't just run rackets, either; Outrage-powered mercenary units fight on all sides of the various conflicts.

The Forbidden Guilds

The Forbidden Guilds also thrive. The powers that be have more important things to do than stamp out suspected rogues when Spectres howl at every gate and the guards fight each other. So the banned Guilds work their way back into the light quietly, making preparations so that when suppression returns (as it always does) the hunted Guildwraiths have more options for concealment.

The Alchemists set up a variety of front groups to protect the Guild and then get rich. Wraiths everywhere want the strongest Fetters they can get (and their enemies to have the weakest). Every Alchemist willing to admit to knowing Flux gets all the work she wants, and then some. The Guilds that traditionally oppose the Alchemists — the Artificers, Monitors and Spooks — deal with their own challenges. That is, until the Insurrection ends and persecution resumes.

Nobody sees the Mnemoi. Nobody thinks about them. They go about their own business. Their time doesn't come for another seventy years. See *Ends of Empire* for what happens when they emerge at last.

The Solicitors operate in secret, as always. They recruit unwitting pawns for their internal political disputes and to spread influence throughout the Hierarchy.

OUTSIDERS


The Great Maelstrom strands wraiths who'd normally go to the Dark Kingdom of Ivory or to Swar. In life they were soldiers in the armies of colonial powers. Now they're stuck, isolated for the duration of the storm. Part two of this article will present information on creating and playing characters from outside Stygia. In addition, some soldiers of the Jade Empire, taken prisoner in conflicts on Stygia's eastern frontier, struggle for survival as the Insurrection distracts their captors.

AFTERLIFE DURING WARTIME

The Great Maelstrom and the Insurrection combine to shatter the empire, at least for a while. What conditions prevail in the Necropolis characters inhabit depends on who's in charge.

LOYALIST GOVERNMENT

In many Necropoli, the traditional order prevails. Anacreons for the Skeletal, Iron, Penitent, Silent and Pauper Legions operate as agents of the Hierarchy. The unpredictable loss of communications means that they exercise more authority on the spot than usual, but their fundamental position doesn't change. Reaper squads



circulate regularly, in an effort to keep new wraiths away from not only random Spectral predators, but also from dissidents and (above all) the Grim Legion. Wraiths who'd normally join the Grim Legion end up assigned to one of the others, all of which have special "substitute Grim" sections.

Most Loyalist Necropoli operate under strict military rule. Everyone not explicitly and enthusiastically supportive of the regime faces investigation and punishment. Luxuries and entertainment come only as the authorities deem appropriate.

IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT

The Grim Legion rules alone (particularly after the Emerald Lord defects), or with incidental support from lackeys in the various other Legions. Otherwise, cities under the Smiling Lord's jurisdiction differ little from their Loyalist counterparts.

INDEPENDENT GOVERNMENT

Nobody can keep exhaustive records in the midst of the storm's chaos. Powerful wraiths can and do band together, overthrow resisting Anacreons and Centurions and institute a new government of their own. In cities with strong religious traditions, Heretic movements flourish, basing their regimes on devotion to holy relics or sacred teachings. Where mortal revolution stirs the Shroud, politically motivated Renegades often come to the foreground. Most such movements preserve the division of wraiths by deathmark while abolishing the standard military hierarchy. A chronicle in an independent city can use, literally, just about any organizational scheme: recreation of ancient Athens or Sparta, 19th century Utopian schemes, arcane occult symbolism as the basis of the bureaucracy, efforts to recreate the environments of pulp fiction (very popular in the 1920s) and so on.

THE CITY AND THE GHOSTS

As part two of this article will make clear, the storm is *dangerous*. Travel sinks to a fraction of its normal volume. The Necropolis where play begins must be, by necessity, where the vast majority of play takes place. Consider your options carefully. Loyalist Necropoli most resemble the Shadowlands in other times. The Imperial approach offers a fresh spin on similar themes. Independent government covers everything else. Be sure to consider how much organization you want, and choose enough to satisfy players and not enough to annoy them.

CHARACTER CREATION

The Great War era emphasizes some aspects of wraithly society more than others, and some constant factors like Shadow and Arcanoi manifest in ways appropriate to the period.

This article covers creating characters in the mainstream of Stygian society after the War to End All Wars. They belong to one or another of the Legions — although they may not serve actively in any sense — and they study the publicly available Arcanoi. **Wraith:** **Great War** includes options not covered here, including the forbidden Arcanoi and Mortwights as player-characters. Look for those in an upcoming article.

STEP ONE: CHARACTER CONCEPT

Who were you in life, and how did you die? The Guilds play only minor roles in the Great War. Wraiths gather because of shared causes of death; the Legions

provide the building blocks of Stygian society. The war in the empire leads all Legions to scour the Shadowlands for new souls. When you die, or shortly thereafter, someone comes to claim you, offering you shelter from the storm and instruction in your new condition. Guild training, if it happens at all, only comes later, and Legion membership defines your place in the Underworld.

DEATH AND THE LEGIONS

See the descriptions of the Legions, and think about how your character died. Unlike the late 20th century, the Great War era includes many causes of mass death — your character probably enters the Shadowlands with many peers. War and revolution create wraiths by the dozens (or hundreds, or even thousands) in every battle. When diseases sweep through a country, they swell the wraithly population of a Necropolis as well. It's easy for Great War wraiths to begin with a shared death, and that fact is a handy hook for a chronicle.


Even if characters go on to join independent movements, Loyalist or Imperialist Reapers almost certainly brought them out of the Caul and into wraithly society. Independent Necropoli seldom have the organization to mount regular Reaping patrols. So characters have the opportunity to get some information (albeit biased) right at the outset. Think about who your character was in life. You have to do so anyway to develop Passions and Fetters, but it also matters for how your character deals with the new realities of the Underworld. Soldiers who hate the war and wish to see all empires fall feel very differently about the Insurrection than loyal citizens who honestly sought to promote their nation's victory, for instance. It's not just biographical facts that matter, but attitude.

The decade after the War to End All Wars is one of revolutionary change. Einstein's discoveries in physics, along with quantum mechanics, open up a whole new way of looking at the natural world. The Russian Revolution proves that no empire can withstand change forever. The war itself shows the moral bankruptcy of old imperial ideas, and in exhausting Europe, lays the groundwork for America to emerge as the new world power. Freud's ideas drastically alter how people think of their own souls. Many people stay true to older principles, of course, but in the face of multiple revolutions, remaining traditional is itself a conscious choice, too. It's an era of self-examination as well as critique of the world at large.

ARCHETYPES

In addition to the Natures and Demeanors common to the late 20th century, provided in *Oblivion*, the psychological and spiritual conditions of the Great War era give rise to other common archetypes.

- **Au Courant.** You must be current. If it's old, you're not interested. You don't risk yourself in particularly dangerous experimentation... but you do watch the risk-takers carefully and help blaze fashions in their wake.
- **Commando.** You're a warrior — not a faceless grunt among many, but one prepared to gather up arms and loyal comrades to take the battle directly to the enemy. You trust hierarchies only insofar as they support your ability to fight as you feel called to.
- **Curmudgeon.** Life was bad. Death is worse. There's a cloud for every silver lining. You expect the worst and get it. You often try to warn others of the trouble they don't see coming, but nobody ever pays proper attention to you.



• **Idealist.** You have a cause, maybe the vision that drove you in life, maybe one that's captured you since then. You dream of the world as it might be, and you work to make it so. You try to inspire others to work with you.

• **Manipulator.** In a land where nothing's solid but souls, you use the people around you as your tools. You're fascinated by what makes people tick, not for abstract curiosity but to make them tick the way you want. You exist for the satisfaction of being at the center of a society doing your bidding.

• **Patrician.** You were born to rule, and death doesn't change that. You bring grace and wisdom to wraithly society. Your role is to encourage proper subordination among those who must defer and to lead them intelligently in this hour of need.

• **Pragmatist.** Reality is what you can get away with. Sure, grand dreams are well and good, but you need to get things done. You proceed step by step, and you'll do what seems necessary to keep yourself safe and secure. Ideals are for times the sky doesn't spit blood.

• **Reformer.** Injustice fills the Underworld, and it must change. You know that revolution gets you nowhere. You work patiently, making incremental changes, building consensus to make this place a better, more moral realm. It may take forever, but then you've got forever, and virtue can outlast vice.

• **Rumormonger.** Someone always carries the news others don't want known. That's you. You listen carefully and take what you hear to the listeners who most need to hear it. You're the one people turn to for information, and you make them pay the right price.

STEP TWO: ATTRIBUTES

Assign Attributes as in *Oblivion*.

STEP THREE: ADVANTAGES

See "The Arcanoi" for Great War-era Arcanoi.

PASSIONS AND FETTERS

Assign these as in *Oblivion*. Keep in mind that your wraith may begin far away from her Fetters, and that she can't cross the oceans to them after a Harrowing while the Maelstrom winds blow. Don't create a character with no Fetters on the side of the Atlantic where play begins, or at least be prepared to make a new character after the first Harrowing if you do.

At least one Passion should relate to the character's cause of death. It provides hooks, whether the character seeks vengeance, redress or just a chance to finish whatever it is death cut short. In most chronicles, characters will naturally develop interests in and attachments to wraithly society; at the outset, make sure that your character also has reasons to care about the mortal world.

STEP FOUR: SHADOW CREATION

Follow the procedure shown in *Oblivion*. Use the historical Shadow Archetypes and Thorns given here in addition to the ones in *Oblivion*. Note that the cost of some Thorns changes because of the conditions of the Great Maelstrom.

SHADOW ARCHETYPES

• **The Anarchist.** Power corrupts. Everything wrong with the world starts because someone has too much power over others. The Anarchist seeks to topple every structure into *Oblivion*. Whatever it is that brings order brings power, and it must go.

• **The Deserter.** All institutions fail. You've got to look out for yourself, because nobody else does, and you've got to know when to flee the scene before it all falls apart. The Deserter looks for reasons to justify betraying friends and associates and then for the best way to leave them in the lurch.

• **The Id.** Only passions untrammelled by reason or an awareness of the future matter. The Id seeks to indulge whatever seems likely to bring satisfaction to the wraith *right now*, and never mind what may come next.

• **The Maggot.** Everything valuable the world ever held is dead, and all that remains is picking through its corpse. The Maggot glories in exposing the doom of all hopes and extracting shards of value from the failure of everyone else's schemes. The Maggot is the ultimate scavenger, wearing down the world until all props, sources of security, comfort and shelters disappear.

• **The Merchant.** The value of a thing is what that thing will bring. The Merchant drives bargains, knowing that nothing need remain with its current owner if the price is right. The Merchant makes bargains that leave everyone a bit worse off than before, feeding Oblivion through dissatisfaction and covetousness.

• **The Nurse.** The world hurts, and nothing matters more than soothing pain. The Nurse brings peace through relief from the sources of pain, healing for old wounds and finally the ultimate release that comes from isolation. The Nurse guides its Psyche into quiet realms, away from Passions.

• **The Officer.** Wraiths, like mortals, are weak and in need of direction. The Officer takes charge, getting the Underworld in systematic order, so that in due time it can all march off into Oblivion in perfect harmony. In the meantime, the Officer punishes all who resist.

• **The Opium-Eater.** Life is pain. So is death. Nothing matters but enjoyment — not the foul, gross pleasures the Id seeks, but the refined intellectual purity that comes from a mind untroubled and yet at liberty to engage with the world. The Opium-Eater seeks something that makes the Psyche detached.

• **The Patriot.** What matters is the nation. The Patriot carries into death the conviction that its living allegiance remains paramount. It will betray any other group if the betrayal might advance the nation (or weaken the nation's enemies) and do whatever seems likely to help make the nation strong.

• **The Peasant.** Life was simple, and death can be, too. The Peasant seeks some simple routine and some strong leader to give the orders. The Peasant punishes the Psyche for ambitions that would stir routine, preparing the character for Oblivion by establishing a pattern that requires less and less passion until only the habit remains.

• **The Revolutionary.** The world reeks of tyranny, but it can change if people act. The Revolutionary picks its target and seeks to overthrow the source of tyranny. Unlike the Anarchist, however, the Revolutionary also seeks to build up a utopian alternative. The Revolutionary seeks a new order, not disorder.

• **The Superego.** The Id aims for the moment's pleasure; the Superego subordinates all current pleasures to ultimate goals. The Superego punishes the Psyche for seeking present gratification, and rewards self-denial in the name of long-term Passions. As long as it means being unhappy or uncomfortable now for the sake of some satisfaction that may never come, it suits the Superego.



THORNS

Shadowed Sense: 1 Trait. The Shadow can distort one aspect of the local environment. This costs two Angst Traits for a Shadowlands effect or three Traits to include Skinlands manifestation. (Reduce the Angst costs by one Trait while the wraith is in Catharsis.) The Shadow specifies a particular effect, which lasts for one hour. The Shadow can only affect one sense, chosen when buying this Thorn; to affect multiple senses, buy it several times and spend all the required Angst.

Typical visual effects include sudden darkness, shadows without apparent sources and fuzzy luminous forms. Common smell manifestations include salty sea air, smoke and rotting flesh. The paraphernalia of haunting, including rattling chains, low moans and rising shrieks abruptly cut off are popular aural effects, as are unexpected echoes (or the suppression of echoes). Tactile illusions include icy chill and the touch of unseen fingers.

Idee Fixé: 2 Traits. The Shadow stimulates one of the wraith's Passions to furious intensity. Spend one Angst Trait and make a Test of Angst against Willpower. If successful, the Shadow specifies a particular Passion to become so intense that the wraith must act in a way that qualifies for a Passion check within one hour or lose a Trait of Willpower.

Shell Shock (Dissociation): 2 Traits. Wraiths with military experience call this Thorn *Shell Shock*; civilians generally call it *Dissociation*. Spend one Angst Trait. For the next hour, the wraith cannot regain Pathos from a particular chosen Passion unless the Psyche first beats the Shadow in a contest of Willpower against Angst. While suffering from a blocked Passion, the Psyche feels emotionally numb in matters related to the emotion in question.

Collective Unconscious: 3 Traits. The Shadow can speak to other Shadows without the Psyche noticing. (The Psyche can detect this only by winning a Static Mental Challenge against the Shadow's Angst plus three Traits.) This Thorn costs nothing when the other Shadow has the same Archetype or one Angst per minute of conversation when speaking to Shadows of other Archetypes.

Pact of Doom: 3 Traits. The Great Maelstrom lets Oblivion's forces roam more freely. Shadows in the Great War era can teach Dark Arcanoi at regular cost and the wraithly and Shadow arts of other Dark Kingdoms for one extra Angst Trait per level.

STEP FIVE: LAST TOUCHES

Proceed as instructed in *Oblivion*. Note that wraith Corpus levels stay the same whether or not you update to include Lethal and Bashing damage as in *Laws of the Night*, Revised Edition.

STEP SIX: SPARK OF UNLIFE

Complete your character as in *Oblivion*.

THE ARCANOI

The Arcanoi are the arts and crafts of the Restless Dead. They include supernatural feats because the Underworld and all its inhabitants are supernatural, but the process of learning and using the Arcanoi is (in its way) mundane. A wraith needs only a teacher, time and diligence.

Whenever your character uses an art that can affect more than one target, use the Mob Scene rules from **Laws of the Night**, Revised Edition, p. 196.

EXTENDED CHALLENGES

Many players dislike extended challenges. These rules keep them to a bare minimum. If you enjoy the element of uncertainty and don't find a few extra rounds of challenge wearisome, then you can convert a great many more Arcanos systems to extended challenges. Whenever there's a system that specifies a unit of return per point of Pathos, Willpower or some other characteristic, interpret it to mean each success in the extended challenge produces that unit of return.

KINESIS

This Arcanos is the pre-computers form of *Inhabit*.

Innate Abilities

- **Straddle.** The wraith blends into a Skinlands object. She gains temporary concealment, but she acquires no control over the object.

System: Make a Static Physical Challenge, difficulty of the local Shroud rating. If successful, the wraith blends into an object for one turn per permanent Physical Trait. Another wraith also using *Straddle* on the same object must win a Physical Challenge to displace the first. *Sense Kinesis* and *Sense Rider* do detect a wraith using *Straddle*; destroying the object inflicts one level of damage on the wraith.

Basic Abilities

- **Bind.** The wraith passes his hand through a Skinlands device, making it seize up momentarily. Clocks stop, automobiles stall and large or complex machines grind to a halt. Someone must restart the machine; fragile machinery generally needs a shaking as well as a restart. This art does not affect devices that contain no moving parts.

System: Make a Static Physical Challenge against the local Shroud rating. Anyone attempting to restart the stopped machine must make one separate attempt per permanent Physical Trait of the wraith using *Bind*. Investing emotional energy by swearing at the machine, kicking it, shaking it and the like makes one attempt count as three.

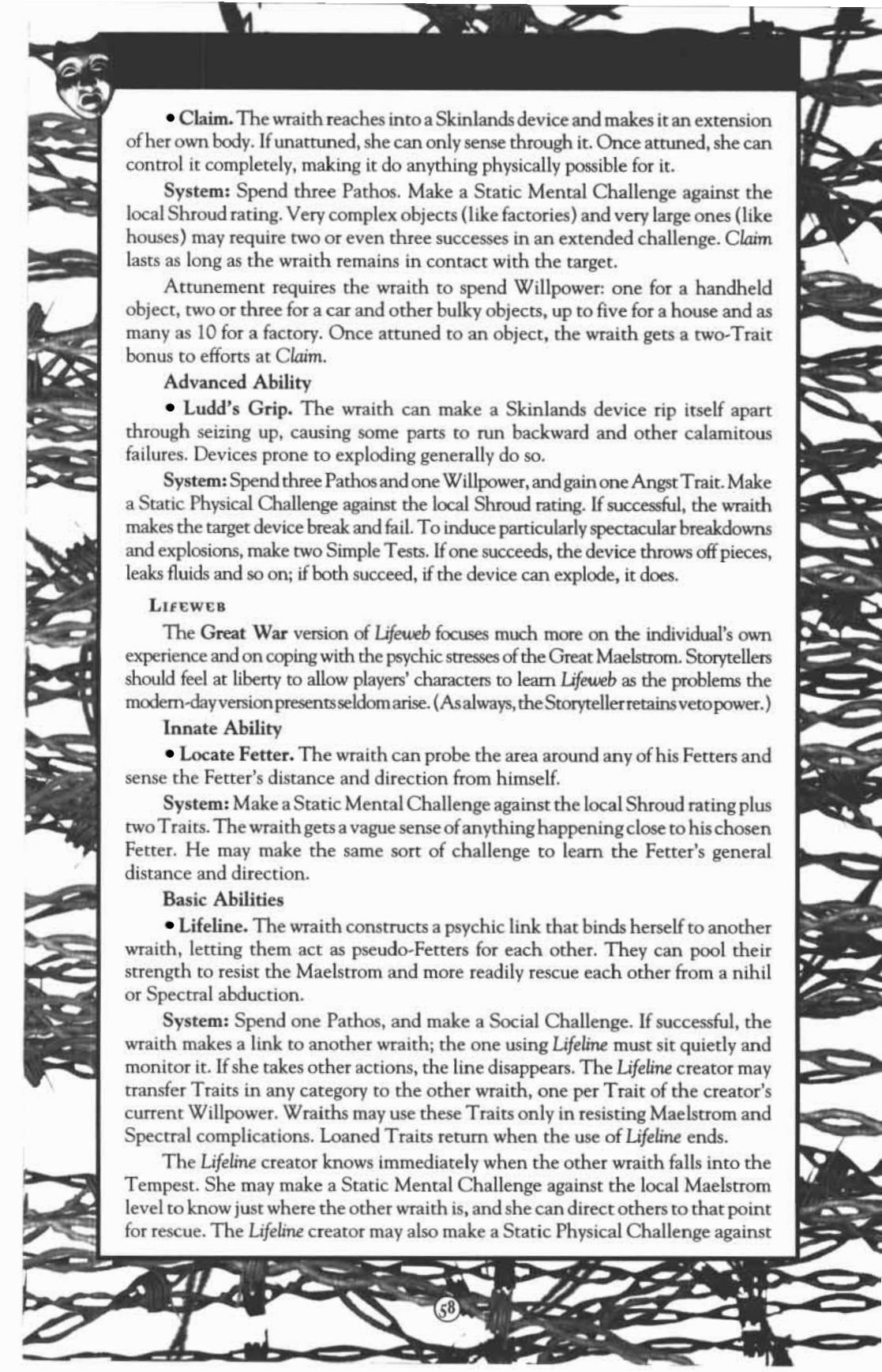
- **Reliquary.** The wraith strengthens an inanimate object by imbuing it with Pathos.

System: Make a Static Physical Challenge against the local Shroud rating plus five Traits. If successful, the wraith can transfer one or more points of Pathos to the target item. Each Trait protects the object against one incident that would otherwise destroy it. Once it does its protective work, the Pathos dissipates.

Intermediate Abilities

- **Haywire.** The wraith seizes control of a Skinlands machine and manipulates it. He can, for instance, make an automobile weave, stop or accelerate to full speed, but he cannot actually steer it.

System: Make a Static Social Challenge against the local Shroud rating. If successful, the wraith can make the target device perform one general action per point of current Willpower. Extra actions cost one Pathos apiece. If any of the actions harm another person directly, the wraith gains a Trait of Angst.



• **Claim.** The wraith reaches into a Skinlands device and makes it an extension of her own body. If unattuned, she can only sense through it. Once attuned, she can control it completely, making it do anything physically possible for it.

System: Spend three Pathos. Make a Static Mental Challenge against the local Shroud rating. Very complex objects (like factories) and very large ones (like houses) may require two or even three successes in an extended challenge. *Claim* lasts as long as the wraith remains in contact with the target.

Attunement requires the wraith to spend Willpower: one for a handheld object, two or three for a car and other bulky objects, up to five for a house and as many as 10 for a factory. Once attuned to an object, the wraith gets a two-Trait bonus to efforts at *Claim*.

Advanced Ability

• **Ludd's Grip.** The wraith can make a Skinlands device rip itself apart through seizing up, causing some parts to run backward and other calamitous failures. Devices prone to exploding generally do so.

System: Spend three Pathos and one Willpower, and gain one Angst Trait. Make a Static Physical Challenge against the local Shroud rating. If successful, the wraith makes the target device break and fail. To induce particularly spectacular breakdowns and explosions, make two Simple Tests. If one succeeds, the device throws off pieces, leaks fluids and so on; if both succeed, if the device can explode, it does.

LIFEWEB

The **Great War** version of *Lifeweb* focuses much more on the individual's own experience and on coping with the psychic stresses of the Great Maelstrom. Storytellers should feel at liberty to allow players' characters to learn *Lifeweb* as the problems the modern-day version presents seldom arise. (As always, the Storyteller retains veto power.)

Innate Ability

• **Locate Fetter.** The wraith can probe the area around any of his Fetters and sense the Fetter's distance and direction from himself.

System: Make a Static Mental Challenge against the local Shroud rating plus two Traits. The wraith gets a vague sense of anything happening close to his chosen Fetter. He may make the same sort of challenge to learn the Fetter's general distance and direction.

Basic Abilities

• **Lifeline.** The wraith constructs a psychic link that binds herself to another wraith, letting them act as pseudo-Fetters for each other. They can pool their strength to resist the Maelstrom and more readily rescue each other from a nihil or Spectral abduction.

System: Spend one Pathos, and make a Social Challenge. If successful, the wraith makes a link to another wraith; the one using *Lifeline* must sit quietly and monitor it. If she takes other actions, the line disappears. The *Lifeline* creator may transfer Traits in any category to the other wraith, one per Trait of the creator's current Willpower. Wraiths may use these Traits only in resisting Maelstrom and Spectral complications. Loaned Traits return when the use of *Lifeline* ends.

The *Lifeline* creator knows immediately when the other wraith falls into the Tempest. She may make a Static Mental Challenge against the local Maelstrom level to know just where the other wraith is, and she can direct others to that point for rescue. The *Lifeline* creator may also make a Static Physical Challenge against

double the local Maelstrom level to attempt to pull the other wraith out. Spectres can pull back, turning it into a contest and adding double the Maelstrom level to their own Physical Traits for the purpose.

The wraith may make more than one *Lifeline* at a time, but no wraith can receive more than one *Lifeline* at a time. The creator can only loan a given Trait to one other wraith at a time. Trying to pull a wraith out of the Tempest costs one Trait of Pathos for each attempt.

- **Fetter Sentry.** The wraith forges a link between himself and a Fetter (his own or another wraith's), protecting it with his own Corpus.

System: Spend three Pathos. Make a Static Physical Challenge against the local Shroud rating plus three Traits. Now, any damage done to the Fetter passes on to the wraith instead. He may soak and heal it as usual. The wraith gets a one-Trait bonus per level of Fetter rating for purposes of resisting damage. *Fetter Sentry* costs one Pathos Trait every two days to maintain; the wraith can drop it at any time. This art does not work against Fetters that are or have been used as Conduits. The wraith can maintain one *Fetter Sentry* for each level of *Lifeweb* he knows.

Intermediate Abilities

- **Splice Strand.** The wraith manufactures a Fetter-like tie between a wraith and a Skinlands person, place or thing. The wraith using *Splice Strand* must touch the object with one hand and the wraith gaining the Fetter with the other at the time the link is created.

System: Spend one Pathos. Make a Static Social Challenge against the local Shroud rating plus two Traits. If successful, the wraith creates a new level-one Fetter. The target wraith (which may be the wraith using this art) must spend one Pathos per day to maintain it. The wraith using *Splice Strand* can reattach another wraith to a severed Fetter. Doing so doesn't require Pathos to maintain, but the difficulty is the local Shroud rating plus four Traits, and it takes a Trait of temporary Willpower as well as Pathos.

- **Sever Strand.** The wraith can break the connection between a wraith and a particular Fetter. Doing so triggers an immediate Harrowing as well as the long-term consequences of having one less Fetter.

System: Spend two Pathos and one Willpower and gain three temporary Angst. Make a Physical Challenge against the target wraith. (If the target's Willpower is higher than his total of Physical Traits, use Willpower instead.) If successful, the severer cuts a Fetter tie, and the target falls into a Harrowing. *Splice Strand* can repair the damage; the Fetter's owner can also touch the former Fetter and spend a point of permanent Willpower to fix it himself.

Advanced Ability

- **Torsion.** The wraith pulls at a Spectre's Fetters, sending Pathos along them to remind the Spectre of existence before losing to the Shadow. The surge of emotion paralyzes the Spectre. This art doesn't work against Spectres who no longer have any Fetters, of course.

System: Spend three Pathos Traits. The wraith must touch the target Spectre with a hand or melee weapon, then make a Physical Challenge. If successful, the wraith makes a Static Social Challenge against a total of [10—the Spectre's highest Fetter rating] Traits. The Spectre remains paralyzed for one turn per Trait of the wraith's current Pathos.



DARK WATERS DISTANT

A GREAT WAR SCENARIO FOR OBLIVION

by Steve McDonald

"Dark Waters Distant" is designed with an eye toward insertion into an existing live-action chronicle, but is also suitable for use as the "first conflict" found at the start of a new chronicle. Use the entire outline of the story or feel free to lift whichever pieces work best in your chronicle. Strict faithfulness to the letter of the material we provide is not mandatory. However you decide to use this material, be prepared for player ingenuity and creativity.

BACKGROUND

This scenario is based on the real life exploits of the Imperial Japanese Navy destroyer *Sakaki*. As a member of the Allied Powers, Japan sent a token force of destroyers to support naval operations in the Mediterranean, both in support of the Gallipoli landing and the remaining Allied troops in the Balkans. One pair of destroyers dispatched to the region were the sister ships *Matsu* and *Sakaki*, arriving in the area in early 1917. Assigned to escort duty, the pair performed well, with the *Matsu* rescuing 2,500 British soldiers from the torpedoed troopship *Transylvania*.

An Austro-Hungarian submarine torpedoed the *Sakaki* in June of 1917, with 68 hands drowning in the aftermath of the attack. Damaged but not destroyed, the ship was escorted to Italy for repairs. However, imagine for the purposes of our game setting that the submarine attack had a more serious effect. Imagine that the torpedo that struck the *Sakaki* caused the main boiler to explode, mortally wounding the ship and dramatically increasing the number of casualties....

Those unfortunates who died aboard the *Sakaki* with troubled hearts and minds soon woke to the reality of an afterlife totally alien to them. It was only due to the quick action of the captain and the remaining officers that the destruction of the *Enfant* crew was averted. Subsequent conflicts have led to the end of more members of the crew, and the total complement of the *Sakaki* is 25 officers and men.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

The ship is still intact and functional, but the crew has grown increasingly weary of the constant wandering brought on by their alien status. Captain Yamada has refused to ally himself with any of the factions of the Civil War in Stygia, and while their independence has prevented bloodier conflicts, it has also prevented the use of a specific port as a base. While supplies may not be as pressing a need for the Restless, the need for a secure harbor to weather out a Maelstrom is certainly required.

Yamada realizes that he has arrived at a point where he cannot afford to remain neutral. To circumvent the problem of a direct alliance with any of the factions, Yamada has decided to seek a partnership with one of the smaller Necropoli. In exchange for the power that the *Sakaki* and her crew can provide, the crew would have a base in which to seek shelter from Maelstroms and other

dangers. Unfortunately for the players, Yamada will negotiate with any faction he deems powerful enough to deliver the items he desires. In short, Renegades and other such factions will be given equal treatment from the captain as long as they possess the power to deliver what they promise.

Unbeknownst to the Japanese officers and crew, however, a threat to the ship is emerging from within. The Japanese officers in the engine room did not make the passage into wraithhood, and the captain has had to promote from the boiler-room crew to make up for their loss. The engine crew is now made up of impressed Korean and Okinawan sailors, men who resented their subservience to the Japanese officers long before their death. Under leadership of Cho, the current engine chief, a mutiny had been brewing before the sinking of the ship. With the passing of the initial dangers to the ship, Cho's thoughts have turned again to the overthrow of the captain and the loyal sailors.

However, the real reason for the new mutinous thoughts is much more insidious. Due to a lack of Pardoners aboard and the reluctance of European wraiths to deal with the strange Shadows of the crew, Cho and some of the other engine-room crew are losing their battle with their other halves. The mutiny is a front for a conspiracy to bring the *Sakaki* over to Oblivion.

ARRIVAL OF THE SAKAKI

Upon entering the port, Captain Yamada and a small group of crewmen will enter the Necropolis and seek out the nominal head of the city. Yamada's party will be well-trained and armed, and they should be able to dispatch any opportunistic rogues looking for easy pickings.

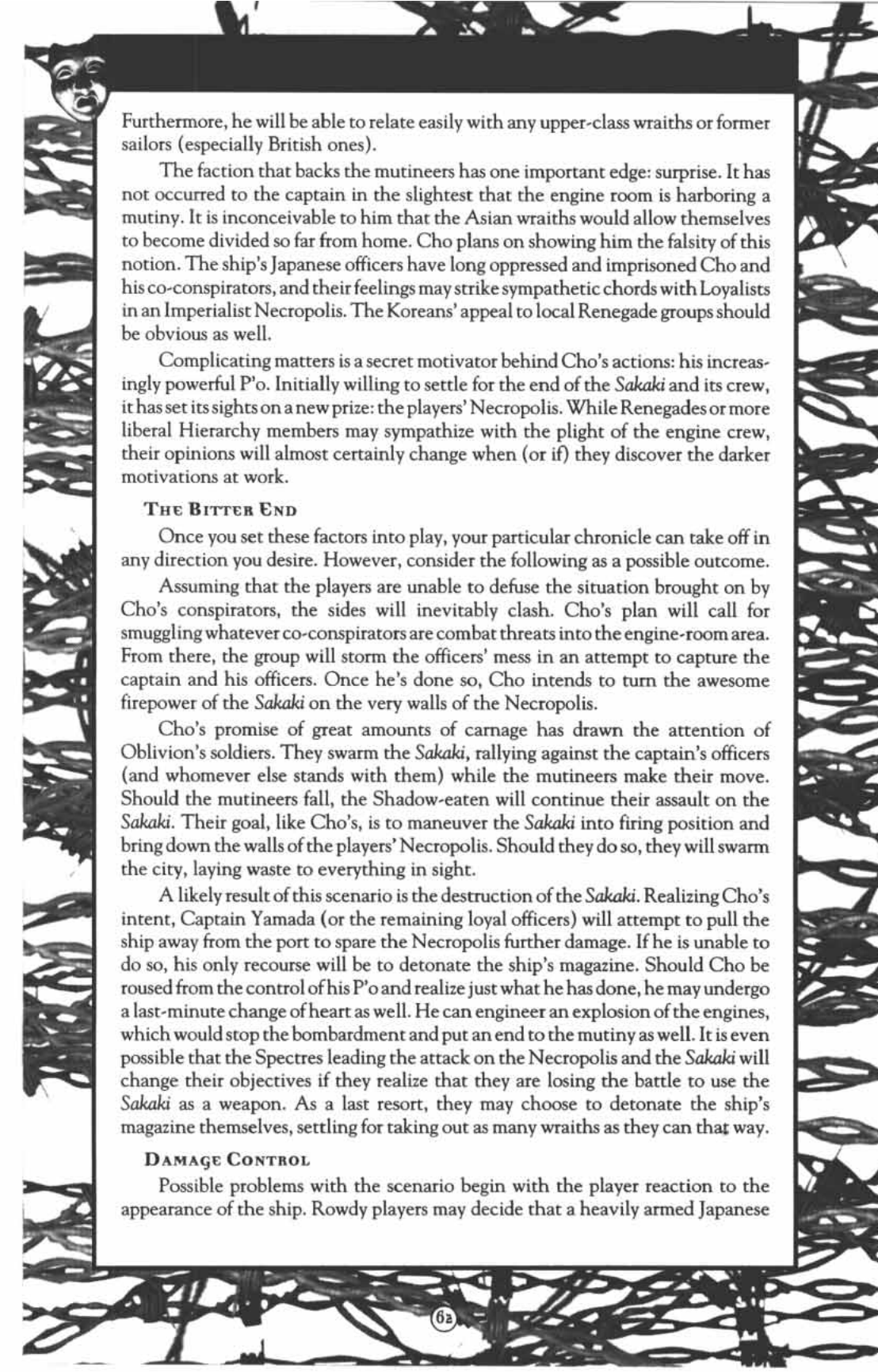
Once Yamada has contacted and arranged a meeting with the city's rulers, he will state what it is he wishes from the relationship. Specifically, he would like use of the harbor area, with a section being set aside for the crew's exclusive use and free passage for members of his crew who wish to visit the Necropolis. In return, the captain is willing to ferry local citizens to nearby locations beyond the walls that have been cut off by the Great Maelstrom and aid in the defense of the Necropolis from its enemies.

Given the assets that the *Sakaki* brings, some sort of deal will likely be reached after some time spent bargaining and roleplaying. The conclusion of the agreement will bring the ship and its crew into port for a long overdue rest. Unbeknownst to the captain and his new partners, however, a second wave of negotiations is about to begin.

ARRIVAL OF CHO

With the new shore privileges enjoyed by the crew, Cho and his faction can seek out the opponents of the captain's new allies and attempt to gain their assistance. Any groups that the captain's party spurned will be obvious targets for Cho. Cho is a natural for allegiance with whatever Renegade or Insurrectionist groups are active in the area, and he will gladly supply them with items smuggled off the ship.

Storytellers will most likely wish to allow the above situation to continue for a few sessions in order to allow the various factions to form up. Both groups have decided advantages. The captain has the most immediate access to the ship and the resources it provides (such as Relics, mindless seaman Drones and munitions).



Furthermore, he will be able to relate easily with any upper-class wraiths or former sailors (especially British ones).

The faction that backs the mutineers has one important edge: surprise. It has not occurred to the captain in the slightest that the engine room is harboring a mutiny. It is inconceivable to him that the Asian wraiths would allow themselves to become divided so far from home. Cho plans on showing him the falsity of this notion. The ship's Japanese officers have long oppressed and imprisoned Cho and his co-conspirators, and their feelings may strike sympathetic chords with Loyalists in an Imperialist Necropolis. The Koreans' appeal to local Renegade groups should be obvious as well.

Complicating matters is a secret motivator behind Cho's actions: his increasingly powerful P'o. Initially willing to settle for the end of the *Sakaki* and its crew, it has set its sights on a new prize: the players' Necropolis. While Renegades or more liberal Hierarchy members may sympathize with the plight of the engine crew, their opinions will almost certainly change when (or if) they discover the darker motivations at work.

THE BITTER END

Once you set these factors into play, your particular chronicle can take off in any direction you desire. However, consider the following as a possible outcome.

Assuming that the players are unable to defuse the situation brought on by Cho's conspirators, the sides will inevitably clash. Cho's plan will call for smuggling whatever co-conspirators are combat threats into the engine-room area. From there, the group will storm the officers' mess in an attempt to capture the captain and his officers. Once he's done so, Cho intends to turn the awesome firepower of the *Sakaki* on the very walls of the Necropolis.

Cho's promise of great amounts of carnage has drawn the attention of Oblivion's soldiers. They swarm the *Sakaki*, rallying against the captain's officers (and whomever else stands with them) while the mutineers make their move. Should the mutineers fall, the Shadow-eaten will continue their assault on the *Sakaki*. Their goal, like Cho's, is to maneuver the *Sakaki* into firing position and bring down the walls of the players' Necropolis. Should they do so, they will swarm the city, laying waste to everything in sight.

A likely result of this scenario is the destruction of the *Sakaki*. Realizing Cho's intent, Captain Yamada (or the remaining loyal officers) will attempt to pull the ship away from the port to spare the Necropolis further damage. If he is unable to do so, his only recourse will be to detonate the ship's magazine. Should Cho be roused from the control of his P'o and realize just what he has done, he may undergo a last-minute change of heart as well. He can engineer an explosion of the engines, which would stop the bombardment and put an end to the mutiny as well. It is even possible that the Spectres leading the attack on the Necropolis and the *Sakaki* will change their objectives if they realize that they are losing the battle to use the *Sakaki* as a weapon. As a last resort, they may choose to detonate the ship's magazine themselves, settling for taking out as many wraiths as they can that way.

DAMAGE CONTROL

Possible problems with the scenario begin with the player reaction to the appearance of the ship. Rowdy players may decide that a heavily armed Japanese

destroyer would make an excellent yacht while Relic-scavengers will salivate over the floating haul that the *Sakaki* represents.

Storytellers can easily avoid this outcome through a variety of means. The easiest is to impress upon the players the destructive power that the *Sakaki* carries aboard. A glance at the **Great War** sourcebook shows the level of injury possible with modern weapons. From a roleplaying perspective, wraiths who were veterans of constant shelling from land guns can extrapolate just how bad a barrage from the deck of the *Sakaki* would be. Another means of stopping player shenanigans is altering the local defense situation to make the ship more attractive. Scavengers may want the ship, but when it is all that stands between them and Oblivion, it suddenly develops shelf life.

The second most likely problem is the survival of the *Sakaki* itself. While the destroyer makes an excellent plot feature, placing such firepower in the hands of the local Necropolis can unbalance the long-term health of the chronicle. It is conceivable that early detection of the P'o influence on Cho or a lack of support for one of the factions could cause the mutiny to either not occur or to end before the arrival of the Oblivion's hordes.

It can easily be impressed on the minds of the characters who hold the city what a danger the *Sakaki* could be to their health. A ship of that size would attract interest, interest that could draw the community deeper into the Stygian Civil War. The ship could well bring on a host of internal problems as different factions in the city vie again and again for control of the potent vessel.

VARIATIONS

Of course, you may modify the preceding scenario to fit your chronicle in any way you wish. In your game, the *Sakaki* may not be destroyed at all. It may remain throughout the life of the game, anchored just off-site, providing another in-game location or a constant source of conflict. The players' characters may even decide to scuttle it after the preceding events play out to supplement their war effort.

However, if the basic premise doesn't appeal to you, try including the *Sakaki* in your **Great War** chronicle in these alternate ways:

RAIDER

The ship could simply be a pirate preying upon the locals. Remove the Korean-conspiracy element, add a greater degree of P'o influence onboard, and you have a basic scenario for starting and intermediate players to tangle with.

TO SAVE OUR FORMER ALLIES

In another variation that removes Cho and his corruption, the captain of the *Sakaki* wishes to use the port for a far different reason. After finding himself in the Shadowlands, Yamada hopes to establish the players' Necropolis as a base to extract Western wraiths from the African theater of war. Interaction with the Bush of Ghosts and exposure to the strange Arcanos of African wraiths are a few of the more basic offerings this chronicle concept provides. This frame establishes the players' Necropolis as a central refuge for many different types of wraiths, allowing for a constant influx of new story potential.



IMPRESSMENT

Assume that Captain Yamada's intentions are not so noble as they would appear to be. In this variant scenario, the captain's negotiations are a front for something more insidious. With the recent deaths of some of his crew members, the captain needs replacements. And where would be better to draw those crewmen from than a Necropolis with no protector from depredation?

STORYTELLER CHARACTERS

The two most influential characters driving this chronicle concept are Captain Toshio Yamada and the Korean Pien Cho. Build these characters using the Dark Kingdom of Jade rules provided in the fourth issue of the **Journal**, but feel free to adjust their relative levels of power to remain in balance with your chronicle. However, there are some basic characteristics to keep in mind when creating these characters.

Captain Yamada's main regret is that he died outside of Japan. He is a shrewd and dignified leader who inspires confidence and trust in his officers and crew. He is a staunch supporter of the Allied cause during the Great War, and he is willing to assist the Allies who have found themselves in the Shadowlands. His Passions include his desire to protect the honor and security of the *Sakaki*, to protect his crew and those with whom he makes alliances and to return to his native Japan once the Great Maelstrom abates to a level in which that return is possible.

Cho, on the other hand, shares no such patriotism with Captain Yamada. His regret is that he died while impressed into servitude aboard the *Sakaki*, and his P'o should never cease to remind him of that regret. Driven thus, Cho will stop at nothing to gain his freedom, overthrow the haughty Captain Yamada and perhaps even return to his own native Korea. If he can do so with the reclaimed *Sakaki* as his prize, that's all the better.





COSTUMING FOR LIVE-ACTION PLAY

by Laura D. Hanson

This article is the first in a limited series on the hows and wherefores of historical LARP costuming. We found Laura at the 1999 Gen-Con, and we're glad we did so. And for those astute readers out there who caught the last issue of the Journal, no, Laura is not "Auntie Csilla."

First off, for those of you wondering who this woman is and why you should be taking advice from her at all, here's a little back history on me. Currently, I run a small costuming business in New York City. I have about 15 years of practical costuming experience, gathered in various places like university costume shops, Renaissance festivals and the occasional Halloween and LARP sewing gig. Regular Gen-Con attendees may also have encountered my costumes (usually with me in them) wandering through the dealers' hall. Along the way, I also managed to pick up a degree in medieval history (so please forgive me if the Dark Ages section seems to run on a bit), all of which leaves me qualified to talk to you about some of the more important aspects of accurate period costuming. And that is more than enough about me. Let's get on to the costume-designing, shall we?

The most important piece of preliminary advice I can give you is, "Get thee to a library!" Yes, this means research. Stick your nose into a book about the time period you are going to game in and read about it. Find etchings or drawings or photographs of people from the time and study the way their clothes looked. If you really want an authentic feel for the era that you're about to enter, research it. That, in its simplest form, is really the best advice that anyone can give you about costuming for a historical setting. Since the reality of it is slightly more complex than that, let me give you a few points on how to wade through all of the information (and misinformation) out there. My advice will enable you to garb your character effectively and satisfactorily for play in the Dark Ages, the Wild West or the Great War period.

THE DARK AGES

Just to get one of the more common misconceptions about Dark Ages fashion (not to mention one of my pet peeves) out of the way, noblemen at the end of the 12th century never spent their days dressed in full plate mail armor. The first reason being that full plate armor did not exist until the 13th century or so, and the second reason is that even when it did exist, wearing it to dinner would have been roughly equivalent to strapping on a Volkswagen and trying to eat. It just didn't happen.

Another stereotype that you should avoid is the Robin Hood look, made famous by Errol Flynn and more recently Cary Elwes. As a part of this look,



heroes wore tights and streamlined suede vests. Every line of these outfits existed to show off the contours of a heroic frame. There *was* actually a time when men dressed this way, and it's called 1930s Hollywood. Second, the pointed hennin, or "princess hat," also comes from a later date, more like the 13th or 14th centuries, as does any form of close-fitting garment.

Yes, that's right. Dark Ages fashion had yet to discover tailoring. Clothes for both men and women were long and simply cut, with very few seams. Clothing style did not differ much from class level to class level, but quality and amount of material did. For example, a peasant woman might wear a simple wool ankle-length gown, but a noblewoman would wear a floor-length version of the same style, made out of velvet or brocaded cloth with a second, shorter gown over it. Castle dwellers wore more clothing not only because they had more money, but because castles were really cold and damp and generally unpleasant.

Color was another important factor in class-distinction. Animal- and vegetable-based dyes were expensive, and they faded quickly. Therefore, the deeper the color of your clothes, the more prosperous you looked because you could obviously afford to either keep re-dying things or buying new ones. In a world where most people had only two sets of clothes at a time (if they were lucky), dark or brilliantly colored clothing practically shouted "Nobility!" There were even sumptuary laws governing what colors each level of noble could wear. It was a way to maintain a visual class distinction among courtiers, helping people to "know their place." Purple was usually reserved for royalty only, no matter what country you hailed from, but rulers would often also enact laws restricting their favorite colors. Color also came into play with heraldry, with different courts dressing in the colors of their ruler's coat-of-arms. Use of color could be very effective in game play if, for example, only the prince and prince's courtiers dressed in scarlet. The color of blood and power would be an immediate visual reminder of who truly rules the city.

The basic style for men was a long-sleeved T-tunic gown (yes, I said gown) that slipped on over the head and reached mid-calf in length. It was worn belted at the waist and was very loose-fitting to allow for ease of movement. Men commonly wore knitted stockings as leg coverings and either plain leather slippers or sandals. (Birkenstock-style shoes work well for this look, although they do tend to be pricey.) The only other piece of the daily wardrobe was the cape or cloak, cut on a circular pattern. These garments had no shoulder seams or hoods. They consisted of just a large circle or partial circle of fabric, draped around the shoulders and held either with circle pins or a band of fabric stitched to create a neck opening. Since patterns of any kind actually had to be woven into the cloth instead of printed on top, decoration commonly took the form of edge trim in wide bands which could be removed from one garment and transferred to another when the first one wore out.

There are two ways to approach dressing for the Dark Ages as a man. One is to grit your teeth, find someone who sews and be really nice to them — then to learn to wear tights and like it. The other way is to simplify your wardrobe.



Wear very plain drawstring pants and a plain, oversized pullover shirt with a simple neckline that you feel comfortable wearing a belt over (so you have somewhere to put that all-important belt pouch). Find undecorated, slip-on boots if you're not the sandals type, and invest your wardrobe money in a full-circle or half-circle cloak. This is one of the few time periods I would recommend buying a cape for first, but 12th-century clothing was all about draperies. Wear fabric, and lots of it.

Now for the ladies. Your basic wardrobe would be something like this: a lightweight linen or cotton full length slip called a chemise, usually white or off-white, over that a floor-length dress with long, tight sleeves and a high neck-line. Over that, wear a knee-length overdress with shorter, wider sleeves. A belt cinched everything in at the waist. Unmarried women could wear their hair down loosely or in braids while married women wore veils draped over their hair, sometimes held by a band of braided cloth or a circlet of metal that was almost Arabic in style. Plain boots are good for outdoor footwear, while "ballerina flat" style shoes make good indoor slippers.

To capture the basic look, I would recommend a long-sleeve unstructured dress, floor length if possible. If you can find one in a solid color and a natural fabric like linen, cotton or wool, great. If you happen to sew, two patterns that have the right basic feel to them are Simplicity 9103 (version D, but longer) and McCall's 7957 (versions A or E). Then accessorize. For hip girdles, look in thrift shops for chain-belts with long tails that will hang down your skirts, or check the upholstery section of your local fabric store for thick, decorative cording that can serve the same purpose. For "older" female characters, veiling the hair is necessary. The veil should be a white or sheer lightweight fabric, not bridal veiling or tulle. If your character is wealthy, heavy chain necklaces and large rings (again, look in thrift stores or "antique malls") make good additions to your costume. You can also add a half or full-circle cloak to top things off.

THE WILD WEST

All women in the Old West were not saloon girls who wore satin and feathers and showed off their legs. Similarly, all men were not gamblers, cowboys, Indians, buckskinned Wild Bill Hickock types, gunslingers or sheriffs. They were mostly average farmer types who had more in common with *Little House on the Prairie* than with *Tombstone*. Clothes were simple and easy to take care of because there were more important things to worry about. The main thing to remember is that the Wild West happened during the Victorian era, which means that high fashion echoed English clothing of the time. This knowledge can make research quite a bit easier to find since it widens your field of reference.

Guys, things just got easier for you. Men's clothing had begun to settle into the same basic patterns it follows today, which means that pulling together your outfit might just be as easy as delving into your closet. A man's basic



wardrobe in the 1800s would be plain, pull-on work boots, wool pants (zippers were invented already, so no worries there) with suspenders and a button-up, collarless shirt. The shirts could be white, or solid colors like red or blue, and they often had vertical stripes on a white background. Add a few accessories like a bandanna or a single-breasted vest, and that's it — you're done.

If you're planning on playing a cowboy or a gold-miner type, you can even get away with blue jeans, just as long as they're not modern looking. Modern in this case means anything really tight fitting or super-baggy, or anything that has labels all over it. Basic, boring, straight-leg Levi's in dark blue denim are the most accurate match you'll find today. Also, you should avoid anything "something-washed" or ripped, unless you want to look poor. Torn clothes did not denote fashion; they denoted poverty.

A good, basic piece of costuming to focus on here is the vest. A vest in the right style can completely change the character of an outfit. A fancy, double-breasted vest with satin lapels can make a white shirt and dress slacks into a gambler's uniform. Add the low-slung hip-holster and a wide, flat-brimmed hat and you're a gunslinger (although no prop guns in a LARP, please). Working-class types might wear a more plain, single-breasted vest made out of canvas or wool. Suspenders are another good way to achieve a working-class look. They create the impression of a man who spends a lot of time laboring with his jacket off.

Women of the era ran the gamut from strictly corseted, bustle-pad-wearing Victorian ladies, all the way down to the women who dressed in men's clothes because of the hard labor they did, such as panning for gold or farming. Basic fashion dictated a full ankle-length skirt, worn with petticoats and bloomers underneath. High-necked white blouses, often with lots of detailed stitching, accompanied the look, which often included a short, fitted jacket. Dresses were cut along similar lines, with close, fitted bodices, long sleeves and full skirts. Everyday wear was mostly cotton or calico-print, while more formal wear could be silk or satin or even velvet. Proper women never exposed their legs in public (even sight of an ankle was considered shocking), but in formal evening dress, it was common to see low-cut necklines and short sleeves exposing the arms. The "fallen angels," as saloon girls were often called, went to even further extremes, sometimes wearing completely sleeveless gowns with the skirts cut scandalously short. The Victorians loved color, and saloon girls also took this favor to extremes, wearing bright, contrasting patterns such as stripes and checks together. They wore their hair back, away from the face, and they piled it up in a bun or curls. Shoes should be easy to find, just look for the low-heeled, lace-up "granny-boot" style of today. (There is after all, a reason we call them "granny-boots.")



THE GREAT WAR ERA

The time period surrounding the Great War actually suffers from the least amount of stereotyping of the eras mentioned here. Mostly, that's because it was a time of major transition: a decade in a world moving from the restrictions of the Victorian era to the free spirit of the 1920s with "The War to End All Wars" thrown in to help move things along.

Men's clothing had basically settled into the patterns it follows today, at least in more formal dress. Suits were slightly more fitted at the waist and buttoned higher at the front so that the lapels were shortened. Vests were still commonly worn, and hats were still very much in fashion. Men wore bowlers or flat "newsboy" caps for daywear, straw boaters (think Barbershop Quartets) in the summer and top hats for the evening. Vertical stripes were very popular in both jackets and shirts, usually a darker stripe on a light background, but dark suits with pin-stripes were also popular. If you invest in a good tweed or pinstripe vest and a hat of the appropriate type, you should have two of the cornerstones of your costume. All that you'll need to add to it are the extras, like pocket watches and handkerchiefs.

Women's fashion, on the other hand was all over the place. Women were moving away from the tight restrictions of corsets and long skirts as they moved from the home into the workplace, although they had not yet achieved the freedom that the 1920's would give them. Skirts had raised up to mid-calf, daywear allowed women to expose their arms for the first time, and the dancer Irene Castle had set the fashion for shorter, wavy hair and decorative headbands as well as dresses with flowing drapery and scarves. A suited, menswear style had also come into vogue, due in large part to women taking over in factories and such while the men were away at war. The "sailor dress" with its uniform details was popular, as was the new "sports" look, which had women in mannish, tailored shirts, with ties and fitted jackets. Skirts remained at least calf-length and very full, similar to the poodle skirts of the 1950's (sans poodles).

A loose, calf-length tank dress in a satiny fabric would work well for evening wear. Pair it with a long scarf or rectangle of silky fabric draped around your neck with the ends flowing down your back. (Just be careful of car doors.) You can achieve an even better period silhouette by wrapping a scarf or shawl around your hips and then blousing the dress slightly over it. Wear it with a "flapper" headband (sequined, with an ostrich plume perhaps) and a few long strands of "pearl" beads to set the look. Stockings or hose and pumps (especially the ones with t-straps) are perfectly acceptable for footwear as women were beginning to show off their ankles. And if you just can't wrap your brain visually around the look, think 1920's "flapper" but with longer skirts.

For daytime wear, look into pleated skirts and lots of plaids, which were very popular, especially in suits. Simple white blouses worn with short, wide neckties or scarves that match the suit make another nice period touch. Accessories included clutch bags, gloves and many different styles of hat.



WRAPPING UP

Finally, here are a few basic tips to help with any historic costume design. First, I meant what I said about research. Go to the library and look up your new time period if you aren't familiar with it. Most library databases file clothing under the subject followed by the time period and/or the region. The Dark Ages, for example, would be found under "Costume-12th Century-European," or more specifically "-Italy" or "-England" while the Wild West would be found at "Costume-19th Century-Western or -Victorian." For the Great War era, look up America or Europe between 1914 and 1919. Some specific book titles that I like are *The Mode in Costume* by Ruth Turner Wilcox for a good, general overview of a lot of different time periods, and *American Costume 1915-1970*, which begins with a nice section on Great War fashion.

If you just aren't the library type, the Internet is your next best bet for information. There are all kinds of costuming sites and newsgroups online, many of which are happy to help out people with questions. You can start your research someplace like alt.history.costuming on Usenet, or Costuming Resources Online at <http://members.aol.com/nebula5/costume.html>. An excellent source for tips on medieval costuming is the Society for Creative Anachronism; most of their local web-sites have links to costuming pages.

For more visual references, you can watch movies dealing with the time, as long as they are well made with authentic costuming. I like Zeferelli's *Hamlet* (yes, the one with Mel Gibson) for its Dark Age costuming, as well as the *Cadfael* mystery series on PBS. Corny as it sounds, *Little House on the Prairie* had the whole settler look down fairly well. While I wouldn't recommend sitting through all of that saccharine goodness just for a few costuming tips, if you happen to stumble across a re-run, it wouldn't hurt to take a look. For the Great War, check out *Legends of the Fall* with Brad Pitt, *Galipoli* starring Mel Gibson (he does seem to like those costume dramas) or Julie Andrews in *Darling Lily* (just remember that the fast-forward button can be your friend.)

Last, but certainly not least, here are a few generic tips for historical dress that I would like to pass on since a lot of people tend to overlook them. Try to avoid wearing any kind of modern shoe with your costume, especially any sort of athletic shoe. It doesn't matter what they look like or if they are black—they will never look right. And except in specific circumstances, a cape should absolutely, positively be the last thing that you buy for a costume. No really. It doesn't cover up your street clothes; it just makes your street clothes look out of place.

Again, research is the key to good costuming for live-action play. Find a look that appeals to you, and copy it as best you can. A good costume can go a long way to establishing a living, breathing (or not) character and make your roleplaying more compelling and entertaining for everyone involved.

EVENT HORIZON: UPCOMING LARP EVENTS

VAMPIRE EVENTS

NORTHWESTERN US

Blood Moon Social Club; Trails End Troupe; Oregon City,
Las Vegas, NV OR

www.bloodmoonsocialclub.com TheChylde@aol.com
(702) 877-1813

Ruby Rain Society; Mountlake,
WA

Tracy Soldan, tarot01@juno.com

Theatre of Roses; Portland, OR
Kewi-Cee Chu,
kc@csua.berkeley.edu

Dark Necropolis; Kitsap, WA
mrdeath@u.washington.edu

Dark Salem; Salem, OR
Preston Malone,
Coordinatrix@hotmail.com

Tacoma; Tacoma, WA
sheperd@darkdestiny.com
(253) 581-8728

Nox ad Infinitum; Fairbanks, AK
fsdck@aurora.alaska.edu

Of No Concern; Eugene, OR
Jmcloud@gladstone.uoregon.edu

Ivory Masque; Anchorage, AK
glitter_boy@hotmail.com

The Outlands; South King
County, WA

Christopher Buser,
Buserc@mindspring.com
425-687-8093

Dark Tears; Walla Walla, WA
annapuma@hotmail.com

All Seattle Camarilla-run games
seattledc@hotmail.com
www.lovelys.com/seattlecam

MIDWESTERN US

Crimson Facade; Indianapolis, IN
Paul M. Starr, tophat@indy.net
(317) 466-9064

EVENT HORIZON: UPCOMING LARP EVENTS

SOUTHWESTERN US

Baptism of Fire; San Diego, CA
Maggie MacDonald,
maggie5@home.com
(619) 425-1587
www.larp.com/vespasian

Domain of Mountain Shadows;
Provo, UT
Nikki McCoriston,
N.Burton@m.cc.utah.edu
(801) 363-3959

Moonlight Masquerade;
Marysville, CA
Jennifer Young, kaidin@syix.com

Labyrinth of Crying Shadows
(Sabbat Game); Sacramento, CA
Adam Abramson,
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Paraiso de Espinas/Paradise of
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OTHERS (UNSPECIFIED AND MIXED GAMES)

Dark Carpathia, Portland, Maine http://home.maine.rr.com/darkcarpathia/darkcarp.html	More Than Night: Portland, Oregon (Independent game that some times playtests upcoming supplements) Bruce Baugh, bruce-baugh@sff.net
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An up-to-date Calendar of all Dutch
games and European Camarilla
games can be found at [http://
www.troy.demon.nl/vampire](http://www.troy.demon.nl/vampire)