

WRAITH: THE ARISEN
A BOOK OF RESTLESS SHADES...

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1. Statement of Intent.

By J. Edward Tremlett

This is a "patch" designed to make player character Wraiths in the new World of Darkness. When the patch is completed, players will have a combination of: the new ghost rules; the old rules and some of the backdrop from W:tO 2nd ed; some of the backdrop and innovations from Orpheus and Exalted: the Abyssals; and a new imagining of the world of the dead for the World of Darkness.

The patch's rules are based on the new rules for Ghosts, as given in The World of Darkness. However, they depart from the text in order to present Ghosts as more than just antagonists, as well as to give them more freedom than they're currently granted. The broad outlines of the new ghosts will be turned into fully-formed, playable characters, complete with templating for mortal or other characters who die and can't completely let go of their lives.

In the beginning was The Word.
The Word was Light - The Light was Life.
The Gods found them Good and Gold.
Nothing Good and Gold can stay.
- The Book of Old Times, first Stanza -

Speaking of beginnings, here we are at yet another one.

By the time you're reading this, it's been about two months since White Wolf Gaming Studios unveiled its new World of Darkness, which a lot of us have taken to calling WOD 2.0. This new world represents a rehauling of rules and reimagining of core settings, with what worked - and what didn't work - all taken into account.

Reaction from fans seems to be overwhelmingly positive, both for the Core rulebook, The World of Darkness, and the first "new" game down the pipe, Vampire: the Requiem. The remade Vampire has emerged as something very interesting, with a feeling of being new, yet fairly familiar.

One of the better changes is the increased emphasis on the characters and their night-to-night existence. Rather than focusing on necro-archaeological adventures and the signature characters' reaction to them, or power struggles from far away, the book encourages players to focus on their characters' immediate concerns.

So, in the spirit of Vampire: the Requiem, which is looking around at the current, moribund situation, rather than some enigmatic threat, ahead or within, the patch formerly known as Wraith: the Something Or Other shall henceforth be named Wraith: the Arising.

And so it begins...

Kill Not The Living
Save The Lost - Destroy The Damned
Wake Not The Sleepers
Await the Day of Dominion
- The Injunction -

Wraith: the Arising is a "patch," designed to be placed on top of the rules in *The World of Darkness*. It is a reworking of *Wraith: the Oblivion*, taking the new Ghosts of the WOD 2.0 into account, but departing from the new rules in certain spots.

This departure from the new rules will be to turn the broad outlines of the new ghosts into fully-formed, playable characters. These characters the same range of action that a vampire, werewolf or mage might have, and take them away from just being "antagonists." It will also allow for the templating of Wraiths, so that mortal or other characters who die and can't completely let go of their lives can come back to haunt us all.

To that end, the patch will be a combination of the new ghost rules, the old rules from *Wraith: the Oblivion*, and a bit of the backdrop from it as well. It will also have some of the backdrop, rules and innovations from *Orpheus and Exalted: the Abyssals* thrown in there as well.

The basic idea is that there are Ghosts, and then there are Wraiths. Ghosts are mostly as presented in *The World of Darkness*: stunted, incomplete presences that are hopelessly bound to their Anchors, and might not even be aware of their being dead. They go about their routines, slowly disintegrating as the ages go by and their Morality spirals downward, until they either go away for good, or someone puts them down.

Wraiths, on the other hand, are fully-aware Ghosts. In the language of the dead, they have Arisen: "woken up," for want of a better term.

And therein lies all the difference...

I remember thinking how strange the world looked - how surreal and distorted. Things seemed to be behind warped glass, and the air was heavy and wet. Humid.

Then I realized that it wasn't the air that was heavy and wet. I was caught up in that something, and found it repellent, like an unwanted hand on my shoulder. So I sought to tear it from myself as quickly as I could.

My Shroud came apart as easily as tissue paper, and fell to my feet in tatters. I felt the cold, night air on my face, and saw no trace of the man who'd been killing me all those years. I saw bright park lights that hadn't been there just moments ago, and a new set of benches, right on the way to the trees...

And I knew, at long last, that I was dead.

Some might ask "Why bother with a reworking? Why not just adapt the new rules to work with the old setting, and let the rest of the new *World of Darkness* go on its merry way?"

All arguments about what "did" or "didn't" work put aside, *Wraith: the Oblivion* was very much a product of its time. And in the time since its first publication, back in 1994, the field and the backdrop have undergone some heavy additions. It would be criminal to not take this chance and consider them.

The popular notion of ghosts - and what it means to be one - has been seriously challenged. Excellent movies like "The Ring," "The Sixth Sense" and "The Others," just to name a few, have posed questions that need answers. Chiefly amongst these are whether ghosts always know that they're dead, and if they'll really just go away peacefully when you "help" them.

Meanwhile, the *World of Darkness*, itself, went through second editions, and then Revised editions. A lot of the really crazy, over the top stuff from the first and second editions was either retconned, represented or done away with entirely. Likewise, the mechanics for some things were changed, making some things easier and some things more "realistic."

The end result were games that were redone and well done, allowing for a smoother, less jarring ride. They were mature games made wiser for the passage of time.

And on a more familiar note, White Wolf presented a marvelous gift to *Wraith* fans in the form of *Orpheus*. This limited series game, which presented a world where people could spiritually

interact with ghosts, opened a whole new chapter in human/ghost relations in RPGs. It also took a lot of what "needed work/fixing" from Wraith and either fixed it, reworked it, or did away with it entirely, making for a whole new vibe on being dead.

Whether Orpheus was a part of the "proper" World of Darkness is debatable. However, there were more than enough homages to Wraith or were those "Easter Eggs?" in the game to keep everyone guessing right up until the end. And then both the proper WOD and the Orpheus game were shook down to their foundations, right around the same time - complete with a major cameo from Grandmother in Apocalypse for Werewolf: the Apocalypse.

In short, the playing field has been rearranged. The bar's been set a lot higher than it was when Wraith: the Oblivion first came out, and folks coming back to Wraith after all this have a new, and higher, set of expectations.

And who would want to disappoint?

They call themselves the Messengers, yes they do.

They say they're guardian angels, indeed. And they spend their afterlives looking after people, yes they do. The helpless, the hopeless and the aimless, folks like that, they are. Just trying to keep them alive, the Messengers say, yes they do.

Or so they say. So they say!

Me, now, I've got my own ideas.

You, I bet you notice how those people they watch always die. Those stories never have a happy ending, no they don't. One day the angel isn't there, and that's when it happens, yes it does. The little boy falls down the well, yes he does. The junkie takes the fall, yes he does. The kid eats the gun, yes he does.

And they always become ghosts, yes they do. Isn't it funny, that is? Always always always ghosts.

Always, yes I say!

And when they wake up... they always become Messengers.

Yes they do.

Keeping all that in mind, my personal goals for this patch are as follows:

1. To present Wraiths in much the same way that they were before. They are tortured souls who are still bound to the world they left behind, and have a tenacious hold both on it, their ethics and their own sanity. Do they cling to what they had, risk it all for a chance at what lies beyond, or find some way to make this new existence work for them? If death is not the end, but only the beginning, then what will you do with the rest of eternity?
2. To simplify some matters, both in keeping with the new rules and on reflection of the old. This involves condensing some things, getting rid of others, and trying to cut down on anything that would make a player and Storyteller have to grind mental gears to figure it all out.
3. To change the previous backdrop of the game. I'd like to get away from the old history, the old structures and the old cosmology as much as possible. Some of the more evocative ideas and a few Easter Eggs will be left behind, but they'll be radically changed and/or under a new name. The question is what new angle can we show it from?
4. To bring in a renewed sense of mystery, danger and dread. There are going to be a lot of unknowns, in this game - a lot of enigmas, ancient questions and really bad news lurking in the dark corners. What your characters don't know can hurt them... very, very badly.

5. To keep the angle of passion and horror that made the Wraith: the Oblivion the great game it was, and still is.
6. To keep the Shadow, in spite of all the changes, because that's always been one of the major selling factors for the game, itself.
7. And lastly...

Vanth, I invoke thee.

(WE INVOKE THEE)

Vanth, I hold your torch which lights the darkness.

Vanth, I hold your key which opens the door.

Vanth, I am your serpent, holding the key and the torch.

(WE ARE THE DEAD, CRUSHED UNDERFOOT)

From the darkness of the Underworld, Vanth, I call thee.

Thou who sees all that is, all that was, all that is yet to come, Vanth, I abjure thee.

Thou who art the healer of life and the taker of it, Vanth, I supplicate myself before thee.

(WE AWAIT THY WORD, THY CALL, THY COMMAND)

Come to us from beyond the Barrier, noble Goddess.

Hed the words of thy true servants.

Show us your favor on this, your day.

(AND WE AWAIT THY APPROACH ON THE DARK DAY TO COME)

- Prayer of The Order to the Herald of Death -

... to keep the hope.

One person I knew said that a good game of Wraith makes you want to kill yourself, but that was wrong: flat out dead wrong. A good game of Wraith makes you want to get up from that table, get back out into the world and live.

Why? Because after dealing with the hopes and horrors of a fictional persona who'd fallen down the life ladder and can't get back up again, the question of why you're going in circles and leaving things undone becomes a damned good one. It's a rare game that can get you to really reexamine your own priorities in life: Wraith is one of them.

And that's one of the major reasons why Wraith's always been one of my favorite games. That's also one of the major reasons why I've always pitched for it in the way I have. It's a great game that deserves a second or third chance at life, and even if it never becomes "economically viable," it'll still be out there, teaching us something valuable about life and how we live it...

...but enough fatuous self-indulgence and pretension. You came for a game, and it shall be given unto you, piece by piece over the next few months.

We hope you enjoy it.

1.1 From Faust91x.

Hello there, the reason I'm compiling and trying to fill the few pages left is because this book is an awesome piece of work and I hate all of it going to waste. It's playable with only the Antagonist and Rules lacking, and given my love for that aspect of the games...why not?

All credit goes to the original authors of this work and I highly recommend to visit the page:

<http://www.cattail.nu/wraithproject/>

for the original content and ideas for Chronicles.

Also due to the overpowered nature of some of the old WoD Numina, I've lowered their effects and increased their cost. Particularly with those that enable the Wraith to interact with the living world. Wraiths should be at their strongest when dealing with death and decay, fitting them as beings that no longer belong to this world and reflecting their struggle to remain in a world that keeps advancing without them.

Besides, if they used the oWoD levels the dead would have taken over the living world a long time ago.

Finally, some ideas and material has come from the Exalted: the Abyssals supplements as it had some neat ideas that could be interesting and fitting with this game beyond what's presented in Wraith: the Oblivion and Orpheus. Along with the monsters from Geist: the Sin Eaters to make both games more compatible. Hope you can like it!

Anyway, lets get on with this.

2. LEXICON.

2.1 General Terms:

Affinities: Small supernatural powers that are the "deathright" of every Wraith, and allow them to go about their ghostly business. It is said that Numina are natural outgrowths of these basic abilities, but hard facts are hard to come by in the world of the dead.

anchors: People, places and things that were massively important to Ghosts and Wraiths during their life, or else formed an integral part of their death, and are keeping them from moving on.

Angst: The permanent power of the Shadow. The more Angst a Shadow has, the more powers it can offer a Wraith in Shadowstate, and the more dice it can offer a Wraith to "help" on a roll. Also, the amount of Angst forms an upper cap on how high a Wraith's Morality can go.

Arisen: The state of being a fully-aware Ghost, as opposed to a Sleeper.

Art: A specific Numina power. All Numina have one "Basic" Art *, which forms the backbone of the Numen in question. Various different applications branch out from that core understanding, going from ** all the way to *****, and possibly even beyond...

Artifacts: A catch-all term applied to functional objects that come from beyond The Barrier. They all seem to be made of black metal, and are molded in a strange, baroque fashion, so that they appear somewhat alien. Some are even "alive," in a sense...

Asleep: Used to describe a Ghost who is unaware of being one, either because she's still a Sleeper, or has Woken Up but hasn't been told

the truth yet. Also used as an insult towards foolish or stupid Wraiths.

Barrier, The: The invisible "wall" that separates the world of the living, which Ghosts and Wraiths inhabit, from The Spirit World beyond. Some entities - such as Reapers, Ferrymen and The Damned - are capable of crossing from the Spirit World to here, and back again. Ghosts and Wraiths can only make the trip once, though, and are never seen again.

Believers: A loose "Concord" of Wraiths who firmly believe that Paradise waits beyond the Barrier. They tend to be a fractious bunch, but most groups of Believers tend to agree on listening to the Ferrymen, Resolving their Anchors and upholding the Injunction.

Charun: The Emperor of the Underworld, leader of The Ferrymen and sovereign king of all Wraiths. He laid down the Injunction in the wake of the Sundering, and bid his Ferrymen to form The Order to be His voice in the land of the dead.

Concord: A social group of Wraiths who hold certain, shared - or enforced - beliefs on death and their role in it. Some are very loose confederations, split into competing groups who are "together" only because of mutual enemies, while others are very unified in view and action in theory, anyway...

The Concord: (1) The timeperiod following the forming of The Order by Charon's agents. (2) The Order is more properly called The Concord, which is why the other ConCORDs are referred to as ConCORDs.

Consort: A mortal that a Wraith has spiritually "bonded" with, by expending effort and energy. Certain Numina are easier, or at least less-costly, to perform on or around a Consort, and a Wraith can extend her senses out to sense the environs of the mortal. A Wraith can also use a Consort as an "Anchor" of sorts, allowing her to travel far from her real Anchors without the penalties normally associated with that.

Corpus: The "physical" substance that makes up a Wraith's body, and a measure of their Spiritual togetherness. Corpus is formed by a Wraith's residual self-image, which usually conforms with how they saw their body in life. Altering one's Corpus in a radical fashion requires the use of Numina.

The Damned: A Ghost or Wraith completely lost to goodness and sanity that has become an insane, amoral and evil thing. When someone becomes one of The Damned, she disappears across The Barrier, and then comes back across to indulge outrageous and murderous drives. Wraiths rightly fear such creatures, and are under standing orders to destroy them.

Dark Walkers: Cunning and vicious killers from beyond The Barrier. They seem to be Ferrymen, when seen from a distance, but are given away by the fact that they can't talk. They seem to exist just to try and destroy Wraiths and Ghosts, but tend to flee from the Ferrymen.

Day of Dominion: The prophesied time when The Barrier shall break down, and the Spirit World shall be opened to the dead once more, so that all may come to the Underworld, and Paradise, under the reign of Charun. Also known as Dominion Day.

Essence: A Wraith's spiritual power, which she can use to heal herself and fuel her Numina. A Wraith with no Essence has no energy, and must either spend a point of Corpus to gain back a point of Essence, or else get to an Anchor to

replenish herself.

Essence Pool: The maximum amount of Essence a Wraith can carry within her. A Wraith's Essence pool is made up of whatever she has in the Essence trait equal to starting Willpower, plus one for each dot she has in Anchors. So a Wraith with an Essence of 5 who has a full 10 dots in Anchors can have up to 15 Essence. It is possible to go above that number, in certain circumstances, but these are almost always costly and dangerous.

Ferrymen, The: Enigmatic and powerful beings who claim to come from the other side of The Barrier. They appear to Wraiths and speak of a better place that lies on the other side of the Barrier - a realm of final peace and deliverance. They call upon Wraiths to let go of their Anchors and follow them back to the other side, but few heed their call.

Ferrymen are also known to destroy the Damned on sight, and have a great deal of skill and prowess - and strange, black weaponry - to bring to bear for this unpleasant task. No one has ever seen a Ferryman lose against one of the Damned, no matter how large they may be, or how many there are.

Freewraiths: A loose "Concord" mostly comprised of Wraiths who think the Ferrymen are lying - or at least not telling the whole truth - and The Order are a bunch of fascists. Others just want to live by their own rules, rather than the Injunction. Some fight the power, some lay low, and others just thumb their noses at "the man."

The Fugue: The dreamy, half-awake state that a Sleeper endures while still in her Shroud.

Ghost: More or less what it sounds like - the spirit of a deceased person that is bound to the land of the living for some reason. This term can be used to include Sleepers and Wraiths, along with other creatures which exist in the same, ethereal state.

Haunters: A Concord made of those Wraiths who think their true purpose is to frighten the living. They delight in scaring, driving off and even slaughtering the living - sometimes for pay, and sometimes because they like it. Their activities do not make them popular with other Wraiths.

The Injunction: The five rules handed down by Charun, Emperor of the Underworld. All Wraiths are supposed to follow this code, and The Order and The Ferrymen uphold it as best as they can. Meanwhile, some Concords break it as a daily course.

The Land of the Dead: The reality that Ghosts and Wraiths inhabit, which lays beside the land of the living.

Messengers: A Concord made of Wraiths who believe that have been tasked to save lives. They act as invisible (or very visible) guardian angels and saviors for mortals.

Numen (pl. Numina): One of the arcane powers of the dead.

The Order: This Concord - the first - is a quasi-religious society that hews to, and enforces, the Injunction. They see themselves as the shepherds of the dead, and servants of Charon. Others have less charitable opinions.

Ossify: A strange, creeping physical and mental paralysis that happens to Wraiths who "give up." Fully Ossified Wraiths often resemble statues, and are considered to be "Sleepers" in terms of the Injunction.

Paradise: What awaits on the other side of The Barrier, in the Spirit World, according to both the Ferrymen and the Believers.

Pardoners: A martial Concord that see themselves as warriors of the soul. They patrol in search of Wraiths who need their spiritual aid, ever on the lookout for The Lost and The Damned. And they'll save you, whether you want it or not.

Projectors: Living beings who can send their souls out of their bodies, and into the land of the dead.

Reapers: Strange creatures from beyond The Barrier who hunt Wraiths and Ghosts, seemingly for sport. Any souls they capture are taken back across The Barrier with them, and are never seen again. Reapers almost always carry Artifacts with them.

Shadowland: A place where the worlds of the living and the dead are so close that they actually overlap. Shadowlands can be both naturally-occurring and purposely-created, and can be made by man and ghost.

Shadowstate: A state of being where the Wraith's Shadow actually helps her out by placing its Thorns at her disposal.

The Shroud: The flimsy, ethereal membrane that covers Sleepers from head to foot. No one is certain if it is the cause, or a byproduct, of the Fugue. Removing the Shroud from a Sleeper wakes her up, and some Sleepers have been known to Arise on their own.

Sleeper: A Ghost still in her Shroud. They are in a dreamy, half-awake stupor, and are not fully aware of their surroundings. Sleepers aren't always aware that they are dead, and repeat certain moments of their lives over and over again. They can respond to stimuli, but tend to go back "asleep" once the excitement dies down.

Solitaries: Wraiths who don't belong to a Concord, or steadfastly refuse to join one. They tend to be unpopular, and looked upon as poor cousins.

The Spirit World: Whatever lies beyond The Barrier. The exact nature of the Spirit World is subject to fierce debate, especially amongst Believers and The Order. The Ferrymen refuse to talk about it, other than to say that Paradise

awaits there.

Storm: In terms of the land of the dead, a Storm is a terrible, near-volcanic eruption from the Spirit World, where dangerous winds and legions of The Damned spill out of holes in ghostly reality. These do a lot of damage, and are thankfully rare. The only way to protect oneself from a Storm is through the use of Numina, in a Shroud, or Ossified.

The Sundering: The great Storm of ages past that pushed The Spirit World away from the land of the living, and created The Barrier. Everything that has happened since The Sundering is said to have taken place during The Concord.

Tainted Essence: The free-floating power that the Shadow collects for Itself. These can be used to fuel Its powers, and offer dice to "help" Its Wraith. If the amount of Tainted Essence ever goes past a Wraith's Morality, the Shadow has a chance to trade it all in for a dot of permanent power, known as Angst.

Thorns: Powers the Shadow can use to affect ghostly reality around the Wraith. These are often used to confuse the Wraith - making her doubt her senses, or distrust her friends - so she'll rely on the Shadow, instead.

Wraith: A fully-aware Ghost, and the protagonists of this particular game. They are fully fleshed-out characters, as opposed to Sleepers, who function under much stricter parameters and much simpler rules. Most Wraiths were once Sleepers, but woke up due to one reason or another.

2.2 Old Form:

Atran (pl. Atranes): The name the middle-management priests of The Order use amongst themselves.

Arcanos (pl. Arcanoi): The old name for a

Numen (pl. Numina), which dates back to the Old Times.

Charontes: An ancient term for The Damned, most often used by The Ferrymen, or those who work closely with them.

The Concord: The proper term for The Order. It has slowly fallen out of favor due to every other socio-political faction amongst the dead also being referred to as Concords. Sometimes refined as The First Concord.

Haruspex: One who is skilled in using the Numina of Fate.

Lucomun (pl. Lucomones): The name the highest priests of The Order use amongst themselves.

Truna: An ancient name for Essence.

Underworld: The more "proper" name for the Spirit World, used by Ferrymen and the priests of The Order. Most Wraiths prefer to use "Spirit World," since it sounds more gentle.

2.3 Modern Slang:

Boo -Job: Trying to scare the living. This is most often used in the context of getting someone else to do it for you: "I offered to cast lots for him if he did a boo job for me."

Dark Angels: The Ferrymen, according to people who don't trust them.

Day Trippers: What Wraiths tend to call Projectors.

Do-Gooder: A derogatory way to refer to Wraiths who go around Waking Up Sleepers. This title is applied whether the Wraiths in question are acting from unselfish motives or not.

Frighteners: The most common nick-name for the Haunters, and the only one they have no

problems overhearing. Repeating the others in their presence is asking for real trouble...

G.D.I (God-Damn Independents): Often used to refer rudely to Freewraiths and, increasingly, to Solitaries as well.

Halo Hunters: A name applied to any Wraith who does a lot of good for the living, seemingly overcompensating for sins real or imagined. Often applied to the Messengers.

Juice: The street name for Essence, most often used by those trying to refuel themselves. "Damn, I need some more Juice."

Meat Puppet: A mortal that is the "property" of someone, via Bios, Regis or some other Numina.

Rabble: People who don't belong to The Order, according to loyal members of the first Concord.

Shotgun Priests: One of many rude name for the Pardoners, who do tend to live up to it. In fact, it's said that they started the name's use, themselves.

Soul-Gestapo: One of the less rude names for The Order, often used by people who see the First Concord as fascists.

Walking Dude: A recent term for a Dark Walker. Also used to refer to a Ferryman, girded for war, that's headed your way.

The Wall: Another way to refer to The Barrier, common amongst Wraiths who died during the Cold War or Pink Floyd fans.

Zealots: A rude name for the Believers, usually applied by people who don't believe in Paradise and/or hate the Ferrymen.

3. DEAD TO THE WORLD.



Figure 3.1: Illus. by Taz Jurz

*There's a house in the middle of Skylark Street,
and they say that it's haunted.*

*Not that anyone could say for certain. No one
lives there, no one goes there, and no one even
looks at it if they can help it. It's the sort of
place that doesn't invite inspection, if you get
what I mean.*

*The story goes that, long ago, a man came
home and found his wife with her lover. He'd
been married for years, and hadn't suspected a
thing. And then one day he forgot his satchel on
the way to work, and came back just in time to
catch them in the thick of things.*

Caught red handed, you might say.

*What happened next depends on who you ask.
Some versions say he killed her lover, some say
her lover killed him. Hell, some folks think her
lover went mad and killed them both, running
out of town before anyone could call the
police...*

There's all kinds of gruesome, sick stories about

*that place, and what happened there. But no
one wants to find out for sure, since the place
makes you want to be far, far away from its
front door.*

*So no one lives there. No one goes there. No
one even looks at it, if they can help it. They say
it's haunted, and just leave it at that.*

And that's just the way I like it.

"Nothing Gold or Good Can Stay"

The coldest and saddest fact anyone has to face is that there must be an end to things. Nothing is forever: buildings crumble, flowers fade, friendships die, love goes away. Even mighty nations must someday fall into the dust of ages, leaving only trace records, legends and questionable history behind.

And as the mighty nations go, so must the people who made them.

No, mankind is no exception to the stark reality that everything was made only to end. Mortality is but a fragile, temporary condition at best, and though many may try to cheat death - and some, indeed, do - there is no true escape from the ultimate limit of death. Sooner or later, all things must lay down and not get back up again.

But no one wants to accept this.

If asked for an honest answer, most people will say that they believe in a life after death. The alternative is too terrible to contemplate. Who can truly imagine nonexistence? Who can really say that they look forward to not being able to look forward to anything? To never think, to never feel, to never remember another thing,

ever again?

It is madness to dwell upon the idea for too long.

So we cling to the hope that there is something beyond death. Our religions promise us some sort of continuance. Some say we can dwell with the Gods in an unending paradise or might be forced to suffer in an unending hell. Others say we can come back, time and time again, until we finally get it right. There are countless variations, and perhaps some of them are correct.

But there is another, even more universal theme.

Almost every culture that has ever existed has believed that souls can get lost on their way. The reasons they are made are unique to each worldview, as are their limits and purposes. Perhaps they have been taken too soon, or in bad circumstances. Perhaps they are angry at their loss, or need a final closure to truly know. But the general idea that there are souls who are denied rest, judgment or peace is frighteningly common.

Common it should be, for ghosts are very, very real.

And these are their stories...

3.1 GHOSTS.

*Everybody has a Ghost
Everybody has a Ghost who sings like you do
Yours is not like mine
But it's alright, keep it up
Ghost - Live*

3.1.1 Creation songs.

What makes a ghost? There are as many answers as there are ghosts to testify to them.

For some it is a case of unrequited love that has never been resolved, and cannot be put away. For others, a horrible accident or vicious murder cries out for redress, or recognition. Some fall prey to terrifying madness, however silent or obvious, while others succumb to old age, or sickness, or a strange, fatal irony. Even those who die in peace in their sleep might have cause to come back, for one reason or another.

There is no true formula to predict what lets one soul go on and holds another back - no exact science of the soul. Some say it's choice, some say it's chance, and some say it's a cosmic conspiracy. Still others say it's all a matter of Fate, which lies somewhere between those three boundaries.

Whatever the reason, there are times that the soul does not depart from the world the way that it should. The most precious and painful things left behind, and the feelings they engender, deny these souls full flight from their mortal coil. These great and weighty things are known as Anchors, and they hold the soul down as surely as any chain, prohibiting the peace their final journey into death should bring.

What is left behind, fettered to these Anchors, is a spectral mockery of what once had flesh, a voice and a will of its own. It is a shadowy echo of what was mortal: a stillborn voice, whispering in the darkness, and begging - however unconsciously - for the attention of the living.

A ghost, for want of a better word.

3.1.2 Sleeping reason.

*Drifter - Sleepwalk
Drifter - Sleptalk
Awake to who is following
Drifter - Siouxsie and the Banshees*

Ghosts are drowsy, stunted things, endlessly repeating key moments of their lives over and over again. Wraiths call them Sleepers, for they seem to be sleepwalking through their undeath. Most aren't aware that they are dead, and even those who know this fact are barely aware of their surroundings, their situation or their own strength.

This half-awake state of being is known as the Fugue. Those who have some insight - however limited - into these matters say that it is caused by the shock of dying. And a ghost might yet outsit

an eternity without ever recovering from it, for it is all-encompassing, and powerful: draining away conscious thought and lulling the Ghost to "sleep" as surely as opium.

Sleepers will respond to certain things, such as being attacked, or having their Anchors threatened. But once the threat is gone, or the excitement goes away, they go right back to whatever they were doing before they were interrupted. They may completely forget that it happened, or may conveniently remember it again when something similar happens. Such are the vagaries of the Fugue.

There are a few ways out of this state of affair. Sometimes the directed outpouring of emotion towards a Ghost, or one of her Anchors, is enough to bring her around. Exceptionally strong-willed Ghosts have also been known to bring themselves out of the Fugue by working through the unreality of their current situation, or forcing themselves to ask questions about the passage of time, and their relation to it. And sometimes Ghosts just wake up, as though the Fugue were nothing more than a long and luxurious nap.

But there is a more direct - if somewhat brutal - way to wake up a sleeping ghost: removing its Shroud.

All ghosts are trapped inside a Shroud, which is a flimsy, ethereal membrane that covers them from head to foot. No one is certain if the Shroud is the cause, or a byproduct, of the Fugue. All that is known for certain is that its presence is integral to keeping the Ghost Asleep, and removing it, then, is the surest, most direct way to Awaken a ghost, thereby creating a Wraith.

And when it's over, and the Wraith is fully aware of what she's "gained," it's quite understandable why many of them wish they'd stayed Asleep.

3.1.3 Means of demise.

The first division in undead society - at least past the matter of being Asleep or Awake - is caused by the last moments of every Wraith's mortal life.

The means by which one dies mark the dead in ways that are both indelible and unquestionable. They provide Wraiths with the source of their Deathmarks, and an affiliation towards certain Numen. And they also make each Wraith stronger in one regard, yet weaker in another, as though they were caught in some kind of spectral balancing act.

Those slain by **Violence** are something of an angry breed, hence the nickname of "Ragers," "Redfaces" and "Bruisers." They know too well the cost of anger, and yet they are marked with an odd propensity towards it, reflecting in an increase in their strength. They also become attuned to either controlling fear in others, via the Numen of the same name, or channeling their rage and pain through the strains of Kinesis. And their anger will become all too clear if they are presented with a close reminder of how they, themselves, died, as they may slip into Shadowstate without meaning to.

Meanwhile, those who succumbed to **Sickness** or **Starvation** are conversely granted an increase in their stamina, as if to make up for their bodies' failure. These dead are known as "Sickies" and

"Plaguebearers," even if they starved to death, due to the horrid miasma of disease and sickness that surrounds them. The experience of having died in this all-too-earthly fashion lends them an affinity towards either the Bios or Embody Numen, as they have either gained an insight into the workings of the human body, or forced themselves to be for so long that Embodying now seems second nature.

The ones taken by **Old Age** are often referred to as "Elders" or "Grandparents," when they're not being derided as "Antiques" or "Old Farts." Having forced themselves to live as long as they did increases their resolve, just as having gotten so old makes them more attuned to the Bios or Decay Numen. But they also face the danger of giving up too easily, or falling into a deadly rut - leading to easier Ossification if they're not careful about it.

Happenstance takes many a victim, and grants them an increase in their dexterity as if to make up for the whole thing. They are also granted affinities with Kinesis and Fate, which may give them a better chance the next time around. However, all "Accidents," "Whoopsies" and "Slip-Ups" are also cursed with suffering physical flashbacks to their deaths, both on important anniversaries and in eerily similar circumstances.

The "weirdoes" and "lunatics" who died due to their own **Insanity** are not often popular, even if they might have a talent for the much-needed Castigate Numina as a result of wrestling with their inner demons. This may be because they can also have a talent for the Fear Numina, instead, or perhaps because their mania followed them even unto death, in the form of a post-mortem insanity that can never be healed. The fact that their composure is raised to help counter this handicap is often lost on those who would judge them.

Also unpopular are those whose deaths are a **Mystery**, even to them. Bereft of Deathmarks, they stand out like sore thumbs, and could develop a talent for any Numina at all - including ones that are hard to come by, or possibly even unique. Their wits have been sharpened by the uncertainties of their death, but they will need them, for they are compelled to seek out any new evidence of what may have happened. And once the mystery is solved, their proper Deathmarks appear, and they can no longer be referred to as "blanks," "enigmas" or "questions."

But the most unpopular of all are those who died due to the hand of **Fate** in action - mostly because no one but the "Touched" know who one another are. The "Condemned" sport proper Deathmarks according to how they died, but the why of it revealed only to one another, in a special Deathmark only they can see. The hand of Fate upon them makes them more manipulative, perhaps because they are more attuned to how the world works, and they can have an affinity for either the Fate or Embody Numen along similar principles. But that hand can also be very controlling, and many of the "Puppets" find out that it can control them just as easily, occasionally turning them into automatons and sending them off on some unguessable errand.

3.2 INNER STRUCTURES.

"You see... I keep thinking Greg's died, I've died.

*This has to be Hell or some Tibetan Bardo experience... and I keep thinking...
if I was going through some sort of weird afterlife Purgatory? Would I know it?"*

Officer Slade, from The Filth - Grant Morrison

While all Wraiths must start out as Ghosts, the change from one to the other is quite spectacular. The two beings still share many similarities, but also diverge in important ways - so much so that some are convinced that Ghosts are a separate species altogether, and that the act of Waking Up is more than just a burst of self-awareness. How else to explain that a Sleeping Ghost appears much like a mortal, when seen from the vantage point of the Wakeful dead?

In terms of their similarities, Wraiths and Ghosts both have Anchors: people, places and things that hold them back. Both spirits gain power and stability from their Anchors, and a Ghost cannot exist without them. Likewise, a Wraith with no Anchors quickly disappears into the Barrier, never to be seen again except, perhaps, as one of the Damned.

The difference between the spirits is in the numbers and limits of their Anchors. Ghosts are barred from moving too far from their Anchors, but Wraiths have a wider field of action. They are inconvenienced by their separation from them, rather than prohibited outright, and can teleport to their Anchors through force of will.

Ghosts also tend to have but one Anchor, while Wraiths may have several. It seems that the process of becoming a Wraith also "Awakens" one or more other Anchors that were dormant up until that point.

Both Wraiths and Ghosts are made of up of Corpus: firm but pliable soulstuff that forms a reflection of the Wraith's own self-image.

Some appear more comely than they did in life, while others appear thinner, fatter, stronger or weaker. If a Wraith saw herself as being uglier than she was, then whatever features she didn't like about herself will be slightly exaggerated. Likewise, if she saw herself as being prettier than she was, her favorite aspects of her body will be slightly accentuated in her favor.

The differences are most often cosmetic, though it's not unknown for people to be slightly stronger, faster or more observant in death than they were in life. However, it is possible for a Wraith to radically change her appearance using the Shaping Numina, or various other means, and these changes are often substantial. Wraiths can impersonate other Wraiths, and make weapons, armor and other objects out of themselves by consciously rearranging their Corpus. They can even invest these objects with an existence separate from themselves, which is how most things in the Deadworld came to be.

Deathmarks

There are other, more noticeable changes to a Wraith's Corpus, such as the odd, tell-tale signatures the manner of their death marks them with. These signs are known as Deathmarks, and while they can be Shaped away, or hidden by other means, a Wraith's "default" appearance always has these features.

Violence: The final act of violence against the person takes permanent and exaggerated form on the Wraith, forever marring her body. The "blood" from this wound continues to drip, but dissipates before it reaches the floor.

Sickness: The symptoms of the fatal malady are exaggerated, and permanent. Those who died from Jaundice have yellow skin, and those who died from fevers are sweaty and seem to radiate heat.

Starvation: Those who died from hunger or thirst are thin and gaunt, with skin stretched taut against the bone and eyes sunken deep in their sockets. They also look extremely hungry.

Happenstance: The wounds from the accident that killed such Wraiths stay upon them. But - unlike those who died from Violence - these wounds do not bleed, burn or break, except when the Deathmark's owner suffers a flashback.

Insanity: Wraiths who died as a result of their own madness have the unblinking, glassy stare of the lunatic.

Mystery: Those who have no idea how they died are unique in that they have no physical Deathmarks whatsoever. Only when they discover what killed them will the marks manifest, if at all.

Old Age: Wraiths who died from advanced age, or some of the "natural causes" such a state of being brings about, have stark white hair and a gray tint to their skin. They also have cobwebs about their bodies, as though they were falling victim to Ossification.

As for those who were **Fated** to die, they display one of the marks above, appropriate to the manner in which they left the world. However, they have another, truer mark: a strange, indescribable sigil upon their forehead that seems to change from moment to moment. This true mark is submerged, however, and visible only to others who were taken by Fate as well.

Both kinds of spirit are intangible and invisible to the living. They can walk right through walls, floors, ceilings, speeding cars and bullets - though not the ground - as though they weren't there. Some say this is because they're spirits, while other, more scientifically-minded Wraiths have posited that the Dead are in a different molecular state. Either way, Wraiths have to Manifest, or use various Numina, in order to be seen by the living, or to have any true physical contact with them, and take damage from their attacks.

Wraiths and Ghosts share certain powers, which have been referred to as Numina since time out of mind. However, where a Ghost's Numina are halting, limited things that seem more of an afterthought, Wraiths have access to a frightening array of powers. Some Numina are rather common, and seem to come naturally - if anything can be said to be natural to the undead - while others are more arcane, and require study and a great deal of practice to fully master.

Both kinds of spirits can harvest and store a form of spiritual energy known as Essence. This energy can be used to power their Numina, and can also be used to heal their Corpus. Wraiths and Ghosts can collect Essence by being in close proximity to their Anchors, or when someone remembers them. But Wraiths have other ways to gain Essence, and other things to spend it on as well. Wraiths also tend to have much larger stores of Essence available to them, though this is largely dependent on the strength of their Anchors.

Wraiths also have access to small but potent abilities known as Affinities. These ghostly senses take advantage of Wraiths' status as dead, entropic entities, and let them see weaknesses in objects, flesh and the soul. They also allow for a small measure of foresight, both into their own immediate future and the far-off future of another, and allow them to keep track of their Anchors.

Ghosts cannot use most of their Affinities, most likely because they are Asleep, and unaware of their true potential. One important exception is the ability to Manifest, whereby the gulf between the living and the dead is breached by the spirits, allowing them to appear in physical form. Ghosts have a fairly limited repertoire when it comes to Manifesting, while Wraiths have a few choices on how fully they want to be felt, seen, or heard.

3.2.1 Shadows.

*The mirrors always tell the truth
I love myself for hating you.
Everyone I Love Is Dead - Type O Negative*

And then there is one, final way in which Ghosts and Wraiths differ: the malign, split personality of the Wraith, known as the Shadow. These inner monsters wake up right alongside the Wraiths they belong to, and are quite unhappy to have been brought around to consciousness. So they spend their time trying to get their Wraiths to go back "Asleep" - willingly if they can, forcefully if they must.

Some say the most ironic thing about being a Wraith is that the most forceful advocate for a final, peaceful rest is also the most spiteful, hateful thing a Wraith will ever encounter, outside of the Damned. The Shadow detests the Wraith for existing past her death, and wishes death and destruction on the Anchors that hold her back. It loathes other Wraiths for giving her aid, compan-

ionship or a new purpose, and laughs at the promises of something more than this. Indeed, it hates the entire world for allowing the cruelty of extended, post-mortem existence to be heaped upon her, and it, and would not hesitate to destroy it all if something ever gave it a chance.

In short, the Shadow is the enemy; It exists to deceive, disenchant and destroy. It can use its special powers, known as Thorns, to trick its Wraith. It can also use them to tempt her into certain actions, or offer them to the Wraith for a short time and a high price. Failing that, it could talk the Wraith into giving up completely, or engineer the destruction of her Anchors.

Given time, the Shadow can lull a Wraith into a state of horrid delusion - known as being Lost - or else become so powerful as to destroy the Wraith, one fraction of her being at a time. Such deception and power take a long time to accumulate, but as it's been noted, time and again, Wraiths and their Shadows have nothing BUT time.

There is help available against the Shadow, but it is often as questionable as the Shadow, itself. Pardoners are especially skilled at dealing with them, but their ministrations are often intrusive and unwelcome, and are always painful. Ferrymen are also a source of salvation, but it's hard to persuade them to give it; They seem to take the stance that some souls are not worthy of their time.

3.3 STATES OF NON-BEING.

"Watch me bleed - bleed forever."

Watch Me Bleed - Tears for Fears

To be a Wraith is to be a spiritual echo of what once was. And though it's true an echo will last longer than the sound that originally made it, it tends to get weaker and more diluted as time goes by. As above, so below.

To the dead there is no question of the heart and mind ruling the body or not - they ARE the body, and the body is them. Wraiths are thought and feeling wrapped inside ghostflesh, ever in danger of being undone from without or within. And while Wraiths might be a little hardier than most, even they have their limits.

3.3.1 Body is soul.

A Wraith's appearance is largely dependent on how "together" she is: a combination of how she's feeling, how much Essence she has in her, and the overall strength of her Corpus. Given all that, a Wraith might change her looks fairly often in the same day, even without consciously Shaping herself.

A Wraith tends to wear her emotions on her sleeve, unless she's very good at hiding them. Those who are upbeat and happy appear brighter, as though they were out in the sunlight, while a Wraith who is dejected or upset seems dark, as if caught in the shadows. Those who are sad seem wet and clammy, as though they'd soaked themselves with their tears, and those who are angry seem hot to the touch, and may even steam with rage. And so on.

Wraiths with a lot of Essence seem to move faster, and glow with an inner light that illuminates their features and stands out against their Deathmarks. They also have more color to them than

your average Wraith, which is still considerably muted when compared to the world of the Living, but is a welcome change from the normal dull palette of the Deadworld. Those with very little Essence to them are duller than usual - almost colorless, in fact - and seem to move slower, even if there is no real reduction to their speed.

Corpus, meanwhile, is measured in two ways by Wraiths: how much they have at the time, and how much capacity they have for it. Those with a fairly normal capacity are solid in appearance, while those who aren't are translucent, transparent or practically invisible, depending on how little room they have for Corpus. And while those with a fairly full "tank" have distinct features, those who have lost most of their Corpus are fuzzy, indistinct or unclear, as though they were losing cohesion due to damage. This lack of clarity is on top of whatever other damage might have been done to the Wraith, such as losing a limb, having been raked across the face by claws or burned severely.

3.3.2 Soul damage.

A Wraith's Corpus is a bloodless sack of soulstuff - one intangible to most of the slings and arrows from the Land of the Living. However, when faced with dangers from her new world, a Wraith's body proves as malleable and fragile as the flesh she left behind at death. Wraiths can be punched, kicked, cut, mashed, sliced open, dismembered and burned, just as any mortal. And while they are in no danger of having bones broken, bleeding to death, or suffering the loss of a vital organ, the pain caused by their equivalent remains as acute as ever.

That said, it is difficult to destroy a Wraith through the application of brute force alone. Only the most serious kinds of damage, done in an overwhelming amount, can utterly destroy a Wraith on the spot. All other kinds of damage done to them might indeed shred their bodies to nothing, but they will reform near their closest - or most powerful - Anchor within the hour, provided they can overcome their Shadows' attempts to keep them from reforming.

Denial and Dissolution.

Whenever a Wraith is dropped down to zero Corpus, that poor soul is in for an unpleasant time. She must literally wrestle her Shadow for the "right" to come back - a process that requires her to expend energy and square off against her darker side. This awesome battle of wills is known as Resurrection, and the Shadow's efforts to block it are referred to as Denial.

Those who succeed in their Resurrection reform in part, using their Anchor as a base to rebuild themselves from. If they overwhelm their Shadow's attempts to Deny them, then they can fully return, just as they were. However, if they reach a stalemate with their dark halves, they must either concede the Denial, and try again -which is risky, and time-consuming - or else spend additional energy to force themselves past the deadlock, losing a piece of themselves as they do.

Those who are Denied in this must marshal both time and energy and try yet again, until they either succeed or run out of energy. Those who run out of energy are destroyed, as surely as a Wraith whose body was overwhelmed by severe damage. And those who take too long may come back to discover that days, weeks, months or even years have passed them by.

As previously mentioned, Shadows can damage their Wraiths' Corpus in another, more direct manner: they have the power to force a Wraith's very being to fall apart. This action, known as Dissolution, is not an easy thing for a Shadow to do, and they can only do it a little piece at a time. However, the process becomes easier once the Wraith has already lost a fraction of herself to Denials, certain Numina, or other perils of the Deadworld.

3.3.3 Ossification.

*The further I get from the things that I care about
The less I care about how much further away I get*

Fear of Ghosts - The Cure

A Wraith's essential oneness of body and soul can produce physical effects that are not merely cosmetic. Perhaps the most pitiful is being spiritually "frozen" by an extreme lack of inner drive. This state is known as Ossification, and it can strike anyone, at any time.

Over the years, a Wraith may tire of the endless, seemingly-pointless expanse of time that is life after death. If she doesn't recognize that this is a problem, and gives in to ennui, boredom and depression, she may find herself slipping away. Hours will slide by as swiftly as minutes, days will pass with little note, and she will question the need to do anything ever again. After all, what would be the point?

Wraiths who succumb to this line of thinking find that their bodies are a willing accomplice to the crime of soul-surrender. They begin to reject Essence, which makes them feel dull, gray and unmotivated. Then their Corpus gradually turns as white as marble, and becomes just as unyielding and immobile. Cobwebs form in the air around them, binding them tightly to wherever they chose

to make their final resting place.

And if they do not snap out of their funk, and no one intervenes, such Wraiths one day close their eyes one last time, and fall back Asleep.

It's important to note that a Shadow cannot cause a Wraith to Ossify. It can, however, steer a Wraith towards that state of mind by judicious use of its Thorns. It can also pull the Wraith back from the brink, and set her back into motion, but why would a Shadow want to do that?

Letting Sleepers Lie

While this seems like a horrible tragedy - and perhaps it is - it's not irreversible. A Wraith on her way towards Ossification might snap out of it, and come back from the brink. And it is possible to revive a victim by pouring great amounts of Essence back into her, even if she's been Ossified for centuries.

The Order, however, prohibits these actions. They believe that some Wraiths just can't handle the hand that Fate has dealt them, and are clearly better off this way. Besides, once a Wraith is Ossified, she's in no danger of becoming one of the Damned; Those whose Anchors are destroyed simply collapse into a pile of dust and cobwebs.

In keeping with that philosophy, the Ossified are considered to be Sleepers, as per the Injunction - "Wake Not the Sleepers." All such unfortunates are gathered up by The Order, and taken away for safekeeping. In Order Temples across the Deadworld, there are vast chambers full of ancient statues who once walked, talked and wept - a sobering reminder that one's unlife should be as rich and productive as possible.

3.3.4 Getting Lost.

I'm not crazy - Institutionalized
You're the one who's crazy - Institutionalized
You're driving me crazy - Institutionalized

Institutionalized - Suicidal Tendencies

Another danger of the mind and body being one in the same is what the Shadow can do to a Wraith's senses, body or immediate circumstances. If left unchecked, it can completely rewire how its Wraith receives information, putting her into a sinister, virtual reality known as being Lost. And a Lost Wraith is a serious hazard, both to herself and to others.

The living speak of delusions: seeing and hearing things that aren't really there, or failing to see things that are. But while those illusions might be tricks of an unbalanced mind, to the dead they may be everyday occurrences, spawned by their Shadows. These tricks are known as Thorns, and much like their namesake they are painful and entrapping.

Most of the illusions a Shadow can make with its Thorns are of short duration, only. However, it is possible for a Shadow to make such a trick last for much longer, and then keep it going, so as to really fool its Wraith. And as a Shadow gains in power, it can keep more and more Thorns going at once, eventually getting the Wraith to a state where almost all she perceives, says and does is a

product of her Shadow's will.

Wraiths who have reached this sorry state of affairs are referred to as Lost. They are rarely pleasant to be around, as they may look grotesque and invite trouble on themselves. They might interpret all friendliness as hostility, and all offers of help as sordid, demeaning suggestions. They may even start to see friends as foes - and foes as friends - and lash out against anyone who tries to bring them out of it.

It is for this reason that the Pardoners are so extreme in their methods. They won't tolerate any dissembling, as they know it could be the Shadow covering up a cry for help, and treat all their flock as though they were in need of desperate scourging. They figure it's better to have been a little overzealous in a situation that didn't call for it than to be criminally kind to someone needing tough love.

3.3.5 Damnation.

*All they want is your heart and soul
They want your tears to fall
All they want is your purest sin
They want to welcome you in*

Walking with Shadows- Gary Numan

All Wraiths have a preternatural fear of The Damned - not only because they are so hostile towards Wraiths ravenous might be a better word but because they know that behind every fanged maw and taloned hand is a face that was once just like their own. Each and every one of their deadliest enemies were Wraiths, and they are an ever present reminder of what happens when the Shadow wins.

One might wonder, then, why so many Wraiths succumb to Damnation? It should behoove anyone with a sense of self-preservation to look well upon the Damned, and consider their own position.

The answer is a sad one: the more power a Shadow has, the more its Wraith becomes like it.

As the Shadow grows stronger, it is able to subtly influence the Wraith's thinking. It starts out with small, little decisions, such as whether to lie, but eventually goes up to much larger and darker sins. And as these dark acts weigh upon the Wraith, the Shadow gets stronger still.

Before long, the Wraith reaches the point where she sees less and less reason to care about keeping her dark side in check. Aren't their goals essentially the same, now? Aren't they stuck with one another, thick and thin? "Detente" becomes the watchword, rather than "victory," and co-operation with the darkness becomes a daily convenience rather than a frantic act of dire emergency.

By this time, both halves of the personality are on near-equal footing, and there is precious little difference between the Wraith's point of view and the Shadow's. One day she will ask if it really be that terrible to be united with their inner darkness, once again. And after that it's a slow but sure spiral into Damnation - one that only the greatest expenditure of self-will, or the most powerful

acts of a Pardoner or Ferryman ,will halt.

And even they cannot reverse the damage that's been done. "Once fallen, always scarred."

I realize that the prognosis sounds horribly bleak, my brothers. But we must ever remember that our darkness is merely a reflection of ourselves, and our true reaction to this condition of shadow and whisper.

No, we were not meant to be in this state of affairs, and the Shadow would remind us of this - harshly and brutally, if need be. But we have the intelligence to direct it in the direction we need it to go, do we not? We have the drive to persevere, do we not? And do we not have the wisdom to know a good idea from a bad one, thanks be to God?

To leave this condition with some sort of dignity, we must become one with the Shadow, once more. We know this for a fact. The question, then, is whether one shall rule the other, or the two shall become one, and we may truly walk alongside the Angels into Paradise.

- Father P. Gant, Believer of London, God's Flock

3.4 OUTER REALITIES.

How could we not see this approaching?
 What trick of topography is this,
 that lets the sprawling monster hide behind corners to leap
 out at the traveler?
 It is too late to flee.

Perdido Street Station - China Miéville

Wraiths have a wider range of action than Ghosts, but they remain tied to their Anchors, which dissuades wide travel. That said, it isn't unheard of for Wraiths to explore the far corners of their world, either on their own or by creating a Consort and riding someone - or something - around the planet. In fact, some Wraiths with well-protected Anchors go "Skinriding" all the time, jaunting from place to place so they can say that they have, indeed, seen everything.

Simply put - anywhere one of the living can go, so can a Wraith. They can walk the poles, swim in the sea, traverse the deserts and jungles and climb through the mountains and valleys. They can even soar through the air or dive to the depths of the oceans, provided they can get a ride.

And some have even hitched rides aboard spaceships in near orbit, though the pull of their Anchors makes such a trip little more than an extreme stunt.

3.4.1 Here and there.

When speaking of what they left behind in death, Wraiths tend to make a distinction between the world of the living and the world of the dead. The former is the Land of the Living - sometimes known as the Liveworld - while the hazy realm they inhabit is often called the Land of the Dead, the Deadworld, the Deadlands, or any number of other, less cozy terms.

In truth, the notion of there being separate lands for the living and the dead is a misnomer: both occupy the same world at the same time. It's just that Wraiths are one step "beyond" the people, places and things they left behind, and are unable to interact with them without using their powers. And even then, with their Affinities or Numina turned full on, that interaction is temporary and draining, and serves as a harsh reminder of what's been lost. So they prefer to think of it as two separate realities, even if they are one and the same.

To a Wraith, the Liveworld - and, by extension, the Deadworld - is a pale reflection of what they remember. Everything and everyone they once knew is still there, barring their destruction, demolition or death, but what was left behind seems more than a little off. Everything there is hazy and indistinct, as though the Wraiths eyes were watering up or out of focus. The colors are washed-out and flaccid, motion is seen as a blur, and the Sun is a dull disk in the sky, even on "sunny" days. Smells are muted, sounds are distorted and taste is simply not an option, here.

In fact, the only things that are sharp and clear to Wraiths are their own Anchors and their fellow Wraiths: even Ghosts in their Shrouds seem as much a part of the cloudy landscape as the living. While this state of being makes it relatively easy for the Dead to tell one another apart, it also makes for a depressing and discouraging view of the things they left behind. Anchors seem so close, and yet so terribly far, far away.

To be a Wraith in the Deadworld is to exist alongside the living, but to be unable to enjoy anything of the former life. Their intangibility keeps them from touching anything in the "real" world, and it's a rare human who can see or hear them. It is for this reason that many Wraiths take up "riding" people or objects, or else learn the lower levels of the Embody Numina. They just want to see, hear and touch the world, again - to experience it as it was truly meant to be, once more.

And the fact that this makes the loss even deeper than before is not lost on Shadows.

Consorting With the Dead.

One exception to the rule of appearances are Consorts: mortals that Wraiths have spiritually "bonded" with, using Numina or the expenditure of Essence to do so. It's easier, or at least less-costly, to use Numina on or around a Consort, and they can be used as temporary "Anchors" as well.

To Wraiths, Consorts appear to be as 'real' as Anchors. In fact, they appear so 'real' as to often be mistaken for other Wraiths, too, which leads to unintentional comedy as the Wraiths try to talk to them. Especially if the Consorts talk back.

Interestingly enough, those mortals who can hear or see the dead - often referred to as Mediums - do not appear any different than ordinary mortals. This also leads to unintentional comedy when the Mediums speak to the spirits, and the Wraiths don't realize they're being spoken to.

3.4.2 The Catacombs.

They had streamed up the aisle between the high pews to the trap-door of the vaults which yawned loathsomely open just before the pulpit... I followed dumbly down the footworn steps and into the

dark, suffocating crypt.

The Festival - H.P. Lovecraft

While they may have the run of the world, Wraiths also have a special place all to themselves. Under the ground of the Deadworld is a sprawling labyrinth of untold lengths and depths, existing alongside the subterranean buildings of the living, and bordered only by the oceans and seas. This endless maze of tunnels and chambers is known as the Catacombs, though there are those who refer to it as the Labyrinth, as well.

The Catacombs appear to be much like what the name would imply: a spectral echo of any place that the living may have placed their dead. The shafts and passages run and twist, leading explorers into burial chambers, mausoleums, temples, tombs and crypts. Some of these grottos appear to be exact replicas of famous burial places - such as the necropoli of Egypt or Rome - while others have only ever been seen in dreams of fancy, or terrible nightmares.

All a Wraith has to do to enter the Catacombs is to find an entrance, which is sometimes quite a trek if she doesn't know where the nearest one is. It's not possible for Wraiths to slip into the ground as they can slip through walls, floors or people, for some reason, so these entrances are the only way in, and also the only way out. It's not even possible to go underground via a subway or parking lot and walk through the wall, there.

It can also be tough to get in those entrances, sometimes. The Order, convinced that the refuge was created by Charun for their use, always posts a guard, and they only allow in those who belong to their number. They tend to allow the Believers in as well, as the two Concorde have an ancient pact of neutrality, but the fine print of this Understanding differs from city to city, depending on their local relationship.

The Order's guards also get out of the way of anyone escorted by the Ferryman, even if they're Haunters or Freewraiths...

Wraiths use the Catacombs as meeting house, place of worship - for those so-inclined - and sanctuary from the Storms. The Order most often has its Temples down below, in the largest and most grandiose of crypts, while Believers are mostly content to take smaller, more humble lodgings.

They say that wonders beyond imagining lurk around the myriad corners of the place, along with horrors equally unthinkable. However, as Wraiths are as bound by the pull of their Anchors while down in the Labyrinth as they are while above ground, very few care to explore for too far, or for too long.

Grave goods.

Under most circumstances, the only things that come across into the Deadlands are those things that had a soul: people, in other words. All objects that are found amongst the dead are either things made from Corpus - via the Shaping Numina - or Artifacts brought over from beyond the Barrier.

That said, it is possible - however rare, these days - for objects to come across into the world of the dead. To do this, they have been buried along with the dead, and done so in order to be specifically used by their previous owners. So long as the object lasts in the Land of the Living, a ghostly "echo" of it can be found in the Deadlands, ready to be used by whomever would take it up. But as soon as it's destroyed, rots or crumbles to dust, it fades away, never to be seen again.

Such items are known as Relics, and they are extremely rare and valuable commodities. And by some quirk of dead physics, they only ever turn up in the Catacombs, making the exploration of the unmapped reaches something of a niche industry for Wraiths.

3.4.3 Dead weather.

Being one step "beyond" the world of the living doesn't make for much in the way of comfort. The good news is that Wraiths are in no danger of being soaked in the rain, blown away by a tornado or buried under ten feet of snow. The bad news is that they can never feel the warmth of sunshine on their faces, never have a delightful breeze blow past them, and never truly appreciate the change of the seasons. From their vantage point, it's all a dull, lukewarm blur that they can't indulge in.

That's not to say that the Deadworld doesn't have its own, unique weather patterns, though. Every so often, for reasons that are not fully understood by anyone - except perhaps the Ferrymen, who warn of their approach - the Land of the Dead shakes and shudders, as if caught in a fevered dream, and the air comes alive with the fury of a Storm.

These thankfully rare eruptions from the Spirit World bring with them terrible, ripping winds and hordes of The Damned. Visibility drops down below zero, even in a "mild" Storm, and between the predators, the razorwinds and the sheer confusion, any Wraith caught out in it will be lucky to get out in one piece. Any Wraith caught out in a bad Storm is most likely destroyed.

The only sure way to protect oneself from the ravages of a Storm is to be down in the Catacombs, or inside an Anchor. However, whenever a Storm is on, it is impossible for Wraiths inside its area of effect to instantly teleport to their Anchors. Those unlucky enough to be caught out in one must either use certain Numina, or voluntarily Ossify themselves, in order to survive.

And as for those in the Catacombs, the innate power of the maze may keep the Storm's winds out, but the Damned may go anywhere they like.

A sicker option.

One of the many oddities about the Deadworld and its relations to the Land of the Living is that Ghosts in their Shrouds are completely protected from Storms. It's as if they weren't there at all, and this is most likely caused by the special properties of the Fugue, or the Shroud they wear.

So it's not unknown for a Wraith caught out in a Storm to find the nearest Ghost, tear off her Shroud, and put it on herself for protection. While this maneuver doesn't completely spare her from the ravages of the winds, it does keep most of the damage at bay.

It also keeps The Damned from tearing her to pieces, since they tend to settle for the newly-awakened Wraith her Shroudftheft created...

3.4.4 Shadowlands.

*I know not how it was - but, with the first glimpse of the building,
a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit There was an iciness,
a sinking, a sickening of the heart - an unredeemed dreariness of
thought which no goading of the imagination could torture
into aught of the sublime.*

The Fall of the House of Usher - Edgar Allan Poe

While the inhabitants of both worlds are most often kept from one another, there are areas where their separate realities overlap, and their inhabitants are back on equal footing, once again.

The most obvious area of overlap is a physical place that happens to be an Anchor for one or more Wraiths. While inside such an Anchor, the Wraiths it belongs to have an easier time Manifesting and using their Numina to affect the mortal world. Such Anchors - known to Wraiths as Haunts - give rise to legends of haunted houses or forests, and provide shelter against deadly Storms.

There are also places of tangible overlap, known as Shadowlands. They are dark and blighted places, each one representing some taint on the landscape. They can be caused by massive atrocity, stark depravity, generations of murder or the unleashing of foul magics. It is also said that they can be deliberately created by Wraiths, but if so, the exact means are a well-kept secret.

In a Shadowland, the living can see and touch the dead, and vice versa, and things no longer look hazy or indistinct to Wraiths. However, everything else outside the area - such as the sky, the Sun and Moon, and other far-off places and things - still appears as "normal" for Wraiths.

People or things from the Liveworld that enter a Shadowland don't appear hazy or indistinct to Wraiths. Likewise, the dead look perfectly human to the living, though any alterations to their form caused by Thorns, Shadowstate or the Shaping Numina can be seen. Objects from both worlds can be brought into the Shadowland, and used by anyone there - living or dead - but they must return the way they came: the grave does not relinquish its possessions, and the living have little place amongst the dead.

That said, there are those mortals who can use the unnatural energies of a Shadowland to their own uses. They often go there to make contact with Wraiths, or enact rituals that allow them to enter the Deadlands. Some even parley with The Damned for malign, selfish purposes.

Common wisdom is to avoid mortals who enter into the Shadowlands, but - as with life - it's uncommon for such wisdom to be heeded.

3.5 THE FINAL OBSTRUCTION.

There is but one limit to a Wraith's travel in the Deadworld - or, more properly, out of it: the boundary between it and the Spirit World, otherwise known as The Barrier.

It is said that once, long, long ago, the Spirit World was as much a part of the world as anything else. People could go from the realms of the living into the realms of the dead, provided they were willing to make a long and arduous journey to do so. And it was not unheard of for the dead to make the return trip, though it was rarely for long - death is, after all, a very jealous owner.

All that changed with the Sundering, though, and now the Spirit World is off-limits to Wraiths. Between the world shared by the living and the dead and the Spirit World is an invisible obstruction known as The Barrier, which forms the single boundary for all the dead. It is all around them, like a blanket they can never slip out of, but could rise up and strangle them at any time with a Storm, a Reaper or one of The Damned.

Of course, the Barrier is not completely impenetrable. Some inhabitants of the Deadworld traverse it all the time. And these entities have been known to take Wraiths and Ghosts back with them, willingly or forcibly, for their own, unguessable purposes. But while they are able to make the journey with seeming ease, no Wraith who has tried to follow them has ever been seen again.

"No Wraith?"

Oh, I went there, once, I did, I went through the Barrier, Gears came back, I went there and Gears came back, Spiderman came and took me through, metal legs and steel teeth and all, reaped me, he did, raped me, reaped me, took me to the place where they all come from, Spidermen, heard the eggbeaters whirling in the sky, saw the black smile of a sky up above, dark angels pissing on us between the teeth, stolen moon sky, broken teeth stars, hungry clouds thinking heavy thoughts and flattening the world underneath, Spidermen took me, made me not me, Gears came back, Dark Mother Machine took me in her coils and corners, took me back inside her, operated on me in her love surgery, fucked me and made me the machine I am today, what he is today, I am, he is, I was, he is, I went through it, Gears came back, I went through it, Gears came back

- **"Gears," First Prophet of the Mother Machine, Believer of Tulsa.**

3.5.1 The Great Unknown.

Through the Barrier lies the Underworld. This is what The Order proclaims, what the Believers preach, and what the Ferrymen will say little or nothing about. That is not in dispute, except by those with a gift for sad denial.

What is in dispute is the exact nature of it.

The Order says that the Underworld is the realm of Charun, His fellow Gods and Goddesses, and those worthy few Wraiths who serve them faithfully. They speak of a long, dark river that leads to the gates of the great city of the dead. And they speak of the rest, respite and surcease they shall all find there, when the cares of their lives are lovingly taken from them, and they can at last have the peace of mind they crave. One day, the Barrier will fall, and the shores of the river will lap at their feet, ready to carry them home.

The Believers generally agree with this idea, but they differ in what face the city of the dead, and the Gods to tend it, wear. Many Believers base their views on monotheist religions, and expect Paradise to be akin to Heaven, as interpreted by Christianity, Judaism or Islam. They expect to find God on His Throne, with the angels in tow, and think the Damned have been sent by the Devil to destroy those weak in faith. Other Believers follow older, Pagan creeds that have a different God - or Gods - on that throne, and a different way of spending eternity.

As for the Ferrymen, they won't say what awaits, other than to call it Paradise and encourage Wraiths to resolve their Anchors so as to travel there with them. Their silence about what awaits is never explained, except to say that blind faith is the greatest weapon against the Shadow.

That and patience - silent and sure.

4. DEAD SOCIETY.



Figure 4.1: Illus. by Taz Jurz

4.1 Welcome to the rest of your death.

When I was alive, I was alone, and I liked it that way.

Maybe it's because my parents were such assholes. Maybe it's because I couldn't make any friends in school, or college. Maybe it's because everyone I worked with turned out to be stupid, or no one I wanted to associate with.

So I lived alone, and I liked it.

Sure, I was lonely, sometimes. Who wouldn't be? But every time I tried to get close to someone I fucked it up royally. I was okay for a one night stand or a staff party, but that was about it.

Any longer than that and I found myself wanting to punch the other guy out, or call the 'date' on his bullshit. Any longer and it was like I was drowning in the other person. I didn't know what to do when the conversation stopped, and I was just staring into space, thinking of how to get away from the table...

So I lived alone, and I liked it.

But then I got old alone, and I died alone. And when I got here, faced with my Shadow, I found out what loneliness really was.

I don't like being alone, anymore...

So you were Asleep.

You were dead, but you didn't know it. You wandered around, doing what you thought you had to, probably scaring the crap out of enough people to fill a classroom while you were at it. And hey, maybe you got your old house put on the National Registry of Haunted Houses?

Not bad, my friend. Not bad at all...

...but now you're Awake, and you're in Hell.

Oh, you think I'm exaggerating? You just Woke Up. I've got years on your ass, my friend, and take it from me when I say you should have stayed in bed.

'Cause now you get to find out that as bad as being alive could be, it doesn't hold a candle to being dead. Oh no.

Being dead is worse - much, much worse.

You've got all kinds of problems, now that you're Awake. Your Anchors need looking after, that little voice inside your head wants to fuck you up, and every time you turn around the Damned are trying to kill you all over again.

And then there's the crazy Pardoners, trying to save you one minute and kill you the next. And then there's the Reapers... maybe a Dark Walker if you're really unlucky.

And then there's those Storms, right out out nowhere, trying to take you back down to Hell with them. Or else screwing you up so bad that you wish they would have erased you from the face of the Earth...

Make no mistake - this place wants to kill you.

Yeah, well, you could just stay here. You wouldn't be the first Solitary S.O.B. I met that made it on his own. Wouldn't be the first to just up and disappear, either.

But take it from me when I say that you are gonna need friends, my friend. Damn are you gonna need friends.

And let me tell you about your first friend and worst enemy, and that's this whole city, right here. Best friend and worst nightmare, all in one.

You can find new friends there, but you'll find problem people, too. You can find shelter, there, too, but that's half the reason those problem people want to be your problem. And when you got a problem, you can find people to take care of it for you, but maybe someday you'll be someone else's problem, and then they'll get your number.

Yeah, that's the city. It'll help you when you need it, and it'll cut you when you get too close. But without friends, you're nothing, here.

Solitude is Suicide.

So how's about you take that chip off your shoulder and come and meet some people? I mean, what the hell have you got to lose... other than what's left of your ass if you stay here by your lonesome?

Hey, at least shake hands. Maybe you'll like them, and maybe you won't, but if you don't then there's no harm done. It's not like we're gonna twist your arm to make you stay. Hell, you might not have the chops to keep up, anyway...

Yeah, that's the spirit. Come on. They're just down the ways, here, holed up in the warehouse you got told never to go play in when you were a kid.

Ever wonder why...?

4.2 The Necropolis.

*Silent streets and vacant halls,
Ruined roofs and towers and walls;
Hidden from all mortal eyes
Deep the sunken city lies:
Even cities have their graves!*

Amalfi - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

In ancient days, the dead were interred in large, sprawling graveyards that were almost separate cities unto themselves. The Greeks called such a place a Necropolis - a city of the dead. And sometimes the dead were laid down in places so far from the living that this name was quite apt, indeed.

To the modern dead, a Necropolis is the city as inhabited by the dead. It is a self-contained kingdom of the dead: cut off from all but the closest neighbors, and effectively alone. All the Ghosts and Wraiths, and all the things they do with one another - or against one another - happen

here.

This is where the Haunts and Citadels stand, and where the Domains are laid down, or ignored. This is where the Catacombs can be entered, and the Shadowlands avoided. This where the Storms erupt, where the Lost lurk and where the Damned attack the unwary.

This is where it all happens, safe from the eyes of the Living.

The city is not always the best of friends to the dead, but it's often the only real protection they have. And so, they have adapted to it, in order to fit their needs.

Dying by numbers.

Given how decentralized and fractured the Deadlands are, it's almost impossible to get an accurate census of how many Ghosts and Wraiths inhabit it. The Order has, over the ages, come up with some general numbers, but they are considered to be more of a guess than an observation.

It is estimated that, out of 100 people who die, only one is sufficiently held back enough - for whatever reason - to become a Ghost. And of those who become ghosts, only one in ten is capable of Waking Up on her own. Which would mean that, in a city of 50,000 people, there would be 500 Ghosts, and only 50 Wraiths.

Obviously there are problems with these numbers. The lack of so many Ghosts can be explained by the Reapers, who seem to cull the weakest amongst them. But these numbers cannot take into account the Sleepers who are Woken up by someone else.

In reality, after various forms of attrition, there may turn out to be one Ghost, and ten Wraiths, per 1000 people. And that is still not counting Wraiths who have outlasted their peers by decades, or centuries, or all the Ossified Wraiths down in the Catacombs.

Suffice it to say that each Necropolis is unique, and can have as many Wraiths and Ghosts as it can handle.

4.2.1 Safety in the City.

*The Old City murmurs: Rest with me ...
My streets are flecked with strange, sharp shadows,
and sometimes the Shadow of Death falls upon them,
but if thou wilt not fear, thou art safe.*

Leaves from the Diary of an Impressionist - Lafcadio Hearn

Most of the living, their imaginations stoked by creepy movies and spooky, "gothic" tales, tend to assume that ghosts are far away from them.

Such people believe that ghosts are caused when people die badly in old, forlorn places that no one chooses to live in. So they think the dead live only within creaky old mansions, haunted forests

and deserted cemeteries, all out in the overgrown, mostly-forgotten countryside.

Their modern, vibrant cities are seen as "safe," with their neon lights, glowing signs and police around every corner, whether you want them there or not. Death may happen in the cities and towns, but ghosts stay far, far away.

But nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, while one can find ghosts - and Wraiths - in lonely places, well out of the way, the majority of the Arisen are to be found in cities and towns. And they are not merely confined to the old, decaying and corpse-ridden areas of those places, either, but can be found out walking the streets, just as though they were alive.

There are three general reasons for this, all of which are applicable to almost any Necropolis.

Staying safe.

The Deadlands are simply not safe to be in, at times. The Damned are a constant threat, as are some of the more violent Lost. There is also the everpresent danger posed by Reapers, who have an uncanny knack of knowing when a Wraith is by herself. Or Dark Walkers. Or Storms.

And that's saying nothing of certain ConCORDs, who like to brutalize "Solitaries," or attack small groups of their rivals for one reason or another. Some of the more violent or militaristic members aren't above making trips out to the boonies to look for "new meat."

What does living in numbers offer? Help, mostly: help watching your Anchors, your Shadow, and your back. Help with essential goods and services that you just won't get outside of a city, unless you're really lucky. Help surviving the Storms, the Reaping parties and other, stranger threats than no one's ever been able to put a name to.

Those who remain alone, either in the deserted places or even in the heart of the city, might just be able to hack out an existence. And those who do are amongst the toughest and most frightening of Wraiths to be found. However, for most of the dead, "solitude is suicide": those who stand apart don't tend to stand up for very long.

Staying active.

Ghosts can, due to their being Asleep, carry on solitary existences, doing the same thing over and over for decades, or even centuries. However, once they Wake Up, doing the same thing often becomes boring, and boredom leads to Ossification if it isn't alleviated, somehow.

By seeking out company, Wraiths can not only try to assuage their loneliness, but also find new things with which to keep active. Just having a Circle of friends - or at least allies - is enough to make a difference. And being part of a Concord or Unity may give meaning, or at least a job, to one's dead existence.

There's also the social life that the Necropolis provides, in and of itself. While the "entertainment" might not always be to one's taste, there's always something going on, somewhere. You just have to find it, and have the right friends to get in on the party.

Staying sane.

Every Wraith has her own ways of keeping it together, but being in the city offers two advantages that being outside doesn't: the living, and help with Shadows.

Being surrounded by living people is something of a double-edged sword. On one hand, the separation from the Liveworld is daunting and discouraging at best, and disheartening at worst. On the other hand, the ability to Manifest, coupled with Riding, or the use of other Numen, can help bridge that gap.

By creating helpers - and possibly even friends - amongst the living, loneliness can be further eased, and human aid can be secured. It's possible to find such partners, willing or otherwise, out in the sticks, but the possibility of finding the right partners increases in areas with denser populations.

As for Shadows: at its core, a Shadow seeks to end a Wraith's "torment" by getting her to give up. The best way to do that is to convince the Wraith that her existence just isn't worth continuing, and Shadows have numerous powers - known as Thorns - that they can employ to trick, fool and confuse the Wraith, with the ultimate hope of backing her into a corner she can't see a way out of.

As a result, Wraiths need to be amongst others of their kind, so that they can have a "safety net" of social contacts. If things start going weird, strange or really bad, then they can check with their friends to be certain they're not just imagining things. If they are, then they'll know that the Shadow needs some harsh medicine, and if they aren't, maybe they all can figure out what to do about the problem.

The Soul Police.

Another reason to stay in the city, as opposed to being outside of it, is to have constant access to the Pardoners.

Inside the cities, the martial Concord is on near-constant patrol, looking for Wraiths whose Shadows are getting too powerful. Many Wraiths resent the Pardoners' heavy-handed tactics, but given their near-monopoly on being able to deal with Shadows, they tend to be the only thing standing between them and Damnation. And so they put up with the constant intrusion into their "lives," if only to stave off their inner demons.

While it's not unknown for Pardoners to make "mercy trips" into the wilderness, beyond the urban sprawl, they don't do it that often. And when they do, it's usually because they hear that some Lost soul is making too much trouble. In those cases, the "mercy" they bring is both violent and final, and not many Wraiths want to be met on the way to or from such a mission.

4.2.2 Haunts.

*There was something provocatively fascinating in the tree-girt,
decrepit pile before me, for it spoke of the graces and spaciousness of a bygone era...*

*As I mounted the broad stone steps to the low porch and
the carved and fanlighted doorway I felt distinctly nervous...*

Medusa's Coil - Zealia Bishop

So-called "Haunted Houses" are most often the setting for most ghost stories. Spectral literature is rife with old mansions, lonely roads and condemned tenements where untold horrors took place, and multiple tragedies occurred. Their attics are full of wispy presences, their basements are filled with long-buried corpses, and anything could have happened on the floors inbetween. Anything at all.

Such places just feel wrong. There is a palpable feeling of dread, as though anything could happen at any moment. The rooms alternate between crushing silence, and being filled with sounds that shouldn't be made at all. Suspicious liquids pool on the floor, faces appear at the windows, and doors have a habit of opening and closing all by themselves...

The living say these buildings are haunted. They say that the boundaries between life and death are reduced, and anything could be waiting - and watching - in there. So the living wisely avoid them, or enter them only with the utmost care, lest they disturb something best left alone.

The dead like it that way.

The importance of Haunts.

Haunts have both a practical and social importance to Wraiths. On one hand, they provide protection from Storms, can be used to harvest Essence, and make a nice, quiet "home base" to operate out of, given that the living prefer not to go there. However, the lure of a haunted house might attract ghost hunters, psychics and other mortal nuisances, so this degree of separation can bring trouble as well.

In terms of Wraithly society, Haunts form the "building blocks" of Domains, by which a Concord's general strength within a Necropolis may be judged. The more Haunts a Concord has, the greater its "share" in a city, and the less likely other ConCORDs are to openly challenge its right to rule. Gathering and keeping Haunts, then, is a primary political goal of most ConCORDs within any city.

Types of Haunts.

There are three types of Haunts, each of which provides certain advantages and disadvantages to the Wraiths who live there.

1. Ghost Haunts.

Possibly the most common sort of Haunt is a place that's home to one or more Ghosts. It may or may not be an Anchor, in and of itself, and might or might not contain any Anchors. But it is the place that the Ghost seems compelled to haunt, and that's enough to keep the living away, as well as serve as a source of Essence.

Wraiths who reside in such a place - often called a "Haunted Mansion" by younger folks - have to walk something of a tightrope act. On one hand, it's free room and board, and they don't have to do much of the upkeep, thanks to their "landlord." They also don't have to worry about their own Anchors being compromised by their presence, there.

On the other hand, a lack of personal Anchors means that the place might be useless in a Storm, unless the house, itself, is the Ghost's Anchor. Plus, the residing Ghost is capable of noticing them if they make too much noise, or drain too much of its Essence.

If the Ghost decides it's had enough, and picks a fight, it might be powerful enough to give them some real problems. Of course, once it's frightened them off, it's probably going to go back to Sleep and forget the whole thing. But it might Wake up, too, which causes its own set of complications - most notably, the possible need to get a new Haunt.

There's also the danger of Reapers stopping by, hoping to catch some easy prey. If they find out the place is crawling with Wraiths they might break off and molest someone else. Then again, discovering a mother lode of ghostflesh might be enough to make them chance an attack, or go back where they came from and bring more Reapers along for the hunt...

2. Wraith's Haunts.

Another, more "proper" type of Haunt is one where a Wraith has one or more powerful Anchors in the building, or else the building, itself, is the Anchor. Such places provide protection and a source of Essence, but must be defended at all costs, lest the Anchor be damaged by the living, or something else. The Wraith's direct ownership comes with the need to manage the property, and see to its upkeep.

There are also cases where a single house, or apartment, might be the Anchor of several different Wraiths. These "Shared Haunts" are quite valuable, as a lot of Essence can be gained there by several different people, and more hands are available to keep it safe. This makes them more secure from takeovers, and less likely to be raided by Reapers, or the Damned.

On the other hand, a shared Anchor does not always a happy Circle make. Such Haunts are sometimes brimming with tension, hurt feelings and outright hostility to one another. There's also the danger of someone getting Lost on the premises, and no one realizing it until it's too late, and the afflicted is trying to burn down the house.

3. Shadowhaunts.

There are also those dark blots on the psychic landscape that produce metaphysical overlap between the world of the Living and the Dead. These Shadowlands can be anywhere, but as they are most often caused by generations of suffering, or a great burst of horrid atrocity, they tend to be centered on places where people lived. And these are, perhaps, the archetypical "Haunted Houses" that have given rise to those ghastly stories of old.

Most Wraiths choose not to live in these "Shadowhaunts," unless one or more of their Anchors are inside of one. Those Shadowlands without Anchors provide no Essence, and while the Storms will not rage inside of them, the Damned are often drawn right to them, sensing the ability to deal with foolish mortals.

Then again, Reapers won't go anywhere near a Shadowland, for some odd reason, which makes them good places to fall back to if all else fails.

Unusual Haunts.

Musty old houses, drowning pools and creepy graveyards aren't the only places that people die in, or get attached to.

There have been records of Haunted trains, airplanes, submarines, boats, subway cars and other such vehicles. The "L" in Chicago reportedly has a battery of Ghosts and Wraiths attached to various trains. They even say that the Titanic could be its very own Necropolis - and a powerful one at that - but no Wraith's ever been down there to look.

There have even been stories of: Haunted doll houses, where the Wraiths all assumed tiny size and lived amongst the doll furniture; Haunted videotapes, whose Wraiths fattened like ticks off of the emotions being "watched" gave them; Haunted beds that offered dreams of passion, or heart-stopping fear; and Haunted animals, who lived much longer than they should have, and were always at the center of terrifying occurrences...

4.2.3 Citadels and Temples.

*Lo! Death has reared himself a throne
In a strange city lying alone
Far down within the dim West,
Where the good and the bad and the worst and the best
Have gone to their eternal rest.*

The City in the Sea - Edgar Allan Poe

As social creatures, Wraiths need some sort of central meeting place. They need somewhere that they can meet, talk, do their business or just relax, and it would be best if this took place in a secure environment. Meanwhile, the more pious - or dutiful - amongst them also need a place to pay homage to their Gods.

Such places are generally known as Citadels and Temples, and their ownership is hoarded by the Concords as signs of strength, and sources of power. Under normal circumstances, these structures provide a framework for the social structure within a Concord. And when the Storms hit, everyone who's far from their own Haunts heads for their own Citadel, both to keep it safe from the Damned, and possibly save their own lives.

Citadels.

*The front door was hard and heavy,
It shut behind me on the house of ghosts.
I flattened my feet on the pavement
To feel it solid under me;*

The Dinner Party - Amy Lowell

By The Order's definition, a Citadel is the largest, strongest and most powerful Haunt inside a Necropolis. Such Haunts become their above-ground "headquarters" within a city, and stand guard over their own Domain. Ideally, The Order's Citadel would be within sight of the entrance to the Catacombs, and oddly enough it often is...

If Haunts are the sort of places that most of the living want to steer clear of, then Citadels are the sort of places where no one but the mad, bad and dangerously-driven make a trip to. The Echoes from such a place are usually awful enough to make even the most hardened antiquarian, architect or photo-hound turn in their tracks and seek better sites to visit. And if the Echoes aren't enough, a few applications of Fear on the premises will take care of most pesky mortals right away.

Unreal Real Estate.

That said, it's not unknown for some of those mad and bad types to like it like that, and take up residence - official or otherwise.

How the Wraiths who own the Citadel deal with the matter varies from Concord to Concord, and Circle to Circle. But those who prefer to follow the Injunction tend to humor their "downstairs lodger," and leave her to her own, peculiar goings-on. On the other hand, if those goings-on might gain the attention of mortal authorities - or be too terrible to blithely ignore - they might step in to protect the sanctity of their meeting place.

As for those who don't pay the Injunction any mind, the downstairs lodger had better watch her step...

Other Concords have tended to keep the name "Citadel" to describe their own, general gathering places, but not always. And while their Citadels might be the strongest and most powerful they can lay claim to, they often prefer to find ones that are "out of the way," instead, so as to not invite unwanted attention. It all depends on what's available, what works best for everyone involved, and whether the people who actually "own" the Haunt - since it's their Anchor - want folks tromping in and out of their home.

An especially powerful Concord may have more than one Citadel within a city, but most have at least one. Whether that one, solitary Citadel as powerful as they'd like it to be or not is another matter entirely - sometimes you have to take what you can get, and be glad of it.

Marketplaces.

Sometimes, certain Concords - most notably the Freewraiths - will set up "neutral ground" Citadels, which are open to any and all. Such places are known by various names, but are often called Marketplaces, whether or not there's any actual commerce going on or not. All Concords are usually welcome there, and the only steadfast rule of such a Citadel is that conflict is not permitted.

Marketplaces tend to be open-air Ghost Haunts that a Concord has claimed. They might also be enclosed spaces, such as a wide, abandoned warehouse, half-collapsed steelmill or a cavernous, near-empty church: the bigger the building, the better the Market.

Sometimes the Marketplace is convened underground, in the Catacombs. However, such gatherings are open only to those who "own" that city's Catacombs, and those they allow in. As such, they are "Marketplaces" in name only, and are therefore limited in what sort of goods and services one can purchase there. Freewraiths tend to call such one-party gatherings "flea markets."

Marketplaces may also be convened in Wraith Haunts, rather than those "leased" from a Ghost.

In such cases, the Anchor's owner is often directly in charge of the Citadel, regardless of what status she may hold in her Concord. Her word is law in all things, and has the backing of her entire Concord should someone decide to be a problem.

It goes without saying that such Wraiths tend to be rather powerful, in and of themselves. So if a fight should break out, it might already be long over by the time the rest of the Concord gets there.

Citadel Etiquette.

Every Concord has their own way of handling matters within a Citadel, but a general rule of thumb is that the Citadel is the extension of the Concord's will. All rules, guiding ideas and standards of behavior are in full effect, and those who break them there - of all places - may be punished more severely than they'd be if they broken them somewhere else.

Members of other ConCORDS are generally not allowed in a Concord's own Citadel, any more than a Wraith would let a stranger into her own Haunt. This also goes for times of Storm, though it's not unknown for the Wraiths inside to relent and let in a desperate stranger, "just this once."

Some ConCORDS do allow visitors to enter, so long as they're on fair-to-decent terms with the visitors' ConCORDS, but this courtesy cannot be counted on. Those who extend this trust often insist on the visitor having some reason for being there, and some of the more paranoid will see that she's accompanied at all times.

Waifs and Strays.

Solitaries and the newly-Awakened are almost always welcome, so long as they are brought in by a member of the Concord, and look like they have "potential." Everyone in a Concord had to start at the ground floor, after all.

If such "strays" prove unsuitable they can always be shown the door, or possibly steered towards a Concord better-suited to their temperaments. Unless they really piss someone off, in which case they might never be seen again.

4.2.4 Temples.

*They come from miles around
In avarice and love
To suckle on the blood
Of some forgotten god*

Dead in the Water - David Gray

If Citadels are gathering places for "secular" purposes, Temples are places where Wraiths attend to the veneration of their Gods. Some ConCORDS are more steadfast in these religious notions than others, and see maintaining such centers of worship to be as important - if not more important - as keeping Citadels. Meanwhile, others don't see the need, or make do with small shrines, mobile icons or the like.

Temples don't tend to be Haunts of any kind, but it isn't unknown for a highly spiritual Anchor - such as a church, or mosque - to be put to sacred purposes. That said, most "Temples," as Wraiths reckon the word, are to be found in the Catacombs. There, in the nooks and crannies of the underground labyrinth, the dead go to pray amongst the ancient reliquaries and burial chambers.

As for the appropriateness of such found places, they say that if you go underground looking for something, the Catacombs will give it to you - eventually. You might have to crawl on your hands and knees, or get lost for days to find it, but sooner or later a place of worship suited to your tastes will be found.

And once you've found it, going back there sure seems a lot shorter, not to mention easier. The labyrinth is funny, that way.

4.2.5 Domains.

*This is my house
Welcome is here
This is my house
Welcome to me*

This is My House - Gary Numan

To the Dead, a Domain is an area that's "owned" - or at least claimed - by certain Concord. In this case, "ownership" implies that the Concord has either gained a monopoly on the Haunts within their Domain, or has earned proper Tribute or at least an understanding from Wraiths of other ConCORDS whose Haunts fall within that area.

The word Domain is also used to describe the area - most often a Haunt - that a Wraith, or Circle of Wraiths, have claimed as their own. Their claim usually comes from the area being their Haunt, which may be an Anchor Haunt or Ghost Haunt, but the Domain may also be an area that they've taken control of through other means.

In either case, their Concord lays claim to this Domain through the presence of its Wraiths, but may or may not consider that land theirs to do with as they please. Some ConCORDS are very liberal with the notion of "owner's rights," while others - most notably The Order - insist that it all belongs to them.

As Haunts form the building blocks of Domains, gathering and holding Haunts is the primary goal of many ConCORDS within a Necropolis. This activity has become known as The Game of Houses, though no Wraith is absolutely certain why this name was put upon it, or when. It's just another one of those things which make enough sense for Wraiths to take it for granted, and cause enough headaches to leave well enough alone.

Tribute.

What does a Wraith do if one or more of her Anchors is in another Concord's Domain? If she's lucky, they might let her have visiting rights. If she's not, they'll expect some kind of payment for the "privilege" of free movement in and out. This payment is known as Tribute.

In general, The Order, the Messengers and the Believers are generally nice about letting other ConCORDS' Wraiths visit their Anchors, so long as they behave themselves. However, they may have prohibitions against certain ConCORDS: the Haunters are a favorite target of all the above, and may be forced to pay Tribute, or be barred from coming in altogether, depending on how the relationship in that Necropolis is.

The Freewraiths, on the other hand, are highly territorial, and demand Tribute at every turn. The Haunters tend to destroy anyone who comes into their Domain, so Wraiths with an Anchor in Haunter territory should see about having it moved - if they can.

Meanwhile, the Pardoners are generally allowed to go where they will, as no one dares to tell them they can't. Except, of course, the Haunters...

Importance of Domains.

A Concord's strength within a Necropolis is mostly judged by how large a Domain they can comfortably hold. Ideally, a Concord would have a sizable area of the city - if not most, or all of it - under its direct control. Other ConCORDS may be content to have a small but well-established corner of it, but general wisdom holds that, for Domains, "bigger is better".

There are three key reasons why: Safety, Security, and Essence.

1. Safety from Storms.

Wraith Haunts are the only real, guaranteed protection against Storms. While knowledge of the Castigate Numen can fend off the winds, and what comes with them, those who aren't lucky enough to have learned these Arts need something to hide behind.

And when a Storm breaks, there's no certainty that rival ConCORDS will let other Wraiths into their Haunt, either. One can always try to teleport to one's Anchor, but the Damned have ways to home in on anyone traveling in this manner during a Storm, and can follow along, or at least mark the location for "fun" at a later date. Given that, most Wraiths would rather bang on a stranger's door than bring the enemy to their own.

2. Security all Around.

They say that the best weapon is one that's so fearsome that it never has to be used, as others won't attack for fear of seeing it in action. Having enough Haunts to eke out a sizable Domain, then, inflates a Concord's standing enough that it appears strong, even if it isn't. This often keeps ConCORDS from attacking one another, thus maintaining the peace.

Haunts also give Wraiths a redoubt full of energy in case they are being attacked. So long as they can keep the enemy outside - which isn't always impossible, thanks to certain Numina -

they can fight a purely defensive battle with a ready store of energy. They only have to outlast the zeal of those outside, or hold the door until the calvary arrives.

3. Essence, Essence, Essence.

The more Haunts a Concord has, the more opportunities it has to tap - and store - Essence. This can only be good for a Concord's Wraiths, who may have a highly-varied diet, or need to consume a lot of it. It also comes in handy during emergencies, such as Storms, invasions of Reapers or all-out war between ConCORDS.

Having a large supply of Essence also increases the ability to comfortably trade Essence with other ConCORDS, in exchange for favors or certain, exotic blends. Not everyone has ready and full access to the emotions of Essence they need, after all, and sometimes one has to put one's pride aside and buy what's needed.

Tapping the vein.

It isn't unknown for a Wraith - or an entire Concord - to covet a Ghost Haunt simply because it's a rich source of a certain kind of Essence. The more unusual it is, the more likely it is that someone will need it, or someone will crave a whiff of it. These factors translate into a lot of favors - or an abundance of "cheaper" Essence - in return.

4.2.6 40 Acres and a Citadel.

In most Necropoli, The Order and the Freewraiths hold the most territory between the two of them. Some say this is mostly because the two ConCORDS hold one another in such disdain, and have designs on one another's holdings. Therefore, they play the Game of Houses for keeps, knowing that any sign of weakness shown to the enemy is just the excuse they're looking for.

There are times that the Believers form the third major player in the Game of Houses, depending on their relationship with either The Order or the Freewraiths. If they count one or the other as a strong ally, they tend to stay out of it as much as possible. If they get no respect from either side, however, they do what they must to survive.

The Haunters and Messengers often eke out small parcels of area for themselves. The difference is that, while the Haunters claim territory and stay there - and keep outsiders out with a vengeance - the Messengers use their Domain as a "home base" of sorts. Some Haunters do this as well, it should be pointed out.

As for the Pardoners, they do not play the Game. They have no time for it, and no patience for any who would force it upon them.

The Lay of the Land.

The Order, who are sticklers about keeping their Domains right and proper, aim to maintain an "ideal" Domain.

Such a Domain would have its Citadel right in its center - and very close to the entrance to the Catacombs - with an even distribution of strong, well-defended Haunts around its edges. A fair

number of smaller, but still potent, Haunts would be in the areas inbetween. And the boundaries of the Domain would be marked with special signs, known as Terms, every so often.

Needless to say, this is not always achievable, even for The Order. Many Domains are top-heavy or lopsided affairs, while others look like highly-gerrymandered political districts of the Living, with narrow corridors going around dangerous territory or recently-annexed Haunts.

Terms of Separation.

The ancient, Roman custom of marking one's property by putting down small statuettes - known as Terms - at the boundary corners has been retained by most of the Concorde. These decorations may seem something of a wasteful extravagance to some, but they also spare Wraiths from the ignominy, and possible danger, of walking into the wrong part of town. They also add a certain level of intimidation, much like a sign saying Keep Out! does for the Living.

Terms can be functional as well. Some of them are able to verbally challenge those Wraiths unknown to them, or start up a terrifying shriek that can be heard for blocks if they're not told the password. Others act as the eyes and ears of the Concord, giving a reckoning of who's passed into and out of their territory, or keeping a lookout for a particular Wraith. The really fancy models provide constant visual input, requiring teams of Wraiths to sit in the Citadel doing "monitor duty," but these require too much Essence to maintain for long periods of time.

The Order's Terms tend to be long "stones" made of Corpus, with the Hammer of Charun inscribed upon them in bas-relief. The eyes in the skull of the hammer blaze a fiery red by day, and an eerie green by night.

The Believers' Terms are often made to resemble tokens of their faith, such as Crosses, icons, protective sigils, verses or the like. A more ecumenical Term would be a goblet with the image of a holy light - or star - floating above it, which provides illumination of their borders at night.

The Freewraiths, meanwhile, often make their Terms out of Wraiths who have displeased them. These unfortunate souls are fixed into tortured positions, with the list of their crimes written upon them. And their skulls are set "alight," so that they can be seen both night and day.

Those are the Terms that can be seen. The Messengers rely on their mastery of the Regis Numen to keep others outside of their territory - erecting emotional "stop signs" every so often. The Haunters do much the same with Fear, though they're also known to make very baroque and frightening Terms out of the pieces of those who came in, anyway...

Oversaturation.

Another problem with the "ideal" is the Injunction, or at least The Order's overzealous interpretation of it.

As The Order sees it, having too many Haunts in one area goes against their prohibition against interfering with the Living. While the emotions of mortals provide meat and drink for the Dead, they have to have some respite from being frightened out of their wits. To ignore this is to risk driving the living mad, or to an early grave - doing the Damned's work for them, or creating more Ghosts to look after.

The Order is also very keen to avoid problems with mortal ghost-hunters. Psychics, Projectors and other superstitious busybodies may notice the strong Echoes in more than one location, and start to connect the dots. And while the Concord might be able to repel an attack on a Haunt from another Concord, getting rid of a mob of spiritualists intent on "purifying" the house is another matter entirely - especially if they can't be killed.

The Believers tend to follow the lead of The Order on this one. And while the Freewraiths could care less about the Injunction - they have their own laws, thank you - they can also see the wisdom of maintaining as discreet a profile as possible. Meanwhile, the Messengers are all about being witnessed by the living, but prefer to do so while being some distance from their own Anchors, so as to avoid being mobbed by the faithful, or targeted by the jealous.

...But then, there's the Haunters.

So how is it that we can drag an entire section of town down into the dirt of death with us, and not worry so much about it? That is an excellent question, little ghost. Here is my answer...

Do you see the old woman in our front room? That stinking, incontinent wrinkle in the easy chair, before the television? You might ask how could she live here, in this house, with an entire Circle of Haunters? Surely she would have run away ages ago? And surely the rest of the Meat in this part of town would have joined her...?

But, you see, she can't.

She's stuck here, little ghost. She has nowhere else to go. There's too much money involved in moving, and too much money involved in going to that rest home. Her children have abandoned her, her husband rots in the boneyard, and everyone around her is afraid to know her because at some point, she's going to die, and then they'll feel obligated to do something for her.

Do you see what pathetic little things they are, now? Islands of humanity, lost in the crowds and kept separate from one another by fear. They'll talk to complete strangers for hours on the internet but don't dare get to know their own neighbors.

So we don't have to "tone it down," here, little ghost. We don't have to worry about being discovered. They know we're here, and they don't dare antagonize us because there's nowhere for them to run to.

And if they decide to try... well, an example needs to be made every so often. Especially when we need some recruits.

4.2.7 Acquiring Haunts.

If the surest way to strengthen one's Domain is to gain more Haunts, then the surest way to maintain dominance - if not equilibrium - in the Game of Houses is to constantly acquire them. This is why getting new Haunts is one of the primary activities that Concords engage in, even if they don't care to play the Game that often, or that well.

Taking Control of Ghost Haunts.

If members of a Concord find a Ghost Haunt on their own turf that doesn't have any obvious signs of someone else owning it, they will most often take it for themselves. Once someone's run back to the Citadel to make certain they aren't claim-jumping, they can then elect to keep it, or else offer to sell or lease it to other Wraiths who may want it.

If that Haunt happens to be in someone else's turf, however, the would-be owners have to be very careful. It's best to try to take control of Ghost Haunts that are right next to the boundary laid down by the Terms, so the Concord can send a large group of Wraiths into the Haunt to repel the inevitable attack.

If they can hold it for a lunar month, it's theirs, and the Terms can be repositioned accordingly. But 28 days can be a long, long time.

Membership Drives.

If the Haunt is the Anchor of a Wraith, and the Wraith isn't a member of a Concord yet, then the best thing to do is to sign that Wraith up for membership. Once she joins, that Haunt becomes part of the Concord's holdings, which will be reflected in their overall Domain.

If a Wraith already belongs to another Concord, her Haunts transfer over to the new Concord if she switches sides. Needless to say, this can be very problematic for the losing Concord. This is why many ConCORDs often go out of their way to make certain their members are at least satisfied - if not happy - with how things are going.

This is also why some ConCORDs bind their members through various means, so as to keep side-switching to a minimum.

Outright Theft.

If a rival Concord has a claim to a place that another group of Wraiths simply must have, for whatever reason, they can try to occupy it. This involves getting a large group of their people together, taking the Haunt by force, and holding onto it for a Lunar Month.

Between the fight to take the Haunt, and the fight to hold it, this maneuver can be a costly proposition. It's usually only done by the most powerful Concord in a Necropolis against the weakest, who may turn out to have hidden resources - or considerable allies - that the bigger Concord didn't count on.

D.I.Y.

So supposing a Wraith really needs to lay claim to a Haunt, but can't find an unclaimed one, and doesn't dare try to steal one? The answer is to actually make a Haunt on her own, which is about as labor-intensive as it sounds, but can pay off big dividends for all the effort.

Certain uses of the Anchorage allow a Wraith to make permanent Anchors, which can then become Haunts. Meanwhile, the Decay Numina can let Wraiths treat objects - and entire buildings - as Consorts; So long as the Wraith is willing to pay the upkeep, there's no reason the Haunt can't stay haunted for the near future.

You Keep What You Kill.

There is another way to acquire a Haunt, but it's a very unethical proposition, not to mention risky on several levels. But if there's someplace a Wraith just has to have as a Haunt, then all that Wraith has to do is make certain a Ghost takes up residence there. And the surest way to do that is to actually make the Ghost in question - a practice the Haunters are notorious for doing.

There is no way to absolutely guarantee that someone will become a Ghost - much less a Wraith - after they die. That said, it has been observed that there is a close correlation between how much ghostly activity someone endured before they died, and their increased chances of becoming a Ghost, themselves. That's the reason why "haunted houses" tend to have multiple Ghosts at work.

So if a Wraith was to scare the living hell out of a mortal, and then do away with her after delivering the fright to end all frights, chances are good that the mortal would become a Ghost. And if the mortal was very attached to the house she died in, it would most likely become her Anchor. The house then becomes a Ghost Haunt, with all the promises and pitfalls thereof, and the Wraiths who created it can call it their own.

Until the Ghost Awakens, at any rate...

4.2.8 Outside the Bounds.

*On a long and winding grey paved street
Your breath the only friend
Chattering others surrounding you
You're going out again*

Roll Call - Peter Murphy

As previously mentioned, Wraiths don't like to be outside the cities, if given a choice. The Necropoli present many dangers - especially the dangers of one's fellow Dead - but also provide advantages that the wilderness cannot compete with. And that wilderness has its own risks, most notably a relative lack of Haunts and an overabundance of spiritual predators.

That said, there are Wraiths who are known to leave the safety of the Necropolis, or else keep to its outskirts. Some of these have their Anchors far from the bright lights of the city, and have to wander far outside its bounds to tend to them, or take full advantage of them. Others prefer to keep to the edges of the cities, just outside the boundaries laid down by the Concorde.

And there are also Wraiths who stay away from the Necropoli altogether, scavenging an existence in the areas no one else cares to enter, unless they absolutely have to. Meanwhile, the Believers take to those roads for spiritual purposes, just as the Pardoners are known to occasionally go on an errand of "Mercy."

These Concord members tend to return, though - provided nothing out there keeps them from coming back. For there are many Wraiths who leave and are never seen again, and many who come back with their souls much worse for the journey.

Just Visiting.

Wraiths may be aware of the dangers that wait outside, but they'll leave the city to visit an Anchor anyway. That's because they always feel the need to get back to what matters most - their Anchors - and find themselves heartsick for them if they don't make some kind of contact. The Anchorage Numen can alleviate some of the nagging feeling that Anchors cause, but it's no substitute.

So if most of a Wraith's Anchors are in the city, but she has one out in a suburb or - worse - the countryside, she can't neglect it in favor of the ones close-by. Sooner or later she will need to go and see it, for herself, if only to partake of the Essence it provides.

The reverse can always be true as well: some Wraiths have most of their Anchors out in a small town, somewhere between the Necropoli, but have at least one in the city. So they'll have to come in too, sooner or later, at which point they run the risk of being labeled "Solitary" - or worse - by the city Wraiths they encounter.

The Edges.

Every city has a "line" around it, even if it's not so visible. The people who live in that city come to recognize that line as the place where the city ends, and something else begins. It might be where the brownstones and brick buildings peter out into newer - or older - houses, or it might be where the sidewalk ends and the prairie begins. This is the edge of the city, where one thing ends and another begins, or there's just nothing there at all.

It's not unknown for a Concord to take territory that goes over that line. Indeed, many groups of Freewraiths prefer to hold Domains that slink out to the far corners of the Necropolis, just to deny The Order - or anyone else - the chance to take it. Often times, there's not much out there to take, but the Freewraiths are ancient masters of making do.

But in many cities, that edge is well-marked by the Dead, and rightly avoided. They place the largest, most imposing Terms of all along those boundaries, and sometimes even post an actual guard to challenge any who would go out, or come in. And even those ConCORDs who don't care to put anyone on the firing line at least keep that end under watch.

It's there, in that null boundary zone, where the Barrier first becomes uniformly easier to breach.

That's where the Damned tend to creep into the Necropolis and lay their nests. That's also the place where the Reapers send in their hunting parties - slipping into the city as quietly as they can before the stark violence of their hunt breaks their cover. And that's where the Dark Walkers begin their trek into town, seeking that special someone to take back with them, or kill outright.

Who stays in such a place? The Freewraiths and Solitaries, mostly.

Freewraiths have superior numbers to call upon, as well as a yen to prove themselves in a fight against something truly nasty. The Solitaries, on the other hand, enjoy the privacy that living in a spiritual minefield can provide. As long as they keep a close eye out, and are ready to hide when

trouble comes around, they can probably survive.

The Wilderness.

Past the edge of the Necropolis is the Wilderness. Such an area is called that even if there's a well-populated, busy street leading to a thriving suburb that winds away, rather than a downgraded road heading for desolate country. If it lies outside the Necropolis proper, then it might as well be the dark side of the Moon as far as most Wraiths are concerned: one should not venture out into it by oneself, and any Circle who goes there should be prepared to fight or flee back to the Terms at any moment.

In these places, where actual Wraiths are scarce, the Damned lurk like cunning spiders and the Reapers lay their more baroque traps. There are also stranger creatures out there: great beasts not seen outside of nightmares that come through the Barrier, wreak untold havoc and then disappear, sometimes taking unfortunate Ghosts and Wraiths along for the ride.

Any Wraiths who live out here need to be crafty, tough or well-hidden - preferably some combination of the three. What few Haunts there are tend to have several Ghosts and/or Wraiths in residence, huddling together for safety in the face of a singularly hostile environment. And what few strangers make it out that far are viewed with either high suspicion or massive relief.

Tourist Traps.

*So if you should happen to
Come to our little town
It might be wise
If you didn't hang around*

Tiny Town - Dead Milkmen

Small, mostly-isolated towns and burgs are rapidly becoming a thing of the past in "developed" nations, thanks to interstates, highways and other forms of rapid transportation. However, the Dead aren't always able to get out of town, and the Concorders aren't always able to visit, much less establish any kind of long-term presence. As a result, small towns in the Wilderness tend to be as "backward" to Wraiths as they can be to mortals.

The common story goes a little like this: once, a long time ago, The Order, while on Pilgrimage with the Believers, set down roots in a developing town. The representatives couldn't stay, obviously, so they left the Wraiths they found with the rudiments of The Order's ways. They then left the town to its own devices, figuring that it could blossom into a full-fledged Necropolis over time, and they - or someone else - could visit them again later and see how they were getting on.

Unfortunately, no one did, and the next time anyone from a Necropolis stopped in - anywhere from 50 to 100 years later - they discovered that things were seriously askew. The Injunction had been perverted to serve selfish ends, or simply not followed at all, and the Gods were not being properly venerated, or were completely ignored. The prohibitions against Shaping were flaunted in plain sight, Domains were not laid down, nor respected, and the strong took advantage of the weak. Anarchy ruled this town, and the only justice to be found was in barbaric revenge.

Of course, the representatives of The Order and the Believers tried to lay down the law, once more. But this got them attacked and run out of town - even by the ones they tried to save from others' savagery. They were lucky to escape in one piece, and no one has ever gone to that town since. Charun only knows what may have happened there in the meantime...

That tale can be applied to any small town far enough outside of a Necropolis that not even Pardoners or Freewraiths will venture there. They also say that the Believers have left marks around certain places to inform their brethren to keep going, and seek no shelter there - not even for a Storm.

And that would most likely be because there are worse cases on actual record. There are small towns almost bereft of Ghosts and Wraiths, where Reapers make regular forays to take ghostflesh back across the Barrier. There are also tales told of places where the Dead are ruled by the Damned: conned into thinking them angels and saviors, they gratefully submit to being harvested, and do their dark bidding without question...

4.3 GHOSTLY SOCIETY.

4.4 The Concorde.

*I'm all dressed up with nowhere to go
Walkin' with a dead man over my shoulder
Waiting for an invitation to arrive
Goin' to a party where no one's still alive*

Dead Man's Party - Oingo Boingo

Concorde are worldwide, well-established groups of Wraiths who follow a common philosophy, and seek the same general goals. These goals may be political or spiritual, violent or pacifistic, helpful or selfish, but they all come back to the same basic need: finding - or imposing - sense and order upon the Deadlands, or their Wraith's own relation to them.

Given how fractured and disjointed Deadlands' society can be, it may be strange to think of a Concord as a worldwide organization. They may share a common history - however obscured - along with a philosophy that sets them apart from the others, but a Concord's priorities, rules and by-laws may differ greatly from Necropolis to Necropolis. And as they are in no danger of having someone "greater" than themselves come into town to usurp them, they can do pretty much what they like.

That said, the fact is that the Concorde are as large as they say. It's just that they cannot pretend to have any real power or influence within a city that directly results from however widespread they might be. As with so many other things in the Deadlands, it all comes back to the Necropolis, and what its inhabitants are willing to do to hold onto their corner of it.

4.4.1 Time and Tide.

As The Order's history would have it, the Concorde - more specifically, The Order - were born in the wake of the Sundering, as a way to organize and rule over those Wraiths left behind. Naturally, The Order claims the mantle of being the first Concord, or at least the first large group of Wraiths to use that name. And they still see everyone else as pretenders or usurpers, regardless as to whether they are allies or foes.

Other Concorde, such as the Believers, say that they pre-date the Sundering, itself, and have only changed their name - and a few modes of operation - over the ages. Still others have only come about in comparatively recent times if you consider five centuries or a millennium to be "recent", or claim to have changed greatly from what they once were.

Unfortunately, with the Storms being what they are, Deadlands history is little better than a sheer contradiction in terms. For all anyone knows, everyone's understanding of what took place could be somewhat mistaken, if not sheer fantasy. And since the Ferryman will neither confirm nor deny - much less correct - the record, everyone is left to wonder what really happened, and where it all truly came from.

4.4.2 Order and Purpose.

Some might ask why the dead would bother to join an organization at all, much less create one. They already have their Anchors to deal with and Essence to gather, and can get help from their Circle - who cares for territory, politics or prestige?

The first answer is simple: barring the ConCORDS, there is no overriding organization that Wraiths are expected to slip into. Some of the more forward-thinking or backward, as the case may be Necropoli might play at having a leader, or a ruling council, but most are too caught in the Game of Houses to see the wisdom of such a move. Without the ConCORDS, there could be no order at all, and the spectre of mere anarchy tends to frighten Wraiths more than the prospect of endless turf wars.

There is also the fact that Wraiths are creatures of passion and purpose. Should they lose one or the other, they may stumble in their tracks, and lose sight of why they're bothering. Such directionless Wraiths are in danger of being Lost, or slipping into the troubled, uncertain slumber of Ossification - either of which claim far too many of the dead.

So, in order to create purpose, and companionship beyond the bounds of a mere Circle, the Dead often allow themselves to be organized. They may find purpose and truth in the ConCORDS, or they may merely submit to the rules and rituals of the larger group in order to have something else to do. But while such activities may not be the best cure for loneliness, despair or the oncoming weight of the ages, it's better than sitting alone in a Haunt and wondering if you're going crazy.

The Concord that isn't.

While the Solitaries are listed below for the sake of the reader's convenience, they should not be considered a Concord, but rather something of a social phenomenon amongst the dead.

"Solitary" is something of a catch-all term, used to describe those Wraiths who either haven't joined one of the other ConCORDS yet, or refuse to get involved in dead society. They often link up with one another for mutual protection and friendship, but a lack of cohesive goals and philosophies make them little better than an extended Circle.

4.5 Believers.



Figure 4.2: Illus. by Lost Soul

Do not give into the nightmare of disbelief, my friend. Do not give into fear, or loneliness, or anger.

God has not punished you, nor abandoned you. You are simply being tested, as are we all.

Come with me, and with God's help we will aid you in passing this test...

Both the Deadlands, and the state of being that is presented to the dead that dwell there, do not match what was promised - or threatened - by any mortal religion or belief system. The closest anyone can come to it is the Catholic concept of Purgatory, and even then it's more of an analogy than an exact match. There is just no accounting for this horror of an existence, and no certain way out of it, either.

The Order claims that this is the way it's been since the Sundering, and that all Wraiths should accept it, and join them in their ways. The stark lack of any other, higher form of validation - along with the Order's impressive sense of organization - leads some to turn to this way of thinking. Others fall into despair or atheism, while still others are turned to darker, more sinister alternatives.

However, there are also those who see this incongruous situation is seen as a test of faith, or cause to regain it. Those Wraiths who hew to the rock of faith - however seemingly denied in this place - often fall in with the Believers: Wraiths who seek to leave the Deadlands, and enter Paradise, by Transcending beyond it all.

- Freewraiths: Too angry, and too tied down
- Haunters: Little better than the Damned

- Messengers: Good-intentioned, but too tied down
- The Order: Admirable in their dealings, but wrong
- Pardoners: Overbearing and militant madmen
- Solitaires: Lost sheep in need of salvation

Overview.

By their own reckoning, the Believers predate the notion of Concords, themselves. They have their genesis in the ancient temples and groves of the dead, where those who were tied down to the world were tended to by those who could have gone on to Paradise, but did not. Such activities were highly looked upon by Charun, and His Ferrymen, and those who denied themselves rest until these others, too, could travel with them were high in His sight.

In the wake of the Sundering, and the blocking of passage to what lay beyond, their mission changed. With the help of the Ferrymen, they sought to create passage for those who would step through the Barrier, rather than waiting for the promised Day of Dominion. Such a task was arduous and difficult, to be certain, but the Ferrymen gifted them with the understanding of Anchors, and guided their hands as best as they could. And so did the Believers begin to seek Transcendence, so they might all rejoin Charun, and dwell in Paradise with Him forever.

While that idyllic past is where the Believers might have come from, the reality, today, is slightly different, and therefore more fractuous. The Concord still believes that Paradise lays beyond the Barrier, and that a Wraith must turn her back on the ties that bind her to the world to reach it. And they still solicit - and receive - the aid of the Ferrymen in their goal to escape the Land of the Dead.

But the shape of that Paradise, and the God - or Gods - that dwell there, are no longer uniformly agreed upon. The rise of monotheistic religions, and the splintering of the old ways, has led to the balkanization of the Believers. While they are still one Concord, there are as many viewpoints on what lies beyond the Barrier - and what else a Wraith might need to believe to get there - as there are individual groups of Believers. And this has caused them to break apart, and seek distance from competing groups, lest religious disagreements turn to open violence.

Can't We All Just Get Along?

It would be nice if just being a Believer was enough to erase centuries of internecine religious strife, or do away with a person's distrust and dislike of other religions. Sadly, this is not always so: there's room for conflict on both sides of the living/dead divide, and sometimes it can spill over, causing generations of conflict.

For example: Muslim Believers don't always mix so well with Christians and Jews, to say nothing of Buddhists, Hindus or other polytheists. The feeling is often shared in full measure, especially by Wraiths who had a firsthand taste of hard, violent religious intolerance in their lifetimes. And then there are those whose beliefs can only be characterized as strange, weird or too "out there" to be taken seriously.

In such cases, careful avoidance and tactful silence are the watchwords for peacable cohabitation. But some hotheads and zealots aren't happy unless they're getting payback for ancient slights, or upholding "the word" by attacking disbelievers.

Oddly enough, the Ferrymen don't intervene all that often when their Believers start attacking one another. They will, however, lend their strength - and presence of being - to those clear-headed individuals who stand above the fray and call for peace and calm. Sometimes.

Organization.

In spite of having the most diverse mix of Wraiths you could find in any Concord, and pushing themselves apart to avoid conflict, the Believers are the most "together" of all the Concords in terms of contact between the Necropoli.

This is because of their mastery of the Anchorage Numina, which allows them to leave their Anchors far behind in order to go on Pilgrimage. While they're on the way, they also check up on like minded groups of Believers in other cities, and see how they're doing. In this manner, information is shared between groups of Believers, and some semblance of a higher order is maintained.

The "higher order" is nowhere near as tightly organized as, say, the Catholic Church. But it's enough to send needed personnel from Necropolis to Necropolis, send entire groups to one another's aid, and have an occasional Conclave to discuss matters of faith. So other Concords know that picking on the Believers without just cause is a foolish thing, both for what they might do to their Anchors, and because knocking the locals over might actually bring help from the outside...

That said, different groups of like minded Believers don't tend to form large, networking organizations that span cities. The offers of aid and people are done on a temporary basis, both to avoid creating the illusion of temporal power - thus fastening them even more to this world - and in the interest of staying near one's Anchors.

There are some exceptions, but these are often courtesy of relatively young Wraiths who haven't quite understood the point of the exercise, yet.

The Understanding.

By ancient compact, the Believers and the Order are allied with one another, in times of peace, war, storm and other emergency. In exchange for their helping to uphold the Injunction, and extending their services when things go severely wrong for a Necropolis, the Believers are allowed to do what they will, and given free rights to the Catacombs.

No one can say for certain where or when this compact - known as the Understanding - was signed, much less who wrote it up, or where the copy might be kept. However, the Order readily admits to this being a fact, as do the Ferrymen if asked. And most Believers acknowledge the Understanding, as it's nothing the more civic-minded amongst them wouldn't do, anyway, and gives them a privilege denied to most other Concords.

It also allows for a Wraith to leave The Order to join the Believers, which is all but unheard of with other Concords.

Sometimes, however, the Believers don't choose to recognize the Understanding, or have it denied them by a less than pleasant Order. In those Necropoli The Order might go out of their way to harass and bully their rival Concord over this matter. And, oddly enough, the Ferrymen rarely intervene in this case, either.

Titles and Duties.

Groups of Believers are called by many names, depending on what belief system a particular group espouses. For example, Christian Believers tend to call themselves Churches, Flocks or Bodies, while some claim more exacting - or grandiose - names, such as the 7th Street Adventists of Brooklyn, or Las Vegas' Church of the Neon Redeemer.

When a Wraith first joins a Group, she is known as a Supplicant. Once she has proven her dedication to the Concord by undergoing The Removal, she is accepted as a full member. The title given to a member differs from Group to Group, though Seeker, Parishoner and Pilgrim are fairly common. Others just identify themselves as Believers - what's the point of a fancy name?

The Believer in charge of a particular Group most often takes the name associated with the faith that Group holds: Priest, Father, Rabbi, Imam, High Priest, and so on. Some of the more non-denominational groups prefer the term Shepherd, Prayer Leader or Reader.

The duty of such a person is, unsurprisingly, to lead; Her Group is her flock, her example is the one they follow, and their spiritual welfare is hers to oversee. She decides who may join, and who must go, and sets tone for the Group's "life" of worship and praise.

While the sins of the individual cannot be fully blamed on her, if there is any trouble she often has to be the one to answer for it. As a result, her right to punish infractions of their beliefs, or the Concord's tenets, is considered absolute. The worst punishment is often to be cast out, though some Groups have devised more painful ways to deal with sinners.

Triumphed by the Scythe.

That said, no Shepherd should ever mistake "leading" for "complete autocratic rule."

The Ferrymen won't answer direct questions of faith, or what lies beyond the Barrier, and won't usually take a hand when conflict erupts between Groups. But they will intervene when they see someone abusing their position of trust in the Concord. If the legends of The Order are to be believed, that is one of the few things they retain from the Old Times, and they are very serious about enforcing it.

There are many tales of a Ferryman appearing to grab hold of a charlatan, and dragging her - kicking and screaming - back through the Barrier with him. Then the Ferryman returns and, with only the pointing of a long, metal finger, designates the new leader of the Group. And you will never find a more humble and pious Shepherd...

In some of the larger Groups, the Shepherd is joined by a Prayer Leader, who acts as a secondary voice of authority and praise, and leads the Believers in their rituals. This may have evolved out of the ancient practice of expounding on points through scripted dialogues, with one person asking questions and the other giving the answers.

It may also be simple logic: the Shepherd can't always be everywhere, looking after her flock, and an extra pair of eyes and ears is always a help. That said, a Shepherd should always be careful, as the Prayer Leader sometimes covets the Shepherd's position, and may act against her in order to acquire it - a practice that the Ferrymen don't find actionable, oddly enough.

Members.

The Believers tend to attract people of strong faith and unshakable beliefs, as well as those relatively weak-willed people who need something strong and unshakable to hang onto. There is room for all seekers at the doorway, and even if a would-be Believer is knocking at the wrong door, most groups are kind enough to send her towards the right one. Usually.

Most of the Believers are either extremely young Wraiths, seeking to make sense of what's just happened, or clinging to a faith that seems to have been negated. The rest of the group is made up of Wraiths who've spent some time in the Deadlands, and possibly in one of the other Concords most likely The Order. But then, some of the oldest Wraiths in the Deadlands are Believers: still trying to make the trip across the Barrier, or volunteering to remain behind and help others reach the same understanding they did.

Almost any Deathmark can be found in the Concord, given what a widespread and powerful force for good - and ill - mortal spirituality can be. However, there seem to be a large number of Fate's children in the Believers. This is most likely because many Groups believe these Wraiths have been touched by the hand of their God, and they would be foolish to turn them away, or treat them badly.

Beliefs.

In a short phrase, the chief belief of the Believers is that they believe.

They believe that there is a God, or Gods, or some Divine spark of being. They believe that Paradise lies beyond the Barrier, and their Divinities await them there. And they believe in seeking Transcendence, so they might leave this world and travel to Paradise, where they belong.

Unfortunately, the way between lies beyond the Barrier, which is anathema to any Wraith. The Adversary and Its agents lurk just behind it, waiting to tempt the faithful astray and destroy their souls. And any who enter the Barrier before they are fully prepared, by Resolving all their remaining Anchors, will be instantly destroyed by the sight of the Divine.

The answer, then, is to prepare both mind and soul for the journey, so that they may truly Transcend. The details of the best way to accomplish this differ from Group to Group, depending on the finer points of their doctrine, or lack thereof. But it's generally understood that Resolving one's Anchors is a major part of the process.

One Paradise, Two Thrones.

The Order also believes in Paradise, but the primary difference between the two Concords - other than The Order's waiting for Paradise to come to them - is who is in charge of things there.

There are a few Groups of Believers who hold to The Order's ancient religion, which may explain the existence of The Understanding. But these Groups are few and far between, mostly to be found in Europe around the Mediterranean Sea.

Tenets and Truth.

The Concord has two tiers of belief: what an individual Group of believers holds to be theologically true, and what the core tenets the Concord preaches, and practices, as a whole.

When dealing with Group beliefs, there are about as many different sorts of beliefs as there are Groups of Believers out there. Their theological codes largely depend on what a Group sees as truth, or lies, and what they consider their moral directives to be. Sometimes these ideals are in conflict with the core tenets of the Concord, and sometimes they work either hand-in-hand, or at least side-by-side.

A common theme throughout Group doctrines is that being stuck in the Deadlands, rather than being allowed to go on to Paradise, is intentional on the part of the Divine. There's always a question as to whether this state of affairs is a punishment for sins, a refinement of the soul, or some, final test to prove a Wraith's worthiness to pass on. But everything that is here, in the Deadlands, is here for a reason - including the dead.

As for the Concord, they have four core tenets. These may vary slightly from city to city, mostly depending on their relationship with The Order, but there's usually not that much variance.

- Seek Paradise

This is the highest charge and first priority of any Believer. The act of dying - or being killed - has taken from life, and the Deadlands are a sad mockery of what they left behind. Their true place is beyond all this, where Paradise awaits, and where the others have gone. They should be there, and with help of the Divine, they will get there - one footstep at a time until the giant leap of faith that is Transcendence.

- Heed the Ferryman

The Ferryman comes from beyond the Barrier, as messengers of the Divine. They cannot speak of all they know, for they have been silenced by their master lest His words, spoken through them, shatter those poor souls who hear it. But they may advise those who seek their master, and will always be there for those who believe - especially when it comes time to try for Paradise.

- Resolve Your Anchors

Anchors are not tools - they are traps. They exist only to hold the dead back from what lies beyond, denying Paradise to those who desperately need to be there. But ripping them from those who are spiritually unprepared to face the Divine only strengthens the Adversary, who devours these souls' fragments whole. One must mentally and spiritually remove these chains one link at a time, so as to achieve a moral and loving divorce from the lost life.

- Uphold the Injunction

This commandment always winds up at the bottom, and sometimes is not there at all, depending on whether the local Order is treating the Believers with respect and friendship, or anger and rivalry. While many Believers see the wisdom in the Order's dictates, even if - as that Concord claims - they came from an ancient, pagan God, they also see them as possible distractions. The goal is not to destroy the agents of the Adversary, but to avoid even meeting them, so as to not be tempted by what they have to say. And as for awaiting the Day of Dominion, no one ever got anywhere by lying around and waiting for God to find them.

Rituals.

Almost every day is a ritual of sorts for a Believer, who tend to see their new existence as one long prayer to what they revere. This prayer should be performed in thought, word and deed, so they may spend as much time as possible seeking what lies beyond.

That's not to say that the Believers are religious robots, tending to the holy from one sunrise to the next. But they are aware that the Divine sees them all the time - not just when they're on their knees or in their places of worship. Each idea and action must be weighed in the balance of the heart and the soul, lest one fail the trial that the Divine has placed down.

The exact nature of a Believer's rituals depends on which group she belongs to. It may be as simple as worship services once a week, or they may need to be shut away from "the world" in a quiet place of contemplation, venturing out only to tend to their Anchors, or handle things that can

be dealt with no other way.

That said, there are a few rituals that most Groups of Believers use. The names may differ, but the idea is the same.

- **The Removal**

When a prospective member "joins" a Group, she is called a Supplicant and initiated into the ways of the Deadlands as seen by the Believers. Every Group has their own criteria as to what makes an acceptable member, and if the Supplicant proves herself to be worthy of a chance at things, they will offer her a place. However, before joining she must prove her dedication by undergoing The Removal: the Resolution, via Anchorage, of an Anchor of her choosing.

How this is done is up to the Group, but most often they ask the Supplicant to tell them of what the Anchor means to her, and why she wants to be rid of it. If they agree that the answers are real - even if they don't agree with the reasoning behind them - they will link hands and lend their strength to the Supplicant as the person leading the ritual lessens, and then Resolves, the Anchor.

If the ritual is successful, they welcome the new Believer to the fold. If it failed, then they will wait for a period of time and offer the Supplicant another chance, provided the disappointment hasn't made her quit, or brought out a side of her personality that proves her unsuitable for the Group.

- **Resolution**

A Resolution is something like a Removal, only it is - if all goes well - the last thing a Believer ever does as a Believer. It involves the Wraith Resolving her last Anchor, before her peers, and achieving Transcendence before them all. A successful Resolution involves her leaving that Anchor behind, and vanishing, while failure ends with her going nowhere at all.

A Ferryman must be present to help facilitate this ritual. However, he does not do anything more than ask the Seeker if she is ready, and offer a hand to the beyond. The first, middle and last steps must be taken by the Seeker, but if she can push herself towards the fall he will catch her, and walk her through the Barrier with him.

- **Pilgrimage**

Thanks to their understanding of the Anchorage Numen, the Believers are able to travel far from their Anchors. This allows them to visit sites that are holy to their faith, or hold some special significance to their Group. They prefer to walk to these places, if they can, but sometimes "cheat" and take advantage of modern transportation if they feel time is against them. Sometimes Groups take a Supplicant along so the Removal can be done in these holy places, and sometimes they travel there just so a Resolution can be performed.

- Conclave

Every so often, Groups of like minded Believers will converge in a chosen location to work, pray and debate religious issues together. Such gatherings - which can last anywhere from a few days to a few weeks - are known as Conclaves. The relative strength and success of one is judged by how many Ferrymen wind up attending, and if they impart any wisdom to the gathering. Some Groups of Believers use this as a time to perform Removals or Resolutions, relying on the goodwill of the many to help the process along.

4.6 FreeWraiths.

4.7 Haunters.

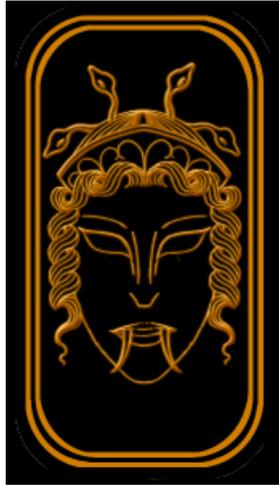


Figure 4.3: Illus. by Lost Soul

Why do you scream, so? In another time, you would have gladly given me your loved ones to ask for this blessing.

But see? I give it to you freely, because I must, and because you so clearly need it. Your loved ones would have understood, little ghost. Even now, with their mouths stilled by death, they silently rejoice in the favor you will now receive. Here it comes...

The Haunters are often seen as the enemy: murderers and monsters - possibly even traitors. Their stated goals are so contrary to what that the other, major Concords stand for that outsiders wonder if they are being deliberately provocative, and their activities are so dangerous to the soul that it's wondered if they're trying to commit suicide...

But never, ever openly. The fear the Concord leaves in its wake is a hideous, palpable thing that very few care to challenge. And as they tend to keep to themselves, in those parts of the city unfortunate enough to have been claimed by them, all but the most foolhardy souls are happy to leave well enough alone.

And so the Haunters are left to their cursed enclaves - all alone with the mortals unlucky enough to live there, with them.

That's just how they like it.

- Believers: Victims of a lie too large to destroy
- Freewraiths: Honest in their dealings, and their fear
- Messengers: They have their place, and we ours

- The Order: Victims of the Liar, Himself
- Pardoners: Mad dogs who must be put down
- Solitaires: Some are called, few are chosen

Overview.

The Haunters' past is tightly-bound to the ancient myth-cycle of the Goddess Mania, who was both the guardian of the Underworld and the muse of insanity. In Classical times Her visage was hung upon doors to ward off evil, and poets and philosophers sought Her favor, claiming that insanity granted by the Gods was far greater than the sanity of Man.

The antecedents of the Haunters were those spirits who performed Her works at Her command. They were the Maniae - the venerated long-dead spirits, whom Mania oversaw in a special, privileged sector of the Underworld. They acted to protect those who venerated Her and kept Her mysteries, and sought out mortals worthy of Her divine favor.

But then the Sundering came, and everything changed. Mania was blocked from leaving the Underworld, just like all others who'd been down there at the time - God or Spirit. She could not contact the Maniae who had been left behind, and they could not contact Her, either.

Eventually, Charun's Ferrymen found a way to leave the Underworld, and then return back. When news of what had happened above came, She petitioned Him to allow Her and her remaining Maniae back to the surface with the Ferrymen. She wished to be an active part of His Concord, for mortals would still need Her divine insights if they were to properly venerate the Gods.

But Charun refused Her this; He had always been jealous of Her insight, and the popularity it gave Her amongst the living and the dead. He was more than happy to have Her confined to the Underworld with the other Gods, where He could keep them all under His hammer.

Mania was furious, and sought the help of other Gods to defy the rule of Charun. Some of them offered Her aid in escaping, but most turned their backs upon Her, for they were too cowardly to openly defy the Emperor. She could only truly count on the aid of Her Maniae, who obeyed Her every word.

So Mania and these few, other Gods conspired to learn the new skills of the Ferrymen, while the Concord was in its infancy. And one day She and these Gods gathered each last Manes to her, and traveled up to the Lands of the Living, escaping the City of the Dead.

But the way was arduous - even for the Gods. None of her Maniae survived the journey, and most of the divine beings She traveled with were destroyed by the terrors they encountered along the way. And even with their might combined, the few survivors were barely able to break through the Barrier at the end.

So it was a severely weakened Mania who appeared before her faithful, and was shocked to find that they had grown lazy and indolent away from Her influence. They had set themselves up as willing members of Charun's new Concord, and had heven to the words of His Injunction - going

so far as to help the Ferrymen hunt down and punish those Maniae who still performed Her will, rather than His.

Her rage was legendary. Even though She was weakened from Her trying, terrible journey, She hunted down and slew each traitorous, backsliding servant. She slaughtered Manes after Manes until only those who had stayed loyal to Her yet remained. And from those few, She crafted a new, more loyal following, and taught them some measure of Her divine magic, so they might inspire madness and fear in Her stead.

Mania did this reluctantly, for it is not proper for mere Spirits to own the power of the Gods. But She knew She did not have long to remain amongst them: the journey, and her rage, had so diminished Her that staying upon the skin of the world was becoming much too difficult. She delayed Her fall to the Underworld as long as She could, but knew it was only a postponement of the inevitable.

Thus did She gather Her followers together, one last time, and give them Her final instructions. Until She could return more fully, they would hold to these new codes She had given them. And they would stay here, in Her place, until each Manes had passed a certain span of time, and were no longer able to interpret Her will. Such dutiful servants could sink into the Underworld and join Her, but the rest must remain behind.

Some of her followers asked how this could be possible - how could mere spirits travel to Her, when the journey here had almost destroyed Her? And She promised them, one and all, that not only would She ease their passage, but one day She would return.

Yes, she would return, for Charun could not hold onto His power indefinitely - here or in the Underworld. One day He would lose His allies, His support, and His power. And on that day, She and the other Gods would come back, bearing His hammer in one hand and His head in the other.

And then, just to prove Her intentions, She and the other, weakened Gods joined hands one last time, and performed a great working amongst them. The ground shook, the air split open with Charontes, and another great Storm came rushing into the lands of the Dead - one that tore down all the Ferrymen had built up, and forced them to retreat.

This new Storm had the effect of giving Mania's followers a more even landscape to work within, which had been Her intention. And it had also created new paths through what lay beyond, so that Her worthy followers could one day join Her.

But She had only a few moments to bask in their glory and praise, and She then sunk into the Barrier. Spent of all power, She fell down once more to the City of the Dead...

That was the last time the Haunters have seen their Goddess, except as representations of Her face, or when they work Her will upon the world. They hold tightly to the words She taught them, and the commands She placed, knowing that there will be no salving Her wrath if She should return to find them slothful or disobedient.

And the world is much better for their diligence.

Coming Home.

Unlike most other groups of Wraiths, the Haunters are not terrified of the idea of falling through the Barrier. They don't want to go through it until it's their allotted time to go, as they fear the penalty of having failed Mania. But when that time has come they're more than happy to let go of the Deadlands and sink into the Underworld, just as their Goddess did so long, long ago.

This involves them letting go of their Anchors, either by becoming so full of Angst that their connections snap and they fall away, or having their links to them permanently cut. That act usually forms the climax of their Falling Ritual, where the Haunters of a Necropolis gather to hear the last words - and gather the treasure - of a Hunter who has been made ready to meet Her Goddess.

They also place great value in martyrdom. If they exhaust themselves in a great work of faith and devotion, they are considered to have fallen right into the waiting arms of Mania. Likewise, immense favor awaits those who die in combat against the Ferrymen, as they are the greatest foes of the Haunters and the most likely to destroy them outright with a single blow.

Conversely, they have only pity for a Hunter who is destroyed at the hands of the Pardoners. They may hate the shotgun priests as much as the Ferrymen, but, much like the Damned, they are seen as more of a rabid annoyance than a truly worthy foe.

Organization.

The first thing that Haunters will tell their new recruits is that they are not a Concord - they are a Calling.

The difference is not merely semantic: "Concord" has come to mean any large, socio-political grouping of Wraiths across the Deadlands, however disjointed and uncommunicative it may be. As the Haunters see themselves as a religious order, and hate the idea of petty politics getting in the way of their veneration of Mania, they desire to distance themselves from even the slightest appearance of being like The Order or the Freewraiths.

Plus, their distaste for the notion of the first Concord - The Order - is so overpowering that they refuse to give it the "honor" of thinking themselves its linguistic equal.

That said, the differences between the Haunters' Calling and the other ConCORDS is slight. They are as fractured as the others, and just as vulnerable. And they have no central body of authority, either - who amongst them would dare to usurp their Goddess' place?

It is true that they tend to be more uniform in their beliefs than other ConCORDS - other than The Order. But even that isn't a guarantee that what goes on in one city will be an exact mirror of what goes on in its immediate neighbor.

Alliances.

A group of Haunters within a Necropolis is referred to as an Alliance. They use these words because, just as they see themselves as part of a Calling, they recognize that everyone must agree to come together and worship - it cannot be forced. Once a Haunter has joined the Alliance, she had better tow the line, though.

The Alliance works within a Domain, as do the other Concords. However, they claim ownership over everything and everyone within it, which includes not only the Deadlands and its Haunts, but the Liveworld side of their Domain. This means they also "own" all mortals who live and work within it.

They also claim dominion over any Anchors that might be in the zone, and deny all passage - in, out or through - to outsiders. If a Wraith has an Anchor in a Haunter's Domain, she had best see someone about sneaking it out, somehow.

The Road to Madness.

There is no mistaking a Haunter Domain for anything else. Those who manage to make it past the Fear wards at the borders - or the horrid, still-screaming Terms - soon find themselves in a nightmarish landscape. And if they don't turn right around and leave as soon as they realize their mistake, there is a good chance that they will become a part of that landscape, forever.

Almost every foot of the Domain is decorated with some grotesque, Shaped icon of the Haunters' dark faith. Tiny representations of their past victims hang from strings of ghost viscera, whimpering as they sway in the dead wind. Previous intruders are ensconced in jails and gibbets made from their own bones and flesh, and left to scream and beg at horrors only they can see. Every so often, a large statue of a long-gone and infamous Haunter adorns a corner or square, providing inspiration to the current crop.

And if all that wasn't enough to inform a fool that she's gone too far into the wrong Domain, a life-size mask of the face of Mania hangs from every building there. Each one's crazed eyes move to watch the intruders' progress, and more often than not, these masks are linked to a central one back in the Alliance's Citadel. This is part of why intruders are found and "welcomed" so quickly.

The Pit.

An Alliance operates out of the strongest, most imposing Haunt they can find within their Dominion, which they refer to as a Pit.

This term harkens back to ancient times, when it was believed - sometimes correctly - that the Maniae came up from the Underworld through a sealed pit in a town's center. On various occasions throughout the year, the high priests of these cities would roll away the stone that covered the pit, and let the Maniae out. It's the same idea, in modern times, except that - thanks to the Goddess' last orders - no mortal may ever claim dominion over them again.

Pits should be horrid and sickening affairs: the more insane and degenerate its past, the better it is to act as a conduit to the Goddess Mania. As a result, Haunters tend to hole up inside corrupt prisons, cursed mansions, abandoned sanitariums and the like. If these places come with their own Ghosts, it's a bonus, but if they don't the Maniae can always see about making one or two, or maybe three...

In downtown areas, the Haunters favor oppressive apartment blocks. If it's the sort of place where people might move into a room less than a week after the previous occupant killed her entire family with a shotgun, and then blew her own head off, they'll want it. And, as with the above examples, if they can't find such a place, they'll make one.

The most sacred spot in a Pit is referred to as the Gateway. It is a Shaped representation of a stone-lined, open pit, set in the floor of the largest or most frightening room in the building. It is here that the Alliance holds its Induction and Falling ceremonies, with the new or soon-to-be-gone Haunter standing in the center of the Gateway.

This House is Cursed.

Unlike most other Concorde's central Haunts, the Haunters prefer to have mortals sharing the space with them. It's something of a game for an Alliance to see how far they can push their "roommates" before they crack, and have to be replaced. Conversely, some see how long they can keep the mortals completely oblivious to what's going on, to the point of prohibiting the use of any Numen on them at all.

Titles and Duties.

The leader of any Alliance is known as either Grandmother or Grandfather, depending on gender. The leader is usually the Haunter who's been "dead" - a Wraith, not a Ghost - the longest, but it sometimes goes to the most powerful member of the Alliance, irrespective of age. Popularity, general support and a complex network of owed favors also factors into the Alliance's decision, which is made by open group vote when the position becomes vacant.

In some Necropoli the spot is given to the most insane Wraith amongst them, instead. In these cases, the Alliance is usually truly ruled by three self-appointed Elders, and the Grandmother or Grandfather is merely a figurehead who plays the part of Mania during their Mysteries. Sometimes this addled figurehead is trundled in front of other Concorde's as their "negotiator," thus frustrating outsiders all the more, and keeping them even further away.

Priests of Madness.

Rank and file Haunters refer to themselves as the Maniae singular - Manes. The word has drifted somewhat from its true meaning, but they are still "of Mania," and that suits their purposes just fine. "Haunters" is merely the name they give to outsiders, who don't need to know the first thing about their beliefs, Mysteries or origins. Calling another Manes a "Haunter" is done either as a diminutive jest or an insult, and new members of the Calling are often referred to as Haunters until they've earned some respect.

Haunters who have won the respect to be called Maniae often take a use-name once they've

been accepted as such. These names tend to be stern and authoritative, or baroque and gruesome, or some combination thereof. Once a use-name has been taken, no Manes in a Necropolis can ever call herself that again, so that a Haunter's deeds will live on well after her, without ever being diluted by imitation, or disgraced by an incompetent successor.

Sacred Rites.

The Calling exists for two reasons: to punish those who defy the will of the Gods, and to give Mania's gift to those who truly deserve it.

This means that Haunters are constantly on the lookout for people who stand guilty of breaking divine laws, and those who have earned the right or "need" to be driven insane. On a good day, a Haunter might find both in the same location, and can reward one by severely punishing the other. But more often than not they have to stand around in their Domain like spiders, and wait for a chance fly to get caught in their web.

Who has earned the right to madness? The spectrum has two ends: the obsessed visionaries who crave it, and the dull and boring non-entities who desperately need it. Granting it to the former is a sign of divine favor, done both to reward those who think outside the static box of reality, and to help push them to even greater heights. Giving it to the latter is sometimes seen as mercy - however horrible their subsequent actions might be - and sometimes considered necessary to balance out a lack of the former, especially in these over-medicated times.

Who deserves punishment? The Haunters often like to joke "everyone" - after all, no one is innocent - but they truly frown on those who deny the existence and power of the Gods or any God, for that matter. Those who damn them, blame them for ill luck or laugh at those who believe are also asking for a come-uppance, as the Haunters see such persons as perfect opportunities to make the faithful hew closer to their beliefs.

But then again, if they're low on Essence, or wanting to try out a novel use for one of their Arts, there are any number of other rules that ignorant mortals can be found guilty of, and punished accordingly...

Whose Rules, Again...?

The Haunters say they enforce the will of "the Gods," but which Gods - and which rules - can and do differ from city to city.

Ancient taboos, such as those against incest, dishonoring your parents and violating the dead, are generally fair game. However, many Haunters feel that they are free and clear to make the mortals under their dominion adhere to certain religious prohibitions that have been long-since forgotten, or done away with. And if the mortals under their charge are ignorant of these laws... well, ignorance is no excuse.

That doesn't give the Maniae carte blanche to scare or kill everyone who forgets these rules, though. After all, if they enforced the Saturnalia, who would be left sane in their part of town other than Pagans and obsessed Latin students?

But making a visible, critical example of the right person at the right time is much more important than any concept of "fairness."

Members.

Haunters tend to have one of two things in common: they're either not quite right in the head, or they're incredibly angry those who are literally insane with anger are considered a real prize.

Most of their members died from violence or because of their own insanity, which makes for violent impulses and "divine insight" that other Concorde are distinctly uncomfortable with not to mention a possible Affinity for Fear. The Haunters find such people, and tell them that it's not only okay to use their Numen to frighten, hurt and possibly even kill mortals, but that they're supposed to be doing it.

Frighteningly enough, that right there is all it takes to get many prospective Haunters off to the Pit for a looksee. And once they're there, they either join up willingly - all too often, at that - or are given a one-minute headstart to run for the border before the Alliance comes after them.

Recruitment.

So if no one can get in or out of their Domain, how do the Haunters find recruits? It's simple - they cheat.

For one thing, they say that no one else can come in, but they don't say anything about them going out. Haunters often perform clandestine snoops through outsider territory, and keep an eye out for possible recruits while they're in the Freewraiths' Markets. The consequences for being caught are severe, given that the Pardoners are always on the prowl for them, but finding new members is important enough to risk it.

And for another thing, the Haunters often make their own members. Those who go mad and commit suicide thanks to Fear still die from their own insanity, after all. And while you might think they'd be angry for having been brought into death like that, by the time the Haunters are finished talking to them, many are surprisingly keen on the idea of joining up.

There's also the fact that sometimes new recruits just come to them, somehow sensing that paradise waits behind the screaming Terms and bone orchards. They are rarely disappointed with what they find.

There are a lot of bold Haunters, but not many old ones. The Calling believes that, much like mortals, Wraiths can only truly hear the will of the Gods for so long seven times 12 years, in fact. After their 84th year of being a Wraith, it is believed that the Dead are made blind and deaf to these divine signs, and such persons are considered incapable of living in the Gods' favor.

But most Haunters don't get even halfway to 84 years as a Wraith before they are genuinely tired of the Deadlands, and barely able to control their own Shadows. As such, many "middle-aged" Maniae seriously consider Falling, or seeking the Goddess' favor through an extreme act of self-sacrifice. And if any are so gauche as to refuse either of these honors, their colleagues are more than happy to help them see the light.

Hazardous Faith.

One might wonder how a Hunter could do the sort of things their Calling asks of them for long enough to lose sight of the Gods' will. Wouldn't they be completely Damned after just a few short years in an Alliance - especially without the Pardoners to handle their Shadows?

The answer might shock outsiders, provided they hadn't been paying attention. Many of the Calling's members died from Insanity, which can provide an Affinity for Fear, but also for Castigate. So the Haunters often do have members who can use that particular Numen.

This is as well-kept a secret as anything else the Haunters do within their Domains. If a city's Pardoners knew that their enemies had access to "their" Numen, they would most likely damn all caution and invade the Haunters' Domain at once.

4.7.1 Beliefs.

The Haunters' first duty has always been to reward the deserving with the the Gift of their Goddess, Mania. They recognize that mankind is restrained by reason, and held back by the chains of sanity. Those who dare to go beyond those iron walls, and seek to dream unfettered and free, should be allowed this favor, and given the divine insight they desire.

The Haunters also recognize that mankind is corrupt and weak - possessed of a fragile moral fiber, and given to severe ethical lapses. Without leaders they fall into barbarism, and without laws they turn on one another like starving dogs. Only the fear of punishment for disobeying their leaders and laws keeps the masses of humanity in check, and even then just barely.

Therefore, the Haunters have taken on a second duty: to keep the mortals in line. They do this by providing constant reminders of what happens to those who defy the will of the Gods, or break their rules.

They believe that all Wraiths should be engaged in this activity, as they are one step "closer" to the Gods by dint of being dead and aware. They despise The Order - and, to a degree, the Believers - for seeking to halt this, and respect the Messengers for being bold enough to take a hand. That doesn't make a Messenger any less of an Outsider, though.

- All Must Heed the Will of the Gods

This goes without saying, but it should be emphasized that the Haunters apply this to themselves as well. They expect total and complete obedience to the Grandmother - and, through her, Mania - from all members of an Alliance. Those who start to backslide or openly doubt are counseled or invited to leave, and those who do not do what they're told can expect to be severely punished for their transgressions.

Divine Punishment.

Those who fail are chastised by their friends. Those who speak out or against are silenced by the group. And those who disobey - in thought, word or deed - are punished.

Being forced to give up all stored fears and nightmares to the group, and having to re-assemble one's personal collection all over again, is a common penalty for small infractions. Having Anchors damaged or removed entirely is the next step up, sometimes followed by being Shaped into something one personally fears, or locked in a traumatic memory/nightmare loop.

But those who persist in open and constant disobedience will most likely become a Shaped object, and be used to decorate the Domain. In fact, the Calling believes the best material for the likeness of Mania comes from someone who knew of Her laws, and yet disobeyed them.

And they always need new masks in Her image.

- Some Must Suffer That Others May Learn.

This sweeping proclamation is what gives the Haunters their mandate to frighten, maim, hurt and kill the living. They feel it is much better to make a few, extreme examples, so that the majority can see the penalty for their crimes, than be "merciful" and encourage lawbreaking.

- No One Is Innocent, All May Suffer

The Haunters must be ready to derange or murder anyone they must in order to perform their duties. There is no room for mercy, kindness or sympathy - there is only duty, and it must be done. So while they might drive a rapist to suicide through the apparitions of his long-dead victims, one day, they might have to take the head from his one, living victim and stick it on a weathervane the very next day for some other infraction.

- The Brave Deserve Her Favors

This is also self-explanatory, though it should be pointed out that the divine madness of Mania is not the same madness the Haunters bestow upon lawbreakers. The deserving are filled with amazing visions and vast vistas of possibility, to the point where their minds are literally somewhere else - someplace the rational mind can neither see nor fathom. Those who earn their ire, however, are broken under the weight of their guilt, phobias or bad memories, and left white-haired and gibbering.

- One is All and All is One

Haunters take the notion of being allies with one another very, very seriously, which is why they call themselves an "Alliance." They are too small to be divided by fractures, and what they do is too important to allow personal disagreements to spoil it.

So while they may have disagreements, they do not allow petty problems to divide them. There is no more room for open dissension amongst the group than there is for gross disobedience. And while they are often harsh and uncompromising with their newer members, they can never punish them without reason, nor harm them without cause.

The other side of this belief is that Haunters will always stand with, and alongside, one another: if you pick a fight with one member of the Alliance, you have picked a fight with all of them. And even if defending one Haunter from a Ferryman fully-girded for war is likely to get them all killed, they will still rush right for the enemy to protect that one Haunter.

- The Concord Must Be Defied

By "The Concord," they mean The Order, which was synonymous with Concord when Mania gave Her final orders. Any who are following their Injunction are following the words of Charun, the liar, and not the words of all Gods. And if they are listening to the words of the Ferrymen - however advisory - then they are hearing His voice from afar, and still following lies.

So they do not pay any heed to The Order, its rules and rituals, or its cursed Injunction. And they do not hew to the words of the Ferrymen, though they know that there is little chance

of any of them - or indeed all of them - besting such a creature in open combat. They must do what they were bade to do by their Goddess, and any who would stand against them must either be avoided, or punished.

Note that Mania, in Her maddened wisdom, said "defied" and not "deposed," or "destroyed." She knew that The Order would always have greater numbers, and that the Ferrymen would always be with it. So She bade Her servants to stay apart from its sheeplike masses, disobey its rules and keep its adherents far, far from their sight.

And if any of those adherents should be foolish enough to come calling... well, there's other things that need Shaping besides Her image.

Rituals.

Much like The Order, the Haunters have many rituals - both great and small - to mark the passage of their days. They have a ritual to greet a new member in the faith, and a ritual for deciding if a mortal is worthy of insanity. There are rituals for learning a new Path of Fear, and new Arts within that Path, not to mention other Numen that the Goddess Mania would find pleasing.

Some rituals are public, and some are private, or to be experienced by only a few people at once. The following are among the major rituals of the Calling, and it is expected that all Haunters be present for them.

- **The Induction**

When a new member joins the Haunters, she is blindfolded and presented to the entire group in the Gateway. The Grandmother stands beside her, dressed and sometimes Shaped in the aspect of the Goddess Mania, and asks all there to reveal the Mysteries of the Goddess to the new member. This is done orally, and in unison, while the Grandmother places the occasional dream, memory or nightmare inside the would-be Haunter's mind to act as a visual aid.

Once this is done, each member comes before her, places her hand upon the new member's forehead, and says "I am Manes member's name here, a servant of the Goddess, and your new friend." This goes down the line until the Grandmother's turn, at which point she leads the new member through a series of ritual questions.

When the questions are answered to the Grandmother's satisfaction, she removes her mask of Mania, and assumes her normal form. She then removes the new member's blindfold, and formally introduces herself: "I am your Grandmother, a servant of the Goddess, as are we all, and as are you, now."

The ceremony is sometimes finished by everyone going outside the Pit, finding the first law-breaker they see and letting the new member perform her duty upon that unfortunate soul. This is mostly done to gauge the skills and inventiveness of the new member, so that Haunters with similar skills and outlook can take her under their wings, but sometimes it's done just to

make sure she was serious about what she said during her Induction.

- The Presenting of The Mysteries

Every so often, the Haunters perform a strange sort of morality play in which ordinary mortals are used as unwitting actors. These Mysteries pit the participants' virtues and ethics against their vices and inner drives - not to mention the other participants - so that the Maniae can see what happens.

A common practice is for the Calling's members to find a group of people who are completely and utterly beyond saving, and slowly twist each person towards fulfilling a certain "part" in the Mystery. They let it build up ever so slowly, and then, right at the boiling point, they find a way to keep the mortals from leaving the stage, and invite the rest of the Alliance to come and watch what happens.

Such spectacles are usually reported as "3-Hour Massacre at Local Restaurant," "Supermarket Rape-Torture-Murder Spree" or "Entire Family Dead at Each Other's Hand" on the news. The authorities do the best they can to keep the really terrifying details out of the respectable papers, but the tabloids and undergrounds go wild with the suppressed information.

And the entire city shudders and looks over its shoulder, wondering how real the "real" world really is.

- The Feast of Mania

In ancient times, at various times of the year, the high priests would roll away the stone that covered the Pit of the Maniae, and let them out of the Underworld. Faithful mortals put tribute directly under the face of Mania, which adorned each house as a ward against evil, and held feasts on behalf of the Goddess and Her spirits. They would also bake bread in the image of those spirits also called Maniae for Her emissaries to enjoy.

No one - other than modern Pagans - has followed those traditions in over a thousand years: no stones are rolled away, no Maniae are baked, and the face of the Goddess has been replaced by other things.

However, the Maniae still hold their Feasts.

If the Haunters of a Necropolis believe that the wickedness or disbelief of their Domain has gotten too high, their Grandmother can call for a Feast. No one bakes them bread, anymore, so Fear and nightmare are their new meat and drink along with the Essence they can harvest from their Arts. And they no longer feel like they have to be given the mortals' "permission" to have a party, either.

They usually wait until the Dark of the Moon to actually hold it, as the ConCORDs are out walking their boundaries, and the Alliance can be ensured of total privacy. But they can do

it whenever they feel they need to, just as they can have as many Feasts in a year as their Grandmother feels are warranted. It's something of a fine line: if they hold too few then the living forget, but if they hold too many it spoils the crop.

During such Feasts, the Haunters don't need to wait for someone to break a law or defy the Gods. Instead, they work their arts on whomever first catches their eye, and give that mortal a damn good scare. If they can find a lawbreaker in action, then so much the better, but they won't go specifically looking for them on Feast nights.

The only hard rule of the Feast of Mania is that no mortal may be killed - at least not on purpose - and no one driven completely insane. After the Feast is over, the Haunters go back to their usual ways, but during the Feast night the mortals under their dominion can at least be ensured of surviving until morning.

But if they decide they can't take anymore around 4 AM, and reach for the pills, anyway, then whose fault is that...?

- The Falling

The final act in the tenure of a Haunter is expected to be her rejoining the Goddess in the Underworld. It usually takes place when the Haunter is one close step away from being completely filled with Angst, or has grown so weary with her duties that she can no longer perform them with care and joy. If she can secure the permission of the Grandmother - who speaks for Mania on this issue - then she may announce her Falling.

This is done at the Gateway, with the Haunter standing in the middle of it, and the Grandmother directly behind her. When she feels she is ready she allows the Grandmother to place her hands upon her, and all other members of the Alliance join hands with the Falling one as well. It's common for two Haunters with Castigate to be the ones on either side, so that they can give her some last morsels of Tainted Essence, and help her on her way.

As the Haunter states her name, and a recording of what she has done, she passed her stored memories, fears and nightmares to the rest of the assembled Concord, so that all might share of her contribution. The Grandmother, meanwhile, makes copies of these things for herself, so that they may be kept in a central location for the Alliance to share.

If it's timed right, the Haunter's last and most cherished thoughts are spread around the group just as she fills up with Angst, loses her connection to her Anchors and falls through the Barrier. As she goes into the waiting arms of the Goddess, below, the Alliance breaks the chain of hands and rejoices, calling her name and venerating Mania, as well as other Haunters who went down before her.

Feeding the Darkness.

So what do Haunters with Castigate do with their Tainted Essence when they're not giving it to a Falling friend? More often than not, they share the "wealth" with other Haunters, in order to keep everyone in balance.

Haunters believe that Tainted Essence is not, in and of itself, a bad thing. It is proof that actions have consequences, and a humbling reminder that no one should think themselves too powerful. To forget consequences and dream of power is to commit hubris, and they are all too aware from their Mysteries - and their duties - of what Hubris brings.

So while their Castigators take Tainted Essence from those who need to keep their Shadows in check, they don't take as much as they could - just enough to avoid Catharsis, Dissolution and the like. The rest is passed around to other Haunters who request it, so that they might have a small reminder to be modest while doing the work of the Goddess.

4.8 Messengers.



Figure 4.4: Illus. by Lost Soul

Don't let them frighten you by asking why it is that you do as you must.

You merely must tell them what happens if you do not intervene.

Or show them.

Some Wraiths awaken in the Land of the Dead with a very strong desire to make a difference. Perhaps this is left over from when they were alive, and perhaps it is new - a response to a death they didn't earn. And, as they cannot protect other wraiths from wrongful deaths, they must instead turn their attention back to the Land of the Living, even though the Order's Injunction prohibits them from intervening.

These wraiths are well suited to joining the Messengers: a seemingly-altruistic Concord whose stated purpose is to protect the living. They are self-appointed guardian angels, following a code of behavior given unto them by the Gods. They are tasked with protecting life - all life - and go about their duties with the reverence they are due.

But no one should mistake reverence for pacifism. When the Messengers speak of their sacred vows they are sincere in their beliefs - not merely spouting pretty words. And they will fight with divine fury to see those beliefs carried out.

For there are angels of vengeance, too - and of death.

- Believers: They have pretty dreams, but death is the reality
- Freewraiths: Taking a stance is respectable, but they are children.
- Haunters: If only they weren't already dead...

- The Order: The Living are more worthy of protection than the dead
- Pardoners: How can they save our souls when theirs are already damned?
- Solitaires: We were all lost, once. Some may yet be found.

4.8.1 Overview.

The Messengers' Concord was formed shortly after the Sundering - the time when the realms were split apart. Because the gods could no longer speak to the living, and the dead could no longer travel so simply to the realm of the gods, a communication channel was needed, other than through Charun, who censored and controlled the flow of information.

Some god, or goddess, perhaps desperate for the communication that they needed to keep themselves flourishing, sent The Book out into the Land of the Dead. Inside The Book was a description of Regis, and a statement of The Code. The wraith who found The Book, a member of The Order at the time, became known as the First Prophet, and turned her attentions to spreading the message as far as its merit would take it.

The Order tried to suppress this information, as they viewed it as a usurpation of the power of Charun and The Order. However, the Ferrymen, subtle as they are, observed this, and whispered warnings about what might happen if this knowledge was suppressed. So The Order relented, and hoped the new group - which they called a cult - would die out of its' own accord.

However, it didn't. Slowly but surely, the message was spread - first by the First Prophet, and later by her Messengers. And thus, the Concord was formed.

Many of the original Prophets - those who heard the message from the First Prophet - were chased, harassed, and brutally assaulted by various other ConCORDS who disagreed with their Message. According to the Messengers, the First Prophet Ascended after being attacked by a group of Pardoners who felt her words were the words of the Damned.

The Pardoners, of course, vehemently deny this.

The Ferrymen.

Every Messenger who knows the true history of their Concord agrees that every Messenger owes the Ferrymen a profound debt. Indeed, their organization owes the Ferrymen for its very existence. And yet, each Messenger tends to be rather cool to the Ferrymen: their authority isn't even recognized by the Messengers.

This is because the Messengers hold the god or goddess who sent them The Book in much higher esteem than Charun. In fact, they hold each other in higher esteem than the emissaries of Charun, wise though they may be. This is not hubris so much as a recognition that they have allied themselves with a different power, and work to spread this power's aim above all others.

The Ferrymen still have very little to say on the matter, though they still advise against the destruction of Messengers simply based on their affiliation. Perhaps they know something about the future of the Messengers that they have yet to reveal? Or perhaps they just admired the verve and passion of the First Prophet...?

In this, as in all things, the Ferrymen offer no explanation.

4.8.2 Organization.

There is no clear, official hierarchy amongst the Messengers: no chain of command, and no pecking order. Any Messenger who needs help will need to convince his peers to assist, rather than simply being able to command newer, or weaker, Messengers.

Note, however, that this doesn't mean that informal ranking systems do not spring up in communities. But these are specific to that community, and doesn't spring from any external authority.

Messengers all have very similar goals, to be sure, but they each choose to go about them in different ways. As a result, most of the Messengers in a Necropolis act independently. Each selects some territory, and sets out each day to keep it safe.

Sometimes this territory is a small group of individuals, sometimes it may be as large as a whole neighborhood. Each Messenger takes what he feels he can protect, and he takes the territory he feels most needs to be protected.

Haunts.

Mystically bound to help each other, and to protect the living from crossing over into the Land of the Dead needlessly, the Messengers don't typically scatter too far from each other. Most Necropoli will have a single Haunt set up as a base for all of the Messengers who are working in the area, or simply passing through. And if they commonly number more than five, multiple Haunts will be set up around the Necropolis in a sort of Safe-House arrangement.

These Haunts are equal parts message-board and hideout. When the Order catches wind of a Messenger who has spent too much time disobeying the Injunction, they will most likely lay low in the Concord's Haunt, rather than their own.

Another function of the Concord's Haunts is to house the wandering Prophets which pass through eventually. Since there is a very slight formal hierarchy, the Prophets' messages are accepted based upon their merit. Those who speak words of wisdom and can teach useful skills are kept around.

Some have tried to impersonate a wandering Prophet, and by doing so gain access to much more detailed information about the workings of the Messengers. Those who have often find themselves chasing at their own tail, racing after a deep structure underneath the "facade" of nonchalance that pervades the Concord's organizational scheme. Many of these are then found out, and steps are taken to re-secure the Concord's Haunts.

The Words of the Prophets.

Messengers who have achieved the status of "Prophet" are a rare and mysterious sight in the Deadlands. They wander from Necropolis to Necropolis with ease, seemingly unhindered by the pull of their Anchors or the threat of the Damned. And, perhaps more amazing, they seek no special favors or authority for their position: they seek only to illuminate their fellow Messengers, and answer puzzling questions as best as they can.

No one in the Concord is quite sure how the Prophets become Prophets. Some say that when one has memorized and understood the entirety of The Book no mean feat, given how long and complicated it is one hears the words of the First Prophet, and is summoned across the Barrier to a special audience in which even more is revealed. Some say that those who impress the God or Goddess who delivered The Book are called, even if they aren't Messengers and have never even seen that holy writ. And there are other, even stranger stories...

The truth is known alone to the Prophets, and they cannot say how it occurs, stating that, as The Book says, all must find the path in their own way. The only advice they give is to follow The Code, and "be true, above all things."

There is one general certainty: all Prophets are total masters of Regis - possessing Arts, and possibly entire Paths, that no one has a name for. They are frightening indeed when they choose to use their skills in that Numen, and it is a foolish Wraith who seeks to challenge such a one.

4.8.3 Titles and Duties.

Just as there is no clear, official hierarchy amongst the Messengers, there are no official titles amongst a Necropolis' Messengers, and each Messenger is equal. Even the Prophets cannot command - only advise. All decisions are made by a majority vote, counting only the Messengers who are affected.

That said, the Messengers may use various titles to refer to each other based on their preferred strategy. There are "guardian angels" who pick a single person to defend, "hoodlums" for those who will protect a neighborhood, and so on.

Messengers all have two primary duties. The first of these duties is to follow The Code. Messengers are supposed to be following The Code in all aspects of their existence, working towards its ends with verve and gusto.

The second duty is much more pragmatic. The Messengers are supposed to enforce their control over the Regis Numen. Regis is a gift from higher powers to allow the Messengers to do what is right, not a toy for other wraiths to play with as they see fit.

The Hand.

While it is true that there are no official hierarchies of the Messengers, there are some wraiths who feel that they must take on additional duties for the good of the Concord. These wraiths are known as The Hand, and they almost universally died through extreme violence, or in situations of incredible tragedy. It is these wraiths may accept the additional role of being angels of vengeance amongst the living.

Messengers agree that taking life is generally bad, but The Hand is given the license to do so. They become "angels of death" with the knowledge that the people whom they target have performed such vile acts - and with no sign of redemption - that it is plainly much better to simply destroy them and be done with it. The most common tools for the job are the Embody and Bios numen, all the better to reach across and do the deed right.

Most Hands - sometimes called "fists" - do not pursue the more physical side of their duties for long stretches. When they do they go on a bit of a bender - one which often ends with the destruction of many of the worst criminals in a given area. They then "retire" for a short while, and live the life of a normal Messenger again.

4.8.4 Members.

The Messengers have a strong tradition of gaining new members who were very active advocates for change in their lives. They attract the sort of people who protest every war, and help run fund raisers for community centers to keep kids away from gang violence. Other recruits come from people who are victims of violence, and who wish to protect their living relatives and friends from the same fate. Those who wish for payback most often do not join the Messengers, due to their supposedly anti-violence stance.

Most of the wraiths in the Concord are not terribly young, nor terribly old. It takes time to come to grips with one's death and become accustomed to wielding the powers necessary to be an effective Messenger. Also, given the lack of hierarchy, a wraith needs to spend time discovering the Concord, rather than being talked to by wraiths specifically tasked with recruitment.

Those Messengers who last a long time are most often very capable defenders, having been at it for a long time. Though, that having been said, many don't last that long, as they fail a few times too many and eventually give up the ghost, so to speak.

Many Deathmarks are represented in the Messengers, but most of them are very small numbers,

in comparison to the major two: Mystery and Fate.

Mystery folks often end up in the Concord because their capability of developing Regis puts them at cross purposes with the Messengers' goal of controlling the use of that Numen for good ends. These wraiths are typically given an ultimatum, often in the form of "join us, or regret it". Fate is the second most common deathmark in the Concord, as they will join up if they decide to do their part to help keep people from dying before their time.

4.8.5 Beliefs.

To be brief, the Messengers predominately believe that there is some inherently sacred quality to the order of existence which they must protect.

As to why there is this order, that is up in the air, but each Messenger knows, on some level, that the circle of life, or the wheel of dharma, or whatever they may call it, is a sacred process which must be kept moving smoothly, and free of interruptions.

The Code.

The Code is a group of beliefs passed on from the First Prophet at the founding of the Concord. Since then, Regis has been used, in a ritual, to imprint these beliefs on each and every member. This is not so much a stripping of the wraith's will as a constant reminder of these universal truths which inspires and guides the wraith towards good actions and deeds.

- **Death Has Its Purpose, and Must Be Respected.**
To put it bluntly, there is an order to things. There is a time to live, and a time to die. It is the role of the Messenger to prevent deaths before their time, but to stand aside when it is right to do so, for those who die can have a greater effect than those who live past their life's natural span. The Messengers all know that they couldn't do what they do if they were still alive, so there are definitely benefits to dying, at times.
- **The Dead Must Serve as the Voice of the Gods**
Living humans have a much weaker connection with divine truths than the dead do, and the messages that are being sent by other ConCORDS don't fit with what the Messengers wish to make happen amongst both living and dead society. Therefore, the Messengers must send their message out to the living however they can. This will mostly include warnings and truths revealed after a person has been saved, as they are very open to suggestions then, or it may come in a more overt form. The Messengers are not intended to be preachers, but they also should not have to keep saving a live human who just won't learn his lesson.
- **The Dead Must Protect the Secrets of the Gods**
Regis is a powerful tool, as well as a gift from the divinities for the use of the Messengers. Other wraiths, then, shouldn't be able to just use it as they will. Most Messengers don't run around stomping on any wraith that knows the Numen, preferring to stick to punishing those who use it too blatantly, or harmfully. However, there are some fanatics who will object to

the Regis Numen being used at all by anyone who doesn't belong to the Concord, for fear that they may misuse it and because they desire to protect its secrets.

- **All Life is Sacred, and Must Be Protected**

A warning for more spirited Messengers, this tenet of the Code says that even vile members of the living still deserve to live the full duration of their life. Some Messengers are a bit inflexible about this tenet, whereas others feel it ought not be in the Code (see below). However, it is present, just as it was handed down from the First Prophet, and so it must nag at the back of their minds. This also provides further impetus to protect those who should not die yet.

- **The Good of the Many Must Overcome All**

This is a spur to action, despite all those who would stand in the way of what is right. This is why Messengers flaunt the Injunction and interact with the Land of the Living. The good of the people they save must come before all of their cares, before all worldly opposition. Some Messengers fail, and this is undoubtedly a tragic proposition, but this aspect of the Code makes them even more doggedly determined to succeed than just their moral fibers demand.

Even Him...?

There is some concern as to whether the last, or second to last, aspect of the Code is more important, specifically in terms of those who wantonly murder and destroy. Obviously this person is a terrible danger to many. Therefore, does the good of the many who are in danger come before everything, or does the villain's sacred right to live until his time is up trump that?

There tend to be two answers to this question. Mostly, it depends on individual preference, but a Necropolis with a strong Messenger presence may have decided on an official policy for the area.

If the wraith decides that the right to life trumps the last tenet, then the human must be allowed to live. That doesn't mean, however, that the Messenger in question must do nothing to end his reign of terror. The Messenger, with his Regis arts, is in a perfect position to flood the mind of the villain with a full awareness of what he has done, a full knowledge of the harm he is causing to himself and the world. Some of the victims of this are driven mad. Many more eventually decide to stop, if for no reason other than to end their mental anguish and torture.

If the wraith decides that the good of the possible victims trumps the evil human's right to life, then the answer is very simple: yes, he can be killed. Certainly, one life will have ended before it's time, but it is simpler to patch up that little snip in the weave of life than it is to fix the incredible snarl that may be built up should he be allowed to live.

And this is where the Hand comes in.

4.8.6 Rituals.

The Messengers, being typically a very individualistic bunch, rather than a well structured Concord, have few rituals that they will observe frequently. However, those rituals that they do observe are very important, and detaining a Messenger from the completion thereof is a very drastic offense.

Additionally, almost every Messenger ritual is a private ritual. Since the Messengers can't count on having enough others to help them at the appropriate time, they structure the rituals so that a single person is all that they take. However, groups can undergo the rituals together, and the bonds between a group that does this are often very strong, as they see each other at many very important moments.

The four most important rituals to the average Messenger are:

- **The Scribing of The Code**

When a wraith wishes to join the Messengers, this is the ritual he undergoes. The first step is for the fledgling to seek out a Messenger who can take him in and induct him into the Concord. Next, the Messenger he seeks out asks for the initiate's name, discards it, and then gifts him with a new name, derived from one of the tenets of The Code, such as Life-Is-Sacred.

After this, the newly renamed initiate must follow the Messenger around during his duties for 96 days. During this time, the initiate must speak out as a staunch advocate of whichever tenet he is named after. Once the Messenger feels that his initiate has served enough time with a particular tenet, he repeats the renaming ceremony, naming the initiate for a different tenet.

At the end of the 96 days, the initiate is renamed once again with whichever name he chooses. This is most often his old name, but not always. At the end of that, final renaming ceremony, the new Messenger is asked to recite The Code, while advanced Regis arts are used to imprint the words in the back of his mind, so that they spring up whenever the new Messenger acts contrary to them, flooding his mind with guilt.

After this, the mentor and the new Messenger bid each other farewell. This could be as ritualistic as a recounting of bold deeds and a grand ceremony, or as simple as a handshake before they both walk off in separate directions.

- **Gratitude**

Gratitude is a celebration which occurs whenever a Messenger Ascends, either through her own actions, or by being helped along by a Ferryman. The first of these is much rarer than the second, but they are both very rare occurrences.

The first day of the ceremony is a celebration of the accomplishments of the Messenger in question. His exploits are shouted to the wind, written into song, painted into pictures, whispered in the darkness, or any other way which the celebrating Messenger feels is appropriate.

On the second day, the celebrating Messenger goes about her daily life as if she was the departed Messenger, protecting the departed's territory as if it were her own.

On the third, and final day, the celebrator goes back to living her own life, but acts more like the departed wraith. At the end of the day, she records, in some fashion, a lesson which ought to be learned by the actions of the Ascended Messenger.

- Grief

This ritual is much like Gratitude, but is a mourning for those wraiths who fall through the Barrier. The three days proceed in the same fashion, but instead of celebrating the merits of the departed, their faults are desecrated, denounced, and berated. And instead of acting like the departed, the celebrator is supposed to act like themselves, taking care to avoid the faults of the departed. The lesson learned ought to be recorded in the same fashion.

- Rejuvenation

Two hundred seventy days after a Messenger's Scribing or his most recent Rejuvenation, he must partake of this ritual.

The ritual itself is very simple. The wraith must immerse themselves fully in a body of water, and, upon emergence, they must recite the Code.

The ritual represents a rebirth. The wraith must be reborn, and, once again, confirm his faith in order to carry on as a Messenger. Those who don't, find that the Code will be more present in their awareness, constantly repeating itself in the back of their minds. The longer they wait before undergoing Rejuvenation, the louder it gets.

4.9 The Order.

4.10 Pardoners.



Figure 4.5: Illus. by Lost Soul

*What? You think you have rights, here?
You think this is unfair?*

*Welcome to death, lady.
We don't have time for rights or fairness,
and you don't have time to waste
talking about them, either.*

*Like it or not, you're in a war zone, now.
There's just me and mine standing between
you and Damnation.*

*So you don't have to like us,
but you will do what you're told. Now.*

It's not too trite to say that Wraiths tend to have a love-hate relationship with the Pardoners, who are the undisputed masters of the Castigation Numen. Everyone with any sense - or an understanding of being Lost or Damned - is grateful for the martial Concord's interventions. But the way the stern warriors of the soul about their business leaves a lot to be desired: "if only they weren't so... harsh?" seems to be a common refrain amongst their charges.

The Pardoners, however, do not care what their charges think. Their views are unimportant when compared to the horror of being Lost, or Damned, and their concerns are meaningless in the face of the big picture. And if ordinary Wraiths cannot see that picture from where they are, they have the Pardoners to thank for that - if they're lucky, their charges will never see have to see the world through the Pardoners' eyes.

For to defeat the enemy, one must understand it. And to properly understand the enemy - within and without - Pardoners must make a terrible bargain with it, through their Shadows. They have

willingly sacrificed a part of their souls to the Darkness in order to better fight what lies beyond the Barrier, and hold no illusions that the war can ever be won.

But as the consequences of surrender are simply unthinkable, they soldier on...

- Believers: Well-intentioned, but misled and ignorant
- Freewraiths: Not so 'free' that they won't submit
- Haunters: Damned in training - shoot on sight
- Messengers: Well-intentioned, but dangerously misguided
- The Order: Misled and hypocritical, but tend to know their place
- Solitaires: Save them if you can - shoot them if you must

4.10.1 Overview.

The Pardoners say that they have always been together, in one form or another. In ancient times they were gentle healers who learned the arts of Castigation, and sought to teach them to other lost souls such as themselves. Some eventually went on to the Underworld, as they grew weary of their task, but many chose to remain behind so that others might benefit from their ways.

But being gentle and kind to their charges created too many mistakes. The numbers of the Damned grew too large to be managed, or repelled. Worse still, Emperor Charun - not a God, but a Wraith some say the first - became horribly Lost over the ages. None of his healers dared brave his wrath by forcing him to abandon things that placed him in spiritual jeopardy, and they could only salve his soul's wounds and hope he came around.

The result was the Sundering. One horrible day, Charun became Damned, and the hordes of Charontes and Dark Walkers he now commanded were sent aloft to rape the worlds of the Living and the Dead. Thankfully, some of the true Gods took pity upon the world, and placed the Barrier there to prevent the disaster from growing any worse.

But the Wraiths would not believe that their Emperor - their God - was now the enemy. When the Ferrymen now corrupted Dark Walkers broke through the Barrier and announced The Concord, the healers opposed them. But the newly-corrupted creatures declared them Anathema, and banished them from the cities. And those who would not willingly leave were rent limb from limb by the monsters, as an example to others.

In the wilderness, the healers were forced to see their failure, and put aside the path of mercy for one of war. They became the army in opposition: warning Wraiths of dangers that the "Ferrymen" represented, and defying their rule at every opportunity. And they learned the secret names of the Dark Walkers, so that the creatures dared not attack them directly, for they could send them back to Hell at any moment.

When The Concord was put to an end by the true Gods, the Pardoners cheered the end of the false Ferrymen's rule. However, they cheered alone, for the Wraiths they had helped "liberate" still

refused to believe that Charun was corrupt, and were still enraptured by the lies of the Dark Walkers.

The Pardoners offered their help to the fledgling Order, in the hopes of working hand-in-hand to create a new society. But The Order rebuffed them, and paid more attention to the Dark Walkers - now forced into "advisory" positions by the Gods - than the warriors of the soul. In spite of all the Pardoners had to offer, they were turned away.

The Pardoners became enraged at his betrayal, and pledged that they would do what needed to be done in spite of this "Order," rather than with or alongside it. Ever since then, the Pardoners have walked their path alone. None dare make demands of them, nor stand in their way.

And those who have cause to defy them soon learn the folly of it.

Wither Shaping?

Unlike some other Concords, the Pardoners hold the secrets to two Uncommon Numina: Castigation and Shaping. The Freewraiths are also masters of Shaping, which has led some to wonder if there was ever a connection between the two groups.

The Freewraiths hold that they shared their talents in Shaping with the Pardoners. This was in exchange for their Castigationary services, back when they were all fighting The Order, together. But as that version of "History" doesn't quite match up with what the Pardoners hold to be true, they don't pay it any heed.

The Pardoners believe they developed Shaping along with Castigation, back when they were healers. It came from their perceived need to heal both soul and body at the same time. Once they became warriors, their skills with that Numen were simply turned to a more martial bent.

4.10.2 Organization.

Like most other Concords, the Pardoners are a broken entity. Each Necropolis has its own body - known as a Chapter - but they are concerned only with their own welfare, and not those of other cities. There's no sense in splitting off and providing a weaker front to the enemy: If the Chapter two cities over falls, their charges will just have to look to The Order for their souls.

That said, there is a central authority of sorts to the Pardoners, but it remains an informational one. A group of ancient, dedicated researchers known as the Curia maintains the Shadow Library, somewhere in Italy. Their purpose is to collect all known lore about Shadows and the Damned, as well as tactical information, uses of Castigation and anything else that could be of value.

Should another event like the Sundering take place, or a Storm completely erase all information from the minds of Pardoners, it is hoped that the Shadow Library will remain as testament to what they learned, and what they did. It may be a vain hope, but the effort must be made.

In the meantime, Chapters may send emissaries to the Shadow Library to request information, or deliver it. The members of the Curia are not eager to let anything out of their grasp - much less

let people walk out with it in their minds - but if the situation is desperate enough, they may yet relent.

Chapterhouses.

The Chapter is based out of a Haunt known as a Chapterhouse. They prefer it to be as strong and scary a Haunt as possible, so as to keep out both the living and the Storms. However, they prefer that the Haunt be a Ghost Haunt, and not "owned" by any member of the Chapter, as it would be compromised were that member to fall to the Enemy.

Every Chapterhouse has a Chapel, which is where the Pardoners go to have their Tainted Essence leeches from them, and be given their orders, lessons or tactical briefings. There is also a Foundry, where the Pardoners work their Shaping on the carcasses of the Damned they bring back.

It's also common practice to have a "Reservoir" locked up in the house, somewhere. This is a chained, gagged and lobotomized Damned who acts as the dumping ground for their Tainted Essence. If the Chapter's careful, a Reservoir will last for decades before finally needing to be replaced. However, once they lose their usefulness, they tend to explode, which means that watching the Reservoir for leaks is a constant duty.

As the Pardoners do not bother to play the Game of Houses, they maintain their Chapterhouse anywhere they like, much as they do their individual Haunts. No one from the other Concorde bothers to give them much of a hassle, if any, and no one in their right mind would try to take it from them, either.

... But There's Always One, Isn't There?

The enmity between the Haunters and the Pardoners is legendary: they hate one another more than Freewraiths hate The Order, and the Pardoners actually detest the Haunters more than the Dark Walkers.

As far as the Pardoners are concerned, the Haunters are traitors: little better than the Damned. They've been given the gift or curse of a second chance, and they waste it by doing half the work of the Enemy. And if that wasn't bad enough, they're constantly trying to get new members, too...

So the Pardoners treat the Haunters just like they treat the Damned. They won't listen to their pleas or hear a word about mercy. They won't even bother to Castigate them - what would be the point? The only thing they're "good" for is termination - preferably with as few bullets as possible.

The Haunters aren't above making trouble for the Pardoners, since they know they have a measure of safety in their own part of town. And it's only the danger of high attrition, and the way the Haunters tend to be "Contained" in one corner of the Necropolis, that keeps a Chapter from marching on them outright.

But whenever one of their members spies the other, the guns and Arts come out. Neither one stops until the other is destroyed. And then they do something really memorable with the body, just to say "This is what you get" to the other side.

4.10.3 Titles and Duties.

Each Chapter is ideally overseen by two Pardoners: a Master and a Commander. The Commander, sometimes known as the War Chief, holds supreme tactical command over the Necropolis, and is charged with teaching Pardoners the Arts of their war, and sending them on their rounds. The Master oversees the spiritual welfare of the Chapter, and has the final say on who may join, and who must leave.

The Commander and Master are considered of equal rank. They are not allowed to overrule one another's decisions, and may unseat one another only if their counterpart is proven to be treasonous, or spiritually compromised. Three witnesses must attest to the truth of this matter for it to be considered actionable, and if the Chapter agrees that a replacement is warranted, it is done.

However, when this occurs a new Master or Commander must be selected from the body of Pardoners who did not serve as witnesses. It usually goes to the most senior Pardoners that remains, but it's not unknown for a relatively new member who's proven herself in the field to get the nod. And if the Chapter accepts her, she's in.

Rank and File.

Ordinary Pardoners are known simply as Pardoners, though ones who've been doing it well for a long time are sometimes nicknamed Honorables As in the Honorable Brother Anger. Some prefer to be called Purifiers, Absolvers, Sin Eaters or Warders by their charges, and fellow Pardoners, but

this is very unofficial.

Upon joining, each would-be Pardoner is known as a Postulant. She is also given a name that reflects her greatest failing, as seen by the Master Postulant Zeal, Postulant Diffidence, Postulant Ignorance, etc.. The Postulant does not have to agree with this assessment, but until she shows herself worthy of the Proving - and survives it - she will be called that name by every Pardoner in the Chapter.

Following her Proving, the Postulant is now allowed to call herself a Pardoner, and known as Brother or Sister. She is also to choose a name that she thinks indicates her greatest strength, or something she wishes to overcome within herself Brother Hatred, Sister Mirth, etc.. Her old identity no longer exists.

Marching Orders.

The chief duty of all Pardoners is to go out into the Necropolis and Purify it. Each Pardoner is given responsibility over one particular area - and possibly assigned a Postulant, or Brother/Sister Pardoner, for help - and expected to keep tabs on every Wraith in that area. Ideally, they will visit each person at least once a week, but sometimes that's just impossible, and they have to settle for once every two, if that.

As there are always far more Wraiths than Pardoners can comfortably handle, they tend to take a "slash and burn" approach to their rounds. If someone's ailing, they might take the time to fix them, but if they're too far gone to save they might just shoot them and get it over with. It seems terribly harsh, but they prefer to spend what little time that have saving those they can, rather than struggling with someone who let themselves go too far to do much for them. Sometimes war can be cruel...

Pardoners are also expected to keep an eye out for the Damned, Reapers who are Damned, by their estimation and Dark Walkers, who could be lurking anywhere. They don't tend to get into confrontations with "Ferryman" if they can avoid it, since other Concordees have been brainwashed into thinking them their friends. However, if they have a chance to spread the truth about the monsters, they will.

Pardoners are known to go out into the Wilderness, beyond the city's bounds, and minister to Wraiths out there. They don't like to do it, since they're too far into enemy territory to get help if things go wrong. But since the enemy is within and without, that's no real excuse.

While out on Long Patrol, as they call it, the Pardoners' usual "slash and burn" techniques are in full effect. Wraiths who are borderline are more likely to be put down than helped out, and those who can be helped are given a stern lecture about needing to be more careful.

4.10.4 Members.

Pardoners tend to fall into one of three niches: intense people with something to prove, those who are intensely driven to help others, and those who are intensely - some would say too intensely - curious about the Darkness. The Concord can make use of all these people, though the latter tend to not last for long in the field. Still, someone has to compile the information for the Chapter's War Journal, and often times it winds up being the would-be researchers.

Most Pardoners tend to be "middle-aged" Wraiths who've been Awake for at least a decade or so, but those are the survivors. There aren't many "old" Wraiths in the Concord, due to the increasing strain of the job, and the young ones have a rate of attrition that can best be described as shocking. In fact, many Pardoners don't bother to get on a first-name basis with their assigned Postulants because they're so likely to lose them within a month's time, if that: "hey, you" will do until they've proven their mettle.

Recruitment is a constant process, and is done while on rounds. They keep an eye on all the recent arrivals, and look for Wraiths who have a high degree of willpower and/or resistance to their Shadows what some call the Eidolon. Common sense, a willingness to obey orders and combat training are also good things.

They also keep an eye out for those who seem to have a knack for the Castigation Numen. Such worthies are all but forced to join, in order to keep the number of "non-combatants" with that power to a minimum. And those who don't get with the Pardoners' program find things very uncomfortable in the Necropolis from then on out.

Due to this, there are a lot of people who died due to their own Insanity in the Pardoners, given their possible Affinity for Castigate. Sometimes the victims of Mystery are in higher than normal evidence too, as they might come into the Deadlands with a handle on that rare Numen. However, the largest proportion of Deathmarks is that of Violence - a phenomenon that need not be explained too much, except to point out that getting one's own back is as good a reason for joining as any.

No Fear, No Fate.

Two things that the Pardoners don't want is anyone who makes a habit out of using the Fear Numen, and those whose deaths were attributed to Fate.

The distaste for Fear is due to its close association with the Haunters. The Pardoners spend most of their time ordering their charges not to use that sort of Numen, as it practically spoonfeeds Tainted Essence to the Shadow. If their own number were seen to be using it, that would look really bad. And they don't need any Traitors, either - not in this kind of war.

The last one is the sort of policy that has as many explanations as there are reasons for asking. The general consensus is that Fate - as both Numen and cause of death - is seen as the province of The Order, who learned it from Charun and the strange Gods they venerate. So if Charun's gone bad, who's to say that the Condemned aren't just that? And when you add in the fact that they can be taken over anytime, anywhere, you have a real liability on your hands.

However, it's a hard policy to effectively police, since only those who were chosen by Fate can truly tell one another. But if they learn they've got one of the Touched in their ranks - most often when they are remote-piloted at a key moment - Dismissal follows immediately thereafter. Whether it's followed by a volley of fire depends on how much the disgraced Pardoner knows.

4.10.5 Beliefs.

The primary, overriding ethos of the Pardoners is simple: We Are At War.

They are at war with the Darkness, both within and without.

They are at war with its soldiers: the common Damned, the mysterious Reapers, and the turn-coats in the Haunters.

They are at war against the Dark Walkers - both those who disguise themselves as "Ferryman," and the ones who can't, anymore.

And they are at war with wayward Wraiths who allow themselves to become Lost and Damned.

There may be "non-combatants" in this war, but there are no civilians - only soldiers of varying rank and file. Those whom the Pardoners refer to as Charges are there to take orders, lest they too fall to the Darkness. And those whom the Pardoners refer to as the Enemy are there to go - preferably straight back where they came from, with several bullet holes in their heads.

There can be no middle ground: no compromise, no surrender. There is only victory or defeat, and the consequences of defeat are far too terrible to contemplate.

Marching Orders.

The Concord has other beliefs as well, all of which derive from the special nature of their War. They drill these into Postulants while they teach them swordplay, marksmanship and the secret Arts of Castigation. And seasoned Pardoners often repeat them, over and over again, while they're out on patrol; They say it both clears and clutters the mind, confounding the Shadow's attempts to ruin the exercise.

- **Soul Is Sword And Shield**
Body is soul, to the dead, and both become highly malleable when Shaped. And at the same time, the integrity of the soul is all that stands between death and Damnation. This is why Pardoners are often encouraged to imagine their entire body - and soul - as one great weapon, aimed at the Enemy.
- **To Understand The Enemy Is To Defeat It**
Admittedly, this is something of a misnomer: there is no defeating the Darkness, as it's too great to truly defeat, much less destroy.

However, they can thwart it, push it back and hold the line. And the best way to do that is to arm oneself with knowledge. If you know what the Enemy wants, you can anticipate its moves, and act accordingly. But without that knowledge, you're fighting blind - swinging at literal shadows.

- **Some Can Be Saved, Others Cannot**
The Pardoners exist to fight the Enemy, and cannot take the time to save everyone. If they are battlefield medics of the soul, they have to be ready to perform triage, and give the bulk of their attentions to those who aren't too far gone, or at least show some hope. And they have to be ready to dispatch those who are too far gone, lest they cause harm to others on their way down.

This is one of the reasons why Pardoners don't get too emotionally attached to the Wraiths they minister to. In fact, they are exhorted to imagine shooting each and every new Charge in the face whenever they first see them, and repeat the mental exercise with each subsequent encounter. This acts to remind them that everyone is expendable in this war - even the Pardoners, themselves.

- **The Fewer, The Better**
Knowledge is dangerous in the hands of the untrained or untrustworthy. As such, no one outside the Pardoners needs to know anything more than certain key facts. Namely, that Darkness lies within and without, Wraiths are at war with that Darkness, the Ferrymen are compromised, and surrender to the Shadow is treason.

Any Pardoners who tell "non-combatants" more than that are walking dangerous ground. Any who tell them the Concord's truest and darkest secrets - or spread the knowledge of

Castigation - are traitors. And treason has but one penalty, to witness their actions against the Hunters.

- We Are Expendable, Knowledge Is Not

Every Chapter maintains what is known as a War Journal: a record of everything they have done, seen and learned in the fight against the Darkness. Every Pardoner who finishes her rounds for the day is supposed to write down at least something, and on a "good" day the Chapter might get a full page or two out of each of its members.

The idea is that, should a serious Storm hit, or their Chapter be wiped out, the record of what they learned would be retained. A Pardoner on a Long Patrol, or someone from the Curia, might come by their ruined Necropolis and collect it, and the knowledge will be passed on in its own way.

Enjoy the Silence.

Speaking of the importance of knowledge...

Those who are in on why the Pardoners hate the Ferrymen, and why they call them all Dark Walkers, sometimes ask why Ferrymen can talk but Dark Walkers can't. Surely this proves that not all Ferrymen are Dark Walkers, and vice versa?

The Pardoners have an answer for this. Once, long ago, they knew ways to learn the secret names of the "Ferrymen," and could banish them from the Deadlands, and back through the Barrier. This is the reason why the Dark Walkers could not hope to defeat the Pardoners, during The Concord, for it would take but a word to cast them back down to whatever Hell lies beyond.

Unfortunately, the methods of learning the secret names - and the names, themselves - have been lost over the ages. And while the banishments were powerful, they were only good for so long: the Dark Walkers could eventually crawl back up to the light, after hundreds of years. And many of them have...

But such was the power of the names' use that any "Ferryman" who was struck down by one was rendered silent forever more. They remain unable to do so much as speak their own name, or any other word.

So the Dark Walkers who can't talk are the "Ferrymen" the Pardoners banished, untold ages ago. And the "Ferrymen" who can talk are the ones they didn't get to around to throwing down.

But give them time.

4.10.6 Rituals.

The Pardoners don't have time for many rituals. Much of their daily schedule is based around going out on Patrol, training Postulants, and then - if they have time - tending to their own needs. Some Pardoners can find a way to balance all their obligations at the same time, but as this isn't always possible, the less "social nonsense" they have to put up with, the better.

However, there are important milestones in the career of any Pardoner, and Chapters tend to take these moments and make them into Rituals. Not every Chapter does a massive ceremony with everyone there: sometimes it's just the Master and Postulant, or Commander and Pardoner, as the case may be. But some Chapters recognize that having your elders and peers adds a certain esprit de corps to the proceedings, or at least scares the hell out of people who need it.

- The Naming

The first major step in any Pardoner's career is when she first comes before the Chapter as a Postulant. She is introduced to the Chapter, person by person, and then made to swear, on the War Journal, to remember the beliefs of the Concord at all times. Once this is done, the Master gives the Postulant her "Name," and either assigns her to a Pardoner for training, or asks for a volunteer to do so.

- The Proving

Once the Postulant has progressed up to a certain point - exactly where depends on the Chapter's own views - she is eligible to undergo a trial by fire, against the Darkness. This consists of her being chained and gagged, as though she were a Reservoir, and allowing the members of the Chapter to use her as one. In the meantime, she is read key parts of the War Journal, and taught certain secrets about Shadows, and how they can be bent to one's will.

The idea is to strengthen the Postulant's own Shadow, so that she truly understands what she's to be fighting against. The process may take anywhere from a few days to a week or two, and is overseen by a Master, who constantly checks her progress. After the point is reached, the Postulant is released, checked for signs of spiritual damage, and then asked for her new insights into the nature of the Enemy.

Those who impress the Master become full-fledged members of the Concord, and are allowed to choose a new name for themselves. And from that day forward, they are either Brother or Sister, and may refer to themselves as Pardoners.

- The Dismissal

War is harsh, and wartime discipline must be equally harsh. Those who engage in treason are destroyed, and their parts used to make weapons for the fight. However, those who engage in less serious offenses, such as constantly breaking the rules, flagrantly disobeying orders, or engage in seriously questionable activity may receive a different sort of punishment - expulsion from the ranks.

The ritual is known as Dismissal, and often involves all members of the Concord, even if they don't include the others in Naming or Proving. The charges are read to the Pardoner in question, and she gains one last chance to answer them, or offer evidence to the contrary. If she fails to convince the Commander who always brings these charges, the matter is left to the Master to decide.

Depending on the severity of the charges, and the weight of the evidence, the Master may elect to nullify the proceedings, put it to a vote, or simply declare the person Dismissed.

In case of a vote, those who wish the Pardoner to be gone need only turn their back on her. Once the vote is taken, if the majority rules for Dismissal, the Master must follow suit, at which point all Pardoners turn their back. Only the Commander is not allowed to vote, and only she must remain facing the Pardoner - if only to level a gun at her head, tell her to leave, and then make sure she does.

Dismissal brings not only expulsion from the Concord, but also surveillance by the Pardoners. If they receive word that the ex-Pardoner is calling herself a Pardoner, using Castigation, or conspiring with the enemy, they will destroy her. Some of the less-noble members of a Chapter might use this as an excuse to settle old scores - something that is frowned upon, but rarely punished in and of itself.

The Mission.

It is, perhaps, a sign of the desperation of their war that those who fail the Pardoners are sometimes given a chance to redeem themselves, rather than be permanently cast out. This redemption comes in the form of undertaking a dangerous task, and is known as The Mission.

At any point in the Dismissal, the accused Pardoner may declare herself guilty, and ask for a chance to redeem herself. Alternatively, the Master may forgo her decision, or calling for a vote, and offer this form of redemption to the Pardoner. There is no forcing her to do this - it must be voluntary, or else it's just another order for her to screw up or disobey.

Missions often involve taking a very Long Patrol, out to a fallen Necropolis, and reporting on what happened there, and why. They may also be asked to make a journey to another Necropolis with some of the War Journal never all of it, so that they can add to it, and send it along to the next one up the road. Some Missions even involve the harrowing journey to the Shadow Library, there to speak with someone of a question of great import.

Those who accomplish The Mission as ordered, within a set period of time, are allowed back in as full Pardoners. They are considered to have redeemed themselves, whatever their crimes, and no one is to speak of those incidents again. Those who fail, however, presumed lost to the Enemy, fully Dismissed or destroyed for treason, depending on the circumstances of how they failed, and why.

Note that genuine traitors are never offered a Mission: there is only one thing to be done with them, and it happens in the Foundry.

4.11 Solitaires.



Figure 4.6: Illus. by Lost Soul

*No, really - I don't want to join
your gang. And I don't want to
hear the initiation speech, either.
I'm just passing through, and
that's all I'll ever be doing here.*

*You leave me alone,
and I'll extend you the same courtesy.
Deal?*

As long as there have been Wraiths to have a society - of sorts - there have been Wraiths who do not wish to belong to that society, or remain largely unaware of it. The latter can usually be blamed on naivete, and is often fixed by dragging such Wraiths off to the nearest Haunt to meet some new "friends." But there is little cure for chronic malcontents, loners, or those who refuse to bow to anyone - no matter how well-meaning - and thusly eschew membership in the Concords.

Such Wraiths are referred to as Solitaires, and tend to be considered the dregs of Deadlands society. In fact, even the most rulebound members of The Order would rather deal with a Haunter than one of these loners - at least you know what you're getting with one of the Haunters.

But while the Solitaires are without Concords, and don't hold to any specific organizational patterns, it would be wrong to write them off as complete loners. They do fraternize with other Wraiths - most often one another - and seek social contact, help and kinship. They just do so on their terms, and not anyone else's, which makes most of the difference.

4.11.1 Overview.

Legend has it that the first Solitaires were headstrong Wraiths who utterly refused to follow the words of Charun, as spoken by the Ferrymen during the time of the Concord. Some versions of the

tales say that they refused to believe the Ferrymen truly spoke in His name, while others say that they had no desire to bow to anyone, and might have even spat in the face of Charun, Himself.

As it was, they could only spit in the face of His servants, but that was more than enough. As punishment, they were declared outcast, and banished from the early Necropoli. Rings were permanently bound around the base of their thumbs, so that all might know them, and none were allowed to sell to them, buy from them, nor give them shelter or aid of any kind. To even speak their names was to commit treason against the Emperor.

This state of affairs only lasted as long as the Concord, as the "New World" soon crushed Charun's proxy rule underfoot. But while His laws were soon reduced to suggestions, Charun's disdain for those who would not join the first Concord - later called The Order - was to transfer over to all ConCORDS as they evolved, or were created. And to this day, Solitaires are still reviled, or at least avoided, for their refusal to kneel to the Ferrymen.

While these stories are quaint, they don't explain why members of ConCORDS who would rather die all over again than kneel to the Ferrymen - much less Charun - seek to avoid the Solitaires as well. The more realistic explanation is that, given how Wraiths see social contact with one another as essential, those who willingly cut themselves off from society are seen as crazy and untrustworthy, if not Damned waiting to happen.

Get Lost, Weirdo.

Of course, the surest way to keep someone outside of the circle around the fire is to tell them they're not welcome, which is part of what perpetuates the Solitaires. If they're already on the social black list for having told someone "no," then why bother to join up with anyone else?

Such close-minded attitudes on the part of other ConCORDS helps continue the cycle of avoidance that Solitaires find themselves caught up in.

Solitary culture tends to be made up of small knots and whorls of Wraiths, all living independently of one another. These groups often hole up in small Ghost Haunts, nestled in the extreme peripheries of the Necropolis, where the only regular visitors are Pardoners on a mission of mercy, Freewraiths seeking Essence or the genuinely curious. Some of them do congregate around an Anchor, but realize that doing so will just make them stand out all the more, thus bringing unwanted attention from Concord recruiters.

Solitaries in a group are often close to one another in post-mortem age, and when they died. This is because most people, if presented with a choice of companions, tend to want to face death with those they share a cultural understanding with, rather than a hodge-podge of times and places. That said, it's not unknown for a few younger Wraiths to hook up with an old-timer, or a group of more experienced Wraiths to "adopt" a newcomer, but these are exceptions rather than the rule.

There's no absolute sense of hospitality at work when new Solitaires come into a group: its members generally have to carry their weight, and share the load, if they want to stay. Being accepted, then, is no little deal, and this helps create a bond of loyalty and trust within the group.

It goes without saying, though, that the loyalty and trust can sometimes be grossly misplaced, on either end.

4.11.2 Members.

Solitaries are a widely-varied bunch, but most of the ones who stick with being "loners" for any period of time tend to have one or more things in common: a notable distrust and/or disgust of Wraithly society, an extreme dislike for being told what to do, or crippling anti-social tendencies. Of the latter, little needs to be said, other than such Wraiths often accounting for tales of "hermit ghosts," most of whom disappear into the wilderness for lengthy periods of time.

A significant number of Solitaries are young Wraiths, most of whom were taken by violence or accidents, or are unsure of how they got into the Deadlands. The sense of betrayal, unkind fate or utter uncertainty can keep a Wraith from feeling at ease around would-be "friends" who want them to join a Concord. After all, how do they know it wasn't some kind of scam to bring them here? A question that, in the case of the Haunters, may not be complete paranoia...

As for those Solitaries who've been around for a long while, a number of them actually do become Solitary by name and inclination. These Wraiths tend to cut off contact with others altogether, and coming around only when they need something. And as they tend to be more powerful than most, it's rare that they truly need anyone else, which makes their reappearance into the Necropolis something of an event.

Not that they tend to appreciate the attention...

"Honorary" Members

There are small towns, outlying suburbs and unincorporated areas where the Concords have never been able to establish a real presence. Those towns' Wraiths have their own ways of dealing with "life" after death, and may or may not have a social structure all their own. But in the eyes of the other Concords, anyone who isn't in a Concord is a Solitary, which makes these Wraiths Solitaries... even if they aren't.

This only becomes a problem if one of these "Solitaries" has one or two Anchors inside a Necropolis, and must come inside it once in a while to visit that Anchor. Once she's encountered, and unable to account for who she's "with," she's in danger of being tagged as a Solitary, and treated accordingly.

4.11.3 Beliefs.

If the Solitaries have a central belief, amongst their many different viewpoints, it would probably boil down to the Luciferian credo I Will Not Serve. Their distrust and/or disgust of other Concords may be what marks them as Solitaries, but it's their unwillingness to dance to any tune other than their own that keeps them that way. They may one day "see the light," and join up with a Concord, but until then they will stay with the other outsiders, well beyond the bounds of "civilization."

4.12 History and other Myths.

*I believe that imagination is stronger than
knowledge, that myth is more potent than
history.*

from The Crow

As long as mankind has recorded its past, that past has been replete with ghost stories. Therefore, it only makes sense that the Wraiths' own history would stretch back that far. And it does, indeed - but it is stretched rather thin, and this makes for a number of problems.

The official history, as recorded and maintained by the Order, goes back to the days of ancient civilization: back to a time when Gods walked the earth, and great heroes performed amazing feats in their name. The Order prides itself on having assembled the largest amount of historical material possible, and the Necropoli that house those priceless artifacts are considered fortunate indeed.

However, the official history those documents tell is far from complete, and not to everyone's liking. It hinges itself on the veracity of one source - The Book of Old Times - and that document is missing entire stanzas. And what is there still has glaring omissions and deep mysteries, not to mention many "conundrums" that may be nothing more than ancient lies though the record keepers of The Order are never open to such talk.

Disparate Records from Diverse Hands

While The Book of Old Times may be the "official" history, according to The Order, it is not the only such history to be found - far from it.

Almost every Concord has their own version of history, which either plays up their role within it, or else makes the other ConCORDS out to be less noble than they would like. Some versions even directly contradict The Book of Old Times, which angers The Order to no end.

4.12.1 Urban Legends.

Past the "official" history of times past - and no one is really certain when this all may have happened - there really isn't a universal "history" of Wraiths. This is because, much like Wraith society, all history is local, too. What happened in the Deadlands of Rome a thousand years ago bears little meaning to the Wraiths of London, New York or Tokyo. However, it matters immensely to the Wraiths of Rome, as they have to live with the direct consequences of that day, and what came from it.

As if to make up for the lack of complete confidence in the most universal, Wraithly history, The Order of each Necropolis goes out of its way to keep its own historical record. All goings-on of import are recorded faithfully, and without much side comment, so that future generations of archivists can judge for themselves what happened without having to decide if the author was being ironic, sarcastic or understated.

This makes for very dry and boring reading, but its accuracy is legendary - especially on the personal level. All members of The Order are encouraged to keep journals, and make them part of the archives minus extremely personal or salacious details, one would hope.

The Lady Vanishes.

There is another reason why The Order maintains such voluminous histories on the local level: memory is not only fallable, in the Deadlands, but it's all-too mutable, too.

History has been seen to change, due to the reality-warping nature of Storms. It isn't so much the events that change, as it is Wraiths' memories of those events that are altered. And while a Wraith whose Shadow is playing tricks on her might be able to get help from friends, or a Pardoner, it's no use if everyone in the Necropolis has also had their memories tinkered with.

While such changes to group memory are usually small and trifling, larger Storms can cause major changes to the timeline. Indeed, entire events, places and even people have vanished from the memories of an entire Necropolis, never to be remembered again.

As a result, having an exacting record of what goes on is a must. After each major Storm, the Temple of The Order is often swamped with people who want to make sure they didn't forget anything important. And sometimes it plays host to those whom no one can remember anymore, too.

What follows is a short summary of the remaining text of The Book of Old Times, along with the actual stanzas, themselves, broken down into their individual sections.

There is also, in the interest of equal time, a rebuttal by a well-known Freewraith.

4.12.2 The Book of Old Times.

The Book of Old Times comes to us from scores of fragmented, individual copies of its contents. Bits and pieces of the ancient story have been found on crumbling scrolls of soulstuff, caked-over walls in the catacombs and everywhere inbetween. And it has been painstakingly assembled, translated and poured over through the ages, just to make certain that it's as correct as can be.

The oldest copies are all written in Etruscan, as one might expect, given the genesis of the Gods of The Order. More "modern" versions were set down in Greek and Latin, with one later copy written in Germanic Runes. Given the importance of the subject matter, and the wide variance in the narrative that occurs in later copies, anything written in pre 4th century BCE Etruscan is considered to be the most accurate. However, even contemporary copies have been prone to variance, and The Order has had to go with consensus, and hope they are correct.

The Book of Old Times consists of five chapters, which have thirteen stanzas apiece. The most complete chapters are the first and third, while the fourth is missing one stanza, and the second is missing four. In both cases, it seems that the stanzas describing Charun's fight with the "new world" have been lost, which makes it hard to understand the scope of the conflict.

The fifth chapter is both the most fragmentary and the most disappointing. Only six full stanzas have been found and confirmed, and of those missing, it would seem that most of them are prophetic in nature. While we know, courtesy of the rites of The Order, that Charun and the Ferrymen will come back on the Day of Dominion, the signs that point to that time have yet to be satisfactorily unearthed.

"Why not ask the Ferrymen?"

That's an excellent idea, son. But it's been tried before. And, just like most things you try with them, it's failed.

Oh, it's not that they don't know, I'm sure. It's just that they just won't answer the questions, is all. You can put it as simple as you like - even get it down to a simple 'yes' or 'no' - but all you get is that stony, hard silence of theirs. That and the feeling you might want to stop wasting their time...

I did get an answer, once. Not quite what you might expect, though. I'd been trying to get Germanicus - that's the one in Westminster Abbey - to just tell me if I was barking up the wrong tree or not. And when he refused to so much as look at me, I finally lost my temper, and said 'how the hell are we supposed to know any of this is true at all, eh?'

And he turned around, real slow like... looked right at me... and said 'have faith.'

Yeah. Just that and nothing more. Went right back to ignoring me. Bastard.

4.12.3 The Chapters.

The following is a summary of The Book of Old Times, broken down into chapters for ease of comprehension, and without much in the way of critical comment. Sheer volumes have been dedicated to uncovering, rewriting, reconstructing - and, of late, deconstructing - the ancient history of the dead, and to skim even the top five of each theory and countertheory and present them, here, would threaten to confuse the beginning reader.

In Ancient Times.

There were Ghosts, in ancient times - indeed, it would seem that every soul, upon death, became a Ghost of sorts. They were permitted to walk in their sleep, and go about their business as they saw fit. But when they Awoke they were taken away by the gentle hands of the Gods, and their Ferrymen, and taken down the River of Death - also known as the Black River - by the Ferrymen.

The destination of their journey was the great City of the Underworld. There they were brought before the throne of Charun, there to say of their lives, their deeds and their ends. Those who met with the Emperor's approval were escorted to the paradise that awaited, there to dwell in rest and splendor for an eternity as his subjects. Those who failed to impress him, however, were destroyed.

The Sundering.

But the ancient idyll was not to last. The Gods came to Charun to tell him that something was changing in the world, and to seek his aid against an "evil star." This change was apparently prophesied by no one, and even Vanth - who sees all that is and all that will be - was quite violently prohibited from seeing what would happen.

We are later told that the world is going from old to new, but we are never told what that really means, due to the loss of four entire stanzas. All we know is that a man died, and that his death created "a new world."

With the death of the "greatest idea" came the birth of another, and a mighty Storm - the greatest ever - raged across the world for a "season." The Damned Charontes made merry in the world of the living and the dead, and even grew so brazen as to attack the City, itself.

The Concord.

The great Storm pushed the worlds of Life and Death away from one another. Between them came the Barrier, which blocked easy passage between the two. Charun had clearly been forced out of his previous position as lord of the dead, and he sent the Ferrymen to try and breach the surface, to see what remained.

The Ferrymen eventually got through the Barrier, though we are not told exactly how they did this. They reported to Charun that the dead now "went somewhere new," but those who Arose were left behind, and not accounted for. Worse still, those souls that remained behind were somehow kept from following after the Ferrymen.

Needless to say, this angered Charun, and he sought the advice of Vanth once more. She told him that looking after the forgotten dead "was his mandate made plain." Thus did Charun proclaim the Concord, taking a year and a day to come up with the simple rules of its governance, with help from Vanth, the shades of old and his Ferrymen.

The Injunction.

At Charun's instruction, the Ferrymen went once more to the surface to proclaim the Concord, and rule in his stead. They were to be the arbiters of his law, and maintain order - most notably the Injunction - amongst the Arisen. It is from these days that The Order springs from, though the leadership was given unto the Ferrymen, and not mere Wraiths.

However, the "new world" was displeased by this turn of events. Storms and the Damned were let loose upon the world to show its displeasure. Due to a missing stanza, we are not certain of how the conflict came to a head, except that Charun clearly "acceded to the new world's demands." At the same time, there appears to have been some kind of compromise: the "new world" says that the dead may "chose" to follow Charun, but Charun - and, by extension, the Ferrymen - may not directly interfere.

The Day of Dominion.

The last chapter of The Book of Old Times is the most savagely incomplete, with only six stanzas remaining in full. This is extremely unfortunate, because the narrative is just getting to the signs which signal the "approach of the day" when it cuts off. All we are told is "By the light of the..." which could mean almost anything, and has led overly-enthusiastic members of The Order and the Believers to tidy their lives up at every bright astronomical event.

What we do know is what will happen after Dominion Day. The Barrier will fall, and the Black River will come back, and with it the Ferrymen. The "new world" will be knocked down by a return of the old, and those who have kept the Injunction will be allowed to follow the Ferrymen to Paradise, and Charun.

In Ancient Times.

*In the beginning was the Word
The Word was Light - the Light was Life
The Gods found them Good and Gold
Nothing Good or Gold Can Stay*

*In ancient times we trod our paths
Our lives were hard - our lives were short
Heroes were born and lived great lives
Even great heroes must someday die*

*In death we all became one race
All rivalries gone - all strife set aside
We were set within our caves of stone
We were given our likeness for the new world to come*

*In our own ignorance many would dwell
Some stayed asleep - some would arise
Those who came to their senses were welcomed
Heralds of the Gods urged us to go on*

*We walked to the Black River, one and all
Kings with their peasants - friends with their foes
The Ferrymen came to take us away
In their reed boats we were ferried to a far shore*

*The Ferrymen took us away from our world
As we were taken from life - we were taken from light
The Black River went down deep into the earth
Not all the passengers survived the long journey*

*The river stretched on, black league upon league
The way was hard - the way was unsure
At the end of this journey was the Underworld's City
At long last we beheld the city's front gates*

*The gates were strong, and hid the City behind them
 Divine Aita stood by one side - Great Persepini stood by the other
 Each one of us had to walk between these two Gods
 Not all those who tried were allowed to pass on*

*After these ordeals we had one last remaining
 This was the most terrible - this was the most wonderful
 Each one of us had to kneel before Dread Charun
 Not all those who did were allowed to rise*

*Dread Emperor Charun to whom was given the dead
 Wise Charun who led us - Dread Charun who judged us
 All the Gods knelt before him and spoke of their deeds
 As the Gods did, so did we, and then we were judged.*

*On his black throne Emperor Charun listened to all
 They spoke of their lives - they spoke of their deaths
 They told of their deeds and begged to be his subjects
 Some he spared, the others he destroyed*

*Those who yet remained were bade to stand
 Dread Charun had judged them - Wise Charun had judged them
 Those who yet remained were deemed fit to serve
 Paradise awaited them beyond the black throne*

*There in the Underworld a garden stretched out
 It was the size of the city - it was hidden by its walls
 All there who dwelled did so with glad hearts
 All dwelled there forever, as Emperor Charun's subjects*

*So did these things happen for ages untold
 So it was in the beginning - So it was assumed to be for all time
 But sometimes what is meant to be is not what the Gods would wish
 Sometimes what is to be is not made plain until it occurs*

The Sundering.

*For long ages did things occur as they had
 The living became dead - the asleep became arisen
 Those who arose were ferried to the Underworld
 Those judged worthy would enter Paradise there*

*These things occurred as they were bade to occur
 Dread Charun was the judge - Wise Charun was the leader
 The Underworld swelled with the dead of the world
 Paradise grew to house every soul.*

*The Gods came before Charun, kneeling to him
 They appeased his wrath - They lauded his wisdom
 They spoke of a strangeness in the world above
 They spoke of times changing, and a new order to come*

*The Gods pleaded with Charun to stop this evil star
Dread Charun he raged - Wise Charun he considered
He promised them his hammer would be at their side
He promised them he would see this thing through*

*So did Dread Charun seek the wisdom of Vanth
She who sees all that is - She who sees all that comes
But she could not see what was yet to come
A great hand blocked her vision, striking her down*

*So did Emperor Charun seek the wisdom of Shades
All those in his gardens - All the wisemen and kings
But they had no idea of what this could be
They thought only of Paradise, and had forgotten the world*

*So did Emperor Charun gather his Ferrymen
Those who brought him the dead - Those who plied the Black River
He bade them to go into the world above
He bade them to discover the face of this change*

...

*And when it was over, the sky shook and bled
The blood was like ashes - The blood was like fire
The world as it had been known was torn asunder
A new world was created with the death of this man*

*So did the understanding come to die
What was once the way - What was no longer so
The death of one great idea was the birth of another
With the death and the birth a new Storm was let loose*

The Concord.

*The role of Gods and of men had been changed
What once was ceased to be - What was left was made low
The greatest of ideas had died and been reborn
The greatest of Storms was to rage by its side*

*The Storm raged for a season, and all was made waste
The asleep were spared - The Arisen were devoured
The Charontes frolicked in the cities of men
The Black River was carried away by the winds*

*The Underworld was attacked on all sides
The Charontes grew bold - The Charontes waxed fat
The Gods and the Shades stood side by side at the gates
The walls did not fall, nor buckle nor crack*

*At the end of the season the Storm came to an end
All that had been was gone - All that was left was ruin
The Underworld was buried by heaven and earth*

The Black River no longer reached up to the light
Upon death there would be no more ferrying of souls
The new world had claimed them - The new world had won
The dead were no longer beholden to Charun
The world had been remade and him left outside

So Emperor Charun gathered his Ferrymen to him
Those who had not perished - Those who followed him still
He bade them return to the surface once more
And to tell him of what they discovered up there

The journey was more difficult than they had imagined
The Black River was stopped - The road was made hard
But they soon learned the way to go through the barrier
One day they were able to fulfill his command

They told their Emperor of the new world above them
They spoke of its changes - They spoke of its ways
They told Dread Charun of the new way of things
They told him of how the dead went somewhere new

But the dead were not always taken away
As before some were sleeping - As before some arose
And those who arose were now left behind
The new world had not thought of what to do with them

These lost souls were now trapped and had no resolution
The old world was blocked - The new world was shut
The Ferrymen said not a one could come hither
Their unfinished business lay too heavy upon them

Emperor Charun was angered by this
He asked of their succor - He asked of their welfare
They said these dead were lost to the Charontes' tortures
They said there would be no rest for these pitiful ones

These were the words that the Ferrymen spoke
Dread Charun he raged - Wise Charun he pondered
He consulted with Vanth, whose eyes were now clear
And she told him that this was his mandate made plain

So did Emperor Charun declare this new age the Concord
The old world had fallen - The new world was broken
He would see to it these dead were all cared for
He would move heaven and earth for these souls

The Injunction.

The new world had been made in haste and abandon
Not all souls were cared for - Not all souls were claimed
Emperor Charun was enraged by this new world

He swore that he would make these things aright
For a year and a day he sent his Ferrymen on journeys
He bid them go far - He bade them return
He charged them to learn all they could of this new world
He charged them to bring all this knowledge to him

For a year and a day he consulted his Shades
He spoke to priests - He spoke to old kings
He asked them what they could tell of good laws
He asked them what he should say from afar

For a year and a day he consulted with Vanth
She who sees all that is - She who sees all that comes
He asked her to tell of this new world's last hour
He asked her to tell of his return to dominion

In the year and the day he pondered The Concord
He decided its rites - He decided its laws
He decided what order to set upon the dead
So they might one day come to Paradise

For that year and that day he wrote down his Injunction
He kept this thing simple - He kept this thing plain
Emperor Charun wrote these words that were certain
Emperor Charun said these things in his name

Kill Not The Living
Save The Lost - Destroy The Damned
Wake Not The Sleepers
Await the Day of Dominion

Emperor Charun bade his Ferrymen leave
They should go to the surface - They should go to the dead
They should see to the creation of a new order
They should bring the Injunction to those up above

And so did the Ferrymen obey Dread Charun
They brought about order - They brought about law
They ruled this Concord in his name
Throughout the lands above there was peace

But the new world was unhappy to see this
Who were these usurpers? -Who were these dead kings?
The ground opened up and great Storms were unleashed
The Charontes were set loose once more upon men

...

So Charun acceded to the new world's demands
No more Ferrymen would rule - No more souls would be lost

*If the dead chose to follow Charun's rule so be it
 But there would be no more direct interference
 So spoke the new world, but the damage was done
 The arisen had seen - The arisen had learned
 Those above cared not for them, but Emperor Charun did
 So the lost souls made the Concord go on to this day*

The Day of Dominion.

*Emperor Charun bid the creation of the Concord
 His Ferrymen were bid to rule - His Ferrymen ruled well
 The new way of things rent this all asunder
 But though Charun abdicated, the Arisen ruled in his stead*

*And so shall this Concord be maintained
 The order shall be maintained - The Injunction shall be upheld
 The Ferrymen shall now advise, but not rule
 And those who fulfill their duties may follow them yet*

*The lot of the new world is hard upon you
 The way is not easy - The world is not well
 Your inner darkness conspires against you
 The darkness below seeks to swallow you whole*

*But Vanth says these things shall not endure forever
 She who sees all that is - She who sees all that comes
 She says there will come a day when the new world will fail
 And the old ways shall return once more to men*

*On that day of Dominion shall the Barrier fall
 The Black River will return - The Black River will flow
 Those who have Arisen may follow the Ferrymen
 Those who have kept the Injunction will be in Paradise*

*This shall be the great Day of Dominion
 Dread Charun shall return - Emperor Charun shall rule
 The lie of the new world shall be swept aside
 The lost souls shall be once more given a home*

*By these signs shall you know the approach of the day
 By the light of the...*

...

An Opposing View.

Jesus on a crutch, I've never heard so much happy-crap "all get along" nonsense in my life or my death.

All the gods paying fealty to Charun, the demon back-breaker of the Etruscans? Charun putting down his big, bloody

hammer to write up four commandments and tell us all to be good little ghouls and ghosties and things that go Boo in the night?

Gimmie a fucking break! Next thing you'll be telling us that Countess Bathory was Cinderella all along.

It not only goes against all common sense, but it goes against everything we know about Etruscan myth cycles. Charun was just a rather ugly bit of hired muscle, not the one running the show! And as for the Charontes, they were supposed to be his servants, not his enemies... you getting the picture yet?

No? Well, let's try this on for size: we've been lied to since before day one. Everything we've been told is a big old pile of shit.

There is no Charun, there is no Paradise and there is nothing beyond the Barrier but the Damned. Maybe Hell, if you believe in it. And that might explain a lot, come to think of it...

The Injunction? Fuck that noise. It was made out of whole cloth by the Order to keep control over the population. They have the

Ferryman as their proxy agents and secret police, and everything the Ferryman can do is some weird smoke and mirrors crap the Order keeps to itself for obvious reasons.

And it's worked, hasn't it? All the good little boys and girls who need a pat on the head from wire mommy and big, bad dad fall into a straight line, and they've duped most of the Believers into buying the party line, too. Even if they can't get the Zealots into the lock-step part of the program, the Ferryman have got them so doped up on religion that they're not going to make too much trouble, are they? One contrary word from Ferryman Franco and they're all prostate, begging forgiveness from the proxies of the big bad Demon Emperor.

And considering the reality-warping nature of Storms, and all the time that's gone by, and how hard it is to last for more than a century without getting Damned or turning into a fucking pillar of dust and cobwebs, it's no wonder no one can testify to the truth anymore. There's no accurate records, no witnesses and no one left to say otherwise except maybe for some of the really old and Ossified folks all moldering down in the Order's sepulchers.

Which kind of explains why they're all there, under lock and key and not to be disturbed, doesn't it?

"Coraline" - Freewraith of London, Stand-up Philosopher and self-described "All Around Pain in the Arse."

4.13 Trascendence.

*Then I heard a voice from heaven say,
"Write: Blessed are the dead who die
in the Lord from now on."
"Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest
from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."*

- Revelation 14

The other day, when preparing a sermon for new members of our Flock, I found myself at a curious impasse: how does one describe Transcendence?

I have been privileged enough to see ten people be taken away, with the angels, before my own eyes. I have been witness to other, less canonical "disappearances," as well, and have reason to suspect that others of my acquaintance have found their own way through the Barrier, and beyond. And the more I research the stories that I hear, every day in our city, the more I believe that it isn't as "simple" a matter as we, or the other groups of Believers I'm familiar with, would believe.

My Brothers and Sisters would prefer that I did not speak of these other things to new members, much less to anyone in our Flock, because they are not scriptural. But when even scripture must be extrapolated from, and then re-interpreted in the face of an unfamiliar reality, what do we have to go by but our own eyes and ears?

And how can we deny that our Angels, whom some call Ferrymen, minister even to non-Christian Believers in this place? It would seem that scripture is merely a path to glory, but not the only one.

So I have decided to speak, once I know what I must say. To that end, I have decided to chronicle what I know of it, and what I suspect to be true. And, while I realize that my own biases and viewpoints will color it, I will also say what others have said on the matter as well.

4.13.1 What's known.

I witnessed my first Transcendence within a month of joining the Believers, which was only a few days after Brother Simon had removed my Shroud. I was only a novice, but he encouraged me to take part in the ceremony of Sister Bernice, who was on the sheer cusp of being taken away. It is a memory that I've cherished ever since.

Sister Bernice was an astonishing sight to behold. She had Resolved most of the things that she had left behind, and had carefully peeled away most of the connections between herself and that one, last thing. And as she

*was fasting in preparation for
the day, she was so dark and lightless that she seemed a human stain compared to the rest of us. In
fact, when I first met her, I
thought I was seeing a shadow, as bad as that sounds in a place like this.*

*But unlike so many others that I have seen in a similar state, she moved with great vigor and
energy. Her smile was radiant enough
to light the entire room when she was introduced to me, and when she prayed with me for God's
favor in her ceremony, I felt a
power inside her that I've only ever felt with those who've been ready to Transcend. It was as
though she were already standing
next to God, even though the ceremony was hours away.*

*Many Believers I know have to take the ceremony to the Angels, but ours always comes to us
when we need him. That time was
no exception, and it was also my first time meeting one of the Ferrymen. I remember that he scared
me, because he looked more
like a demon than anything else. But Brother Simon counseled me that, in times of war, the Angels
must be as terrible as their enemies,
and God has terrible enemies, indeed. That has never assuaged my fear, I'm sorry to say*

*When the ceremony came, there was a sense of anticipation and hope, mixed in with more than
a little dread. While Brother Simon
didn't say it then, and indeed never did, I've come to recognize that the dread accompanies our
fear that the ceremony might all be
for nothing. All too often, one of our Flock has gone through the long, slow process of Resolution,
and sought God's wisdom and
guidance every step of the way, only to falter at the last moment. I've seen it happen many, many
times, and it is a terrible thing to
see someone go so far, and then fail to take that last step.*

*After an hour of silent prayers and solemn chants, Sister Bernice stood and made her way to
the Angel. He I never like to think of
them as 'it' held out his hands to her, and asked her if she was ready. That was the first time I'd
heard his voice, and it was so like
thunder, splitting the air, that it almost made me stop in the chant.*

*Her reply was like a gentle breeze in comparison: yes, she was ready. She was ready to meet
God. She had made her peace with
who she'd been, and what she'd done. She had no regrets and no last wishes. She was ready.*

*Was she ready to meet his judgment? the Angel asked, and she said that, yes, she was ready for
that, too.*

Was she finished with her old life? the Angel asked, and this was the important part of the ceremony, because it was the part where she had to let go of that one, last attachment to her life.

We all stood, clasping hands and making a chain of faith and power. Brother Simon walked us all behind her, and placed his hand just barely upon her, so that we could give her the last bit of energy she needed to make the cut.

As we did, the darkness that had been upon her rolled away, and she blazed with our combined power. She threw back her head and gasped in ecstasy, and I could see that she was reaching out, in her mind, to that one last thing that had held her back for so very, very long.

She shuddered a few times, wracked with the effort. And she shook her head as though she were fighting off a fever. She might have even cried out, once or twice, but it is hard to be sure if I remember that, or if I think I remember that.

I wanted to cheer her on, or say "God be with you," but Brother Simon had expressly forbade it, much for the same reason that only he placed his hands upon her, and just barely at that: any weakening in concentration might be disastrous, and a sign of love or friendship or fellowship from even one of us might make her wonder if she was really ready to go or not.

But she was. There came a moment of perfect calm across her face, and she stopped struggling altogether. Her body began to flicker and ripple as she lost hold over this world, and it was only the excess power around her that was keeping her together. Either that or the Angel, who stepped forward, with a hand outstretched, just out of her reach.

He asked her if she was ready, one last time. And she said yes. It was all she could manage to say, but she meant it.

And she stepped forward, flaking away more and more with every inch of movement, and took his hand with both of hers. He clasped his other hand right on top of hers, and walked backwards to where he'd been. Each step made her seem less and less there, but it was as though she was changing, and not merely falling away.

And then they both just walked into nothingness, as though turning a corner the rest of us could not see. Sister Bernice had Transcended, and we all fell to our knees in joy, thanking God for this day, and praying for her soul.

That was the first Transcendence I ever witnessed. I have been through dozens of ceremonies since, and the vast majority of them have failed for one reason or another, which fills me with some doubt. But I have also seen nine others succeed, all in much the same way, both in our Flock and other Flocks who share our beliefs. And that cannot help but fill me with hope...

But my hope is always tainted with the need to understand, much like my belief is always strongest when I have something solid to put beneath it. Hence this essay, if I am being completely honest.

And to be more honest, would I have been one of those people who would have needed to see the holes in Jesus' hands, feet and side before I believed it was Him, back from the dead? "Blessed are those who do not see, and yet believe." I have seen, and I believe, but why do I feel like I need to know more before I can really be at ease?

4.13.2 What's Believed.

When people from other Concords ask we Believers what we believe, we often say "Transcendence." And we often say this as a short form for all our own diverse, and sometimes contradictory, beliefs. But it's more true than we know: as Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, or any other faith, we may hold various beliefs, but as Believers, we hold to two truths: we have faith that there is something beyond all this; and that we must conquer the drawbacks of our condition in order to go there.

Of course, the rhetorical and literal Devil is in the details. I will skip a discussion of all the different groups of Believers I have encountered, both friendly and hostile, over the years, because that would be an immense volume indeed. Even just amongst fellow Christian Believers I have encountered such wide variances in my travels that I am sometimes amazed we all came from the same wellspring of belief.

Reasons for staying behind.

What must we do to Transcend? To begin to answer that, we have to ask how we came to be here in the first place. I find that it comes down to three general beliefs, and I will try to present them in as neutral a language as possible:

- 1. This is punishment: For some reason, we have displeased the powers that reign. Many believe this is Purgatory, or some kind of equivalent, while others believe we are in Hell, or stuck between alternatives. We have to redeem ourselves, somehow, in order to leave through the door that Transcendence creates.*
- 2. This is accident: For some reason, we wound up here, and the powers that reign cannot or will not get us out of here. Most of the time this is seen as our fault, somehow, but it's not a*

punishment, and is instead something we got wrong, or failed to do. We have to either get it right, or overcome the challenges this existence creates, in order to leave, via Transcendence.

3. *This is design: For some reason, the powers that reign either put us here, or this is all part of the plan and we fit into this part of it. Some feel that this is a waiting station between incarnations, in which the former life is to be cut loose, while others have more intriguing ideas. We have to discover why we "qualified" for life, here, in the Deadlands, so that we can find the way out of it.*

I have also met Believers who feel that our time spent as Wraiths is a reward, or an opportunity. But I tend to relegate these ideas with the same people who think God was incarnated as a certain science-fiction writer, or the like.

It's not very ecumenical of me, but I have to set some boundaries on what I will or won't accept, and I think I'm at least partially justified in denying the lunatic fringe. And anyone who would think of this state of being as a reward definitely qualifies.

Things Keeping Us From Leaving.

After we have established that division, we also have to ask what it is, other than perhaps the will of the powers that reign, themselves, that holds us back.

The general, overwhelming consensus amongst the Believers I have met is that it is those things that we are tied down to, from our lives, which keep us from our final destination: our "Anchors." The Angels have said this to us, and it fits in with our observations and experience.

Simply cutting these Anchors away, or destroying them, is not enough. A Wraith whose Anchors are no more will herself last no more than a second before falling through the Barrier. And any who fall down that way are taken over by the Adversary, and become Damned. And there is a great deal of debate as to why that is, but that is cause for yet another treatise, yet another time.

But a Wraith can Resolve her Anchors, too, and by "Resolve" I mean that they come to terms with them, emotionally and spiritually, so as to lessen the connection one careful step at a time. Wraiths who can perform this difficult, spiritual task can Transcend, God willing, and this is what I have seen.

Resolution can be done through our understanding of Anchors, and many of us use the Anchorage Numina for that purpose. But it is a draining and difficult thing to accomplish, and can be dangerous if used incorrectly.

Resolution can also be done "naturally," over time, which is what most likely accounts for Transcendence amongst Concords who do not share our views. And while it is a lengthy process, it is without direct risk, other than the risks associated with Anchors, in themselves.

Other's Factors.

But, as I have said, the Resolution of Anchors is but one road to take. In spite of the Angels tending to be clear on the need to Resolve Anchors, there are competing theories and beliefs. I do not share them, but I must report on them, here, in order to be fair. And for all I know, they may have a kernel of truth to them, for Believers on these other roads have had their brethren Transcend as well.

One theory is that we must come to terms with the darkness inside ourselves, which many call Shadows. They say that only by meeting this tempter in spiritual warfare, inside the heart, soul and mind, and either besting it, or cooperating with it, can we overcome this reality. Those who are able to wrestle the inner demon into submission, or else join with it, are said to be seen as two forms fighting within one, and then ultimately becoming one, and disappearing shortly thereafter.

Our Flock holds that, as we are still children of God, the Adversary cannot be inside, or personal. It must be considered to be outside and, therefore, ultimately impersonal. However, this belief of ours does not negate others' beliefs, and it cannot explain why it is the Pardoners can do what they do. So I remain open-minded, and counsel others to be as well.

Another theory is that we must strengthen our own, inner sense of God's "voice," which some call the Holy Spirit, or Inner Spirit, and others the Eidolon. This soft, still voice is what speaks to us in our time of need or emergency, and gives us comfort. It is also the voice of conscience and control, right and justice.

Those who cultivate the Eidolon are said to become amazingly peaceful and beatific. They often act as though Ossified, and may not move nor speak for months at a time, but are yet lively and active when roused. And one day, they simply say their goodbyes, turn a corner, and are seen no more.

Again, our Flock is open to the voice of God, but we do not feel its "cultivation" is worthy of our efforts. God speaks to us when He will, and remains silent the rest of the time. To try and make that voice grow is to be selfish of His presence, and invite tricks of the Adversary. But, yet again, this does not explain how those who "cultivate" their kernel of the Holy Spirit can defy the Adversary so well. So I remain open-minded on this point, also.

Past that, there are other combinations. Some believe that we must neglect Anchors in favor of the holy voice, and use that voice to subdue the Devil. Others believe we should seek peace, or victory, over Satan in conjunction with the timely severance from our Anchors, so that we achieve victory just as the very last string is removed.

Still others believe all three things must be pursued, along with other factors that I have decided not to list in much detail, here, such as: obeying the Four Spiritual Laws, the Seven Heavenly Virtues, or other, more mystical and less Christian codes of behavior; the advanced study of magic, or certain Numen; making bargains with pagan deities, the Angels or God Himself; pilgrimages into the far depths of the Catacombs, there to find the lost passageways to Paradise, and so on.

4.13.3 Other Concords.

As outreach counselor for our Flock, I have had the pleasure though at times, with some individuals, it is more of a burden to speak with other Concords of our Necropolis on the subject of Transcendence. And while it would not be fair for me to say that all members of a Concord, everywhere, are just as the people I have spoken to, here or elsewhere, I have to go with what I have heard, and have seen.

I find that some of the people I speak with are at least open to talking about the notion of Transcendence, whether they agree with it or not. However, most others are closed against even speaking of it, and would rather talk about anything else. I have even had people threaten to destroy me just for saying "the t-word," though I'm happy to say that I was able to defuse the argument by walking, and sometimes running, away.

I suspect that some of the reluctance to talk is because they think I'm trying to "convert" them. It is not really my aim, but the perception is hard to shake, especially amongst The Order and the Freewraiths. But I also sense that there is a sense of psychological danger involved, as though they fear to think of it, as pondering a release, but getting no closer to it for the pondering, may make the Adversary's taunts and tricks all the worse.

Going from worst to best is probably the most expedient way of handling this part of the discourse, which means that we must speak of the Haunters.

Haunters.

The Haunters that I have met seem unanimous on the point that Transcendence is a lie. In fact, their disdain and denial of its existence seems almost monomaniacal, and I have had to end many conversations with swiftness, and sometimes even direct flight, when I gently insisted that I had seen it happen. Those who did not try to kill me for the seeming insult insisted that I was mistaken, and had been fooled by the Angels "Demons," to them. They would not elaborate on that point, either.

Why the hostility? I can only suspect that, as most of them came to a tragic end, and fell in with a group who use that tragedy as a reason to behave like monsters, they have turned their backs on God. The fact that God's hands are often against them may add to that, for when have you ever seen a Haunter and an Angel in good company?

But I find that to be a simplistic explanation. And nothing in life, or death, is ever simple.

The Order.

A step up from the Haunters' utter disbelief, The Order also disbelieves in Transcendence, but only officially, and only self-willed Transcendence. Their superiors prefer not to use the word, for fear of angering the Angels.

They believe that, when their Day of Dominion comes, all will "Transcend": the Angels "Ferry-men," to them will come to take them off to Paradise, and their Charun, on that Day. They need only wait for the Day, and the fact that some of them have been waiting for a very long time and many more await in the Ossuaries, under the city does not dissuade them.

The Order does, however, recognize that the Ferrymen sometimes take one of their own through the Barrier, and do not bring them back. When this happens, they say that the person has been "blessed by Charun" for some great deed. I find this confusing, because their own history says that the Ferrymen aren't supposed to be doing things like that.

I have to say that it puzzles me that the Angels would support such blatant Paganism. Perhaps they are only waiting for someone to Resolve his Anchors and rededicate himself to Christ, and then whisking that one away to Paradise. But this is strict conjecture on my part.

But in the end, maybe, to invoke Michael MacDonald, Transcendence by another name is just alright with The Order. This is most likely why so many of our Concord has joined us, or at least one of our other Groups, after spending time in The Order. Some seek a return to their old spiritual beliefs, after wallowing in the paganism of the The Order for so long, while others seek a more pro-active route to Transcendence. Either way, we are happy to have them.

The Freewraiths.

What can I say about the Freewraiths, except to say that they are, indeed, truly free about the subject. While they have as much reluctance to talk about it with me as any other Wraith, the reluctance does not seem to stem from outright hatred of the concept, or fear of what their superiors might think.

That said, I have gotten at best only a partial understanding of their views on the subject, which seem wild and contradictory. One Freewraith spoke of finding immense favor with their patron deity, who may "set us free, even in death." Such persons simply vanish at the apex of their glory, sometimes with witnesses and sometimes without.

Another spoke of strengthening the will to its utmost, so that victory over the Shadow could be had. This approach is akin to the Pardoner's views, and some of our own, and may have some merit. On the other hand, the same person was so self-assured of the righteousness of his many vices and sins that he even tried to tempt me into an unnatural act.

Yet another very intriguing, and less spiritually-dangerous, conversation I had involved discovering the means to leave the Deadlands by reaching an absolute understanding of Shaping. This Freewraith even claimed to have known Wraiths who Shaped themselves into Transcendence, which she said was like watching someone "fall into themselves so far" that they simply winked out of existence.

She was still following the clues they left behind, and hoping to join them. Sadly, the next time I returned to the camp, years later, she was gone, having "died" fighting a pack of the Damned. And she left no clues at all.

That said, the Freewraiths I have known tend to disdain the Angels almost as much as the Haunters do. They also often seek our help in strengthening the ties to their Anchors. So for all their freedom, they are still lost sheep.

The Messengers.

The Messengers are very open to the notion of Transcendence, given that it's right at the heart of their own Concord's liturgies. However, they believe, much like The Order, that it cannot be achieved by the individual's own effort with God's help, of course. They believe that they have to earn it by doing good works, even in their condition, without heed for self-preservation, selfishness or self-advancement.

And they do, indeed, try to earn it! I applaud their attempts to keep our city safe and healthy, insomuch as they can without breaking the Injunction. Indeed, the fact that they have to weigh any intervention, and the favor of the Angels, against being too visible or obvious, thus incurring their censure, is worthy of high praise.

I only question only their ultimate sense of what "selfishness" is. One doesn't do good things in search of heavenly reward, but does them because they are right, and trusts in God to know His own.

They agree with me in principle, but then go right back to seeking their "reward." But then, in all honesty, how can you not have the thought of God's approval in the back of your mind?

I also find it sad that some of them are willing to bow in fealty to the Gods of The Order, and Charun's fellow Lords of the Underworld. But, as with The Order, the Angels seem to favor the Pagans with their presence. So I must withhold judgment until I have all the facts.

Those who are either led through the Barrier by the Angels, or are seen to disappear in a bright flash of holy light, are said to Ascend. Not many do, but those who are thusly glorified are indeed paragons of virtue, if the stories told of them are to be believed.

The Pardoners.

I have saved the Pardoners for the last for one reason: while they may not always be the "best" about Transcendence, as some of them are very close-minded about how to get there, and they tend to distrust the Angels almost as badly as the Haunters, I know a great deal about their ideas. This is thanks to a wonderful friend, and fierce debating partner, that I once had in their Concord. His name was Brother Warmth, and we were "set up" by our respective superiors in the hopes of enjoying closer cooperation in our city.

Brother Warmth was named that because his smile was enough to melt your heart, even when you were angry with him. I am told that the Pardoners all take some name, either to underscore a shortcoming, name an aspiration or promote something that brought hope and love to others. In that sense, I suppose he could have been Brother Pride, because he was very stubborn about his views, or Brother Sacrifice, because he felt he owed his long-gone mentor a debt for saving him from the Damned. But he was well-known for the warmth of his smile, and that is why he chose the name he did.

What did we talk about? Everything. We did stay away from certain matters that we were told not to discuss, but past that we had no barriers, and often confided in one another well past professional matters. And so did I learn a number of encouraging, and disquieting, things about the other Concord.

Much like some Groups of Believers, the Pardoners feel that the darkness of the Adversary is inside of us. Some of them believe that this is an outcropping of the Devil, taken root in our hearts and minds. Others believe that the Shadow is just a strange reflection of our worst excesses, given strange life and power in this place.

Either way, this darkness can only grow in this place, and the Pardoners see their role as checking the growth. He made the allusion to a gardener, who might prune leaves and branches, kill weeds and deal with potato bugs. If the garden is neglected, nature will run riot; Sometimes one must be cruel and firm to be kind.

I asked him if others might advocate burning the bush to the ground, and he had to admit that, yes, a few of his brethren were that "dedicated." Needless to say, that touched off an argument, which boils my blood to this day as we never resolved it. I can understand their views on why they are so blunt and brutal in their methods, but I find their casual attitude towards "breaking" people to be... well, I could go on at length. I will stop.

Transcendence, then, can only come when the Shadow is completely outwitted, effectively neutered or utterly eradicated. There are many paths to these ideal states of being, which they call "being Purified," but they seem to revolve around improving the Eidolon his word, approaching the zenith of their Numen, or else completely excising the aspect of one's personality that the Shadow devolves from. Failing that, Pardoners can seek a second death in battle against the Damned, or perform some act of martyrdom so great that they are seen to explode into Purity, and then disap-

pear.

I asked if any of them believed in merging with the Shadow, as some Believers do. Warmth almost screamed in horror at the thought, but in a later conversation he admitted that he had, indeed, heard of it. Such Pardoners were part of a rare "heresy" that tended to crop up in Asia, every so often, and he didn't want to go into any details.

But one thing we often argued about was the nature of the Shadow, itself, and the role it played in Transcendence. I refused to budge in my insistence that Anchors have to be let go, and he refused to acknowledge their total importance, saying that they were just one tool in a Shadow's arsenal.

The real secret, he insisted, was self knowledge: understanding your other side so well that you could, in yet another metaphor, wrestle it down to the ground and keep it from bothering you. If you put it into a really good headlock you could make it do what you wanted, rather than the other way around. And if you fought it "to the death," and won, then you could achieve Purity right then and there.

I was incredulous, but he winked and told me that he'd seen it happen. And he would be happy to let me watch it in action, too, if the opportunity ever arose. He wouldn't go into more detail than that, though, and we had to end the conversation there.

As for Brother Warmth, he never got to show me that "little secret," for he was destroyed at the hands of the Damned not too long thereafter. I am told that he put up a fight that you wouldn't have thought him capable of, but in the end he was just one Pardoner against entire swarms of the Adversary's legions. He died saving others, which was how he would have wanted to go out.

That does not assuage the sense of loss I feel, though. I would give almost anything just for one more argument with him, even if I had to lose it. I loved losing religious debates to him more than I love winning them with other people.

As for the so-called "Solitaries," I find them to be as individualistic as some of the Freewraiths I have met. Some are open to the idea, and may join with us in time, if they feel they can stand the company. And some are not open to the idea, and tend to kick dust upon our shoes.

I can only pray for them, and hope that they find the truth they need to hear.

4.14 The Barrier and Beyond.

And then we come, at last, to the most questionable part of this essay. It is a subject that we know little or nothing about, save that we should desire it, because it contains all our hopes and dreams. But there are so many unknowns involved that I find myself uncertain of even my uncertainties: just

when I think I know what I don't know, more information or rumor comes to taunt me.

What is Paradise? I call it Heaven, and expect to find God on His throne, and Jesus by his side. Still other Believers see it as other things, or just as an ideal state, or metaphor for a destination.

Meanwhile, the Order calls it the city of Charun, and expects to find their Emperor on his throne, hammer in hand. God only knows what the Haunters think they'll find on the other side, or those monstrously-deluded people who kneel at the feet of the Damned, or those so-called Dark Walkers.

Can Paradise really be all things to all people? The Angels deal fairly with all who deal with them, in spite of their religious leanings. Some of the more open-minded or is that 'unable to make up their mind'? Believers say that there is truth in all forms of belief, and the Angels are here to facilitate the quest for that truth. Perhaps Paradise is just a metaphor for being at peace, at long last.

But, more importantly, what is inbetween here and there? What is the Barrier, really? And what will we find there, when we finally step through it?

On one hand, there are the Angels, who use it to vanish from one place and reappear in another, and then walk us into it when the time comes. But then, the Damned also come from there as well, though only the strongest of their number can go through it with anything approaching ease. The rest must wait for the Storms that harry them through the Barrier in immense, deadly numbers.

Seen in that light, I am almost tempted to say that the Barrier is God's way of both denying us rest, until we have let go of our Anchors, and yet protecting us from further harm.

And yet the Reapers that hunt us, as though for sport, also come from there as well, and seem as adept as the Angels at using it to get around. And the Dark Walkers... and those Storms! How can the divine and the infernal come to us from the same door?

Perhaps the Barrier is more of a two-way street, leading both to Heaven and to Hell. It would explain why both good and evil can come through it. And as for why God would allow evil to come through it at all, we are back at the old question of why He allows evil to exist in His world. And that leads to yet another, long essay.

A better question is why the Angels don't rescue those lost to the Reapers. I've asked, and they won't do it. They won't even respond to questions why, other than to say it is already 'too late.' Just that and nothing more.

And so, once more, we are faced with a conundrum: we seek that which we cannot define with

absolute knowledge, and will have no way of knowing if we were right until we find it. And the way is so hard, even with so many signs, and a trail well-laid by so many who have gone before us. It is indeed that undiscovered country, and for all our maps and legends we have barely begun to truly understand the way.

In the end, I can only speculate, and hope that my speculation in no way leeches away from my ability to believe, or to have faith...

"Faith." What does it mean to have faith? I thought I had it in sufficient quantity when I lived, only to find myself here.

Christ spoke of the faith the size of a mustard seed, but how much is that? How much is enough to leave? How can it be that we can walk with angels... talk to them, no less... and yet be so far from the Kingdom of God?

I just want this to end. I want to be done with this world. I want to see my wife and children again, and live with them forever, as I was promised. I want to clasp hands with Brother Warmth once more, as I have hoped I could do.

I just want to go to Heaven. I want to see my Lord, on high, and have Him tell me that I did good, or at least did the best good that I could. I just want him to at least acknowledge my presence, directly, even if it's only for a second...

But every day I spend here, in this place, I find myself falling further and further from its gates. The ceremonies are mere motions and my prayers with others only words.

Even when I teach others what I know I feel no joy, and no sense of duty. I just feel tired while I'm doing it, and then happy when it's done. Even the greatest smile of a student is no balm for my soul, anymore.

God help me. Please, please help me. Just a sign to guide my way to you... a star to light me in this darkness...

- From the Journal of Brother Samuel Ryans missing, presumed Lost

No Easy Answers

Much as there is no real way of saying what lies beyond the Barrier, neither is there any real way of saying what Transcendence actually is. Such matters go beyond dice rolling and exact rules, and cut right to the heart of a game about horror and hope. What does it mean to hope so much - to trust, even in the face of so much horror - that one can let go of all things holding one back, and step away from the remnants of life, itself?

Earthly religions and philosophies have been trying to come to grips with the questions of living and dying - and what they actually mean - since time out of mind. As one might expect, almost everyone has a different answer. And to echo a song quoted earlier in the book, "yours is not like mine, but it's alright - keep it up."

So, no, we won't be offering system mechanics for finding meaning in death, or letting it all go. And we won't be spilling the beans on what really happens when someone goes through the Barrier with the Ferrymen, or on their own if that is, indeed, possible. Such matters should be decided by the Storyteller, in keeping with the game she wants to run, and her players want to play.

This section has, hopefully, given a lot of ideas and background information, but it's no real guide - just another legend to a map that's no longer there. So long as everyone's having fun on the journey, that's what's really important.

5. CHARACTER CREATION.

*"By pouring my blue ink into them,
I made the ghosts turn visible.
To say that the task is simple or
without danger would be insane.
To dare disturb the angels."*

- Jean Cocteau

In order to take a mortal and turn it into a Wraith, jump ahead to Step 5. Otherwise, follow the bouncing skull...

Step One: Concept.

This is exactly as presented in The World Of Darkness, pg 34, but be sure to think of the following important questions:

- *What did the character live for?*
- *What were her goals?*
- *What was the character proud of about herself?*
- *What did she hate?*
- *What did she believe about an afterlife?*
- *How and when did she die?*
- *How old was she when she died?*
- *How long was she Asleep? How did she wake up?*
- *How did she join her Concord, if any?*
- *What would she give for peace, or does she care?*

Step Two: Select Attributes.

This is exactly as presented in The World Of Darkness, pg 34, and explained on pp. 42 - 51.

Step Three: Select Skills.

This is exactly as presented in The World Of Darkness, pg 34, and explained on pp. 54 - 87.

Step Four: Select Skill Specialties.

This is exactly as presented in The World Of Darkness, pg 34, and explained on pp. 54.

Step Five: Add Wraith Template.

Once all the preliminary stuff is out of the way, you can start giving the character things that are unique to the dead, and the world they inhabit.

Death: *There are seven different ways to die, each giving an Attribute bonus, a Numina affiliation and a drawback.*

Pick a death, based on your character concept, and write it down in the upper part of the character sheet under "Death." Then adjust your character's stats accordingly.

- *Violence: "I was killed."
Strength +1
Affiliation with Fear or Kinesis Numina
May go into Shadowstate involuntarily if they are presented with certain situations*
- *Sickness/Starvation: "My body wasn't strong enough."
Stamina +1
Affiliation with Bios or Embody Numina
A sickly miasma causes them to lose dice from Presence and Manipulation rolls*
- *Old Age: "My body gave up."
Resolve +1
Affiliation with Bios or Decay Numina
May Ossify if they remain inactive for too long.*
- *Happenstance: "I had... an accident."
Dexterity +1
Affiliation with Fate or Kinesis Numina
Can suffer physical flashbacks to their death*
- *Insanity: "My mind failed me."
Composure +1
Affiliation with Fear or Castigate Numina
Must begin play with a mild "Derangement" that can never be fixed*

- *Mystery: "I don't know what happened to me."*
Wits +1
Affiliation with one Common or Uncommon Numina of choice
Are compelled to seek out new evidence concerning their deaths
- *Fate: "I died because I was meant to." Manipulation +1*
Affiliation with Fate or Embody
Run the risk of becoming a puppet of Fate

Concord: *a Wraith may join - or be forced to join - a group once she wakes up. Being a part of a Concord gives a perk for being a part of the group, but also has a drawback attached to it. As they say, "Only death is free, here..."*

Pick a Concord, based on your character concept, and write it down in the upper part of the character sheet under "Concord." Then adjust your character's stats accordingly, starting with a free dot in Status for that Concord, to reflect at least being a member. Note that "access to" means that your character may take dots in the Numina or Background in question at character creation, but these must be purchased normally.

There is a seventh "Concord" known as Solitaries: those who have no Concord, either because they don't want to join one, or haven't been able to, yet. Truly alone in the world of the dead, they receive no bonuses, but have no drawbacks, either.

- *Believers: "There is something more than this, my friends."*
Those who hold that Paradise waits beyond the Barrier, and listen to the words of the Ferry-men for guidance
Access to Anchorage Numina
Must start game with no more than 7 dots in Anchors
- *Freewraiths: "I'll do my own thing my own way, thank you."*
Those who think the Ferry-men are con artists and The Order is bullshit, or just want to live by their own rules
Access to the Shaping Numina
Have Freewraith "colors" permanently marked upon them
- *Haunters: "We're not here for the living - they are here for us."*
Those who delight in scaring, driving off and even slaughtering the living - sometimes for pay, sometimes because they like it.
Receive three free dots to put into Allies, Contacts, Mentor or Retainer - all Haunters, of course
Must do whatever they're told by their superiors or be severely punished for it
- *Messengers: "If we would be seen as higher beings, then let us act like them."*
Guardians of life who act as invisible (or very visible) angels and saviors for mortals.

Access to Regis Numina

Are mystically bound to protect all human life from unnecessary harm

- *The Order: "We uphold the Injunction for the good of all."
Quasi-religious society that hews to - and enforces - the Injunction given unto the dead by the Ferrymen.
Receive five free dots in Allies, Artifact, Contacts and Eidolon
Are mystically bound to uphold the Injunction, and are expected to give up 1/10 of all they do for The Order*

- *Pardoners: "I'm here to save you, whether you want it or not."
Warriors of the soul, ever on the lookout for The Lost and The Damned, and making sure other Wraiths don't turn into them.
Access to Castigate and Shaping Numina
Begin play with an extra point of Angst and three extra points in Thorns*

anchors: *Wraiths are held back from whatever lies beyond the Barrier by their Anchors: people, places and things that were massively important to them in life, or else formed an integral part of their death.*

Anchors give special powers to Wraiths, but also demand care and attention. A Wraith with a few, weak Anchors is nowhere near as powerful as a Wraith with many strong ones. And without any Anchors at all the Wraith cannot stay in the world; She will fall through the Barrier into whatever lies beyond, never to be seen again.

Every Wraith starts out with ten dots to place into Anchors, unless they're in the Believers - then they get only seven. Pick a person, place or tangible object, assign a number of dots between 1 and 5 to it, and write down the primary emotion that the Wraith associates with that Anchor.

"The Knife I Was Killed With Fear: 3" would be an example, as would "The Streetcorner Where I Died Terror: 2," or "My Girlfriend Love: 5."

Numina: *Every Wraith starts the game with five points to put into their Numina. Two points must go into the Numina Affiliation that corresponds with the Wraith's death. The rest can be placed in any Common Numina, or an Uncommon Numina the Wraith's chosen Concord allows for.*

*Notice that Numina of level ** and above have prerequisite requirements in the form of previous levels of the Numen in question. Also note that Wraiths cannot take any Numina above level *** at this time.*

The Numina are:

- *Anchorage (uncommon): The ability to make new Anchors, and to affect and manipulate both your own, and those of others.*

- *Bios (common): Manipulating the bodies of the living, either to heal, harm or change them. This also includes possessing them, either for the long or short term.*
- *Castigate (uncommon): Forcing Shadows to behave and give up their power to you, or letting them loose...*
- *Decay (common): The ability to animate, break or fix inanimate objects by slipping into them and taking over.*
- *Embody (common): Forcing your Corpus back into the land of the living, either to better interact with mortals or scare them silly.*
- *Fate (common): Learning the way things will be, or changing the course of fate, itself.*
- *Fear (common): Seeing the memories and horrors of both living and dead, and turning them - or your own - against others. It also allows Wraiths to enter and change dreams.*
- *Kinesis (common): Telekinetics, power over motion and the ability to turn anger into action.*
- *Regis (uncommon): The ability to make both wraiths and the living obey your desires as though they were their own, or follow your commands, even unto death...*
- *Shaping (uncommon): Reforming your Corpus - or someone else's - to shapeshift it into anything imaginable, as well as manipulating Essence to suit your own needs.*

Angst: Every Wraith starts the game with one dot in Angst, which is recorded on the Morality chart by putting an X through the 10th level. The possibility of having a Morality score higher than 9 is lost to Wraiths as a result of this, and every time a Wraith's Shadow increases its power by gaining another dot of Angst, another potential level of Morality is lost: going down from 10 to 9, then 8, then 7, and so on.

Players may, at Storyteller's discretion, elect to take up to two more dots of Angst at character creation in order to purchase Experience Points: five Points per dot of Angst taken. This would reduce the Wraith's maximum Morality to 7 if two dots of Angst were taken, as the 9th and 8th level of Morality would be lost to the Shadow. This option is not open for mortal characters who become wraiths by applying the template - it is meant to represent a character who's been a Wraith for some time, and has lost ground to her Shadow.

Step Six: Select Merits.

This is mostly as presented in the *The World Of Darkness*, pg 34, and explained on pp 108 - 117.

If you're making a Wraith, it would be a good idea to not take Merits that would indicate having a living body: *Iron Stamina*, *Iron Stomach*, *Natural Immunity*, *Quick Healer*, *Strong Lungs* and *Toxin Resistance* are right out.

Also remember that most Social Merits can be directly applied to either dead or living society. In order to have, or keep, Social Merits that deal with the living, the Wraith must be able to keep contact with those she left behind.

Exceptions to that rule are Resources and Status. Resources represents wealth and possessions in the living world that the Wraith still has access to - such as a bank account that hasn't been cleared out yet - or has hidden away, somewhere. Given the nature of dead society, there is no Wraithly equivalent to Resources.

*In order to have Status amongst the living, the Wraith must still be "alive" in their eyes. Taking the Secret Death Merit is required for this, and if it's ever completely compromised, the mortal Status goes away. In addition, no Wraith can ever have a Status above ** amongst mortal society: the higher up a person is, the more scrutiny is given to them, and the act becomes too hard to pull off.*

*If you are applying the Wraith Template to a dead mortal character, you may take dots from Merits that simply do not apply anymore or that you wish to drop, and shunt them over into new Merits. Some restrictions and caveats may apply a living **** Retainer is now worth * in Memoriam, for example, giving three dots to stick somewhere else.*

*Wraith-based Merits include Artifact * - ****, Eidolon * - *****, Memoriam * - *****, and Secret Death * - ***. Status for Wraiths * - *****, applies to Concord, only.*

Step Seven: Determine Advantages.

This is mostly as presented in the The World Of Darkness, pg 34, and explained on pp 90 - 105. Defense, Initiative, Size, Speed and Willpower are all determined as listed there, and a Wraith starts the game with a starting Morality of 7. A Wraith also picks both a Virtue and a Vice.

Important changes are:

Shadow Type: *The Shadow is a perverse extension of the Wraith's own Morality: a result of the shame, horror and/or self-disgust the Wraith feels when she goes too far in following her inner drives. The Wraith's player should pick a Shadow Type that corresponds to her Virtue or her Vice, and record the free Thorn that comes with it.*

Thorns: *The Shadow has the power to affect ghostly reality around the Wraith - making her doubt her senses and distrust her friends. These powers are often used to confuse the Wraith, and make her rely on the Shadow for "guidance." However, the Shadow can also offer to let the Wraith use these powers against others - after a fashion - to their mutual benefit.*

All Shadows get one free Thorn that goes with the Shadow Type, and receive three dots to spend on other Thorns at this time.

Corpus: *Wraiths are not alive, in any real sense of the word, but they tend to have a residual self-image that conforms with their body in life. As such, they determine Corpus - which is a reflection of their spiritual "togetherness" - by adding Stamina and Size.*

Essence Pool: *All Wraiths have a certain amount of "storage" for Essence. This is a reflection of the strength of their Willpower and the power they share with their Anchors. Wraiths usually cannot have more Essence than they have room in their Pool, but there are exceptions usually risky*

and dangerous to this rule. And as time goes on, a Wraith might become powerful enough to increase her Pool...

To calculate the Wraith's starting Essence Pool, add the number of Dots in Anchors 10 at Character Creation to the Wraith's Willpower score. Mark that down by the Essence bank on the Character Sheet. Then roll a single die, and add to the result however many dots she has in the Memoriam Merit: this is how much Essence the Wraith has at the start of the game.

Tainted Essence Pool: If Essence is the free-floating power Wraiths gather from their Anchors, or what they can skim or siphon from the Living and other Wraiths, then Tainted Essence is its darker opposite. This is the power the Shadow collects for Itself, as the Wraith goes about her business.

Just as Wraiths have a certain amount of "storage" for Essence, Shadows are also limited as to how much power they can carry. This is fixed at ten for all Wraiths, and is recorded in the Tainted Essence bank, right next to Morality.

To determine a Shadow's starting Tainted Essence, roll one die for each dot in Angst the Wraith has at character creation, minus one die for each dot the Wraith has in the Eidolon Merit. Each success gives one dot of Tainted Essence.

5.1 Backgrounds.

*It is absurd asking me to behave myself...
quite absurd. I must rattle my chains,
and groan through keyholes,
and walk about at night,
if that is what you mean.
It is my only reason for existing.*

The Canterville Ghost - Oscar Wilde

Artifact * - ****

The term "Artifact" is used to describe objects that come from the other side of the Barrier. They seem to be made of black, oily metal, worked and tooled in a baroque - or utterly alien - fashion, and can often be heard to moan or whisper nonsense, as though they were "alive." Some even say that they are...

Artifacts are freely brandished by Reapers, Dark Walkers, or the more intelligent Damned. Fer-rymen carry them, too, but have a habit of not letting Wraiths hang onto their dropped goods for very long, if at all. Sometimes they just appear out of nowhere after a Storm, though, which is why Wraiths will brave streets filled with wounded, stragling Damned to see if today's their lucky day.

Unlike Shaped objects, Artifacts do not run out of power, or charges: so long as they are intact, they will continue to function. However, some of the more powerful Artifacts may require a Wraith invest Essence, Corpus, Willpower or other things into them, and refuse to work until they are "fed."

Artifacts also make good trading pieces: they are worth between one and two Immense Favors per dot.

Artifacts may or may not have an obvious function, but all of them have some sort of power, which is what determines their costs, as follows:

- * Minute Object - Basic Art - 2nd level Art*
- ** Minor Object - 2nd - 3rd level art*
- *** Intermediate Object - 3rd - 4th*
- **** Major Object - 4th to 5th*
- ***** Treasure - 5th or beyond*

*Keep in mind that starting characters would probably not have access to anything with a rating higher than ***. Such powerful items are greedily snatched up by the powers that be, and jealously hoarded so that they can hang onto their positions.*

Eidolon * - *****

Just as a Wraith has a Shadow, dragging her down, so does she have a counterbalance, holding her up. This font of inner direction is known as the Eidolon, and while all Wraiths have it to some degree, some have a better sense of its being there, or have developed it to the point where it is like a shield. Some even say they can hear it talking to them, though what it says rarely makes any sense.

In most cases, Wraiths can't consciously use this Merit. It's more of a defense against their inner darkness: taking dice away from the Shadow's rolls, or adding dice to a Wraith's rolls to resist a Shadow's Dirty Tricks.

The Eidolon has one direct use, though most Wraiths are loath to use it because it's so costly. If a Wraith learns that she is Lost - or suspects that she is - she can spend one permanent dot of her Eidolon to disrupt everything her Shadow has done to her. All the Thorns and illusions are wiped away in a burst of purifying light.

The Wraith doesn't automatically learn what was done to her. However, the Shadow is knocked unconscious for an entire week by this sacrifice, which may give the Wraith enough time to find out.

Memoriam * - *****

Wraiths can gain Essence from more than just their Anchors. Those who were loved - or loathed - with great passion during their lives, and strongly remembered after their deaths, can harvest that feeling.

Once per Story, a Wraith may devote herself to soaking up the ambient Essence created by those who remember her. She doesn't have to be around around who does, or near anything that serves to remind others of her life - or death - but she must do nothing but focus on that emotion. Even a non-taxing conversation, or trying to mentally puzzle something out, is enough to disrupt this concentration.

If she does this for a Turn, the Wraith gains one Essence for each dot she has in this Merit. If she does this for an entire Scene, she gains five Essence for each dot in the Merit.

Secret Death * - ***.

Not every Wraith is known to be dead. Some people die in secret, while others were so unknown and ordinary that no one missed them when they were gone. And this can be a boon for those who enjoy messing about with the Liveworld, as they don't have to invent a new identity to move within it: they're still listed as "there."

Those with the Secret Death Merit have a number of dice taken away from any attempt to discover their exact condition. Each dot removes one die from the search for the truth.

Should someone get through these defenses, and learn the truth, the Merit is reduced by one dot. And should that someone - or someone else - publish what was learned on a citywide basis, the Merit is wiped out.

Status * - *****

For Wraiths, the Status Merit reflects their standing within a Concord. This is a measure of both rank and respect the Wraith has earned within the group. Status doesn't mean anything outside of a Concord: members of one Concord who try to throw their weight around with others are asking for trouble.

Rolls using Status are made according to the rules presented on pg. 117 of World of Darkness. The negative modifiers listed there can apply to Wraiths as well.

*A Wraith's Status also determines what sort of "Resources" she has, both in terms of Shaped material possessions and Favors, at the start of the game. For each Dot in the Merit, she has either the equivalent of one Immense Favor that she can call in, Shaped items that would add up to one Immense Favor, or some combination of the two Two Big Favors and Two Big-Favor Shaped Items, for example. A Wraith with ***** in the Status Merit has one Sacred Favor at the start of the Chronicle.*

And If It Should Go Up?

Note that this reckoning of Favors and items is good at the start of the game. Once it gets going, and favors and items trade hands, Status is unaffected.

However, those who skimp on payments, and write checks they can't cash, will soon find their Status being ripped to shreds by the Magistrates. Wise Wraiths pay their debts - especially to the Freewraiths.

5.2 Mechanics.**5.2.1 Affinities.**

All Wraiths have access to senses that go far beyond the normal ones allotted to mortals. Wraiths call these low-level powers Affinities, and use them fairly often as they go through their unives. It's said that all Numina are natural outgrowths of these Affinities, but no one can say for certain.

Most Affinities are rolled using only Attributes. Certain Affinity rolls can be modified by vari-

ous factors, which are listed along with each. Most often these are Anchor Ratings, if the Affinity is being used on an Anchor.

Anchorsense.

Being emotionally tied to an Anchor creates a strong bond, indeed. And while this bond is sometimes chafing and uncomfortable to an "Awake" Ghost, it gives a Wraith a certain advantage: the ability to check up on that Anchor from anywhere by using the Anchorsense Affinity. By taking no other action, and thinking intently of an Anchor, the Wraith is able to sense the immediate surroundings of it - inside and out - as though she was the Anchor.

This Affinity is limited by the physical environs of that Anchor. Someone with a pen for an Anchor might see the entirety of the room if it's on a desk, but if it's in the desk, then all the Wraith will see is the drawer. On the other hand, it might be able to hear voices from around the desk, smell smoke from a fire, and so on.

All five "mortal" senses work with Anchorsense, as do other Affinities such as Deathsense but the Wraith cannot use any Numina from a distance. If she wants to put a scare on someone stalking towards her prized bowling trophy, she'll have to get to it, somehow.

While the Wraith is using Anchorsense, she is not aware of her body's own surroundings, and will have to end the effect to sense what's going on around her. If she's attacked, however, the effect ends and she's brought roughly back to her own body.

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Wits + Anchor Rating

Action: Instant.

Dramatic Failure: *Not only is the Wraith unable to sense what's going on, but the connection to the Anchor is disrupted, as though the Wraith had an emotional door slammed in her face. This stuns her for one Turn, and prevents her from trying Anchorsense on that Anchor until she goes back and visits it, either by normal travel or spending a point of Willpower to teleport there.*

Failure: *The Wraith's senses extend towards the Anchor, but then fade out and return to the Wraith's own immediacy.*

Success: *The Wraith's senses reach the Anchor, and then emanate out from it as described above. The effect lasts until the Wraith chooses to turn it off.*

Exceptional Success: *Not only do the Wraith's senses emanate out from the Anchor, but the connection is so strong that when the Wraith ceases contact, she maintains a low-key connection*

for a number of Scenes equal to the total amount of successes. Any particularly strong stimulus that happens around the Anchor will be immediately sensed by the Wraith strong odors, shouted voices, a noteworthy sight, etc.

Deathsense.

Wraiths are creatures of loss and decay, and can sense the slow onset of entropy in objects. As such, they can see the flaws, cracks and fractures that have yet to appear, and know how long it may take for something to finally fall apart. This Affinity is usually applied to one's physical Anchors, but it can be useful in other circumstances as well.

In order to use this Affinity, the Wraith must either be in direct contact with the object, or using another Affinity to "see" it such as Anchorsense. She then spends one Essence, unless the object she's using it on is an Anchor, in which case it costs no Essence at all. She may do nothing but perceive the object, and if she's interrupted by so much as a loud noise or attempt at conversation, the Affinity automatically fails.

The Storyteller should ask the player for one crucial piece of information that the Wraith wants to learn by using this Affinity. A single success will deliver this piece of information, and further successes will provide even more. An exceptional success provides a flash of the object's ultimate fate, though whether this can be averted or not is debatable.

If this Affinity is used by a Wraith on her own Anchor, she may add one die per dot in that Anchor's rating. If she's using it on someone else's Anchor, however, one die is taken away for each dot in the rating. And if the Anchor of another Wraith is shared by several different Wraiths, use either the average rating of the Wraiths, or the Anchor rating of the closest Wraith - whichever is higher.

Cost: 1 Essence Zero if the object is the Wraith's Anchor

Dice Pool: Wits + Composure + or - Anchor rating, if applicable

Action: Instant

Dramatic Failure: *The Wraith sees the exact opposite of what's truly there. Items about to fall apart look unusually resilient, while sturdy buildings seem ready to fall down. This delusion will persist until another Wraith has a successful look at the same object, and convinces her of her wrong conclusions.*

Failure: *The Wraith cannot perceive anything about the item.*

Success: *The Wraith learns the general condition of the item Excellent, Good, Bad, Poor, About to fall apart, etc. and can learn one extra detail about the item per success. The Wraith learns the*

one thing she really wanted to know first, with all other information coming in as the Storyteller sees fit to give it. Things to be learned include its true age, stress limits, expected lifespan, and obvious or hidden weaknesses, etc.

Exceptional Success: *The Wraith not only learns all the above information, but comes to know the item so intimately that she gains foresight into its ultimate fate. This comes as a glimpse of its future destruction, revealing what happens to it, and what - or who - is responsible. If this occurs when a Wraith is looking at her own Anchor, the preknowledge of that Anchor's destruction stuns her for an entire Scene.*

Foreboding.

Foreboding is unique amongst the Affinities in that Wraiths cannot choose to use it. All that the dead know is that, every so often, they catch a glimpse of something's future or immediate importance, or else perceive an accident - or surprise attack - just before it happens.

The Haruspexes of The Order say that this Affinity is every Wraith's first glimpse of the Gods' will. Other, less religious sorts say that it's just another expression of the dead's sensing of cold, harsh inevitabilities. Either way, wise Wraiths learn to watch for these moments of cosmic awareness, and react to them as best as they can.

The Storyteller is the one who rolls for this Affinity, and need only make the roll if she feels the story warrants it. In the case of accidents, or future importance, the roll is generally unmodified, though a truly spectacular accident or future might call for a Modifier of one or two dice. In the case of surprise attacks, the Storyteller should make the attacker's roll ahead of time, and subtract half of its successes from the Wraith's Wits + Composure pool, rounding up.

This Affinity only activates once, whether at the start of a combat or to herald future importance of someone or something. If the Wraith doesn't pick up on the clue, for whatever reason, it's gone.

Cost: *None*

Dice Pool: *Wits + Composure - 1/2 Opposing Successes, rounding up*

Action: *Reflexive*

Dramatic Failure/Failure: *The Wraith simply fails to "see" whatever's coming, or that the person, place or thing she just passed by had any greater purpose in things.*

Success: *A Wraith gets the feeling that something bad is about to happen, and can prepare herself in a small way, such as getting ready to duck or move backwards. All successes the Storyteller*

received on the Foreboding roll can be applied to the Wraith's Defense score to do this. In the case of future importance, the Wraith senses that there's something vital about a person, place or thing, but will not have an idea why unless she uses the Fate Numina on it.

Exceptional Success: *The Wraith not only senses an oncoming accident or attack coming, but knows exactly what is about to happen. This gives her a free, full Turn to do something about it, as though she'd won Initiative in Combat. In the case of Future Importance, the Wraith doesn't just sense that something's important, but receives a glimpse of exactly why. The vision only gives the ultimate result, though: why, how or when must be discovered by other means, or else one day at a time.*

Ghostsight.

The Order preaches that "The Dead shall know their own." This is especially true when it comes to seeing the dead within the living, or the inanimate objects they can take over. All Wraiths have the ability to see past the surface of people, places and things, and perceive a ghostly entity lurking within. Likewise, all Wraiths can passively block that sight when engaged in the act.

Wraiths using the Ghostsight Affinity must be within a few feet of the person or object to be looked at. A Wraith must spend one Essence to start looking, and may not be interrupted during this time. The roll is passively modified by the Resolve of the Wraith or Damned being searched for, with the onlooker's dice being taken away on a one for one basis.

Cost: 1 Essence

Dice Pool: Wits + Composure - the Resolve of the possessing entity

Action: Instant

Dramatic Failure: *The Wraith receives wildly incorrect information, seeing a host of the Damned in the statue instead of a harmless Ghost, or believing the person has never been ridden at all when she's actually been a shared Consort for quite some time.*

Failure: *"Ghost? What Ghost?" The Wraith sees no trace of a possessing Wraith, and can't tell if the person or object has ever been ridden.*

Success: *The Wraith sees that a spectral presence is inside the person or thing. She can't see what the Wraith looks like, unless she knows her personally, but can tell if it's a Ghost, a Wraith or one of the Damned. She can also tell if a person or place has been ridden, but can't tell by whom - or what - or how long ago. She can also tell if the person's a Consort, though not for how long, or by how many entities.*

Exceptional Success: *The Wraith can see right through the person, place or thing being ridden as though it wasn't there, and see whatever's inside as clear as day. This won't help her identify the possessing entity if she doesn't know who it is, but she can at least see what the entity looks like. She can also tell how long ago something was ridden, and see what the possessing entity looked like. In addition, she can tell how long the person's been a Consort, and how many Wraiths or Damned have used her in this capacity.*

Lifesense.

Much as Wraiths can sense the slow onset of entropy in objects, so too can they see the march of disease and decay in the living. People have their flaws, cracks and fractures, too, and Wraiths can use the Lifesense Affinity to see how they're "falling apart." And much like Deathsense, this Affinity is most often used on one's living Anchors, in order to make sure they're okay.

In order to use this Affinity, the Wraith must either be in direct contact with the person, or using another Affinity to "see" her. She then spends one Essence, unless the person she's using it on is an Anchor, in which case it costs no Essence at all. The Wraith may do nothing but perceive that person, and if she's interrupted by so much as a loud noise or attempt at conversation, the Affinity automatically fails.

The Storyteller should ask the player for one crucial piece of information that the Wraith wants to learn by using this Affinity. A single success will deliver this piece of information, and further successes will provide even more. An exceptional success provides a flash of the person's ultimate fate, but - as with Deathsense - it's debatable as to whether this can be changed, shaped or averted entirely.

If this Affinity is used by a Wraith on her own Anchor, she may add one die per dot in that Anchor's rating. If she's using it on someone else's Anchor, however, one die is taken away for each dot in the rating. And if the person being looked at is the Anchor of several different Wraiths use either the average rating of the Wraiths, or the Anchor rating of the closest Wraith - whichever is higher.

Note that the Affinity won't give an exact, clinical diagnosis of what's wrong with the person, only a general indication of her health, along with a few insights. For example, a Wraith may learn that a person's kidneys are working harder than usual to process the abnormally high amount of sugar in her blood, but if she doesn't understand that this is a symptom of Diabetes, the insight may be wasted. Wraiths will have to either use the Bios Numina, or else combine their insights with a working knowledge of medicine, to fully comprehend what they see.

Cost: *1 Essence Zero if the person is the Wraith's Anchor*

Dice Pool: *Wits + Composure + or - Anchor rating, if applicable*

Action: *Instant*

Dramatic Failure: *The Wraith sees the exact opposite of what's there. Cancer patients at death's door look "a little peaked," while people in the bloom of health seem ready to keel over any second. The Wraith will persist in this delusion until another Wraith informs her of her error, or common sense kicks in such as when the "healthy" cancer patient vomits up half a lung.*

Failure: *The Wraith cannot gauge the person's health.*

Success: *The Wraith learns the general condition of the person Excellent, Good, Bad, Poor, Dying, etc., plus one extra detail about the person's condition per success rolled. The Wraith learns the one thing she really wanted to know first, with all other information coming in as the Storyteller sees fit to give it. Things to be learned include other maladies, pre-existing conditions, possible complications, developing ailments, how the disease was contracted and the like.*

Exceptional Success: *The Wraith not only learns all the above information, but comes to know the person so intimately that she gains foresight into her ultimate fate. This comes as a glimpse of that person's final moments, revealing what happens to her, what - or who - is responsible. If this occurs when a Wraith is looking at her own Anchor, the preknowledge of that Anchor's death stuns her for an entire Scene.*

Manifestation.

Stories of ghosts appearing to the living are amongst the oldest told, and not without good reason. While not every Wraith has the talent to learn the intricacies of the Embody Numina, all Wraiths - and Ghosts - have the ability to make themselves seen by the living by Manifesting. And while it's not as potent - or as long-lasting - as the Arts of Embody, the Affinity can do wonders in a pinch.

The process is rather simple: a Wraith simply has to will herself to be seen, and it happens, regardless of any other actions being taken. Wraiths can choose how fully they want to make their presence known, and spend Essence accordingly before they begin. The successes scored on the roll determine how long the Manifestation lasts.

A zero-Essence Manifestation is more of a 'weird feeling' than anything else. The Wraith makes its presence known via cold drafts, brief emotional swings, fleeting smells and raised hackles on the back of the neck. She cannot use these 'weird feelings' to make noises, however.

With the expenditure of one dot of Essence, the Wraith appears fully, but has no substance, looking much like a humanoid, vaguely-recognizable cloud of ether. Her features look much as they did in life, regardless of how much she's been Shaped. She can point to things or people, but she cannot touch them, and while she can move her lips she cannot make a sound. She also cannot

be harmed, except by magic, magical items, or things that have been Blessed.

With two dots, the Wraith has substance and speech, once more, but remains a weak shadow of her true self. She is now quite recognizable to any who knew her in life, though she looks pale and clammy. Her Physical Attributes are all reduced to one dot, and her semi-solid flesh treats any damage that gets past her Defense as though twice the number of successes were scored. Magic, magical items and Blessed objects cause Aggravated damage.

Manifestation is modified by three factors: Anchors, Belief and Faith.

A Wraith within ten yards of an Anchor can add its Rating to her Presence + Strength when rolling to Manifest. Also, the Essence cost to the Wraith is one less in these circumstances.

As for Belief and Faith, those modifiers follow the same progression as the Chart on Pg. 210 of World of Darkness.

Cost: Variable 0 - 2

Dice Pool: Presence + Strength + nearby Anchor, if applicable

Action: Instant

Dramatic Failure: *Not only does the Wraith not Manifest, but the psychic shock of being deflected from the land of the living bars her from attempting to Manifest, or use Embody, for a day and a night.*

Failure: *The attempt fails, but the Wraith can try again next turn.*

Success: *The attempt succeeds, and the Wraith appears for one turn per success.*

Exceptional Success: *The Wraith grabs hold of the land of the living so firmly that she is able to reside in it for longer than usual, Manifesting for an entire Scene.*

Passion Sense.

Essence is everything to Wraiths: the spark that animates them, the energy that drives them, and the power that moves them, day after day, through this mockery of life. Without the passion to go on, they are adrift, and without the power that passion creates - or the power to feed it, at least - they risk losing their grip.

The constant need to keep Essence in their systems has led Wraiths to develop a "nose" for seeking it out, which has been called Passion Sense. The most common use of this Affinity is to find Essence when they're running low. This is possible because the power created by passion - Essence - creates eddies and vibrations in the air of the Deadlands, which can be tracked.

All a Wraith has to do to track down Essence is concentrate for a turn, and then extend her senses out into the air around her, seeking these minute disturbances out. A single success will give the Wraith a general direction, and a sense of how much Essence can be found there. An Exceptional Success would give a psychic impression of the place or person - caused by the eddies - and a near-exact understanding of what awaits.

This Affinity can also be used to gauge how much Essence another Wraith has on her, or how much passion a mortal can provide. The user of this Affinity must be at least within conversational distance, and spend a turn looking at the other person. A single success gives a general indication low, middling, full while an Exceptional success gives an exact accounting, right down to what sort of Essence she's full of and where she got it, or why the mortal is so keyed up.

Wraiths being scanned with Passion Sense can resist it, so long as they know it's being done. They must spend a dot of Essence and roll their Resolve + Composure to counter the onlooker. The living may also resist, provided they know the Wraith is present and scanning, but they must spend a dot of Willpower to do this.

In both cases, the Wraith doing the looking may do nothing else but send her perceptions out into the air, or watch the other Wraith. If she's interrupted by so much as a loud noise or attempt at conversation, the Affinity automatically fails.

Also note that this Affinity cannot be used to gauge the level of someone's Tainted Essence - that belongs to Soulsight, below.

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Wits + Composure vs. Resolve + Composure If Contested

Action: Instant.

Dramatic Failure: N/A

Failure: *The Wraith's senses extend out, but go nowhere, preventing her from seeing what she was looking for.*

Success: *If feeling the air for Essence, she gets a general direction and some idea of how much is there. If looking at another Wraith to gauge her capacity for Essence, she gets a general idea of how much Essence the target has. If looking at a mortal, she gets a general idea of how much passion that mortal can generate.*

Exceptional Success: *If tasting the air for Essence, the Wraith gains a perfect psychic impression of the place or person, and a near-exact understanding of how much Essence - and what kind - awaits. If looking at another Wraith, she gets an exact understanding of how much Essence she holds, what flavors and where she got it. If looking at a mortal, she sees how much passion the mortal has, and why she feels that way.*

Soulsight.

Wraiths are very sensitive to emotion and desire, given that they are kept "alive" - or at least active - by strong emotions. And they are also very sensitive to negative and self-destructive impulses, given the presence of the Shadow within them. Through the Soulsight Affinity, they are able to use their enhanced senses to detect the feelings, wants, needs and inner darknesses of others.

In order to use Soulsight, the Wraith must be within a few feet of the Wraith or person. She then spends one Essence, unless the person she's using it on is an Anchor of hers, in which case it costs no Essence at all. The Wraith may do nothing but perceive the target, and if she's interrupted by so much as a loud noise or attempt at conversation, the Affinity automatically fails.

The Storyteller should ask the player to identify the aspect of the target's psyche the Wraith wants to look at Emotions, Desires or the Shadow, and for one crucial piece of information the Wraith wants to learn. A single success will deliver this piece of information, and further successes will provide even more information about that aspect. However, successes cannot be split amongst aspects: all information learned must be about one part of the target's soul.

Wraiths can resist this, so long as they know they're being scanned. They need only spend a dot of Essence, and may roll their Resolve + Composure to counter the onlooker's gaze. The living may also resist, provided they know the Wraith is present and scanning, but they must spend a dot of Willpower to do this. Some Shadows are also able to block the roll on "behalf" of their Wraith; See the section on Shadows for more information.

Cost: *1 Essence Zero if the person is the Wraith's Anchor*

Dice Pool: *Wits + Composure + the Anchor Rating vs. Resolve + Composure If Contested*

Action: *Instant / Contested*

Dramatic Failure: *The Wraith receives wildly inaccurate information about the target.*

Failure: *The Wraith sees nothing, as though she were looking at a complete blank.*

Success: *The Wraith sees the foremost feeling or desire of the target, or the current activity of the Shadow. Each success past the first gives an additional piece of information about that aspect of the target's psyche. Desires are explained one piece at a time, emotions are broken down and elaborated upon, and the Shadow's abilities are revealed one by one.*

Exceptional Success: *The Wraith not only learns everything about the viewed aspect of the target, but comes to know the target so intimately that she gains foresight into that aspect's most defining moment. The second the target's defining emotion knows no equal, her fondest desire is made real, or her Shadow finally triumphs is shown in a brief vision. Why and how are shown, but the exact chain of events leading up to it are left tantalizingly blank.*

If this occurs when a Wraith is looking at her own Anchor, the preknowledge of that Anchor's happiness gives the Wraith a chance to roll that Anchor's Rating, and gain a dot of Essence for each success. The preknowledge of bad times, on the other hand, gives her Shadow a chance to make the same roll for Tainted Essence. And should the Wraith see another Wraith fall to her Shadow, the experience scars her so badly that it gives her Shadow a dot of Tainted Essence.

5.3 Anchors.

5.3.1 Anchors in General.

Wraiths and Sleepers are held back from whatever lies beyond the Barrier by their Anchors: people, places and things that were massively important to them in life, or else formed an integral part of their death. Someone with a waggish sense of humor once called them "deathlines," and the nickname has stuck.

Anchors give special powers to Wraiths, but also demand care and attention. A Wraith with a few, weak Anchors is nowhere near as powerful as a Wraith with many strong ones. And without any Anchors at all the Wraith cannot stay in the world; She will fall through the Barrier into whatever lies beyond, never to be seen again.

*As pointed out in *The World Of Darkness*, Ghosts are limited in their range of action by their Anchors. Sleepers can't venture away from an Anchor more than 10 yards per dot in Power. For them, the length and breadth of their Anchors is the whole of their world. They can teleport from Anchor to Anchor by spending Willpower, but they are unable to walk the distance between.*

This only truly applies to Sleepers, though. Wraiths, being fully "awake," are able to act outside the box their Anchors would place them in. They can perceive the world around them clearly, and may choose to go out into it for their own purposes. And not only can they teleport to their Anchors, but they are able to use the Anchorsense Affinity to check up on them from afar.

However, they are still highly impeded by the pull of their Anchors. And there are extra costs and risks involved with venturing far from them - most obviously the threat of their destruction.

Advantages of Anchors.

For Wraiths, Anchors represent stability, mobility and power. Wraiths use their Anchors to regain Essence, and to heal wounds, but there is much more than can be done with them.

For one thing, a Wraith's Essence Pool is directly tied to how strong their Anchors are. A Wraith with many strong Anchors has room for a lot of power, while a Wraith with a few weak ones is a sorry sight indeed.

Wraiths can also use their Anchors to travel great distances in the blink of an eye, and take others along with them. This trick is also good for ducking a fight, or fleeing from a particularly nasty opponent, and has saved many a Wraith from certain destruction.

And a Wraith's proximity to her Anchors allow her an easier time using her Numina on the Living, and appearing to them. Wraiths aren't prohibited from doing either thing, of course, but it's much more strenuous while away from one's Anchors.

Dangers of Attachment.

On the other hand, being so intimately tied to Anchors brings its own share of problems. The most obvious one is needing to protect them at all times, but there are others as well.

Unlike a Sleeper, a fully-awake Wraith can travel some distance from her Anchors. However, the further away she goes, the less able she is to function, due to the strong emotional pull the Anchors exert over her. This inability to think - and act - straight can be overcome by force of will, but only temporarily.

Yet another danger is the fact that Anchors are indelibly marked as being part of the realm of spirit - a malady Wraiths refer to as "Echoes." While the signs of being claimed by a Wraith aren't totally obvious, they're enough to bring human ghost-hunters and do-gooders sniffing around. And a Wraith has enough worries of her own without having her own Anchors betray themselves.

And, of course, there is a final danger: if a Wraith ever loses her last Anchor, she disappears, doomed to fall through the Barrier. No Wraith has ever been there and come back, and except for what those Ferryman who come across have to say, no one can be certain of the truth. All that is known is that The Damned always come from there on their obscene expeditions back into the world, so whatever lies beyond the Barrier can't be all sweetness and light.

Letting go.

It is possible, with time and effort, to gradually loosen the hold on one's Anchors. The process requires coming to terms with one's loss, and slowly, painfully letting go of one's former life. This must be a conscious decision on the part of the Wraith: Shadows cannot make a Wraith let go,

though they can always arrange events so a particular Anchor is destroyed.

There are those who believe that something greater than the land of the dead lies on the other side of the Barrier, and they - along with the Ferrymen - often exhort their fellows to loosen their hold on their Anchors. Most Wraiths consider this the equivalent of a second suicide, and ignore them as cranks or madmen. But Wraiths who've been around for a while can't help but feel that they, too, feel a gentle pull away from the things that held them back after death.

However, since their Shadows seem quite keen on sending them in that direction, too, they tend to ignore it.

5.3.2 Anchors at Character Creation.

Every Wraith starts out with ten dots to place into Anchors. Storytellers might be willing to allow a player to trade in dots in Anchors for extra Experience Points, to reflect a Wraith who's been Awake for decades, or even centuries. But that's entirely up to the Storyteller as befits her Chronicle.

When choosing Anchors, the player picks people, places or tangible objects for the Wraith to be attached to. Concepts, philosophical ideas and organizations or movements the Wraith left behind can't be used as Anchors, because they, in themselves, are not physical, or are hopelessly spread out amongst far too many people to hold onto.

The player then decides what the primary emotion behind that Anchor is: when the Wraith is in the presence of it, what does she feel? Love for the child? Hate for the workplace? Fear for the murderer? Nostalgia for the toy?

Then the player assigns a number of dots between 1 and 5 to each Anchor, depending on how strongly the Wraith feels about it. A massive obsession or strong, pure emotion would be around a 4 or 5, while a minor fixation or uncertain feeling would be a 1 or a 2. The 5th dot in an Anchor costs 2 dots, rather than one.

Note that the size or strength of the Anchor should not be reflected in the dots; A huge, "haunted" house could have a rating of 1, while a wedding ring could have a rating of 5.

Finally, the player marks this information down on the Character Sheet, under Anchors. "The Knife I Was Killed With (Fear): 3" would be an example, as would "The Streetcorner Where I Died (Terror): 2," or "My Girlfriend (Love): 4."

5.3.3 Anchors in action.

As stated previously, Anchors provide both advantages and drawbacks for the Wraiths who have them. All Wraiths are generally aware of the advantages, though some of the drawbacks might not be readily apparent. And this is yet another opportunity for the Shadow to cause problems.

- *Travel: Wraiths can teleport to their Anchors at any time by taking a full turn to concentrate, and then spending a point of Willpower. They can use this ability to carry other Wraiths, or*

things, off to her Anchors, but there is a limit to how much can be taken. A general rule of thumb is that a Wraith can teleport an amount equal to her own Size along with her for free, but each increment thereafter requires another point of Willpower.

For example: if Fred is Size 5, he can bring another Wraith of Size 5 along with him with no troubles. If another Wraith of Size 5 or less wants to come along, however, he'll have to spend another Willpower point to do it. And so on.

Teleporting to an Anchor usually counts as an Extended Action, as it takes a full turn to concentrate on the Anchor. That said, it is possible to teleport as an Instant action. However, this costs the Wraith an automatic point of Lethal damage, due to the system shock. Also: if a Wraith is being grappled by an opponent of equal or less Size than the Wraith, that opponent will vanish right along with the Wraith, and appear next to the Anchor along with her.

A Wraith can venture anywhere up to mile from an Anchor for each dot in Willpower she has. Once she passes this barrier, however, she can feel her Anchors pulling her back. This pull makes itself felt as a sense of growing unease, insecurity and dread - much like wondering if you left the gas stove on.

The moment a Wraith passes her limit, she is subject to a -1 Modifier on all rolls involving Numina, and Mental, Physical and Social Skills, due to that sense of being too far away. She can spend a point of Willpower to alleviate the nagging doubt for a Scene, thus removing the modifier, but it will come right back at the end of that Scene.

And it gets worse: after a full day of being away from the nearest Anchor, the -1 Modifier becomes a -2 Modifier, and then a -3 on the next day, a -4 on the day after that, and so on. To add insult to dread, expending Willpower only removes one from the Modifier for a Scene: someone with a -3 Modifier will be at -2 on all rolls for a Scene if she spends Willpower, and then it's back up to -3.

- *Numina: A Wraith's connection to the world of the living also limits the kind of power she can bring to bear upon it. It's not impossible for a Wraith to use various Arts on the Living, or their world, while away from her Anchors. However, it requires more effort than usual, and not many Wraith are willing to expend that effort so frivolously.*

The limit to a Wraith's use of Numina on the Living is equal to ten yards per dot in Anchor rating. If a Wraith wants to use her powers on the Living, or their world, while beyond that barrier, she can. However, this costs a point of Willpower per Art activated, as it requires that the Wraith concentrate to feel the link to the mortal realm. This cost is above and beyond any other Willpower requirements a specific Art may require

- *Manifestation: Being in the presence of an Anchor makes it much easier for Wraiths to Manifest to the living, and less costly as well.*

*If a Wraith is within the same field for easy use of Numina on the Living ten yards per dot in Anchor rating then her player may add one die per dot in Anchor rating after the first to the roll. For example: if Bloody Mary wants to appear and scare the crap out of an onlooker at her *** Haunted Clump of Trees, she gets two extra dice to roll.*

As for the costs involved: being within the same zone gives a Wraith a power boost, negating the first dot of Essence they would have to spend to Manifest. This means that a Wraith can do a no-Essence and one-Essence Manifestation for free, and only pay one Essence for a two-Essence Manifestation. This bonus is applied regardless of the Anchor's rating.

- *Echoes: A Wraith's attachment to an Anchor affects the Anchor in certain ways, even when the Wraith isn't anywhere near it. A dead killer's favorite knife often seems more threatening than a normal one, for example, and a person who has a dead relative or lover looking after them might seem somewhat fey or, for want of a better word, haunted. And as for a "haunted house," the place could be plagued with cold drafts, clammy rooms, inexplicable noises or stark, white silence.*

Ordinary mortals might just shrug the oddness off as nerves, strain or an overactive imagination. Those who are schooled in the occult, or well-versed in battling it, however, can use these clues to help discover a Wraith's Anchors. It's no substitute for investigation, observation and research, but it might help to confirm one's suspicion that something - or someone - is "just not right."

For every dot in an Anchor's rating, past the second, there is a +1 Modifier to any roll made to locate "something odd/supernatural" in the vicinity. Storytellers should insist that only those with sufficient scores in Occult or Academics Religion/Parapsychology can make this roll without heavy negative Modifiers, if they can make the roll at all.

A Wraith can, if in the proximity of a Anchor, spend a point of Essence and a point of Willpower to "turn off" the Echoes for a Scene, thus dropping the positive Modifier from the onlooker's roll. It won't negate any supernatural powers used on the Anchor, but it will make it less apparent to anyone who's looking that the Anchor isn't just an ordinary person, place or thing.

5.3.4 Anchorsense Affinity.

Being emotionally tied to an Anchor creates a strong bond, indeed. And while this bond is sometimes chafing and uncomfortable to an "Awake" Ghost, it gives a Wraith a certain advantage: the ability to "check up" on that Anchor from anywhere by using the Anchorsense Affinity. By taking no other action, and thinking intently of an Anchor, the Wraith is able to sense the immediate surroundings of it - inside and out - as though she was the Anchor.

This Affinity is limited by the physical environs of that Anchor. Someone with a pen for an Anchor might see the entirety of the room if it's on a desk, but if it's in the desk, then all the Wraith

will see is the drawer. On the other hand, the Wraith might still be able to hear voices from around the desk, smell smoke from a fire, and so on.

All five "mortal" senses work with Anchorsense, as do other Affinities, but the Wraith cannot use any Numina from a distance. If she wants to put a scare on someone stalking towards her prized bowling trophy, she'll have to get to it, somehow.

While the Wraith is using Anchorsense, she is not aware of her body's own surroundings, and will have to end the effect to sense what's going on around her. If she's attacked, however, the effect ends and she's brought roughly back to her own body.

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Wits + Anchor Rating

Action: Instant.

Dramatic Failure: *Not only is the Wraith unable to sense what's going on, but the connection to the Anchor is disrupted, as though the Wraith had an emotional door slammed in her face. This stuns her for one Turn, and prevents her from trying Anchorsense on that Anchor until she goes back and visits it, either by normal travel or spending a point of Willpower to teleport there.*

Failure: *The Wraith's senses extend towards the Anchor, but then fade out and return to the Wraith's own immediacy.*

Success: *The Wraith's senses reach the Anchor, and then emanate out from it as described above. The effect lasts until the Wraith chooses to turn it off.*

Exceptional Success: *Not only do the Wraith's senses emanate out from the Anchor, but the connection is so strong that when the Wraith ceases contact, she maintains a low-key connection for a number of Scenes equal to the total amount of successes. Any particularly strong stimulus that happens around the Anchor will be immediately sensed by the Wraith strong odors, shouted voices, a noteworthy sight, etc.*

5.3.5 Regaining Essence from Anchors.

There are four ways a Wraith can regain Essence from her Anchors. They range from extremely safe, and mostly automatic, to extremely risky and strenuous.

All Wraiths instinctively know that these options exist, though they might not know the dangers involved with some of them. And this is yet another chance for a wily Shadow to try and get some Tainted Essence via a poisoned suggestion or two.

There is also a limit to how often a Wraith can try to gain Essence from an Anchor. A Wraith cannot make more Essence rolls in a Scene than that Anchor has dots in its rating. The more powerful the connection between the Wraith and the Anchor is, the more power she can harvest from it.

- *Proximity: By resting in the presence of one of her Anchors for a Scene, she suffuses herself in the emotion behind that Anchor. She can regain one dot of Essence for each dot she has in that Anchor at the end of the Scene, but only if she does nothing more mentally strenuous than contemplate or meditate in that time.*

No roll is necessary for this.

- *Sympathy: If the Living feel the core emotion that binds a Wraith to her Anchor while in the presence of that Anchor, the Wraith may attempt to soak up that feeling. This roll can be made regardless of whether the mortals in question felt that emotion on their own, or if the Wraith "helped" them along.*

Cost: *None*

Dice Pool: *Manipulation + Anchor Rating*

Action: *Instant.*

Dramatic Failure: *The Wraith cannot try to pull emotion from the Anchor for an entire day. Also, the Shadow can make a Tainted Essence roll, using half the Anchor's rating, rounding up, due to the wasted chance and/or effort.*

Failure: *Nothing happens, and the Wraith may try again so long as the mortal is feeling, but at a cumulative -1 Modifier due to the frustration of failure.*

Success: *One dot of Essence is given to the Wraith per success.*

Exceptional Success: *The Wraith not only gains a dot of Essence for each success on the roll, but also reaches such a degree of connection with the mortal that the Wraith may now consider her a Consort.*

- *Potency: By gently pulling the strong, ambient emotion from the Anchor for a turn, she can try to get a faster replenishment of Essence.*

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Anchor Rating

Action: Instant.

Dramatic Failure: The Wraith cannot try to pull emotion from the Anchor for an entire day. Also, the Shadow can make a Tainted Essence roll, using half the Anchor's rating, rounding up, due to the extreme frustration the Wraith now feels.

Failure: Nothing happens, and the Wraith may try again, but at a cumulative -1 Modifier due to the frustration of failure.

Success: One dot of Essence is given to the Wraith per success.

Exceptional Success: The Wraith not only gains a point of Essence for each success on the roll, but also gains back a point of Willpower for the heady sense of self-affirmation this gives her.

- **Larceny:** By violently ripping the emotion right out of the Anchor, the Wraith can get a larger than usual replenishment of Essence from it. This is highly dangerous, however, as it may reduce her connection to the Anchor, thus decreasing both her hold on the world and her overall pool of Essence. This is usually only done by a Wraith in extremely dire need of power, such as when Ghost Hunters are on the verge of destroying her Anchor and there's nothing else she can do.

To perform this, the Wraith spends a point of Willpower, and a roll is made using Presence + Anchor rating. Each success gives an amount of Essence equal to the total rating of that Anchor: If Bloody Mary rolls Presence 2 and the 4 dice that go with her haunted chapel, and gets a 2,3,5,6,8,9 result, she gets 8 Essence from the roll 4 dots in that Anchor x 2 successes = 8 Essence .

This method of gaining Essence from Anchors is one of the few instances where Essence gain that exceeds a Wraith's Essence pool does not result in wasted successes. The outpouring of emotion is so primal and powerful that the overage can be kept by the Wraith, however temporarily. This extra, "stolen" Essence is highly unstable, and bleeds away at the rate of one dot per turn, above and beyond any expenditures the Wraith may incur.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Presence + Anchor Rating

Action: Instant.

Dramatic Failure: The Wraith cannot try to leech or pull emotion from the Anchor for an entire day. Also, the Shadow can make a Tainted Essence roll, using the Anchor's full rating, due to the extreme frustration the Wraith now feels.

Failure: Nothing happens, and the Wraith may try again, but at a cumulative -1 Modifier due to the frustration of failure.

Success: A number of dots of Essence equal to the Anchor rating is given to the Wraith for each success.

Exceptional Success: As with a success. Also, the extreme confirmation of the Wraith's connection to the Anchor means that she doesn't have to test it, via the roll described below.

The savage removal of raw emotion from the Anchor threatens the Wraith's connection to it. Immediately after the roll to take the Essence, another roll must be made using the Wraith's Resolve + Anchor's Rating, to see if the connection holds. This roll is modified by -1 for each success scored after the first on the original roll.

To go back to Bloody Mary, again: she has a Resolve of 3, and her player scored two successes on the initial roll, which means that she must subtract one die from the normal 4 associated with her chapel, leaving only 6 dice to test the connection with.

Dice Pool: Resolve + Anchor Rating

Action: Instant.

Dramatic Failure: If the Anchor had more than one dot, then its rating is dropped to one, which decreases the Wraith's Essence Pool accordingly. If the Anchor only had one dot remaining, the Wraith either disappears into another Anchor to undergo a Harrowing, or vanishes completely if she has no Anchors remaining. In addition, the Shadow can make a Tainted Essence roll, using the Anchor's previous rating, no matter what fate befalls the Anchor.

Failure: *The Anchor's rating is decreased by one, which also decreases the Wraith's Essence Pool by one. If the Anchor only had one dot remaining, the Wraith either disappears into another Anchor to undergo a Harrowing, or vanishes completely if she has no Anchors remaining.*

Success: *The Wraith's connection to the Anchor is tested, but holds.*

Exceptional Success: *The Wraith's connection to the Anchor not only holds, but is spectacularly reconfirmed. The Anchor's rating is raised by one dot, which also raises the Wraith's Essence Pool by one. This new dot can take the Anchor's rating above 5, if that's the case.*

5.3.6 Regaining Corpus from Anchors.

Wraiths have the same healing times as Mortals, when it comes to Bashing and Lethal damage. And they are usually able to heal damage to their Corpus by spending Essence.

However, sometimes Wraiths are dangerously low on Essence, and need to retreat to an Anchor to heal up. And Aggravated damage is so severe for Wraiths that it can't be healed except by using one's Anchors to do it.

A Wraith can use any of the methods detailed in Regaining Essence from Anchors to heal Bashing or Lethal damage. Instead of each success giving a dot of Essence to the Wraith's Essence Pool, the power is used to knit the Corpus back together. Any Essence that goes above and beyond what's needed to heal the wounds goes into the Essence Pool as normal.

Bashing is healed on a one success for one Corpus basis, while Lethal costs two successes per Corpus. Aggravated requires three successes per Corpus, plus an extra expenditure of Willpower for each Corpus healed in this fashion.

As with regaining essence, a Wraith can make as many rolls in a Scene as the Anchor has dots in its rating. Again: the more powerful the connection between the Wraith and the Anchor, the more power she can harvest from it.

Note that with Proximity, a roll is still unnecessary. However, the Wraith must still be completely at rest for this to work, regardless of whether she's healing Bashing or not.

5.4 Consorts.

She comes to me only at night, when I'm halfway to being asleep. She crawls beside me, in my bed, and whispers sweet things in my drowsy ear. Her kisses are like a breath of fresh air on my lips. Her hands are clouds that move over and within me...

Oh yes, we make love, my lover and I. But she slides inside of me. And when we are done we sleep together, just like that - nestled inside each other like wooden dolls.

She shows me such wondrous and amazing things, in my dreams. She leads me through the gates of slumber and takes me far away...

Oh, I wish you could see these things. I wish I could do them justice. I thought I knew beauty before, but never like this.

I thought I knew love, too, but I was wrong.

They say I'm mad to love the dead. I say I'd be mad not to.

Why can't you just be happy for me...?

- Patient AB-366, Starkmoore-Raven Mental Institute

Mortals who have the privilege - or misfortune - of being given the special attentions of a Wraith are generally known as Consorts. They are also sometimes called lovers, bitches, toys, victims, thralls, servants or hired hands, depending on the relationship between the Wraith and her Consort. It's also common to put "meat" in front of the term, as in "meat-lover" or "meat-toy." This is done to keep them from being confused with Wraiths, who have toys, lovers and servants of their own.

An older term for a Consort is etera - "servant" - though it's a rare Wraith, and usually one from The Order, who chooses to evoke this archaic phrase. They say that once, long ago, Wraiths were encouraged to maintain vast numbers of etera amongst their descendants, who worshiped their ghostly ancestors like gods. But this is often scoffed at by modern Wraiths, who wonder how anyone could have managed so many Consorts at once...

Wraiths take Consorts for many reasons. Sometimes it is a short-term relationship to allow a Wraith to use her Numina while away from her Anchors, or travel some distance from them. Sometimes they wish to keep tabs on a particular mortal, or go do some damage at a place - or on a person - that the mortal frequently goes to. And if all else fails, they make good emergency shelters when a Storm hits.

There's also a measure of protection a Wraith can provide a mortal while she's Marked, which is why Wraiths often make Consorts of friends and acquaintances from their lives. But there's dan-

ger for those mortals, too, which is why The Order isn't keen to have its Wraiths keeping Consorts in the first place.

5.4.1 Making the Mark.

A Wraith doesn't have to make a special roll to make a Consort, unless she is using Anchorage to do so. All she has to do is expend 5 extra Essence, or 1 extra Willpower, while using Numina on that mortal, and she gains at least partial "ownership" over that individual. Each use of Numina that counts towards making a Consort must be done at least 24 hours apart from one another, though the Wraith is free to perform other acts upon the mortal in the meantime.

The number of times extra Essence and/or Willpower must be expended to create a Consort depends on how close the mortal was to the Wraith in life. A complete stranger would require five "loaded" uses of Numina to be done upon her, while a friend might take three, a close family member two, and a child, lover or spouse could only require one. Storyteller's discretion in all matters.

The Wraith can, if she chooses, expend a dot of Permanent Willpower while using the Numina, instead. This gives her full ownership over the mortal right then and there, but few Wraiths are willing to go to that kind of trouble: not only is it expensive, but it carries the risk of Ossification see below.

After the final application of Numina, the mortal is a Consort. She now appears as "real" to the dead as other Wraiths, and Anchors, though she can't see other Wraiths - or Ghosts, for that matter - unless they Manifest to her. She also gains a special sigil upon her forehead, visible only Wraiths, that is known as the Mark: it identifies her as the property of the Wraith that made her a Consort.

Marked.

The Mark is a sigil that is unique to each Wraith. No one else has the same Mark, and it is supposedly impossible to force the Mark to look like that of another. It is whispered that some truly old Wraiths know a way to do it, though.

Marks can be "read," but not without effort. If a Wraith wants to know whose property a Consort is, she must touch the Mark and spend a point of Essence. This gives her a mental image of the Wraith who Marked the Consort, and perhaps a sense of her personality - at the time of the Marking. Unfortunately, it also lets the Consort's owner know that someone asked after her, which is why reading a Consort's Mark is often known as "knocking" or "ringing," to modern Wraiths.

Only Wraiths - and perhaps Mediums and Projectors - can see the Mark. Even the Consorts who bear them cannot see them, unless the Wraith chooses to make it momentarily visible. This costs one Essence, and causes the Wraith's Mark to flare, as though it were lit up just under the skin.

At the Storyteller's discretion, other supernatural beings with sensory powers may be able to detect the Mark on a Consort.

Note that more than one Wraith may lay claim to a single person at the same time, though this can have disastrous effects for the Consort. A mortal who's "owned" by more than one Wraith bears all their Marks upon her forehead, and suffers from all their Echoes see below.

A Wraith can choose to end her relationship with a Consort any time she chooses. All she has to do is spend a turn in concentration, as though she were using Anchorsense, and will that it be done, and it is. It doesn't cost the Wraith anything to end it, but there is a danger of Ossification see below.

There's also a social stigma to those who "drop" their Consorts on a regular basis. Some see them as highly stylish and urbane, like a rich mortal who never wears the same suit, or pair of shoes, twice. Others see them as vain and wasteful, if not highly callous.

5.4.2 Owners Manual.

*Consorts mostly behave like slightly-limited ** Anchors, except that they don't add to a Wraith's Essence Pool, and won't save her from falling through the Barrier if she loses the rest of her Anchors.*

Those caveats aside, Wraiths that claim Consorts gain a number of advantages, along with a few disadvantages, for their pains.

Advantages are:

- *Anchorsense: a Wraith can extend her senses out to sense the environs of the Consort, just as though she were a ** Anchor. When doing this, the Wraith's five senses register everything*

the Consort does, as though she were the Consort. This sensation is not unlike the Possession Basic Art of Bios, only without actually being there.

- *Numina: Wraiths can use Numina in the presence of a Consort without having to pay an extra dot in Willpower. The Arts can be used on the Consort, or else around her, but no more than twenty yards beyond her person, as though she were a ** Anchor.*
- *Manifestation: Wraiths can manifest to, or around, Consorts with less effort. They get one extra die for the roll, as though the Consort were a ** Anchor; and the first dot of Essence they would have to spend is negated. As with Anchors, this means that a no-Essence and one-Essence Manifestation is free, and only one Essence need be paid for a two-Essence Manifestation. Wraiths can also choose to Manifest to the Consort only, and not others nearby, for the same Essence cost.*
- *Travel: Wraiths can follow along after a Consort, as though she were an Anchor, without suffering the usual modifiers for being so far away from her real Anchors. However, she can only venture up to twenty yards away from the Consort, or else she feels the pull of her nearest Anchor once again. Wraiths can also spend a dot of Willpower to travel to her Consort,, as though she were an Anchor.*
- *Essence: A Wraith can gather Essence by being in the presence of a Consort, using any of the means listed in Anchors. The Consort is treated as a ** Anchor, which limits how much Essence can be gained. Wraiths should also be very cautious about using Larceny, as failure on the roll to maintain the connection completely severs her from the Consort.*
- *Healing: Wraiths can heal herself inside the Consort, as though she was a ** Anchor.*
- *Storms: Wraiths can slip inside their Consorts and hide while the Storm rages around them, so long as the Storm could be deflected by a ** Anchor. If it's stronger than that, the Consort isn't much help.*

Disadvantages are:

- *Echoes: Much like any Anchor, there is a sense that the Consort is "touched" by the supernatural, which adds a modifier to rolls to detect that something is truly odd about her. How much of a Modifier it is depends on how close the Wraith was to the person at the time of her death: a complete stranger has +1, while a beloved, lifelong spouse or favorite child has +3. And for each additional Wraith past the first who claims the Consort, another +1 Modifier is added on.*
- *Letting Go: A Wraith can sever the connection between herself and the Consort anytime, as stated above. However, if she's below half of her Willpower when she does it, she has to roll against Ossification due to the loss of time and effort the dropping represents. And if she gained the Consort by spending Permanent Willpower, then she has to make the roll no matter where her Willpower may be at that moment.*
- *Sympathy: The connection between the Wraith and the Consort is both spiritual and physical. If the mortal has damage done to her, the Wraith feels it - point for point, type for type. While this doesn't do damage to the Wraith, she does suffer any dice penalties the Consort does, up to and including being Incapacitated.*

- *Death: Should the Consort die before the Wraith can sever the connection, the Wraith goes into a Harrowing without the Shadow having to spend any Tainted Essence. And if she used Permanent Willpower to make the Consort, she must make a roll against Ossification once she gets out of the Harrowing - even if she rolled an Exceptional Success for the Harrowing.*

May Break - Handle With Care.

As a Consort's horror, pain and death is reflected back upon the Wraith, it's usually not a good idea to use dangerous or maddening Numina in their presence. If they go suicidal, or start having shocking lapses in self-control or self-preservation, the Wraith might be able to sever her connection to the Consort just before she dies. But that's still a massive waste of time, energy and effort.

To try and avoid this, Wraiths often use their "Consorts of Convenience" as Trojan Horses. They walk alongside them into someplace they really need to be, do their damage once the Consort's out of sight, and then do their best to keep the Consort from even knowing about what went on. This isn't always possible, but it's a lot better than letting loose right in front of the poor dope.

As for more long-term Consorts, Wraiths often try to let them know what's going on - or a highly doctored version of it, at any rate. If they can help the mortals understand what the stakes are, they may not only gain willing partners, but get their Consorts to bend their sanity and morality around to the Wraith's needs. How can it be "murder" if they're doing away with the bastard who killed the Wraith in the first place?

5.5 Damage and Healing.

Wraiths' bodies are made of an odd, bloodless soulstuff referred to as Corpus. While Corpus is firm and solid, it is also as fragile as the flesh Wraiths had in life. And while they are in little danger of being destroyed by most wounds, they are more than capable of feeling pain.

*Wraiths follow all the rules on taking damage from *The World of Darkness*, pp. 171 - 181, with the following notations:*

- *Wraiths are not subject to Deprivation, Disease, Drugs, Electrocution, Fatigue, Poisons and Toxins or Temperature Extremes.*
- *Wraiths aren't as incapacitated by pain as mortals are. They begin to lose dice from their pool only when the second-to-last box of Corpus is marked, and they suffer a -1 penalty. The last Corpus box gives a -2 penalty.*
- *Wraiths do not suffer the Incapacitation rules on pg. 173 - 174, and are in no danger of "dying". If their Corpus is all marked out, they dissipate and must go to a nearby Anchor to be Resurrected within the hour, provided they can beat their Shadow's Denial. See below*

Now I Destroy You...!

Some kinds of attack are so devastating and severe that no Wraith can withstand them, and being dropped to zero Corpus truly does mean the end. Most of these attacks fall under the mechanic of Aggravated Damage, though some special kinds of attacks - usually by Ferrymen or the Damned - can destroy a Wraith outright.

If a Wraith is brought down to her last point of Corpus through Aggravated Damage, she will be destroyed if the final blow damage more than, or equal to, three times her remaining Corpus.

So if Robert is maimed by a weapon that does Aggravated Damage, and he has two Corpus left, his would-be killer would have to do six or more levels of damage to him in order to truly destroy him. Any less, and he will simply reform at his Anchor - provided his Shadow lets him.

Dissipation is the complete or partial evaporation of the corpus as the Wraith's physical form is rent assunder, and the Wraith travels to the nearest Anchor to Resurrect herself. In cases where the evaporation was partial, a "cocoon" is left: a hollow or hideously emaciated body that has no spiritual aspect to it whatsoever. No one is really certain why cocoons are left behind, but they can be Shaped into useful objects as surely as any Wraith, which makes the after-battle looting that much sweeter for the victors.

5.5.1 Healing.

Wraiths heal Bashing and Lethal damage in the same time as mortals, as per the rules on pg 175 of The World of Darkness. Unlike mortals, medicine and first aid will not help a Wraith. Their bodies "know" how they fit back together, and will eventually do so, but this process cannot be rushed except through use of the Shaping Numen.

Wraiths can accelerate this process by using the energy gained from their Anchors, however. Rather than using their emotional energy to fill their Essence Pool, they can replenish their Corpus instead. Details on this process can be found in Regaining Corpus from Anchors.

Wraiths can also spend Essence to instantly heal Bashing and Lethal damage to their Corpus. Wounds are seen to zip back up again, limbs reattach themselves and spilled organs slop back into the body, closing the rent behind as they go.

Healing Bashing damage in this fashion requires one Essence per Corpus regained, and Lethal requires two Essence per Corpus. This instant healing can be done while active, such as when engaged in combat, but it must be the Wraith's only action that turn. Also, the Wraith can only spend up to her Stamina in Essence per turn to instantly heal - the Corpus can only handle so much stress and shock.

Foiled You.

Given that Wraiths can't always heal damage in one go, and must not attack while instant-healing, a common tactic is to fall down "dead" that is, stunned, heal on the ground, and then get back up once one's opponent has passed.

This kind of low trick - known as "playing dead" - often works with new Wraiths or stupid brawlers, but seasoned warriors are all too aware of their bodies and how to get around their limits. This is why such Wraiths won't frown on stabbing a seemingly-prostrate opponent, and why most fights inevitably end with the victor standing over a dissipating Wraith.)

Note that Aggravated damage cannot be naturally nor instantly healed. The soul-jarring wounds caused by such damage are so serious that they can only be healed by spending Essence gleaned from an Anchor, while in the presence of that Anchor. The Wraith must spend three Essence and one dot of Willpower per dot of Corpus regained, and it takes a Scene per dot of Corpus, during which the Wraith cannot do anything physically strenuous at all.

5.5.2 Resurrection.

Most of the time, being dropped to zero Corpus need not destroy a Wraith. So long as she has Anchors that connect her to the lands of the living, and some Essence left within her, there is a good chance she can come back - a process known as Resurrection. She will have to fight her Shadow to do this, but should this inner battle - known as a Denial - be successful, she will reform by an Anchor within the hour.

When a Wraith is dissipated, she falls into a dreamlike state, much as though she had reentered her Fugue, and floats towards an Anchor. Wraiths tend to head for the nearest Anchor, but if they're more or less equidistant from more than one, they will unconsciously head for the largest one.

Most Wraiths say that they spend this "dream" reliving their death. Others are subjected to reminders of personal failure, relived tragedies and other, even more nightmarish scenarios. These are all courtesy of the Shadow, the better to prepare the Wraith for its attempt at Denial.

The dream usually lasts for no more than ten minutes, though it may feel like forever. At the end of it, the Wraith is "greeted" by her Shadow, who is seen to be standing between her and the Anchor. The specifics of the conversation that follows vary from Wraith to Wraith, but they essentially follow the same pattern: the Shadow would very much like the Wraith to just give up and die, and the Wraith - unless she has truly had enough - wants to keep going on.

Once the impasse is clearly reached, the Shadows's Denial begins. Should the Wraith succeed, she pushes past the Shadow, reforms ever so slightly - one Corpus - by her Anchor, and must either use its energies, or her own Essence, to heal herself from there. Fortunately, the exertions of the Denial are such that her Shadow is kept from harassing her at all for a day and a night.

If the Shadow succeeds, the Wraith is blocked from Resurrecting herself at that time, and must

go back into the dream until she can try again. During this time, the Wraith cannot regain Essence from her Anchors, but does not need to spend Essence to keep going.

With each subsequent successful Denial, the time the Wraith spends in the dream becomes longer, and her dice pool smaller. This cycle continues until she either succeeds, fails or gives up. A Wraith who fails or gives up ceases to exist, fulfilling her Shadow's need for silence.

<i>1st denial</i>	<i>1 hour</i>
<i>2nd denial</i>	<i>12 hours</i>
<i>3rd denial</i>	<i>A day</i>
<i>4th denial</i>	<i>Two week</i>
<i>5th denial</i>	<i>A month</i>
<i>6th denial</i>	<i>Six months</i>
<i>7th denial</i>	<i>A year</i>
<i>8th denial</i>	<i>Two years</i>
<i>9th denial</i>	<i>A decade</i>
<i>10th denial</i>	<i>A century</i>
<i>11th denial</i>	<i>A millenium</i>
<i>12th denial</i>	<i>???</i>

Cost: *1 Essence for the Wraith, 1 Tainted Essence for the Shadow*

Dice Pool: *Intelligence + Presence + Angst vs. Resolve + Composure + Eidolon*

Action: *Contested*

Dramatic Failure: *If the Wraith suffers a Dramatic Failure, she is either destroyed or instantly Damned, depending on how powerful the Shadow is.*

Success/Failure: *If the Shadow fails, the Wraith pushes past it to her Anchor, and can begin the process of Resurrection. If the Wraith fails, she is pushed back into the dream for the period of time indicated on the chart above. Once that time is passed, if she has enough Essence she can challenge the Shadow again, but loses one die from her pool per successful Denial. If she does not have any Essence remaining, she is destroyed.*

Exceptional Success: *If the Shadow scores an Exceptional Success on the roll, it gains a point of Angst for such an amazing assertion of its will. If the Wraith scores an Exceptional Success, she gets back her full Willpower for such a spectacular assertion of her desire to go on.*

5.6 Death types.

Something in me - Dark and sticky

*All the time it's getting strong
No way of dealing with this feeling
Can't go on like this too long*

Digging in the Dirt - Peter Gabriel

The first division in undead society - at least past the matter of being Asleep or Awake - is caused by the last moments of every Wraith's mortal life.

The means by which one dies mark the dead in ways that are both indelible and unquestionable. They provide Wraiths with the source of their Deathmarks, and an affiliation towards certain Numen. And they also make each Wraith stronger in one regard, yet weaker in another, as though they were caught in some kind of spectral balancing act.

Deathmarks: *Noticeable changes to a Wraith's Corpus that are a signature of the the manner of their death. These "Deathmarks" can be Shaped away, or hidden by other means, but a Wraith's "default" appearance will always have these features.*

Numen Affiliation: *Most Wraiths have a choice between two Numen to have an Affiliation with. This means that they pay less Experience to learn Arts in that Numen. They also may reroll two dice, rather than only one, for each die on a Numen roll that comes up 10.*

Advantage: *Upon dying, Wraiths get a one-dot bonus in a particular Attribute. This can take a Wraith above 5 dots.*

Disadvantage: *All Wraiths also gain a nasty reminder of their death. Sometimes these are negative Modifiers to certain rolls, and sometimes these are general conditions.*

Death Trigger: *The connection between the Wraith's current existence and the ghastly half-life of her time as a Ghost is more than just a bad memory of time lost. If the Wraith sees a particularly harsh reminder of how she died, her Shadow will take advantage of the psychic shock to attempt Catharsis. And when this happens, the Shadow may make its roll as though its Angst were 2 higher than it actually is.*

5.6.1 Violence.

Those slain by Violence are something of an angry breed, hence the nickname of "Ragers," "Red-faces" and "Bruisers." They know too well the cost of anger, and yet they are marked with an odd propensity towards it, reflecting in an increase in their strength. They also become attuned to either controlling fear in others, via the Numen of the same name, or channeling their rage and pain through the strains of Kinesis. And their anger will become all too clear if they are presented with a close reminder of how they, themselves, died, as they may slip into Shadowstate without meaning to.

Deathmarks: *The final act of violence against the person takes permanent and exaggerated form on the Wraith, forever marring her body. The "blood" from this wound continues to drip, but dissipates before it reaches the floor.*

Numen Affiliation: *Fear or Kinesis*

Advantage: *Strength +1*

Disadvantage: *May go into Shadowstate involuntarily if they get extremely angry, or have an act of extreme violence done to them, their friends or their Anchors.*

Death Trigger: *Seeing someone die like they did, unless they intentionally cause the death.*

5.6.2 Sickness/Starvation.

Those who succumbed to Sickness or Starvation are conversely granted an increase in their stamina, as if to make up for their bodies' failure. These dead are known as "Sickies" and "Plaguebearers," even if they starved to death, due to the horrid miasma of disease and sickness that surrounds them. The experience of having died in this all-too-earthly fashion lends them an affinity towards either the Bios or Embody Numen, as they have either gained an insight into the workings of the human body, or forced themselves to be for so long that Embodying now seems second nature.

Deathmarks: *The symptoms of the fatal malady are exaggerated, and permanent. Those who died from Jaundice have yellow skin, and those who died from fevers are sweaty and seem to radiate heat. Those who died from hunger or thirst are thin and gaunt, with skin stretched taut against the bone and eyes sunken deep in their sockets. They also look extremely hungry.*

Numen Affiliation: *Bios or Embody*

Advantage: *Stamina +1*

Disadvantage: *A sickly miasma of disease or look of terrible hunger causes them to lose dice from Presence and Manipulation rolls. These rolls all have a -2 modifier. Fellow sickies are not affected by this negative modifier.*

Death Trigger: *To see someone die from the same disease or condition. If the Wraith helped cause the infection, the roll is +2.*

5.6.3 Old Age.

The ones taken by Old Age are often referred to as "Elders" or "Grandparents," when they're not being derided as "Antiques" or "Old Farts." Having forced themselves to live as long as they did increases their resolve, just as having gotten so old makes them more attuned to the Bios or Decay Numen. But they also face the danger of giving up too easily, or falling into a deadly rut - leading to easier Ossification if they're not careful about it.

Deathmarks: Wraiths who died from advanced age, or some of the "natural causes" such a state of being brings about, have stark white hair and a gray tint to their skin. They also have cobwebs about their bodies, as though they were falling victim to Ossification.

Numen Affiliation: Bios or Decay

Advantage: Resolve +1

Disadvantage: May Ossify if they remain inactive for too long. All their Ossification rolls have a -2 penalty unless they were being active at the time.

Death Trigger: Seeing mortals give up to mortality and old age without a fight. If they know the mortal well, it's +1.

5.6.4 Happenstance.

Happenstance takes many a victim, and grants them an increase in their dexterity as if to make up for the whole thing. They are also granted affinities with Kinesis and Fate, which may give them a better chance the next time around. However, all "Accidents," "Whoopsies" and "Slip-Ups" are also cursed with suffering physical flashbacks to their deaths, both on important anniversaries and in eerily similar circumstances.

Deathmarks: The wounds from the accident that killed such Wraiths stay upon them. But - unlike those who died from Violence - these wounds do not bleed, burn or break, except when the Deathmark's owner suffers a flashback.

Numen Affiliation: Fate or Kinesis

Advantage: Dexterity +1

Disadvantage: Can suffer physical flashbacks to their death. Anytime she sees someone die exactly like her, pass the place of her death, or comes upon the anniversary of her death, the Wraith must roll her Resolve + Composure or spend a Scene reliving the whole thing.

Death Trigger: Seeing people die because of a stupid accident that could have been prevented. If they could have reasonably helped to prevent it, but didn't, it's at +2.

5.6.5 Insanity.

The "weirdoes" and "lunatics" who died due to their own Insanity are not often popular, even if they might have a talent for the much-needed Castigate Numina as a result of wrestling with their inner demons. This may be because they can also have a talent for the Fear Numina, instead, or perhaps because their mania followed them even unto death, in the form of a post-mortem insanity that can never be healed. The fact that their composure is raised to help counter this handicap is often lost on those who would judge them.

Deathmarks: Wraiths who died as a result of their own madness have the unblinking, glassy stare of the lunatic.

Numen Affiliation: Fear or Castigate

Advantage: Composure +1

Disadvantage: Must begin play with a mild "Derangement" that can never be fixed. Pick one from *The World of Darkness*, pp. 96 - 100: ideally, it should have something to do with how the Wraith died, though not always.

Death Trigger: Seeing people surrender to insanity, whether permanent or temporary. Unless the Wraith caused that insanity, of course.

5.6.6 Mystery.

Also unpopular are those whose deaths are a Mystery, even to them. Bereft of Deathmarks, they stand out like sore thumbs, and could develop a talent for any Numina at all - including ones that are hard to come by, or possibly even unique. Their wits have been sharpened by the uncertainties of their death, but they will need them, for they are compelled to seek out any new evidence of what may have happened. And once the mystery is solved, their proper Deathmarks appear, and they can no longer be referred to as "blanks," "enigmas" or "questions."

Deathmarks: Those who have no idea how they died are unique in that they have no physical Deathmarks whatsoever. Only when they discover what killed them will the marks manifest, if at all.

Numen Affiliation: One Common or Uncommon Numina of choice

Advantage: Wits +1

Disadvantage: These Wraiths are compelled to seek out new evidence concerning their deaths. If they find out any new evidence concerning their deaths - even a hint of it - they must make a

Resolve + Composure roll at -3 to avoid dropping everything and following that lead up.

Death Trigger: *To be harshly confronted by the fact that they don't know what happened to them.*

5.6.7 Fate.

The most unpopular Dead of all are those who died due to the hand of Fate in action - mostly because no one but the "Touched" know who one another are. The "Condemned" sport proper Deathmarks according to how they died, but the why of it revealed only to one another, in a special Deathmark only they can see. The hand of Fate upon them makes them more manipulative, perhaps because they are more attuned to how the world works, and they can have an affinity for either the Fate or Embody Numen along similar principles. But that hand can also be very controlling, and many of the "Puppets" find out that it can control them just as easily, occasionally turning them into automatons and sending them off on some unguessable errand.

Deathmarks: *Those who were Fated to die display one of the marks above, appropriate to the manner in which they left the world. However, they have another, truer mark: a strange, indescribable sigil upon their forehead that seems to change from moment to moment. This true mark is submerged, however, and visible only to others who were taken by Fate as well.*

Numen Affiliation: *Fate or Embody*

Advantage: *Manipulation +1*

Disadvantage: *The Fated run a constant risk of becoming a puppet of Fate. Anytime the Story calls for it, the character will be hijacked and made to do something. The player will not know what this is, and the other Wraiths will have to discover this on their own - provided they know anything's happened at all.*

Death Trigger: *The same trigger as however they died: those who died because of violence will have the violent trigger, and so on.*

5.7 Essence.

*Oh come with me, eh come with me
Concur and swallow me
Explode secrete your tender
Let's scream out like the sea*

The Sweetest Drop - Peter Murphy

To Wraiths, unlife is a careful balance between hope and horror - a balance maintained by the

strength and well-being of their Anchors, and kept aloft with the Essence those Anchors provide.

A Wraith who is filled with Essence feels "alive," in a sense. She is full of energy and boundless potential, and glows as though lit from within. Conversely, a Wraith who is low on it, or has none, feels the full weight of her death, and is sluggish, morose and dull-colored. There may be no actual difference between the two Wraiths, in terms of what they can do - barring a lack of Essence to fuel it - but they feel worlds apart.

Gathering and maintaining Essence, then, is of primary importance to a Wraith. She feels the need to be full of it - or at least mostly full - the same way a mortal feels the need for food and water. And while a Wraith can go without Essence, having too little of it in one's body may lead to Ossification.

5.7.1 Ways and Means.

Wraiths gain Essence from:

- *Direct Contact: Wraiths can take Essence that's given by others, or stored, by certain uses of the Shaping Numen. They can also take advantage of fields of ambient Essence, though these are sometimes rare.*
- *Anchors: Being in the proximity of one's Anchors - or that of another - gives a certain amount of Essence per hour. Access to one's own Anchors can give more options to harvest Essence, some of which are more risky than others. See Anchors for more details.*
- *Scaring the Living: Any time the dead interact with the living in such a way that the mortals know, without a doubt, that they've been haunted, the strong emotions created feed Essence to the Wraith. See Haunting for more details.*
- *Taking it from Others: Those who have the Shaping Numen are able to leach Essence - and Corpus - from other Wraiths with a touch. The Numen also provides ways to take it directly from the living, or other spiritual entities encountered in the Deadlands.*

Wraiths spend Essence to

- *Keep Going: Wraiths - ever-aware of their unnatural condition - must spend one Essence at the stroke of Midnight in order to keep going the next day. This is an automatic expenditure, and those who have no Essence at Midnight lose a point of Corpus, instead - a wound that's treated as though it were Aggravated.*
- *Fuel Numina and Affinities: Wraiths sometimes must use Essence to fuel their innate and learned powers. Sometimes the use of Numina can lead to Essence being regained See "Scaring the Living," above but more often than not it's lost in the use.*
- *Heal Quickly: Wraiths heal Bashing and Lethal damage in the same time as mortals, but can spend Essence to heal the damage to their Corpus right then and there. Also, Aggravated damage is so serious to them that it can only be healed by spending Essence gleaned from an Anchor.*

5.7.2 Going Over.

A Wraith tends to start "life" with ten dots in Anchors, but can go up to 10 plus her Permanent Willpower without danger, courtesy of the Fetterbound Art of Anchorage. This also means that a Wraith can have an Essence pool of 10 plus twice her Permanent Willpower without danger. Once this limit is breached, however, it becomes harder for a Wraith to handle her now-increased Essence pool - Corpus has its limits.

To safely absorb Essence above the danger limit, the Wraith must roll her Stamina + Composure. Each dot of Essence to be absorbed takes one dice away from this roll. Success means all Essence is absorbed, Failure means the Wraith suffers a level of Lethal damage for each dot of Essence she tried to take in. Dramatic Failure gives a level of Aggravated damage for each dot of Essence.

Example: Xavier, a powerful Wraith of The Order, has a Stamina of 4, a Composure of 3, Willpower of 7, and a total of 23 levels in Anchors. This means that his Essence Pool could go up to 30 $23 + 7$ but he can only handle 24 $10 + 7 + 7$ Essence safely. And if he's at 24 Essence, and stands to gain more, he must roll 7 dice $4 + 3$ minus one for each dot of Essence he stands to gain. As he stands to get four extra Essence, he must roll 3 dice.

5.8 Haunting.

*It is absurd asking me to behave myself...
quite absurd. I must rattle my chains,
and groan through keyholes, and walk about at night,
if that is what you mean.
It is my only reason for existing.*

The Canterville Ghost - Oscar Wilde

While any Wraith can gain Essence from Anchors, or absorbing it from other means, Wraiths can also gain Essence by haunting the living. It's quite a gamble, given that they have to spend Essence to try and gain more back. But they say that there's nothing better than the Essence gained after you scare someone so badly that they turn pale, swoon and wake up with grey hair.

Meanwhile, the Haunters say there's nothing better than frightening someone so badly that they die - horribly - right then and there. The fact that their sinister Concord does it on a regular basis, and the awful messes it leaves behind, is one of the many reasons why this behavior is frowned upon.

Still, many Wraiths reason that they were given these terrifying abilities for a reason. And needs must when the Devil - or a lack of Essence - drives...

5.8.1 Keep Out, Meatbag.

Any time a mortal has a Numen used offensively upon them, they must make a Resolve + Composure roll to avoid fleeing the area. Possible modifiers are listed below.

Whether the mortal turns around and calmly walks out of the house, or screams, wets herself and dashes far away depends on the characters, of course. But the result is the same: the strong emotional states of fear, shock, terror or horror that are generated create a buffet of energy for the Wraith to dine on.

In the meantime, the mortal will not willingly return to the location for at least a day, and if trapped, she must spend the time trying to find a way out. The Wraith is free to use other Arts on the mortal to gain Essence in this time, but once a specific Art's gained the Wraith some Essence, she can't use it to gain Essence from the same mortal for another 24 hours.

"Offensively?"

There's a lot of wiggle room around this concept, so as to not tie down Storytellers and empower Rules Lawyers. Suffice it to say that not every use of Bios is meant to scare the living, but some Numen Arts can really only be used to terrify.

However, note that the use of the Manifestation Affinity is not offensive, unless the Wraith Manifests in such a way that she cannot be mistaken for human, and then chooses to scare and/or attack the Mortal. And if the Wraith stacks her Manifestation with certain, terrifying Embody Arts, then it's fair game for a roll.

5.8.2 A Banquet of Fear.

After the mortal has rolled Resolve + Composure, compare the successes on the Wraith's Numen roll and the mortal's roll to avoid fleeing.

If the Wraith received more successes than the mortal, subtract the mortal's from the Wraith's, and pay the difference back to the Wraith in Essence. If it was a tie, the Wraith gets nothing.

On the other hand, if the mortal received more successes, she now has a +1 Modifier to her roll when dealing with that Wraith's attempts to scare her off using that Art. And if it was an Exceptional Success, the Wraith cannot hope to use that Art to scare that mortal again - the meatbag has become immune.

Cost: None

Dice Pool: The Wraith's Numen Roll vs. Mortal's Resolve + Composure

Action: Contested

Dramatic Failure: N/A

Failure: Nothing happens, and the mortal now has a +1 Modifier to her Resolve + Composure roll when that Wraith uses that Art against her in the future.

Success: *One dot of Essence is given to the Wraith per success over the mortal on the Resolve + Composure roll.*

Exceptional Success: *The Wraith not only gains a dot of Essence for each success, but also gets a point of Willpower back for the "moral" victory over the mortal.*

Possible Modifiers:

- *The mortal has a Willpower of 7 or higher: +1 for 7, +2 for 8, and so on*
- *The mortal is armed with knowledge about the Wraith, and has some idea of what to expect: +1 to +3*
- *The mortal has faced that Art from that Wraith before, and persevered: +1*
- *The mortal has been frightened by that Wraith before: -1 to -3, depending on how badly.*

5.9 Morality.

A Ghost cannot improve her Morality, and is doomed to unconsciously watch it slip slowly away over the years. Such poor creatures may end up Damned before they even know the meaning of the word.

Wraiths, on the other hand, are able to maintain, and even improve, their Morality as time goes by. However, the ravaging voice inside their heads can grow more powerful in that time as well. And the more powerful the Shadow becomes, the less a Wraith is able to raise her Morality above a certain point; A Shadow can even force a Wraith's Morality to go down a notch, if it gains enough power to overwhelm it.

The basic rule is that the extent of the Shadow's power forms an upper limit to how Moral a Wraith can be. For example, a Shadow with an Angst of 3 would keep a Wraith from ever improving her Morality past a 7. And if that Shadow's Angst grew to 4, the Wraith's Morality would be shoved back down to 6.

*Wraiths mostly follow the Morality rules on pp. 91 - 94 of *The World of Darkness*, with the following exceptions:*

- *Wraiths do not get Derangements, and any Derangements that were had at the time of death are folded inwards, to become quirks of the Wraith and aspects of the Shadow. An exception to this rule are those who died from Insanity, as they begin play with a "mild Derangement." This cannot be healed, but it cannot get any worse, either*
- *When a Wraith loses a Degeneration Roll, she loses a point of Morality as normal. Should the Wraith then lose the roll to check if she suffers a mental imbalance because of the experience, the Shadow gains a Tainted Essence-free shot at a Harrowing, just to see if it can gain a dot of Angst in the mental confusion that follows. See "Harrowings," in the Chapter on Shadows, for more information*
- *A Wraith can, with Storyteller permission, add a Modifier to her Degeneration Roll if she acts in pursuit of her Virtue unless her Shadow type is connected to her Virtue. If that's the case, then she cannot add a Modifier, even if the situation would otherwise merit one.*

6. SHADOWS.



Figure 6.1: Illus. by Taz Jurz

6.1 Shadows in General.

*Can you look outside your window
without your shadow getting in the way?*

Building a Mystery - Sarah McLachlan

Mortals have the possibility of gaining a Derangement if they lose control of their minds, or fail a Morality roll. Wraiths, on the other hand, start the game with a Derangement of sorts. And this Derangement is the Shadow.

The Shadow is every Wraith's worst nightmare. It is a sentient outgrowth of the worst, most self-destructive parts of the Wraith's persona. It starts out annoying, and gets steadily worse as time goes along: becoming more powerful, more tempting and more dangerous with each passing year.

The Shadow is a perverse extension of the Wraith's own Morality: a result of the shame, horror and/or self-disgust the Wraith feels when she goes too far in following her inner drives. The person who seeks Justice may lose control and become The Vigilante, willing to smash all sense of law and order to get revenge. Meanwhile, the Lustful person may fly into a rage when a potential partner

says "no," and become *The Violator*.

At early stages the Shadow is just a tendency towards certain kinds of behavior, but as the Wraith's Shadow grows, it becomes more and more dominant. It starts talking to her, making improper or high-minded suggestions, and altering her perceptions of reality in such a way as to get the Wraith to do what it wants. And the more the Wraith complies, the more powerful the Shadow gets

*After enough wear and tear has taken place, the Wraith lives in a mentally confused state, and is known as one of *The Lost*. Such a Wraith is beset by constant illusions, impulses and suggestions, and these persuade her to act out her Shadow's desires. Such Wraiths tend to live in a world of their own, unable to tell Shadow-spawned fantasy from reality.*

*With some outside help, or a courageous display of self-knowledge and personal resolve, a *Lost Wraith* might be able to come back. But there is a point where she will be completely lost to goodness and sanity, and will become an insane, amoral and evil thing that lives only to indulge its outrageous drives.*

*Wraiths call such monsters by the name of *The Damned*, and rightly fear - and destroy - them.*

The Book of Truth and Joy.

Untold ages ago, the Pardoners discovered an incredible thing: a collection of scrolls, written by one of the more literate of the Damned, that described with horrible detail the mindset of Shadows. The creature had called its masterwork The Book of Truth and Joy, and while the Pardoners found much truth inside its demented stanzas, they found little joy to accompany it.

While the book was written from the viewpoint of one particular Shadow Type - and debate still rages as to which one it was - its worth in understanding the "mind" of Shadows is incalculable. Everything a Pardoner needs to know about what a Shadow is, what it wants, and intriguing glimpses as to what it can and might do, are there. And Pardoners have used its teachings to anticipate or second-guess Shadows ever since.

Copies of this book are available to Pardoners, but there are few copies, and the waiting list to view it is quite extensive. It is a lucky Necropolis that has its own copy - all others must petition that city's Pardoners for permission, and they are most often turned down for purposes of security.

There is only one, complete and unexpurgated copy, other than the original scrolls. Some of the sections of the book were so spiritually destructive that any who read them went Lost, and then Damned, in short order.

After losing all the original translators, and a number of nigh-experienced veterans, to the pages of the book, the Pardoners who oversaw its transcription locked that copy away, and ordered new, less-explicit versions to be made, instead.

That single, unexpurgated copy of the book is somewhere in Italy, under constant watch. The guards are never told exactly what they're guarding for fear of their being tempted to read the proscribed sections.

6.1.1 Types of Shadows.

*I am the voice inside your head
And I control you*

Mr. Self-Destruct - Nine Inch Nails

Just as every Wraith is unique, so is every Shadow. Every soul must beat its own, individual path to Hell, or whatever nightmare lurks beyond the Barrier.

That said, there are some general "types" of Shadow, each of which operates within certain parameters. These types correspond to the recognized Virtues and Vices of an individual's Morality, and act as a deranged outgrowth of one of them. This is most often the side of the personality that the Wraith did not appreciate in life, but it can also be a dark reflection of the preferred side of her personality as well.

Death is nothing if not ironic...

The Heart's Thorn.

Each Shadow Type has a particular Thorn that is unique to that Type, and these special powers are referred to as Heart's Thorns.

Unlike other Thorns, they don't cost Tainted Essence to activate, and won't give the Shadow power over the Wraith. They instead give the Shadow a chance to get Tainted Essence directly back, even if not in Shadowstate, by offering dice to their Wraiths.

Once the Wraith's Angst is powerful enough for Thorns' physical blemishes to manifest outside of Shadowstate, the Heart's Thorn is most likely to show up first. It's not unknown for another to jump to the head of that line, though. It all depends on the Shadow, and how it views itself and the Wraith it's been shackled to.

Heart's Thorns cannot be purchased or gained by Shadows - they come with the Type, and are not interchangeable.

Certain Considerations.

A Heart's Thorn allows the Shadow to offer extra dice in certain situations, which must correspond with the goals of the Shadow's Type. One die may be offered for each dot of Angst the Shadow has, but Shadows don't have to offer over all the dice they could. How many dice are actually handed over is for the Wraith and her Shadow to discuss between them, but once the decision is made and agreed to, these tainted dice are duly given so long as the Wraith actually follows through.

Should the Wraith follow through, then the Wraith can use these dice in her next roll to do something they've agreed upon. All the dice the Shadow offered must be used at this time. And the Shadow gains a dot of Tainted Essence for each Tainted Die that comes up '10' - including any '10's scored on the re-roll - as this result affirms the Shadow's self-esteem. It's recommended that the Tainted Dice be of a different color than the rest of the dice in the roll, just to make keeping track easier.

Shared Convictions.

Heart's Thorns do offer a shared advantage, should the Wraith choose to invoke them in Shadowstate. These powers tend to affect other Wraiths in the same way the Shadow would like to affect the Wraith, herself, or else they cause other Wraiths to behave the way the Shadow would prefer them to act towards the Wraith.

When the shared aspect of the Heart's Thorn is used, the Shadow gains Tainted Essence, just as though it were a normal Thorn. She makes the appropriate roll, as listed in the rules for the Heart's Thorns, and the Shadow gets a dot of Tainted Essence whether the power works or not. These shared powers may last for a turn, a Scene, or another passage of time, depending on the Thorn.

The Best Defense.

Heart's Thorns also offer another advantage to the Wraith - that of being protected against her own tricks.

Should another Wraith with the same Shadow Type attempt to use her Heart's Thorn on the Wraith, she will detect it instantly, and may elect to go into Shadowstate to try and block it. And unlike most Shadowstates, the Wraith may enter it without needing to ask her Shadow's permission, though this gives the Shadow an automatic dot of Tainted Essence for the violation.

Once in the Shadowstate, the Wraith may roll for the Heart's Thorn, which gives the Shadow a dot of Tainted Essence as normal. Each success takes away one of the other Wraith's successes to affect her. In fact, should the Wraith's successes exceed the other Wraith's, then the effect is broken for all who would have been affected.

The Martyr (Charity).

I'll give everything I have to save you!

If charity is the noble impulse to give of yourself to others, the Martyr turns this simple kindness into a sick, self-destructive parody.

Whether it stems from feelings of worthlessness, or an unreasonable fear of one deity or another, the result is the same: a Shadow who thinks that only through extreme self-sacrifice can one be truly worthy of existence. And the Shadow constantly preaches this truth to the Wraith, hoping to get her to think much more of others than of herself, to the point where she not only neglects her own well-being, but seeks to make herself worse just to make the others better.

Those who are overcome by the touch of the Martyr often look grotesquely messianic, or else take on the appearance of a raggedy pilgrim, star-eyed ascetic or complete wretch. The pathetic strangeness of their appearance puts them at -2 in all social rolls, except those that require the onlooker or listener to feel pity.

Heart's Thorn: No Greater Love.

The power of the Martyr stems from self-sacrifice, and the Shadow can offer dice to help the Wraith perform an insane act of it. This might include such things as taking on an extremely superior foe or far too many foes to allow others to escape, or defend a Necropolis, or else bargaining as many favors as possible from a buyer while selling everything for the Wraith's favored cause.

The shared power makes others doubt their own intentions, and wonder if they, too, should lay down their lives on behalf of the Wraith. Each success on the Wraith's Presence + Angst takes away one from the Defense scores of each opponent in hand-to-hand combat range for the rest of the turn. Those who wander out of the Wraith's range get it back, until they return to it, and those who wander in lose it, until they wander out.

The Zealot (Faith).

You will see my way, dammit!

Those who are possessed of faith may believe many things, but perhaps none of their convictions are as amazing as the understanding that all things have their place in the world. No matter how wonderful or terrible, each event has meaning, and a place in the plan of God or the universe.

But those who are zealots go a step further - and a step too far - by "knowing" full well what the plan is, and seeking to see it done perfectly, and by their hand. No matter what the Truth is, there can only be one perfect version of that Truth, one path to it, and one way for it to be expressed. And there can be no questioning it, either: the Truth is the Truth, and all else is heresy, apostasy, unpatriotic, politically incorrect or flat-out evil.

The zealot Shadow is unafraid to define it in those terms, and desires only to see the Truth set on high over the broken backs of the wrong and misguided. As such, those who manifest the look of the Zealot exhibit eyes that are either wild with fiery, violent passion or frozen with cold, cruel certainty. The iron sense of their conviction makes others extremely uncomfortable around them, and puts them at -2 on all social rolls, except amongst those who share the cause - whatever it may be - or are temporarily allied to it, and in dire need of certainty.

Heart's Thorn: The Only True Course.

Just as the Zealot lives to uphold the Truth against those who would defy or question it, so does the Shadow aid the Wraith who does the upholding, and does not question it herself. Extra dice is granted in the course of illustrating, preserving or expounding upon that Truth, so long as the Wraith does not question the Shadow's interpretation of it and, more importantly, how to go about acting on its behalf

The shared power extends the Shadow's benefit to fellow crusaders for the Truth. Any who join the Wraith in her actions to uphold the Truth can gain extra dice to perform any act that furthers that goal during the Scene. The amount of dice given to the Wraith's followers is determined by rolling Presence + Angst, with each success giving each follower a die that may be used on any one roll.

The players of the followers or the ST, as the case may be can determine for themselves when these dice are used, but once used, they're gone. Note that, unlike the tainted dice handed over to the Wraith by the Shadow, no Tainted Essence is gained for a score of '10.'

The Complicated (Fortitude).

I never do anything nice and easy...

Those who exhibit the Virtue of Fortitude gain their strength from having their convictions tested, and coming out the other end the better for it. Those who are addled by the Complicated Shadow have a voice that is constantly urging them to truly test those convictions. The saying 'Keep It Short and Simple' is anathema to such a Shadow, who thinks that shortness is for the meek and craven, and simplicity is for well, simpletons, obviously.

This Shadow wants to see the Wraith constantly doing mental, physical and social gymnastics. It urges the taking of unnecessary risks, performance of ridiculously over-the-top stunts, and enacting of incredibly complex and/or hare-brained schemes in the prosecution of the Wraith's duties or trials. And it won't be happy until the Wraith's done it all, and then some, with a style and flair

that could have rivaled a Greek hero.

Such exertions may benefit the Wraith, but more often than not it only gets her the reputation for being a scenery-chewing windbag with no credibility. As befits such a belief, anyone overcome by the Complicated appears to be adventurous to the point of sheer foolishness, or cunning to the point of audacity. And they suffer a -2 to all social rolls with those who are rightfully unimpressed by such stupid risk-taking or Byzantine intrigues.

Heart's Thorn: With Panache!

Those Wraiths with a Complicated Shadow have to jump through hoops to get their extra dice - literally. This Shadow will only aid the Wraith if she agrees to do things in as complicated a manner as possible, and the Shadow has a lot of really good ideas on how to make it that way. Note that the Shadow's ideas aren't guaranteed to fail on their face: the Shadow wants the Wraith to succeed, but only so she can one day go out with a real gang, instead of a whimper.

The flip side of this is the shared ability to confound the minds of others, so that they can do nothing more than stare in gape-mouthed shock at the Wraith's actions. Those hit with the full force of With Panache! are reduced to little more than befuddled zombies, and some go as far as to applaud the Wraith who out-wits, out-dances or out-guns them.

To do this, the Player rolls Angst + whatever Attribute is most appropriate Presence, Strength, Dexterity, etc.. Each success takes away a die from the onlooker's pool to react, whether the appropriate reaction would be physical, social or mental. The effect lasts for as long as the Wraith is performing her antics, plus one turn.

The Deluded (Hope).

Someday my prince will come...

Hope is much like Fortitude, except that those who hope must inspire others not to give up. In that sense, the Deluded Shadow is a little like the Complicated one, except that where the Complicated are called to extreme action to see things done, the Deluded believe that everything will turn out okay, so they don't have to do a damn thing.

To be Deluded is to believe that not only is the entire world good and moral, but that its agents of good are everywhere, and will leap to the Wraith's rescue when things get tough. Such Shadows are always telling their Wraiths to just let things take place on their own, and not worry about it. Prince Charming and the Warrior Princess will charge over the hill on white steeds at the last moment, every time - why break a sweat in worry or effort? And they encourage the Wraith to get others to understand this as well.

The symptom of the Deluded is the look of delusion, itself. Such Wraiths seem eternally starry-eyed and helpless, bumbling around on a wing and a prayer. Such Wraiths suffer a -2 on all rolls to perceive their environment, or dangers lurking there, because they are so caught up in the delusion that others must help them that they don't care to notice much at all.

Heart's Thorn: Good Things Come.

The Shadow wants the Wraith to look after herself while others handle the problems, and offers extra dice so she can stand her ground - or hide, if need be - while waiting for the calvary.

These dice are handed over only on the understanding that the Wraith must do nothing to actively improve the current situation: evasion and hiding are amongst the activities the Shadow will support, while fighting back is not. The Wraith also gets extra dice to give an impassioned speech encouraging others to wait for aid, keep the faith or remain hopeful that they will be delivered from these trials.

The shared power of the Deluded is to project a feeling of victorious euphoria upon others. Those so affected feel that they feel they've already "won," by dint of being who and where they are now, and aren't in much shape to do anything more. Each success on a Manipulation + Angst roll takes away either one level of Defense or one die from any pool to locate, fight or deal with the Wraith in an active manner. This lasts for a Scene, and those who take the full force of the delusion tend to spend the time celebrating their "victory" instead of doing what they can to secure it.

The Vigilante (Justice).

*Nothing gets in the way of what's right.
Nothing.*

Those who hew to the Virtue of Justice believe that what is right must triumph over what is wrong, even if seeing it through causes great risk to the one who pursues that justice. The Vigilante believes in much the same thing, only this Shadow believes that all other notions of right and wrong - and the lives of others - are not as important as seeing that one wrong put right. The weight of the world rests on that one sin, however long ago, and the Shadow will see all things burn if need be.

Such Shadows always tell their Wraiths that laws and rules are for other people, and not her. She's on a mission, and anyone and anything that gets in the way is expendable, or forfeit. But each step taken towards the Shadow's desired MO puts the Wraith on a slippery slope, indeed: next stop, oblivion, preferably with the target going down for the ride, too...

Vigilantes look like machines made out of meat and bone. All traces of emotion are gone from their faces, long since burned away by the horrible deeds they've committed, and the need to get harder than before just to keep going. Those who exhibit these symptoms are at -2 on all rolls involving Empathy, and they are at -2 on all rolls to influence others with a Morality above 6.

Heart's Thorn: Righteous Anger.

The Vigilante does not want to hear the words "caution," "compassion" or "mercy" - they are anathema in relation to what drives this Shadow. It will gladly hand over dice to the Wraith so long as she acts without any of these three words getting in the way. The more she overreacts to the situation, and the more permanent the damage she stands to do, the happier the Shadow is.

The shared power extends the Shadow's benefit to those who join the Vigilante's Wraith in her quest for rough justice, so long as they, too, are overreacting. Those accompanying the Wraith gain

a certain amount of dice, which is determined by rolling Presence + Angst. Each success gives each follower either: an addition to their Defense rolls for the rest of the Combat; an addition to their Attack rolls for the rest of the combat; or dice to perform a single extreme action, done in the name of "the cause."

Note that, unlike the tainted dice handed over to the Wraith by the Shadow, no Tainted Essence is gained for a score of '10' on these extra dice.

The Coward (Prudence).

Don't do anything, just yet! Let's wait a while... yeah...

Prudence is the understanding that restraint may not provide the same huge "rewards" as risky, unethical behavior does, but it provides better ones, for the conscience is clear and the way unfettered. Cowardly Shadows take this notion to an unhealthy extreme by second, third and fourth-guessing each and every situation they get into just to make sure they're doing "the right thing."

Such Shadows tend to sprout from some long ago moment of indiscretion, or the crippling fear of having one. They are paralyzed by the spectre of making a mistake, and over-analyze all angles to any given problem. By the time they're absolutely, positively 100% sure that it's the right thing to do, then the opportunity - and the moment of truth - is often long past, and they will have done nothing at all.

Of course, they are sometimes quite right to suspect it's a trap... but no one likes the person who always cries "wolf!"

The cowardly are nervous bundles of sweat and shaky, sideways glances. They often look like they're on the verge of hysterics, since anything could go wrong at any moment, and we'll all be doomed. All proactive sorts find them to be annoying wet blankets, and they are at a -2 to try and explain their concerns to others, as it comes across as so much defeatism and paranoia.

Heart's Thorn: Doublecheck It All!

*Prudence is the watchword of the Cowardly, and it will offer its Wraith dice for any roll that involves taking extreme stock of the situation at hand. These can be used for research, investigation, perceiving the immediate area, checking up on people, or anything of the sort. The Shadow won't be happy until the Wraith is as freaked out about the possibility of *gulp!* doing something as the Shadow is, though, and if the Wraith's researches are starting to make it sound like the idea might be a good one after all, the Shadow immediately freaks out and refuses to hand over any more dice.*

The shared power makes other Wraiths feel some of the paranoia and hypersensitivity of the Shadow. The player rolls Manipulation + Angst, and each success takes away a die from another's pool to examine the situation, or make a decision as to what to do next. Those who freak out from the full effect of this power tend to collapse into a corner, shaking and quaking at the fear of making the wrong move, just now. This lasts for the rest of the Scene.

The Restrainer (Temperance).

New and different is bad, BAD, BAD.

The Temperate believe that all pleasures have their place in the greater scheme of things, and that moderation is the key to good and responsible behavior. The Shadow who Restrains its Wraith would agree with this, but is also rather narrow-minded when it comes to things that it can't vouch for yet.

As such, the Restrainer is something akin to the Cowardly Shadow, except that where the Coward doesn't want to take any risks, the Restrainer doesn't want to risk anything new, or outside its experience. Things it can already vouch for are fine, if done with moderation, but the shock of the new is too much for the Restrainer to handle. Who knows what dangers this or that might bring, and how much they may upset the balance?

The Restrainer doesn't want the Wraith to go out on any limbs while in pursuit of her goals, and admonishes her to stick by what she already knows. It will offer lots of suggestions on how to go about doing what needs done by using what they already have, or know, and don't want the Wraith to learn anything new. Who knows what that might lead to?

The Restrained look as though they are shocked - shocked! - to discover that things have changed from when they were kids, or alive, or last in town. They have the appearance of having sucked on one too many sour pickles, and turn off those who are willing to live a little. This puts them at -2 on all rolls involving their suggesting a plan or action, and gives them a -2 modifier on all rolls to understand someone else's plan if new ideas are on the table.

Heart's Thorn: Stay the Course.

The Restrainer will offer dice to the Wraith only if she sticks by tried and true methods of doing something, which is most often what the Shadow suggests. That the suggestions might be less than helpful in the long run goes without saying - the Restrainer is a Shadow, after all. And the moment the Wraith says "well, now that I think of it, maybe we should do something different," the dice stop coming.

The shared power extends the Shadow's distaste for new and changing circumstances to other Wraiths. Those who are fully affected by this look like they've blown a mental fuse, and are unable to do more than stammer as things happen around them.

The player rolls Resolve + Angst. Each success either takes away a success on another's roll to adapt to something the Wraith is doing such as a debate, or put up a fight when the Wraith steals something from her for the rest of the Scene, or else reduces the Initiative score of the Wraith's opponents, on a one for one basis, for one turn of combat.

The Jealous (Envy).

I'll take that right fucking now, thank you...

Those who are riddled with Envy are never satisfied with what they have, and are more than willing to covet - and steal - their neighbor's things, positions and lovers. However, most who suffer

from this Vice are careful enough to not get connected to the theft, or else find some perfectly legal or socially acceptable way to take what they want. The Jealous Shadow is unwilling to be subtle or sneaky about the matter: it sees something, and if it wants it, it takes it - end of story.

A Wraith with such a Shadow is always being tempted to do away with byzantine intrigues or complicated plots and plans, and just reach out and take what she wants. "Wealth is the only reality," whispers the Shadow: "Theft the only true currency, and those who cannot hold onto what they want to not deserve to have it... not like us."

The Jealous pretty much look it: shifty, desirous eyes and all. Their hands always seem one brisk movement away from being in your pocket, or around your lover, and they seem to pay too much attention to where you put your valuables. They are at -2 on all social rolls against those who have something they want, as the fact that they're spending more time looking at the pretty than the people they're talking to is clearly evident.

Heart's Thorn: All for Me

As would be expected, the Shadow makes dice available to the Wraith in the course of just stealing, taking or seducing what - or who - she wants. Plots, plans and intrigues are not acceptable uses of these dice: the Wraith must make little or no room for not being discovered in the theft though sneaking around might be a good idea, so as to get the bauble without being stopped.

The shared power, then, is the ability to cloud the desires of another to the point where the Wraith can talk her out of what she most wants, and get her to hand it over to the Wraith. Each success on an Angst + Appropriate Attribute Strength, Wits, Presence, etc. roll takes one effective die out of the Willpower pool of the person being spoken to in this manner. The effects of the power are cumulative, and once the person is down to zero effective Willpower, she will hand the thing right over without a qualm, and spend the rest of the Scene sitting in a stupor, uncaring of her loss.

The Pig (Gluttony).

More! More! More!

Of all the Shadow Types, the Pig is, perhaps, closest in viewpoint to the Wraith it belongs to. Those who are gluttons indulge themselves at any expense - including others - and don't care about anything else, so long as their gross appetites are sated. Needless to say, the Pig agrees with this epicurean viewpoint, and acts as a spiritual enabler as the Wraith explores new vistas of stuffing herself silly.

The Shadow would like nothing more than for the Wraith to wallow in her appetites like a horribly corrupt Roman Emperor, demanding everything and denying nothing. A perfect day would consist of the Wraith lying back, and not needing to lift a finger to have what she most desires brought around to her, in excess. And while being dead means that certain pleasures are more difficult to procure, the Shadow is nothing if not full of ideas on how to get it here, or bring the Wraith there.

Wraiths who exhibit the symptoms of the Pig look disgusting: they are often rolling with fat, and unsightly blemishes and warts that might indicate an STD or two. Wraiths can't catch them, of

course, but tell that to the Pig. They are -2 on all Social rolls, except when leading the willing into depravity or gluttony.

Heart's Thorn: Bacchanalia.

The Shadow knows what it wants, and knows how to get it. Extra dice will be given to the Wraith in the pursuit of their shared, gargantuan appetites, so long as the Wraith is willing to undertake a choice morsel or two on the Shadow's behalf. Lending dice to tempt others into joining at the table, or arranging for the banquet, itself, are also within the Shadow's purview.

As for the shared power, the Wraith is able to get others to join her in shared gluttony. A Contested roll is made, with the Wraith's Presence + Angst pitted against the others' Composure or Resolve whichever is most appropriate + Eidolon. Those overcome by the Wraith's persuasion must join her in whatever she's doing, and can only break free with the expenditure of 1 Willpower and a successful Morality check. If they don't succeed in this, or don't care to try and break free, they run with the Wraith on her wild spree of gluttony for an entire Scene.

The Hoarder (Greed).

I want it all, I want it now, I want it forever

The Hoarder is akin to the Jealous Shadow, but is - arguably - much worse. The Jealous suffer from envy, and steal what things they desire without restraint. However, an envious Shadow can be choosy in its desires, and pick its thefts. A Hoarder simply wants everything, even if it really doesn't need what it's taken, just to have it all.

Such a Shadow is always driving its Wraith on to take more, so as to add it to her holdings, and get bigger rooms for the holdings once the collection gets too large for them. And the Wraith must not let any of it go once it's there: if she needs to get something, she shouldn't deign to pay for it with her hard-stolen things - she should just steal it, swindle it away, or otherwise claim it as her own. And, as with the Jealous, the Wraith shouldn't take many steps to hide the theft.

Hoarders' symptoms are not physical, but spiritual: they literally exude an air of avarice and covetousness. Those who deal with them get the distinct feeling that they're after everything they have, and they would be right. This causes a -2 on all social rolls with everyone - even their fellow Hoarders, as they know their own sins far too well...

Heart's Thorn: Gimmie Gimmie Gimmie.

The Shadow wants the Wraith to take everything she sees: lock, stock and barrel. Dice will be handed over to aid in such wholesale pilfering, so long as no massive precautions are taken - other than sneaking about - and the Wraith leaves not so much as a flinder lying in the room when she's done. Saying "oh, that's too much" or "But I don't want that" is the surest way to get the Shadow to withhold its aid.

The shared power allows the Wraith to make others aid her in this demented goal through their "cooperation." The player rolls Presence/Manipulation + Angst whichever is more appropriate and

each success takes away a success on another's roll to stop the Wraith from doing what she's doing. Those who've been completely neutered by the Wraith's gleeful smile and nimble fingers often stand with their hands in the air, and remain where they are for the rest of the Scene.

The Violator (Lust).

I'm not taking "no" for an answer, tonight.

Lust is an overwhelming craving for something - or someone - that cannot be sated except by having it, again and again. Lust can sometimes end in violation, as some will not be stopped in their quest to have what they crave. For the Violator, however, violence, manipulation and force are the tools of first resort, rather than last.

Such Shadows know what they both want, and want the Wraith to go get it - now. There is nothing to be gained by delaying the inevitable, especially when every minute spent waiting could be a minute spent enjoying what they came for. Worse, it tends to egg the Wraith on to even lower depths of behavior, and tells her that they really wanted it like that, anyway.

Violators appear to be overbearing and pushy, and tend to be very single-minded about their particular desire. This might make them look like a lech or a junkie, and their leering and naked desiring puts them at -2 in all social rolls, except for those who are seeking the same thing, or happen to like that kind of approach.

Heart's Thorn: Submit.

The Shadow will give over dice to ensure that they all get what they want, no matter what it is, as long as the Wraith makes no attempt to be subtle about it. Doors should be kicked down, dealers beaten senseless and would-be "lovers" given no chance to escape.

The shared power is the ability to take another's will to resist away. Each success on a Presence/Manipulation + Angst roll takes one effective die out of the Willpower pool of the person the Wraith's fixated upon either for herself, or what she has to offer. The effects of the power are cumulative, and once the person is down to zero effective Willpower, she will let the Wraith have what she wants, and spend the rest of the Scene largely yielding to the Wraith's desires.

*** Ulp... ***

It goes without saying that this sort of Shadow's urgings might lead to some RP situations that are outright distasteful for most players. A Violator with taste for heroin is one thing, but the Violator who desires someone's Anchor, or another Wraith - especially another player's Wraith - may lead to a bad time had by all. Especially if the Heart's Thorn is employed.

On the the other hand, it may serve as a springboard for some very good and interesting stories. And maybe your Troupe doesn't mind these kinds of things? If so, who are we to tell you not to explore this facet of the game?

The best advice is to Know Your Players, and their limits. If forced sex however removed and its emotional and physical consequences are things that you and your players would rather not play around with, then don't allow a player to take this kind of Shadow - period. Either that or get her to channel the Shadow's lusts into a different, or unusual, direction.

The Primadonna (Pride).

If I don't lead, there is no dance. Period.

Pride leads a person to believe that she's right by dint of being herself, and everyone else is either with her - and thereby right - or against her, and wrong. The Primadonna believes this, also, and takes it a step further by firmly believing that the world does revolve around her.

The Shadow wants the Wraith to feel as though she's the life of the party, and the cornerstone of the society. Nothing should happen without her say-so, and no one should make a move without her approval. The Shadow has declared itself king of all it surveys, and wants the Wraith to step up to the throne, where she obviously belongs. And the Shadow will be happy to advise from right behind the throne...

Primadonnas carry themselves regally and proudly, so much so that they seem to have their nose stuck clear in the air and walk an inch above the ground. It's more in the motions that anything else, but it shows, and the sickening sense of self-importance puts them at -2 in all social rolls, all the time: no one likes a snob, and that goes double when she thinks she's in charge, too.

Heart's Thorn: It's My Party.

The Shadow is happy to fork over dice for anything that a Wraith might need to make herself the center of the circle and life of the city. Whether this is for fighting or for fun, social or physical - or even mental, as the case may be - the Shadow can be counted on to help out. However, the Wraith must never listen to others, or take advice from anyone, because she is always right and needs no such aid from anyone.

The shared power gives the Wraith the ability to make others fawn over her, and hang on her every word. Each success on Presence/Manipulation + Angst takes away a die from their rolls to see her for the cad she is, and those who are really besotted by her will just follow her around for ages, like a wagon train of yes-wraiths. Sad, really.

The Lump (Sloth).

*I just wanna sleep... just let me sleep... *snore**

Those who are slothful tend to be lazy, and want others to do everything for them, allowing them to skate through life - or death - with minimal effort. The Lump goes beyond this by asking why the Wraith should do anything at all. If this Shadow had its way, the Wraith would just lie there and let it all happen around her.

This Shadow doesn't believe that anything could be more important than sleeping - or trying to, at any rate - and wonders why the Wraith even bothers to get up and out of her digs in the morning. What's the point? Death is an exercise in futility that can be handed by other people. What could be more important than doing nothing at all?

Wraiths who bear the symptoms of the Lump seem... well, sleepwalking for want of a better word, and maybe they are. Their eyes are barely open, and they move as though their next action is going to be to collapse onto the nearest flat surface, stretch out and catch a nap. They suffer a -2 to all rolls to react to changing situations, which includes Initiative in the case of combat.

Heart's Thorn: *Yawn*

The Shadow doesn't want the Wraith to do anything, but recognizes that things need to be done. So it will fork over dice to help the Wraith influence other people to do things for her, or else do what needs doing without her. This "influence" could be a social roll of some kind, or a Numina of one stripe or another. Under no circumstances will the Shadow give the Wraith aid to actually do anything physically, though - not even to save time later.

Their shared power is the ability to make others fall into a stumbling stupor, as though they had Lumps for Shadows, themselves. The player rolls Presence + Angst, and each success takes a die away from the pools of other Wraiths to do anything against, to, or around the Wraith. Those who are completely gobsmacked by this shared power tend to drop everything, curl up into a comfortable ball and have a "cat nap" on the floor.

The Rager (Wrath).

You're all gonna pay for this! Everyone!

The Vice of Wrath sees a person possessed by the urge to take her frustrations out on everyone, and everything, that looks at her funny. Folks ruled by this Vice smack their televisions when the signal goes bad, and smack other people when they get uppity with them. Where this differs from the Rager is that, rather than waiting for something to go wrong, this Shadow has so much pent-up wrath that it wants to take it out on those nearby with little or no provocation. And once it gets going, it won't stop until the rage is gone, which may be several broken bodies later...

These Shadows are the sort of thing they write "X-rage" articles about: road rage, air rage, sports rage... you name it, they're a cause of it. That's because Ragers want their Wraiths to take their pain, anger and hurt out on others. One little thing goes wrong and everyone nearby may pay the price for this transgression. And even if nothing went wrong just then, there's always an excuse: someone "looking at me funny" is enough to get a fist flying into their face.

Worse still is the Rager who has a legitimate gripe. The act of revenge will not only claim the person who did the deed, but anyone and everyone connect to them: friends, family and people who were just nearby at the wrong moment will suffer for this Wraith's pain. It's a frightening thing to see a Shadow like this at work, and a constant job to keep it under control - provided the Wraith cares to.

Ragers look, and act, angry: their eyes burn with impending violence, and their movements are shaky and over-exaggerated, as though they might lose their shit and start swinging at any second. They are also very poor judges of others' character, since all they can see is hate. Those who have this symptom suffer a -2 to all Empathy rolls, and a -2 on all social rolls, except in dealing with those who are ready to break some heads, themselves as long as it isn't the Rager's Wraith they're after

Heart's Thorn: All Will Suffer. *The Shadow is all about dealing pain and suffering to those who cause it unto the Wraith, no matter how slightly. It will hand over dice to see this done, so long as the Wraith's reaction is massively past the bounds of legitimate response. The Shadow won't hear any pussy-eating bullshit about 'backing off' or 'taking a breather,' either - one whimper of regret, remorse or concern and the gravy train stops cold.*

The shared power is the ability to stir up an angry mob. Any who join the Wraith in her frenzy of destruction can gain extra dice to perform any act that furthers that destruction during the Scene. The amount of dice given to the Wraith's comrades in hate is determined by rolling Presence + Angst, with each success giving each accompanying person a die that may be used on any one roll.

The players of the other Wraiths or the ST, as the case may be can determine for themselves when these dice are used, but once used, they're gone. Note that, unlike the tainted dice handed over to the Wraith by the Shadow, no Tainted Essence is gained for a score of '10.'

6.2 Angs and Tainted Essence.

*Give me life
Give me pain
Give me myself again*

Little Earthquakes - Tori Amos

6.2.1 Angst.

Angst is the permanent power of the Shadow. The more Angst a Shadow has, the more powers it can offer a Wraith in Shadowstate, and the more dice it can offer a Wraith to "help" on a roll, via the Heart's Thorn.

Also, the amount of Angst forms an upper cap on how high a Wraith's Morality can go. Should a Wraith's Angst ever reach 10, the Wraith becomes one of the Damned, and is no longer a playable character.

6.2.2 Collecting Angst.

Angst can usually only be gained by a Shadow's succeeding in a Harrowing, as detailed in "Harowings," under Dirty Tricks.

6.2.3 Using Angst.

A Shadow's level of Angst is an indication of:

- *How many Thorns a Shadow may have active at once under normal circumstances. A Shadow with two or fewer dots of Angst may have one Thorn active, a Shadow with three may have two Thorns active, a Shadow with four may have three, and so on.*
- *How many Thorns a Shadow may have active during Shadowstate. When the Shadow and Wraith have agreed to pool their efforts, one Thorn may be offered per dot of Angst.*
- *How many Dice the Shadow can offer while using the Heart's Thorn. Each dot of Angst allows for one Die to be offered, up to a limit of nine per roll.*
- *How many Tainted Essence the Shadow can spend to negatively modify the Wraith's Ossification roll.*
- *If the physical symptoms of Thorns are present or not. Once a Wraith reaches four Angst, a Thorn's symptom - most often the Heart's Thorn - manifests. At five Angst, two Thorns' symptoms appear, three symptoms appear at six Angst, and so on. If the Wraith has any Eidolon, each dot is subtracted from the Shadow's Angst when making this determination, delaying the inevitable manifestation of the Wraith's growing inner darkness.*

6.2.4 Tainted Essence.

If Essence is the free-floating power Wraiths gather from their Anchors, or what they can skim or siphon from the Living, and other Wraiths, then Tainted Essence is its darker opposite. This is the power the Shadow collects for Itself, as the Wraith goes about her business. And it is the bane of every Wraith who values both her sanity and her continued existence.

Shadows cannot have as much Tainted Essence as Wraiths have Essence: their potential pool starts out at ten, and can go no higher or lower. Any time a Shadow would stand to gain so much Tainted Essence that they would go above ten, the extra energy bleeds off uselessly, taking the form of wisps of dark energy that can only be seen by those sensitive to such things.

If a Shadow's Tainted Essence ever goes past a Wraith's Morality, the Shadow has a chance to trade it all in for a dot of Angst, via a Harrowing. This has the effect of lowering the Wraith's moral ceiling, possibly even knocking away a dot of Morality. And this, in turn makes it that much easier for a Shadow to get another dot of Angst, and so on.

Collecting Tainted Essence.

Shadows cannot collect Tainted Essence the same way that Wraiths collect regular Essence. Instead, they have to gain it by tricking their Wraiths into giving it to them, one dot at a time. It's slow going, but there is a point where the Shadow can have the Wraith eating out of Its hand, and once that point is reached it's often straight downhill from there.

To gain Tainted Essence, Shadows must:

- *Agree to enter Shadowstate with the Wraith, offering the Shared power of its Thorns to be used at the Wraith's behest. When a Thorn's power is thusly used in Shadowstate, one Tainted Essence is gained, regardless as to whether the roll to activate it is a success or not. In addition, if that roll is an Exceptional Success, then one Tainted Essence is gained for each success past the first. And if the Shadowstate should be extended, the Shadow gains an additional dot of Tainted Essence for each Scene past the first.*
- *Use the Heart's Thorn on the Wraith's behalf, outside of Shadowstate. This Thorn allows the Shadow to offer extra dice to a Wraith for certain rolls, and any time one of those dice comes up '10' on a roll, a dot of Tainted Essence is gained. Note that the Shared power of the Heart's Thorn acts like a normal Thorn - a dot of Tainted Essence is gained every time it's used*
- *Get the Wraith to feel the Virtue or Vice that goes with that Shadow's Type to the point that the Wraith either feels it extremely, or acts on it without hesitation. Should that happen, the Shadow can roll one die for every dot of Angst it has, and each success gives a point of Tainted Essence.*

Spending Tainted Essence.

Tainted Essence can be spent to do things as well, though a few of these expenditures give the Shadow a chance to win it back.

Shadows can spend Tainted Essence to:

- *Fuel the Shadow's powers, which are known as Thorns. Most Thorns require one point of Tainted Essence to activate, but some require more than one, and others require that extra points be spent to keep the effect going.*
- *Fuel the Wraith's Numina, or heal damage, as though it were regular Essence, should the Wraith ask for help. In this case, the Tainted Essence is spent, but the Shadow can try to win it back with interest by rolling one die per Tainted Essence given over. One success gives the Shadow back all the Tainted Essence it let the Wraith borrow, and each success past the first gives an additional point.*
- *Negatively affect the Wraith's Ossification roll. Each dot of Tainted Essence spent takes away one die.*
- *Attempt Catharsis or Dissolution, as detailed respectively under Dirty Tricks.*
- *Try to gain a new dot of Angst, as detailed in "Harrowings," under Dirty Tricks.*

6.3 Thorns.

*In the end you will submit
It's got to hurt a little bit*

Perfect Kiss - New Order

Thorns are the powers that the Shadow can use against the Wraith, mostly to get her to see things the Shadow's way. These can be used in carrot-and-stick fashion, but more often they're used to trick the Wraith, alienate her from others, or get her to do things the Shadow wants her to do. Even a clumsy application of these powers can soon have the Wraith eating out of the Shadow's hand, but the truly masterful use of Thorns is a scary thing indeed.

That said, it is possible for the Wraith to reap some benefit from its darker half's bag of tricks. While in Shadowstate, the Shadow can allow the Wraith to use some of its powers against others. These Shared Powers are usually the same trick that the Thorn would do against the Shadow, but not always.

6.3.1 Using Thorns.

Under normal circumstances, a Shadow doesn't have to roll in order for a Thorn to work. The Thorn activates once the Shadow pays the Tainted Essence required, and stays on either for a scene or for however long it takes for the Thorn to take effect. Once the time runs out, the Shadow can continue the Thorn's effects by paying Tainted Essence, again, or choose to let it go away.

Extended Play.

Shadows may attempt to radically increase the time period of a Thorn. This requires a roll, and costs more Tainted Essence to attempt, but if it works the Shadow can delude, confuse and alienate the Wraith for much longer than normal. This goes a long way towards the Shadow's goal of getting its Wraith Lost.

In order to do this, the Shadow decides what it wants to have the Thorn do, and spends three times the normal cost to activate the power. It then rolls Permanent Willpower + Angst against the Wraith's Permanent Willpower + Eidolon in a Contested Roll. Each Success scored over Wraith's total keeps the Thorn active for a day and a night, doubled with each success after the first. An Exceptional Success keeps the Thorn going for a lunar month.

Cost: 3X normal for the Thorn

Dice Pool: Resolve + Composure + Angst vs. Resolve + Composure + Eidolon

Action: Contested

Dramatic Failure: N/A

Success/Failure:

If the Shadow fails, nothing happens - the Thorn doesn't even go off as normal, and it has wasted its Tainted Essence

If the Wraith fails, the Shadow succeeds and the Thorn is active for a day and a night for the first success, doubled for each success thereafter (One success = one day & night, Two successes = two days & nights, Three successes = four days & nights, et).

Exceptional Success:

An exceptional success for the Shadow gets the Thorn going for lunar month.

Symptoms.

*I am a brother to dragons
and a companion to owls.
My skin is black upon me,
and my bones are burned with heat.*

Job, 30:29-30

The darkness within the Wraith shows up when the Shadow is brought to the fore in Shadowstate, and begins to appear once the Shadow grows in power. These manifestations of the Shadow's abilities are known as Symptoms, and Wraiths are terrified of them showing, as they not only attract harsh treatment from Pardoners, but make other Wraiths less likely to be friendly to them. They also cause problems in their own way by making some things more difficult for the Wraith, due to the deformity or unpleasant aura they create.

Whenever a Wraith enters Shadowstate, the Symptoms of all her Thorns show up, even if the Shadow hasn't made them all available for use. There is no way for a Wraith to hide them, either - it's all part of the deal when you clasp hands with your Shadow.

Thorns also begin to show up when the Shadow is strong enough. Once Angst reaches four, a Symptom appears right on the Wraith - usually the Heart's Thorn - and a new Symptom appears for each new dot of Angst gained thereafter. The Wraith can spend a dot of Willpower to cover up one, and only one, Symptom for a Scene, along with its modifiers.

Note that the possession of the Eidolon background delays this, negating a dot of Angst for each dot of Eidolon the Wraith possesses. However, no amount of Eidolon will hide Symptoms while in Shadowstate.

Stacking Symptoms.

Having the Symptoms for all your Wraith's Thorns be clearly visible can be a real drag at times, to put it lightly. This not only has the effect of making the Wraith look utterly monstrous and terrible, but seriously impedes any attempts to be friendly with others, or receive kind overtures from strangers, much less allies.

Players may wonder if certain Modifiers would be lessened, or removed altogether, by other Modifiers. The general answer is no: the losses are supposed to be cumulative. Thorns are nothing to laugh at, and the hideous nature of what they do should be emphasized.

However, Storytellers are free to wheel and deal with their players if they feel the penalties are too harsh. For example, the losses to social rolls can be taken in average, or the losses restricted to the Symptom that takes away the most dice.

6.4 List of Thorns.

*Some people say I lie to you
If I do, it is like the Storyteller lies
As he hides reality in order to reveal it
So do I lie to show you the truth*

The Book of Truth and Joy - Anon.

The following are general dark powers that Shadows have access to. They can begin the game with any of the ones here at least, any that the player can afford to buy and can purchase them later, with Shadow Experience.

Note that this is just a sampling of the more common ones that Wraiths have observed, over time. There may be dozens, or even hundreds more. Not even the Pardoners have been able to catalog all the different ways that Shadows can trick or harm their owners.

6.4.1 Thorns.

At the very least, the entries for Thorns will include the name of the Thorn, the cost to buy it at Character Creation, what it does - both against, and "for," the Wraith - and the Symptom it produces.

Unless stated otherwise, all Thorns require one Tainted Essence to use against the Wraith, and give the Shadow one Tainted Essence when used for the Wraith, in Shadowstate.

Note that the Heart's Thorns, and their rules, are presented with the Shadow Types, here. These powers come for free with each Shadow, and cannot be purchased by other Wraiths' Shadows.

Also note that, unless specifically mentioned, Wraiths cannot use Shared Powers on the Damned, or Dark Walkers. Something about these creatures' own, special powers negates the Shadow's abilities.

Speak Evil (3)

This Thorn forces the Wraith to say something against her will. As a general rule, it can be no longer than what it would take a single, moderate breath to say. These things are usually hateful and spiteful, but often have a faint ring of unintended truth.

Shared Power: The Wraith's Shadow floods her mouth with negative energy, and they can focus that power into a deadly scream. Roll Presence + Angst, and all Wraiths within ten feet of her front and sides take a level of lethal damage per success to hear the soul-shattering scream. Decrease damage by one die for every foot past ten

Symptom: The Wraith's mouth becomes hideously ugly, to the point where no one likes to watch her speak. Possibilities include distended and/or discolored lips, missing lips, jagged and discolored teeth, rotten gums dripping blood, ichor or pus, etc. All friendly Social Rolls are at -2 dice due to this handicap.

See Evil (3) *Can be Taken Twice*

Shadows are able to selectively edit a Wraith's senses, and this Thorn is often the first one taken towards that goal. This Thorn can also be purchased twice, with the second level giving the Shadow a new twist on the power.

For each application of the first level's power, the Wraith cannot see one thing. It could be as simple as an incriminating piece of evidence, the identity of someone, or even a person, or other Wraith though that person's actions will show up, causing confusion. There is no size limit to the thing not seen, and Shadows can disappear entire buildings or landscapes. However, the item to be masked must be a singularity: Shadows cannot mask over an army, a gang of Freewraiths or a pack of the Damned.

At the second level of the Thorn, the Shadow can elect to edit the thing seen, rather than make it disappear altogether. A sick junkie on death's door will appear to be in the prime of health, a cat will look like a dog, a person will seem to be slightly angry to see the Wraith, rather than very pleased, etc. This application "keeps time" with the object so altered, so that the illusion is complete, but the aspects cannot be changed again without spending more Tainted Essence. However, the Shadow cannot create things out of thin air - only alter them.

Note that both levels of this Thorn will work on Anchors, which makes it very dangerous. In this case, it can be used in tandem with the Anchorsense Affinity, showing things to be "fine" or "bad" for an Anchor, even from far away.

Shared Power: At the first level of this Thorn, the Wraith can edit her own appearance in the sight of others, making a small and weak Wraith look immensely powerful, making her hands appear to have grown huge guns via Shaping, or making her appear to be a Dark Walker. The effect is very realistic, and each success on a Manipulation + Angst roll gives the Wraith a die to put towards a subsequent Social roll such as Intimidation.

At the second level, the Wraith can make herself - or something she has on her person - disappear from the sight of others. Each success on a Manipulation + Angst roll takes a die away from

onlookers attempts to find the Wraith, or whatever she's hidden from sight.

Symptom: Wraiths with this Thorn have very ugly and creepy eyes: bulging, beetling, sunken, discolored, goo-dripping, "blind" or perhaps entirely "absent," leaving only worm-ridden, sore pits. The Wraith is at -1 on Social Rolls for the first level of the Thorn, and at -2 for the second.

Hear Evil(3) * Can be Taken Twice*

A worthy companion to See Evil, this Thorn allows a Shadow to selectively edit a Wraith's hearing. It can also be purchased twice, with the second level giving the Shadow a new twist on the power.

For each application of the first level's power, the Wraith cannot hear one thing. It could be a cry to duck, or for help. It could also be a tiny detail of an important order, or a lover's last goodbye. An entire conversation could be mooted using this Thorn, however the voice - or noise - must come from one source. The Shadow cannot mask out the shouted approval of an entire group of people, merely one individual amongst the crowd.

At the second level of the Thorn, the Shadow can edit what is heard, rather than make it fall on a deaf ear. A speech of praise is turned into an angry denunciation, and vice versa, and one word can be substituted for another in an entire conversation. This application of the power "keeps time" with the source of the sound, so that there are no gaps in the illusion. However, the aspects cannot be changed again without spending more Tainted Essence, and as with See Evil the Shadow cannot create noises out of nowhere.

Both levels of this Thorn will work on Anchors, and can be used in tandem with the Anchorsense Affinity.

Shared Power: At the first level of this Thorn, the Wraith can edit what others hear. A cry to attack will sound like "Retreat!" instead, and cries of "leave him alone!" become "kill him!" Each success on a Manipulation + Angst roll takes away a die from the affected's ability to detect the ruse.

At the second level, the Wraith can make herself - or something she has on her person - completely silent. Each success on a Manipulation + Angst roll takes a die away from onlookers attempts to hear her sneaking up on them, or going past them.

Symptom: Wraiths with this Thorn have grotesque ears: twisted, long, animalistic, uneven, or just not there at all. The Wraith is at -1 on Social Rolls for the first level of the Thorn, and at -2 for the second.

Alternate Reality (5)

This Thorn only comes into its own when a Shadow succeeds in Catharsis, but it is a very powerful tool for the Shadow. Normally, when this happens, the Wraith falls into a coma, and is aware only of being disconnected from her senses. With this Thorn, however, the Wraith is entirely unaware that Catharsis has happened, and is instead presented with a realtime simulation of what's "happening."

This Thorn costs three Tainted Essence to start, and lasts as long as the Catharsis does. While it's active, the Wraith is fed a distorted picture of reality, but one that looks and feels so real that she can't doubt what she's experiencing unless the Shadow goes too far, or forgets something.

Shared Power: When used in conjunction with a Wraith in Shadowstate, they are able to take control over another Wraith's senses. A successful Manipulation + Angst roll fools a single Wraith into seeing, hearing and sensing what the Wraith wants her to.

Wraiths aren't often as adept at micro-managing another's senses, though. If the Storyteller feels that the deception has stretched the point of credibility, the other Wraith can roll her Intelligence + Eidolon in a contested roll against the successes of the activation roll. If the victim meets or exceeds the number of successes rolled to start the Shared Power off, the effect crumbles, and she not only sees reality as it is, but understands what went on while she was "under."

A single application of this power gives the Shadow two Tainted Essence, and lasts for a Scene, unless interrupted.

Symptom: Some people just look insincere, as though their inability to tell the truth - or see the world as it really is - was warping their appearance. The Wraith who manifests the Symptoms for this Thorn has the seedy, distrustful look of a cosmic used car salesman, and has severe problems being taken seriously. The Wraith is -3 on all Social Rolls to convince others of the truth of her statements, or get them to go along on a plan.

Worse, even those who know the Wraith is telling the truth have a hard time making the "facts" match with what the Wraith says. All attempts for them to remember what happened as the afflicted Wraith retells it are at -2, because the field of disbelief and confusion is so strong. Their own versions of "what happened" may even vary greatly between themselves...

Anorexia / Bulimia (3)

Makes wraith think she's too fat or too thin.

Shared Power: Adds dice to defense fat armor or thin speed.

Symptom: Looks stick-insect thin or morbidly obese, losing dice from Social Rolls.

Bad Penny (3)

Pulls an object out of a bad memory of the Wraith and taunts her with it, breaking her concentration at key moments.

Shared Power: Lets the wraith do it to others, subtracting dice from their rolls.

Symptom: The object floats around the wraith, and can be heard to say telltale hints about the bad memory, causing unfavorable attention and/or embarrassment.

Bully (3)

Shadow can force the Wraith to take one single action she doesn't want to do.

Shared Power: Adds to all social rolls in which the wraith's trying to scare or bully people.

Symptom: Takes dice away from friendly social rolls because the wraith looks so darn mean.

Dark Manacles (3)

Takes away a Wraith's action.

Shared Power: Allows the Wraith to get an extra action.

Symptom: Wraith seems to be wrapped in black, inky chains that restrict her movements, lowering her Dexterity pool.

Fumblefingers (3)

Takes 3 dice from Dexterity rolls to manipulate things, aim, etc.

Shared Power: Either adds dice to melee attacks, or adds to Defense, due to whipping around in combat.

Symptom: Long, rubbery arms that reduce Social Rolls due to how silly the Wraith looks.

Ill-Starred (3)

Negates one success per Tainted Essence spent, prior to the roll.

Shared Power: Lets the wraith face off against others in a Contested Roll, removing successes from their rolls prior to the roll.

Symptom: Things go subtly wrong around the wraith, removing one success from all rolls made, whether to help her or not. Rolls made to harm her are unaffected.

Bile (4)

Gets wraith too angry for her own good, and makes her vocalize it for an entire Scene.

Shared Power: Can deliver "poison" by a bite attack.

Symptom: Fangs, and the Wraith looks as though black, poisoned blood runs under her skin through raised, grotesque veins.

Brute (4)

Crashes into people and things, if running, as though larger than she is -3 dice.

Shared Power: Adds dice to defense armor and/or Strength rolls

Symptom: Look really big and hulking, scaring others away

Face Dancing (4)

Makes the wraith look hideous to others, or appear to be someone entirely different than who she says she is.

Shared Power: Lets the wraith change appearance so convincingly that even Shaping and Soul-sight cannot detect duplication.

Symptom: Wraith's face warps out of shape constantly, both revealing her true feelings for others and making her look hideous.

Plagued (4)

Gives Tainted Essence to any Wraith she touches.

Shared Power: Forces other Shadows to use their Thorns in the Wraith's favor.

Symptom: Hands drip with clear, gooey slime, making Dexterity rolls more difficult.

Soul Armor (4)

Makes it harder for the wraith to gain Essence from others' emotions.

Shared Power: Gives the wraith two more defense.

Symptom: Makes the wraith's skin look knotted and lumpy.

Voice of the Damned (4)

Can call the Damned out to play against the Wraith.

Shared Power: Can summon up the Damned to attack, though control is not always assured.

Symptom: Talk comes from the wraith in black, miasmal breath, dropping dice from social rolls.

Bad Reputation (5)

Shadow can gain Tainted Essence every time someone remembers the Wraith unfavorably.

Shared Power: Sucks Tainted Essence away from other Wraiths' Shadows and turns it into Essence for the Wraith to use

Symptom: Makes all Wraiths who see the Wraith "remember" all the bad things the Wraith ever did, even if they aren't real, or didn't happen quite that way.

Castigator's Shield (5)

The Shadow can use this to partially shield itself from the gaze of Soulsight or Castigation, making it harder to see the Shadow for what it is.

Shared Power: The Wraith can hide from the Damned in plain sight but not Dark Walkers

Symptom: The Wraith's attractiveness is in constant flux, making her more attractive at some times, and less so at others. Worse, it often has a way of attracting the "wrong" people, and turning away the "right" ones - often at the same time.

6.5 Shadowstate.

*And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me,
and I did eat.*

Genesis 3:13

All Wraiths are capable of making a Faustian bargain with their Shadows: asking their darker halves to allow them use if not exact control of the same powers - or variants thereof - that the Shadows, in turn, use against them. This might not seem to be that great of a bargain, especially when one considers the cost, but there are times when having that little extra trick up one's sleeve can make all the difference in the world.

If the Shadow agrees, then it and the Wraith enter "Shadowstate," whereby the Wraith brings her Shadow up to the fore and uses some of its powers as she will. And doing this not only makes the Wraith look the worse for it, as the Thorns' symptoms will appear, but it also strengthens the Shadow each time these dark powers are used.

Pardoners often warn their flocks not to engage in Shadowstate all that often. But the fact that Pardoners, themselves, seem to use it quite often tends to take the bite out of such prohibitions. And their claims that they can handle it - thanks to their own, unique skills - sounds an awful lot like a two pack a day parent lecturing their children about not smoking.

6.5.1 Starting Downwards.

To enter Shadowstate, all the Wraith has to do is either ask the Shadow for its "help," or agree to the Shadow's offering of the same. This is not a sure-fire thing, though: just because the Shadow offers doesn't mean the Wraith has to agree, and just because the Wraith asks doesn't mean the Shadow has to relent. Either side can withhold cooperation altogether, and try to use it as a bargaining chip, and in fact most smart Shadows do.

Such Shadows demand that the Wraith agree to certain terms in exchange for the service. Often times, they will ask for things to be done while in this particular Shadowstate, but others are willing to leave a debt hanging, and expect it to be handled in the meantime. And if the Wraith doesn't

follow through, then the Shadow might just leave the Wraith to her own, hobbled devices the next time she needs Its aid. It might arrange for some very bad things to happen, too, just to teach that creep who's the boss

"And What Thorns Would Madame Care For...?"

Wraiths don't tend to know what their Shadows can do, and their Shadows don't like to admit it, for obvious reasons. While there's something to be said about letting your Wraith know you can mess with their eyes, as it has them running around in circles wondering if they can trust anything they see, they may also learn to be wary, and tell their Pardoner if they suspect anything odd. And that just won't do.

That's why crafty Shadows tend to couch their offers of aid in as bland or cautious of terms as possible, and don't give their Wraiths direct control over the Thorns at all. They don't tend to say "Hey, I can make all those guys over there see, or not see, any one thing I choose, which includes you," but instead "I can blind them for you," or, better yet, "I can distract them."

All the Wraith has to do, then, is 'point and shoot,' while the Shadow handles the small details, and relishes a measure of Tainted Essence for its pains. In fact, it's a lot like using a handgun: you don't have to understand how it all works to know that if it's loaded, and you aim it correctly, pulling the trigger hurts someone.

That the gun, in this case, also aims a spiritual bullet back at the user's soul is a point that all too often falls on deaf ears...

6.5.2 Shadowstate Mechanics.

No roll is needed to enter Shadowstate. All that is required is the commitment of both parties - usually - and Shadowstate begins. It then lasts for the entirety of a Scene, or until the Shadow decides to pull out.

When in Shadowstate, the Wraith's appearance will change to reflect the Thorns she has, even if the Thorns aren't all being used at the time. Whether the change is gross or subtle depends on the Thorn in question, but all modifiers are in effect. This exhibition cannot be covered up at all, and has the unfortunate side-effect of making the Wraith appear to be Lost, or possibly even Damned if the Thorns are bad enough.

For each dot of Angst the Shadow has, one Thorn can be committed to the Wraith's benefit for the duration of the Scene. If the Wraith only has one dot of Angst, the Shadow usually prefers to use the Heart's Thorn. That doesn't mean the Wraith can't ask to have another one used, or that the Shadow can't suggest another.

Usually, a Shadow's use of Thorns requires the expenditure of Tainted Essence. However, each time a Thorn is used in Shadowstate, one Tainted Essence is gained, regardless as to whether the roll to activate it is a success or not. In addition, if that roll is an Exceptional Success, then one Tainted Essence is gained for each success past the first.

While in Shadowstate, a Shadow cannot use its Thorns against the Wraith, and cannot attempt Dissolution or a Harrowing until Shadowstate ends. It can, however, attempt Catharsis, and does so as though its Angst were 3 higher than normal. It can only attempt to do this once per Shadowstate, no matter how many Scenes it is extended for.

Any Extended Thorns are still in effect, but the Shadow cannot alter them in any way: if the circumstances change, and the Wraith figures out that something is just not right, then too bad for the Shadow. However, with all else that's going on, it's not very likely that your average Wraith is going to have the time to figure that out.

Shadowstate is supposed to last for a Scene, but it can be extended out, one new Scene at a time. As before, this has to be agreed upon by both the Wraith and her Shadow. However, unlike the first Scene, this extension gives the Shadow one Tainted Essence per extra Scene agreed to.

Also note that, as previously mentioned, the Shadow can stop the Shadowstate any time it cares to. This is most often done if the Wraith reneges on her promises, but sometimes Shadows just like to see their "better" halves squirm under extreme duress, or see a golden opportunity to have them done away with once and for all. Crafty Shadows claim there was some kind of outside interference - and sometimes they're not lying, either...

6.6 Dirty Tricks.

*I am here to be your friend
Why else would I make you feel small?
I am here to show you the truth
And in the end you will love me*

The Book of Truth and Joy - Anon.

Besides Thorns - and the Heart's Thorn - Shadows have other, harsher powers that they can bring to bear against the Wraiths they're shackled to.

Unlike Thorns, there is no benefit to be had to the Wraith from these abilities. These dark tools are for the Shadows' use only, and bring only pain, ruin and decay to Wraiths. Smart Shadows use them very carefully and sparingly, given their tendency to backfire, but the right gamble at the right time often pays off in harsh dividends.

6.6.1 Catharsis.

*I know what is best for you
I have always known these things
That's why I've pulled your strings, tonight
You must learn to listen to me*

The Book of Truth and Joy - Anon.

The Shadow doesn't just have to rely on tricks, trade and being a nag in the backseat. It can, with luck - or proper timing - take over the body it shares with the Wraith. This state of being,

known as Catharsis, isn't easy for a Shadow to pull off. That doesn't stop them from trying, though.

In order to enter Catharsis, the Shadow must spend a three dots of Tainted Essence, and roll its Angst against the Wraith's Resolve + Composure + Eidolon. Success means that the Wraith slips into a coma of sorts while the Shadow takes over the body for a Scene per success scored over the Wraith's successes. Failure means nothing happened at all.

While in charge of the body, the Shadow can do anything the Wraith can do. It moves the body, speaks with the Wraith's voice and appears perfectly normal. It can spend the Wraith's Willpower and Essence, and gain them both back, and it can use her Numina and Advantages as well. It cannot, however, use its Thorns, spend Tainted Essence to fuel Numina or heal, or attempt Dissolution or a Harrowing, for that matter.

Taking Over Easier.

Under normal circumstances, the Shadow doesn't have a very good chance of succeeding against the Wraith. These chances are lessened even more by the Wraith's possessing the Eidolon Background.

However, there are some circumstances when the roll is much easier, and Wraiths need to be very careful of them:

- **Shadowstate:** When in Shadowstate, the Shadow can make the roll as though its Angst were three higher than it is. It may only try this once per Shadowstate.
- **Death Triggers:** All Death Types have a specific "Trigger" that cuts through the Wraith, right to the core of her being, and gives the Shadow a slightly better chance to take over. In these cases the Shadow can make the roll as though its Angst were two higher than it is. It may only try with this increased chance once per day, even if the Wraith encounters Trigger after Trigger.
- **Various Modifiers:** The Storyteller may decide that something the Wraith does makes her especially susceptible to Catharsis, just then. This might be anything from giving into the Shadow's ideas a little too readily, or going dangerously close to the Shadow's Type in thought, word or deed. Such Modifiers should ideally range between +1 and +3, depending on the severity of the Wraith's indiscretion.

Cost: 3 Tainted Essence

Dice Pool: Angst vs. Resolve + Composure + Eidolon

Action: Contested

Dramatic Failure: N/A

Failure: Nothing happens, and the Shadow has spent Tainted Essence for nothing.

Success: The Shadow takes control of the body, as described above, for one Scene per success

Exceptional Success: The Shadow takes control of the body for an entire day and night 24 hour period

6.6.2 Harrowings.

*I have such amazing things to show you
A lifetime's worth of mistakes and fears
Every little error you've made
These puppets are mine to control*

The Book of Truth and Joy - Anon.

A Harrowing is a hideous psychodrama that plays out inside the Wraith's senses, where the Shadow tries to assert dominance upon on the Wraith: showing her that it is right, and she is wrong. The Wraith must find some way to persevere through this, or else lose to the Shadow, who becomes that much stronger for its dark victory.

To begin the Harrowing, the Shadow must spend almost all the Tainted Essence it has, taking itself down to one. However, note that in the case of a failed roll to stave off mental imbalances, following a failed Degeneration roll, a Harrowing occurs without the Shadow having to spend anything: see Morality for more information.

When this happens, the Wraith is immediately plunged into a catatonic state, and "wakes up" in the bizarre, nightmare reality the Shadow has created for her. The Shadow then brings to life an odd and twisted morality play, giving the Wraith a choice to embrace the Shadow's point of view, or else succumb to its power.

In game terms, at the climax of the Harrowing, the Storyteller rolls the Wraith's Presence or Manipulation - whichever is higher, or more appropriate - plus the Shadow's Angst, to represent the Shadow's side of the matter. The Wraith's player then rolls her character's Manipulation or Composure - whichever is higher, or more appropriate - plus the Wraith's Eidolon. No Modifiers are allowed on this roll.

A failure on the part of the Wraith means that she chooses poorly, or submits. A failure by the Shadow means that the Wraith saw past the lies, or stood firm. Either way, the Harrowing ends, and the Wraith is brought back to her senses - however befuddled they may be - either better or worse for having gone through the ordeal. Meanwhile, the Shadow is exhausted by the effort, and cannot say or do anything for a day and a night.

If a Harrowing should result in a Shadow's Angst going up to 10, then the Wraith immediately becomes one of the Damned. The connections to her Anchors are cut, and she falls through the Barrier, screaming with the joy and relief of the Shadow. The character is no longer a suitable

player character, and the ST should take possession of the sheet.

Cost: All the Tainted Essence in the Shadow's pool, minus one

Dice Pool: Presence/Manipulation + Angst vs. Manipulation/Composure + Eidolon

Action: Contested

Dramatic Failure: N/A

Success/Failure:

If the Shadow fails, the Wraith succeeds, and leaves the Harrowing feeling vindicated, regaining a dot of Willpower for her trouble. If she was Lost, she is no longer so.

If the Wraith fails, the Shadow succeeds and gets another point of Angst, and if the Wraith was Lost, she remains so. In addition, if the gaining of another point of Angst should overlap the Wraith's current Morality, then that dot of Morality is lost, forever.

Exceptional Success:

An exceptional success for the Shadow not only gets it a point of Angst, but gives back one point of Tainted Essence per success past the first. Wraiths, meanwhile, not only come "back" if they were Lost, but also regain two dots of Willpower due to the extreme self-affirmation of the experience.

Diceless Options and Inspirations.

Note that the roll to resolve the Harrowing is not entirely necessary: Storytellers are encouraged to take this matter beyond dice, and allow the day to be carried by good roleplaying on the part of the Wraith. They can simply judge the matter to be a success or failure for the Wraith based on how the player chooses, and why.

More details on Harrowings, what you can do with them, and how to pull them off, can be found in: Wraith: the Oblivion 2nd ed, Wraith Player's Guide, Shadow Player's Guide and The Sea of Shadows.

For the purposes of Wraith: the Arising, don't pay any attention to the rules for Target Harrowings or Destruction Harrowings: these distinctions are obsolete in the WOD 2.0 setting.

6.6.3 Dissolution.

You have asked me why I do these things

*Why does the gardener clip the tree?
I only want what is best for you
Removing your branches is sign of my love*

The Book of Truth and Joy - Anon.

Should illusions, harsh realities, temptations and the maddening interplay between them fail to do the job, Shadows have one last trick up their sleeves to destroy their partner in existence. They can, by ultimate force of dark will, cause the Wraith to lose large pieces of herself, or her Anchors.

This is known as Dissolution, and while it can be effective, it is also quite expensive, draining and risky for the Shadow to attempt. However, if the Shadow can somehow succeed, it will have scored a massive victory against its Wraith - one that she may never fully recover from.

In order to activate Dissolution, the Shadow must have 10 Tainted Essence in its possession. It then decides whether to attack one of the Wraith's Anchors, or the Wraith's Corpus. It is generally easier for Shadows to weaken a Wraith's Anchors than to dissolve chunks of her Corpus, but that doesn't stop some Shadows from thinking large.

Once the decision is made, and the Tainted Essence spent, the Shadow makes its roll: pitting Manipulation + Angst against the targeted Anchor's Rating + Eidolon, or the Wraith's Permanent Corpus, + Eidolon if applicable. As with Harrowings, no modifiers are allowed on this roll.

Successful applications of Dissolution are devastating: gobs of the Wraith's Corpus catch fire and burn down to nothing, for an effect not unlike someone being splattered with acid. The damage may be cosmetically healed, but the loss of Corpus cannot be healed, or fixed with Shaping; She will now seem less substantial and distinct for her pains.

Anchors so affected are corroded, decayed or cracked within seconds. Living Anchors suffer accidents, or are stricken with strokes, heart attacks or other swift and debilitating illnesses. Buildings catch fire, public parks are overrun with locusts and monuments are backed into by 18-wheelers. And while the damage to the object or person may be fixed, or healed, the connection to the Wraith is still gone.

Cost: 10 Tainted Essence

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Angst vs Anchor Rating + Eidolon/Permanent Corpus + Eidolon

Action: Contested

Dramatic Failure: N/A

Success/Failure: If the Shadow fails, nothing happens, and the Shadow has spent ten Tainted Essence for nothing. Also, the Shadow may do nothing against the Wraith - not even speak to her - for an entire week. If the Shadow succeeds, then one dot is removed from the Anchor or Corpus

rating.

Exceptional Success: If the Wraith scores an exceptional success against the Shadow, then not only is the Shadow silenced and neutered for a week, but it also loses a dot of Angst.

However, if the Shadow gains an exceptional Success, then not only was the one dot removed from the Anchor or Corpus rating, but each success past the first returns a dot of Tainted Essence spent on the roll.

7. NUMINA.



Figure 7.1: Illus. by Taz Jurz

7.1 Numina in General.

*From the panes a green mist swirls
Is it a shadow of reflection?
This apparition, in moonbeams bathed,
A voice like wind though trees beckons*

Haunted - Type O Negative

7.1.1 Organization.

In stark contrast to the stunted powers of Ghosts, the Numina of fully-awake Wraiths are multi-faceted, complex things.

All Numen start from a relatively simple Art, which is known as the Basic Art. Once this power is understood, a Wraith can then branch out into one of many Paths: different "understandings"

based on the central concept of the Numen. How far along a Wraith is on a particular Path, including the Basic Art, is her Path Rating.

Example: Charlie has a total of five dots invested in Anchorage. He has the Anchorage Path of Protection at **** and the Path of Creation at **. Since the first dot is the Basic Art, he didn't have to pay to re-learn it to start learning Arts on the Path of Creation - he just put a dot towards Creation, giving him a total Path Rating of ** on the Path of Creation.

Numina can also double back on themselves in the form of Crossover Arts. These advanced techniques require a Wraith to have gone so far along two or more Paths, so that they can learn an Art that requires the concepts of those Paths to work.

Example: Lisa has the Bios Paths of Control and Change at *** each. This allows her the understanding needed to learn the Swarm Crossover Art, as the prerequisite Arts are Path of Control *** Sleepwalk and Path of Change *** Pull.

Crossover Arts are purchased at a special rate, as explained in Experience.

7.1.2 Ghostly Workings.

The general idea behind Numina rolls is Attribute + Attribute + Numen Path Level. For example, the roll for Anchorage's Early Warning Art is Intelligence + Wits + Anchorage: Path of Protection.

It is an Attribute roll because the use of Numen is partially-instructed, but mostly-instinctive. It goes well beyond the vale of Abilities, and into the realm of what is felt or seen, rather than what is known. A Wraith doesn't have to understand physics to push herself into the Liveworld via Embody, and doesn't need to have much medical knowledge to sense that she's harming her ride via Bios, either.

It also means that Wraiths who become more knowledgeable in a particular Numen also become more adept at using it, at least within a particular Path.

Most uses of a Numen require at least a token amount of Essence to fuel them. Some do not require Essence, but these tend to be Basic Arts. Very powerful Arts will require more Essence, possibly up to five or more dots. And some Arts require Willpower - especially if they require the Wraith to put something of "herself" into someone, or something, or to make an effect permanent.

7.1.3 Roll the Bones.

When rolling the Basic Art of a Numen, use the level of the highest Path attained in that Numen.

Whenever using an Art in a particular Path, the highest level attained in that Path is the level rolled to activate the Numen, rather than that of the highest Path gained in the Numen altogether. This reflects the fact that there are different techniques, ideas and concepts embodied in each Path.

Example: To use Charlie again - he has the Anchorage Path of Protection at **** and the Path of Creation at **. When using the Ping Art Creation **, he will add two dice to his Intelligence

and Manipulation for the roll, rather than four. When using any of the Arts in the Protection Path, however, he will add four dice. And when he rolls the Basic Art for Anchorage - Distant Presence - he will add four dice to his Intelligence and Presence, since he has the highest amount of dice in the Path of Protection.

When rolling a Crossover Art, use the average of the Paths needed to have the Crossover Art, rounding up.

Example: John wants to use Pilgrimage, an Anchorage Crossover Art that requires Path of Protection ** Early Warning, and Path of Creation ** Ping. He has up to **** in the Path of Protection and ** in Path of Creation, which means that he will roll his Strength + Manipulation + 3 dice - the average of 4 and 2.

7.1.4 Group Casting.

If a Wraith needs help performing a certain Art, she can enlist the aid of others who know it. This makes it a little easier to do it, but it costs - and may penalize - all involved in the working.

To do a group casting of an Art, everyone involved must be in physical contact with one another. Everyone helping the Wraith who is using the Art must spend one Essence to link their will with hers, whether the Art requires Essence or not. If the Art also requires Willpower, they must contribute a dot of that as well. And if the Art gives Tainted Essence, they all receive however many dots the user gets for performing it, as they are all complicit in the act.

Each extra Wraith linked up in the effort contributes one die to the effort. However, there is a limit to how many others can help: the mind and will of the Wraith who is actually using the Art is only able to channel so much energy at once. There cannot be more Wraiths directly involved in the group casting than the user has dots in Permanent Willpower - including the user, herself.

Example: Brother Stubborn and a group of Pardoners are out in a Storm, and want to group cast **** Ward of the Damned, so as to have a better chance of surviving the event. Stubborn's Willpower is 6, and there are 7 Pardoners with him. He can have 5 of the Pardoners join him, all of whom must contribute one Essence and one Willpower, as the Ward requires both to fuel it. This action gives 5 extra dice to the roll.

7.1.5 Tainted Essence.

Some uses of Numina cause Tainted Essence to be gained, and some contain the possibility - but not the guarantee - of its accrual.

These gains tend to be caused by Arts that force another to do something, or else take something away from another - lessening their hold on the world, and control over themselves. And some Arts require a Wraith to manipulate or befriend her Shadow, or use powers from beyond the Barrier, ensuring that some of the negative energy rubs off on them.

In those Arts that have the potential, there seems to be a "moral" choice made by the user, which either causes or does not cause Tainted Essence to be gained. There is always a lot of debate as to

whether morality fits into the grand scheme, or if it's just a matter of aiding in another's impediment - or destruction - that causes negative energy to form.

7.1.6 Affiliation.

Wraiths have the capacity for an "Affiliation" with certain Numina, depending on their Means of Demise. Whatever happened to them scarred their souls in such a way as to make certain powers of the dead easier to learn, and slightly easier to use if their luck holds out.

Wraiths who have an Affiliation for a Numen pay less Experience to learn Arts in it. They also may reroll two dice, rather than only one, for each die on the roll that comes up 10. This means that it's easier for them to get Exceptional Successes.

7.1.7 Anchor Limits.

A Wraith's proximity to her Anchors limits her use of Numina on the Living. She can use Numina on the Living without additional effort while near her Anchors: ten yards per dot in Anchor rating.

If a Wraith wants to use her powers on the Living while beyond that barrier, she can, but this costs a point of Willpower per Art activated. This cost is above and beyond any other Willpower requirements a specific Art may require.

Whispers and Rumors.

The listings that follow are but a sample of possible Paths and Crossover Arts. There could be other Paths, and countless Crossover Arts to be learned.

There may also be powers well beyond the range of normal Wraiths ***** though no one but the oldest of Wraiths can say for sure if these "Hidden Arts" are real, or just rumors.

And the Damned may have their own, twisted variations on Numina as well, though not even the Pardoners are certain of the shape of these "Dark Numina."

7.2 Anchorage Uncommon.

Anchorage is the ability to manipulate Anchors, without which a Wraith cannot exist for long. It goes without saying, then, that Anchorage is one of the most powerful Numina in the Deadlands; Its understanding is jealously guarded, and its use is very expensive to hire.

One fully schooled in the Arts of this Numen can protect her Anchors from harm, make new Anchors and repair preexisting ones. It's also possible to whittle away the connection between a Wraith and her Anchors, which is what makes this Numen both enticing and frightening to many Wraiths.

The Believers are the undisputed masters of this Numen. They use their expertise in it in order to seek Transcendence, primarily, but often use it to negotiate terms with The Order and the

Freewraiths. It can also be used to keep others - most notably the Haunters - at bay.

Unless specified otherwise, Anchorage Arts can be done for either the Wraith's own Anchors, or for another's.

7.2.1 Paths.

Anchorage has three recognized Paths:

- Path of Protection: Also called Shielding Arts that allow a Wraith to strengthen and look after her Anchors, or those of another. Its users are known as Shieldwraiths and Guardians, amongst other names.
- Path of Creation: Also called Generation Arts that allow a Wraith to make Anchors - temporary or permanent - for herself, or another. It is practiced by Generators and Splicers.
- Path of Separation: Also called Resolution, or Smiting Arts that allow a Wraith to disconnect her Anchors, or those of another. This can be a gentle, cathartic disconnection, or a rude tearing away, but the harsh removal tends to accrue Tainted Essence. The Scissormen who employ it are both feared and revered.

7.2.2 Those Who Know.

All three of the known Paths are generally understood by the Believers, and called by various names amongst their Concord. They are willing to teach the Path of Creation to outsiders, for a price - or certain territorial considerations - but prefer to keep both Protection and Separation to themselves.

Meanwhile, the Messengers are well-versed in the Path of Protection, though how they wrested its secrets from the Believers is a mystery. Some members of The Order have learned the Path of Creation, bought in return for various "understandings" they give to the Believers.

Whispers.

They say that true masters of Anchorage are very frightening, indeed. They are purported to be able to crack and shatter a Wraith's connection to her Anchors without having to be in contact with them - just by looking at her. They also say that they can heal Anchors just as easily, or make an Anchor from halfway across the world - based on a really good description - and then teleport to it.

They also say that The Damned have their own, twisted version of this Numen. Some say this allows them to know when a mortal is destined to die, so they can be right there to take her soul. Others say they can make hideous bargains with the Living, or enslave the Dead.

And there is some evidence to support the idea that the Damned can watch - and follow - Wraiths teleporting back to their Anchors, either to escape a Storm or a pack of the Damned. Unfortunately, a distinct lack of survivors of such attacks leaves the evidence spotty, and unsupported...

Basic Art.*** Distant Presence**

The stepping stone of all Anchorage Paths, this Art trains the Wraith to maximize her connection to her Anchors. After she makes contact with an Anchor, she can use Numina on, in or around it, even from a distance. This Art also allows a Wraith to turn an Anchor's Echoes off from afar.

System: The Wraith must first establish contact via the Anchorsense Affinity. Once this is achieved, she must spend one Essence to bridge the physical distance between the Anchor and herself, and roll Intelligence + Presence + Anchorage. Each success on that roll allows for a maximum number of successes on subsequent Numina rolls on, in or around the Anchor.

Example: If Julia scores three successes on her Distant Presence roll, and scores four successes on a subsequent roll to activate a Fear Art on a snooping human, only three successes on that Fear roll are counted.

Only one success is necessary to turn the Anchor's Echoes off, but a point of Willpower and Essence must be spent to do this, as normal.

7.2.3 Path of Protection.

*Have no fear. I am holding your things here,
close to my heart.*

*And they will bend, but not break.
On this you have my word.*

The need to protect one's Anchors from harm is one of the chief concerns of all Wraiths. Those who study this Path of Anchorage can rest assured that their Anchors are more secure than others. They can also rest assured of having a secure source of income, as Wraiths are willing to pay well for such protections: the Shieldwraith of any town is a wealthy one, indeed.

All the Arts on this Path can be used on another Wraith's Anchors, but the Wraith who owns those Anchors must be present, and willing to have them done, when the Art is used.

**** Early Warning**

This gives the ability to place an 'early warning system' on an Anchor, thus alerting the wraith if a clear danger is looming. Ideally, the warning gives them at least enough time to teleport back to the Anchor, and possibly even time to activate Anchorsense, and then Distant Presence. The Art also allows the Wraith to place Willpower and/or Essence into the Anchor as a "down payment" on a future teleport.

System: If making a "down payment" on a future teleport, the Wraith need only be in physical or spiritual Anchorsense contact with her Anchor. She may either place a Willpower point into the Anchor, or three Essence, in order to charge a future teleport to that Anchor. A charge may be redeemed at any time within a Lunar Month of its being placed in the Anchor - after that, it dissipates. An Anchor can have no more charges than it has dots in rating.

As for the early warning, the Wraith must place a point of Essence within the Anchor, and then spend another point of Essence, rolling Intelligence + Wits + Anchorage: Path of Protection. Each success past the first grants the Wraith a turn's warning that the Anchor may be in danger, though she will have to use Anchorsense - or go back to the Anchor - to determine exactly what is wrong. This effect lasts for up to a Lunar Month, and then dissipates, and must be recharged.

*** Cloak of Concealment

Any Wraith with sufficient Anchorage might be able to sense the location and strength of another's Anchors. This Art partially shields an Anchor from such deliberate viewing by Wraiths, and also partially blocks their Deathsight and Lifesight viewing as well. The Art completely negates the ability of The Damned to find these Anchors, as well, even with a single success. It does not, however, lessen the power of Echoes

System: The Wraith must be in physical or spiritual Anchorsense contact with the Anchor in order to use this Art. She places two Essence into the Anchor, and rolls Dexterity + Composure + Anchorage: Path of Protection. Each success negates any successes on others Ping, Twang, Lifesight or Deathsight rolls to detect the Anchor, or learn anything about it. The effect of the Art lasts for a week, and must then be renewed.

**** Shield of Self

This Art allows a Wraith to create a "physical" connection between herself and an Anchor, so that any physical damage done to it is done to her, instead. This is meant to be more of a guard against sudden and accidental damage, so that fragile objects are not broken into pieces - and people killed - before the Wraith can get back to them. However, the Wraith can place her body between the Anchor and sustained, heavy damage, so long as she's willing to take the pain, or can heal it.

System: A Wraith must be in physical contact with the Anchor to initiate the use of this Art. The Wraith must place three Essence, one Corpus and one willpower into the Anchor. She then rolls her Resolve + Stamina + Anchorage: Path of Protection. Each success past the first grants a week in which the Wraith and the Anchor are physically connected to one another one success gives a day. She can then go as far away from the Anchor as she'd like, and the effect will hold.

One of the advantages of this state is that the Wraith need not spend Essence in order to use Anchorsense on the Anchor. She needs only concentrate for a turn, and then make the roll as normal. This also allows her to use Anchorsense on the Anchor of the other Wraith, using her own Wits and the Anchor's rating for the roll. Further, the doing of any damage to an Anchor protected by this Art immediately plunges the Wraith into Anchorsense - as though she'd Succeeded on a roll - so that she may see what is happening.

So long as the Art is in effect, any damage done to the Anchor that exceeds the Durability Rating, or Defense, will be done to the Wraith instead: point for point, type for type. Note that Aggravated Damage will supersede the Durability of an object as normal, and the Wraith may not use her Defense to escape the damage.

The Wraith may spend Essence to heal herself, of course. However, she may not end the Art on her own, unless she's protecting her own Anchor. If she lays herself down on the line for another, she's stuck with the decision for as long as the effect holds out.

***** Shield of Will

A further improvement on Shield of Self, and the highest pinnacle of the Protection Path, allows a Wraith to create an unseen shield around an Anchor. This shield will deflect a certain amount of damage, or at least make it more difficult to damage something, or someone. However, it isn't completely invulnerable.

System: A Wraith must be in physical contact with the Anchor to initiate the use of this Art. The Wraith must place five Essence and two Willpower into the Anchor. She then rolls her Stamina + Manipulation + Anchorage: Path of Protection. Each Success acts to negate a Success from an otherwise-Successful roll to damage that Anchor, and such is the strength of the Shield that it may even be used to block Aggravated damage. Once each Success is used, it goes away, reducing the supernatural shield around that Anchor.

Example: Valerie has gained four successes on her Shield of Will roll, and is using it to defend her beloved bicycle, which would normally have a Durability of three. A vandal is trying to break the bike by slamming it up against a wall, and gets five successes. That would normally be enough to harm it, but two of Valerie's four successes are activated, inexplicably protecting the bike from harm. Valerie's bike now has two successes left.

Valerie also rolled three successes to protect her kid brother, Billy, who's made some enemies at school. The bully trying to punch him out at class change has an attack pool of five, and Billy only has a Defense of three. The bully rolls both remaining dice, and succeeds with both, but these Successes are removed by the Shield of Will - for some weird reason, the punch misses. Billy now has one success left to protect him.

The protection lasts for a Lunar Month, at which point any unused Successes dissipate, and the Art must be renewed.

7.2.4 Path of Creation.

So they wanted to send you a message, huh?

*Well, let's send them one right back -
you don't cave. Not to them.*

Not when you've got me there to pick up your pieces, anyway.

The most in-demand of all the Anchorage Paths, the Path of Creation is sought out by Wraiths who have, over time, lost connection to their Anchors. It is also invaluable for giving Anchors back to a Wraith after they have been severed, either by uses of the Path of Separation, or other, darker alternatives. So-called Generators can also create easier Consorts, or temporary Anchors for themselves and for others, in case of emergency.

All the Arts on this Path can be used on another Wraith's Anchors, or used to create an Anchor for another Wraith. Unlike the Path of Protection, the Wraith who owns the Anchors does not have to be willing to have these Arts used on her, or her Anchors. Some Arts require that the Wraith be present, however.

**** Ping**

The first step on the Path of Creation allows a Wraith to see another Wraith's Anchors. Gathering information about another's Anchors is usually seen as a violation of privacy, but those who need their Anchors fixed are often willing to be scanned. The Art can also be used to perform minor "maintenance" on the Anchor.

System: To use this Art, the Wraith has to be within conversational distance of the other Wraith, and spend a Turn in concentration, looking at her. After that, she spends one Essence and rolls Intelligence + Manipulation + Anchorage: Path of Creation: Path of Creation, with each success giving a detail about a single Anchor the other Wraith has. Unless the other Wraith specified which Anchor, or the Wraith doing the Pinging has an idea of one, the Anchors are seen from largest to smallest, and most important detail to least, respectively.

The Wraith can also use this Art to perform minor "maintenance" on the Anchor: removing dust or mold, smoothing over cracks and dents, cheering the person up, etc. This is done by spending an additional Essence after using Ping on the Anchor. The maintenance has no bearing on the Anchor's actual rating, but makes the other Wraith feel a little better, as though she'd gotten a second wind for some unknown reason.

***** Grasp of the Grave**

This Art allows a Wraith to create a Temporary Anchor, making it easier to travel, escape a Storm, use Numina on the living or Manifest while away from one's own Anchors. It also allows a Wraith to create a temporary Consort - and have full "ownership" over that person - without having to spend the time and Essence needed to make a Consort in the normal, "proper" fashion.

System: The Wraith must be in physical contact with the object in question to use this Art, and if she's creating the Anchor for another Wraith, that Wraith must be present. The Wraith spends two Essence and rolls Wits + Presence + Anchorage: Path of Creation. Each success gives the Anchor a level rating - to a maximum of ***** - and the effects last for a full 24-hour period.

The Wraith can try to make the roll again in order to strengthen the Anchor. However, each further attempt must exceed the previous roll in order to have an effect: equal or fewer successes don't do any good. Subsequent attempts do "reset" the clock on the Art - extending the effect out for another 24 hours.

Consorts made through this Art do not get Anchor ratings, obviously - instead, each success on the roll gives the Wraith full "ownership" over the Consort for a 24-hour period. These people then act mostly like normal Consorts, in terms of "ownership," Manifestation and Numina. However, a Wraith cannot heal herself inside the Consort, nor regain any Essence in her presence.

****** Renewed Link**

One of the most sought-after Arts on this path, Renewed Link allows the Wraith to repair damage done to an Anchor's level. It won't repair the Anchor, itself, but will repair any spiritual damage, whether done by Anchorage or other means. The Wraith can even reattach Anchors that were completely severed using this Art.

System: The Wraith has to be in physical contact with the Anchor to be repaired, but does not have to have the owning Wraith present. She spends three Essence and one Willpower, and rolls Dexterity + Manipulation + Anchorage: Path of Creation. Each success past the first takes the Anchor back up a level.

The Art can reattach Anchors that have been completely severed, but this costs four Essence and one Willpower. The Wraith whose Anchor was severed must be present for this use of the Art.

No matter how good the Wraith's roll may be, this Art cannot improve upon the preexisting level: an Anchor that was *** can only be taken back up to level *** with Renewed Link. Extra Successes are wasted.

******* Fetterbound**

This - the most powerful Art of the Path - allows a Wraith to create a brand new, permanent Anchor for a Wraith. It also allows the Wraith to augment the levels of a preexisting Anchor. Wraiths who are virtual powerhouses of Essence may have used this Art to create many new, powerful Anchors, but the power is not without its risk...

System: If creating a new Anchor, both the Wraith working the Art, and the Wraith to be granted the new Anchor, must be in physical contact with the would-be Anchor. The Wraith being granted it must sacrifice a point of Permanent Willpower, and whatever emotion she feels for the Anchor will become the core emotion behind that Anchor.

Meanwhile, the Wraith using the Art must spend five Essence and one Willpower. If the Wraith is using the Art on herself, the expenditure comes out to five Essence and one Permanent Willpower. She then rolls Strength + Presence + Anchorage: Path of Creation: one success creates *, two successes create **, four creates ***, and so on. Failure gives all Wraiths involved three Tainted Essence.

If augmenting a preexisting Anchor, the Wraith whose Anchor it is need not be physically present - though that might be a good idea. The Wraith having it augmented doesn't need to sacrifice anything, either. The Wraith using the Art spends three Essence and one Willpower, and rolls Dexterity + Presence + Anchorage: Path of Creation. Success follows the same pattern as making a new Anchor: if the Anchor is at *, then it takes two successes to take it up to **, four to take it to ***, and so on. Failure gives all Wraiths involved one Tainted Essence.

In either application of the Art, the Anchor's levels cannot be taken up past ***, regardless of however many successes are gained on the roll.

Go Bang.

There is something an upward limit as to how many Levels in Anchors a Wraith can have, and this is what causes the high risk of using the Fetterbound Art. It's not that having extra Anchors is a problem, it's that the Wraith's body can't always handle all the "extra" Essence that many Anchors would provide. The results can be rather explosive...

A Wraith tends to start "life" with ten dots in Anchors, but can go up to 10 plus her Permanent Willpower without danger, courtesy of Fetterbound. This also means that a Wraith can have an Essence pool of 10 plus twice her Permanent Willpower without danger. Once this limit is breached, however, it becomes harder for a Wraith to handle her now-increased Essence pool - Corpus has its limits.

To safely absorb Essence above the danger limit, the Wraith must roll her Stamina + Composure. Each dot of Essence to be absorbed takes one dice away from this roll. Success means all Essence is absorbed, Failure means the Wraith suffers a level of Lethal damage for each dot of Essence she tried to take in. Dramatic Failure gives a level of Aggravated damage for each dot of Essence.

Example: Xavier, a powerful Wraith of The Order, has a Stamina of 4, a Composure of 3, Willpower of 7, and a total of 23 levels in Anchors. This means that his Essence Pool could go up to 30 $23 + 7$ but he can only handle 24 $10 + 7 + 7$ Essence safely. And if he's at 24 Essence, and stands to gain more, he must roll 7 dice $4 + 3$ minus one for each dot of Essence he stands to gain. As he stands to get four extra Essence, he must roll 3 dice.

7.2.5 Path of Separation.

*Some say I am your best friend.
Some say I am your worst enemy.
What do you think, friend?
Tell me truly - lies are costly, here...*

Rightfully loved and feared, the Separation Path allows a Wraith to decrease the effectiveness of another's Anchor, cut its links to another Wraith, or sever it completely. Used "responsibly," it is an invaluable tool for Transcendence. But there are those who use this Path for less noble ends, and while the Scissormen make for good allies, they are terrible enemies.

All the Arts on this Path can be used on another Wraith's Anchors, or used to create an Anchor for another Wraith. Much like the Path of Creation, the Wraith who owns the Anchors does not have to be willing to have most of these Arts used on her, or her Anchors ***** Resolution is an important exception.

**** Twang.**

Something of an "answer" to Ping, the Wraith also uses this Art to see another Wraith's Anchors, and functions just like Ping in that regard. Those who practice the Path of Separation for ignoble

purposes often use this Art to evaluate another's Anchors, sizing them up for possible blackmail. The Art can also be used to raise the other Wraith's hackles, making her think that something is wrong with one of her observed Anchors.

System: To use this Art, the Wraith has to be within conversational distance of the other Wraith, and spend a Turn in concentration, looking at her. After that, she spends one Essence and rolls Intelligence + Manipulation + Anchorage: Path of Separation, with each success giving a detail about a single Anchor the other Wraith has. Unless the other Wraith specified which Anchor, or the Wraith doing the Twanging has an idea of one, the Anchors are seen from largest to smallest, and most important detail to least, respectively.

The Wraith can also use this Art to make the Twanged Wraith feel distinctly uneasy concerning her Anchors. This is done by spending an additional Essence after using Twang on the Anchor. The feeling is gone almost as soon as it's noticed, but it's acute enough to make some hair-trigger Wraiths teleport back to their Anchors, only to discover that nothing was wrong.

*** Clutch of the Beyond.

This Art temporarily diminishes the effectiveness of an Anchor - dropping it down level by level. Some Believers use this Art as an emergency measure if they have to travel, while others use it to aid a Wraith in getting used to the idea of living without a particular Anchor. However, it can also be used to deliver an unsubtle threat to a Wraith: letting her know that she's been "tagged."

System: The Wraith must be in physical contact with the Anchor to use this Art, unless it's her own Anchor. She must spend two Essence, and roll Dexterity + Presence + Anchorage: Path of Separation. Each success on the roll, past the first, makes it seem as though the Anchor's level was one less, and this can take the effective level of an Anchor down to zero. One success just makes the Wraith whose Anchor is being affected feel violated.

The effect of the Art lasts for an entire day. During that period, the Wraith's ability to heal and gain Essence from that Anchor, and use it for Numina, or Manifestation, is lessened. An Anchor that has been dropped to zero still has a "hold" over the Wraith, but cannot impede her free movement.

Using the Art on one's own Anchors garners no penalties. However, if the Art is used on another for selfish or destructive purposes, a dot of Tainted Essence is gained for the violation of another's Anchors.

**** Broken Link.

The reverse of Renewed Link, a Wraith can use this Art to cause spiritual damage to an Anchor, reducing its level. Believers often use this Art a little bit at a time - either on their own Anchors, or another's - in order to lessen the connection to their former lives. But it can also be used as a weapon against others, which is one reason why the Believers are often left alone.

System: The Wraith has to be in physical contact with the Anchor to be thusly affected. She

spends three Essence and rolls Strength + Manipulation + Anchorage: Path of Separation. Each success past the first takes the Anchor's level down a dot: one success just makes the Wraith whose Anchor is being affected feel violated.

The Wraith can elect to "pull her punches," and reduce the level only by so much, regardless of the successes. However, each success that goes over the amount the Wraith wants to do causes automatic Lethal Damage.

Example: Saul is reducing Lisa's Anchor. He wants to reduce it by only one level, but he rolls four successes, which would take it down three levels. He stops this further damage from taking place, but suffers two Lethal Damage to his Corpus.

As with Clutch of the Beyond, the Art should be done for therapeutic and/or kindly spiritual purposes. If not, then the Wraith who does it receives one Tainted Essence for every level she drops the Anchor by. That only happens if it's done to another Wraith's Anchor, though - there is no such penalty for reducing your own.

That said, this Art is not recommended to be used to completely remove a Wraith's Anchor, whether for offensive or altruistic purposes. Doing so gains two points of Tainted Essence above and beyond whatever else may have been gained, no matter what the Wraith's motivation. And this also happens if a Wraith uses the Art to sever her own Anchor, as the act bolsters the Shadow.

***** Resolution.

All Wraiths can, given time, Resolve their Anchors. However, some Wraiths don't wish to wait for what may be several decades to gain the spiritual wherewithal to accomplish this. For them - and others - a Resolution can be forced, but not without great risk. And while the Resolution Art is not as harmful in practice as Broken Link, the cost of failure is dire, indeed.

System: If done for another, the Wraith must either be in contact with the Wraith who wishes this done - and it can only be voluntary - or the Anchor. She must make a Contested roll of her Presence + Wits + Anchorage: Path of Separation against the Resolve + Stamina + Anchor Rating of the other Wraith. The Anchor Rating is of the Anchor to be Resolved. Each success scored by the Wraith using the Art in the Contested roll, past the first, "Resolves" one level of the Anchor.

The other Wraith may improve the chances of the roll by spending three Willpower, and making a Willpower roll. Each success reduces her pool for the Contested roll by one, down to a minimum of one.

Example: Lisa is helping Richard to Resolve a painful, and powerful, Anchor. Her dice pool 3 Presence + 2 Wits + 5 Anchorage: Path of Separation stands at 10 dice, while Richard's is 13 5 Resolve + 3 Stamina + 5 Ex-Lover From Hell. The odds aren't good, but Richard is steadfast in his desire to lessen the person's grip on him. He spends three willpower, and rolls Willpower to commit himself to this. He gains four successes, which reduce his pool to 9 dice. Lisa and he then square off in the Contested roll, and she gets four successes to his two. This reduces the Anchor by one level - a small improvement, but it's a start...

If done for the self, the Wraith need not be in contact with the Anchor. However, she still must make a Contested roll of her Presence + Wits + Anchorage: Path of Separation against her own Resolve + Stamina + Anchor Rating. She may spend three Willpower, and make the Willpower roll, to commit herself to the action, as illustrated above.

The Art is often used to completely sever the connection between a previously-weakened Anchor, so as to avoid the harsh effects of Broken Link. It is also used to give a final "push" to Wraiths seeking Transcendence, though it's considered best if the Wraith learns the Art, and then uses it on herself.

Use of this Art normally causes no Tainted Essence to be gained, given its therapeutic nature. However, if the roll fails, then the attempt to spiritually divorce the Anchor causes a horrible, dark feedback upon the soul. Not only is nothing lost from the Anchor, but five dots of Tainted Essence are gained, both to the Wraith using the Art and the Wraith being "helped" by it.

7.2.6 Crossover Arts.

Pilgrimage.

(Prerequisite Arts: ** Early Warning, ** Ping)

This Art allows a group of Wraiths to be bound together, as though they were one another's shared Anchor. This allows the Believers to travel great distances away from their own Anchors, so that they may go on voyages of faith, seekings and other such quests together.

System: The Wraiths must all be touching one another to begin this Art. Only one member of the group need know the Art, but all other Wraiths to be included must contribute one Essence to make it work. The Wraith using the Art must spend one Essence and one Willpower, and then roll Strength + Manipulation + Average of Path of Protection and Creation.

Ever after, until stopped, the Wraiths act as a group Anchor, with each member past the first giving it an effective "rating." The Art allows them unlimited range of travel and shelter from Storms. It also lets them use Numina on the living, as though they were Anchors, and gives a "power boost" to Manifest. However, they cannot use the Art to gain Essence, or heal themselves.

Each day after the first, someone in the group must pay an additional dot of Essence in order to keep the effect going. Also, the Wraiths must be within fifty feet of one another at all times: if anyone steps outside the distance, the effect of the Art is broken, and must be reestablished. Also, everyone takes a dot of Tainted Essence for the sudden breakdown.

The Art can only be "properly" ended as it began, with all Wraiths in the group touching one another, and the Wraith who activated the Art turning it off.

Lifeline.

Prerequisite Arts: ****Shield of Self, ****Renewed Link

This Art allows a Wraith to perform other Arts from the Protection and Creation Paths on her own, pre-existing Anchors without having to be physically present. She can also perform these arts on behalf of another Wraith - so long as the Wraith is willing - by touching her while that Wraith is engaged in Anchorsense with the Anchor in question.

System: The Art represents a certain level of advanced understanding that comes with both the Path of Protection and the Path of Creation. It requires no extra roll, but the Wraith must spend an additional Willpower to use this Art in conjunction with other Arts.

The Hand of God

Prerequisite Arts: ****Shield of Self, ****Renewed Link, ****Broken Link

Perhaps the mightiest of the known Crossover Arts for Anchorage, this allows a Wraith to place a geas upon an Anchor, so that none may dare attack it without severe consequences. Anchors that are protected by this geas often seem to be surrounded by a dull, gray sheen - the sign that none should dare harm such a thing. Few do.

System: The Wraith must be in contact with the Anchor, spend five Essence and two Willpower, and roll Strength + Presence + the Average of her Paths of Protection, Creation and Separation. Each success past the first provides a week of near-divine protection one success provides a day.

During the time that The Hand of God is in effect, any Wraith or living person who succeeds in harming the Anchor will have Lethal damage done unto her, measure for measure. And any Wraith who succeeds in reducing the levels of that Anchor will also have an equal amount of levels removed from her own Anchors, going from smallest to largest.

But while this Art is powerful, there is a heavy price to pay for invoking the divine. If anyone should happen to attack an Anchor that is protected by the Hand, and be damaged by the Hand, the Wraith who placed it upon the Anchor gets two Tainted Essence for their pains.

7.3 Bios (Common).

It is whispered that the Bios Numina is one of the oldest of them all. The desire to feel what it was like to have a body, once more, is very strong amongst the dead, which led them to re-enter - and control - the flesh of the living. The deluge of stories of "demonic possession" can most likely be attributed to this.

It would be highly simplistic to say that Bios only concerns itself with manipulating the bodies of the living, though. Such is the strength of the bond the Numen creates that one can also heal, and alter, the body one lays claim to. One can also cause harm, however, which is part of what has given this otherwise-useful Numen such a bad reputation amongst certain Concords.

7.3.1 Paths.

Bios has three recognized Paths:

- Path of Control Also known as Puppeteering is the "signature" Path of this Numen, given its high rate of distribution. Put simply, it allows Wraiths to manipulate a living being's actions: anything from slight slips of the tongue to complete and total possession of the body, with the "owner" lost inside her own mind. Puppeteers have a reputation - perhaps ill-deserved - for being cruel, controlling monsters, but are invaluable for getting things done in the living world.
- Path of Stasis Also known as Healing lets Wraiths heal injuries, cure diseases and keep people alive much longer than they should be. Healers are considered saints when one has living Anchors, but the Arts can be reversed to do damage, too. And serious damage, at that.
- Path of Change Also known as Mutation teaches the Arts needed to convert the Living into more suitable forms. The Shifters are rarely considered good company, given their tendency to misuse their Arts. But if you need to send a very distinctive message to someone, they're very keen for a job. The trouble is finding them...

7.3.2 Those Who Know.

As Bios is one of the so-called "Common" Numina, almost any Wraith could have it, or else learn it with little difficulty. Those who died from sickness, starvation and old age have a particular knack for it, which is why anyone who needs the services of a Puppeteer - or a Healer - often looks for their Deathmarks.

Finding Shifters is much more difficult, as - having taken the time to extensively "customize" their hosts - they tend to stay in the Liveworld as much as possible. They also suffer greatly at the hands of The Order and the Pardoners if they hang their signs out, which adds to the lure of remaining as hidden as possible.

Indeed - the Order, as a rule, tends to consider this entire Numen to be a danger, and prefers that its members not use it except when absolutely necessary. The Pardoners also consider it to be little more than an exercise in Tainted Essence accrual, and strenuously urge their charges to avoid it.

Almost conversely, Bios is one of the favored tools of the Haunters, and the Freewraiths are known to shelter many Puppeteers amongst them...

Whispers.

Bios - at least the Path of Control - is so widespread that most rumors are, indeed, fact. Given enough Essence, it is possible to take complete control of someone, warp them into an image of how you looked before you died and make them live for hundreds of years. What could be more impressive than that?

The answer is "a lot more."

They say that true masters of the Numen are capable of possessing entire communities of people, or rebirthing themselves in successive generations of animals. They are also supposed to be able to possess people from across the world, so long as they've used Bios on them before.

On a more subtle note, they say such masters can completely obliterate the soul of the person they take over, so as to remove all interference from the process. The Puppeteers are accused of doing this as a matter of course, anyway.

They also say that more intelligent members of The Damned are very accomplished in this Numen, and regularly employ it in order to deal with living, or harm the Anchors of the dead. Whether that is true or not is a matter of some debate, but the stories of Damned-possessed Anchors are terrifying enough to send many Wraiths into the arms of the Shieldwraiths.

On a darker note, they say that The Damned have perfected ways to raise the dead - one at a time, or en masse - as though they were living, the better to wreak havoc in the Liveworld. This has yet to be confirmed, however.

7.3.3 Basic Art.*** Possession**

The Gateway to all other Arts of Bios, this lets the Wraith perform the necessary task of bonding with the Living. It's no more difficult than climbing inside something that's alive - be it human or animal - as opposed to something that's dead, or was never alive. But by bonding one truly experiences what the living do, once more, which is why Possession is so handy to have.

System: The Wraith must be in physical contact with the living being she wants to enter. She then rolls Dexterity + Presence + Bios, and she's in. Each success on the roll takes away a die from another's roll to try and enter the body, thus kicking her out. She may, of course, elect to let the other Wraith in.

If the Wraith is entering someone else's Anchor, each dot in Rating the Anchor has removes two dice from her Possession pool. If she's entering a Consort she's made - either through Bios or other means - she doesn't have to roll at all, but it might be a good idea just in case another Wraith tries to jump her claim.

While possessing a body, the Wraith feels as though she is the owner, though she can do no more than observe what happens. Everything the owner sees, hears, touches, feels and tastes is felt by the Wraith, with the senses of a living person. However, all Affinities - with the exception of Ghostsense - do not work: being in the body cuts her off from the Deadlands.

This state of being also has the danger of damage. The Wraith loses Corpus every time the living being takes damage - kind for kind, level for level - and has to rely on the mortal's Defense. The Wraith can heal herself, of course, and may slip out of the body at any time to avoid further damage.

7.3.4 Path of Control.

*I'm not a freak, okay?
It's just that I don't wanna spend any more time
dead than I have to.
And if that means I have to borrow someone...
well, then I borrow them, okay?
But just so I can remember what it felt like, again.
And I just borrow. Not keep, okay?*

Of course, mere Possession of a host body is rarely ever enough. Once one is feeling the real world, again, one wants to reach out and touch it - to feel it, and savor the sensations. And if the host doesn't like what the Wraith does, or doesn't want to do what the Wraith wants, then something has to be done. It would be madness to be so close and yet so far...

Keeping that in mind, the Path of Control is more widespread - and more used - than anyone would like to admit. Even those who advise others to avoid its use can often be found in flesh, "convincing" their hosts to order steak instead of fish, or tea instead of coffee.

It's just little things, at first.

**** Slip**

The first step to assuming control over the living, Slip allows a Wraith to make the body perform one quick action, or say one quick thing. "Quick" actions include pulling a trigger, pressing a button or flipping someone off, while quick things are "Yes," "No," "Go away" or the like. The host might not be aware of having performed the action, depending on how subtle the Wraith is - timing is everything, here - but will always know what she said, even if she doesn't know why.

***** Sleepwalk**

The next step is forcing the body into a sleepy, half-awake state and then piloting it around, or else taking advantage of such a state. The Art can be used when one's host is drunk or on certain drugs, too, but there's a massive loss of coordination involved. In either case, the host has to be gingerly handled, as one good bang, flash or harsh action will wake her all the way up. She will have a hard time remember what she said and did while Sleepwalking, though.

****** Lost Time**

This Art allows the Wraith to take the host completely over without having to put her into a trance, or take advantage of one. The takeover is as quick as the snapping of fingers, and lasts for as long as the Wraith is willing to pay for it in Essence, and she can keep the host from coming to. Should the latter happen, the host will "wake up," not knowing what she's been up to, or how she got here.

Clever Wraiths take the living over while they're in bed, or falling asleep, and pilot them back to bed before releasing control.

******* Changeling**

This Art allows a hostile takeover of the host body, and the Wraith can use it to take up full-time residence amongst the living. In the process, she shoves the host's consciousness deep into the subconscious parts of the mind, bringing her own to the fore. This puts her completely in control of the body, and negates the need for constant Essence expenditure to maintain control.

Time is the true enemy of the Wraith using this Art. The host will start to act as a second "Shadow," given time: slowly becoming more awake and aware as the Wraith spends more time in her body. After a while, she can try to force Catharsis, or work with the Shadow to ruin it all. Oddly enough, when it ends, she might not remember any of her time as a prisoner in her own body.

7.3.5 Path of Stasis.

*No, he will not die. Of that you can be certain.
So long as I have what you've promised,
your friend will be cured.
But should you go back on our deal...*

The Path of Stasis is the very textbook definition of "double-edged sword" for Wraiths familiar with Bios: all of its Arts can be used to heal or harm in near-equal measure. This makes hiring a Healer a very risky proposition, and makes the Healers themselves something of an "acquired taste."

All the Arts here can be used to harm the host, but no damage is passed on to the Wraith, since she is causing it via Bios.

**** Minor Mending**

The first Art in the Stasis Path allows a Wraith to accelerate the healing of Bashing damage that the host has suffered, sometimes dramatically. It can also cure diseases that aren't life-threatening by accelerating the body's natural fight against the condition.

On the other side, the Wraith can cause Bashing damage to the host: bruises flower, bones are chipped and the skin breaks in small patches. The Wraith can also pox her host with the rapid onset of any contagious disease the host's body has been in contact with recently. Both applications cause Tainted Essence to be gained, of course.

***** Major Mending**

An improvement over Minor Mending, this lets the Wraith accelerate Lethal damage's healing time, and heal Bashing damage immediately. It also cures life-threatening diseases that are external in nature - viruses and bacteria - and not internal, like kidney failure, cancer, and so on. In the latter cases, the Wraith can slow the onset to a near crawl, but cannot completely do away with it.

Again, the Wraith can cause damage, only now it is Lethal: bones break and splinter, and the skin tears open in wide, bloody rents. She can also awaken a deadly, contagious disease that the host's been in contact with, or else has been imprinted on her antibodies at some point. Anything the host has been vaccinated against is fair game.

****** Making Miracles**

This Art allows the Wraith to heal Lethal and Bashing damage immediately, and accelerate the healing of Aggravated damage. It can also cure all diseases, whether internal or external, and reverse the damage caused. It's a costly Art to perform, but all miracles have their price.

The flip side is that a Wraith can cause Aggravated damage in a host. She can also introduce a disease into the host's system, and accelerate its spread to near-impossible speeds, so that someone might be fine one moment but riddled with tumors an hour later. This is also very costly, both in Essence and Tainted Essence, but they say the impression it makes it worth every bit of the pain...

******* Methuselah**

Who wants to live forever? A Wraith can use this Art to slow down a host body's natural lifespan, and improve her constitution to the point where she doesn't suffer any illnesses at all. The Art takes a lot of Essence to maintain, and a host deprived of it will quickly start to age again. It is often used in short bursts to prolong life close to its end, so the host can have a chance to see loved ones before dying, or do one last thing that needs doing.

It has an offensive use as well: the total and complete termination of life, either by turning it off all at once, or accelerating the aging process to superhuman speeds. Such is the power of this Art that it can turn a middle-aged host into a brittle, old woman in days - if not hours - and reduce a rest home resident into a pile of bones and dust in the same amount of time.

7.3.6 Path of Change.

Yes, it's really me, lover.

I was dead, but now I'm alive again. I'm alive and I came back...just for you.

Look grateful.

How far will you go to take back what you had? For Shifters, the answer is shown by what they can do to their hosts with the Arts of the Path of Change. It's possible for them to turn a middle-aged, overweight man into a skinny covergirl, and vice versa. They can also make various

"improvements" to the human form, if they choose, though these are costly and may be harmful.

As with the Path of Stasis, any damage done to the host as a result of these Arts is not passed along to the Wraith. However, if the things done wind up killing the host, then the Wraith will gain large amounts of Tainted Essence for her part in it.

**** Twist**

The Wraith can use this Art to make a very minor change in the host body: changing the color of someone's eyes or hair, making her pale, moving body fat around, altering the shape of her face, giving her a birthmark where she didn't have one before, altering the pattern and color of a cat's fur, etc.

The change cannot be something that couldn't be natural, such as turning someone's hair bright neon blue and their eyes pink, or giving a dog a zebra-stripe pattern to its fur. That still leaves a lot of room for maneuvering, though.

The change usually lasts for at least a Scene, but the Wraith can expend Willpower to make it permanent.

***** Pull**

The Wraith can not only make cosmetic changes to her host, but she can now go beyond what is "normal" for it: blue hair, pink eyes and a dog with zebra-stripe fur are well within this Art's purview, as are bizarre genitalia, extra fingers, weird teeth and the like. So long as it does not add or subtract from the host's Dice physical dice pools, it can be done with Pull.

As with Twist, the changes usually last for at least a Scene, but the Wraith can expend Willpower to make them permanent. The Wraith can also impress these changes upon the host's genes, so that any offspring it has will carry them as traits, though this is a little more costly.

****** Alter**

This stage on the Path allows the Wraith to go beyond the cosmetic, and put serious changes on the map of her host. She can add extra limbs and joints, fashion body armor, make horns, fangs and claws, perform sex changes, increase or decrease muscle and fat... so long as the host will still have something close to its original shape, it can be done with Alter.

In mechanical terms, Alter can be used to add dots to Physical Attributes, or swap them around, increase Defense or Health, or create natural weapons. These changes are costly, though, and the Wraith has to be careful with what she's doing: too many changes may seriously damage or kill a host.

******* Warp**

This Art increases the bond between the Wraith and her host to the point where the Wraith's Corpus

suffuses itself into the living flesh around it, and becomes one with it. From that point on, anything the Wraith can do with her own Corpus through the Shaping Numen - no matter how radical - can also be done with the host.

However, there is a constant danger of the host's body being unable to cope with the gross changes wrought upon its anatomy. Fatal damage may be caused if the Wraith is too careless, and doesn't clean up after herself.

7.3.7 Crossover Arts.

Swarm

Prerequisite Arts, *** Sleepwalk, *** Pull

Normally, a Wraith using Bios is only able to be in one host at a time. This Art allows the Wraith to spread herself out amidst a swarm of tiny, like creatures - ants, bees, spiders, etc. - so that she becomes the guiding force behind the swarm.

Unity

Prerequisite Arts, **** Lost Time, **** Alter

This Art allows a Wraith to take full advantage of the mind she's living in: gaining access to memories, skills and information that the host knows. Such access is fleeting, but it may be just long enough to save the Wraith's masquerade, or get her out of a tight spot.

From the Dust

Prerequisite Arts: **** Making Miracles, **** Alter

One of the more impressive uses of Bios is the ability to bring a dead body back to some semblance of life. So long as there's a scrap of tissue left on the bone, the Wraith can reverse the process of mortal decay back to just after the moment of death. This process is a quick but costly thing, and will never do more than create an animated cadaver - one that needs Essence daily to keep from falling back into the dust.

But the look on someone's face when they're confronted by a victim they dispatched, years ago, is purportedly worth every ounce of trouble...

7.4 Castigate (Uncommon).

Every Wraith has a Shadow, and every Wraith's Shadow seeks to harm, hinder and end the Wraith it's attached to. This is one of the simplest - and most terrible - facts of "life" in the Deadlands, and is what makes the Castigate Numen so valuable. Those who know its secrets can defy the Shadow's ascension to power, control the actions of their own, and even use the dark energy of Storms to their advantage.

Such abilities make for a powerful Numen, which may be why the Pardoners go out of their way to make certain that only they have unfettered access to its secrets. On the other hand, they say that they're protecting their charges from the dangerous secrets that Castigate holds. And they may

well be telling the truth... after a fashion.

7.4.1 Paths.

Castigate has three recognized Paths:

- Path of Absolution Also known as Purification provides the most obvious - or well-recognized - of Castigationary Arts: the humbling and weakening of Shadows. Wraiths who've been taken "under the wing" of a Pardoners come to know these Arts all too well, as their Purifiers use them against their dark halves on a regular basis.
- Path of Partnership Also known as Coercion involve techniques for humbling one's own Shadow, either stopping its offensive actions, or making it give the Wraith certain "favors" on demand. Such actions have the potential to be dangerous, and actually feed the Shadow, but the Partners say they can handle it. Hopefully they're not deluding themselves...
- Path of Warding Also known as Stormweaving relies on the connection between the Damned and the Storms they inhabit to give a measure of safety against both. The Warders are always good people to know, both for their ability to predict eruptions and protect against their effects.

7.4.2 Those Who Know.

The Pardoners see themselves as the stewards of Castigate, and do their utmost to ensure that they alone are privy to its secrets. They will not teach their Arts to others, and will not tolerate outside amateurs passing themselves off as "Pardoners," either. Any of their number convicted of spreading the Numen to outsiders is severely punished for disloyalty.

That said, something as valuable as Castigate cannot be bottled up forever. The Order maintains a few specialists in the Path of Absolution, as do some groups amongst the Believers. Meanwhile, the Messengers seem to have gained access to the Path of Warding, though no one - not even them - is entirely certain how the knowledge was passed on.

Whispers.

Given the Pardoners' stern demeanor - and the sinister whispers their overzealousness creates - rumors about Castigate are almost a dime a dozen.

They say that the secret masters of the Numen can create Storms if they get angry at a Necropolis' inhabitants. They also say that the Pardoners can yank their own Shadows out of their bodies and force them to fight on their behalf, or have beaten their own dark halves into such complete submission that they don't have to fear so much as a harsh word.

They also say that the Concord can spy on people they've Castigated, too, and zap them from afar like a stray puppy if they don't like what they're up to.

And there are deep-seated rumors of an entire, other Path of the Numen that allows for direct control the Damned. What the Pardoners would want with such Arts is unknown, though they say the reason the Path isn't disseminated is because its use brings a high amount of Tainted Essence, and almost guarantees being lost to the "other side."

7.4.3 Basic Art.*** Dark Mirror**

While the Soulsight Affinity allows a Wraith to gain some information about another's Shadow, it doesn't tell the whole story, nor does it allow a Wraith to check up on her own dark half. The Dark Mirror Art overcomes this handicap, giving a Wraith the chance to gain complete insight into another's Shadow, or her own.

System: The Wraith using this art must be within conversational distance of the Wraith she wants to use Dark Mirror upon. She then spends one Essence, and rolls her Wits + Presence + Castigate. Each dot of Angst of the other Wraith has removes one dice from the roll.

If rolling to check up on herself, the roll is the same, only the Wraith does not have to spend the Essence to do it. Also, each dot she has in the Eidolon Merit counteracts one dot in Angst when removing dice from the roll. If she has more Eidolon than Angst, the excess is reflected in extra dice added to the roll.

The first success reveals how much Angst the Shadow has, and the second reveals how much Tainted Essence. Successes past that point reveal such details as: what the Shadow's been up to, what it's planning, what Thorns it has active but not what they're being used for, etc.

7.4.4 Path of Absolution.

Yes, it will hurt. But the hurt you will suffer now is a hundred... nay, a thousand times better than the hurt you will suffer later if the Shadow within you grows.

Now, are you ready...?

The sight of a Pardoner on patrol is a source of relief to some, and horror to others. These Arts allow their users to halt a Shadow's progress, and stymie it in its attempts to dominate a Wraith's life. But they don't come cheap, and they tend to hurt - which might not be so bad if Wraiths didn't get the idea that the Pardoners were enjoying it, somehow...

With the exception of Purification, Wraiths cannot use these Arts on themselves.

**** Penitence**

Often times, a Castigator's charges are not willing to tell the entire truth about what they've been up to. Whether this is because they went against the Injunction, feel complicit in some crime or are deeply ashamed of something they did, or left undone, the Shadow can only benefit from their silence.

This Art turns the tables by making honesty a weapon against the Shadow. For every dark secret, sin or lapse of poor judgment the subject confesses to, and promises to make good on, the Shadow loses any Tainted Essence it had gathered from that particular failing.

Such is the power of the Art that, even if the Shadow hadn't gotten Tainted Essence from a confessed-to sin, if the Wraith makes the promised amends, Tainted Essence is lost. However, if the Wraith breaks her promise, the Tainted Essence is regained with interest.

***** Pardoning**

More drastic than the gentle Art of Penitence, this technique - considered the signature Art of the Pardoners - allows a Wraith to bubble, boil and burn the Tainted Essence right out of a Wraith. The pain and damage are in equal measure for the amount of Tainted Essence removed, but if it's that or letting the Shadow run free over them, many Wraiths are more than willing to take the pain.

The manner in which Pardoning is done is up to the Wraith doing it. Some prefer to lay on hands or pray with the subject, while others seek to scourge or beat her. The results are exactly the same.

During the process, the Tainted Essence is leached from the subject and harvested by the Castigator. This goes into a "Shadow pool," equal to her overall pool of Essence, and is stored there - safe from her Shadow - for a day and a night. The Wraith must somehow get rid of that Tainted Essence during that time, for if she does not it will start to bubble out, with one dot per hour escaping from the Shadow Pool and sliding to her Shadow.

****** Purging.**

One of the more advanced forms of therapy a Pardoner can deliver, Purging lets the Wraith take hold of another's Shadow and make it cease and desist all tricks and lies that are known to the Pardoner. This can also bring a Wraith out of Catharsis or a Harrowing, smack the Lost back to

their senses, and even jerk a Wraith out of Shadowstate.

However, the Pardoner has to know exactly what is going on. It is not merely enough to know that a Wraith's Shadow is using a Thorn: she has to know which Thorn, and what it's being used to show - something that Dark Mirror won't divulge. Gaining this knowledge requires a Pardoner to do a lot of investigation into her charge, which is not a thing that your average Pardoner has the time to do.

It's also a dangerous thing to interrupt a Shadow when it's engaged in one of its tricks. Purging risks the absorption of the Tainted Essence thusly disrupted, just as though the Pardoner had used Pardoning on the Wraith. And as with Pardoning, the Tainted Essence goes into the Shadow Pool, and stays there for only a day and a night before seeping out.

***** Purification

The Pardoners believe that the only difference between Essence and Tainted Essence is that the latter is just as described: tainted. It is possible to remove that taint, and change negative energy to positive, using the soul as a crucible. However, it is not a gentle thing - half of the energy is always lost in the transfer, and the crucible burns so hot as to make the Wraith catch fire in the process.

The Wraith must spend Essence and Willpower to spark this change. She can take Tainted Essence from either her Shadow's own store, or her Shadow Pool, but not both. She can also choose how many dots of Tainted Essence she wants to risk changing over.

The first success transforms one Tainted Essence to one Essence. Every other success after the first adds another Essence to her pool. However, the second success causes a level of Lethal damage, as does every other success after that, due to the power caused by the change.

Example: Brother Addition decides to try and change five Tainted Essence from his Shadow Pool, and rolls. He gets six successes, which means he converts three Tainted Essence the 1st, 3rd and 5th successes and takes two Lethal damage the 2nd and 4th successes. The 6th success is wasted, since he didn't "wager" enough Tainted Essence.

7.4.5 Path of Partnership.

*No, actually I think you're going to listen to
me, this time.*

*And if you're really good,
maybe I'll let you off easy.*

Just as a Pardoner can conquer the Shadows of others, so can they conquer their own. In fact, they can do so with precision, using the Shadow's own powers and tricks for their own benefit without having to get their dark halves' permission.

Such Arts can be dangerous - some would say addictive, too - but a Wraith in charge of her own Shadow is both a terrifying opponent, and a good friend to have.

Wraiths can only use these Arts on themselves, and not others.

**** Darken**

Allowing your Shadow to know what you're thinking of doing is a near-guarantee of disaster. Pardoners use Darken to completely shield their thoughts, feelings, hopes and dreams from their other half. The Shadow can still talk to the Wraith, but it can't tell what the Pardoner is really meaning behind her words.

Darken costs Willpower, and a lot of Essence, to start up, but doesn't need much to keep going after that. However, while this Art is in effect, the Wraith cannot use Dark Mirror on herself: the shield created by the Art hides both sides from one another's view...

***** Defy**

Once at this stage of the Path, the Wraith's control over her Shadow has increased to the point where she can halt her other half's attempts to do her harm. The second the Pardoner becomes aware of her Shadow attempting Catharsis, a Harrowing or Dissolution, the Pardoner can try to stop it.

It requires Essence and Willpower, but success means the Shadow wasted its Tainted Essence. That said, a little of the Shadow's power always comes back for the Wraith having to wrestle her inner demon.

****** Demand**

Shadows have a particular power - known as the Heart's Thorn - that allows them to hand over dice provided the Wraith performs certain actions. Under normal circumstances, the Shadow decides how much to hand over, if anything, and the Wraith is forced to bargain with her other half for "help."

Demand turns the tables on the Shadow by forcing it to hand over as many dice as it can, any time the Pardoner demands it, for whatever the Pardoner wants to use it for. This costs Essence, and the Shadow still gets Tainted Essence whenever one of those dice comes up 10 - even on a re-roll. But if it's that or certain disaster, most Pardoners bear the sting.

******* Daemon**

Wraiths can elect to enter Shadowstate with their Shadows' permission and cooperation. This state of being puts some of the Shadow's powers in the Wraith's hands, but gives the Shadow Tainted Essence each time these powers are used. It also gives the Shadow a better chance at Catharsis, which makes such a bargain risky indeed.

However, such is the power of Castigate that, at this level of the Path, the Pardoner can force the Shadow to enter Shadowstate. She can also specify which Thorns she wants to use - provided she

knows what they are - and can extend the state out as long as she'd like. Worse still, the Shadow cannot stop the Shadowstate, or attempt Catharsis while it's on.

This extreme feat of Shadow management requires both Willpower and a lot of Essence to pull off. It also gives Tainted Essence right from the start, along with another dose every time the Shadowstate is extended by a Scene.

7.4.6 Path of Warding.

*Just hold onto me, okay?
Hold on and don't let go,
whatever happens.
I will save us all from this - I swear.*

Storms are extremely dangerous, both for what they can do to Wraiths caught out in them, and the Damned that come along for the ride.

Pardoners can use the connection between the Damned - who are just Shadows that triumphed, really - and the Storms they inhabit to affect the winds of the Storm. The lesser Arts will at least save them from the physical and mental damage the winds would bring, while those with a higher understanding of the Path can even force the winds to keep the Damned away, or else smash them to pieces before they draw near.

** Storm Warning

Wraiths with the Storm Warning Art receive advanced warning of a Storm's approach. This warning is usually quick on the heels of a Storm, but sometimes comes days or even weeks ahead of time, depending on how strong the Storm is, or how good of a glimpse the Pardoner receives.

The Art activates by itself, and costs no Essence. However, the approaching darkness gives the Wraith some Tainted Essence as a way of saying "Hello..."

*** Stormwall

Once the Storm is upon them, Pardoners can create a small zone of clarity, into which the Storm will not intrude. Stormwall does little more than deflect the winds around the Pardoner, creating a space that is usually just large enough for the Wraith who creates it, and those holding onto her when she does. Also, the field cannot be moved: once the Pardoner has decided to place her zone, it is fixed there until the Wraith ends it or is ended, herself...

The only problem is that, while the Storm is held back, the Damned within it are not. They are usually too caught up in the high-speed race of the winds to stop and examine the null spaces they pass, but not always.

**** Ward of the Damned

A step up from Stormwall, this Art allows the Wraith to create the exact same zone of clarity, only

most of the Damned are kept out as well.

This requires Willpower as well as Essence to create, and the strength of the zone created is what determines how powerful the Damned have to be to get in. Fortunately, even a low-grade zone will keep out most of the enemy. However, no Ward of the Damned has ever stood against a Dark Walker.

Also note that Ward of the Damned only works during a Storm, as the Art uses the energies of that Storm against its dread riders and hangers-on. It will not keep the Damned away at any other time.

***** Windweave

The highest pinnacle of the Path of Warding, Windweave makes the Storm winds obey the Pardoner, both to defend and destroy. The near-herculean effort requires a lot of Willpower and Essence to start - and garners Tainted Essence - but allows a Wraith to not only divert the winds, but to control them however she'd like. It can be used to create a moving zone of clarity, or pick enemies up and smash them against the ground, or each other.

A common use of this Art is to cause the winds to spin around the Pardoner at a rate of speed far higher than the Storm, itself - keeping the Storm out at some distance, and ripping the Damned within it to shreds when they get too close. Such a cyclone can be placed around entire buildings, or extended out to the size of few large city blocks, depending on how much power the Pardoner wants to put into the Art.

7.4.7 Crossover Arts.

Dark Release

Prerequisite Arts, *** Pardoning, *** Defy

Wraiths who perform the Art of Pardoning store the Tainted Essence in a "Shadow Pool," within themselves - keeping the dark energy away from their own Shadow. Dark Release allows them to siphon that energy away from themselves, though their Shadow always gets a little of it on the way out.

The Tainted Essence has to be placed in something that can hold it, however. It can be given to another Wraith, placed in a special Artifact designed to hold or dispose of it, or - as is often the case - dumped into one of the Damned. Many groups of Pardoners have a near-lobotomized "reservoir" chained up in their main Haunt, existing only to serve as waste disposal.

Giving it to a Wraith who doesn't want it, or doesn't know you're doing it, gives more to the Shadow due to psychic feedback.

Storm Armor

Prerequisite Arts, **** Demand, **** Ward of the Damned

Normally, walking into the Storm would be an act of suicide for a Wraith, but the Damned are able

to thrive in that hostile environment. This Crossover Art lets the Pardoner "convince" her Shadow to give her a measure of protection against the Storm, so she can walk within it undetected, and undamaged. It requires Essence, and gives Tainted Essence in return for the Shadow's "help."

The protection created by Storm Armor makes the Wraith look as though she's in Shadowstate - with a vengeance. It is usually employed to perform tactical strikes or espionage upon the enemy during a Storm, or to just "get some" against the Damned when they're not expecting any real trouble. However, it can only protect the Wraith, herself, so there will be no tag-alongs on these missions.

Bulwark

Prerequisite Arts, **** Purging, **** Ward of the Damned

The Path of Warding contains an Art - Ward of the Damned - that allows a Pardoner to keep the Damned at bay, but only during a Storm. However, once this Art's understanding is combined with Purging, it becomes possible for a Pardoner to create the same zone of clarity without a Storm - keeping the Damned from entering the space created by the Art.

The procedure to start it is pretty much the same. And, as with Ward of the Damned, the strength of the zone determines how powerful the Damned have to be to break through. Also, Dark Walkers are unaffected by the Bulwark, breaching it with contemptuous ease.

Parting the Clouds

Prerequisite Arts, ***** Purification, ***** Windweave

One of the more miraculous uses of Castigate is the ability to push the Storm back where it came from, or stop it from erupting at all. It works by transforming the dark energies of the Storm into their opposite, which both cancels out the forward motion and knocks it back a bit.

Such an effort requires that many Pardoners - who must all know this Art - join forces to walk the Storm back to its starting point, or else sit around its promised point of origin and deny it entry. The more people involved, the greater the chances of success and the less Essence and Willpower spent by all involved.

Nothing can stop the high amount of Tainted Essence to be gained for the effort, but the Pardoners view this as a worthy sacrifice.

7.5 Decay (Common).

The dead are well-known for their ability to possess and control the living, but there are fewer tales of them being able to do the same to inanimate objects. There's no good reason for this, though: slipping into places or things, and taking them over, is much easier for the dead to accomplish, given the utter lack of resistance.

It's also seen as more "ethical," since the dead don't have to interfere with a living being to do it. However, it's perfectly possible to use the Decay Numen to animate, break or change objects

before the eyes of the living, thus sending them running for the door.

What's In A Name?

Given the wide range of effects the Numen can produce, some might wonder why it's called "Decay" - especially when one of its Paths allows Wraiths to strengthen weak objects, and fix broken ones.

The answer is that objects that have had a Wraith Claim them have an unfortunate tendency to fall apart: they cease functioning, break or rot much faster than they would if a Wraith hadn't taken them on. Sometimes the difference is almost imperceptible, and sometimes it's almost terrifying how quickly something crumbles.

Some Wraiths wonder why Mortals don't suffer the same effect. The most obvious answer is that they're living creatures, and their bodies can heal whatever damage takes place usually. Places and things can't just heal themselves, though.

7.5.1 Paths.

Decay has three recognized Paths:

The Path of Animation sometimes called Bedlam is what's most often associated with this Numen: Claiming objects in order to move them about. Shellriders do this for many reasons, though protecting one's Anchors - or those of others - are often the main reason. But there's nothing like walking, talking child's doll to scare a mortal, or "running" refrigerator to do more than just scare them...

The Path of Restoration also known as Corruption focuses on turning back time for a place or thing, or speeding it up. Its users are known as Custodians or Gremlins, depending on whether they use the Path to strengthen and repair things, or weaken and break them. But while the Path can be used to destroy things, its users enjoy a generally good reputation.

The Path of Variation, or Deviation on the other hand, is seen as going much too far by those on the outside of the Numen. The Artificers who use it to change the form and function of the objects they Claim say they're just improving things. But it's hard not to notice how baroque, sinister and just flat-out hazardous a lot of those "improvements" are.

7.5.2 Those Who Know.

As Decay is one of the Common Numen, its use is fairly widespread, though only one of the Paths is truly well-known. The Order sees it as an "acceptable" way to frighten mortals away from Anchors, so long as their Wraiths don't do anything too crazy with it Or create too high of a body count. Slamming doors, creaking floors and shuffling things around just out of the sight of the living is considered to be tolerable terror.

Those who died from old age often have a knack for this particular Numen. Some of them suspect this is caused by their own, personal experience with advancing in years and falling apart, thus

attuning them to the spiritual wavelength of this Numen. Others wonder if there isn't something more to it than that, but appreciate that they're the ones other Wraiths go to first if they need a Shellrider, as no other means of demise enjoys a general Affiliation with Decay.

Whispers.

Decay is something of a stand-up Numen: if you can think of something to do with it, there's a good chance that, given enough time and Essence, it could be done with one known Arts. That and most Shellriders are truthful enough to give an honest assessment if something could be done or not. And if they can't do it, they'll send potential customers onto someone who can - it's not as if they're lacking for business, after all.

But rumors yet remain. For one thing, there are those who say that, once a Wraith gets to a certain point with the Numen, they can control any object they've Claimed before without even having to touch it, much less see it.

They also say that true masters of the Path of Restoration can put anything back together, even if it's been nothing but dust under the ground for thousands of years. They say that Artificers can draw the "soul" out of an object, and let it speak for itself, and possibly even take control of its body. And they say that a particularly cunning Shellrider could put herself into hundreds - even thousands - of objects at once, and control them in series, or independently...

The Damned are known to make use of this Numen as well. And if the stories are true, the objects they Claim do not decay faster. They do, however, become extremely unlucky for the mortals who handle them. and may even be invested with certain, evil powers that make the bad luck worth risking...

But these remain stories, for now.

Basic Art.

*** Claim**

Claim lets the Wraith perform the necessary task of bonding with the object or place she's passed into. Much like the Bios Basic Art of Possession, it's no more difficult than climbing inside something, rather than just passing through it. But by bonding with the object or place, one can not only see the world through its eyes, but begin to exercise some control over it.

System: The Wraith must be in physical contact with the object or place she wants to enter. She then rolls Dexterity + Presence + Decay, and spends a varying amount of Essence unless it's her Anchor and she's in.

Smaller than the wraith	Zero essence
As large as the wraith	1 Essence
Average car	2 Essence
Large room	3 Essence
Small House / Large Office	4 Essence
Huge Mansion / Average Factory	5 Essence

Each success on the roll takes away a die from another's roll to try and enter it, thus kicking her out. She may, of course, elect to let the other Wraith in, which is common practice amongst Shellriders acting in concert. And if the Wraith is entering someone else's Anchor, each dot in Rating the Anchor has removes two dice from her Claim pool unless, of course, the owner's there to let her in.

While possessing an object, the Wraith feels as though she is the object. Without using other Arts, she can't do more than observe what happens around it, but her eyesight, hearing and other senses extend all the way around whatever she's in. As with Possession, all Affinities, save Ghost-sense, do not work, but there are times when they're not missed at all...

This state of being also has the danger of damage. The Wraith loses Corpus every time the object does - kind for kind, level for level. The Wraith can still heal herself, though, and may slip out of the object at any time to avoid further damage.

Every time the Wraith Claims something that is not an Anchor - either hers or another Wraith's - she must roll her Stamina + Presence + Decay. One die is subtracted from this roll for each time she's Claimed it past the first.

Failure on this roll means that the object's natural rate of decay is doubled, and subsequent failures double it again. A Dramatic Failure means the object breaks, cracks, ceases functioning or possibly even crumbles to dust right then and there. This disaster gives one Tainted Essence to the Wraith for each time she's Claimed it, up to and including the one she received a Dramatic Failure on.

Wraiths can instead elect to spend a point of Willpower when Claiming the object. This forgoes any need for the roll, as it staves off the damage she and other Wraiths may cause by being inside the object.

7.5.3 Path of Animation.

*Heh, you should have seen the looks on their faces.
All those little, antique bells in old Mertle's bedroom,
all ringing out of sync with one another?
And then when they couldn't take anymore,
they tried to leave, but I slammed the door shut
and made it so they couldn't get out.
And I just kept ringing louder and louder... priceless!*

Sure, it was a lot of Juice to waste on a bunch of stupid burglars,

*but I bet they won't be coming back
to her house anytime soon. Heh.*

Shellriders are known for their ability to take control over objects, and move them about as they will. Their Arts are often seen as a gentle means to keep things from harm - mostly by putting them out of harm's way, or ensuring that they fall in the "right" way. But it's not impossible to use them to put a real scare onto someone - and they will, if they have to.

Where this Path really comes into its own is if a Wraith Claims a large object, like a room, an entire house, a mansion or a factory. She can use the following Arts to extend control both over every object that is connected to the building, itself doors, windows, lights, etc., and eventually move objects within it as well. Controlling and moving said things about is cause for more rolls and Essence expenditures, of course, but the results achieved are amazing.

As a general rule, the Path of Animation doesn't tend to accrue Tainted Essence, which makes it a "safe" choice for scaring the living. However, if a Wraith uses any of these Arts to seriously maim or kill a mortal, or drive her insane, they may wind up feeding their Shadow.

**** Sudden Motion:**

This allows the Wraith to move one thing open or close a door or window, move the head on a doll, etc.. She can also affect the rate of speed of an object's molecules, making it noticeably warm or oddly cool, or else create enough friction to zap someone with a very mild electric shock, like static electricity.

*****All Activity:**

The next step up allows full control of an object with moving parts, so that all the moving parts connected to that object can be moved as often as the Wraith would care to. The Wraith could open and close all the doors in the house several times, or keep someone from opening or closing any of them. She could also fully animate the child's doll, and make it walk across the room towards someone, or get an object with wheels on its undercarriage like an industrial stove to silently trundle across the floor when the cook's back is turned.

****** Complete Control:**

This lets the Wraith move something that wasn't meant to move, and though it can bend the rules of physics, it can't leave the ground. For example, a factory machine with no wheels could be made to slide along the floor, but it couldn't fly at someone. And while a handbell could be made to shake itself back and forth, and ring, it couldn't get up high enough to go into full motion.

However, the true wonders of this Art are:

1) A Wraith can also extend control to a separate object within what she's possessing, without having to slip from object to object and Claim it.

2) The object can be slid up walls and along ceilings, no matter how heavy it is

3) The Wraith can make the object "talk," in an odd, vibratory approximation of the Wraith's own voice.

******* Sympathetic Action:**

This is the next step up from ***** Complete Control, whereby a Wraith can extend control over several different objects at once. She could, if she had the mind to do it and the Essence to spare, animate every car in a factory showroom and make them "dance" around the floor, walls and ceiling. She could also make everything in a refrigerator "leap" from its berthings, fall to the floor, and then encircle a would-be late night snacker in a threatening horde of leftovers and luncheon meats.

7.5.4 Path of Restoration.

You want it to look just like new?

I can do that.

You want it to work just like it used to?

I can do that, too.

And, yeah... I can make it look older, too,
but I prefer not to do that.

It's really unprofessional. And painful.

Well, okay... but that is gonna cost you extra. A lot extra.

And, um... don't tell anyone you hired me for it. Okay?

The Path of Restoration wears two faces - protector and destroyer. Custodians can pride themselves on being able to recreate beauty and function, spitting in the face of time and eventual collapse. But Gremlins can take sadistic pleasure in watching it all fall apart, one slow, certain crack at a time.

The Arts are all the same: the only difference is in their application, and the Tainted Essence that breaking things down brings to Wraiths who do it. There's also a danger of being caught in the backwash when a Claimed object is destroyed, and suffering physical damage. Most Wraiths are able to time the breakdown perfectly, so they can get out at the critical moment. But accidents do happen, and they aren't pretty...

That said, the restorative powers of this Path are amazing - especially when you consider that its users don't have to understand anything about how to really repair things in order to make it work. The process of Claiming the object, and then using these Arts, give the Wraith an intuitive sense of what belongs where, and how to coax things together or tear them apart.

The chief irony is that, for all its power, none of the Arts on the Path of Restoration can be used to repair the damage that Decay can do. Anyone who fails the secondary roll while using Claim has to resign themselves to having scarred the object forever, and either spend Willpower to keep it from getting any worse, or hope they don't screw it up again.

**** The Presaging:**

This is something of an "advertisement" for this Path's services, and is often used as an estimate of how far gone something is, or how new. It allows a Wraith to bring a Claimed object "forward" or "backward" in time, one step per success. The effects last for only a few seconds, but it's enough to let someone know how much work would need to be done to make the object better, or how easy it would be to break it.

Note that, unlike the other Arts on this Path, ** The Presaging can be used on objects that have been weakened by the Decay Numen.

***** The Prevention:**

This allows a Wraith to make a Claimed object stronger or weaker than it currently is. Paper can be made as durable as diamonds, while diamonds can be made as flimsy as Styrofoam. Weakening brings Tainted Essence for having broken things down, however.

****** The Repairing:**

A step up from merely preventing damage or accommodating it is repairing and/or causing it. This Art allows the Wraith to fix a Claimed object, so long as all the parts are still there, or replacements found. The reverse makes the object stop functioning, and possibly even make key parts disappear. As with *** The Prevention, breaking an object brings Tainted Essence.

******* The Resurrection:**

A Wraith with this Art is one to be cherished, or feared, for she can - within one hour - completely rebuild a near-ruined object, or else break something brand new down into smashed, almost-unrecognizable parts. Best of all, only half the parts need to be there for a resurrection to occur - such is the power of this Art that missing pieces are filled in.

Destroying things brings Tainted Essence, and if this Art should be used to destroy an Anchor, extra Tainted Essence is garnered for this extreme act of violation towards another Wraith.

7.5.5 Path of Variation.

*Why do I do it? Because I can.
And I think you would, too, if you could.
Admit it or don't. I don't care either way, my friend.
Just don't try to stop me. This is art.*

The Artificers are known for their ability to rework places and things to suit their needs and tastes. It's not merely enough for them to Claim and control something - they have to transform it, within and without, until it matches their ideal. And they can have some seriously odd ideas on how things should look, or perform...

As with the Path of Restoration, a Wraith doesn't have to understand how something actually works in order to change it. And, as with the Path of Animation, there isn't too much danger of harvesting Tainted Essence while using the following Arts. The only exceptions are using the Arts to maim, kill or drive the living insane, or else screwing up a **** Mutation or ***** Metamorphosis roll to the point where the object becomes a broken heap of slagged junk, and collapses in on itself. In the latter case, the combination of wasted potential and disappointment feeds a dark banquet to the Artificer's Shadow.

Any changes that a Wraith makes to an object are permanent ones, though the Wraith who made them can always change them back by using the same Art in reverse. Another Wraith with the same Art can try to reverse the process as well, but must gain at least an equal number of successes on that roll as the Wraith who changed it in the first place.

**** Modification:**

This Art allows a Wraith to make cosmetic changes to a Claimed object. She can change its colors or texture, and make small modifications to its shape, so long as she doesn't change the object's stats or performance.

***** Modernization:**

With this Art, a Wraith can make more complicated changes to a Claimed object. She can affect its Durability and Size, which in turn affect Structure and Damage. She cannot, however, change Structure and Damage independently, nor affect the overall performance of its mechanical and electrical parts.

****** Mutation:**

Once the Wraith has gotten to this point, a Claimed object's properties can be radically altered, as long as it retains its basic purpose. The Wraith can affect any of the object's stats independently of one another, and change the performance rates of its working parts as well. This allows for the creation of some amazing things, but failure brings the danger of the object collapsing in on its own impossibilities - giving Tainted Essence to the Wraith who forced it too far.

******* Metamorphosis:**

The pinnacle Art of the Path allows the Wraith to do damn near anything she wants with an object. So long as the parts are there, or can be converted or cannibalized from nearby and the Wraith has enough successes and Essence to cover it a Wraith can turn anything into almost anything. As with **** Mutation, however, the penalty for failure is a massive infusion of Tainted Essence.

7.5.6 Crossover Arts.

Deadwire

Prerequisite Arts, ** Sudden Motion, ** The Presaging

This relatively recent Art takes advantage of long-distance communication systems, such as telephone and telegraph wires. Claiming an entire line network would be very expensive, so Wraiths have learned to shellride the electric impulse, instead: turning themselves into a few electric crackles, disappearing into a wall socket and reappearing somewhere else, almost instantly.

There are two catches. The first is that the Wraith can only use this to go somewhere she's been, or somewhere she knows the exact location of. The other is that they still experience the pull of their Anchors - if the destination is outside of their limit, the pull will catch up with them the moment they reform.

Ghost Prison

Prerequisite Arts, *** All Activity, *** Modernization

It's always been possible for more than one Wraith to Claim the same object at once, so long as the first one to Claim it lets the others in. This Art goes a step further - it allows a Wraith to Claim an object, and shove another Wraith in there, against her will. The Wraith using Ghost Prison can then lock the other Wraith inside of the object for a certain amount of time, if she chooses to.

This Art doesn't work as well against Wraiths with Decay: they can try to make a * Claim roll to get out, so long as they get double the successes of their Jailer. And anyone with Ghost Prison can just make a roll of her own to reverse the effects. However, for those who don't know anything about Decay, this Art is a good way to keep troublemakers locked up for a while.

Ghost In The Machine

Prerequisite Arts, **** Complete Control, **** Mutation

Ordinarily, someone who Claims a computer can only make it to what it's supposed to, and by going through the normal means "typing" on the keyboard, flipping the buttons, moving the mouse to click on the folder and read the file, etc.. This Art lets a Wraith slide around inside its programming and read, change or delete information, and also lets the Wraith make the programs do things they aren't supposed to.

While they can't leave the Claimed computer and retain control over it, Wraiths can use this Art to talk to other computers on the same network, and correspond with other, Claimed machines so long as they're hooked in, too. Wraiths can't achieve total control over another computer while they're Claiming the one they're in, but they can always modify some of the computer's programs to hack into the others.

Haunted Mansion

Prerequisite Arts, ***** Sympathetic Action, ***** Metamorphosis

One of the more terrifying Arts that Decay has is the ability to make a Claimed object do things it just isn't built to do. Books grow teeth and bite their readers, marble statues come to life and grapple with intruders, staircases fall flat and slide mortals into an opening gullet in the floor below, spiral staircases turn to iron snakes and constrict their climbers... almost anything is possible with this Art.

The changes wrought with Plasticity don't last for too long, and are costly - both in terms of extra Essence and Tainted Essence. But nothing says "get out" like the front facade of a house suddenly becoming a great, fanged maw and shrieking "feed me your soul!"

Total Destruction

Prerequisite Arts, ***** Resurrection, ***** Metamorphosis

Objects subjected to the reverse of ***** Resurrection often break down over the space of an hour, which can sometimes be way too slow for a Wraith. The Total Destruction Art delivers exactly what's promised - the Claimed object breaks down in seconds.

The Object can collapse, implode, explode, rot or melt, depending on what the Wraith wants to have happen. But for its swiftness, the Art brings more Tainted Essence than simple, left-handed ***** Resurrection.

7.6 Embody (Common).

At first glance, the Embody Numen might seem like a strange redundancy. If Wraiths - like Ghosts - can Manifest without having to learn the Numen, then why bother to learn it at all?

What Embody does is allow Wraiths to Manifest as things other than themselves, or to create different effects while Manifested. These Embody Arts are costly to use, and maintain, but those who enjoy the use of this Numen say that it's worth every sliver of Essence and Corpus, just to be there again. And you should see the look on those meatbags' faces...

Note that a Wraith doesn't have to have even a glimmer of the Shaping Numen to be able to warp and change her body via Embody. In fact, the two Numen are somewhat antithetical to one another, even though their thought processes are related disciplines: modifications done with Shaping will never show up while Embodied, and Shaping cannot be used while Embodied - not even to give or take Essence, or Corpus.

7.6.1 Paths.

Embodiment is unique amongst the Numina in that there are no set paths for Wraiths to follow. Just as every Wraith sees herself differently, so does every Wraith Manifest in a slightly different way, slowly navigating towards mastery of the Numen by intuition alone. This also means that there are no Crossover Arts, as each Art is its own, separate concept.

As for the names associated with the users of this Numen, it depends on what the Wraith tends to do with it. Those who make a habit of looking after the Anchors and interests of others are known as Proctors or Guardians, in more modern parlance, while those who use these Arts to destroy them - or just the living - are known as Shades and Fiends. Meanwhile, "ordinary," non-commercial Wraiths who happen to use Embody on a regular basis for their own benefit are sometimes referred to as Phantoms.

7.6.2 Those Who Know.

Embodiment is often innate to those who died from Sickness and Starvation, as well as those who were chosen by Fate. And as it's one of the Common Numina, and almost any Wraith could develop it on her own - or learn it from another - there is a wide scattering of the Numen throughout the Necropoli. That's not to say that there are many masters of its Arts, due to The Order's concerns about its more outré and lethal uses, but there are places where it's a rare Wraith who lacks any talent with it at all.

Out of all the Concords, the Haunters and Messengers are the ones who utilize this Numen on a regular basis. The Messengers use it to aid the living, and provide them with friendly warnings, while the Haunters take advantage of its darker aspects, and use them as a one-two combination along with Fear.

Whispers.

They say that the true masters of this Numen are virtuosos - completely bypassing the laws of man, ghost and Wraith when they Manifest into the Liveworld.

They are reputedly able to Manifest around the living, forming a shell of Corpus, or a strangling mask. They may even be able to take form inside of the living, either co-existing with mortal flesh - and controlling it - or doing terrible damage with a hand in the right spot. And others are said to be able to take full human form - so much so that they could be impregnated by the living...

Others are said to be able to form multiple copies of their ideal self, just as Wraiths can form themselves into swarms of small, noxious animals. These copies might be controlled individually, or in a group mind, but no one can say for certain. Others can stretch their bodies out to a ridiculous extreme - forming houses, mansions and entire villages out of their bodies, so as to harvest the fear of the mortals who step inside them.

As for the Damned, it seems that this Numen is something they simply cannot learn, much less use. They may be able to possess the bodies of the living - and the dead - via their warped version of Bios, but they are somehow kept from forming bodies of their own. And for this, we should all be eternally grateful.

7.6.3 Basic Art:

*** Phantasmal Flourish**

The first step towards learning the rules of Embodiment is learning that there are no rules - only guidelines. Just as each Wraith is unique, so is each Wraith's path to full interaction with the Liveworld. That said, certain techniques and understandings are very common, and while one Wraith's favorite way of Manifesting might do the same thing as another's, they will all appear slightly different to the onlooker.

To take this Basic Art, pick three of the following Flourishes. These now make up the abilities of the Embodiment Basic Art for that Wraith. The other Flourishes may be taken, too, but must be

purchased individually as 2nd level Alternate Arts.

System: To use these Flourishes, the Wraith makes the normal Manifestation roll, and then pays the extra cost in Essence and/or Corpus. More than one Flourish can be used at once, so long as they make sense, and the Wraith can pay the costs.

*** Ethereal Traces**

Allows the Wraith to make an effect more "permanent," or leave "ghosts" of herself around that activate if certain conditions are met. For example, she could set an effect by the doorway of her Haunt, so that anyone who passed by heard someone whisper Get Out, or felt a sudden chill. They might also see the Wraith "reflected" in the mirror, just once, the first time they pass it.

This +1 Essence and +1 Corpus to make, and additional +1 willpower to set the "trap," +1 essence per charge

*** Extended Visit**

Allows the Wraith to be Manifested for one scene per success, rather than one turn. This costs 2 more Essence per application.

*** Grave Voice**

Allows the Wraith to speak while Manifested, or speak while at the Zero Essence level. This costs 1 more Essence per application.

*** Revealed Rot** Allows the Wraith to activate a secondary, Embodied form if certain conditions are met, without having to reroll, much less re-Manifest. The successes of the roll for the first Art are transferred equally to the secondary Art.

For example, if the Wraith is using Spectral Banquet, the primary form could be a juicy, roast leg of lamb and the secondary form could be rotten meat. The moment a mortal takes a bite of the lamb, the secondary form is activated, and she receives a mouthful of disgusting, rotted slop.

That secondary form can be from other Embody Arts, so long as it's something the Wraith knows how to do. To use the Spectral Banquet example again, the secondary form could employ Tendrils of Darkness, and the food could be suddenly squirming with maggots. And if the Wraith had Storm of Vermin, a literal flood of worms could spew out of the lamb and into the poor mortal's face.

The Flourish costs 2 more Essence. The Wraith must pay the Essence costs for all Arts to be employed up front.

*** Strength of Death**

This Flourish allows a Wraith to make her Manifested form stronger, so she doesn't take double damage while Manifested, and can have up to three dots in her stats. This costs 2 more Essence.

*** Unseen Visitor**

The Wraith can Manifest for any amount of Essence, or using any other Art, and not be seen, so long as she can concentrate on maintaining a form that lets light go through it. The moment that concentration is gone, due to a sudden distraction, engaging in a fight, being attacked and/or wounded, or having to think about something else, the Flourish is dispelled. This costs 2 more Essence per application.

7.6.4 Embody Arts.

*Yes, there was a time when I wanted to hold
you, my love. I wanted to take you in my arms
again. Kiss you with real lips. Make love to
you for real. Be with you again, forever,
and never let you go.*

*But that was before you burned all my photos.
That was a dozen of your girlfriends ago.
That was before you screwed my own sister,
and left her crying in the dirt...
Oh, I'll hold you, alright.*

It's an exquisite bit of cruelty that, in order to get to the pinnacle of the Embody Numen - a fully-formed, if "dead," human body - Wraiths have to crawl through a rotting, junk-infested playground of darker, less wholesome Arts. The fact that ***** Fully Form is buttressed by two of the more dangerous and frightening Manifestations available to the dead is, perhaps, proof of how many Wraiths lost their way while climbing towards the ideal.

**** Will O' The Wisp**

This allows the Wraith to take the misty, slightly-phosphorescent form. She can choose to either spread herself out over the size of a small field, creating a small bank of fog or mist, or shrink up into a floating, glowing ball. Both the fog and the ball can move at a rate up to the Wraith's walking speed, but no further.

**** Moving Shadow**

The Wraith takes the form of a patch of shadow: either her own, or some other shape or shapelessness, so long as it's no larger than herself. The shadow can move along walls and floors, creep across ceilings or suddenly loom out and cover the Living.

**** Ghost Writing**

This old staple of traditional ghost stories has more than a kernel of truth to it: Wraiths can Manifest in the form of writing, should they care to, but the message must be relatively short, and the characters cannot move. The message can appear to be chalk, blood, paint, charcoal, ink, slightly

phosphorescent ooze, or whatever the Wraith would care to make it look like, and lasts until the Wraith ends it, or the message is "cleaned up."

*** Curio

This allows the Wraith to Manifest as an object of any kind, but one no larger than the Wraith, herself. The object may have moving parts, but she cannot move them herself. Common examples of forms taken with Curio are creepy antique dolls, odd books, keychains, showroom dummies, framed pictures, and so on.

*** Spectral Banquet

This works a little like Curio, except that the object the Wraith manifests as can be either edible or drinkable by mortals. The foodstuffs can be as appetizing or unappetizing as the Wraith would care to make them, and it "evaporates" as soon as it goes down the gullet, with no damage to the Wraith. As with Curio, the Wraith cannot move herself while in this form.

*** Ectoplasm

The Wraith can spread herself out into a wide puddle of thin, watery liquid, or take the form of a smaller and more concentrated wash of thick muck. The liquid can be fair or foul - but not edible - and is often used to make mud, blood, black "water" or stranger things. It's even possible to take the form of weak acids or glowing, unearthly slime.

**** Tendrils of Darkness

With this Art, the Wraith can take shape as an object that can move itself. As the name might indicate, this is perfect for making a solid glob of tentacles, but it can also be used to make a moving child's toy, a painting whose image changes when watched, and other frightening things. The only limit is that it must be one object, though a clever Wraith can make herself appear to be lots of things such as a writhing patch of maggots

**** Black Shuck

A Wraith can use this Art to assume the form of one animal, which can be as small as she'd like, but no larger than the Wraith, herself. The Wraith gains the abilities of that animal - such as flight, bite attacks or the like - but is still bound to the limitations of her Manifestation. This Art is often used to take the form of a great, spectral dog, but can be used to take other forms as well.

**** Storm of Vermin

Like Black Shuck, the Wraith takes animal or insect form, but takes the form of a pack or swarm of them. The Wraith gains the abilities of that animal - gnawing, stings, webs, flight, etc. - but the animals must be small ones, and the size of the pack or swarm cannot exceed that of the Wraith.

The animal type must also be something that can properly be called "vermin," such as ants,

bees, spiders, rats, stray cats, and so on. However, the Wraith doesn't have to be bound by their normal behavior: it's perfectly okay to use this Art to make a swarm of bees, and have it walk about in a human shape, only to fly apart once prey is spotted...

***** Fount of Madness

A Wraith can use this Art to take an insane and chaotic form: one that cannot be fully described as solid, liquid or gas, but pulses between these states and is in a state of constant flux. A Wraith using this Art has the ability to shift to new forms at will, and channel the effects of other, known Arts through the form without having to re-Manifest. The only limit to what can be done is the Wraith's own imagination, and how much Essence she's willing to commit to staying in this form.

***** Flowers of Evil

This Art is the next step up from Tendrils of Darkness, allowing the Wraith to manifest as several moving objects. Each one can be as large as the Wraith, but a Wraith can only make and command a finite number of these things without taxing her mental resources.

The Art was named in memory of one particularly nasty Haunter who liked to take the form of a wide patch of beautiful flowers, the better to lure young boys and girls in. He would then tangle them in his roots, and strangle them with tendrils, leaving them to rot amidst the pretty posies left behind.

***** Fully Form

Wraiths who use this Art appear fully, slipping past the boundaries of a normal, two-Essence Manifestation towards a better representation within the Liveworld. All the Wraith's stats are up to normal, she takes damage as normal, and she's able to speak with no difficulty. She is, however, cold and clammy to the touch, and looks distinctly unhealthy and pale.

7.7 Fate (Common).

While the Fate Numen is common, its use is not as widespread as one might imagine. This is largely because the most-recognizable aspect of the Numen - the ability to see the destiny of things, however darkly - is understood to be difficult and painful, not to mention highly-nourishing to Shadows. And as all it often tells its users is that they, the Deadlands and everyone in it are screwed... well, why bother?

But while the Haruspexes of The Order preach that the Gods have already made their choices, and will enforce their decisions, there are others who hold that the future is not carved in steel. They claim that predestination is bogus, and that Wraiths can still exert influence over which way they go. They just need the help of those who can see a little ahead of the curve, and take heed of their warnings.

Fickle, Funny Fate.

So which view is true? Both of them, in a way.

Fate has more than just the predetermined or "we-determined" aspect to it. Wraiths can use Fate to discover how things will be, and to influence their outcome, both now or later. And the results of the Arts of both Paths are often very much up to Storyteller fiat.

The problem is that Wraiths can't always walk both Paths at the same time without penalty. The two conflicting worldviews at play in the Numen tend to cancel one another out. This leads some to say that the Gods do not appreciate their pawns playing both sides of the fence.

System: The cancelation is both philosophical and mechanical. Wraiths can use Arts of Destiny and Luck, or Luck and Influence, with no penalties. However, someone who has used Influence with success recently suffers a penalty to use Destiny, and vice versa. The penalty is equal to the number of successes they got on the conflicting roll, past the first.

7.7.1 Paths.

The Fate Numen has three recognized Paths, though the "middle" Path - Luck - is rarely taken to the exception of the others.

- The Path of Destiny shows wraiths what will come, however darkly. The Oracles who practice the Arts of that Path are regarded as dour, joyless creatures because of the unavoidable futures their visions show them. However, it is said that the masters of this Path can bribe the Gods into forestalling the future - for a while.
- The Fortunetellers who practice the Path of Influence, on the other hand, say that predestination is hogwash. They see the future as "what if" rather than "what is," and their Arts allow them to manipulate the strings of chance and skeins of fortune, both for themselves and others. This can bring good luck and bad to their targets, too, but they don't always have control over what happens when.
- The Path of Luck is something of a compromise between the outlook of the two camps. Its results come without seeing the future, or directly manipulating fortune, but by just letting things happen around them. The Finders who practice it as a Path of first resort are aptly named, for they make invaluable informants and trackers. Just don't ask them what's going to happen - they won't know until they see it.

7.7.2 Those Who Know.

The Fate Numen is common amongst those who died from happenstance, as well as those who were fated to die. Most people would rather deal with the former than the latter, given how the Touched can be "hijacked" and made to say and do things by mysterious forces. But then, since only the Fated truly know their own, it's hard to be sure what you're truly dealing with.

As a general rule, however, the Fated tend to be Oracles, and the trip-ups mostly prefer the Path of Influence. Those who died from an accident like to believe that it was just an accident, and

that they can deal themselves better fortune from here on out. And those who were destined to get here... well, they know better.

The Order has traditionally thrown its weight behind predestination, given its Etruscan roots, so most followers of the Path of Destiny can be found in its ranks. Many of the Believers also use that same Path to divine the will of their deities, however humbly. Meanwhile, the Freewraiths prefer the Path of Influence, as their hatred of confinement and outside orders extends to "Fate" as well.

Oddly enough, the Messengers prefer the Path of Luck, as they need only lose themselves on the streets to find where they're needed the most.

Whispers.

Those who practice the Path of Destiny have all kinds of nasty rumors about those who have embraced Influence. They say they're the tools of the Damned, who have fooled them into believing their current heresy. They also say that, once one goes past the "acceptable" Arts, one learns how to seriously curse other Wraiths, or vex their second sight with false visions, or even complete blindness.

Meanwhile, the Fortunetellers whisper that Destiny leads to a series of strange delusions, whereby one actually sees the Gods at work. Tales are told of how the deluded can kneel before the "architects" of their fate and offer sacrifices for their favor. And you can probably guess whom some of the more paranoid Fortunetellers think the "Gods" might be.

As for Luck... is it truly possible to be so damned lucky that one could bounce back - or away - from all troubles and trials, only to come out of the other end with no recollection of anything bad having happened at all? Some say it's possible, and that they've seen such a Wraith at work. Oddly enough, they can never remember that Wraith's name...

It is also whispered that the Damned are unable to use this Numen, for they have no concept of the future or the past, and are stuck in the current moment forever. Others say that's a lie or perhaps true, and that the Damned excel in placing disastrous curses upon the living and the dead, or else extend their lack of foresight towards Wraiths, and deprive them of the ability to use the Fate Numen at all.

7.7.3 Basic Art.

*** Foreshadow**

All Wraiths have an Affinity known as Foreboding, which allows them to gain a flash of the future, or immediate importance, of someone or something. The Affinity is a very useful thing to have, but Wraiths have no control over it: Foreboding cannot be "used" like the other Affinities - merely experienced. And this means that sometimes Wraiths are blessed with the foresight to know a person or thing for what it is, and sometimes that moment of clarity misses them completely.

Wraiths who study the Numen of Fate learn to harness the fleeting foresight that Affinity grants,

and make it work for them. Rather than just waiting for a flash of insight, they can attune themselves to the web of destiny or possibility, if they prefer and force it to show them a glimpse of what the web holds. As with Foreboding, they will most likely only get a small inkling, but that is sometimes enough.

Note that * Foreshadow will not warn of a surprise attack: that secret remains the province of the Foreboding Affinity. Foreshadow may alert the user to the likelihood of the target trying to attack her, though.

System: The Wraith must concentrate on the person, place or thing she chooses to examine for one turn, and spend one Essence. She then rolls her Wits + Composure + Fate.

With a success, the Wraith senses if there's something vital about the person, place or thing's role in events. She gains a general sense of the role it plays helper, initiator, critical material, site of conflict, etc. She will not be able to tell when these things may happen, but an important event will be shown, no matter how far in the future it is.

If she gains an Exceptional Success on the roll, then she receives a glimpse of exactly what the target's presence in things must lead to. However, she will only see the ultimate result of those events: what leads up to that result is for the Wraith to discover, either through other Arts of Fate, or one day at a time.

Fate's Window.

How the glimpse of the future manifests itself depends on what method the Wraith uses to focus her sight. The basic method has her going into a slight trance, and seeing things, but there have been countless other ways of divining the future throughout history. So a Wraith could use almost any method her player would care to have her use, and the Storyteller will allow.

If a Wraith employs divinatory tools of some kind while using Fate Arts, she may gain a +1 to +3 bonus on her rolls, depending on how appropriate the tools are to the Art being used, and the quality of the tools, themselves. However, if she uses those tools too often, their loss will cripple her - causing a negative modifier of equal amount. This negative modifier continues until she either regains her tools, finds something of equal worth and has time to truly learn their use or becomes used to working without them once more.

7.7.4 Path of Destiny.

The vision is unambiguous. The signs are clear.

The plan will fail.

Yes, it will fail. And there is nothing you can do about it - especially since you have already set it into motion before now...

Well, you should have waited. And do not dare to take that tone with me! Not after all I have

*suffered to bring you this prophecy.
Rage at the Gods if you dare, fool.
But harm not their messenger lest you bring down
their wrath!*

The Oracles' profession is a very depressing one - to be the bearer of bad news, time and time again. Every so often they can give someone a good report, but more often than not they can see only failure, treason or disaster. Like they often tell their questioners, "If you have to ask the outcome, it's already highly in doubt." On the other hand, their safety is highly ensured, as very few Wraiths will dare to harm an Oracle - those who do risk angering the Gods of the Underworld.

The Arts on the Path of Destiny require the Wraith to ask a specific question, either for her own knowledge, or someone else's. She then gets an answer of varying specificity, depending on how well she understood what she saw, or how well the question was phrased. All part of the roll for the Art.

The danger of this Path is Tainted Essence: much as the Foreboding Affinity may bring Tainted Essence to accidentally see a bad future, asking the Gods to grant a vision of a bad future brings it on as well. And the greater the negative consequences of a planned action, or the negative things seen, the greater the amount of Tainted Essence the Oracle gains. This counts for ** Simple Scrying, *** Focused Reading and **** Destined Undertaking.

**** Simple Scrying:**

This Art lets a Wraith build up from the Basic Art, and either reveal the general way of things in the city, or what will happen in general around a certain time frame. She cannot ask questions, but she can pick the city, or a specific time and place within it "Next wednesday at Noon, outside the Marketplace". After at least a turn of concentration, the Scrying comes into focus, and the Wraith will see her answers.

***** Focused Reading:**

With this, the Wraith can read what will happen to a particular person in her future, near or far. This can either someone who asks the Wraith a question on her own behalf - or someone else's - or someone the Oracle sees and is curious about. This also takes at least a turn to concentrate, and the Wraith must ask a specific question.

****** Destined Undertaking:**

If given the details of some great plan or grand undertaking, the Wraith can use this Art to see what will happen. The problem is that getting a vision depends on asking the right question in the right way, and even then she might not get the entire picture - just the outcome based on the question, itself. Calling up such a large thing requires at least a Scene of preparation and ritual, and the Oracle cannot be interrupted during it.

******* Humbled Pleading:**

It is true that, once made plain, the future cannot be avoided. It can, however, be postponed by those who know this Art. The Oracles can invoke the Gods of the Underworld, and sacrifice Essence and Willpower to them in the hopes of fending off a destined thing for a time.

They can also try to improve their standing - or degrade another's - in the wake of that destined thing. But they must be very, very careful what they wish for, and why...

7.7.5 Path of Influence.

Okay... it looks like you're spending too much time worrying about the little things to avoid looking at the one, big thing that's staring you right in the face. You gotta stop avoiding that, kid - it will eat you alive if you neglect it. And I think we both know that, right? Right.

Of course I'll put in a good word for you when you do, kid. In fact, I already did, just this morning. It's all part of the service, right? Right. I just can't guarantee the results, is all. So you be careful, kid, alright?

Unlike the dour Oracles, the Fortunetellers believe that destiny is not set in stone. They claim that fates can be changed, outcomes averted, and the Gods talked into changing their minds or at least tricked into looking the other way for a short while. The results aren't always as neat and tidy as one might hope, but Wraiths will pay quite well to have someone pulling for them.

The Arts on the Path of Influence involve changing the stakes of Wraiths' actions: making it harder for someone to be harmed, and more likely to succeed or less likely to fail in general. At a higher level, the Wraith using this art can hang failure over another's head, so that the likelihood of them succeeding in their goals becomes that much smaller.

The problem is that, cheap promises aside, the Wraith can't always determine what exact stakes will be changed. She may cast for what happens, or doesn't, but the decision as to when it occurs isn't always up to the character to decide. The Gods have their own ideas on things, and while they can be bribed, they cannot be forced.

This means that the Fortunetellers are often as surprised as their clients when something goes amazingly right. However, they always take all of credit and none of the blame - unless that was the idea all along.

**** Good Guess:**

The first Art of Influence is the easiest, for it gives one the ability to focus on an immediate problem, or threat, and guess which way to go. This has the effect of the Storyteller nudging the Wraith

towards a certain, static choice Door A, B or C or the player electing to add to her character's Defense for one turn. These guesses and dodges take a Scene's concentration to "predict" - however unclearly - and can only be rolled for once a week, or when they're all gone.

These Good Guesses then last for a week, and can be used as needed - either for the Wraith or someone she knows. However, the Wraith must choose to do this entirely for herself, or that someone else: she can't have more than one Good Guess pool going at once.

***** Fortune's Favor:**

This Art allows a Wraith to either create successes, or to take successes away, for herself or someone she knows. Casting this takes a Scene, and creates a Favor or Disfavor pool that lasts for one day. Unlike ** Good Guess, the Wraith can have more than one pool going at a time, but can't "double up," or add to a pool once it's cast.

The Wraith can ask to "spend" these successes, or order successes to be taken away, but the Storyteller can always say that it doesn't work. If the Storyteller blocks it, the success or failure returns to the pool.

Also note that, if a Wraith casts Disfavor against someone who is not intent on doing her harm directly, or through her friends or Anchors, she gets Tainted Essence.

****** Gift of the Wheel:**

A step up from granting favors gives the Wraith a chance to avoid general disfavor, and keep failure from her door. The gift allows her to cast for successes - for her, or someone else she knows - that will be used when a failure would otherwise have occurred. Four successes must be traded in to cancel out a Dramatic Failure.

The casting takes a Scene, and, as with *** Fortune's Favor, the Wraith can have more than one pool going at once, but cannot double up or add more to a pool after it's cast. However, the Wraith doing the casting has no control over what failures will be replaced by success - these are entirely adjudicated by the Storyteller.

The Gift pool lasts for an entire Story.

******* Bad Karma:**

This Art allows a Wraith to give failures to someone else over the course of a Story. As with **** Gift of the Wheel, the Wraith cannot choose when they are used, and four successes can cause a Dramatic Failure. And while the Wraith can have several Bad Karma pools going at once, she cannot double up or add failures to them.

However, unlike previous Arts on this Path, the Wraith does not have to know the person in order to grant her failures. This Art works just as well on known enemies as complete strangers, so long as she has either their true name or true likeness in hand. But if the target has done nothing to

directly harm the Wraith, her friends or her Anchors, Tainted Essence will be gained.

While harsh, this Art has another, kinder side - a Wraith can use it to block failures from this Art, or any on the Path of Influence. She can defend herself, someone she knows, or someone she has the true name or true likeness of. However, she cannot block failures from herself while she is using this Art - or any other - to cause failures, even if those failures are highly justified, or in self-defense.

"Influence," Not "Control."

Storytellers and players might wonder why so many of the Arts on this Path take control of Fate away from the characters, rather than giving it to them. What's the point of spending Essence to cast favors or bad luck if they can't use the results as they desire? And why should they take the Tainted Essence if they didn't choose when the Dramatic Failure hit?

This has mostly been done to limit some of the power of the Fate Numen. While there's always a price to pay, the power of this Path could - if fully exploited - make a character almost impossible to beat at anything. And where would be the fun in that?

So this is Influence, rather than Control. After a certain point, the Wraiths who use this Path must learn to "let go and let the Gods," who consider the cast petitions for favors (or disfavours) and weigh them accordingly. Likewise, Storytellers are urged to find a "middle way" that gives the players a feeling of accomplishment while maintaining the mood and direction of the overall Story.

7.7.6 Path of Luck.

*What's my deal? I say that things just happen.
And I'm right.*

*And they happen the way they're supposed to, dig?
You can't ask the world what's gonna happen,
'cause it can't say.*

*And you can't force the world to do what you want,
either, 'cause it won't let you.*

*But it all works out, sooner or later, my brother.
You just gotta be open to possibility.*

Come on... take a walk on the wild side.

Those who don't practice - or appreciate - the Fate Numen often think the Finders are all talk. How much talent does it really take to just go meet people at random, or scrounge around for something important? They say it must be a scam, and put their phenomenal luck in rooting things and people out down to... well, luck.

Of course, it really is just that - luck. The Wraiths who practice this Path have learned to recognize the calm, certain feeling of being on the right track. They know that you can't push things

or try to control them, but just "let it be," and things will work out.

Whether they work out for the best is always a question of perspective, but most Finders know better than to complain.

**** Coincidence:**

With a Turn's concentration, the Wraith receives a vision of what's going on, somewhere else, that has a connection with what she's interested in. The more successes she gets, the better the sense of where it is, what it is, and who might be involved by face, and then name.

That connection could be direct or indirect, and seeking it out might just tell her what she already knows. But it's a step in the right direction, at least.

***** The Walk:** This Art lets a Wraith literally bump into people, things and events that have a connection with what she's interested in. It takes at least a Scene to walk "aimlessly" about the city, thinking about the situation - or not - but the more successes she gets, the more she finds. This Art can also be used to "home in" on things seen through **** Coincidence**, and using that Art first adds dice to this Art's roll.

The "Walk" can also be a "slouch," if the Wraith would rather use this Art to make people, things and events come to find her. However, it costs more Essence, and doesn't give her the option of running away if what she discovers gets a little too hairy.

****** Found Objects:**

Some people are never, ever at a loss. Using this Art lets a Wraith "go blank" and scrounge for something to help her out of whatever jam she's in at the moment. The more successes that are gained, the more useful the object the Wraith turns up.

On the other hand, if there's nothing there to find at all, the Wraith will know it right away and not waste her time searching.

******* Lucky Escape:**

Sometimes the luck - good or bad - comes too fast and furious for Wraith to process properly, or handle in the best way. This Art is something of a cosmic "Time Out," and stops her from running into anything to do with what she's working on for a certain amount of time. It also stops that situation from getting any more involved, for better or worse, and puts a halt to whatever plans or plots are cooking.

Such is the power of this Art that a Wraith can escape near-certain death or disaster by using it, so long as the fate to be averted was caused by her nosing into something. However, when she ends the Art's effects - or they run out - the avoided doom will regroup very quickly and head right for her.

Hopefully she'll have what she needs by then.

7.7.7 Crossover Arts.

The Rule of Three

Prerequisite Arts, ** Good Guess, ** Coincidence

Modern Pagans often invoke the Wiccan Rede, whereby the good you do will come back to you three-fold, but also the bad. This Art puts a little bite into that promise, so that those who are in need of a pointed reminder get at least three strong hints thrown their way. They will not help or hinder the target in her goals, but they're jarring enough to make the point.

This can be aimed at anyone whose name the Wraith knows, or that she has a likeness of, and successes determine how strong and obvious the hints are. Fortunetellers often use this Art to remind wayward clients to settle their debts, but that's a highly-mercenary example of its use.

Web of Fate

Prerequisite Arts, *** Fortune's Favor, *** The Walk

This Art causes a target of the Wraith's choosing to live in interesting moments. From the second it is cast, the target Wraith will act as though she had used *** The Walk to investigate something, or someone, of the casting Wraith's choosing. This is a great way to hook people up without the Wraith being seen to be involved, but if it's used for harmful ends - or they turn out bad - she gets Tainted Essence for her part in it.

Time's Winged Chariot

Prerequisite Arts, *** Focused Reading, *** The Walk

The Oracles are quick to point out that one's destiny cannot be avoided. However, it can be sped up, which is what this Art does. Whatever good or bad thing an Oracle has seen awaiting for someone else never the Oracle can be brought to that person much faster than anticipated. If the Wraith uses this Art to speed up a disastrous destiny, she gets Tainted Essence for having forced it.

Divine Harbinger

Prerequisite Arts, **** Destined Undertaking, **** Found Objects

Part of the limitation of the Path of Destiny is that Wraiths have to be very specific in their requests of what to see. They can't ask the Gods to show them the time, date and aftermath of the worst Storm that will ever hit the Necropolis, for example - they can only mince around the subject. And when they finally are "lucky" enough to see that disaster, they suffer for their visions.

Fortunately, those who practice that Path are familiar with a strange harbinger of great events, both foul and fair. It seems that if something wonderful or terrible is going to happen, a nondescript but Fated, they say Wraith known as Justinian will be there. No one is certain why he does this, or what he gets out of it, though - once he's spotted in the crowd, Justinian flashes a knowing smile at whoever saw him, turns and vanishes once more.

Given that behavior, Oracles use Justinian the Harbinger as a "lodestone." By making a likeness of him, and focusing on it for a day and a night, they can gauge when he might next appear. That way they don't have to ask 100 questions of the Gods to determine when they might wish to see something - they need only find the harbinger, and they can ask more questions from there.

The problem with this Art - other than how time-consuming it is - is how much Willpower and Essence it drains from the Wraith who performs it. That and the likeness of Justinian can only be used once, as it cracks and crumbles into soot as soon as he's spotted. And these remnants then blow away on the dead wind so quickly that, within seconds, it's as if the statue had never even been there.

Friend In Need

Prerequisite Arts, **** Gift of the Wheel, **** Found Objects

Sometimes both luck and influence are simply not enough. At times like that, the Fortunetellers and Finders need a helping hand. That hand is Nicolo - sometimes called Nicholas, or Nick - who will appear to perform one single, important action on the Wraith's behalf, and then disappear once more.

Nicolo is not the real name of this person or force, depending on whom you talk to, but it's as good a one as any. And while he has the power to directly interfere on the behalf of the Wraith who summoned him via this Art, the when and how of Nicolo's interference is entirely up to him. He may open the cell door so a living friend can escape, or he may burn down the police station: he's kind of 50/50 between good ideas and bad.

Calling up Nicolo takes a Scene, and a measure of Essence. How long it takes him to get there depends entirely on him - or his schedule - and what he does is up to the Storyteller. However, should Nicolo's idea on how to handle a problem create more problems than it solves, the Wraith who called on Nicolo will take Tainted Essence for having let him loose.

7.8 Fear (Common).

The Fear Numen - which is far too common for the liking of some - is a terrible thing, indeed. It not only empowers Wraiths to witness the horrid nightmares, hidden memories and secret fears of both the Living and Dead, but to then turn those terrible things against them. It also allows the Dead to store the bad memories, phobias and dreams that they see, so that they may use them on others, or weave them together into a great tapestry of horror.

It is this Numen which makes the Haunters so feared by the other Concorde. And The Order is particularly loath to sanction its use, given how terrible the cost to one's soul can be. But the Numen's power is such that many Wraiths seek to learn of it, if only to fall back on when all other means of frightening off the Living have failed.

Funny, then, how it often becomes the first tool they use.

We're All Mad, Here.

Unless stated otherwise, all the Arts of Fear can be used on Wraiths, Ghosts and the living.

Some of the Arts specify that the target may go insane if they're used. Wraiths and Ghosts aren't in any danger of this happening, but depending on the Art being used they may gain Tainted Essence, or suffer Catharsis. Ghosts are also in danger of Awakening if the terror generated is enough to shake them out of their Fugue.

7.8.1 Paths.

Fear has three recognized Paths:

- The Path of Fright is the best-known of Fear's Paths, for it gives Wraith power over fear, itself. Its users - often known as Horrorists - cause their targets to experience their own phobias, or those of others, at varying degrees. At the very least, it's enough to take away someone's nerve, but Wraiths can increase the terror up to the point where the fear seems to come true, with deadly and maddening results.
- The Path of Nightmare allows Wraiths to enter the dreams of the Living and Dead. The Incubi and Succubi who specialize in this Path use its Arts to record, change and replay the dreams and nightmares they witness. They are also known for granting the gift of sleep to the Dead, but let the dreamer beware - their nightmares are truly terrible, and their stolen dreams can kill.
- The Path of Sorrows is practiced by the Remembrancers, who seek memories - preferably very bad ones - for their personal collections. Their Arts allow them to copy, alter and replay memories from the Living and the Dead, as well as Anchors. They can help others deal with their awful memories, should they choose, but they can also use those same traumas to injure both mind and body.

7.8.2 Those Who Know.

Those who died due to violence or insanity can have an Affinity for Fear, given their intimate understanding of anxiety, terror and horror. However, almost any Wraith could learn it, given how widespread it tends to be: the Basic Art is readily available in most quarters, and there are any number of amateur Horrorists lurking about.

That said, the Haunters see this as "their" Numen, and are not very pleased to hear of others trying to steal their thunder - unless, of course, they'd like to join their Calling. Meanwhile, The Order has an extreme distaste for what the Numen can do, and tries to ban its use amongst its members. The Pardoners are also convinced it's a one-way street to being Damned - skipping Lost almost altogether - and are extremely harsh on their charges who make a habit of using it.

The Freewraiths, on the other hand, don't see what the big problem is. In their eyes, Fear is just a tool that Wraiths have at their disposal; So long as its risks are understood and respected, there is no need to proscribe or ban its use.

Whispers.

Those who are fully conversant with Fear and its Paths will admit that there's an odd "sameness" about it all. However, it is rumored that once one goes beyond what is known, the true differences between the Paths are made manifest. That one no longer needs to touch the target for the Arts to work seems a common thread in these tales, along with the notion of being able to remove nightmares and memories, rather than just copy them.

But there's more - much, much more.

They speak of Remembrancers who have created entire Necropoli out of stolen memories within their minds. They say these masters can infect large numbers of the Living and Dead with ideas and recollections they never had. They also say they can excise them from equally large numbers, and do it with such skill that no one will ever notice their absence.

They speak of Incubi who can walk from dream to dream, as though they were stepping stones across a stream of slumber. They say they can enter the minds of the Living through their dreams, and possess their bodies while they doze. And some are purported to walk fully formed from the heads of dreamers, without needing to Manifest.

And as for the Horrorists, it is said that they can command fear and fright to a terrifying extent. They can sit at the middle of a citywide web of terror, and harvest Essence from all who feel fear. The Lands of the Living and the Dead can be turned into an immense tableau of horror, as everyone's worst fears become dreadfully real.

What is not a rumor is that the Damned practice this Numen extensively - it is a known fact. And it is also a known fact that they don't have to touch their targets in order to use these Arts or their Damned equivalents upon them. One saving grace may be that they seem to have severe problems using it on the Living, but they more than make up for it by using it on Wraiths and Ghosts, instead.

7.8.3 Basic Art.*** Hand of Fear**

The first technique any would-be master of Fear must learn is how to harvest it. By touching a Wraith or Ghost, or passing a hand though one of the Living, the user can see into the target's mind, and read their memories, nightmares and fears at will. And once these are uncovered, the Wraith can absorb reflections of them into herself to glean for Essence, hold for later use, or use right away - either against the person she took it from, or someone else.

System: A Wraith does not need to spend Essence to enter the mind of another Wraith, or Ghost, but she must be in physical contact with the target for a turn. For targets in the Land of the Living, she must "touch" them for a turn, overlapping them with her Corpus, and spend a point of Essence to bridge the gap between them.

The Wraith then rolls her Intelligence + Manipulation + Fear to find a memory, a nightmare or a fear. The Wraith can only look for one sort of thing at a time, and successes can be spent on individual finds, or to seek a larger, more potent one. For example: if Bloody Mary gets 3 Successes on the roll, she can either find 3 trivial fears, 1 trivial fear and 1 moderate fear, or 1 serious fear.

Success	Type	Essence Gained	Fear Modifier
1	Trivial	1	0
2	Moderate	2	0
3	Serious	3	+1
4	Terrifying	4	+2
5	Crippling	5	+3

Once these fears, bad memories or nightmares are found, the Wraith has a number of options available to her:

1) She can absorb Essence from watching these things, as per the chart above. It takes one Turn to absorb one Essence, and the Wraith must remain in contact with the Target - who remains unaware of what's happening - the entire time. A Wraith can gain Essence in this way regardless of the emotion behind what's seen, but it garners one Tainted Essence for feeding on such negative things.

2) She can spend one Essence to "hold" it in her Corpus, and then use that reflection the next turn in another Fear Art. This not only saves the Wraith from having to spend time finding something in her own stores see below but can grant extra dice to the roll, as per the chart above. If the Wraith doesn't use it in the next turn, however, she must either spend another Essence to keep it fresh, or else it evaporates, and she has to make the original roll to find it - or something else - again.

3) The Wraith can spend Essence to store it within her mind, and hold for later. This requires one Essence per thing to store, one Turn's concentration, and a Wits + Manipulation + Fear roll to pull off successfully. Success means that it's been stored, while Failure means that it's been lost, and the Wraith has to go back to the original target and find it all over again. If a Dramatic Failure occurs, the thing is melded into her own mind, so that she thinks it's one of her own memories, fears or nightmares, and she takes a dot of Tainted Essence for each Success the thing was worth. A lost Crippling Nightmare means 5 Tainted Essence.

A Wraith can typically hold onto Influence + Presence x 10 Success worth of things of any combination. So if a Wraith had Influence 3 and Presence 2, she'd have room for 50 Successes' worth of things. That could translate into 5 Crippling Nightmares, 1 Crippling Fear, 4 Terrible Memories and 4 Trivial Fear. Should the Wraith run out of room, she can choose to jettison old things at any time, and these can either be "gifted" to another Wraith with Fear for one Essence, or simply erased.

Once such a thing is stored, the Wraith need not roll to bring it back up: only spend a turn in concentration to find it. She can then either use it in a Fear Art the next turn, keep it "fresh" upon her Corpus by spending one Essence per extra Turn outside her mind, or spend a Turn in concentration to put it back where it belongs. But the expenditure of Essence can only be done on a turn-by-turn basis, and if it's disrupted it evaporates, and is lost.

7.8.4 Path of Fright.

*He knew he was being bad when he looked at his
father's special books.*

*He only wanted to look at naked people,
but he didn't realize they were medical books
about skin diseases. He was only nine years old,
then, and he's been terrified ever since.*

*Yes, terrified of skin disease. He's constantly
worried about skin cancer and leprosy.
When he cuts himself he scrubs the wound raw
with alcohol, so it won't become infected.*

*And every night, before he goes to bed, he stands
naked before his bathroom mirror,
and searches desperately for signs of
flesh-eating bacteria. It could eat him up overnight,
as he slept. He'd be dead before morning.*

*So what will he do when he wakes up...
goes into the bathroom... turns on the light...
and sees this?*

The Horrorists are aptly named: virtuosos of terror and horror, they use the Arts of the Path of Fright to scare their victims out of their wits. They can turn the hardest person into a quivering, immobile lump, unable to do more than whimper, and make the most steadfast explorer of haunted places soil herself and run away.

In order to use these Arts, a Wraith must first use * Hand of Fear, either to find a fear or phobia of the target, or to bring up one of the Wraith's stored fears. The fear to be used may give extra dice to the rolls for the following Arts if it's powerful enough, as per the previous chart. And, once used, the stored fear must be placed back inside the Wraith's mind, or else it evaporates and is lost.

The Wraith must also be touching the target to use these Arts. However, should the roll for the Art be so successful that the target runs away, the Wraith doesn't have to maintain contact for the generated horror to take its proper course. She will simply have to catch up to the target and touch her again if she wants to use other Arts on her.

Successes on the rolls indicate how long the effect lasts for, in Turns. An Exceptional Success puts a negative modifier on a mortal's roll to avoid running away as detailed in Haunting. However, these Arts all give Tainted Essence to the Wraith that uses them, due to their harnessing of negative emotions.

Hands Off, Creep.

In order for Fear Arts to work, the Wraith must touch the target. This is fine with Ghosts and Mortals, as they most likely won't be aware of the Wraith's presence. But one might wonder if a Wraith would be affected by these Arts, as she'd know the Horrorist was touching her, and could presume that the terrible things she was seeing were just Fear-spawned illusions.

The answer is yes - they are still affected. Such is the power of Fear that, no matter how strong and rational the Wraithly target's mind is, she will still be overcome by terror at what she sees or doesn't see, as the case may be. In fact, even beings with supernatural senses - such as Vampires - will be convinced that they are seeing these things.

**** Apprehension**

The gateway Art of this path makes the target feel the looming presence of the source of the fear. Someone who was terrified of spiders might be given pause while poking around a Wraith's Anchor, worried that big, ugly and poisonous spiders might be lurking in or around it. Meanwhile, someone who was afraid of her lover's murderous ex-spouse might worry about that person coming up the stairs while they're in bed, together. And if the target wasn't afraid of spiders or psychotic ex-lovers, the Wraith could still use a stored fear to produce those reactions in her.

***** Reflection**

This Art goes beyond mere foreboding, and shows the target the fear, itself. The person terrified of spiders will actually think she sees one scuttling around, while someone terrified of the ex-spouse will see the cuckold's cold, hateful eyes looking in at the window. As with * Apprehension, this fear can be from the Wraith's own stores, and used for the purpose of this Art. This Art can also have the strength of what's seen boosted with extra Essence, so that people besides the Target might actually see

****** Composition**

This Art makes the fear come all too real, much like a 2-essence Manifestation. The person terrified of spiders is suddenly covered with them, while the person afraid of the ex-lover is accosted by that person on the street. Essence can be spent to allow others to see what the target is seeing, otherwise the sensations are experienced by her alone.

The fears conjured up by the Wraith might do some damage to the target, but it's only likely to be Bashing, and won't have secondary effects. A "poisonous" spider may bite, but it has no venom, and while the ex-lover might have a gun in hand with which to threaten and pistol-whip the target, it will not be fired.

******* Damnation:**

The next step up from **** Composition makes the fear horribly and terribly real - at least, in the mind of the target. She goes into a fugue state, not unlike that of a Ghost, and undergoes a

nightmarish confrontation with the fear. Unlike the other Arts in this path, Essence cannot be spent to include others in what the target sees and experiences: this damnation is private, and the target will not be aware of anything outside of it, including others' attempts to help.

While in the fugue, the target will believe that she is being seriously hurt by the fear, and things will be so bad that she will think rescue and flight are impossible. Everything she does is countered, and nothing lets her fight back. Unlike the other Arts, she can try to resist using her own mind, but the odds are against this.

If the target survives the ordeal - or the Wraith lets her survive it - she will most likely be mentally damaged by the trauma she's experienced. And if she is killed in the fugue, she will die of fright.

This Art has another use: it can be employed to instantly end the fugue state of a Ghost, which has the effect of Awakening her. If used in this fashion, the Wraith does not gain any Tainted Essence.

7.8.5 Path of Nightmare.

*So you thought it was all in your head, did you?
All those terrible, awful things...
the ones that made you sit up, screaming,
in the middle of the night?
They were all just your imagination, huh?
Well, that might have been then, bunky,
but this is now. I'm here with you, in your head.
And you're trapped here, with me,
until I decide to let you wake up.
That's right. No one can hear you.
No one can help you. You're with me, now...
... and you are so fucked.*

Named after ancient demons who preyed on the dreams of the young, Incubi male and Succubi female have a mixed reputation amongst the Dead. On one hand, they give the gift of dreams to the Dead, who can no longer sleep. On the other, there's no guarantee that they won't enter those dreams and play havoc with them for their own sick amusement.

All the Arts of the Path of Nightmare require that the target be asleep or a Ghost in her Fugue. The Wraith must then not only touch the target, but actually phase into her, so as to bodily enter the "dreamscape" within the target. It's a lot like Bios' Basic Art of * Possession, in some ways, only it works on Wraiths and Ghosts as well.

Once inside the Dreamscape, the Wraith cannot be hurt in tandem with her host, and can end her observation or meddling at will. However, the Wraith had best leave before the target wakes up, or else she'll be forced out. This ejection takes place within a Turn, and she suffers a varying degree of Bashing Damage that she can't Defend against.

The following Arts work on Mortals, Wraiths and Ghosts, though there's a danger of Awakening the Ghost if the Wraith should have a Dramatic Failure on a roll. Tainted Essence is only gained through these Arts if the Wraith creates a nightmare, though ***** Dreamslayer is always cause for a great deal of Tainted Essence if a mortal target is killed by it. Wraiths and Ghosts don't give so much, since they can just reform - usually...

** Dreamwatcher:

This Art lets the Wraith enter the target's dreams, or the Fugue state of a ghost, and watch. The watching can either be from the vantage point of the dreamer "seeing" the dream through her eyes or just outside of it, as though she were standing no more than five feet away.

The Wraith can interact with the dreamer to a small extent, but this is limited to small talk, or simple questions and answers. The dreamer will always assume that the Wraith's a part of the dream, and either ignore her or go along with her presence. If the Wraith should try to do more than that - such as attack the dreamer, or stop her from doing something - the dream ends, the target wakes up and the Wraith will be painfully ejected.

The Wraith can also use * Hand of Fear to recall a stored Nightmare or Dream, and then use this Art to unfold it inside the Dreamer's mind. That stored Dreamscape will supplant whatever the Dreamer was imagining, but - as before - the Wraith cannot go too far from her side, nor interact too strongly with her for fear of being ejected.

Oddly enough, dropping a dreamer from an idyllic dream into a horrifying nightmare won't run any risk of waking her up.

*** Dreamwriter:

The Wraith can now interact more fully with the dreamer, and move further away from her. She can also spend Essence to change details of the dream she finds herself in - or has pulled out of storage - no matter how small or large. As before, turning a placid dream into a terrible nightmare won't make the dreamer wake up, given the shifting nature of dreams.

The Wraith can now attack the target, or stop her from doing something, but can't cause any real "damage" to her while in the Dreamscape without the dream ending, and the Wraith being ejected. Even if the Wraith succeeds in causing damage, it's an illusion, and it will not carry over into the dreamer's body. However, stopping a living target from having a good night's sleep may cause her to suffer from Fatigue *The World of Darkness*, pp. 179 - 180

This Art can also be used inside the Wraith, herself. She can concentrate for a turn, find a stored Dream or Nightmare, and use this Art to go inside it and change it as she sees fit, either to stitch different ones together or try and increase their potency. The alterations cost Essence, just as they would in another's dream, and such changes are permanent - there's no "reset" button in these stored dreams.

While she's inside her own mind, the Wraith has no idea what's going on around her. Incubi

and Succubi often agree to watch over one another while performing this, knowing all too well that a "sleeping" Wraith is a victim waiting for a crime.

****** Dreammaker:**

In previous Arts, the Wraith has to wait for the target to fall asleep. However, this Art makes the target fall asleep within a Turn, and it can be used both on mortals and Wraiths. Neither can normally resist the pull of sleep that the Wraith gives to them, though a Wraith with this Art can make a similar roll to try and stay awake.

Wraiths who fall asleep dream for an hour per success. As they dream, their Shadows are subsumed back into them, so that the division no longer exists. Any Thorns that were active turn back on where they left off once the Wraith wakes up, though.

This Art can also be employed while in the Dreamscape for the opposite effect: the Wraith can do whatever she likes with or to the dreamer, and she will not wake up until the Wraith allows her to do so. As before, however, any "damage" done to the Dreamer is an illusion, and has no bearing on her true self, though someone who "dies" in her dream will suffer from Fatigue The World of Darkness, pp. 179 - 180

This Art has another use: it can be employed to stop a Ghost from Awakening, so long as it's just in time. Once the Ghost is Awake, this Art will not put her back Asleep, and the best it can be used to do is make the new Wraith take a nap before she does anything stupid.

******* Dreamslayer:**

They say that dreams can't really damage someone, but that's a lie: Dreams can turn deadly, and Nightmares can be made to kill. This Art allows a Wraith to kill and destroy in dreams, and its power is both appalling and formidable - so much so that the "Dreamkillers" also known as "Sandmen" who regularly practice it are often banned, even amongst the Freewraiths.

By using this Art, the Wraith can do damage to a dreamer that somehow does affect the body. Any health levels lost in a mortal's dream are lost in the waking world as well, though there will be no visible damage done to the target's body. And if the mortal dreamer should perish in this deadly dream, her heart will stop, and she will die in her sleep.

Wraiths and Ghosts who are dropped to zero Corpus by this Art act as is normal for them. However, a Ghost who is thusly traumatized may Awaken once she emerges from her Anchor, given the heavy disruption this Art will cause to her Fugue state Storyteller's prerogative.

7.8.6 Path of Sorrows.

*What? You actually think you can lie to me...?
Let's put it this way, honey -
"I know what you did last Summer." In fact,
I'm right there - watching it happen.*

*And I'm seeing it through your eyes.
Scared yet? Well you oughta be, bitch.
I know what you did last Winter, too.
And the Summer before last... my, my,
haven't we been a naughty little girl?
Now, how badly do you not want everyone to
know how naughty you've been?*

The Remembrancers are considered horrid and insane - and very much so. In spite of their obvious gifts with uncovering and retaining memories, very few Wraiths choose to partake of their services. This is most likely because the Remembrancers can also change those memories - both slightly and grossly - and Wraiths are quite right to fear for their minds' integrity.

In spite of the name of the Path, its Arts can be used to capture and refine both bad and good memories, which has led to the Remembrancers' running a "Memory Market" of stolen thoughts for other, desperate Wraiths to enjoy. They are also known to work on commission - engineering events and copying others' memories of them, so that buyers can enjoy their own, pre-arranged spectacle.

But then, many Remembrancers use the following Arts for their own gain: blackmailing and torturing Wraiths, and taunting and maddening mortals. There are those few amongst their numbers who use their powers to help, rather than harm, but these "Shrinks" are often as derided as their less wholesome cousins.

Captured Forever.

One of the odd quirks about * Hand of Fear is that a copied and stored memory cannot be changed by the Storms. Even if the original memory is changed or lost, and the Remembrancer's own memories are scrambled, whatever she's got stored in her head is somehow safeguarded from the ravages of the winds.

This would make them ideal record keepers, but The Order holds them in the same ill repute as Dreamkillers. And given most Remembrancers' habits, that's probably for the best.

These Arts all work on Mortals, Wraiths and Ghosts, and they can be awake or asleep while it's used on them. However, there's often a negative modifier while working on Ghosts, given the shifting nature of their memories within the Fugue.

Showing traumatic memories is always cause for Tainted Essence, and if the Wraith makes it seem to be happening to the target it's cause for more than normal.

**** Replay:**

This Art lets a Wraith replay a Memory inside someone's head - either for her own, private audience, or to be "enjoyed" by the target alone. This can be done with a stored Memory or one the Wraith finds while using * Hand of Fear, and it can seem as though it's happening around the target,

or to her. Onlookers will think that the target is reacting to things only she can see, and will most likely think she's gone insane.

The target is powerless to interfere with the memory, and if it's happening to her, she is caught up in it. Once the memory starts, the target must see it through to its conclusion, unless the Wraith decides to end it prematurely. If the target is "damaged" in the memory - or even killed - she is not actually harmed.

***** Refine:**

The Wraith can take any stored memory and alter it. She can string it together with other memories, or alter those memories into something entirely different. This can be used to increase the potency of a traumatic memory, but once a change is made it cannot be undone.

If the Wraith chooses to * Replay it for the person she copied it from, there's a small chance that the target will begin to believe that the altered memory is what really happened. This depends on how long ago it actually happened, and how potent it was, or is now that the Wraith has altered it.

****** Recall:**

Non-living Anchors have a strange connection with all aspects of the Dead - so much so that Wraiths with this Art can actually use * Hand of Fear on such places or things. And such is the power of this Art that can be used even if the Wraith that owns the Anchor was not there when it happened. These memories can be stored, replayed and refined as any other, though obviously not on the Anchor, itself.

******* Repercussion:**

Memories shown with ** Replay cannot harm the target, even if they end in death. This Art changes that, and places the life and sanity of the target on the line: giving the memory such force that the victim may suffer either insanity or psychosomatic shock, depending on what takes place inside her head.

Those who suffer insanity gain derangements from the experience, just as those the memories were stolen from did. Meanwhile, those who suffer damage lose health or Corpus levels, but do not actually manifest the wounds from the memory. The damage is entirely psychosomatic, but still powerful enough to kill.

Mortals who die from ***** Repercussion lose all brain functions - most notably autonomic - and fall down stone dead, as though someone switched them off. And the Wraiths who used it on them suffer a massive backlash of Tainted Essence for having taken a life in this fashion. Meanwhile, Wraiths and Ghosts are dropped to zero Corpus, and go back to their Anchors as normal, which causes only a little Tainted Essence to be gained.

There is a much kinder side to this Art, but few other Wraiths know of it. Remembrancers can use this Art to help a mortal, Wraith or Ghost "walk through" the memory and resolve it, so that

it troubles them no more. Unlike previous levels of the Path, the target can change her course of action within the memory, which is what gives the Art its power to heal.

Repeated sessions of this therapy will help cure Derangements except for the ones "suffered" by those who died from Insanity, while Ghosts can be allowed to resolve whatever makes them walk the earth. Ghosts who succeed in this most often shrug off their Fugue and disappear forever, going off to wherever such unAnchored spirits go, but a few have been known to Awaken and become full-fledged Wraiths.

7.8.7 Crossover Arts.

Night Hag

Prerequisite Arts, ** Apprehension, ** Dreamwatcher

Wraiths can use * Hand of Fear to go rooting around in a mortal and take Essence from what they find in her head. This Art lets a Wraith put a fearsome nightmare into a sleeping mortal's head, and generate a slightly larger meal of Essence from the target's reaction.

Eternal Restlessness

Prerequisite Arts, *** Reflection, *** Dreamwriter

This particularly sick Art denies the target the luxury of waking up. The the nightmare is twisted in on itself in an endless loop, on and on, and it will last for as long as the Wraith's successes allow. A sick variation lets the target think she's woken up, only to be presented with a new nightmare, and another, and another...

Mnemotechnics

Prerequisite Arts, *** Dreamwriter, *** Refine

The line between bad memories and nightmares is sometimes a fine one. This Art lets a Wraith slip inside the target's head and, though a little coaxing, turn a bad memory into a nightmare, or a nightmare into a bad memory. The former is therapeutic, as it gives the target the sense of having overcome whatever trauma took place in the past - "it was just a dream." The latter is harmful, as it lessens the target's grip on reality, and has her unsure of her past.

Oneirovore

Prerequisite Arts, **** Dreammaker, **** Recall

This sinister Art makes the target suffer from a severe case of Oneirataxia: not only can she not dream, but she cannot remember anything for more than a second, and nothing in-depth. So long as the Art lasts, she lives life from moment to moment, and suffers from Fatigue due to her inability to dream.

It's not that the Wraith has actually "stolen" these facilities, so much as they've been placed somewhere else: one of the user's Anchors. The target's mental functions are somehow tied to that Anchor, and since objects can't really think, dream or remember - **** Recall notwithstanding -

the target stumbles every time she tries to do these things.

If the Anchor in question is severed or destroyed, the Art immediately ends, and the Wraith who used it has her own problems, now...

Night Terror

Prerequisite Arts, ***** Damnation, ***** Dreamslayer

This Art functions much like ***** Dreamslayer, only the damage is no longer psychosomatic. Thanks to this Crossover Art, the target's body will truly suffer the wounds given in the dream - level for level, type for type. Particularly "hands-on" Incubi and Succubi like to enter dreams and slaughter the target with sharp objects, so onlookers will see the body be carved up in its sleep...

Soulbreaker

Prerequisite Arts, ***** Damnation, ***** Repercussion

The Remembrancer's response to Night Terror, this Art functions much like ***** Repercussion, only the damage suffered in the memory becomes real as well. This results in such gruesome spectacles as onlookers seeing a target who's "remembering" her falling to her death, only to splatter on the ground at the end. Car crashes, gruesome diseases and gunshots to the head are also favorites.

7.9 Kinesis (Common).

The Kinesis Numen delivers pretty much what it says it does: motion, both harmful and benign. It can be used to increase a Wraith's speed and range of motion, and it can be used to slap the Living and the Dead around without laying a finger upon them. Likewise, it can be used to pick things up and move them by force of will alone.

Masters of the Numen say that it teaches the Wraith to intertwine her will and body into one seamless thing. When in this unified state, what might have seemed impossible before becomes quite possible - perhaps easy. If it could have been imagined, it can - with time - be done, in spite of the Wraith's physical limitations.

Layering.

When using Kinesis, there is a marked tendency for a Wraith to have a 'double image': a shimmering reflection of herself that slides behind, or ahead, as she punches, runs, picks up and throws. This double is known as "The Layer," for some esoteric reason, and may represent the Wraith's ideal self in some way.

While it looks incredibly cool - and a bit intimidating - there are times when a Wraith doesn't want to have it seen. For example, if she wanted to slug someone from a distance and not have them know it was her, the Layer becomes a handicap. Fortunately, it can be hidden by spending 1 extra Essence per use of Kinesis.

Some Wraiths do not have Layers present, though this is exceedingly rare. And when the

Damned use this Numen - as they are wont to do - they never seem to manifest a Layer. Perhaps there is some connection, but no one wants to ask too many questions in that direction for obvious reasons.

As Kinesis is "common," no group holds a monopoly upon it, or complete antipathy towards it. The Pardoners warn their flocks not to overdo the Path of Fury, as its use is known to strengthen the Shadow, and The Order warns against spectacular uses of the Path of Motion. But no Concord would seek to ban it completely, given how useful a tool it can be.

7.9.1 Paths.

Kinesis has three recognized Paths:

- The Path of Fury is the dark standard by which this Numen is often misjudged. It allows Wraiths to turn their anger into kinetic energy, and direct that energy towards others - often with painful results. The Spooks who use this Path are happy to sell their services, but they aren't known for their subtlety. And since its use causes the Shadow to gain power, they aren't cheap, either.
- The Path of Speed, on the other hand, is relatively harmless - or so the Slipstreaks like to say. The Path teaches the secret to manipulating speed: increasing or decreasing it on a person, or even a place. Slipstreaks are also known to be in two places at once, somehow, but how could anyone keep track of such a thing...?
- The Path of Motion belongs to the Poltergeists, who use it to move objects by force of will in the lands of the Living and the Dead. As their name suggests, they use it to toss things around - by the one or by the dozen - and create whirlwinds of objects. They can also build "bodies" for themselves out of bits and pieces

7.9.2 Those Who Know.

Wraiths who came to their ends due to Happenstance or Violence can have an Affinity for this Numen, seeing as how action brought about those ends. Many like to say that those who died by Violence gravitate towards the Path of Fury, and cultivate an understanding of some of the more... baroque Combination Arts. But that's just a stereotype, surely.

Whispers.

They say that there is no limit to how much a Wraith's fury can be tapped to wreak havoc, via the Path of the same name. Of course, the damage to the Wraith's soul might be horrific, but they say that if you get mad enough - to the point where you just don't care anymore - it can be a terrifying thing. An entire city might pay the price for a dead man's rage.

There's also rumors going around about people who Speeded their way out of existence - at least, as Wraiths reckon it. "One minute they were there, and then they were gone." Did they make it through the Barrier? Or did something get them? The term "speed demon" makes the rounds, every so often

They also say that the Wraith's Layer can be impeded or trapped by a superior opponent. It can perhaps even be removed, which might leave the Wraith unable to use the Numen ever again. No one has seen this happen, of course. But people do talk...

7.9.3 Basic Art.*** Object in Motion**

The first step along the paths of Kinesis requires a Wraith to reach out with either her body or mind, exert a tiny influence on a small object, and move it a short distance. This can be done in both the Live and Dead worlds, and can be used on an object some distance away so long as the Wraith can see it. This Art can also be used to "freeze" the motion of something, so that it won't fall or move, but only in the Deadlands.

System: To move an object, the Wraith's Intelligence + Dexterity + Kinesis must be rolled. Essence need not be spent if the Wraith physically reaches out to "touch" the object, but if it's some distance away - or the Wraith does not wish to reach for it - 1 Essence must be spent.

Success is based on how much the object weighs, and how far the Wraith wishes to move it. One success moves one pound one inch, two successes would either move a one-pound object for two inches, or a two-pound object for one inch, and so on.

If the Wraith wishes to hold something in place in the Deadlands, she must make an Intelligence + Stamina + Kinesis roll, and spend 1 Essence. The object cannot have a size larger than the Wraith's Essence Pool, and will stay suspended until the allotted time runs out, or the Wraith pulls it down, herself.

Each success increases how long the object is kept motionless: one is an hour, two is a day, three is a week, four is a month, and five is year. An Exceptional Success keeps it there permanently, or until the Wraith pulls it down.

7.9.4 Path of Fury.

I told you not to fuck with me. Now you're gonna pay.

Pay hard.

The Arts on the Path of Fury are all about smacking someone, or something, around. The Wraith reaches out with her mind and delivers blows into the Liveworld, or across the Deadlands: her Layer breaching the distance between worlds as easily as the distance between people. And as her understanding of the Path grows, she can deliver harder, faster and deadlier damage - perhaps killing with a single blow.

They say the Spooks, who specialize in this Path, like to hurt people. They say that's not true - they just find it incredibly easy to do. And if you're going to get hired to do what you do best... well, who are they to argue?

Look, Ma - No Hands.

Much like the Basic Art of Kinesis, the Wraith has the choice of physically "hitting" the Liveworld target, or keeping her hands to herself. The first choice costs less energy than the other, but both will give Tainted Essence due to the destructive energy unleashed.

Likewise, as with * Object in Motion, the Wraith doesn't have to be within striking distance of a Deadlands target to use Fury Arts upon it. This will cost extra Essence to perform, but seeing someone across the field recoil from a blow they might not have seen coming is often priceless.

The Layer is often seen to be wrapped around the Wraith as she punches up close, and extends from her - like an astral double - when she shoves, or attacks from far away. In the case of the latter, the Layer delivers its blows, and then circles back to the Wraith like a fast-moving hawk. When force is extended, the Layer holds off the target, and when the Wraith is delivering numerous blows - as with **** Whirlwind - the Layer makes her look as though she had many arms, one per strike.

Note that weapons cannot normally be used with these Arts, since the Layer will only cover the Wraith's corpus. If the Wraith is using weapons she's Shaped out of herself - such as finger-knives - then the damage will be increased to match the Wraith's change of state.

**** Hard Shove**

The Wraith can give someone one good push away from something, in any direction the Wraith cares to. This doesn't often do damage, unless the person being shoved away was running, or is built like a flimsy scarecrow.

A Wraith can also exert a continuous "wall" of force, keeping people and things a certain distance away from someone, or something. This extended action costs energy to keep going.

***** Swift Punch**

The Wraith can deliver one good crack to someone - a normal blow, but the target can't really see coming, and therefore can't use her Defense to reduce. The Wraith can also do several small strikes, instead, coming at the target from any direction.

Using *** Swift Punch doesn't garner any Tainted Essence unless it should maim or kill a living target.

**** Whirlwind

A step up from the small strikes of *** Swift Punch, this allows the Wraith to do several normal blows, or else one concentrated, deadly strike that does lethal damage. Killing a living target is cause for Tainted Essence, but using the lethal option will cause its accrual no matter what shape the target is left in.

When engaged in this Art, the Wraith's arms strobe through the air, the Layer creating numerous arms ahead and behind of her real ones - a very intimidating sight.

***** Death Blow

This gives the Wraith the power to flood a single blow with intense, negative energy, doing aggravated damage to the target. Needless to say, this is cause for quite a bit of Tainted Essence - especially if the target dies from its wound.

7.9.5 Path of Speed.

*idontknowwhereigowheni'mgoing.
ijustknowthatimmovingandthenimthere.
sometimesiloseentiredaystothspeed.
sometimesithinkitsallhappeningnow.
hasthateverhappenedtoyou?*

The Path of Speed is all about swiftness: running faster, leaping farther, and controlling everyone else's ability to do the same. At some point, one's mastery of speed allows one to appear somewhere else so fast that they appear out of nowhere, and even to be two places at once. But are they really in two places at the same time, or just sped ahead or sideways? in time, itself...?

No one but the Slipstreaks can say for sure, and talking to a Slipstreak about what she can do makes for a surreal experience. Their Arts make their comprehension of the world hard to follow, at times. The Layer seems to connect them somewhere else - somewhere just out of sight - and they often think they're running, even when they're standing perfectly still...

When in motion, the Layer of a Wraith using the Arts of Speed flies both ahead and behind them, making for a continuous, outlining loop of shimmering energy. When they're affecting the speed of others, that outline spreads out to cover the people, or the area, being affected.

** Long Stride:

This Art lets the Wraith increase her speed and trajectory - moving faster than she should, leaping higher and generally outperforming those around her. She is also able to perform actions involving manual dexterity faster, in effect getting more actions per turn.

***** Speeding:**

The Wraith can now do unto others, extending her control over speed to another. She can give any effects of ** Long Stride to another, or reverse the process and make them slower, and take away their actions. The only limit is that she cannot use ** Long Stide on herself while her concentration is elsewhere.

****** Speed Zone:**

A further fillip on *** Speeding, the Wraith can affect the speed over everyone and everything within a certain area. She can take away from some and give to others, should she care to, but this is more costly and difficult to achieve. This also shares the same limitation as *** Speeding, in regards to the Wraith giving herself more actions while giving or taking from others.

******* Bilocation:**

The Wraith now has control over speed to the extent that she can "teleport" somewhere else, almost instantly, so long as she's been there before. Onlookers might chance to see her Layer streaking through the landscape, but those who have this Art will always feel someone using it, nearby.

The Art has a further power: the ability to be in two or more places at once. It's almost as though one had gained extra turns, only each turn is performed by a different "copy." Such a feat is costly, and performing all actions simultaneously proves to be difficult, and if the Wraith suffers horrible damage while using this Art she might collapse back into one place rather violently.

7.9.6 Path of Motion.

*Oh, come on - didn't you ever dream of juggling
antique vases when you were a little kid?
It's easy - you just think about it, and you're
doing it... and adding in a fruit bowl...
a beer bottle... the family cat...*

Oops. Well, maybe that was one counterweight too many.

Shame about the vases. I was looking forward to his face when he came in and saw that.

A balm to those who like to move things about without Manifesting, the Arts of the Path of Motion Poltergeists tend to be a fun-loving lot, quite removed from the bloody-minded portrayal they get in the popular press. There might be cause to scare the living crap out of some Skinbag who needs it, but there's no need to go to harmful lengths to do it.

Usually...

The Difference Between.

So what's the difference between Fury and Motion, if used in the Deadlands? The answer is the outcome.

Fury can be used to hold something back, but more often than not it's releasing angry energy in the form of damaging kinetic blows. Motion, on the other hand, could be used to harm someone, but does not necessarily have to be so.

Storytellers are within their rights to charge Tainted Essence to those Wraiths who use the Path of Motion to make clouds of glass shards and send them flying at small children, or anything equally sick and gruesome.

The Layer often extends away from the Wraith, creating phantom hands that pick up the objects in the Liveworld or Deadlands. When using ***** Broken Body, the Layer reaches out tendrils to scoop up the objects and tether them to the Wraith's outline, so she is seen to be sandwiched under a layer of junk.

**** Pick Up:**

Building upon the Basic Art of the Numen, this Art lets the Wraith manipulate, lift, push and throw objects with a greater degree of strength and control. So long as the Wraith could push, pull or pick up the object in life - or in death - she can do it here, too.

Meanwhile, in the Deadlands, the Wraith can use this Art to move something by remote. The Layer slips away, picks up the object and does what the Wraith desires.

***** Ghostly Hands:**

Seen as a "shortcut" to Manifestation, the Layer of the Wraith enters the Liveworld and allows her to affect things as though she were there. This has the added advantage of being unseen while doing it, except by the dead.

When used in the Deadlands, the Layer forms a double of the Wraith, which slides away from her body and acts as her, elsewhere. This works fine, long as the Wraith can see what's going on, which makes fine manipulation from a distance highly difficult.

****** Furious Flurry:**

The obvious source of the poltergeists' name, this Art lets a Wraith handle several objects at once. It can be as simple as a "juggling act" of vases, or a cloud of paperclips, kitchen utensils or plastic toys.

This also lets the Wraith push, lift and throw something that's much too heavy for her to do so normally, as though she'd grown several extra hands of equal strength. Only one object at a time can be acted upon in this fashion.

This Art can be used in both the Liveworld and Deadlands.

******* Broken Body:**

Yet another "shortcut" to Manifestation, the Wraith reaches out with her mind - and Layer - and makes a simulacrum of herself using nearby objects in the Liveworld. This lets her interact with that world as though she were there, and she can "build up" her statistics by absorbing objects that would add to her Strength, Dexterity and Stamina. Conversely, building a body out of, say, tissue paper would reduce her effective levels.

7.9.7 Crossover Arts.

With thanks to JL Williams for some cool ideas

Follow-Through

Prerequisite Arts, ** Hard Shove, ** Long Stride

Many times, the Wraith's Layer follows behind or just ahead of the Wraith, but this shows how a Wraith can be pulled along by it. The Art lets a Wraith land a blow - or a tap - on a far-off target by being yanked along by the Layer, left standing right before the target. Alternatively, the Wraith can use this Art to "duck out" of combat by landing a blow and then being jerked some distance away.

Long Reach

Prerequisite Arts, *** Swift Punch, *** Ghostly Hands

Deadlands weapons won't normally work on those in the Liveworld, but this Art makes that possible. The Layer wraps around the weapon, as well as the Wraith who carries it, and she can then strike the living without having to Manifest.

This Art can also be used to strike Deadlands targets who are far from the weapon's range. The Layer makes an echo of the weapon reach out towards the target.

Inertial Failure

Prerequisite Arts, *** Speeding, *** Ghostly Hands

This rather spectacular - and painful - Art lets a Wraith fine-tune her control over motion. For example, she could stop a car without stopping the passengers, too, resulting in said passengers flying through the window. Alternatively, she could make a stopped car suddenly be going 180 MPH, with disastrous results for the passengers.

Hundred-Handed Punch

Prerequisite Arts, **** Whirlwind, **** Speed Zone

Whirlwind normally lets a Wraith get a handful of small 'taps' on a target. This Art lets the Wraith exploit the art to its full potential, and score a number of full-strength blows on the target, without

having to re-roll for each one.

Cloud of Death

Prerequisite Arts, **** Whirlwind, **** Furious Flurry

A Wraith could use Whirlwind to create a cloud of flying steak knives. However, if she's not in a well-stocked kitchen, what does she do if she wants to severely hurt her opponent? She can use this Art to make even the most "harmless" objects deliver lethal damage: paperclips, thumbtacks and toys all act like bladed weapons when charged with this Art, which gives Tainted Essence for each use.

Guided Hate

Prerequisite Arts, **** Whirlwind, **** Speed Zone, **** Furious Flurry

The power of hate is a terrifying thing. A Wraith can use this Art to make a launched or shot object become 'hate seeking': zeroing in on a target and following her wherever she might go. Worse, this works in both the Live and Dead worlds simultaneously, creating who knows how much damage before the target is finally struck.

7.10 Regis (Uncommon).

The bailiwick of the Messengers, the Regis Numen gives Wraiths power over the minds of Mortals, Wraiths and Ghosts. It gives them the means to command their actions, tamper with their hearts and rework their minds to suit their desires.

As for their ends: the Messengers say that they use this Numen to protect life - all life. But there are those who suspect much darker motives at work. How could such absolute power not corrupt absolutely?

The Messengers would respond that these Arts are not without danger - for both those who use and receive them. Wraiths who are cavalier with others' hearts and minds will suffer a great toll to their souls: one of the many reasons their Concord seeks to restrict knowledge of it as much as possible.

One Mind, Two Numen.

Both the Fear and Regis Numen allow Wraiths to play around with others' minds. However, the two Numen seem to deal with different "halves" of the brain.

The Fear Numen preys upon the irrational side, with its fears and nightmares, and the dreaded memories that sometimes fuel them. Regis, meanwhile, subverts the rational side of the mind, twisting motivations, desires and goals into new forms, and adding or subtracting the memories that have helped shape them.

It's not the most clear and clean of divisions, but the mind has always been a mysterious thing. And while there is a possibility that the two Numen spring from a common source, and might join up with one another at some point, no one has ever found that juncture.

At least, not that anyone knows, or can remember...

7.10.1 Paths.

Regis has three recognized Paths known as Keys to the Messengers:

- The Path of Command is the Key to Action, and is used by the Heralds to turn others into their servants: implanting both sudden orders and long-term mandates within them. These Wraiths are rightly feared for their skills, which many say could only come from the Gods. But using this Key risks a great amount of Tainted Essence, which is why wise Dead are very careful with it.
- The Path of Memory lets the Harbingers use the Key of the Mind, so they might unlock its doors, move about in its rooms and leave messages on its walls. They can implant thoughts great and small, replay the memories of others, and even implant memories within the brain. They often store and replay the best moments of someone's life for their loved ones or, as punishment, the last moments to those who took their lives, but some of the more mercenary amongst them run "Memory Bazaars" in the Marketplaces, so that other Wraiths might enjoy salacious thoughts.
- The Path of Desire, which is used by the Companions, is the Key to the Heart through its desires. These Wraiths can alter, create and remove desires, with varying degrees of strength and exactness. They say they do it all for the good of their "friends," but some wonder if these Wraiths are fit to make that judgment, given how wracked with Tainted Essence they are.

7.10.2 Those Who Know.

The Messengers hold a near-monopoly on Regis. They view this Numen as an important secret, and have tried to keep it far from others' hands, so that they might not fall prey to its dangers. But given their strong moral code, they will not destroy other Wraiths in order to safeguard it, preferring to remove or rework others' memories of its use, instead.

That said, the Messengers have not been entirely successful in their quest. The Order is quite conversant with lower-level Arts of the Paths of Command and Desire, so that they may enforce

The Injunction on their own Wraiths. There's also talk of the Haunters learning it as well, which bothers the Messengers to no end.

Whispers.

In Ancient Times the Gods alone bore the ability to see and command the thoughts and desires of the Living. But the catastrophe of Sundering changed this balance, as it changed many things, and the secret escaped into the hands of the Dead. And over time it has been refined and changed by their hands, and it is now known as the Numen of Regis...

Or so the Messengers say, anyway. Others say that this kind of power could only have come from the other side of the Barrier. And they point out the high cost of the Numen in Tainted Essence to prove this claim.

It is said that the Masters of this Numen are very terrifying to contemplate - quite literally, in fact. It is whispered that they can not only use this Numen on people well out of speaking distance, or line of sight, but on people they have never seen before so long as they have an accurate likeness, or proper name. They also say they can monitor thoughts of everyone in the vicinity, and change people's plans, ideas and desires to suit their needs.

They also say that the Damned practice this Numen extensively, which could account for how many Wraiths and Ghosts they enslave to their bidding. Some Pardoners swear that the Damned can harvest lost memories from the Storms, the better to taunt Wraiths with, though this is somewhat questionable.

The Messengers also insist that particular rumor has everything to do with the Fear Numen, and nothing to do with them.

7.10.3 Path of Command.

*So let me see... you will go to work, as normal,
this morning. And you will not deviate from
your routine there at all.*

*You must give no one cause to think that you are
behaving oddly.*

*When you leave work, you will go to the hardware
store on the way home. There, you will buy five
large packages of strong garbage bags, a mop and
bucket, a hacksaw and ten replacement blades...
yes, and several cans of industrial-strength cleaning agent.
Should anyone ask why you are purchasing these
things, you will smile and say 'Spring Cleaning.'
Just that and nothing more.*

The Heralds' Arts are very powerful things. Both The Order and the Messengers consider the Heralds akin to the Oracles, as only the voice of a God could command so. But the ability to

command can be put to terrifying ends, even amongst the Messengers, which is why that Concord prefers to use the Path of Command only in strict emergencies, or on those who won't behave themselves for anything less.

Targets of this Path's Arts can be made to do things that override their own Morality, and go against their own Virtues and Vices. They also know full well that they are being controlled, but are usually powerless to stop it. If they do things they find immoral, their impotence creates a horrible amount of guilt, and makes them more likely to suffer a Derangement should they fail their Morality check.

If the actions are done instantly or repetitively, without the target being mindful of them, then there is no chance for them to resist. However, if performing an extended set of commands that require some thought on the part of the target such as those performed under ***** The Goal or ***** The Power, the target can roll to resist. Success lessens the Wraith's grip over the target, while failure is painful, and may even cause a Derangement due to the feedback loop it creates in a Living target's mind. Wraiths gain Tainted Essence, and Ghosts are in danger of Awakening.

All the Arts on the Path of Command require that the target actually hear them. This means that Wraiths will have to be well within earshot of other Wraiths, and must Manifest at a sufficient level in order for these arts to have any power over the Living. Since Ghosts are unlikely to hear and understand what's said, these Arts don't often work on them, unless the Wraith has roused their interest, somehow.

Absolute Power, Corrupting.

The Arts of the Path of Command are very powerful things. They're also very dangerous to the souls of those Wraiths who use them on a regular basis, except under the most noble of circumstances. And even then, there's a danger.

Wraiths who use these Arts to command another to do something that winds up harming the target, or another individual, will gain Tainted Essence for having done so. The Tainted Essence is gained in two stages: one dot when the power's used, if it's obvious that harm will be done, and one or more dots when harm is done by the target, depending on how badly things turned out.

There are no exceptions to this rule. Even if the person harmed may have deserved what she got, the damage done to her weighs heavily upon the Wraith's soul. This rude fact makes a lot of Heralds very, very careful how they phrase things, which in turn makes them more controlling, and more likely to use several Arts on a target to ensure that nothing goes wrong, leading to more Tainted Essence if and when it does...

And it's all downhill from there.

**** The Word**

The Wraith uses this Art to make a short, declarative command that the target must obey. Commands such as "block the door," "shoot her," and "drop the gun" are acceptable under ** The Word.

***** The Action**

The Wraith puts the target into a loop, doing the same thing over and over again. Commands such as "knock on the door," "keep walking," "spraypaint your name on the wall" and "stab your attacker" are acceptable. Successes are spent to maintain the length of time the action is repeated.

****** The Plan**

The Target is made to do several things in sequence, one after the other. If the target should be blocked at doing one of them, and cannot find a way to overcome the impediment within a Scene, she may shake loose from the Art's hold over her. On the other hand, she might think of some other way to go around the blocked step, and onto the next - thus completing her instructions.

Successes can be spent both on specific steps, and the time that the target has in order to complete them before the Art wears off. The target can roll to resist **** The Plan once per Scene, and gains a varying Modifier to roll if a step is blocked.

******* The Motive**

The culmination of the Path of Command lets the Wraith give the target certain operating parameters, such as "you will never, ever kill, even if your own life, or that of another, is in danger," or "stalk, seduce and murder, with this knife, all redheads you meet in this city."

Successes can be spent both on specific parameters and the time that they last before they wear out, and the target can act on her own behalf, once again. The target can roll to resist ***** The Motive once per situation where a parameter would kick in, such as being put in a position to take someone's life, or meeting a new redhead.

7.10.4 Path of Memory.

*Do you see this, little man? Those are your hands,
coming towards you now, out of the dark.
Yes, they are. And that is your gun, aimed at you,
now. And your face, leering out the shadows...
hissing orders at your new plaything...
What's that? You don't remember this? Well, you
may have forgotten him, little man. But he has not
forgotten you. Especially after what you did
to him... there in the alley.
Now... what was it you said to him?
"Let's play Master and Servant."
Ah, I see by your sudden panic that you're
starting to remember! But let's continue,
just to be sure?
You may scream, if you like. I know he did.*

The Harbingers bring the gift of total recall, though it is often more of a burden to those they share them with. The Arts of the Path of Memory give them control over the mind's contents - both long-term and short-term. They can place a small, passing trifle into a target's mind, or implant a full memory. They can also remove memories, should they choose to.

Fear and Memory.

Some may wonder what, apart from the need to be inside the target for Fear to work, is the defining difference between Regis' Path of Memory and Fear's Path of Sorrows? After all, one can use Fear on good memories, and Regis on awful ones.

The chief difference is that, while the Path of Sorrows empowers Wraiths to change memories, it will not allow them permanently implant the memories back into the minds of their victims. And while the Path of Memory lets Wraiths implant and remove memories, it will not let them alter those memories in any way.

In fact, any attempt to use Fear Arts on a memory gleaned through Regis' Basic Art, and the Path of Memory, causes that memory to disappear, as though it'd been left outside the body too long. And any attempt to use Regis to implant a memory that has been altered by Fear automatically fails.

It's almost as if the two Paths' Arts were created in such a way as to cancel one another out...

In order to use these Arts on another, the Wraith must be close enough to look the target deep in the eyes - no less than five feet away. The target doesn't have to know the Wraith is there, which is why these Arts work just fine on the Living. But if eye contact is broken at any time, the Art fizzles.

These Arts cannot directly harm the target, but they may cause discomfort and mental anguish. If someone is emotionally disturbed or bruised by what they see, the Wraith takes Tainted Essence for having set the scenario up.

There is, however, nothing to be gained by sending someone on a dangerous errand via ** Repeat or *** Remember. The Wraith just puts it in their head, and if they act on it... well, that's their own fault, isn't it?

**** Repeat**

This Art lets a Wraith put something small into the head of the target: an annoying song, a small thought or some idle worry "Did I leave the stove on...? The thought is enough to distract the target, and take dice away from activities requiring mental concentration. It's also good for nudging people in a certain direction, provided the Wraith got enough successes to seriously worry them.

***** Remember**

This allows for a more involved thought to be placed into the mind. The Wraith can slip in a mental

image of something or someone, or a phrase, objective or errand. She can also place certain pieces of information - such as a street address, password or safe's combination - that will only unravel from the target's mind once she's close to a certain something, or someone.

**** Rerun

* Distraction allows a Wraith to find and/or copy others' memories, and this Art allows the Wraith to run those memories through another's mind. It can also be used to replay an old memory the Wraith finds in the target's head, and boost its clarity so it seems as fresh as an hour ago.

The Art lasts for a Turn, regardless of how long the memory actually is: the target's sense of mental perception is sped up as she "relives" what she sees, unable to move or physically react in any way. Sadistic Harbingers are known to allow them to speak, if only to hear them whimper, cry or scream in sympathy with the memories they're reliving, but that's as much as the targets can do.

***** Replace

The culminating Art of the Path of Memory lets a Wraith permanently implant a memory into the mind of someone, or else take a memory out. The more successes the Wraith gets to do this indicates the skill with which it's removed or implanted, to the point where, with an Exceptional Success, the target thinks the memory's always been there, or won't notice the hole in her mind when something's taken away.

7.10.5 Path of Desire.

*No, Mr. Black River Killer... I don't think it's
a good thing that you want to hurt people.
I think it's bad. Very bad.*

*And I think that, deep down, you'd agree with me,
if only that awful need wouldn't keep getting in
the way. Yes, you would, wouldn't you?*

*Well, see? Now it's gone. And in its place is
this: you don't want to hurt anyone - never, ever again.*

*Now... I could make you want to go to the police and
turn yourself in, too.*

*But I think you're a little more useful to me outside
than you are in.*

*And you want to be useful to me, don't you?
Of course you do.*

In spite of their claims to help others, the Companions are not trusted by many Wraiths. Though they insist that they only use their Arts to rid others of their destructive impulses, there's a general feeling - gained in conversations with them - that they see themselves as superior beings: if they are able to map out someone's desires, and see where people go wrong, are they not better-qualified to

tell people how to run their lives than the people, themselves?

Fortunately, Wraiths cannot create a massive change in another through the following methods. All Arts on the Path of Desire but ***** Complete Obsession are required to sit alongside the target's Virtue, or else play into her Vice. If the Wraith doesn't take these into account, the Arts will simply not work, or not work very well, at Storyteller's discretion.

Like the Arts of the Path of Memory, this Path's Arts require the Wraith to be close enough to look the target deep in the eyes - no less than five feet away. As before, the target doesn't have to know the Wraith is there, so these Arts work just fine on the Living. But if eye contact is broken at any time, the Art stops.

These Arts cannot directly harm the target, but taking desires away is no little thing. If someone is emotionally broken or mentally castrated by what is removed, the Wraith takes Tainted Essence, unless she can put a desire of equal strength into the target to make up for the loss. And if someone is sent off to do things that go against her Morality by these Arts, the Wraith takes Tainted Essence if negative consequences occur.

** Tiny Itch

This Art allows the Wraith to place a simple need in the target's mind, or else take one away. The Art is best seen as a step directly up from * Distraction, only with the distraction lasting up to a Scene as the target is compelled to either satisfy a new craving, or deny it. Such things could include the burning itch to go to get a beer, check one's email or the like.

An implanted need cannot go against a Virtue, but can play into a Vice.

*** Small Need

A step up from ** Tiny Itch, the Wraith can now plant a more involved - or more desirous - need into someone's head or remove it, and make it last for much longer. This could be used to get someone to give up drinking, or to start, or to fall in or out of love with someone else. The effects can last for up to a Lunar Month.

This Art can't normally get a target to go against her Virtue. However, if it can play into a Vice then there's a chance the Wraith can get the target to sidestep her Morality. If any negative consequences should come about, however, Tainted Essence will be accrued.

**** True Passion

This Art causes the target to become fixated on their desire for someone, or something. The Wraith can implant this near-obsession, or else remove one, or replace it with something else. And the effects could last for several Lunar Months.

This Art can't normally get a target to go against her Virtue, either. However, if it can play into a Vice then there's a chance the Wraith can get the target to sidestep her Morality - especially if

the implanted desire is a strong one. But, as with *** Small Need, if negative consequences should come about the Wraith will get Tainted Essence.

***** Complete Obsession

This Art's power is such that it can override someone's Virtue - or Vice - to make them get a hold of whatever they already strongly desire, to the point of obsession, or whatever the Wraith wants them to obsess over. It can also be used to remove an obsession completely and totally, though it's best to replace it with something, so as to avoid Tainted Essence for creating a hole in the target's heart and mind.

What's more, the addition or subtraction can be made permanent, though this is a rather costly - and dangerous - proposition.

7.10.6 Crossover Arts.

Geas

Prerequisite Arts, *** Small Need, *** The Action

The basis for the Messengers' Code, and The Order's enforcement of the Injunction, this Art creates an aspiration for the target to adhere to - something that is both a desire and a command. The Geas must be in the form of short, positive instructions that the target can understand "Always defend all human life" or "Always obey the Injunction" Ever thereafter, the target wants to obey this instruction, and if she doesn't - or neglects her duty - she hears the instruction over and over again in her mind, reducing her dice pool at first, and then possibly causing a Derangement or Tainted Essence, if she's a Wraith

A Geas is usually permanent, but there's always a chance it could be thrown off. The target must essentially wrestle with her own mind, risking the possible Morality checks for doing so. If she can gain the upper hand, the geas becomes a mere whisper, like a quietly nagging conscience. If she loses, however, she may gain a Derangement if alive or take Tainted Essence.

Heart's Fond Longing

Prerequisite Arts, *** Remember, *** Small Need

This Art makes it seem as though a desire the Wraith has just implanted was something the target has always had, and always wanted to follow. It not only saves some confusion on the target, but makes it slightly easier for her to make Morality checks, should the desire go against it.

Always Eager

Prerequisite Arts, *** Remember, *** The Action

The Path of Command's answer to Heart's Fond Longing, this Art makes it seem as though a command the Wraith has just implanted was something the target has always wanted to do, and always been doing. As with its companion Art, this makes it much easier for the target to make Morality checks, should the command be contrary to her principles.

Soul Conversion

Prerequisite Arts, ***** The Motive, ***** Replace, ***** Complete Obsession

Through an extended combination of commands, and implanted/subtracted memories and desires, it is possible for a Wraith to permanently change either the Virtue or Vice of her Target. This is exceedingly hard and costly for the Wraith to undertake. And if it's not done perfectly, there is a good chance that the target will be driven insane by the conflicting contents of her own mind.

7.11 Shaping (Uncommon).

The Shaping Numen is much more than just a way to look frightening, or ease the gathering of Essence: it is the very cornerstone of the Deadlands economy. All workaday objects that the dead can make themselves are fashioned from Corpus, and captured Essence both powers their limited industry and acts as coinage. Without Shaping, Wraiths would have little, and would be reduced to bartering what few goods they had, or relying on favors alone.

The fact that this cornerstone lies mostly in the hands of the Freewraiths and the Pardoners is ironic, given their antipathy and disdain for The Order. Fortunately, enough members of The Order know the rudiments of this Numen to ensure that their Concord can prosper in a Shaper's market.

7.11.1 Paths.

Shaping has three recognized Paths:

- The Path of Flesh allows Wraiths to mold their Corpus, and that of others, into new appearances and unusual, or unnatural, shapes. The Shapers who master this Path are also the craftsmen of the Deadlands - taking Corpus from themselves, or others, and making permanent objects from them.
- The Path of Power deals with the gathering, giving and changing of Essence. The Usurers are aptly named, for they mint the common coin of the Deadlands with their actions. And none dare cross these Wraiths, given their powers over the energies of both the living and the dead.
- The Path of Transmutation is viewed with suspicion: the Alchemists who practice it can change Essence to Corpus - and vice versa - with such fluid ease that it's wondered if they're cheating the market. But as that ability is the least impressive of the miracles they can perform with this Path, their services have no shortage of patrons.

7.11.2 Those Who Know.

The two biggest users of Shaping are the Freewraiths and the Pardoners. They are adept with all three of the known Paths, and use their expertise in them almost every day: the Freewraiths for both commerce and warfare, and the Pardoners for warfare, only.

Of the two Concords, the Freewraiths are the most fanatical about making certain their "property" stays in their hands. Anyone who isn't a Freewraith or a Pardoner who has it had better keep

it to themselves, or else agree to use it only in the Freewraith's Marketplace, under their terms. And those who don't acquiesce to the martial Concord's demands had better not get caught by them.

The Pardoners, on the other hand, aren't so miserly. They have taught the Path of Shaping and Path of Power to The Order, and that knowledge has trickled down from there. Sadly, it appears that this gesture has led to the Haunters getting their hands on the Path of Shaping as well, to judge by their grotesque appearances, and how they make their Terms.

Whispers.

Almost everyone has a "have you heard?" tale when it comes to Shaping, given the miracles that its use can create. Most of the time, these wind up being stories of how amazing a particular Shaper truly is, but strange and unconfirmed rumors make their way around, too.

They say that the true, hidden Masters of its Arts can turn an ordinary Wraith into a giant, or crunch her down into the size of a humble coin. They even say that the coins can be reactivated with a touch, so that entire armies can be carried in a bag of "coins."

They say that objects can be created in such a way so as to have the ability to think, and react - possibly to have their own personality. And while that sounds fantastic, there are a number of Wraiths who believe it as gospel: after all, it's no secret that Wraiths can have their minds "molded" into a coma by one of the Crossover Arts, so why shouldn't the reverse be possible?

And they also say that there are those Shapers whose sudden appearance from nowhere is courtesy of their having reduced themselves to free-floating clouds of Essence. But then, no one's buying that one...

Judging from their terrifying appearance, it is believed - perhaps "hoped" is the better word - that the Damned have access to Shaping. But as their simple teeth and talons are much more dangerous than anything a Shaper could produce, it's wondered if they haven't a few dark tricks up their sleeves.

7.11.3 Basic Art.

*** Give and Take**

The first understanding on any of the Numen's Paths is the ability to give or take Corpus and Essence from another Wraith. Freewraiths often use this Art to "bulk up" before a fight, giving them a lot of Corpus to play around with. Meanwhile, the Pardoners are known to have many jars of Essence on their person while out on Patrol, so they can harm and heal in equal measure.

System: The Wraith using this art must touch the Wraith she wants to use it upon, but does not have to spend Essence. She need only roll her Strength + Manipulation + Castigate, and each success allows for the taking or giving of one dot of Corpus or Essence.

A Wraith can "pull her punch" and not take or give as many dots as the roll allows for, and any unused Essence or Corpus stays right where it is. But she can only give or take either Corpus or Essence, and can also only give or take. If she wants to give Corpus to another, and repay herself in that Wraith's Essence, she must make two rolls.

When taking, the Wraith can decide whether to absorb the Corpus or Essence directly into herself, or hold it in stasis. This stasis requires concentration to maintain, or else the Corpus rots into uselessness and the Essence turns ambient, and floats off.

The Wraith can also spend three Essence per dot of either substance to create stability. These small, glowing pieces of ghostflesh or energy have only one dot in them, and can only be accessed by the Wraith who took them, or the Wraith they were taken from. They must have one Essence put into them per week, or else the stasis ends, and their contents either rot or float off.

It goes without saying that one can take either substance from another Wraith without their permission. However, this gross act of theft gives 1 dot of Tainted Essence for such a violation, even if done in self-defense. Those who've achieved mastery over this Numen often advise their students to make weapons, instead: you don't have to get as close to the enemy, and there's no hard feelings - except, maybe, on their part.

7.11.4 Path of Flesh.

*What can I do? Ha! Friend, I could make you the most
beautiful creature you've ever imagined,
or the most horrifying thing you've ever seen.
I can turn you into a work of art or an engine of
destruction. And I can create such things for you...
the likes of which not even the Gods have seen!*

*What can I do? I think the proper question, friend,
is what can't I do?*

Provided you've got the money...?

Shapers are both loved and feared in equal measure: loved for what they can do with Corpus, and feared for what they might do to yours. That doesn't stop their tents and stalls from being so well-frequented at the Marketplaces, but it's advisable to patiently wait your turn in line, have the promised money at the agreed-upon time, and never, ever be rude.

Wraiths using the Arts on the Path of Flesh can choose to make permanent objects out of Corpus. Once it's done, a point of Willpower must be placed into the finished object, which "fires" it, and makes it permanent. The Willpower can be spent by anyone, and most Shapers insist that their customers be the ones to do it.

While it's being made, the corpus can be "frozen" by spending One Essence, which keeps it in its shape for a day and a night. Another point of Essence must be spent to make it pliable once again, so the Shaper can return to it. Once **** Separate Sculpture is reached, the Wraith doesn't

have to spend Essence to keep it "frozen" in place, but she has to mix the Corpus she's working on within her own body, first.

All Arts on the Path of Flesh may be done to oneself, another Wraith, or harvested Corpus.

**** Simple Sculpture**

The Wraith can use this level of the Path to make minor alterations in herself, or another. These alterations are cosmetic at best: mere manipulations of ghostflesh, none of which are able to hold an edge, or stand up to any kind of punishment. A talented Shaper can also use this Art to make herself resemble another Wraith, but the deception is limited to appearance: she won't be able to make a short person look tall, or vice versa.

It is also good for molding "soft" objects, such as paper, cloth or rope from corpus. And while the Wraith cannot make "hard", objects, she can still make saplike weapons that do bashing damage out of herself, or another Wraith. And she can also cause, or heal, Bashing damage by touch.

***** Splendid Sculpture**

Having progressed in her understanding, the Wraith can make more radical alterations in another Wraith's body. What was once pliable can be made hard as rock, or given a lethal edge, allowing for armor plates, sharp nails, protruding swords... whatever the customer wants.

She can also create simple objects - usually tools or weapons - so long as they have no moving parts. The weapons made can do either Bashing or Lethal damage, and she can cause, or heal, lethal damage with a touch.

****** Separate Sculpture**

At this level of the Path of Flesh, the Wraith has achieved enough mastery over Corpus to make objects with many moving parts. However, she can also throw portions of her Corpus away, without having to spend the Willpower needed to make these items permanent. She can use this to leave Shaping projects lying around without having to spend Essence on them.

She can also throw knives she pulls out of herself, fire bullets from a gun, or shoot darts of bone across the room. These weapons can do either Bashing or Lethal damage, and she is able to heal - but not cause - Aggravated Damage with a touch by this point.

******* Supreme Sculpture**

As with **** Separate Sculpture, the Wraith can throw pieces of herself away without making them permanent. However, this refinement on the concept allows her to take herself apart in such a way that she retains control over her individual pieces, and can continue to shape them on the fly. This leads to such things as literal jigsaw people, talking clouds of flies, or Wraiths who are literally in two - or more - places at the same time.

As an added bonus, the Wraith can also maximize her use of Willpower to make things permanent: if she makes several objects out of the same source of Corpus, she need only spend one Willpower to fire them all. That Willpower must be spent by her alone, however.

The Rule of Ouch.

Mastery of the Shaping Numen is feared for many reasons, but one reason stands above the others: Wounds made by Shaping cannot be healed normally. The trauma caused by the invasion of another's fingers into one's body disrupts the sense of self that allows a Wraith's Corpus to heal on its own. So if a Wraith has a piece of herself crushed, ripped or molded away, she must spend Essence to heal the wound.

Note that this does not apply to weapons made with Shaping. Regardless of whether they're still part of the Wraith's body, or have been made into a permanent object, the weapon does normal damage that can be healed either by time or Essence. This also doesn't apply to any loss of Corpus a Wraith might cause to herself while Shaping her own body - it comes into effect only if she's doing it directly to another

7.11.5 Path of Power.

*Essence is all, and all is Essence.
That is the start of things and the stop of them.
Alpha and Omega. Beginning and End.
Have you come to pay or play?*

They say that if you want to find a Usurer, you need only look for the Wraith that no one will leave alone. Those who can bottle and sell Essence are always popular people, and those who must be paid are to be feared. Usurers also tend to wear their "money" on their person, often in the form of glowing gems and beads of Essence.

Unlike Corpus, Essence is not as easily "frozen" in place. If it isn't stored by some means, it turns ambient and floats away, at which point it can be absorbed by any Wraith who cares to taste of it.

**** Soul Jar**

This Art allows Wraiths to create Amphorae, which are self-sustaining ampules of pure Essence. If a Usurer needs to give Essence to a Wraith, she most often places it into one of these "soul jars," and then gives it to the Wraith, rather than actually touching the other person's skin.

Amphorae are most often made to look like the jars after which they're named, but they can be molded into any shape or color the Usurer might care to. They glow faintly from within, which is how one can usually tell if an object is Shaped or "Souled."

Amphorae can be anywhere from a small ampule with one Essence to a huge jar of 1000+ Essence. Once it's created, anyone can take Essence from it with a touch, but that Essence cannot be replaced, and it shrinks down accordingly.

***** Power Conversion**

Essence must be of an emotion a Wraith has an affinity for in order for her to fully utilize it. This Art allows a Usurer to change stored or ambient Essence from one emotion into another, either for themselves or a Wraith they're choosing to share this Art with. Some Essence is always lost in the conversion, but that is the nature of trade.

****** Hearth's Heart**

A Usurer utilizes this Art to suck the ambient Essence out of a location, wholesale, and either take it into herself or store it in some other fashion. This is usually done with clouds of ambient Essence, but it can also be done to Haunts. If it is, the Haunt is left barren and sterile for a time, depending on how powerful the Anchor is.

This Art can be reversed, either to create a cloud of ambient Essence, or add more Essence to a Haunt. In both cases, the cloud remains until it has been absorbed by others.

******* Touch of Power**

Wraiths aren't able to use Shaping powers while Manifested, but Usurers have a way around that. Touch of Power allows them to reach into the Liveworld, "touch" mortals or Ghosts, and then either give them Essence, or take it from them.

Giving Essence to Ghosts helps keep them Asleep, and docile, and is one way to throw an angry Ghost back into her normal "sleep" patterns. Taking it may cause them to Attack - or even Awaken - if not done carefully, but if the Ghost's already attacking, draining her of Essence is another way to call her off.

As for mortals...

7.11.6 Path of Transmutation.

*Don't let the archaic name fool you.
There are no puffers in this tent,
and no frauds to be found amongst us.*

*We have witnessed the melting point between states,
and seek to further refine it,
both for our own gain and for yours.*

*We are not frauds. We get results.
And they are extraordinary.*

Of all those who practice the Shaping Numen, the Alchemists are viewed with the most suspicion. They say it's because they could be changing their own Essence to Corpus on a one-for-one basis, and undercutting the local exchange rate.

But in reality, it's because the Freewraith Shapers and Usurers are in awe of what the Alchemists can do, and suspect - perhaps correctly - that they've gotten some very Dark help in the process. The Alchemists laugh this off as "nonsense," but then, they would.

The Pardoners, on the other hand, see this Path as one of the best weapons they have against the Darkness. And if they don't care to speculate about where it came from, and why it so resembles things they've seen the Reapers do... well, they do believe that to beat the enemy, you have to understand him. And that is, perhaps, more than enough said on that subject.

**** Reversal of States**

Every Wraith can turn her own Essence into Corpus to heal herself. This Art lets the Wraith do the reverse, and change their own Corpus into Essence. They can also turn Essence directly into Corpus, either to heal another, or create building material out of pure energy. They must touch the other Wraith to do this, and cannot use this Art to turn others' Corpus into Essence, or vice versa.

***** Fire's Hunger**

Once the Wraith has reached this level of the Path, she does not need to touch Essence to absorb it. If it's in her line of sight, then she need only extend a hand to feed on ambient Essence, Essence trapped in Amphorae or Fire Batteries see below, or Essence from a Haunt.

She can also give Essence or Corpus to another Wraith, via * Give and Take, with this Art, though she has to use ** Reversal of States on top of it if she wants to change her Essence to Corpus, or vice versa, before it touches the recipient. This Art cannot be used to take Essence or Corpus from another Wraith, though.

****** The Burning**

This Art forces Corpus towards the point where it becomes Essence, but freezes it one slight step before it gets there. The Corpus can then "burn" or glow at varying degrees of brightness, enough light to see by in absolute darkness if need be. This Art is often used to light up the Terms of the Concords, but must be used on Corpus that is separated from a Wraith.

******* Undying Fire**

The Alchemists use this Art to "go one better" over their Usurer colleagues. They use this to store Essence into a shaped object, or another Wraith, creating what they refer to as a Fire Battery. Unlike the Amphorae created with the Path of Power, Fire Batteries can be both taken from and added to. However, they must be unlocked with a key word or thought before anyone can take from them.

This Art can also be weaponized. The Alchemist need only lock Essence into a suitable object, and then add just a little more Essence on top of it. Until this charge is extinguished, the object burns with literal fire, and does Aggravated damage to any it strikes. This is often applied to weapons, but Alchemists can also use it to make "fireballs" out of a handful of Corpus, and ignite them right when they're thrown.

7.11.7 Crossover Arts.**Lending of Grace**

Prerequisite Arts, *** Splendid Sculpture, *** Power Conversion

This useful Crossover Art allows a Wraith to place an Art she or another Wraith knows into a shaped object, or Wraith. If the Shaper doesn't know the Art, the Wraith who does must be there, and contribute Essence towards the effort.

Following the implantation, the object must be charged with so much Essence to activate the Art. Once it's out of charges, it must be replenished, but this can be done by anyone willing to pay the Essence.

As for Wraiths who are implanted with Arts, they fuel it using their own Essence. However, the shaped part of their Corpus is highly unstable, and the Wraith risks a literal "burnout" every time she uses the Art.

The Hungry Hand

Prerequisite Arts, *** Splendid Sculpture, *** Power Conversion, *** Fire's Hunger

This Art not only lets a Wraith turn another's Corpus into Essence, or Essence into Corpus, with or without their permission, but allows the Wraith to do it without touching the other Wraith. All she has to do is have the target within line of sight, and not be interrupted, for the Art to go off. The Corpus can be shaped however the Wraith doing the Shaping would care to, and can be used to heal, bind or cripple the target.

Line of Power

Prerequisite Arts, **** Separate Sculpture, **** Hearth's Heart

This allows Wraiths to create Amphorae which can be drawn upon from afar. All the Wraith has to do is say or think a certain phrase, and she is instantly filled with Essence from that Soul Jar. Alchemists can do the same thing with their Fire Batteries

Prison of Body and Mind

Prerequisite Arts, **** Separate Sculpture, **** Hearth's Heart, **** The Burning

This rather cruel Art allows a Wraith to reach into another Wraith's body and perform an act that cuts off all control of her body, and perception of the outside world. This essentially traps the Wraith in her own Corpus: it becomes a prison of her own flesh, and one in which that Wraith remains perfectly conscious, but unaware of what's going on around her, and unable to do anything about it.

The state lasts until a Wraith who knows the Art chooses to reverse it, or until the Wraith's Corpus is destroyed, in which case she goes back to an Anchor to reform.

The Pardoners use this Art to make their Reservoirs, and have reported that the Damned they perform it upon are actually turned braindead by the ordeal. Meanwhile, the Freewraiths hold it over wayward debtors' heads as a final punishment for not paying what they owe.

Touch of Death

Prerequisite Arts, ***** Supreme Sculpture, ***** Touch of Power

Much as Usurers can reach into the Liveworld and give or take Essence from Mortals and Ghosts, this art allows them to take Corpus from them. A Ghost is stripped of Corpus on a one-for-one basis, while mortals are depleted of their Health.

A Mortal who is attacked by this Art seems to be shriveling up, turning into a human skeleton or flayed alive, depending on what effect the Wraith cares to go for. These wounds count as Aggravated.

8. ANTAGONISTS.

8.1 Reapers.

*What a nice face you have,
and so healthy looking.
I'm sure the spectres will pay grand
for such a young soul.*

Reapers are a source of hatred for wraiths. Fellow ghosts that willingly work with the forces of darkness and trade away the unwary to slavery and worse. The Order has had some success purging them from the Necropolis but they still roam freely in those lands where the Order has no hold. Pillaging and killing with impunity.

Worse still, some Necropoli are still fond of trading with them and buy captured wraiths for the steel forges and as manpower. While the Pardoners are the most vocal in their hate, the shortage in trained militiamen and the resourcefulness of these mercenaries make such trades necessary.

Also not all Reapers work only on illegal activities with a majority offering their services as mercenaries or usurers. Not all of them abstain of the slave business due to goodwill but rather because The Guild has control over most of the business and has no qualms of disposing of unwanted competition.

8.1.1 The Guild.

While the Order tends to crush the foraging bands of mercenaries in the dead lands, all effort to dispose of the ancient organization known as The Guild has met with failure. The Guild's origins are clouded in mystery with rumours of them originating as bands of marauding assassins that congregated under a single banner, to them being an expy of Charon's order that was disbanded in the early days to rumours that they are a branch of the legendary Hassan-ih-Sabbah.

The Guild is a major trafficant of slaves in the land of the dead. They roam the dead lands in packs where they hunt for recently awakened wraiths to sell to the forges of ruthless Necropoli lords or as food for the spectres in the Catacombs.

Along with their most known market of slaves they also offer other services to the wraith willing to pay the price. From assassination jobs to essence or other forbidden pleasures, the Guild is all too happy to provide to the one willing to pay the cost.

Is this the same Guild?

Whether this Guild is the same as the ancient conspiracy that trafficked with the land of the living in **Exalted** or only a coincidence is up to the Storyteller. Still, information on them can be found in the core supplement.

8.1.2 Guild Leader.

*Strap the motherfucker down!
Fast! Move, before the spectres
come back!*

Background.

Rising over the ranks of normal Reapers thanks to his business accumen along with his battle prowess. The Guild Leader is the face that makes contact with the corrupt Order officers and hungry Nephwrack lords all the same.

Appearance.

Guild Leaders vary their outfit according to the situation they're in although most are known for their black shrouds they use to shield themselves from the storms and the mark in their left forearm which they use to identify each other.

Guild Leader - Standard.

Death: Violence.

Concord: The Guild.

Shadow: The Zealot (Faith).

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

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics (Damned, Wraith Culture) 3, Medicine 1, Politics (Stygia) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl 1, Firearms (Rifle) 3, Survival (Deadlands) 5, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 2, Socialize 1, Streetwise 4

Merits: Inspiring 4, Status (The Guild) 3, Contacts (Corrupt Stygians) 2, Resources (Guild) 5, Fighting Style (Formation Tactics) 3, Fighting Style (Markmanship) 1

Willpower: 6

Angst: 4

Morality: 2

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Greed

Initiative: 4

Speed: 13

Defense: 4

Health: 8

Numina: Fear (Fright) 2, Shaping (Power) 4, Castigate (Warding) 3

Anchors: The Church where he died (Faith) 4

Thorns: See Evil x2, Hear Evil x2, Voice of the Damned, Castigator's Shield, Bully.

Essence: 10/3

Tainted Essence: 3

Weapons/ Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range/Shots	Dice Pool
Knife	1(L)	N/A	9
Rifle	2(L)	20	7

8.2 The Lost.

*What do you mean they're friendly?
Can't you see the shadows in their faces?
Tainting them, sinners all of them!
Or maybe...that's what you want me to think...*

- Father Mercy, Pardoner of the 7th legion [MIA].

The Shadow is one of the Wraiths greatest fear, along with their most intimate enemy. Who else is more dangerous than the enemy within? What can be more dangerous than the self destructive urge that subtly leads all decisions to an unpleasant end? And what's more, most Wraiths are unaware of their influence until it becomes too late to be saved.

Only the strongest will and the support of friends or at the least acquaintances can be of help against the ravages of the shadow and that truth is the principal reason Wraith society is so tightly bound. Sadly such contempt against independence can also result in the shunning of individuals that go against the norms and an increase in pessimism on the whole, something that a shadow quickly takes advantage of...

The Lost are those Wraiths that are on the verge of losing their battle against their Shadows and with it their grip on reality. The process could either be a slow fall of decadence (one vague threat one day, friendly faces look scornful from the edge of vision) to sudden and full fledged madness (a nightmarish world of bloody waters and buildings made of bone as the winds scream curses that only he can hear while spectres closing over the wraiths feeble form). It usually depends on the shadow's nature and natural self-destructive preferences.

Shadowy natures.

Getting lost is an extended and subtle process that could happen in a span of several months or within a short period depending on the Shadow's nature.

Shadows of the archetypes of greed and temperance for example prefer to stack on tainted essence from the Wraith's actions and release it all in taking full control of their hosts for an extended period and maximum horror for their targets while shadows of violence and sloth prefer to afflict their wraiths with thorns here and there while trying to gobble on the Wraith's frustration as his life falls to pieces.

Storytellers are encouraged to keep the players on edge by changing the Shadow's modus operandi across the chronicle treating it like a separate character that adapts to his hosts plans and players should be wary if their shadow stays quiet for extended periods.

Or else...

8.2.1 Becoming lost.

Becoming Lost is a process that depends on a huge number of factors, from the Wraiths will to overcome his shadow, the shadow's nature and modus operandi, to the effects of environmental hazards that could strengthen their dark halves (such as Storms).

It usually begins with simple comments sounding slightly off. A single spiteful word here, a sneer from the corner of their vision there. Nothing too important or harmful that they decide to ignore. As long as they ignore their dark halves everything will be alright and why waste precious time visiting the Pardoners? Right?

One day they feel like being alone, tired of interacting with the rest. They're all spiteful bastards after all so why keep playing that game of pretend? Friends start looking despondent and it only furthers the Wraith's alienation with the society and prompts it to further retreat on its own.

As the process continues the shadow keeps manipulating its host to damage their relationships making the process easier and accelerating the fall. If the wraith manages to convince himself that their actions aren't natural or their support network gets a hold of the problem, a session with the Pardoners can smack the shadow back in line but if the Wraiths keeps defending their behaviour and/or lacks the support needed to treat their problem (I'm alright, I can stop whenever I want to) their fall is almost assured.

The wraith starts feeling everybody wants to hurt or take something from them and may lash against those that come close until one day it wakes up to a world of nightmare reflecting their insecurities and unable to wake up from it.

Furthermore the Lost are sad figures because they could be anyone, you, me, your neighbour or friend. Their delusional state is caused by their losing battle against the disease that is the Shadow and as every Wraith that has faced one can attest, they could be saved.

8.2.2 Mechanics.

The process can be roleplayed as a slow descent into madness but if the Storyteller prefers a more mechanical approach its possible to rule the Wraith becoming Lost if the Shadow's Angs exceed the Wraith's Willpower/Morality depending on how harsh he wants to be to the player. In both cases the Storyteller is encouraged to talk with the players beforehand about the methods or roleplay the process instead.

Recovering from madness.

Roleplaying a Lost character and its fight towards recovery can be a great opportunity to get insight into the darkest recesses of their psyche and their struggle to reach Catharsis and recover from their state...or becoming one of the Damned. The Storytellers should talk with the players when their characters have accumulated too much Angst to be considered Lost and give them the chance to roleplay their recovery (or fall if they so choose) instead of handing the character sheet or using dices to solve the issue and award experience points for a well roleplayed session reflecting the Wraith's new insight and acceptance of their darker aspects.

If the players prefers to skip the roleplay or the Storyteller feels it would detract from the chronicle its possible to use dice to solve it by rolling a Contested action agains their Shadow.

Cost: 1 Willpower.

Dice Pool: the Shadow's Manipulation + Angst v.s. the Wraith's Resolve + Eidolon.

Action: Contested

Dramatic Failure: The Wraith suffers a crushing defeat from the Shadow giving it one point of tainted Essence + the number of successes it scored over the Wraith. Also the Wraith can't roll to escape from the state for a full day.

Failure: The Wraith is unable to overcome the Shadow and it gains one point of tainted Essence. Can't roll to escape the state until next scene.

Success/Exceptional Success: The Wraith overcomes the Lost state and the Shadow loses all active Thorns.

Helping another Wraith on the other hand is an exercise of effort and should be roleplayed by the Wraiths helping him recover, usually with the help of a Pardoner.

Lost are a good source of drama as they represent mental disease, someone lost in their delussions that could nonetheless be saved and that shows still slivers of reason here and there. It presents a good moral dilemma that the players can't just dispatch with a few rounds to the head. To save someone that could represent a danger to everybody, is it worth it?

8.2.3 Unhinged Wraith [NON-COMBATANT].

Have you seen my baby?

Background.

The Wraith roams the streets of the city crying and crawling on its knees. Forever looking for her “baby” and screaming at the passing Wraiths about it. Dispatching it is easy, easier than trying to help it find whatever its looking for. From time to time it gets glimpses of reason and can communicate effectively but soon it slips away into stupor and crazed ramblings.

Appearance.

This Wraith can look like anyone although its usually female, dressed in a ragged and bloodstained hospital gown, her crazed face pleading and dripping tears of blood everywhere.

Roleplaying Hints. You’re looking for something and you’ll find it, of course it would help if you could remember what it is in the first place...

8.2.4 Father Mercy.

*“You’ve been tainted by your sins,
but don’t worry, this will help you,
just don’t move, it will hurt a bit...”*

Background.

Father Mercy made quite a name in the capitol of Stygia as one of the greatest Pardoners it has ever conceived. His mortal identity has been forgotten, eclipsed under the great accomplishments his legend accrued. Father Mercy started as a member of the Believers in the eighties and was known for both his altruistic desire to help his fellow Wraiths and his strong religious beliefs in the power of faith. Father Mercy spent his first years debating against his fellows on the responsibility they had to use their power to protect the Wraiths against the ravages of the Underworld and improve the social conditions of Stygia, to the chagrin of the Order.

Due to frustration in the Believer’s reluctance to assist in the battle against Oblivion he abandoned them to become a Stygian Pardoner gaining with it the mistrust of his old Concord. Nonetheless his natural accumen in the Castigate numen and selfless nature along with zeal in the cause against Oblivion got him a place among one of the 7th legion’s most powerful pardoners, becoming chief Pardoners by his fifth year.

He kept the position for two decades in which the amount of Lost in the city was close to nill along with sucessfully leading several ”campaigns of mercy“ against the Damned where he gained legendary status as being able to bring them back from their states and going as a volunteer to the Persian Gulf War, saving close to two hundred souls from the ravages of Storms and Damnation singlehandely.

But as wraiths are too painfully aware, all good things must come to an end and Father Mercy got missing in action during one of his campaigns. Leading close to fifty powerful Pardoners deep into the labyrinth only one returned, ragged clothes and blabbering madly about the flesh of fallen angels, he became a Specter shortly after. Considering it a lost cause and not worth the risks of losing more Pardoners in a rescue attempt, the tunnel was sealed and no wraith was permitted entry.

No one knows for sure what they found in the corrupted depths of the labyrinth but those that have ventured to the edges of the tunnel claim to have seen shapes appearing and disappearing, figures that preach maddly about salvation and the flesh of fallen angels...

Appearance. Father Mercy looks like a old but strong American man in his sixties. Shaved, white haired and going slightly bald but always with a kind smile in his face. The only thing that seems off about his appearance are the pair of unblinking bloodshot eyes that seem to stare right through people.

He also keeps his Pardoner clerical suit that he used whenever he went on campaigns against Oblivion that was once clean but now sports stains of blood and ragged.

Roleplaying Hints. You bear news of a better world for everybody and they will listen to it whether they want to or not. You must save all those poor souls from the hungry maws of Oblivion even if its the last thing you do.

Father Mercy

Death: Old Age

Concord: Pardoners

Shadow: The Martyr (CHARITY)

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

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics (Theology, Damned, Wraith Culture) 5, Medicine 3, Occult (The Shadow, Spectres) 3, Politics (Stygia) 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl (Grappling) 4, Firearms 1, Stealth (The Catacombs) 3, Survival (The Catacombs) 5, Weaponry (Cane) 5

Social Skills: Empathy (Shadow, Wraiths) 4, Intimidation (Shadows) 3, Persuasion 3, Socialize 2, Streetwise 1

Merits: Iron Stamina 3, Danger Sense 2, Inspiring 4, Striking Looks 2, Status (Pardoners) 5, Status (Stygia) 3, Fighting Style (Formation Tactics) 5, Fighting Style (Fencing) 4

Willpower: 7

Angst: 6

Morality: 3

Virtue: Charity

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 7

Speed: 12

Defense: 4

Health: 7

Numina: Anchorage (Protection) 4, Anchorage (Separation) 4, Castigate (Absolution) 6*, Castigate (Partnership) 5, Castigate (Warding) 5, Fear (Fright) 5*, Shaping (Power) 4, Shaping (Transmutation) 4, Castigate (Dark Release, Storm Armor, Bulwark, Parting the Clouds) *

anchors: The Church where he died (Faith) 4

Thorns: See Evil x2, Hear Evil x2, Voice of the Damned, Castigator's Shield, Bully.

Essence: 200/5

Tainted Essence: 7

Weapons/ Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range/Shots	Dice Pool
Sword Cane	2(L) 2(B) Sheated	N/A	11
Knife	1(L)	N/A	9

NOTES: Father Mercy is a powerful Castigator and despite his madness he keeps trying to save Wraiths, still believing he is continuing his crusade against the Abyss and saving lives, whether that is by burning down the Wraiths or other drastic methods doesn't matter to him anymore. If the players can convince him to return to the city and avoid his attempts to "cure them" he can teach them powerful Castigate rituals only known to him along with useful information on the Labyrinth due to his long stay there.

Castigate 6? The limits of Castigate aren't known and the Storyteller is free to grant Father Mercy abilities not presented in this book. He can be used as a device to teach players new rituals and Numina...along with the price of losing to the Shadow...

Chronicle ideas.

- Rumours about the sighting of Father Mercy have attracted the attention of the Order and a rescue mission has been issued, a mission where the characters need to go deep into the labyrinth and confirm if the legendary Pardoner is indeed alive, and if possible, bring him back for treatment. Of course that implies a dangerous voyage into a labyrinth filled with Spectres and other hazards along with the possibilities of fighting against a powerful unhinged Pardoner. And that is besides the possibility of facing something capable of driving such powerful Pardoner mad...
- Father Mercy comes to the character's village, sane and with miraculous powers to battle the Shadows and claiming to have found a way to Paradise or a method to permanently destroy the Shadow, all the Wraiths need to do is to accompany him to the labyrinth where they will get their reward...

8.3 The Damned.

*(*Sound of shrieks and howling...*)*

Unlike the drama of the Lost, Wraith have little more than contempt and fear of the Damned. The Spectres have given themselves completely to their dark impulses becoming little more than engines of destruction that only seek to devour and destroy everything in their way.

Order among the madness.

Given Oblivion's destructive nature Wraiths often wonder why Spectres don't just destroy each other but rather wait for Storms to wash across the cities and attack the hapless souls trapped within. Its true that some Spectres are unable to distinguish among one another and kill indiscriminately, but most display some sinister cunning and pack mentality that enables them to coordinate attacks and attack wraiths with ease.

The truth behind it is unknown but most Wraiths are too scared to think of Oblivion as a force with intelligence preferring to think of it as a mindless force of nature. The idea is too sinister for sure...

Upon becoming a Spectre the rational mind of the Wraith becomes subdued in the urges of the Shadow becoming a fragmented and self-destructive shell seeking only to devour until its destroyed. The savagery with which the Spectres attack hides behind a desire for Oblivion where upon their destruction they finally are able to stop being. Indeed many wraith scholars believe that existing as a spectre causes the once-wraith pain which drives them to seek their destruction along with a malice and hate for the world that leads them on their destructive cause.

8.3.1 Storm Spectre.

*(*Howling among the winds*)*

Background.

Storm spectres are feral wraiths that attack unwary travelers among the dead lands. They don't get closer than the borders of the city and rather prefer to wait for storms to attack in the comfort of the pack. Their personalities have been subsumed by their rage and care little about their wellbeing. Wraiths can take advantage of it to trick them into going somewhere and getting time to escape although their huge numbers make such attempts difficult.

Appearance.

The primary distinguishing feature of a Spectre is its snarling face, always set with a scowl or roaring madly in fury. Their bodies are usually transparent or black, tainted with the powers of Oblivion and with undefined features, little more than lines that help distinguish faintly where the storm ends and the wraith begins. Some glow with eerie dark green lights, the fires of Oblivion. Any wraith worth its corpus knows to flee from these sights and seek cover or a Pardoner.

Roleplaying Hints.

Destroy, kill, maim, anything that can help calm this rage and endless hunger. Destroy, kill, maim...

Storm Spectre (Basic).

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 1, Resolve 2.

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 1

Social Attributes: Presence 0, Manipulation 0, Composure 1

Mental Skills: N/A **Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Survival (The Catacombs) 5

Social Skills: Intimidation 2

Merits: Fighting Style (Formation Tactics) 1

Willpower: 3

Angst: 10

Morality: 0

Virtue: Any*

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 7

Speed: 12

Defense: 4

Health: 7

Numina: Fear (Fright) 2

Anchors: N/A

Thorns: Castigator's Shield, Dark Inversion

Essence: Any

Tainted Essence: 10

Weapons/ Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range/Shots	Dice Pool
Bite	0(L)	N/A	5
Headbutt	1(B)	N/A	9
Storm	1(L)	N/A	9

Storm Spectre (Pack leader).

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

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 0, Manipulation 0, Composure 1

Mental Skills: N/A **Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Survival (The Catacombs) 5

Social Skills: Intimidation 2

Merits: Fighting Style (Formation Tactics) 3

Willpower: 3

Angst: 10

Morality: 0

Virtue: Any*

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 7

Speed: 12

Defense: 4

Health: 7

Numina: Fear (Fright) 2

Anchors: N/A

Thorns: Castigator's Shield, Dark Inversion

Essence: Any

Tainted Essence: 10

Weapons/ Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range/Shots	Dice Pool
Bite	0(L)	N/A	5
Headbutt	1(B)	N/A	9
Storm	1(L)	N/A	9
Fire Storm	3(L)*	N/A	9

Note: Fire Storm causes them 1 Lethal damage per use due to the fires of Oblivion scorching their ghostly flesh.

Thorn - Dark Inversion.

Due to the Spectre's nature as beings whose Shadow has taken over they get no satisfaction from fulfilling their Virtues, being little more than a pale substitute to the feelings of joy they feel from fulfilling their base urges. Spectres regain only one willpower point when fulfilling their virtues and all spent willpower points when fulfilling their vices.

8.3.2 Pack Leader.

Kill kill kill kill kill...

Background.

Rising over the ranks of the shock troops of the damned, pack leaders mix brutal fighting with leadership skills to direct packs of lesser spectres in crusades against the wraiths. One of the most common sights in Storms is for these brutes accompanied by the howling winds of its broken brethren, their howls signaling their approach

Appearance.

Unlike the almost disincorporated and broken Storm Spectre, the Pack Leader looks like a wraith that has entered Shadowstate. Some look like bloated hulking masses of meat while others are thin muscular men or women in rags and stains of blood. Strange mutations are not uncommon like claws or fangs protruding from their feral faces or tumors and other skin diseases.

Roleplaying Hints.

Look for the prey, call the pack and have no mercy. Maiming, killing, that's all you live for now.

Pack Leader.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 4.

Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 3 (only Intimidation), Manipulation 0, Composure 2

Mental Skills: N/A **Physical Skills:** Athletics (Ride the Storm) 2, Brawl 4, Survival (The Catacombs) 5

Social Skills: Intimidation 4

Merits: Fighting Style (Formation Tactics) 4, Fighting Style (Brute Force) 4, Iron Stamina

Willpower: 6

Angst: 10

Morality: 0

Virtue: Any*

Vice: Wrath or Greed

Initiative: 7

Speed: 12**Defense:** 4**Health:** 7**Numina:** Fear (Fright) 4**Anchors:** N/A**Thorns:** Castigator's Shield, Dark Inversion, Pack Leader, Mental Corruption**Essence:** Any**Tainted Essence:** 10**Weapons/ Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range/Shots	Dice Pool
Bite	0(L)	N/A	5
Headbutt	1(B)	N/A	9
Storm	1(L)	N/A	9
Gladius	4(L)	N/A	11

Armor: Stygian Iron Armor: 4 points -2 to Dextery rolls.**Pack Leader.**

Cost: 1 Tainted Essence. The power of the Void gives Spectres authority over lesser being of the Abyss. By spending one point of tainted Essence the Spectre can issue one simple command to beings with less Willpower or rank (Abyssal creatures, Storm Spectres, etc.) which the being must heed. The power of Oblivion is absolute and flows across all beings that heed its call and as such the being is able to understand the order without need of language (language is a symbol of order and being, something that the Abyss abhors). Most Spectres only grunt to convey intent and their vassals obey...

Mental Corruption.**Cost:** 2 Tainted Essence.**Type:** Reflexive and Contested**Roll:** Spectre's Resolve/Composure + Angst vs the attacker's pool

The Spectre's mind has been warped and infected with a sliver of the Abyss's taint granting it increased resistance against interference to their sacred mission against life. Whenever someone tries to interact with the Spectre's mind in any way (mind reading, trying to control the Spectre emotionally) they must succeed on a contested roll or be unable to influence the Spectre.

Furthermore those arts that require mental contact between the attacker's mind and the Spectre that fail the roll suffer a temporary derangement due to the strain of interacting with a mind infected with the Abyss.

Drawback: The Spectre's mind automatically fails any Social rolls outside of Intimidation due to his warped mind and suffers a -2 to all Mental rolls requiring his focused attention as the Abyss rages within.

8.4 Nemmissaries.

*Oh so you want to learn more about the Abyss?
Come with me, I have something to show you...*

Sometimes a Spectre is special, sometimes something of the old fractured psyche remains intact, sometimes the will of the once Wraith can overcome the shadow, or maybe they were sociopathing to begin with...numerous theories abound among wraiths interested in the void about what make a Wraith retain or not its identity and even more among those that try to harness the power of the Abyss for themselves but no one is certain where the line between Wraith with accumulated Angst and Spectre sociopath stands, all they know is that Nemissaries are creatures of dread and too dangerous to leave alive.

Unlike the feral Spectres that only go out in the Storms and that come into the land of the dead to terrorize the Wraiths, the Nemissaries are wraiths that have succumbed to their Shadows while retaining association to at least one fetter. What makes this possible is unknown but the Nemissaries are thus able to go into the lands of the dead and even the living without problems and retain use of their Numina while being as insidious as the more conventional Spectres.

Nemissaries are a huge danger to Wraiths due to their subtle nature as they tend to use their intelligence to infiltrate wraith society and corrupt it from within, gaining the trust of wraiths and tempting them with power, strenghtening their shadows and sowing mistrust and betrayal among the society. Once they are weakened and dispersed do they show their insidious nature, usually with the destruction of the settlement. More than one Wraith town has fallen prey to a Nemmissarie's action and as such the mere rumour of a Nemissary in town is enough to force a purgue or witch hunt among the Wrait populacy.

All Nemissaries look like any wraith known and can only be detected in two known ways, either they can be exposed to a Spectre which will refuse to attack the Nemissary as they recognize the taint of the Abyss (a dangerous proposition as Nemissaries can command lesser Spectres to help them) or more easily by indiscriminated use of Pardoning on the Nemissary which makes it suffer damage showing the being beneath as Nemissaries are only Shadows wearing their hosts corpus as suits, there's no wraith left, the shadow is all there is.

8.4.1 Frank Grimes.

*Hey buddy its me, Frankie! I'm no Spectre!
So why don't you lower that gun and talk?
That's right, much better.*

Background.

Frank Grimes remembers having run across the labyrinth trying to escape the hungry cultists, his body aching from the wounds those bastards had made with their spears, sweat on his brow and out of breath. He remembers his shadow telling him something about saving himself and about him agreeing on something. Then blackness...and then he wakes up in a new town without memories of how he ended there.

All he knows is that he's happy of being alive (sorta) even though he continually suffers from blackouts and ends up in places he doesn't remember going with people he can't remember. Sometimes its simple like having awoken in the street in the middle of Stygia and sometimes its harrowing like the time he awoke in a puddle of blood and intestines, his head aching and a knife in his hand.

In truth Frank Grimes is a Nemissary and his personality as Grimes is only a facade so well built by his shadow that he truly believes he's the Wraith he used to be. The shadow uses this personality to infiltrate the cities and corrupt or kill the citizens while lowering the defenses, all waiting for a Storm to occur. Once the Storm arrives Grimes reveals his true identity by riding the storm and reveling in the bloodshed as the Spectres kill everyone. When its over the secondary personality takes over and Grimes begins anew, what's worse, three town have burned to the ground this way and he shows no signs of stopping...

Appearance.

Grimes looks like your everyday Wraith. A middle aged man with glasses and short cut crop hair. He wears a bussiness suit and has a sad face, as if he isn't sure of what he's doing. When dropping his facade Grimes becomes a bloodshot man with a sadistic smile in his face and a muscular body.

Roleplaying Hints.

You only want to be left alone and live your unlife as any selfrespecting citizen. Why must everyone be so mistrustful? Wraith society I tell you... Always negate any accusations of being in liege with the Abyss, that's just not your thing and besides, if you were with the Abyss it would show, right?

Frank Grimes.

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

Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics (Oblivion) 2, Medicine 3, Politics 2, Science 1, Occult (Oblivion) 2

Physical Skills: Athletics (Ride the Storm) 1, Brawl 4, Survival (The Catacombs) 5, Larceny 2, Stealth 4

Social Skills: Intimidation 1, Persuasion 4, Socialize 4, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 5

Merits: Language (Void Speak) 2, Barfly

Willpower: 5

Angst: 10

Morality: 0

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Sloth

Initiative: 7

Speed: 12

Defense: 4

Health: 7

Numina: Shaping (Flesh) 5, Decay (Restoration) 4, Regis (Desire) 3

Anchors: Office where he died 3

Thorns: Dark Inversion, Mental Corruption, One Among Them

Essence: Any

Tainted Essence: 10

Weapons/ Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range/Shots	Dice Pool
Punch/Kick	2(B)	N/A	6
Claw (Transformed)	3(L)	N/A	6

One Among Them.

This Thorn is possessed only by Nemissaries and enables them to retain their fetters and a measure of their intelligence to pass for normal.

Drawback: All Nemissaries suffer one point of lethal damage from the Castigate Numen for every success on the Pardoner roll whenever used against their bodies as flesh rots or boils away.

8.5 Mortwrights.

*Click click click clic *roar**

The opposite of Nemissaries are the Mortwrights, those Spectres that live in the deep of the Catacombs and that have traded away their humanity and bodies for the powers of Oblivion. Luckily for Wraiths they rarely venture outside of the Catacombs and even rarer are those that enter the cities but the few that do are extremely dangerous due to the varied assortment of mutations that make them easily identified.

While they used to occupy a great part of what are now the Necropolis and Stygia, its said that Charon ordered the hunt of all Mortwrights by his legendary ghostly legions and that's why they only exist deep in the Catacombs or those dead lands left unchecked by the Order although more and more have been appearing recently to the Order and the Pardoner's worry as the legions are gone and only a slim wall of defense stands between these horrors and the Wraith population...

Mortwrights don't look remotely human although they usually have one or two characteristics that resemble a human being, be it the face or the eyes while some are even rumoured to be capable of speech and rational thinking.

8.5.1 Leatherwing.

Screech

Background.

Leatherwing is a term used to describe Spectres capable of flight. Their appearances are as varied as any, some look like birds with scales and bone in unnatural places, others look like leathery lizards with human faces or like the mythological arphies with woman torsos and heads while having bird wings and feet and even weirder things like rays that exhude wind from their numerous mouths to impulse themselves across the air.

They usually fly in flocks and assault unwary travelers, carrying them in their members and dropping or eating them in flight.

Roleplaying Hints.

If it looks alive, eat it.

Leatherwing (Lizard).

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 4, Resolve 4.

Physical Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 4 (only intimidation), Manipulation 0, Composure 2

Mental Skills: N/A **Physical Skills:** Athletics (Ride the Storm) 5, Brawl (Claw) 5, Survival (The Catacombs, Dead Lands) 5, Stealth 2

Social Skills: Intimidation (Shriek) 5

Merits: Danger Sense, Iron Stamina, Brawling Dode, Direction Sense, Fleet of foot (Flying) 3, Giant, Toxin Resistance

Willpower: 6

Angst: 10

Morality: 0

Virtue: Temperance

Vice: Gluttony

Initiative: 4

Speed: 11

Defense: 4

Health: 9

Numina: N/A

Anchors: N/A

Thorns: Dark Inversion, Mental Corruption, Castigators Shield

Essence: Any

Tainted Essence: 10

Weapons/ Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range/Shots	Dice Pool
Bite	3(L)	N/A	5
Claw	5(L)	N/A	11
Leather wing	0(L)	N/A	5

8.6 Nephwracks.

*How dare you raise a hand against me, I that
am a God among the dead and undead,
I that speak the tongue of the Abyss
and commune with the powers of Oblivion!
This insolence must be punished!*

Rare are the (sane) Wraiths that dare to call the Catacombs their homes as numerous dangers lurk within. Beyond the Spectres that crawl from the entrails of the tunnels every once in a while to the Mortwrights that attack viciously anyone they find. Yet some Wraiths manage to go deep

into the Catacombs and take dominion there. All extremely powerful in their own right these mad Spectres wield tremendous power coupled with cunning and intelligence to become gods of their own domains.

Said to once have ruled over all of the Underworld, they were cast off by the Death Lords upon Charon's orders and have remained in the unmarked lands deep within the Catacombs, planning and waiting for the day when they will finally return to subjugate the Order with their dark gifts and plunge the world into Oblivion. Many Wraiths fear that the day is nearby...

The truth is that most Nephwracks couldn't be less concerned about plunging the dead lands to Oblivion as most care only about conquest and fear the void like the plague, only taking it as an asset in their desire to control everything and enjoy their vices to the fullest. An all consuming Oblivion is no fun after all.

Their powers are varied and arcane, the Nephwracks prove more than a challenge to a group of Wraiths and even to some of the weakest Ferrymen and given that they never venture from their lairs deep in the Catacombs preferring to instead act through their Spectral emissaries, a treatise of sorts has been formed where no member of the Order will invade their domains as long as they stay away from the lands controlled by the Order. A Cold War has been fought by the Order and the Nephwracks since then...

8.6.1 Kira, Tyrant Lord of the Lower Depths - Lesser Nephwrack.

*Oh I won't kill you of that you can be sure,
as long as you do me a little favour that is...*

Background.

Unlike most of the centuries old Nephwracks that infest the lower depths of the labyrinth, The Tyrant Lord of the Lower Depths is said to be a recent occurrence. Coming to rule the labyrinth city just below the 3rd Necropolis, Kira got rulership after assassinating its previous occupant in cold blood in a convoluted coup d' etat that surprised all of the previous Spectre's retainers and managed to put him in a position where he could assimilate all the previous owner assets.

His previous identity forgotten, this Nephwrack lives only to conquer and has already been making moves to take control of the nearer kingdoms in the labyrinth by strategic uses of his Spectres as if they were chess pieces, something that makes his rivals and those of the Order nervous as the labyrinth rumbles with death.

Appearance.

Little more than a deformed skeleton with blood red eyes and a pair of glasses, this Nephwrack has kept most of its human trappings and even retains its human dressing with a black but stained and dusty business suit and a tie on its balding head. It could be considered unimposing if it wasn't due to the aura of menace and dread that emanates from it.

Roleplaying Hints.

You don't remember your previous identity but there's one thing you remember well: that desire to conquer, to prove your superiority to everybody and show how pathetic everybody is compared to you. There are no friends nor family, only assets or enemies, play both to your advantage and kill only when necessary. Better to control and keep everybody where you need them until it becomes necessary to strike. Keep in mind the big picture and one day you will take over the dead and living world and then, when that day arrives you shall be known as the God of the New World. You've never felt so alive!

Kira, Tyrant of the Lower Depths

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 8, Wits 6, Resolve 4.

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 7, Composure 6

Mental Skills: Academics (Death, Stygia, Oblivion) 6, Computer 1, Crafts (Traps) 4, Investigation (Forensic, Traps) 5, Occult (Death, Oblivion) 6, Politics (Machiavelian) 7, Science 2.

Physical Skills: Athletics (Ride the Storm) 7, Brawl 5, Survival (The Catacombs, Dead Lands) 5, Stealth 6, Drive 1, Fire Arms 2, Larceny 5

Social Skills: Intimidation (Police tactics) 5, Empathy (Fake Emotion) 3, Expression (Rethorical) 5, Persuasion (Honeyed Words) 6, Socialize 5, Streetwise 5, Subterfuge (Lies) 6

Merits: Common Sense, Danger Sense, Eidetic Memory, Encyclopedic Knowledge, Language (Oblivion) 2, Meditative Mind, Ambidextrous, Fighting Finesse, Quick Draw (Clock), Allies (Spectres) 5, Barfly, Contacts (Stygia) 3, Inspiring, Resources 5, Status (Nephwracks) 3, Striking Looks 4

Willpower: 10

Angst: 10

Morality: 0

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 12

Speed: 18

Defense: 5

Health: 9

Numina: Regis (Command) 6, Regis (Memory) 5, Regis (Desire) 7, Shaping (Power) 6, Fear (Fright) 2, Fate (Influence) 5, Kinesis (Fury) 3

Anchors: N/A

Thorns: Dark Inversion, Mental Corruption, Castigators Shield, Pack Leader

Essence: Any

Tainted Essence: 10

Weapons/ Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range/Shots	Dice Pool
Hammer	4(B) + Stun	N/A	20

Relic - Apples of life **

Dried blue apples that are cultivated by Kira in his abode. They smell of rot and dust and taste like sour sandpaper but have a useful effect. When ingested they automatically heal one point of

lethal damage or two bashing damage although are useless as food and can't prevent death from starvation for living beings in the Underworld.

Relic - Killing Patch *** ****

A small yellowed wrinkled piece of paper, looks unassuming until a name is written on it with blood after which it unleashes its terrifying effects. If the user focuses on a human face and writes the name in the paper a curse is set and instantly kills the written subject of a heart attack, no rolls are required and he instantly becomes a Spectre if not outright destroyed as Oblivion tears its corpus apart. If the user is a supernatural being he instead gets Incapacitated or suffers 5 points of Aggravated Damage, whichever is lower. Such damage can be healed with magic and the parchment won't work ever again against that being.

Drawback: The parchment drains the blood written on it along with the user's life energy. Whoever uses the note automatically suffers 5 points of Aggravated damage from the artifact.

8.6.2 Gorgonath, The Annihilator - Greater Nephwrack.

*Your entrails shall decorate my chambers... *roar**

Background.

No one knows when Gorgonath came to be. Purported to be the legendary emperor Calligula, this Nephwrack arose during the massacre that was the First World War and has terrorized the Wraith population ever since. Living in the lower depths of the Catacombs, this spectre has decided to ignore the unspoken teatrise with the Order and instead directs his troops to attack the Necropolis to sate his hunger for bloodshed.

Several attacks have been made by both the Order, the Pardoners and even the Ferrymen in order to stop him with the most succesful to date in the nineties where in a conjoint unit formed of Order/Pardoners/Ferrymen wraiths managed to reach the inner chambers of Gorgonath's blood and bones citadel only to be repelled by the huge number of Spectres and abominations inside. Since then no further attempt has been made, his armies ever growing within...

Appearance.

Devoid of any humanity, Gorgonath looks more like a Mortwright as a huge mass of blackened muscle, hulking and deformed with his right arm bigger and longer than his left one, the better to wield his huge sword or plunge his vicious black claws in wraith flesh. Gorgonath has tusks in his face and where his feet should end are huge hooves which he loves to use to trample over wraiths. His eyes are little more than two black orbs like marbles that absorb all light. He measures up to four meters high and prefers to fight naked for it is able to brush off all minor attacks thanks to his tough hide.

Roleplaying Hints.

The Order and their petty ghosts stand no chance against your army. Their legion is gone and the way is clear for you to slaughter them like the sheeps they are. Revel in the blood and try to keep

your opponents alive for as long as you can, enjoy every minute of it...

Gorgonath, The Annihilator

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 6, Resolve 6.

Physical Attributes: Strength 9, Dexterity 8, Stamina 8

Social Attributes: Presence 5 (only intimidation), Manipulation 2, Composure 6

Mental Skills: Academics (Oblivion) 6, Investigation (Wraiths) 5, Occult (Oblivion) 2

Physical Skills: Athletics (Ride the Storm) 7, Brawl 8, Survival (The Catacombs) 5

Social Skills: Intimidation (Brute force) 7

Merits: Danger Sense, Language (Void Speak) 2, Allies (Spectres) 5, Contacts (Spectres) 5, Status (Nephwracks) 5, Giant, Iron Stamina, Fighting Style (Brute Force) 5, Fighting Style (Dirty Tactics) 5

Willpower: 12

Angst: 10

Morality: 0

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 6

Speed: 19

Defense: 6

Health: 13

Numina: Regis (Command) 6, Shaping (Flesh) 8, Fear (Fright) 7, Kinesis (Fury) 7, Kinesis (Speed) 5

Anchors: N/A

Thorns: Dark Inversion, Mental Corruption, Castigators Shield, Pack Leader, Hide of Gorgonath

Essence: Any

Tainted Essence: 10

Weapons/ Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range/Shots	Dice Pool
Tusk	3(L)	N/A	13
Claws	3(L)	N/A	15
Trample	4(B)	N/A	10
Anihilan	10(L)*	N/A	20

Relic - Anihilan *** ***

Requisite: Strength 8 or higher.

A huge double edged sword made out of the legendary Soul Steel, a weird alloy that is said to once have been common usage among the first Underworld inhabitants in Charons time. A rare black alloy made from the substance of Oblivion itself and the labyrinth, a crude cleavage instrument that looks like the bastard child of a butcher knife and a staff, its adorned by strange sygils that preach the teachings of the void and that let the user channel its power for extreme destruction. By spending one point of tainted essence Anihilan channels the powers of the void to make aggravated damage to the target for one turn. If the user wants to keep doing aggravated damage he must pay reflexively its tithe every turn of usage. Frurthermore the soul that gets cleaved by this blade is killed off permanently and can't reform back at its Anchors getting swallowed by the Void instead as he is dragged kicking and screaming into its maws.

Hide of Gorgonath.

Blessed with a hide that can only be broken by the most powerful of holy/unholy weapons, Gorgonath possesses a cursed flesh that can't be affected by any Numina below fourth level and suffers no damage by any weapon except Soul Steel or superior.

8.6.3 The Blood Count - Greater Nephwrack.

*Yeah you feel it now don't you? The cold hunger of Oblivion
corroding your flesh, ensnaring your senses...
and it only gets better from here...*

Background.

Some spectres want nothing more than watching the world burn and plunge directly into the hungry maws of Oblivion...not so with The Blood Count. Older than any known Spectre or Wraith and said to predate since Charon times; The Blood Count is one of the oldest abominations a Wraith could fear encountering...and also one of the most civilized.

Holding dominion over a vast Necropolis almost one eighth of the size of Stygia and domineering over legions of Spectres and other abominations, this Nephwrack cares not about conquest nor destruction preferring to spend the centuries deep inside his vast citadel and offering feasts of blood and forbidden pleasures for any soul willing to pay the right price. Furthermore even wraiths are free to join him in his citadel and partake on his gifts as long as they're willing to help the Count in his errands every once in a while, a prospect that has enticed more and more Freewraiths, Solitaries and all those tired of the Order's strict and obsolete government. He's also rumoured to have made allies with powerful necromantic vampires of an Italian family although how could a being that can't leave the Catacombs interact with the vampires in the skinlands is anyone's guess.

The Count is even known to keep active trade with several Necropolis, trading goods and treasures from the deepest parts of the Catacombs along with the even rarer and valuable Soulsteel produced on the forges of his kingdom for a continuous supply of slaves. Something the more ruthless wraiths are too happy to partake in. Its a secret shame how many high officers of the Order make a blind eye to this trade and if this activity was known it would certainly be enough to cause an uprising among wraith populace.

Many rumours about The Blood Count identity remain, some even going so far as to claim that The Blood Count is Charon himself. His identity long forgotten, The Count makes no effort to deny nor approve those claims, and maybe he himself can't remember.

Appearance.

Tall and regal, dressed in a black long robe The Blood Count would look awe inspiring...if he wasn't so hideous. His face deformed as if he had been struck in an industrial accident, the Count continuously oozes blood and pus from the gaping and infected holes in his face that stain his robe and leave a stain wherever he walks.

Roleplaying Hints.

Care not about the Order, the Pardoners or the cause of Oblivion. They can battle over the scraps, you have more important things to do. The ending has been set already so why worry?

Its over 9000!

The Blood Count is an entity that came to be in the times of Charon and as such has had ample time to develop his abilities being one of the most powerful beings in the whole Underworld only below Juggernaut and the Neverborn and as such can't be measured in the stats of feeble beings like the Wraiths or Spectres.

As such the Storyteller is encouraged to make him display any cool abilities he likes to but that due to the chronicle's limitations can't give to the players; anything goes for a major player of the Underworld.

The Blood Count is also a good narrative device and provide a good antagonist in a politics oriented chronicle, giving the players an obstacle that can't be overcome through sheer dumb muscle, beyond his numerous supporters facing him in straight combat can only lead to death or worse but if the players still do so...

As guidelines The Blood Count favours Mental attributes (the better to play mind games with) and has allies and high rank with Spectres, other Nephwracks, several corrupt high ranking Stygian officials and Dark Walkers along with Vampires of the Giovanni family which possess strange necromantic powers.

Chronicle ideas.

- Rumour start spreading among the spectres of the birth of a new god of death, a Nephwrack has managed to unearth a powerful spell that can ascend him to the levels of a Neverborn. Can the wraiths find a way to stop him?

8.7 Dark Walkers.

If the Ferrymen represent hope of peace and eternal rest, Dark Walkers represent torment. A cruel reminder to Wraiths of the duality of existence, as above so below, as there's heaven there is also a hell...

Many theories abound among wraiths about the nature of these enigmatic beings but so far no wraith has ever been able to test his theories or asked a Dark Walker and lived to tell the tale.

Due to their huge power and cunning nature the best option when facing one of these beings is to run the hell out of their reach and hope it is distracted to leave you alone. Those foolish enough to actually try to attack a Dark Walker find themselves torn to pieces by the creatures extreme power.

Lacking personality the Dark Walkers are little more than forces of nature with the power to destroy all but a Death Lord and the intelligence to hunt in packs which makes them even more dangerous.

And the Ferrymen?

Across history wraith society has asked the Ferrymen questions about their "lost cousins" but so far all attempts have met with a refusal to speak on the Ferrymen's part. Furthermore some kind of non-spoken pact of non-intervention has been set between the Ferrymen and the Dark Walkers as they ignore each other whenever fate puts the two in the same place, sometimes with deadly results on the part of the wraiths that approach a Ferrymen in the middle of a storm expecting his protection...

This is taken by most wraiths as another reason to distrust the Ferrymen while most Believers staunchly refuse to believe their would be saviours to be conspirating, arguing instead on the principles of free will exposed by God and the order of non-intervention from God to the angels.

8.7.1 Dark Walker - Basic shock troop.

All attributes 5

Mental Skills: Academics (Wraith Society, Oblivion) 5, Investigation (Wraiths) 5, Occult (Wraith Society, Oblivion) 5

Physical Skills: Athletics (Ride the Storm) 5, Brawl 5, Survival (Dead Lands, Catacombs) 5, Stealth (Shadowing) 5, Weaponry (Favoured Weapon) 5

Social Skills: Intimidation 5

Merits: Language (Void Speak) 2, Allies (Spectres) 5, Contacts (Spectres) 5, Status (Spectres) 5, Disarm, Fighting Style (Fencing) 5, Fighting Finesse

Willpower: 10

Angst: 10

Morality: 0

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 6

Speed: 19**Defense:** 6**Health:** 13**Numina:** All**Anchors:** N/A**Thorns:** Dark Inversion, Mental Corruption, Any other the Storyteller sees fit**Essence:** Any**Tainted Essence:** 10**Weapons/ Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range/Shots	Dice Pool
Punch/Kick	5(B)	N/A	6
Soulsteel weapon	5(L)	N/A	10

Soulsteel weapon.**Artifact *******

Just like their cousins Ferrymen all Dark Walkers are armed with Soulsteel weaponry that can take any range of forms, the most common being gladius and spears. Soulsteel weapons are extremely cold to the touch no matter the local temperature, leaving thin layers of frost when left alone and giving the wearer a feeling of depression and futility whenever used. Some wraiths have even reported to have heard moaning coming from Soulsteel artifacts from time to time but whether that is a trick from the Shadow or real is unknown. These vampiric blades hunger for the flesh of the living and the corpus of the dead alike and when inflicting wounds to any target they take away a number of points of Essence equal to the number of successes obtained on the damage roll and giving them to the user. If the victim has no Essence left the blade draws Willpower instead at a rate of one point per attack.

If the victim dies due to these weapons they instantly gain one point of Angst and enter a Harrowing.

8.8 Death Eaters.

*You may resent me all you want but trust me,
this is for your own good...*

Being a wraith is no easy task. Between the constant battle to make a living in the Shadowlands to avoid ending in the forge, the inner battle with the Shadow and the Damned, its no surprise most wraiths end ossified or lost after their first century. Those that have the willpower to survive end up in positions of power, old founts of wisdom and grumpy fellows for which life, or rather, undeath is but a boring waltz or neverending paperwork. But even these old souls have to recognize there are stranger things than the Spectres in the lands of the dead. The Death Eaters or Geists as they call themselves are strange souls neither completely ghost nor flesh but rather something far more exotic.

Living in the world of flesh but able to interact with the wraiths, the Geist posses gifts that make many wraiths jealous and that would make them valuable and powerful assets...if they weren't so insistent on meddling in the affairs of the dead.

While some Death Eaters are perfectly happy to help the wraiths solve their issues, make a favour in the lands of flesh where an unfettered wraith is unable to reach or simply provide company to a being that has spent most of eternity in the cold and dreary limbo that is the land of death, a lot of them also are very insistent on "helping" the wraiths reach transcendence against their will, going so far as to destroy anchors or kill ghosts without their consent or using their abilities to enslave wraiths and force them to servitude; seizing Haunts for their own convenience in the way of the Nephwracks.

Some Geist act due to a misconveived idea that wraiths and ghosts are one and the same, misguided shadows or remnants lacking of consciousness and humanity which causes endless headaches to wraith society in general while others have less than pure intentions and a few even actively work for the creatures of the labyrinth or the forces of Oblivion willingly.

Also some of these Death Eater spirits are unbound by human limitations and carry with them a pure hunger for ghostly flesh, an unnatural craving that leaves many wraiths thankful that they are unable to get out of the Catacombs.

Given these less than ideal circumstances its normal that most Death Eaters are approached with distrust or avoided outright and the Order has decreed that all interaction with these undead be avoided at all costs.

8.8.1 Simon.

*Simon says sit,
Simon says stand up,
Simon says...kill him*

Background.

Simon Goldwing was born to a rich and ultraconservative merchant family in the sixties, Simon

took advantage of his accommodated economic leverage to indulge in all excesses he could get his hands on while blowing up the family fortune in the process. Alone and in poverty he died during winter in the middle of a blizzard. And that's where he met the Brilliant Lord of Pearls and Swine, a Geist that offered him another chance at life. Simon awoke with strange powers over the energies of death and a second voice inside his head that serves as his mentor in dealing with the ghostly affairs.

Simon has made a living of exploiting his ghostly abilities by creating "haunted places" that he then "exorcises", appearing exactly when he is needed while commanding ghosts and specters as bodyguards against retaliation. He has made quite a name in the occultist community and has begun working on seizing a dominion in the lands of death with the help of his Geist. As their Synergy grows, Simon and his Geist have been spending more and more time finding newer and more forbidden forms of pleasure.

Appearance.

Small and unimposing, Simon is an auburn haired dark skinned man in his forties with a white suit and a cane, imitating old gangster fashion. His clothing despite being worn out with time still gives an air of richness and he displays a disarming white toothed smile that helps him disarm his clients. When commanding the powers of death, he gains an authoritative and raspy voice that howls with the haunting of the spectres to wraith ears.

His Geist, the Brilliant Lord of Pearls and Swine looks like a huge whitered skeleton with pearls for eyes and pieces of melting flesh on his face. He has a powerful presence of mind and enjoys imposing his superiority over ghosts whenever he can while enjoying his other halve's antics.

Simon Goldwing.

Archetype: Celebrant

Treshold: The Silent

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 1.

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 1, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Crafts 1, Computer 1, Occult (Ghosts) 3, Politics (Comerce) 4

Physical Skills: Drive 2, Larceny 1, Firearms 2

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Expression 1, Pesuasion 3, Socialize 2

Merits: Mentor (The Brilliant Lord of Pearls and Swine) 2, Haunt (Fluidity) 1, Resources 2

Willpower: 4

Synergy: 8

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Lust

Initiative: 3

Speed: 9

Defense: 1

Health: 7

Psyche: 4

Manifestations: Marionette 4, Curse 1

Keys: Stillness and Stigmata

Ceremonies: N/A

Weapons/ Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range/Shots	Dice Pool
Revolver	1(L)	20	4

Manifestations?

The traits of Simon Goldwing may make no sense to players that don't possess a copy of **Geist: the Sin Eaters**. Even though its highly recommended due to being a high quality canon game, the Storyteller can assume that Simon has Regis (Command) and Regis (Desire) to level four but with the limitation that it only applies against dead targets.

8.8.2 The Blue Spirit.

Sweet flesh, tasty flesh, any flesh!

Background.

The blue spirit doesn't remember ever being human with only glimpses of soft and warm light remain of his memories, an endless hunger for ghostly flesh in his place. He roams the waters of the lands of Drowning Sorrows where he lures unwitting ghosts to traps in order to feast on their flesh.

Uninterested in merging with humans, this disembodied Death Eater prefers to spend his days in the swamps away from the ministrations of the Nephwracks and Death Lords.

Appearance.

The Blue Spirit looks like a drowned bloated man. His eyes little more than holes where water and blood drips with algae draped around his clawed limbs. Horns adorn his head and his jaws can dislocated so as to better swallow his prey.

Roleplaying Hints.

Look for ghost flesh, spectres suffice but they lack the passion that ghosts posses. Wraiths are the most tasty but also more dangerous so only attack when you are sure of having the advantage. Stay away from the Stygians and the Nephwracks; you value your freedom too much to trouble yourself with their politics.

The Blue Spirit.

Attributes: Power 4, Finesse 8, Resistance 5

Willpower: 10

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Gluttony

Initiative: 15

Defense: 8

Speed: 23

Size: 5

Corpus: 10

Essence: 10

Key: Stigmata

Passion: Shroud 3

The Geist Viewpoint.

For Storytellers that have access to the NWoD supplement **Geist: the Sin Eaters**; to Geist culture Ghosts, Wraiths and Spectres are the same beings. All shadows of the living in search for salvation and transcendence. The shadow is an unknown and to them all these beings are trapped in the land, some having forgotten their mission to transcend but all seeking it deep inside. Why would they be so autodestructive otherwise?

What the Death Eaters claim to be Cthonians are the result of interactions with Dark Walkers, Mortwrights and the occasional Hecatonchire. Sadly some stories abound of molliated wraiths that tried to interact with the Geist only to be shot on sight.

Kerberoi are the way for Geists to call the most monstrous Nephwracks and some of the most civilized Hecatonchires. Unlike the wraiths, Geist possess a greater lore on the nature of the Catacombs and their denizens due to their Geists spending most of their time in the Labyrinth while having a very archaic knowledge on wraith culture, a situation the Order has taken pains to keep in order to prevent the Geists from getting the upperhand in wraithly politics (not all of it with the most benevolent purposes).

8.9 Juggernaut, The Living Fortress.

Howling of a thousand voices

Background.

The ancient manuscripts of Stygia talk about Juggernaut, a creature that has always been and will be, until the end of time. A howling mountain of corpus that crawls across the Catacombs devouring everything on its way. More of a supernatural force than a being capable of thought, the Order has ordered that all interaction with this being be forbidden and given that it can't get out of the Catacombs and spends most of its time mowing down the realms of the Nephwracks and enemy specters it becomes a kind of mutually beneficial agreement. Better to leave the beast undisturbed...

Said to once have been an undead weapon, the product of powerful and forbidden dark magic long lost to the wraiths. Juggernaut attacks with surprising speed any ghost being it can find and incorporate him into his ever growing corpus. Given its huge size (a writhing mountain that easily comes close to the size of a small Necropolis) and unstoppable rage, Juggernaut breaks through most of the labyrinth walls and defenses and crushes into his unliving rotting flesh/corpus anything it finds where his shrieking victims meld and are digested into his being.

Appearance.

His title The Living Fortress is very fitting given that he looks like a bloated mountain of flesh with limbs, heads and other stranger body parts found in the dead lands which writhe wildly and without control against anything it can get its hands in.

Roleplaying Hints.

Go forward, eat.

Traits of the Living Fortress.

Given his unnatural strenght and size along with his lack of a conscious mind, Juggernaut can be considered to have unlimited Physical Attributes and zero Mental and Social attributes except Resolve which can also be considered unlimited. Attempts to sway Juggernaut or mentally control him automatically fail. Against him the only hope wraiths have is to get away from his destructive path and hope they can get enough distance between themselves and the beast to avoid being crushed.

Chronicle ideas.

- A powerful Nephwrack manages to find a way to reign over Juggernaut and has chosen to direct him from the Catacombs...right into Stygia itself. The characters catch wind of the marching Juggernaut and the Nephwrack's intentions. Can they reach the city in time to warn them of the impending doom? And what if the Lords don't believe them? Furthermore can they evacuate the city in time or is there some way to take control over Juggernaut's broken mind?
- The reverse of the Nephwrack attack. The players find a couple of ancient manuscripts or information from a spectre about the keys to control Juggernaut. What do they do with it? Do they give the information to the Order with the risk of them making misuse of it? Do they try to gain control over the beast on their own? And what if it doesn't work...?
- Due to the player character's fame one of the Nephwracks contacts them offering powerful artifacts or information on ancient Numina in exchange of their help in stopping Juggernaut that is ravaging his kingdom. Do the players accept his proposal and help the Spectre? And what if its a trap?

8.10 The Neverborn.

*Do you feel it? The masters of the realms below.
The owners of the cat's dream and the bloody
rivers.
No? You will...*

Boddshivata of the Bloody Rivers.

Thousands of manuscripts have been written by wraithly scholars across the ages on the nature of the lands of the dead. Since Charon's time information has been sought on the nature and reason of this land, from the idea that is a purgatory meant to cleanse the departed souls of sin before they can advance to the afterlife, to it being a limbo meant for souls to be tortured or that its hell itself with nothing beyond. Those wraiths that have ventured deep into the Catacombs or have had contact with the true lords of the lower depths argue though that the Underworld serves a much more sinister purpose...

The Neverborn are an interesting and seemingly impossible phenomenon in that they were never part of the lands of the living to begin with. While all of the other beings of death originated from the memories and remnants of legends, human and non human alive; the Neverborn were never part of the living world being instead abstract concepts lost forever. Beyond the concepts of good and evil, beyond the limits of gods themselves; these wretched paradoxes seek but one thing: to cease being.

Only some of the most trusted and powerful scholars along with the Death Lords themselves know about the existence of the Neverborn and among their circles they argue in hushed tones about the theory that the Underworld and the lands of death is little more than the byproduct of the need for a place to enclose beings incapable of being afflicted with the concept of death. Beings so vast and powerful that, in their eternal suffering and damnation, generated even another concept to be: Oblivion itself. A concept created from their autodestructive and fevered dreams, a concept that got enough strength in reality that it now has gained an independent hold on it...and a hunger to eat all.

Fortunately for the wraiths, the Neverborn seem incapable of direct action against creation relying instead on servitors that they procure with promises of revenge, power or through the connection in their alien and bizarre minds. Indeed those that have offered their souls to the Neverborn gain tremendous power in exchange for an eternity of servitude and suffering. In the end, their souls are destroyed.

The Hecatonchire.

Beings so vast that the concept of death can't apply to them, these slumbering paradoxes dream madly of death and destruction while awaiting for the day where they can finally meet Oblivion. As they roll in their sleep the Catacombs reform themselves to their masters subconscious thoughts and sometimes, their dreams and nightmares take enough substance that they become independent beings of vast power and motivated by whatever alien input their masters developed.

Some even actively work against their masters, beings of alien intelligence that seek to make a

place for themselves in the dead lands in a world where they don't belong while others are feral in nature or maddened by the pain and lash at anyone they spot.

These beings are the ones wraiths powerful and mad enough to make it to the deepest parts of the labyrinth encounter.

Wretched children. Due to having been born out of a bastard mixture of wretched magic and Oblivion's corrupting touch, every Hecatonchire possesses one or more weaknesses. An activity they must perform or thing they must avoid to keep existing.

What's known.

Given that the Neverborn lie in the deepest sections of the labyrinthian Catacombs, always sleeping and rolling in their fevered nightmares; most wraiths don't know of their existence and attribute the disasters and corrupt state of the deadlands to the power of Oblivion as a natural force or of corrupt Nephwracks at most. Little do they know that the force of evil has a face and a powerful if alien mindset.

The ones most knowledgeable on the Neverborn are those that lie in the labyrinth. Nephwracks and Dark Walkers are among the most knowledgeable and some even serve willingly these dark beings.

Stygia and the Death Lords have a strict policy about knowledge on the Neverborn and sanction with death or worse anyone that spreads rumours about these beings in their lands. Pardoners kill anyone claiming contact with the Neverborn in fear that they might bring taint and corruption to wraith society.

For more literature on the Neverborn the Storyteller can consult the excellent supplement **Exalted: the Abyssals** and the companion book **Book of Bone and Ebony**.

8.10.1 The First and Forsaken Lion - Neverborn.

*Lord of the scarred lands,
wielder of the blackened armor,
he who devours creation.*

Background. One of the most active of the Neverborn. Usually manifests in the minds of wraiths lost in the Catacombs and spectres as an all consuming blackness in a suit of silver and soulsteel armor. Giving off a feeling of razor sharp pain on the skin, and the knowledge that any wrong move will bring forth excruciating pain.

Possesses entire legions of spectres molliated and otherwise along with the allegiance of several Nephwrack rulers although not all of them approve of his methods and would be more than happy to turn against him if it means the continued existence of the dead lands.

The First and Forsaken Lion is said to once have been a powerful ghost of the ages of Charon, possibly even earlier than Charon himself that managed to ascend to godhood (or rather descend), becoming a wretched abomination whose all consuming pain can only be quenched after the land of the living and the death are plunged quicking and screaming into Oblivion.

8.10.2 Oblivion's General, the Walking Armor - Hecatonchire.

clatter of armor in movement

Background.

Born out of the First and Forsaken Lion's fevered dreams of pain and torture this walking armor exists only to spread chaos and suffering on anyone unlucky enough to encounter it. Particularly sadistic it takes great enjoyment on burying soulsteel needles deep into its victims bodies until they are little more than pincushions and doing its best at keeping them alive during the process.

Rational attempt against this being is impossible and is completely impervious to magic and most forms of physical damage. Only soulsteel weapons can hurt it and they must first pass across the armor crevices.

Appearance.

A nine foot tower of black and silvery soulsteel armor with a skull pattern. Inside the armor is only a pure blackness that negates all light. The armor exhudes an aura of cold and promised pain and all minor life forms wither and die on its proximity.

Roleplaying Hints.

Pain, that's what your entire existence is about. Seek out beings with which to share it. Revel on the hunt and make them suffer the most you can. You have nothing more.

Oblivion's General, The Walking Armor.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 6, Resolve 6.

Physical Attributes: Strength 8, Dexterity 6, Stamina 8

Social Attributes: Presence (only intimidation) 5, Manipulation 0, Composure 0

Mental Skills: Medicine (Torture, Preserve life) 8

Physical Skills: Brawl 7, Survival (The Catacombs) 8, Weaponry (Sword) 7

Social Skills: Intimidation (Brute Force) 7, Persuasion (Torture) 7

Merits: Common Sense, Danger Sense, Language (Oblivion) 2, Ambidiextrous, Fighting Finesse, Quick Draw (Sword), Fighting Style (Fencing) 6

Willpower: 20

Angst: 10

Morality: 0

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 6

Speed: 30
Defense: 6
Health: 20
Numina: N/A
Anchors: N/A
Thorns: Dark Inversion, Mental Corruption
Essence: Any
Tainted Essence: 10
Weapons/ Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range/Shots	Dice Pool
Soulsteel sword	4(L)	N/A	20
Soulsteel nail	1(L)*	N/A	10

NOTE: Soulsteel nail can leave target stuck to the ground if rolling five successes. For rules on it consult **World of Darkness Core Rulebook**.

NOTE 2: His soulsteel armor absorbs the Essence of all wraiths in the vicinity at a rate of one per minute spent in the being's presence. It also gives him immunity to all known Numina that try to affect it directly and to all but sources of Aggravated damage.

Weakness - Curse of the Iron Nail.

The Walking Armor loves only to force pain into other creatures and has no concept of sacrifice. Any creature can willingly inflict themselves one point of lethal damage with a soulsteel weapon and as long as the wound bleeds the Armor can't hurt him.

8.10.3 Mother of Excesses and Disease.

Background. The Mother of Excesses and Disease manifests as a rolling and putrid mass of sick flesh and entrails that seeks to spread her corruption into the lands of flesh. Usually prefers to lie dormant and instead spread strange diseases in her followers and sends them to infect other victims.

Is reputed to have been the source of AIDS in the mortal world and her followers are known for having strange mutations and being prone to excesses in her honour.

8.10.4 Vectors - Hecatonchire.

*Follow me and I'll show you
pleasures you can't even
imagine.*

Background.

Angroginous in nature and looking a lot like the Sucubi or Incubus of legend. The vectors exist only to spread disease and pain into the lands of death and the living. The vectors seduce unwitting wraiths into their embrace using their charms and try to get intimate with them, at which they display their true natures.

Appearance.

All vectors look either like voluptuous women or strong handsome men, alluring and beautiful if it wasn't for the horrible scars and infected wounds covering their skin. They use supernatural allure to seduce their targets but are unable to cover their wounds.

Roleplaying Hints.

You desire and you want. You suffer from endless carnal desires and pain. Inflict both. There's nothing you enjoy more than the face of your target in the throes of ecstasy or pain, all the better if you can enjoy both at the same time...

Vector.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 1, Resolve 2.

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics (The Catacombs) 3, Medicine (Torture) 3

Physical Skills: Brawl 1, Survival (The Catacombs) 5

Social Skills: Expression (Love) 4, Persuasion (Seduction) 5, Socialize 2, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Striking Looks 4

Willpower: 7

Angst: 10

Morality: 0

Virtue: Charity

Vice: Lust

Initiative: 3

Speed: 10

Defense: 3

Health: 9

Numina: Regis (Desire) 5

Anchors: N/A

Thorns: Dark Inversion, Mental Corruption, Vector

Essence: Any

Tainted Essence: 10

Weapons/ Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range/Shots	Dice Pool
Bite	0(L)	N/A	5

Vector.

This Thorn enables Vectors to share their diseased natures to his victims. Whenever there's a fluid exchange between the victim and the Vector it can roll Manipulation + Medicine against the target Resolve + Eidolon. A success infects the victim with a supernatural disease that will inflict one level of lethal damage per day that can't be healed until the disease has worn off.

In order to battle the disease the wraith must roll Stamina + Eidolon against the disease each day before the damage is inflicted. Numina or rituals can assist against the supernatural disease but victims that die from it reform several days after as a new Vector

WRAITH

THE ARISING

Name:
 Player:
 Chronicle:

Virtue:
 Vice:
 Concept:

Death:
 Concord:
 Shadow:

Attributes

Power	Intelligence	00000	Strength	00000	Presence	00000
Finesse	Wits	00000	Dexterity	00000	Manipulation	00000
Resistance	Resolve	00000	Stamina	00000	Composure	00000

Skills

Mental

(-3 unskilled)

Academics _____ 00000
 Computer _____ 00000
 Crafts _____ 00000
 Investigation _____ 00000
 Medicine _____ 00000
 Occult _____ 00000
 Politics _____ 00000
 Science _____ 00000

Physical

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics _____ 00000
 Brawl _____ 00000
 Drive _____ 00000
 Firearms _____ 00000
 Larceny _____ 00000
 Stealth _____ 00000
 Survival _____ 00000
 Weaponry _____ 00000

Social

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken _____ 00000
 Empathy _____ 00000
 Expression _____ 00000
 Intimidation _____ 00000
 Persuasion _____ 00000
 Socialize _____ 00000
 Streetwise _____ 00000
 Subterfuge _____ 00000

Other Traits

Merits

_____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000

Numina

_____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000

Anchors

_____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000

Thorns

Corpus

00000000000000
 □□□□□□□□□□□□

Willpower

0000000000
 □□□□□□□□□□

Essence

□□□□□□□□□□
 □□□□□□□□□□
 Max/Per Turn: _____

Tainted Essence

□□□□□□□□□□

Morality/Angst

10 _____ 00
 9 _____ 00
 8 _____ 00
 7 _____ 00
 6 _____ 00
 5 _____ 00
 4 _____ 00
 3 _____ 00
 2 _____ 00
 1 _____ 00

Size: _____
 Speed: _____
 Defense: _____
 Armor: _____
 Initiative Mod: _____

Attributes 5/4/3 • Skills 11/7/4 (+3 Specialties) • Death (+1 bonus Attribute) • Concord • Anchors 10 • Numina 5 (Two dots must be death-affiliated)
 • Shadow and Heart's Thorn (Based on Virtue or Vice) • Thorns 3 • Merits 7 • (Buying the fifth dot in any area costs two points) • Corpus = Stamina + Size
 • Willpower = Resolve + Composure • Size = 5 for adults • Defense = Lowest of Dexterity or Wits • Initiative Mod = Dexterity + Composure
 • Speed = Strength + Dexterity + 5 • Starting Morality/Angst = 7/1 • Essence = Memoriam + d10 roll • Tainted Essence = Successes on Angst - Eidolon roll

WRAITH THE ARISING

Other Traits

_____	00000	_____	00000	_____	00000
_____	00000	_____	00000	_____	00000
_____	00000	_____	00000	_____	00000
_____	00000	_____	00000	_____	00000

Flaws/Disadvantage

Experience

TOTAL:

Gained From:

Shadow

Hearts Thorn: _____

Shared Convictions: _____

Symptoms: _____

Shadow Experience: _____

TOTAL SPENT: _____

Spent On: _____

Combat

Weapon/Attack	Damage	Range	Clip	Size	Strength	Cost

Armor

Rating: _____

Strength: _____

Defense: _____

Speed: _____

Description: _____

WRAITH THE ARISING

Expanded Merits

Allies

Contacts

Memoriam

Other (_____)

Mentor

Retainer

Status/Favors

Other (_____)

Grave Goods

Equipment

Durability

Structure

Size

Cost

Artifacts

Relics

Saunts

Location

Description

WRAITH THE ARISING

History

Goals

Description

Age: _____

Date of Birth: _____

R.I.P: _____

Hair: _____

Eyes: _____

Race: _____

Nationality: _____

Height: _____

Weight: _____

Sex: _____

Distinguishing Characteristics: _____

Visuals

Circle Chart

Character Sketch

