
RIPPLES OF FATE
MALIFAUX 2E
Wyrd



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NELLIE

THE GUILD

EXTRA EXTRA

BY: MATHEW RITTER

Extra Extra!

Or

The Woman Who Could Not Be Kept From Work

Or

Being Memories of the Adventures and Times of Phiona Gage and her Struggles Against Brooding Oppression in Malifaux: Therein who goes upon a Tantalizing Quest First Involving a Horrendous Accident That Would Have Killed a Lesser Robust Personage; Being Ramshackled and Bamboozled by the United Powers in a Lofty and Foolish Attempt to Keep her from Work she Capables Beyond a Doubt; Finally in Climax a Pitched Tussle that Proves the Little Worker Man (or Female Persuasion) Can Using Her Superior Talents to Victory Upon the Day; Written by Herself and now set Forth by Nellie Cochrane

"Rams... hack... led..." A slow deep voice sounded out the word. It had one of those warbles that made it clear the owner of the voice was frowning. "What's that even supposed ta mean?" The voice seemed more intent on getting words out than pronouncing them correctly. It often took a few moments to reconfigure the vowel soup into proper sentences in the listener's head.

"It means... it's meant to give the implication of the power of a ram with the confining sensation of being shackled. Also, with the touch of shack in there to have a very precarious, even perilous vibe to the overall production." The second voice was much different. It was much faster and filled with the import of its own diction, a voice that never missed letters like "T" or "D." Precarious was always pronounced with a solid "P" at the start and a hard "S" at the end.

"You made it up?" Phiona Gage was a strapping lass, the kind that came from farms and worked her whole life because there hadn't been enough boys in the family or maybe just because another pair of hands was another pair of hands. Not strapping for a woman, just strapping. Full stop. The pickaxe on her belt gave her away as a miner. The chipped head and worn handle made it clear it wasn't for show. Only her hat seemed out of place. It was tilted to one side as if to cover a bad haircut, though nothing about her made her seem like someone who cared much what people thought of her hair.

Nellie, on the other hand, was small, compact, slight, narrow, and cute. The cap she wore pulled down low on her head and the dirt on her face seemed a solid attempt to pass for a boy, though it failed. There was something far too feminine in the shape of her lips and cheeks, or maybe in the way she scoffed at Phiona's statement. "Confaggled the word up? Hardly! These are all roots and words that exist in the ether around us already. A bit here! A bit there! Creating something new that feels like treasure from the old texts." Nellie stood up in her chair. Maybe it was to give her some height over the other woman, who was still almost taller than Nellie even with the chair's help, or maybe it was just to grandstand. If it was the latter, it must have been from muscle memory because it was just the two of them in the printing office after hours. Empty desks stretched out like a ghost town around them.

"Words..." Nellie continued in her grandiose way, one hand reaching up as if to pluck the very truth of words out of the air. "...are not like boxes or chairs or doors. They are not simply one thing. They are magical, Phiona. Magic more pure than anything you'll get from a Soulstone. They touch emotions, the raw core of who we are! Love, lust, power, fear, these are ideals more than words. Words like troglodyte or bamboozled have color. Words like crush or shove have real impact. Words can change people and the world is people so words have the power to change this very world!"

Phiona didn't look up from the paper she was still puzzling through. “So, ya made it up.” She straightened the paper as best she could. “Probably made up confaggled 'n purcurious as well.” Noticing the ink stains on her fingers, the lass wiped her hand on her overalls over and over with an annoyed grunt. “The paper's messy, I don't like the feel of it. Books at least feel solid. This paper feels oily. Snakey like.”

Nellie tipped her chair over and landed with her hands up like she was on the dismount. “Don't despair! Your story will help spread the word of the travesty that is the Union and its attempts to ramshackle the common man! Phiona, you can be their light. The Guild could use you as the rallying point they've been needin'...” Nellie took a moment. “Needing! Needing. To crush the Union and free the mines of their noxious touch!” She let her hand fall on Phiona's shoulder for emphasis.

The temperature of the room dropped. “Get. Your hand. Off me.” Phiona's voice changed. Something about her tone turned Nellie's blood to ice water, and her hand skittered off Phiona's shoulder as fast as it was able, disappearing behind Nellie's back. “Sorry, I didn't mean to-”

“I dun't like it.” Phiona glared with her one good eye. The other glowed a deep crimson. Half of Phiona's face was metal. She'd lost a lot of her skull in the accident. The explosion should have killed her, but she'd been lucky. The right tech, the right magic, at the right time.

“Being touched? Really. I won't trespass again.” Nellie stepped back as the other woman stood. Phiona was tall, but right now she felt gigantic, towering over the smaller woman.

“I dun't *like* it.” Her voice kept that steely oiled quality, like midnight spilling out of her, and the red orb in the broken half of her face became a beacon that signaled nothing but rage. “Any o' it!” Her words slurred together. A pillar of rock burst out of the ground next to the two of them, sending desks and wood flying. Nellie was smart enough to know to run.

The printing press was, too.

Half the desks were smashed. The other half were cracked. The printing press itself had managed to stay in one piece, its long spider legs keeping it one step ahead of the rampaging woman. It moved tentatively now that the danger was over. Even though it had no eyes, it seemed to peek around things, as if expecting another outburst.

Nellie did the same. Her hand was all that could be seen around the corner. “You okay in there?” Her mouse-like voice just barely tested the waters, a verbal toe into the ripples.

There was a sob. It wasn't a pretend sob for attention or anything like that; it was wet and full, the kind that came with running noses and dripping eyes. Nellie peaked around the corner just a bit more. Phiona's back rested against the pillar of stone that had come up through the floor.

Nellie let her eyes slide back over to the sobbing woman. Phiona's arms were around her knees, the image of a school girl no one wanted to have lunch with. Most of the lamps had been smashed, but there was enough light left to see the glistening tracks of tears from her still human eye.

Nellie inched out a bit further. She didn't mention how expensive all the stuff Phiona had broken had been, which was really very nice of her, if she didn't think so herself. “Really walloped the place, huh? Showed it a good what-for.”

“My head hurts.” Phiona gave a snort. Her hand was pressed against the metal plate that made up much of her face. “It hurts so much... don't look at me.”

“I know it hurts, and um...” Nellie turned around so her back was to the other woman. “How's this? Not a vision gazes upon your visage. Not a one!” Her arms spread wide.

Phiona sniffled in reply.

“That stone trick is really something, huh? Get mad and you can shape and pull stone to your will.

Symbolically pure. I wish I had the ability to just twist rock to my liking. I'd trade magic powers for a few headaches any day! Soulstones in the noggin, makes you special," Nellie said with her back still turned.

Still just the wet sounds of sadness.

Nellie took a deep breath. "It's the bits about that isn't it? Where I talk about your headaches and the rages. The magical side effects of the experimental procedure... It's the idea of other people reading about that. Well, I can see why you might not be so full of vim and vinegar over it. Downright perturbed, even. Don't worry, I can leave that little nugget out. See, my thought was that it gave you a humanization quality, something people could relate to. But really, you're right. You should be portrayed as an idealized Adonis! Better than real. Half metal, half..." Another sob from Phiona cut Nellie off mid-bluster. "...I can leave those bits out is all I'm saying."

Phiona wiped her nose with her sleeve. "I never hurt anyone, not like that. Not before that day. Now it's like that's all I think about. Any time anyone does anything I don't like. I can't... the story's just about fine, I guess. I don't get it. All of it at least. But it seems good, maybe? It wasn't the story." She hugged her knees harder.

Nellie turned around. "What was it then?"

"The ink wouldn't come off o' my fingers." She held her hands up; they were still a bit smudged. "No matter how I wiped them they just wouldn't come clean."

"Oh, is that all?" Nellie chuckled, almost a chortle.

"Don't make fun of me!" The bark was fast and hard and that red glare surged.

"Nonononono! I can get it off easy. Here, come on. I'll show you." Nellie's small hand touched the other woman's. Nellie smiled, tugging softly on the hand not holding the pickaxe. Probably because it was so surprising, Phiona let the pickaxe drop, a look of confusion on her face as she climbed to her feet and into another room.

There was a small wash basin, a tiny mirror, and a strange-looking bar of soap in the washroom. "The ink gets all over everything. It's a damn nuisance, if you don't mind my language. But it is! We keep this special pumice soap around. Made from volcano rocks, can you believe it? The things people come up with in this day and age." Nellie watches as Phiona dipped her hand in the water and started scrubbing her fingers with the rough soap stone. "Now, if that doesn't do the trick, some rubbing alcohol generally works, though I think..."

The water was grimier than when they started, but Phiona's fingers were fresh, clean, and pink, maybe the cleanest they'd ever been. Phiona worked without a word, as if transfixed by what was going on with her hand. She stared at the clean fingers like they were new.

"I know it must be hard. The accident. It only happened because of the Miner's Union, you know. Those money grubbing devils don't have a fair thought amongst them, what with forcing the Guild to pay double what they need to, and they still don't treat the workers with the proper safety and respect! Sure, they paid for you to get fixed up as best they could, but they still botched it. Bad doctors, that's why you get the rages. Then they tell you that you can't work anymore. You're supposed to just go home and--"

"...I know what happened," Phiona said quietly.

"Let me finish, I'm pontificating here. And you refuse! You swing that ax of yours not just for yourself but for everyone that's ever been pushed around by those unionized jackalopes. They send a dozen toughs and you send them all packing. They send three dozen toughs, and the other workers join with you... and they relent and let you work. You showed those corrupt money baggers what for. You really did, Phiona."

Nellie watched as Phiona held up her now-clean hands. "Let me tell the world about it. Let me make you into the symbol you already are but no one knows about yet. A pickaxe to guide the way..."

Phiona's face was soft. Lost. “Um...” Her words drifted as she wiped her nose yet again. “Um...”

Nellie let go. “Pickaxe. Pickaxe...” She snapped her fingers. “Crickets! That's perfect. The pickaxe will be your symbol!” She painted a pickaxe in the air with her fingers as if sculpting it. “I'll have to restructure the piece. The axe you once wielded for your oppressors now strikes back against them... ha!”

Phiona's face lost its softness. “...I dunno. I'll think about it.”

Nellie halted mid-gesticulation. It was a bit like watching a marionette freeze. “Right. Okay. Think about it. After all the damage and...” Nellie looked back into the smashed up room. “Not that it matters. No worry, no worry, it's fine. The paper's doing great. A few smashed chairs and desks is nothing...”

Nellie pulled her cap off and ran her fingers through her hair for a moment before putting it back on. “At least let me walk you home. A proper lady should never travel these roads by gloaming.”

“...uh...” Phiona's fingers rubbed against one another.

Nellie self-corrected quickly. “At night. You shouldn't travel around at night. Alone.”

“Alright, let me get my things.” Phiona didn't have much, just a small bag and her pickaxe. She spent a long time collecting them regardless. “And I'm sorry 'bout this. And about not being sure about the story.”

“Tut tut!” Nellie raised a hand and waved away Phiona's comments easily. “Tut tut.” She glanced down at one of the smashed desks. Hers, as it happened. She was a bit disappointed. If she'd been writing this scene, the ledger on her desk would have been open, and she would have been able to glance down and see in an instant just how deep in the red the paper was. But no, it was closed. No obvious symbolism for her today. It was just one of the little ways real life always disappointed her.

“Nary a worry or care from you. The damages will be fine, and the story... as it's a story about you, you, of course, have full proprietary control. Rights, perpetuates, amenities. I would never have it any other way.”

Nellie moved over and held her arm up, elbow out. Phiona pursed her lips. “I'm not gonna walk around town holding you.”

The elbow dropped. “Suit yourself.”

“You know yur a lady too, right?” said Phiona.

“Ah, indubitably. There is nary a day that I am not reminded time and time again. Shall we?” Nellie motioned to the door. Her hat came off in her hand as she tipped her head towards it. It was jaunty, like most things she did.

“Nell, you are so strange.” Phiona shook her head as she walked out.

Nellie took one last look around the destroyed room. She patted the top of the printing press as it nudged up against her. “And you may be more trouble than you’re worth, Phiona Gage, but that is yet to be seen.”

Ridley at night was much like any other city. Streets. Lamps. Young men working as torch holders, helping people get from place to place for a few coins, and offering advice on where to avoid so as to not get stabbed by muggers.

On this side of the Breach, though, things are always different, no matter how much the cities may look like those Earthside.

“Phiona Gage, you are one of the most impressive personages I have had the jubilation to meet. I want you to know that!” The slick attempts to coat Phiona in verbal butter had been continuing for quite a few blocks. Nellie's high, excited voice seemed to always find a way to echo whenever possible. Sometimes it sounded like a small crowd of her was prodding Phiona to give in and accept the story.

Phiona had been quiet since they'd left the office. Monosyllabic. “Yuh.” “Nah.” “Erh.” She'd kept her head down and her hands in her overalls.

Now, she spoke a full sentence. “I only get about half of what ya say, mosta the time.” Her voice was a frustrated mumble.

Nellie gave a slow spin. “Uh, well, I do tend to have a varied and visceral verbiage. I won't argue with you on that point.”

Phiona was quiet for a few more steps. Nellie, for the first time, let the silence be silent.

The larger lass looked up. Nellie watched her, straining desperately to not ask what was on her mind. Phiona's face almost twitched, her eyes widening as the moment stretched out. “Nell...”

For a moment Nellie thought her patience had paid off, but then Phiona continued with, “...no, nevermind.”

Phiona kept walking. Nellie hissed quietly and bit her lower lip. She'd been just on the cusp of something, a real connection, she could feel it. That's all she needed and she'd-

“Nell?”

Yes! Nellie let out the most simple and barely audible 'hmm' she could muster

“...do you talk like that, the way you do, ta make sure everyone knows how smart ya are?”

It was Nellie's turn to stare silently, and not for effect. “You see a lot more of the world around you than some would assume,” she murmured.

Before Nellie could continue their journey, an arm like steel shot out in front of her. “Huh? Phiona I meant that as a compliment! I should hope you know I only meant--”

“Stop flappin' your gums for once.” Phiona calmly removed the pickaxe from her belt and swung it onto her broad shoulders. “Whoever's there, come out.”

The creatures that came out of the dark weren't twisted or gnarled. Most of the worst monsters in Malifaux didn't have sharpened teeth or tree-like limbs. Some wore top hats and had chains wrapped around their wrists. Or axe handles in their grip, like the thirteen men that appeared in front of them. They had just enough class in their attire to show how low rent they truly were.

“Thought ya'd be around 'ere 'bout now, didn't ah?” The lead man's voice and diction put Phiona's to shame. It was a beautiful mix of a few missing teeth and just not caring. “Seem'sta me ya must be the famous miss Gage. That'd be ya?" He gave a bow. A slightly smooshed top hat twirled in his fingers, rolled up his arms over his shoulders, and rolled back down to the other hand. “Pleasedta meetcha.”

Phiona stood like a brick wall unto herself. There was no wind. Nellie wished there was wind because the way Phiona stood, her hair should have been blowing very dramatically. Her eye glowed in the dark with Soulstone light; the magic that kept her together always seemed brightest right before the rage took her.

Nellie peeked around Phiona's at the thugs. She wanted to say something dramatic with a lot of wit and whimsy to it. Something that would make them really realize just whom they were dealing with. Some kind of pun about their lapels maybe, or uh...

“Yeah,” Phiona said. One word. Nellie cocked her head. It wasn't bad, but it really seemed to be missing the necessary oomph to really sell the moment.

“Well then. We gots a message from the Union... get'er, boys.” That top hat flew at Phiona's face, and he charged after it. It was a good trick. Classic. Phiona didn't twitch as the hat bounced off her metal plate. The pickaxe swung and there was a wet cracking *shlorp*. Bone, blood, organs. Everything inside of him just gave way.

He came up off his feet. He sailed and hit the dingy wall of the alley a good fifteen feet away, and he hit it hard. A few of the less well-placed bricks cracked and fell. His crumpled body fell to the ground, and Nellie suspected he would not be getting back up in this lifetime.

The rest of the men had pulled and readied weapons: knives, pistols, chains; things of that nature. They all paused mid-attack.

That was definitely the oomph Nellie had been hoping for. “You should all know, this is on the record! I, as a representative of the Ridley Regulator, Ridley’s most prestigious daily gazette, will write up every last bit of this encounter. I will make sure each of you are known by face and likeness. My memory is eidetic. Every hair, or lack thereof, on each of your heads is committed to it! I shall give the authorities a full report if you do not cease this very moment!” The last of the ruffians' footfalls could be heard rounding the corner away from them as Nellie finished. “Ha. Good, I scared them off.”



Phiona heaved. Her body seemed to expand and shrink with her breathing. Her eye gleamed bright. Nellie took a step back when it turned to gaze at her. “You?” Phiona asked. “Ya did at that...” The glow faded. “Not sure what I woulda done if I was alone.” A smile flitted across Phiona's lips.

It was just the connection Nellie had been hoping for. “You'd have been quite adrift, floating like a ship with no harbor or navigator.”

Phiona looked at the man that lay cracked like an egg against the ground. “Should we... I'unno... help him? I didn't mean ta...”

“He would have done worse to us, I'm sure. Probably has many a time. Feel not a speck of guilt. Still, we'll see who we can muster up for help. I'm sure a constable or two must be working at this time of night.” Nellie let out an odd little yip. “And what a rush! It's a good thing they were cowards. When I saw the pistol, I thought things were grim, but they showed their true souls. They were painted and lacquered with failure through and through!”

Phiona got down on one knee next to the downed man. “The Union! He said they were from the Miner's Union. They were here to stop the story.”

Nellie could not stop herself from grinning. “That they were.”

“Well, I think ya should publish that story now. I don't like being pushed ‘round.” It lacked the dramatic punch Nellie would have liked. She'd been hoping for 'they failed' or something along those lines. Oh well. She could write it that way easily enough.

“Don't you worry Phiona, I'll put every last bit of this down in type. They'll regret the attempt. By noon tomorrow, Phiona Gage's Pickaxe will be a symbol against oppression everywhere!” Nellie held her hand high, like she was holding a pickaxe herself.

Phiona stood. Her large shape was silhouetted in the dark night, and she hefted her very real pickaxe above her. In the shadows, only her gleaming red eye could be seen.

Now that was drama.

The morning paper had gone smashing. Stupendous. Fabulous.

No one had actually bought it, but that was not a statement against the quality of the work that had gone into each and every story. The paper displayed a meticulous attention to wording and detail that really framed the Ridley Record in its best light. She had renamed the paper that morning. Regulator had an authoritative quality, but Record was much more concrete.

The meticulous detail in the Record set it apart from other, poor quality, if better selling, papers. They were full of drivel, each and every one of them. More than a few had turned down stories, well-researched and documented stories, from Nellie herself, often for reasons that made no sense whatsoever.

She knew she had a real story for the noon extra, one that could change the paper forever. Then the office would be more than just her, the animated printing press, and a clerk's daughter who helped occasionally in exchange for learning how to type.

Nellie poked a broken desk with her foot. The room was a converted school and the desks had come with the building. The clerk's daughter, whose name Nellie kept meaning to learn, had been shocked. It didn't matter though. The story was everything.

The last of her money was being turned from reams of paper and barrels of ink into pages. The printing press spat them out fast. It was a thing of beauty to watch. Stacks and stacks of newspapers piled up, headline bright and bold: **PHIONA GAGE – THE WOMAN WHO WOULD NOT BE KEPT FROM WORK!** It was a great title. Amazing. Maybe a bit wordy. It was probably too late...

“Hey, um... uh...” She snapped her fingers at the clerk's daughter, who looked up. “What do you think of the title?”

“Oh, it's really... fine. Fine. Yes, fine.” She smiled in her usual polite way. It was things like that smile that kept Nellie from caring about the girl's name.

“Right. 'Course... Of course, I mean. Are you going to have time to help me hand these still-warm-from-the-press, paper heralds of truth out to the awaiting public?” Nellie could see them now, crowded around the papers, jockeying to read her words, fighting each other for it. She'd printed as many as she could afford, and it wouldn't be enough.

She hoped.

“Oh, uh, maybe. I mean, there's this salon that is happening at noon. I've been helping you all morning, so I was... maybe. It's supposed to be a real good one. Then there's a show later. You know, you could come if you wanted? A friend of mine is a dancer, so I get in for free. You should hear the stories about--”

Nellie had stopped listening the moment the insipid girl had made it clear she wasn't going to help. So that left just Nellie. She needed to reach as many people as possible. She'd need to figure out where the most traffic would be. The train station perhaps? Or maybe the...

“...so, I'll be back tomorrow? Um, and not to, well, you did suggest there might be some pay. Eventually. The typing is all well and good but...”

“Ask me about that tomorrow.” Nellie watched the papers pile up out of the press. Higher and higher. Some of the stacks were nearly half as tall as she was.

“Yes, but still you said--”

“Tomorrow! Go see your play, or whatever ridiculous nonsense you plan to attend. I have important work to do. I can't just mince about.” That was harsher than she intended. Nellie hoped it hadn't been taken too badly.

When the girl left, the door slammed behind her, dashing those hopes. Oh well. She'd either be back or she wouldn't. And the Ridley Record would either succeed or... she couldn't even think about that.

The press rumbled and shimmied, making a high pitched steam-like whistle. It was done. Or at least, it was out of paper and ink and she had no more to feed it. So it was done.

She rubbed her hands together and grabbed the yarn.

Four hours and a very sore back later, all the papers were in nice, tight bundles. She had them stacked on top of the printing press. It had legs and could walk, so why shouldn't it help? She'd have it carry the bundles around and she'd sell 'em like hotcakes. It'd be slow at first, but word would spread.

She did one last check to make sure she had all of the bundles and then patted the side of the printing press so it would follow her over to the door.

She opened the door to leave. In the doorway were thugs. Hoodlums. “Huh,” she said, and promptly shut the door again.

She locked it and took a step back.

The door and much of the frame creaked once. Twice. On the third hit, the door splintered. On the forth, the frame gave way entirely.

“Gents!" Nellie clasped her hands together and smiled the brightest of smiles. "How can I be of service?”

“We're here to burn this building. The papers, the printing press... and you.” The man in charge was large. He had a red vest and a handlebar mustache, and he barely fit through the broken door frame. He pushed in. Flanking on either side were other men, who began splashing foul-smelling kerosene around them in every direction.

“Ah! I couldn't maybe--”

“No.” The man's tone wasn't mean, just definite. The gun he pulled from his trousers was a single-shot hand cannon with bullets large enough that there'd be little left of Nellie's head once it was done.

Behind him, more men came in. Each one seemed to know just what he was doing, splashing kerosene in all the most flammable places. Some had axes and started cutting up what was left of the desks and chairs for kindling. Others grabbed things off the walls and tossed them to the floor.

“If I could say just one thing, sir!” Nellie took her hat off and ran her fingers through her hair. He aimed the gun at her, showing that he didn't much care for what she had to say. His arm and eyes were steady. He had seen and done far worse than this before. He wasn't going to miss.

Then Nellie's hat hit him in the face.

The shot was deafening. Most of the men stopped to cover their ears. The flare from behind the barrel was bright. The hole it blew through the roof was the size of a breadbox, at least. Nellie started running...

And then she stopped.

“Come on, you stupid thing! Run!” She slapped the press and was off again, it with her.

The man loaded another round with the oiled practice of someone who did very little else in his spare time. He took aim. The deafening clap of the hand cannon erupted again. The shot hit went high, hitting the papers stacked on the scampering printing press. Printed papers flew every which way.

By the time he had the third round loaded, Nellie and the printing press were out the back door. He sighed. “I hate when things get messy. You know what the boss said.” He motioned with his gun. A few of the men cutting up tables nodded and took after her, axes at the ready.

They moved fast.

“I really don't know where she thinks she's going to go, ya know?” he said casually as he clicked his gun shut. “No attempt at a bribe hardly ever any more. Always fightin' and runnin'. Out of the last five jobs, what, at least three tried to run, right?”

One of the men with the canisters nodded. “About that. Maybe four if ya count the man with the bowler hat, but he tripped all on his own.”

Laughter rippled through the men as they worked.

The sound of thumps and smacks could be heard from outside. They didn't pay it much attention. “Especially a tiny thing like that. Little legs. How far does she think she's gonna get?”

“I wanna know who she thinks she's foolin' with that hat. Too bad really. Bit a dress up she'd probably be half decent,” said the canister goon.

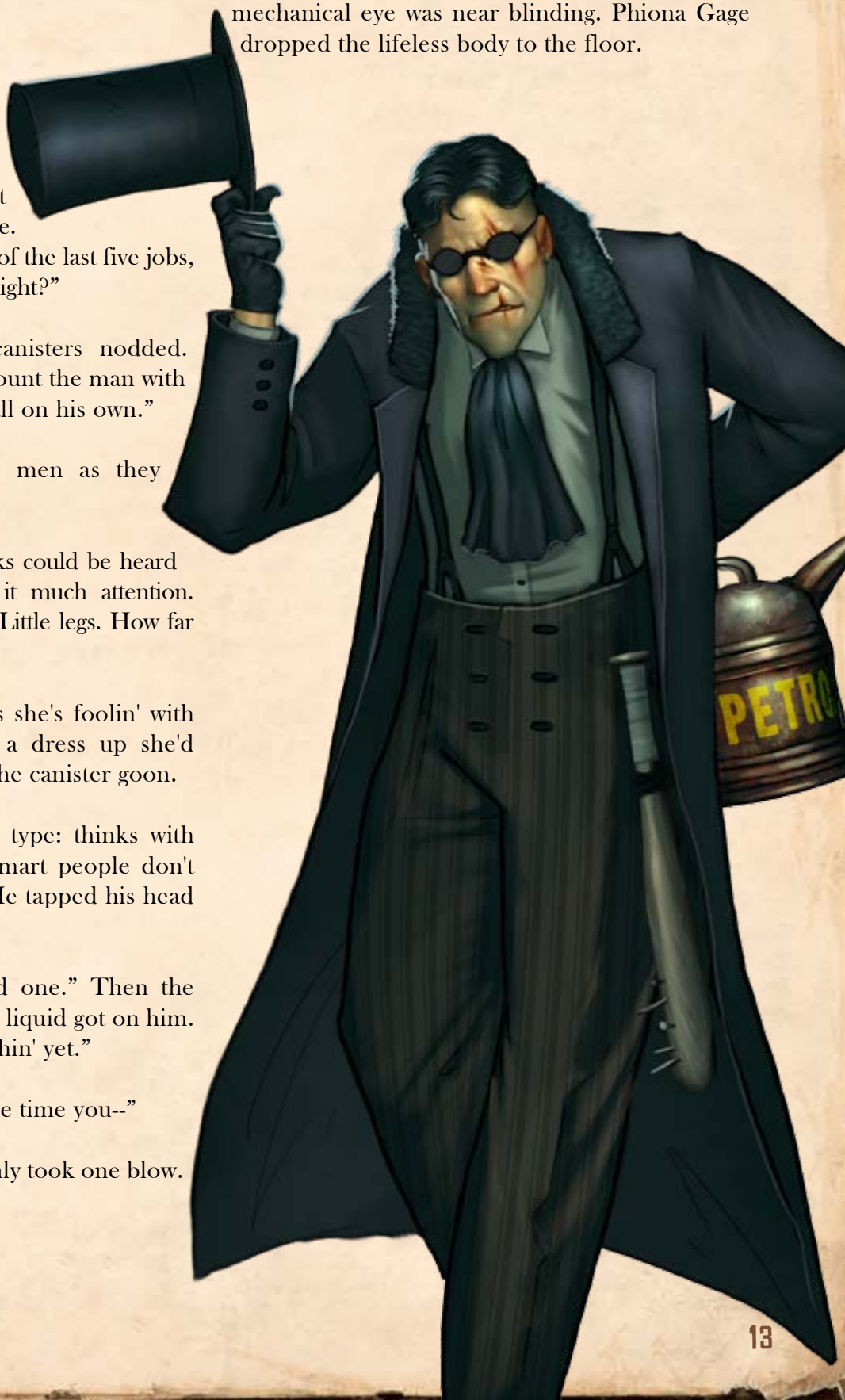
“She's mouthy. You know the type: thinks with her mouth, never her head. Smart people don't get visited by the likes of us.” He tapped his head with the loaded gun.

“That's a truth if I ever heard one.” Then the other man swore as some of the liquid got on him. “Aah... hold up. Don't light nothin' yet.”

“Again? Every time. Every single time you--”

The back doors splintered; it only took one blow.

What had once been a person - misshapen, broken, with bone and sinews stuck this way and that - flew through them. Then *she* came in through the broken doors, her pickaxe in one hand. In the other she held aloft the body of the second man who had gone after Nellie. The red glow from her mechanical eye was near blinding. Phiona Gage dropped the lifeless body to the floor.



They all froze, even the leader with his killer's eyes. They couldn't match a Soulstone's glow.

Phiona let out a roar. The man with the handlebar mustache raised his gun, and Phiona's pickaxe came down.

Just as the gun flared, so did her eye. As the ax broke through the wood of the floor, stone erupted up between them in a pillar of rock. The massive bullet barely chipped it as it ricocheted off.

He snapped the gun open, popped the spent round free, and scrambled to reload it. Phiona roared again.

He snapped the gun closed, brought it up... and his severed arm hit the man he'd been talking to before. The swing of Phiona's pickaxe was wide and devastatingly powerful.

To their credit, the men did not scatter as their leader screamed and fell to the floor, his life bleeding out of him. They stopped what they were doing. Canisters were dropped and axes were hefted. They formed a practiced semi-circle surrounding the tall woman and approached her cautiously, giving her the respect she had earned.

She was clearly dangerous. She even seemed to have a touch of magic about her. However, there were a *lot* of them, and it was clear they had the advantage. That's when it began to rain. The sky was clear, and, more importantly, they were indoors. Droplets of liquid landed among the men. The men stopped to glance up, understandably confused.

Phiona did the same, though she found herself dry and untouched by the strange precipitation.

Nellie stood on the roof, standing at the edge of the skylight. In her hand swung a now-empty canister. She tossed it down, and as it bounced, they could see the word "Kerosene" printed on the side.

“Gents!” Her voice was loud and clear, the exact kind of voice that sold papers. With a dramatic flourish, she pulled something along her leg and held it up. “This one is hot off the presses.” The match flared bright in her fingers.

It was a single point of light as it tumbled down into the room.

Most of the men ran, panicked, to the front door, where they had started spreading their own oil. There was a crackle as the fire engulfed them. A few others - those who had been paying attention to where the oil was - ran towards the back, where Phiona waited. Metal shattered bone as she sent them flying back to meet their friends.

Nellie watched as the men burned. It was horrible. Panic and terror. Flailing. One burning man who didn't yet realize he was dead came at Phiona, and she put her ax through his still-flaming skull.

Nellie tried to not feel chills when, after kicking the flaming skull from the pickaxe, Phiona casually hefted the axe up to her shoulder, turned, and strode from the room.

There was no doubt about it: Phiona was going to sell papers. The lady had a special quality to her.

Phiona's arrival had been a stroke of luck. She'd come by to ask Nellie if she'd needed any help with the extra edition. Boy, had she ever!

Nellie would need to find a new office for her paper. The press had survived, so that was fine. For now, though, she just had to sell, sell, sell. She had a story worth telling, and the world was begging to hear it!

A few hours later, Nellie sat with Phiona on the stacks of unsold papers.

“We sure sold a' lot of ‘em.” Phiona said with a bit of awe in her voice. “Musta been fifty or so...”

“Closer to thirty-six...” Exactly thirty-six. Only thirty-six papers.

“All those people reading about me...” Phiona was wistful. She looked off at nothing in particular. Nellie couldn't help but smile.

“Yeah, all those people are reading about you. You're a hero, you know. Even if you don't believe it, even if you don't think the whole mine thing was heroic, I wouldn't be alive if it wasn't for you. I'm sorry, by the way.”

Phiona looked over at her. “Fer what?”

“Oh, you know, just maybe not thinking about you as highly as I should have at first?” Nellie offered.

“S'okay.” Phiona shrugged. “I did the same thing ‘bout you. But people aren't... just one thing. So, it's okay.” She stood up.

Nellie grinned wide and honest. “You're just brimming with sagacity.”

“I should be goin'. If the guardsman coming by about the fire needs ta talk to me, ya know where ta find me.”

“Sure do! Farewell, Phiona Gage.” Nellie waved farewell even though the tall woman didn't look back. Nellie waved until she was out of sight because she didn't have much else to do except wait for some Ridley representative to come and talk to her about the fire and the bodies and what not. How was she going to explain all of it? Hopefully really well.

When she looked back at the printing press, the unsold papers felt like they had grown in size, dwarfing her. Where was she going to get the money for more ink and paper? And a new typewriter that wasn't melted...

A money clip full of scrip hit the ground in front of her. That could do nicely, she thought.

“For all your unsold editions, and at least a thousand of a second printing.”

She looked up. The collar of the man's coat was raised high and the brim of his hat was down low over his eyes, but she thought she caught a hint of a Guild uniform behind the collar. “A thousand?” Her gaze when back to the clip.

“Yes. The Guild would like to distribute your story to the people of Malifaux, especially the miners. They should understand the... plight they are facing, especially given what is coming.”

Nellie nodded dumbly.

“The Guild would be very interested in any future stories you might have about this particular issue... and perhaps a few other issues that the Guild feels could use some extra attention,” he added.

Nellie picked up the money clip and started counting the scrip in her hand. She could do so much good with it. She could... Wait, what had he said? “Sir, I'm sorry to say that the press cannot be bought...”

“If that's the case, then I'll have to tell your friend just who hired that first group of thugs that ambushed you last night.”

Nellie did not say anything for a very long time. She instead just weighed the scrip in her hand. She thought about what Phiona was like when she was mad. She remembered that glowing eye. “The press has, from time to time, required patronage, though.”

He gave a slow nod. “Anything you need the Guild will provide.”

“Typewriters?”

“Yes.”

“...a secretary?”

“Yes.”

“.....a building with an office, with one of those frosted glass doors with my name written in the gold lettering. Nellie Cochrane! Just like that!” She painted the letters out with her fingers.

“Oh, yes. In fact, if you are willing to relocate to Malifaux City, we can make you editor-in-chief of the Malifaux Tattler. You will be free to direct the offices as you please.”

"...and this is because my writing is so good and cuts to the quick? The marrow. The very bones of the story. Because I have a voice that the people need to hear?"

"Absolutely"

Nellie nodded and swallowed hard. It would be good. She'd be doing good.

"Oh, one other thing," the man added. "We have the utmost respect for your abilities as a reporter. We assume you will discover, if you have not already, that the explosion that injured Miss Gage was caused by Guild agents. We were simply trying to close the mine for reasons that are our own, and no one was meant to be hurt, but..." He shrugged. "This information should not make the papers."

Nellie swallowed again. She felt sick. Sick in every way she could feel sick. She started slowly. "Look..."

Another money clip, as large as the first, hit the ground.

The frosted glass read **NELLIE COCHRANE** and underneath that **EDITOR IN CHIEF**.

"All these people work fer you?" Phiona was a bit taken aback. The hustle-and-bustle of the office was real: conversations, papers shuffling, pens scratching. People rushed about with a passion.

"They work for the paper. They work for the truth! Crafting it with their words as they see it and they believe it. Well, the reporters anyways. Some of them do other things, like set type or make up schedules." Nellie answered nonchalantly as if this was all commonplace and not something that two weeks ago was not only a fantasy, but pretty much her highest ambition.

"An' this is all cause the Guild liked yer story 'bout me?" Phiona said mystified.

"Liked it? They loved it! And the next one, too. That one is about the two times you saved my life from those Union toughs. You gave them a good thrashing. Wanna see my office?! Come on!" Nellie bounced into the room. "Patricia! If anyone comes by tell them I'm in a meeting!"

"No one is going to come b--" The girl at the small desk in front of Nellie's office rolled her eyes as the door shut. "And my name isn't Patricia," she grumbled under her breath.

"Look at this! See this!" She pointed at the name plate at the front of the desk. "And this thing." She gestured at her new green lamp. "And I have shelves!" She waved at the shelves. "And... and it's all thanks to you."

"Me? I didn't write it." Phiona looked around the room in awe.

"No, but you lived it! I'm just the stenographer. You're the thing that matters. They talk about you, everywhere." Nellie moved as if to punch at Phiona's shoulder, then remembered that she didn't like to be touched and just sort of punched the air instead.

"That explains a few things. Couldn't buy my own drinks yesterday. Couldn't get left alone..." She didn't sound too upset. "The Guild bought up all o' the papers?"

"And then some! They want lots more, too. They want me to be their lead publicist, writing Guild news for the whole city! Can you believe it?" Nellie sat down in her chair, which swiveled, and she used that to its full ability.

"That doesn't sound right..." Phiona said.

Nellie stopped the spinning. "What do you mean?"

"...publicist. Isn't it called somethin' else?"

"Oh, no. I can't think of any other term I'd use."

“Ya sure?”

Nellie nodded with absolute certainty. “I'm sure.”

“Well, if you don't know the word it must not exist.”

The awkwardness that exists between any two people with nothing in common settled into the silence. Phiona broke it first. “Well, should be goin'. Glad everythin' worked out so well. Thanks fer' payin' my way for the train out here, but I gots work in Ridley.”

Nellie spoke up before Phiona had even reached the doorknob. “You know, Phee. I've already made enemies. Those that would dare attempt to silence the press! I'm probably going to make a lot more. Are you interested in a job?”

Nellie knew in a well-written story, Phiona would say something telling. She'd say 'Oh, you'd want me? Really?' or something else that would show her vulnerability and fears at her injury and mental state. The blossoming of an unlikely friendship.

All Phiona said was, “Yeah.”

It was just as good.





PAPER DELIVERY

Today's edition has an explosive new story in it! But not everyone is happy to see it made public…

SET UP

Before deployment, each player takes turns placing a Ht 2, 30mm Citizen Marker anywhere on the board, not in terrain, until there are four Citizen Markers. Then, randomly determine one of the players to be the Attacker and the other the Defender.

DEPLOYMENT

This scenario uses Blind Deployment.

SPECIAL

Every non-Peon model in the Attacking Crew starts the game with a 30mm Paper Marker on its stat card. Starting on the second Turn, any model with a Paper Marker may make a (1) Interact Action with a Citizen Marker to "sell a copy." When this happens, discard the Citizen Marker and the Paper Marker. If a model carrying a Paper Marker is removed from play, place the Paper Marker in base contact with it before removing the model.

The Defending Crew may make a (1) Interact Action targeting a Paper Marker in base contact to discard it. Additionally, models in the Defending Crew may choose to discard a card and deal no damage with a successful melee Attack (before flipping damage) against an Attacking model that is carrying a Paper Marker to discard the Paper Marker.

At the end of every Turn, the Defending Crew may push all Citizen Markers up to 4" in any direction.

VICTORY

The Attacking Crew gains 1 VP whenever they sell a copy of the paper.

The Defending Crew gains 1 VP whenever they discard a Paper Marker.

No Crew may score more than 4 VP from this Scheme.

GUILD VIGNETTES

Following the death of the Governor, Lucius surrounded himself with the finer things in life, playing up his role as a bureaucrat who had just earned a promotion on account of his superior's sudden and unexpected death. It was a ruse, all part of the charade that he lived and breathed, but a pleasant one, nonetheless.

When word reached him that someone had discovered the Nythera ruins in the Badlands, he took stock of the situation. It was unlikely that any of the humans could open the vault-like structure... but then again, it had been unlikely that a human would manage to nearly become a Tyrant, as well.

Deciding to cover his bases, Lucius dispatched some of his minions to locate a mercenary who had returned from the ruins, hoping to learn more about the situation. Unfortunately, the Ten Thunders snatched the mercenary up first, keeping him well beyond Lucius' reach.

By the time he had mounted an appropriate response to the situation, Nythera had opened and Titania had appeared outside his office window, talking about unity beneath her rule and the war she intended to wage against the awakening Tyrants.

Despite the threats surrounding him, Lucius couldn't help but find his situation amusing. He had successfully maneuvered the Governor-General out of the picture, only for a more dangerous threat to appear and turn to him for advice and assistance.

Lucius was comfortable playing that role. He was already formulating schemes and contingencies intended to blunt the Autumn Queen's influence... and to turn her strengths toward his own purposes.

Perdita met with the Governor-General shortly before his death, but it wasn't a pleasant meeting. She returned to Latigo, where she took stock of their supplies and ammunition and debated whether or not the Ortegas could survive without Guild support. His subsequent death rendered her concerns moot, however; in his absence, the accountants and quartermasters of the Guild continued to send shipments of ammunition, food, and information about reported Neverborn sightings south to Latigo.

Just as Perdita was beginning to think that things were returning to normal, however, a bevy of Gremlins appeared on the outskirts of Latigo, all of them making loud noises and rude gestures in an attempt to attract the attention of her family. Not giving the vermin much credit, Perdita sent a group of Pistoleros out to deal with them... and they came back with horrified stories of undead abominations trudging toward Latigo.

It wasn't the first time that Perdita had fought the creatures that crawled out of the crater left behind by the Red Cage, and with a curse, she gathered up the rest of her family and led them into the Bayou. There were far more of the undead creatures than she had ever seen, and though they managed to deal with the bulk of the abominations, for every two they killed, three more crawled their way out of the crater.

Realizing that they would have to find the source of the abominations to truly deal with the threat, Perdita returned to Latigo, leaving Francisco, Santiago, and a small force of Pistoleros behind to hold the monsters at bay. There had to be some clue as to where the vile creatures were coming from, and she was determined to find it and end the threat of the Red Cage once and for all.

Sonnia Criid was in her office when the Governor-General's ritual of ascension spiraled out of control. Screaming, she fell to the ground, pressing her hands tightly against the steel mask on her face as it grew hot enough to burn the flesh from her palms.

Then, suddenly, Cherufe was free and everything was aflame. The Witchling Handlers she had been speaking with just moments prior were reduced to charred skeletons in the blink of an eye. She felt the Tyrant swell with aetheric energy, more powerful than ever before, and in the last few moments of conscious thought, Sonnia realized that the world was ending. Bloated on aetheric power, Cherufe was ascending, and everything and everyone in Malifaux would burn in its wake.

But something else was happening.

Like two matches flaring up right next to each other, Cherufe's essence was mingling with the essence of another ascending Tyrant, their flames combining into something larger and more powerful than either. Sonnia felt something pulling at the Tyrant clawing its way free from her soul, and a foreign emotion flashed across its thoughts: Panic.

In the next moment, Cherufe was torn from her, ripped from every cell in her body as it desperately flailed at her soul, shredding it into tatters as the Tyrant tried to maintain a hold on its corporeal anchor. The sundering was over in the time it took for Sonnia's heart to beat once, but to her, it was a lifetime of torment.

Sonnia collapsed to the ground in a charred heap, her office burning around her. Slowly, she opened her eyes and caught sight of her steel mask on the floor next to her, its shape warped by intense heat.

It was over, she realized.

Cherufe was gone.

And that terrified her.

When she learned of the news of the Governor's death, Lady Justice knew that it was only a matter of time until the Resurrectionists made their move. She sent her recruiters out into the city, seeking out those with a talent for necromantic magic who had not yet turned their powers toward animating the dead.

When she finally received word of the zombie horde shuffling across the central slums, its numbers were far greater than she had expected. Drawing upon the Guild Guard, she led the military forces of the Guild against the undead army, hacking countless shuffling corpses apart as riflemen and lumbering constructs supported her on every side.

It wasn't enough.

The undead horde was poised to overwhelm their battle lines when its southern flank suddenly collapsed. Justice didn't know what had happened to weaken the zombies, but she seized the opportunity just the same, ordering Peacekeepers and mounted guards to focus their efforts on that part of the battlefield. She could sense when the enemy necromancer withdrew, as the undead around her began to slow and weaken, allowing the Guild to reassert their momentum and win the day.

There had been something familiar about the way the zombies were fighting, and after going through her records, Justice realized that the Resurrectionist who had been commanding them could only have been the same one that she had fought at the Ruined Observatory. That battle - the one that, more than any other, had nearly killed her - had never sat quite right with her, and now she knew why.

Determined to not let such a powerful necromancer slip through her fingers, Lady Justice turned all her resources toward finding the unknown Resurrectionist and ending him.

In the wake of the Governor General's death, Hoffman carried on in a practical manner. He reorganized the train schedules, making them much more efficient. He inspected each of the various Guild-funded factories in the Industrial Zone, suggesting improvements that would increase efficiency and reduce waste.

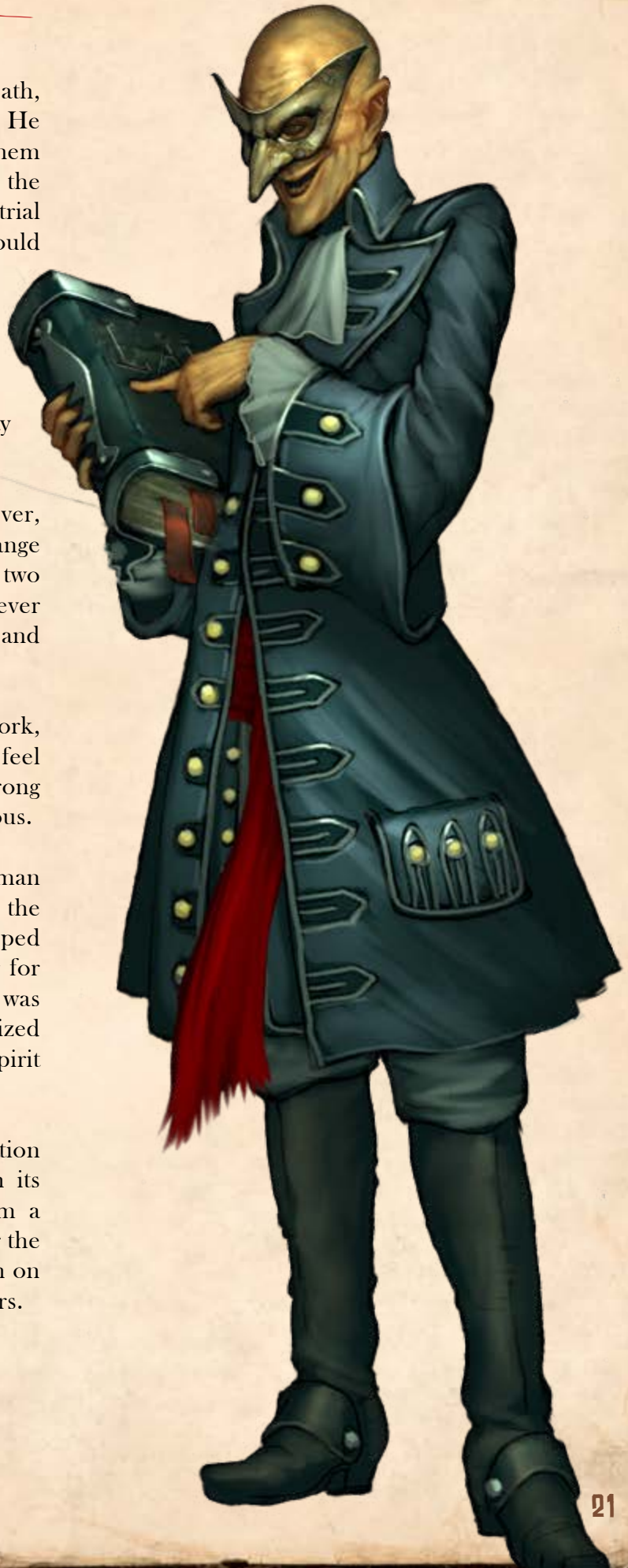
Hoffman also made improvements to the Guild's Aethervoxes, making it more difficult for Arcanists to listen in on their transmissions, and generally helped to reduce the chaos of the city after the death of its leader.

With each report that crossed his desk, however, Hoffman began to notice a number of strange irregularities; people that seemed to be in two places at once, lawyers and guardsmen who never actually seemed to have arrived in Malifaux, and other, stranger anomalies.

The Guild was a machine of people and paperwork, but it was still a machine, and Hoffman could feel that some of the gears were turning in the wrong direction... and that made him very, very curious.

After the new Governor-General arrived, Hoffman placed a full report of the irregularities on the man's desk. The next morning, Hoffman stepped into his office to find Franco Marlow waiting for him. The conversation between the two men was both frank and refreshing, and they both realized that they had found something of a kindred spirit in the other.

By the end of the meeting, the Amalgamation Office had received a significant increase in its budget, allowing Hoffman to expand it from a forgotten little office meant to keep him under the Guild's control to a legitimate Special Division on part with the Death Marshals or Witch Hunters.



NELLIE COCHRANE

The Guild's newest newsy, Nellie Cochrane, is the editor in chief of the Malifaux Tattler. She got her start as the head of a small daily newspaper in Ridley, but after exposing massive Union corruption she was offered a position in Malifaux in charge of the city's second official newspaper.

Many people in Malifaux see the Guild as corrupt, inept, and brutal. Nellie is none of these things. She has a genuine curiosity and spark about her. She understands that words have power: the power to compel, the power to mystify, and the power to change the course of history itself. Her pen is like a scalpel, and with it she cuts away the lies to reveal the truth of the city, not through viciousness or violence, but through argument and alliteration.

Nellie relentlessly seeks out new stories, exposing debauchery and misdeeds wherever she finds them... except within the Guild. This mandatory bias might rankle her journalistic ethics, but she's convinced herself it's a small price to pay for the ability to reach such a large readership. The perks of having reporters, fancy cameras, and an office with her name on it doesn't hurt, either.



NELLIE COCHRANE — CACHE 4

Master, Living
JOURNALIST

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	6	11	5	-	2

ABILITIES

In Plain Sight: When an enemy model within 8 takes an Interact Action, this model gains the following Condition: "**Evidence +1:** At the end of the Turn, end this Condition. Then you may place a Scheme Marker in base contact with this model."

Creative Reporting: At the start of this model's Activation, it may discard a card to gain the **Evidence +1** Condition.

Revisionist History: Damage flips against this model may not be cheated by other models. This model may cheat damage flips made against it, regardless of any ⊟ or jokers.

"Run From The Truth!": After a model within 8 fails an Attack Action, this model may lower the value of its **Evidence** Condition by 1 to push the model up to 4" in any direction, after the current Action is resolved.

NELLIE COCHRANE

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Scathing Review (**Ca** 7 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 10): Target enemy model gains the following Condition for the rest of the game: "**Humiliation:** At the start of this model's Activation, it suffers 2 damage. This model may end this Condition by taking a (1) Interact Action to place a Scheme Marker."

Informant: After succeeding, gain the **Evidence +1** Condition.

(1) Propaganda (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 10): Target suffers 1/3/4 damage. This model may lower the value of its **Evidence** Condition to declare an additional number of Triggers equal to the value of the **Evidence** Condition lowered. The same Trigger may not be taken more than once in this way; you choose the order in which to resolve them. A single suit in the final duel total may be used for multiple Triggers.

Guilt: After succeeding, push the target up to 5" in any direction.

Angry Mob: After succeeding, choose another friendly model within 2" of the target to make a (1) Attack against the target, if able.

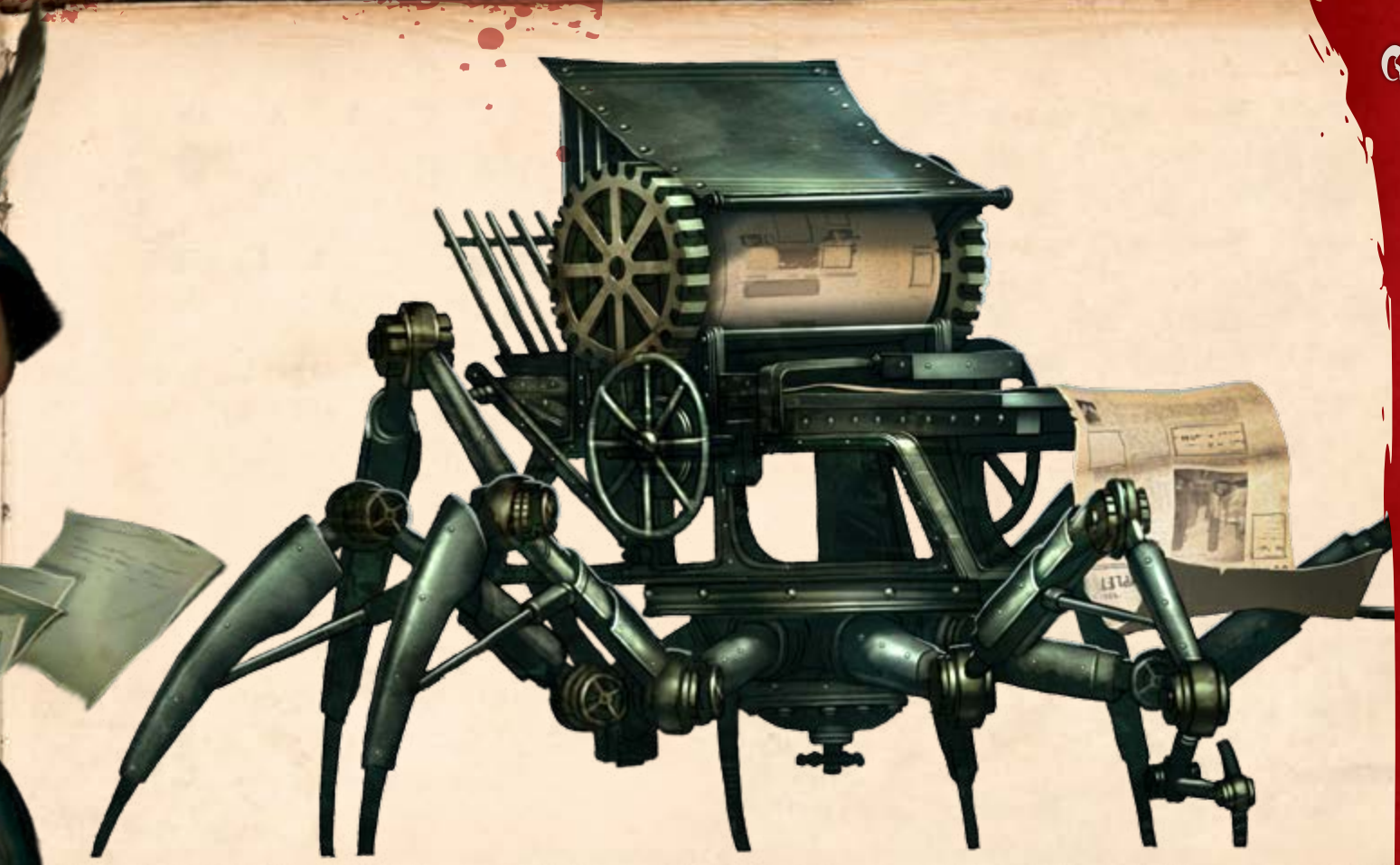
Shock: After succeeding, the target gains **Slow**.

(1) "Hot Off The Presses!" (**Ca** 6 / TN: 13 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 8): Place target model into base contact with a Scheme Marker within 8" and LoS of it which is friendly to this model, then discard the Marker. After placing the target, it gains **Burning +3**.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Lead: Discard a Scheme Marker in base contact to push up to 6".

30mm



THE PRINTING PRESS

"Words are like magic, Nellie," her father used to say. "Words shape people, and the world is people, so words shape the world. Be careful how you use them." Nellie took this lesson to heart, studying and scraping, perfecting the magic of her words.

When her father died, she discovered that he'd kept a small Soulstone on him at all times, and she used this unexpected inheritance to create a printing press in memory of her father. It was the only device capable of wielding Nellie's unique sort of magic: words.

She designed it to be steam powered so it could follow along with her and help her carry papers or print news as soon as a story struck, but recently, the Printing Press has begun to act strangely, becoming very protective of Nellie. She suspects that maybe, just maybe, her inheritance contains some fragment of her beloved father's soul.



THE PRINTING PRESS COST 3

Peon, Construct, Totem (Nellie Cochrane)

JOURNALIST

DF	WP	WD	WK	CG	HT
5	6	4	6	7	2

ABILITIES

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

Arcane Reservoir +1: While this model is in play, increase this Crew's Hand Size by +1.

Insignificant: This model may not take Interact Actions.

Misstep: Enemy models that end a push or placement within 8 and in base contact with impassable terrain or another model suffer 1 damage.

THE PRINTING PRESS

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) You Can't Escape The Truth (**Ca** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 2): Target model gains **Slow**. This Attack gains to disengaging strikes.

Painful Revelations: After succeeding against a target that was **Slow** when this Action was declared, the target suffers 2 damage.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Thorough Investigation (**Ca** 6 / TN: 11 / Rg: 8): Target friendly Master may Activate after this model's Activation ends as a Chain Activation. The target gains the following Condition: "**Evidence +1:** At the end of the Turn, end this Condition. Then you may place a Scheme Marker in base contact with this model."

40mm



PHIONA GAGE

Phiona Gage was always a simple woman. Tall and strong, she gladly and easily did whatever physical task was set before her. The work was hard and life was rough, but things were simple. Mining was a good fit for her, at least until the accident.

Phiona doesn't remember it well, just glimpses. A loud crack, the rush of dust, dragging a wounded miner from the wreckage, and then... darkness. When she awoke, half of her face had been rebuilt with cold, unchanging metal. They tried to tell her how expensive the operation had been and what a miracle it was that she was still alive, but for Phiona, it just meant the end to her simple life. Sometimes, now her vision turns red and an unstoppable anger boils up within her. She doesn't know where it comes from, and it surprises her as much as anyone else. That's what happened the day they tried to tell her she couldn't work anymore.

The anger is what caused Phiona to lose her job in the mines. She drifted for a time, lost and confused, until she was found by Nellie and transformed into the poster child for the cruelty of the Union. Phiona doesn't really understand all the fuss; she just likes having solid work again.



PHIONA GAGE

Henchman, Living, Rare 1

JOURNALIST

COST 8 CACHE 5

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	6	8	5	8	2

ABILITIES

"It's Me You're Fighting.": Once per Turn, after an enemy model engaged with this model fails a **Wp** duel outside of this model's Activation, this model may make a Attack Action against it after resolving the current Action.

Unimpeded: This model ignores penalties for severe terrain when moving.

Hard to Kill: While this model has 2 or more **Wd** remaining when it suffers damage, it may not be reduced to below 1 **Wd**.

Right At Home: While this model's base is touching severe or impassable terrain, it gains +1 **Df**.

PHIONA GAGE

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Modified Pick Axe (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 2): Target suffers 3/4/5 damage. This Attack flip gains against models that have already Activated this Turn.

Head Trauma: After damaging, the target gains the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Head Trauma:** This model suffers to **Wp** duels."

Wide Swing: After damaging, take this Attack again against another model that was not targeted by this Attack during this Activation. This Trigger may only be declared during this model's Activation.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(1) Command Stone (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12): Place one 50mm Stone Pillar Marker in base contact with this model, not in base contact with any other models or Markers. This Marker is **Ht** 5, blocking, impassable, hard cover terrain. Remove this Stone Pillar Marker at the start of this model's next Activation or when this model leaves play, whichever comes first. This Action may only be taken once per Turn.

(1) "Look Out!" (**Ca** 6 / TN: 11 / Rg: 8): This Action may not be taken if this model is engaged. Target an enemy model that is engaged with another friendly model. Place this model into base contact with the target and push all other friendly models engaged with the target 4" away from the target. Then this model may take a (1) Attack Action.

40mm

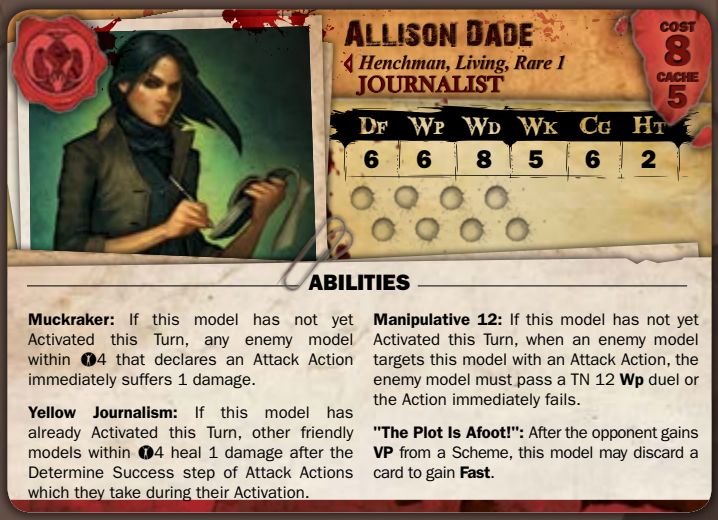
ALLISON DADE

Allison Dade survived the violence that befell Innocence, and the story she wrote about it for the Malifaux Tattler brought her great acclaim. Even so, she has many unanswered questions about what transpired there and the people she thought she knew.

She still seeks answers to these questions. Although she currently resides in Malifaux and works full-time for the Tattler, she has on occasion made the journey back to Innocence to try to learn more about what happened there. What is the Widow Ferris hiding? Why is everyone still so silent about those turbulent days and the Neverborn assault?

With each passing day, she worries that her answers are drifting further and further away from her. Even so, she is always looking for more clues, always uncovering another story, always asking the questions many people do not want answered.

And there will always be someone who wants to silence her.



ALLISON DADE

Henchman, Living, Rare 1

JOURNALIST

COST 8 CACHE 5

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	6	8	5	6	2

ABILITIES

Muckraker: If this model has not yet Activated this Turn, any enemy model within ❶4 that declares an Attack Action immediately suffers 1 damage.

Yellow Journalism: If this model has already Activated this Turn, other friendly models within ❶4 heal 1 damage after the Determine Success step of Attack Actions which they take during their Activation.

Manipulative 12: If this model has not yet Activated this Turn, when an enemy model targets this model with an Attack Action, the enemy model must pass a TN 12 **Wp** duel or the Action immediately fails.

"The Plot Is Afoot!": After the opponent gains **VP** from a Scheme, this model may discard a card to gain **Fast**.

ALLISON DADE

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) "One More Question!" (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 8): Target gains **Slow**. If there is a friendly Guardsman within 6" of the target, the target suffers 1/3/4 damage.

- ***"How Do You Explain What Happened at Innocence?":*** After succeeding, the target must discard a Scheme Marker friendly to its Crew from anywhere in play. If it cannot, the target suffers 2 damage.
- ***"When Did You First Meet Tatterson Flay?":*** After succeeding, push the target 5" away from this model.
- ***"How Long Have You Been In Crowe's Pocket?":*** After succeeding, the target must discard a card. If it cannot, it suffers 2 damage.
- ***"Just What Is Your Relationship with the Widow Ferris?":*** After succeeding, a friendly model within 5" of the target may push into base contact with the target.

(0) Investigation (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 8): Target model gains the following Condition until the end of the game: **"Under Investigation:** After damaging an enemy model, this model suffers 2/3/4 damage that may not be cheated and this Condition ends."

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(1) Uncovering the Truth (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12 / Rg: 8): Target a Scheme Marker. The opponent may reveal their Control Hand to you. If they do not, or if they have no cards in their hand, discard the target Scheme Marker.

30mm

FIELD REPORTER

"But that wasn't the assignment!" she huffed. "The assignment was to infiltrate a Union protest and investigate ties to the Arcanist movement. I did that, and I'm reporting what I found. There were no Arcanist ties that I was able to gather."

Nellie kept scratching out lines with her pen. "I know the assignment; I gave it to you! I'm not telling you to lie, just to make it more colorful. Give it some pop! Tell the tale with more glamrificance! Look here," she said, pointing at the page. "This section: 'Members of the protest were wary of the Guild's Witch Hunters.' We could easily change that to, 'Fearful of being accused of sorcery or Arcanist ties, many members of the protest kept to the shadows, looking fearfully over their shoulders.' It's not a lie, just an elaboration. People will read it and think, 'Well, do they have something to hide? Something to fear?'"

The reporter pinched the bridge of her nose. "You made up the word 'glamrificance,' didn't you?"

Nellie glared.



FIELD REPORTER COST 4

Minion, Living

JOURNALIST, WOE

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	5	5	5	-	2

ABILITIES

Unimpeded: This model ignores penalties for severe terrain when moving.

Disguised: This model may not be the target of the Charge Action.

Manipulative 12: If this model has not yet Activated this Turn, when an enemy model targets this model with an Attack Action, the enemy model must pass a TN 12 **Wp** duel or the Action immediately fails.

FIELD REPORTER

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Exclusive Interview (**Ca** 5 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 8): Target an enemy model. This Action must declare a Trigger if able.

Assaulted In Public: After succeeding, the target gains the following Condition until the end of the game: "**Assaulted +2:** When this model Activates, it suffers +2 damage and ends this Condition."

Incessant Questions: After succeeding, the target gains **Slow**.

Under Scrutiny: After succeeding, the target gains the following Condition until the end of the game: "**Under Scrutiny:** This model suffers to all Attack Actions it makes. This model may end this Condition by discarding two cards at the start of its Activation or taking a (1) Interact Action to place a Scheme Marker."

They're On to You! Run!: After succeeding, push the target up to 5" away from this model.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(1) Corroborating Evidence (**Ca** 6 / TN: 15 / Rg: 6): Target an enemy Scheme Marker. Place a Scheme Marker in base contact with it and then discard the target.

(0) Reference the Field Guide: This model discards a card. Add the suit of the discarded card to all of this model's duel totals for the rest of this Activation.

30mm

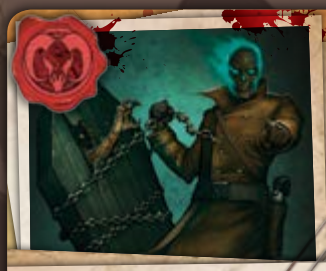
DEATH MARSHAL RECRUITER

The boy, barely sixteen, struggled in his chains. "Look, you have to believe me! I didn't want to kill them! But I... I had to. They weren't themselves anymore. Ma and pa, they were undead, like the stories!" Tears rolled down his face. "I know I shot them, but I had to!"

The old grizzled man standing outside his cell was silent for a moment. "I know what you had to do, son. I'm more concerned that you ran afterwards, and that I had to haul you out of some Arcanist hell-hole. But that's done, and I only have one question now: what would you do if you found the man who did that to your family?"

The boy stared right into the man's eyes. "Put 'im six feet under."

The man smiled and reached for the key to the boy's cell. "Come on, kid. We're your family now."



DEATH MARSHAL RECRUITER COST 7

Enforcer, Living, Rare 2

GUILD MARSHAL

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	6	7	5	7	2

ABILITIES

Hard to Wound +1: Damage flips against this model suffer ⍈.

"Not Today, Lads": When another friendly Guild Marshal within ❶4 without this Ability is killed, it may discard a card. If it does, it is not killed and heals 1 damage.

Sight Beyond The Veil: When this model declares an Attack, it may discard a card. If it does, it may target buried models with the Attack regardless of range or LoS.

DEATH MARSHAL RECRUITER

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Recruiter's Sword (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 1): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.
Critical Strike: When damaging the target, this Attack deals +1 damage for each in the final duel total.
Glimpse the Void: After damaging, if no other models are buried, the target must pass a TN 13 **Wp** duel or become buried. The next time a model in play is killed, unbury the target in base contact with the killed model before removing it.

(1) Peacebringer (**Sh** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 10): Target suffers 2/3/5 damage.
Critical Strike: When damaging the target, this Attack deals +1 damage for each in the final duel total.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Into The Fray (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12 / Rg: 18): Push this model up to 5" towards target enemy model.
"Give 'em Hell!": After succeeding, target other friendly model engaged with the target may take a (1) Attack Action.

(0) You Have A Knack For This (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12 / Rg: 6): Target friendly non-Leader model gains the Guild Marshal Characteristic until the end of the Turn.

40mm

WITCHLING THRALL

Everyone reacts differently to the aetheric environment of Malifaux. Many people seem to remain untouched, others seem to be able to tap into their magical potential more easily, and a rare few learn how to bend the aether around them, using it to fuel their growing magical power.

On the rare occasion Sonnia captures such a powerful individual, she takes her time with them. Any run-of-the-mill Arcanist can be turned into a Witchling Stalker, but these prime specimens are instead transformed into mighty Witchling Thralls. Their power turns inwards during the transformation, searing away their minds and repurposing their bodies into massive walls of muscle.

Afterward they are assigned a handler, just like the Stalkers, and they begin the long, agonizing process of being turned into nothing more than a tool for the Guild, a killing machine designed to seek and destroy others with their power. In a different world, they might have been deciding the future of Malifaux, but Fate, and Sonnia Criid, had other plans.



WITCHLING THRALL COST 9

Minion, Living
WITCH HUNTER

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	5	12	5	8	2

ABILITIES

Impossible to Wound: Damage flips against this model suffer ⊟. Damage flips against this model may not be cheated.

Beyond Terror, Beyond Pain: This model automatically passes Horror Duels, regardless of the duel total.

Prone To Frenzy: Once per Turn, after another model places a Scheme Marker within ❶4, this model may take a (1) ⫻ Attack Action after the current Action is resolved.

WITCHLING THRALL

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Chainfist (**Ml** 6🕮 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Target suffers 3/4/6 damage.
🕮 ***Essence Drain:*** After succeeding against a model with **Wp** 6 or higher, heal 2 damage on this model.
🕮 ***Aetheric Overload:*** After succeeding against a model with **Wp** 5 or lower, the target must discard a card if able.

(1) Aetheric Blast (**Ca** 6🕮 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 8): Target suffers 2/3🍄/4🍄 damage.
🐺 ***Blowback:*** After succeeding, push all models damaged by this Action up to 3" in any direction.
🕮 ***Mindblast:*** After succeeding, the target gains the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**False Confidence:** If this model's printed **Wp** stat is less than 6, this model's printed **Wp** stat counts as 6."

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Yank The Chain (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12 / Rg: 6): Push this model into base contact with target friendly model. This Action must declare a Trigger if able.
🗡 ***"ANGRY!":*** After succeeding, this model must make a (1) ⫻ Attack Action against the target if able. The opposing player controls this model for the duration of the Action.

40mm

Malifaux Tattler

Vol. CXIV
NO. 561

Wednesday, May 16th, 1906

Unjust Union Ultimatum

By Nellie Cochrane



Not a week has passed since the departure of our beloved Governor-General, and the Union has already begun to use his passing as a means to bleed the workers of Malifaux dry. While the rest of the city mourns the loss of the Governor, the Union picks over his corpse like a hungry vulture. Already they have proposed a series of new regulations and demands in the hopes that they can take advantage of the Guild's weakened state!

It is rare I speak to you on such a personal level, as this is a highly respected paper that sticks to facts over fiction, truth over tyranny, and enlightenment over erroneous exclamations. However, this matter is simply too important to treat with a delicate hand. I understand that many of you are proud Union members, and I applaud you for it! You are the backbone of this fine city. You toil in the mines and keep the machines running in the deepest bowls of the earth! You provide the vital Soulstones that allow us all to continue thriving in this fine city! I am merely your humble servant; your advocate against forces that seek to manipulate and persuade you for their own ends!

As your advocate, I must speak truthfully to you about these preposterous proposals. At first, shorter hours and more safety regulations may seem appealing to you, and why wouldn't they? But in truth, they are the creations of the Union elite; they are the creations of Viktor Ramos and his cronies, designed purely to line their own pockets! Shorter hours means less pay for the hard working men and women of the mines! New safety regulations means more inspectors, more equipment (provided, of course, by Viktor Ramos), and more red tape between you and your pay check!

I plead with you, do not allow these miscreants to use the death of the Governor to take from you your hard earned scrip!

JOURNALIST UPGRADES

GUILD FUNDS

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Abilities:

Guild Funds: At the end of the Turn, before resolving the **Evidence** Condition, this model may choose one of the following depending on the value of its **Evidence**:

Evidence +2 or greater: Heal 2 damage on target model within 8".

Evidence +3 or greater: Target model within 8" gains the following Condition until the end of its next Activation: "**Hard to Kill:** While this model has 2 or more **Wd** remaining when it suffers damage, it may not be reduced to below 1 **Wd**."

Evidence +4 or greater: Gain 2 Soulstones.

Df/Wp (📖) On The Record: After failing, this model gains the **Evidence +1** Condition.

Journalistic Spin: When an enemy model within ❶8 is killed by a Condition, this model may choose to count as having killed it for Strategy and Scheme purposes.



RESTRICTIONS

Nellie Cochrane

EMBEDDED

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

Embedded: This Crew may hire up to four models with the Mercenary Characteristic that are not this Crew's declared Faction (instead of the usual two). Mercenaries that are not from the Resurrectionist or Neverborn Factions are hired at their regular cost, rather than costing one extra Soulstone.

- This model gains the following Triggers to its **"Hot Off The Presses!"** Attack Action:

Hide In Shadow: After succeeding, move this model up to 3".

Slow News Day: The target does not gain **Burning** from this Action.



RESTRICTIONS

Nellie Cochrane

MISLEADING HEADLINES

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

Misinformation: When this Crew has the opportunity to Activate a model, this model may discard a card or lower its **Evidence** Condition value by 1 to pass rather than Activate a model. This Crew may still Activate a model later in the Turn, as normal.

- This model gains the following Attack Action:

(0) Incite (**Wp** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 12): Target gains the following Condition until the start of its next Activation: "**Mood Swing:** When this model's controller has the opportunity to Activate a model, the opponent may choose for this model to Activate instead if it is available to Activate."



RESTRICTIONS

Nellie Cochrane

DELEGATION

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

(1) "Assignments, People!" (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12 / Rg: 8): Target other non-Leader model gains **Fast**.

Document Everything: After succeeding, lower this model's **Evidence** Condition by 1 to place a Scheme Marker in base contact with the target.

Sabbatical: After succeeding, lower this model's **Evidence** condition by 1 to heal 2 damage on the target.



RESTRICTIONS

Nellie Cochrane



TRANSPARENCY

COST: 1 SS

- Friendly Journalist models within 8 gain the following Trigger to all of their Attack Actions:

  Transparency: After succeeding, place a Scheme Marker in base contact with the target.

RESTRICTIONS

Journalist, Rare 1

WRATH OF THE GUILD

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Wrath of the Guild: This model gains + to damage flips it makes when Attacking models that have already Activated this Turn.

RESTRICTIONS

Phiona Gage

GUILD UPGRADES

ARREST HIM

COST: 0SS

- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (1) "Arrest Him!" (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wk** / Rg: 6): Summon a Guild Guard into base contact with target enemy model. The summoned Guild Guard suffers 1 damage. This Action may only be taken once per Turn.

- This model gains the following Triggers to its **Collier Army** Attack Action:

  Critical Strike: When damaging the target, this Attack deals +1 damage for each in the final duel total.

  False Evidence: After damaging, discard a friendly Scheme Marker in LoS to push the target up to its **Wk** in any direction.

RESTRICTIONS

Captain Dashel

READY TO WORK

COST: 0SS

- This model gains +1 **Wk**.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Ready To Work: When this model declares a Charge Action, it may discard this Upgrade to take the (2) Charge Action as a (1) Action.

RESTRICTIONS

Executioner

HACKEEM TEWOLDE

Recently, the Guild has been working with Dr. Hackeem Tewolde. Dr. Tewolde is an Abyssinian scientist whose knowledge of engineering and design is almost unmatched in Malifaux, outside of a few brilliant individuals such as Viktor Ramos and Charles Hoffman.

Although his experimental airship project fell through, Dr. Tewolde has continued his research for the Guild in a hidden laboratory somewhere on the outskirts of Ridley.

On some nights, strange flashes can be seen on the horizon. Many of the residents blame it on the unusual occurrences that always seem to happen on this side of the Breach, but, in reality, it is Dr. Tewolde continuing his work for the Guild with a fiendish enthusiasm.

Dr. Tewolde does not care what the Guild does with his creations so long he is paid up front and given full academic credit when they are finally revealed to the public.



Curfew

Cost: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Curfew: When this model ends its Activation, if there are no friendly models available to Activate, it may choose to discard this Upgrade and a Soulstone. If it does, all enemy models which have not yet Activated this Turn (both buried and in play) gain the **Slow** Condition.

RESTRICTIONS

Rare 1

Numb To The World

Cost: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Numb To The World: This model may choose not to gain Conditions applied by the Actions and Abilities of enemy models.

  Hard-Headed: When this model would take an Action controlled by the opposing player, the player that hired this model may discard a card to prevent the Action from being taken.

RESTRICTIONS

Non-Master, Rare 1

A Debt To The Guild

Cost: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Death Does Not Release You: When this model is killed or sacrificed, this Crew adds one Soulstone to its Soulstone Pool.

  Paid In Blood: Once per game, at the start of this model's Activation, it may choose to draw a card. If it does, for the remainder of the Activation, all of its Attack Actions that deal damage deal +1 damage.

RESTRICTIONS

Non-Master, Rare 3



REVA

RESURRECTIONISTS

COMMON GROUND

BY: CHRISTOPHER GORHAM

Vincent held his symbol of office, turning it over in his hands. In the flickering light of the carriage's interior, he examined the Ram's pitted, tarnished surface. He recalled how brightly the brass had shone on the day the late Governor-General had presented it to him, all those years ago. He hadn't polished it in months.

As the carriage lurched to a halt, the symbol slipped through his fingers and clattered across the floor. Cursing, Vincent snatched up the ornate crossbow that lay across his lap and scrambled to retrieve it. He was still on his hands and knees when the driver, in crisp Guard uniform, opened the door.

"All right, sir?" the young woman enquired, peering in an air of studied boredom to see what he was doing.

"Yes," he snapped, looping the Ram's chain over his head and tucking it into his shirt. "Out of the way."

The driver obligingly stood back, making a sweeping gesture to indicate his freedom to pass. As Vincent stepped down to the cobbled street, a gust of icy wind whipped at his cloak and threatened to dislodge the driver's hat. She clamped it down with one hand while she fastened the door and raised her voice over the gale.

"Are you sure you don't want me to stay, sir? There's a big storm coming, and you'll have a damnable time trying to get back to your lodgings."

"I'll manage," Vincent grunted. The driver gave him a curt nod and scrambled up to her seat without another word. One flick of the reins and the carriage was moving, the horses surging and prancing skittishly as the driver tried to keep them calm. Vincent hooked his crossbow securely to his belt and drew his cloak over its dependable bulk. Only once the carriage was out of sight did he allow himself to start shivering.

The building that stood before him had an edifice of forbidding gray stone, more akin to a medieval castle than a townhouse. Ram-headed gargoyles stared from the parapet, poised as if to swoop down on unwelcome visitors. Vincent approached the iron-banded door and rapped the knocker sharply.

Almost immediately, the door swung open and a tall, powerfully-built man in butler's livery ushered Vincent inside. The vestibule was surprisingly warm and lavish after the building's austere facade, with rich cherrywood paneling and ornately framed portraits on the walls. Vincent waved the servant off as the man attempted to take his cloak.

"Captain Cortinas will see you at once," he rumbled, leading Vincent into a well-furnished sitting room. A man and woman were already present, and they rose as Vincent entered. "Exorcist Vincent St. Clair," the butler announced before withdrawing.

Vincent made an instinctive inspection of the pair - husband and wife, he assumed. They were both of a similar age, likely in their mid-sixties. The man was tall and thin, with horn-rimmed spectacles and a slight stoop, more suggestive of an accountant than a military officer. The woman was shorter, stockier, with a straight-shouldered bearing and the air of confidence that came from years in a position of command. He offered his hand to her and was sure he saw a slight nod of approval.

"Thank you for coming, Exorcist," the retired Captain began, shaking his hand firmly. "You must be wondering why we asked the Secretary to send... someone of your occupation."

"I'm not accustomed to making house calls," Vincent growled. "People don't usually invite me in."

The Captain's husband gave a bark of laughter, but immediately fell silent when he saw Vincent's stony-faced expression and began intently studying the carved scrollwork on the nearby mantelpiece.

"Yes, I'm sure," Captain Cortinas agreed. "Exorcist, this is a delicate and private matter. I specifically requested someone discreet, diligent, and loyal. Are you up to the task?"

Vincent narrowed his eyes. "What task?" he demanded.

The Captain's frown was fierce, and he was sure she had once been a truly formidable woman, but age - and perhaps whatever burden he had been sent to alleviate - had taken its toll on her. After a few seconds, she deflated slightly.

"Perhaps you'd better see for yourself."

The two of them shepherded Vincent up through the corridors and narrow staircases of the house and paused on the highest landing. Through a narrow window, Vincent looked out over rooftops and up to the thick clouds that hung low over the city, churning and black. The air was tense.

"Please understand," Mister Cortinas spoke for the first time, wringing his hands, "that the woman you're about to see is our daughter, Reva. Her condition is... we didn't want..." He took a breath and tried again. "This is the best we could do under the circumstances. Ever since becoming an adult, she has been... different. Behaving in ways not befit..."

"She's possessed," the Captain cut in. "The physicians say she's insane, and they've subjected her to every treatment their horrid little minds can dream up," she continued, her face tight with anger, "but nothing works. She was always a difficult girl, but now she's not even our daughter anymore."

"Who is she, then?"

Captain Cortinas picked up a lantern that hung beside the door, adjusted the wick, and lit it with a match, ignoring Vincent's question. "We try to keep her room dark," she explained. "She's quieter in the dark." She slid back the heavy bolts that secured the door and stepped through, lantern held high.

It took Vincent's eyes a few seconds to adjust to the dim light. The Captain and her husband were already moving ahead. As he followed, his shin struck a wooden crate in the darkness and he swore. Hearing his misfortune, the Captain turned to light his way. As she did, Vincent saw boxes of all sizes lining the walls and spilling out across the floor. *The attic*, he thought, and couldn't help adding, *where we keep the things we don't want.*

Pushed up against the far wall, where the Captain stood with the lantern, was a bed with a heavy cast-iron frame. On it - or rather, Vincent realized as he approached, *strapped* to it with thick leather belts - lay the body of a woman, somewhere in her late twenties, clad only in a nightdress. He took the lantern from the Captain to examine her. Her wrists and ankles were raw and bruised from struggling against her bonds. Her hair was shaved close to her scalp, and rose-colored burn marks showed at her temples. Just above her left ear, a row of small round wounds showed where, Vincent suspected, someone had repeatedly drilled through her skull in the name of medicine. Her eyes were open and stared blankly, not responding to the light. She was shivering.

"She must be freezing," Vincent frowned. "Why haven't you given her any blankets?"

Mister Cortinas looked away. "We had to take them away," he said quietly. "She tried to strangle herself with them."

And yet you called in an Exorcist, Vincent mused. The pieces of this puzzle were starting to come together, and he didn't like the image they formed. "And why are you keeping her up here? All those stairs can't be easy for people your age."

"You don't know what you're talking about," the Captain snapped. "She speaks to no one! She wanders through the graveyard! And you haven't had to listen to her screaming at night. We have to keep her up here just so we can get things done, so we can sleep at night! Do you know what it's like to listen to someone scream for hours on end?"

Vincent regarded her, his expression grim. "Yes," he answered flatly. "Captain, are you aware of what an exorcism entails? Whether she is possessed or not, if she undergoes the trials, she will almost certainly die. So few survive..."

The Captain and her husband exchanged a glance that to Vincent's eye, looked somewhat furtive and guilty. They nodded.

"And yet," Vincent continued, "you were so concerned for her safety that you thought it better for her to suffer in the cold. You were so disturbed by her suffering that you thought it better she do it alone, in

the dark. You've kept her here in the house, in secret, rather than have her cared for in a sanitarium."

The couple shared an expression of dawning outrage, but his anger was mounting and he couldn't stop himself.

"Insanity and suicide are so *embarrassing*, aren't they? A stain on the family cloth. But possession, evil spirits, Resurrectionist plots, well - bad things happen to good people all the time in Malifaux, very tragic, couldn't be helped. So why not do what you can to protect your *propriety*," he spat the word, "at the mere expense of your daughter's life?" He began angrily unfastening the bed's straps with one hand, the lantern in the other.

"Stand down!" the Captain ordered, drawing herself up. "This is treason. Stop now, and your crime will remain a secret."

Vincent looked down at the woman on the bed. Her eyes, unblinking, moved and locked his gaze.

"No," Vincent said quietly. "I've seen how you keep your secrets." He hoisted the woman's body over his shoulder and headed for the door. Captain Cortinas tried to bar his way, but he sent her sprawling over a pile of boxes. On the landing, he looked back for a moment at the couple's furious, terrified faces, then closed the door and slid the bolts into place. Ignoring their muffled shouting and thumping, he extinguished the lantern and hung it back on its hook. With Reva cradled in his arms, he began the long climb down the stairs.

At the last step, he froze. A deep ache was burning in his legs, and they were on the verge of giving out, but he forced himself to remain still, to show no weakness. He put on his deepest scowl and growled, "Out of my way."

The butler regarded him impassively, a heavy felling axe held casually in one massive fist. Slowly, the man stepped aside and set the weapon down. Vincent stepped warily onto the landing.

"I had anticipated that going a different way... What happens now?" Vincent asked.

"I think you overpower me and steal a horse." The man gestured toward the rear door. "There is one already saddled in the courtyard outside. I... thought I might need to leave, on short notice." He almost looked sheepish. *He cares for her,* Vincent realized.

"Do you think they will believe that I took you down?" Vincent cast a look over the muscles bulging under the butler's starched uniform. He had to crane his neck to look the man in the eye.

"I'm sure you are very capable, sir... but perhaps you caught me by surprise." The butler grinned.

Vincent rode hard through the abandoned, storm-lashed streets of the city. Reva shivered against his chest - he'd wrapped her in his cloak, but they were both soaked to the skin and the temperature was still dropping. At least nobody would be out looking for them in this weather; as long as they didn't die of exposure, they would be one step ahead of any pursuers.

They were heading, as best as Vincent could navigate, away from the Guild's seat of power and into the city's slums. Guard patrols would be minimal in this weather, and he was sure they could safely hide for at least a few days while he planned his next move.

He felt slightly sick at the thought of what he'd done. His former life was over, that was certain, and if the long arm of the Guild caught hold of him, his new life would be as well. He couldn't fully explain why he'd felt so compelled to rescue this woman. He'd seen people suffer - hell, he'd *made* people suffer - far worse torments than hers and not felt the wrenching sense of injustice that had overtaken him tonight.

Reva stirred and seemed to be trying to talk to him. The little he could make out over the sound of the wind was foreign to him, possibly a sign she was delirious. Her babbling soon dissolved into a fit of coughing. He had to find somewhere warm.

They were long past the last Guard post now. Ramshackle buildings loomed close over streets littered with detritus and, occasionally, vague forms

that Vincent was quite certain were human bodies sleeping - or dead - under piles of wet blankets and soggy rubbish.

A painted sign caught his eye - the twisted snakes of a physician's caduceus. He reigned in the horse and dismounted, trying not to jolt Reva too badly in the process. He hoped the horse would find its own shelter; if it ran off, that might mislead any pursuers. With Reva in his arms, he gave the door a few kicks with the toe of his boot and waited. Just as he was about to kick again it swung open. Without waiting for an invitation, he pushed his way inside.

There was a fire, and right now that seemed like the only thing in the world that mattered. Vincent hurried to the fireplace. Behind him, he vaguely noted a voice saying, "Oh, come right on in, why don't you?" and the door being secured against the weather.

He laid Reva down as gently as possible on the floor near the fire, spotted a threadbare old armchair, and collapsed gratefully into it.

A tap on his shoulder startled him, and he twisted around to see a small middle-aged woman in a plain shirt and trousers with one eyebrow cocked.

"You're in my chair. Get up," she instructed, pointing at a simple wooden stool next to the fireplace, "and sit there. Put your back to the fire. Come on." Her hands made shooing gestures. Vincent forced his protesting body to move. The seat was uncomfortable, but he was closer to the fire. The woman - the clinic's doctor, he realized belatedly - pushed a grimy glass of something that almost smelled like whiskey into his hands. "Drink."

He tossed it back in a single gulp, feeling warmth spread through his chest. The doctor sank into her armchair, grimacing slightly at its dampness, and took a sip from her own glass.

"So what were you thinking, going out on a night like this?" she asked, and a crash of thunder rattled the windows as if on cue. "If she's got consumption, there's sod-all I can do for her. She might as well have died at home, and you could have both stayed dry."

Vincent had been starting to feel warm and a little fuzzy around the edges, but one word hit him like a bucket of icy water. "Consumption?"

The woman frowned. "You're not from around here, are you? Boy, did you end up in the wrong part of town. They haven't relegated us to the grave just yet, but..." With one finger, she made a tick-tock motion.

Vincent tried to stand, a rising panic threatening to overwhelm him. "We have to..."

"No," the doctor said sharply. "She's not going anywhere. You can take your chances with the storm if you want, but you brought her to me, and that makes her my patient. Maybe your friend will die," she shrugged, "but maybe she won't. You take the hand that Fate deals you. But," she prodded a bony, accusing finger into Vincent's chest, pushing him back down onto his stool, "if you take her out in the sleet again, she'll be dead by morning. She stays."



Vincent started awake in the early morning gloom, crossbow in hand and half-cocked before his brain caught up. Unfamiliar surroundings, but no obvious threat - just a makeshift hospital ward and early morning light streaming through the small, high windows.

He lurched to his feet, stiff and sore from sleeping on the cold floor. Reva's bed was empty. She'd been near-catatonic when he'd brought her in - was it possible that she'd left of her own accord? Rubbing his eyes, he spotted a shape in his familiar dusty, black cloak bending over a cot in the far corner, as if to whisper in the occupant's ear. He hurried past the ranks of wheezing, gurgling patients and tried to ignore the nagging realization that many of the bodies in the beds were perfectly silent and still.

As he approached, she drew in a deep breath. The old man on the cot produced a long, rattling sigh, and his withered chest did not rise again. Reva shook once, and her back straightened a little more. As Vincent came up alongside the bed, he saw the man's face, creased and tense with pain, relax into something like a peaceful smile. Reva collected herself, color seeming to come back into her cheeks.

"Reva?" he ventured, hesitant to break the moment.

"Yes," she agreed, her attention focused on something beyond his perception. "I'm afraid I didn't catch your name."

"St. Clair," he answered automatically, then corrected, "Vincent. How are you feeling?"

Idly, she rubbed one of her bruised wrists. "Like I have awoken from a very long sleep," she mused, then added wistfully, "I dreamed that we rode a horse."

He nodded. "Do you know where we are?"

"An antechamber. A place where the dying gather to prepare for the next stage of their journey." She smiled as she carefully folded the old man's arms over his chest. "This one has just departed."

"It's..." Vincent began to correct her but faltered as he took in the sallow, pinched faces and labored breathing of the men and women still alive around them. None of these people were ever going home, if they even had homes. "Yeah, I guess that's pretty much right."

He looked back to her, and she matched his gaze. He was used to people avoiding his gaze or spitting defiantly in his face, but her look of distant curiosity was something new. She didn't hate him or fear him - she was simply waiting to see what he would do next.

"Reva, I saw this man die," he said carefully. "Did you... kill him, somehow?" He paused, uncertain what he would do if she had. "I know he was suffering, but..."

She held up a slender hand, and he fell silent. "It was his time," she stated gently, as if lecturing a child. "He was confused and afraid and couldn't find his way onward. I guided him to the veil, and he passed through it." She cocked her head to one side, a faint smile teasing her lips. "So, you tell me."

While he was still searching for a response, she patted his arm and turned away, weaving between the beds toward one of the other patients.

"Bit of an odd one, isn't she?" said a voice over Vincent's shoulder, breaking his reverie. He whirled to see the doctor, her nose and mouth covered by a blood-spattered rag, eyebrows waggling expressively in Reva's direction. "Looks a damn sight healthier than she did when you brought her in last night, that makes a nice change."

"She's... I think..." Vincent shook his head and stepped aside, gesturing at the bed. "This man died," he finished lamely.

"Oh, old Pol's finally popped his clogs, has he? Poor bastard." The physician bustled forward, wiping her hands on her grimy apron and checking for a pulse. Her eyebrows raised a notch when she saw the peaceful expression on the dead man's face.

"Blimey, I've known this grim old stick for years, and I've never seen him look so happy. What the heck did she do to him?"

Vincent shrugged helplessly and started planning where they might go after this woman inevitably threw them out on the street.

"Well, whatever it was," the doctor said, fixing him with a steely eye, "tell her to keep doing it. My medical supplies are stretched so thin, there's barely anything I can do to help make them comfortable." She waved her hands in a gesture encompassing the clinic, the neighborhood, the whole slum. "Do you know how long it's been since anyone around here died with a smile on their face?"

After two weeks, Vincent was starting to relax. Neither of them showed any symptoms of consumption, and Reva was recovering much more quickly than Vincent had expected. The Guild had set up a quarantine blockade, which was actually working in their favor - it would be impossible for them to leave the district undetected, but by the same token, none of the Guard would enter it to search for them.

They had stayed on at the clinic after Doctor Gaskell gruffly admitted that she could use the extra help to keep the place running. Word of Reva's ability to ease the suffering of the dying had spread, and they were overwhelmed with people seeking ministrations for their loved ones from "The Lady of Mercy."

Reva had taken to wearing a white linen scarf wrapped around her head, hiding her cropped hair and scars. Vincent wasn't sure if this was vanity, modesty, or mere practicality against the cold weather, but the effect - in combination with the black cloak that she had refused to return to him, insisting it gave her strength - was striking and distinctive. Everywhere she went, people stopped her in the street to press what meager gifts they could afford into her hands: bread, bolts of rough cloth, a few small coins, and tiny trinkets carved from wood. Those making the offerings were themselves starving and ragged, and Reva always graciously refused the food, clothing, and money, but she adored the tiny carvings.

Between the sickness, the quarantine, and the storm, this area of the slums was in total disarray. People had lost their families, their homes, and the scant livelihoods that maintained their sparse existence in one of the poorest areas of the city. Some were left with nothing to live for, and one by one those unfortunates eventually found their way to Reva.

Most of these lost souls simply sought a merciful end to their meaningless lives, but Reva instead gave them useful work to complete. They helped in the clinic, cleared detritus from the streets and alleys, distributed food and clothing, and rebuilt homes from salvaged materials. Their duties were hard, but the satisfaction of making a tangible difference transformed and revitalized them, giving them new purpose. The group followed Reva's guidance with a zealous adoration that Vincent found unnerving.

While Reva was having an undeniably positive effect on the area, Vincent still questioned her ability to make the dying pass into eternity peacefully. Was she simply a peaceful, steady presence for them to latch on to, or was it something deeper? Something darker?

Vincent was accompanying Reva back to the clinic one evening when a male figure, swaddled in rags, lurched into the alleyway ahead of them. In a split second, his years of training took over, and with an instinctually smooth motion, he unlimbered, cocked, loaded, and braced his crossbow. As he fired, Reva slammed her shoulder into his elbow and the bolt went high, hissing just over the man's head with no visible reaction.

"Reva," Vincent hissed, "that's a zombie. Don't panic; just stay behind me. I'll destroy it."

Reva scowled at him. "You will not. It was a person, once, and it maintains some semblance of that now. When people come to us for help, we do not *kill* them. We help them."

"You don't understand, Reva. That's not a person, it's just a... mindless thing. It's nothing but a twisted puppet for some Resurrectionist. We can't help it, other than to *end* it. You need to..." He faltered, seeing true anger flash in Reva's eyes for the first time since they'd met.

"You don't know anything about the unliving, Vincent." Her statement seemed so outrageous that he spluttered and began to launch into a tirade on the countless monsters he'd destroyed and the ways it could be done, but she held up a hand for silence. "Fine, you know how to kill them. That doesn't mean you understand them. Stay here."

She turned and walked toward the waiting creature. He couldn't risk shooting past her, so he'd have to use his knife. He judged the distance between them; it shouldn't take him more than three seconds to close the gap, and he hoped that would be quick enough. As soon as it attacked...

The corpse slowly raised its arms in a gesture of supplication as Reva approached. She took its emaciated, gray-skinned hands in her own and held them. It stared at her with milky eyes, slack-jawed and moaning softly. Vincent slowly drew his blade.

"Ignore him," Reva soothed. "He won't hurt you. Tell me what troubles you."

The creature couldn't speak, so what followed was quite confusing to Vincent. It made a series of slow, awkward hand gestures, groaning and wheezing the whole time. Reva nodded and at one point burst into laughter. As the zombie returned to stillness, she asked, "Are there more like you, hiding?"

Slowly, solemnly, the corpse nodded its head and held up a finger. One of its teeth fell from its mouth and skittered across the cobbles.

"I want you to bring him to me. The clinic on Archer Street, do you know it? Good. Don't worry," she placated, squeezing the man's bony hand, "it will be all right." She waved Vincent closer, and he approached cautiously. The thing turned its misshapen head to stare at him.

"You see?" Reva smiled. "He means no harm. He is trapped and looking for a place. For a family."

Vincent blinked. "It... wants a family?"

Reva gave a half-amused, half-exasperated shake of her head. "Everyone wants a family, Vincent. We all want to belong somewhere, in this life or the next. Let's go," she added. "We should probably prepare before the unliving show up at the door."

"Wait, you've invited zombies to our *house*?" Vincent squawked, but Reva was already striding ahead. He carefully navigated around the corpse, its head swiveling to follow his progress. "If you come to eat our flesh," he muttered, holding up the knife, "I'll make sure to bury this deep in your rotting brain, got it?"

The creature started to lift one arm, and Vincent dodged back and retreated down the alley. Rounding the corner after Reva, he looked back to see the man still standing in place, a cadaverous hand upraised toward him in an unmistakably rude gesture.

The arrival of the undead at the clinic was not as tumultuous as Vincent had expected. Initially Reva's small following reacted with not-unreasonable shock and fear of the walking corpses, but at Reva's prompting they began to see past the decaying horror to the "people" beneath. Was Reva's influence on them really so strong, Vincent wondered? Perhaps, trapped in quarantine and doomed to die by plague, they held on to whatever shred of hope they could, and Reva was it. Or perhaps it was something more. Vincent shook his head; he could hardly believe the devotion she had inspired.

Vincent found himself standing with Doctor Gaskell, her arms folded and a slight frown on her face as she watched Reva's few followers mingle with the dead.



They had dressed them up to help hide who they were from others, but their slow, awkward motions made them stand out no matter where they went.

"What do you make of all this?" he asked.

"Look, everyone's seen undead before," she began. "Every so often, some mad Resser gets an idea in his head to go on a rampage, and since we're so close to the Quarantine Zone it's us that cops it." She harrumphed. "Then a pack of... well, people like you, no offense... come storming in, shoot up the place, and make a big mess. One side or the other wins, you all skulk off to lick your wounds, and we pick up the pieces and get on with our lives as best we can until the next time. This, though," she shook her head, "I don't like it."

Vincent studied her face. "You think they'll attack when we least expect it?"

She raised an eyebrow at him. "Son, they don't look like they could hit the broad side of a barn..." She shuddered as one of the followers embraced an elderly cadaver, yellow ichor drooling from its mouth onto her shoulder. "It doesn't look very *sanitary*."

"They're monsters! They should be destroyed!" The grizzled man all but screamed in Reva's face, his skin flushed with anger and fists clenched. His anger was directed at the two undead standing behind Reva and Vincent, swaying slowly, seemingly trying to look as non-threatening as possible. Mingling with them were Reva's handful of devotees, proud and defiant. All around, carefully keeping a safe distance from the walking corpses, the slum's inhabitants had gathered. They completely filled the rubble-strewn clearing that served as a town square, with some leaning off balconies or perched on rooftops to get a better view.

Vincent took a single step forward. Inwardly, he agreed with the sentiment... but if this rabble-rouser took a swing at Reva, he would break him into pieces. Several of the man's companions stepped forward as well, posturing, ready for a fight.

The crowd was excited, uneasy. They hadn't known what to expect when the shouts had drawn them here, but nothing could have prepared them for the seemingly peaceful presence of undead in their midst. They were palpably afraid, but the sense that something important - or at the very least, something violent - was about to happen held them captivated.

Reva gestured for Vincent to back down and met the self-appointed spokesman's furious gaze. She spoke calmly, but there was a cold edge to her voice.

"Simeon, these people pose no threat to you, they simply..."

"People?" Spittle flew from the man's lips as he spluttered in mock astonishment. "*Those*," he roared, pointing an accusing finger at the undead, "are not *people*. Who amongst you," he demanded, turning to address the crowd, "has not lost a friend, a relation, a loved one to these abominations?" He paused, a murmur of agreement rippling through the throng. Nodding, he continued, "I have. I've seen people... actual, decent people... torn apart, *devoured*," he seemed to savor the word, "by monsters just like these. They cannot be allowed to exist because of the word of this... this Resurrectionist!!"

The murmur grew, punctuated by shouts of support. Vincent was bristling, but he could also sense that the mood was against them. He was acutely aware of the fact that, regardless of the goodwill Reva had earned during their short stay with the sickly and dying, they were outsiders here. He scanned the assembled faces, noting which seemed more angry and which more afraid, plotting the path of least resistance to safety. "Reva..." he growled in a warning tone.

Reva's face betrayed no concern. Her voice rang out across the square, high and clear. "It's true," she began, as Vincent shot her a look of alarm, "that the unliving you have encountered before have done terrible things. They have done so at the bidding of cruel and vicious masters with the power to compel their every thought and deed! Who amongst you," she echoed, with a sidelong glance at Simeon, "can truthfully say they have never done things they regret, of which they are not proud, when forced to by someone else?"

The crowd muttered but seemed to be considering Reva's words. Vincent thought he saw a subtle blend of emotions flash across the faces of Simeon and his cronies: momentary confusion, surprise, and a calculating thoughtfulness as they realized Reva's gambit. *These people understand what it means to be powerless*, Vincent thought, *but you don't, do you, Simeon?*

"These two," Reva swept her hand to indicate the undead, "have broken free from such tyranny. They simply wish to find a place. To stop being between. With no masters, they are free to follow their own hearts and minds!"

That's… not right. The thought leapt unbidden into Vincent's head, and he wondered why the strangeness of all this seemed to have only just struck him now. He'd dealt with wild zombies before - they were mindless, ravening beasts. They didn't have any desires or concerns beyond killing and eating anything they could find. And yet, these undead seemed genuinely motivated by a longing to be accepted, to feel a connection, to contribute. Their decaying expressions looked almost pleading. Was this Reva's doing, somehow?

"They will bring the Death Marshals to our doorsteps!" Simeon bellowed, trying a different tack. "Undead walking the streets... you think the Guild won't notice? They will bring guns and fire, they will raze your homes to the ground, and they will kill anyone they believe is working with these Resurrectionists... which will be all of us!"

"We've all heard the rumors about your Arcanist ties, Simeon," Doctor Gaskell shouted. "You're not one who gets to complain about drawing Guild attention!"

A murmur went through the crowd at that. Vincent glanced at the doctor with a new respect, which was clearly shared by most of those living in this Guild-forgotten ghetto. Simeon, for his part, looked taken aback, but years of ferreting out the truth had pitted Vincent against greater actors than him.

He's going to be trouble, Vincent thought, as Simeon and his cronies melted back through the crowd.

The next few days had been tense. One of the undead had been attacked - it was somewhat ironic, Vincent thought, that it was not safe for zombies to walk the streets at night, though Reva hadn't seen the humor in that observation - but they were resilient. Reva had begun to keep them in or around the clinic, helping to ensure their safety. But despite the trouble, the zombies did not fight back.



"I still can't quite believe," Vincent remarked to Reva as they sat by the clinic's fire during a rare break one afternoon, "that some people have gotten used to... all this," he gestured, indicating the decomposing man relentlessly dusting all the clinic's surfaces, "so fast. There are zombies in the streets, in broad daylight! Normal people would be boarding up their windows to keep them out, but your followers seem to welcome their company! Doesn't that seem, I don't know..." He gestured wildly, searching for the right word. "Insane?"

"People adapt; it's what they're best at. Most people can't afford the luxury of 'normal,' so they make do with what they can get. Many of these people will travel beyond the veil themselves before too long, and you can't begrudge them wanting to believe that some small part of them might still live."

"I'm not sure how much you can call what these things are doing living. Get off!" Vincent shouted, shooing away the man that had begun trying determinedly to dust off the top of his head. "I swear it does that on purpose."

"Don't be rude," Reva admonished, but her eyes glittered with amusement. "Takashi is just trying to help, aren't you darling?" The zombie made a disgusting wet noise that might have been the undead equivalent of a haughty sniff and lurched away. "Anyway," Reva continued, "you can't..."

The clinic door crashed open as one of Reva's followers burst in, a wild look in her eyes. There was soot and blood on her hands and smeared across her face. Reva and Vincent were on their feet in an instant.

"My lady," the woman gasped, one hand against the wall for support, the other holding her ribs.

"Catch your breath, Mara," Reva reassured her, but the woman shook her head.

"No time," she panted. "Simeon is attacking your followers," Mara swayed but remained standing. "Simeon and the other two that are always with him... they were leading a mob, shouting about the dead staying dead. Some of us tried to stop them, but they have magic. I saw Simeon throw fire from his hands."

Out of breath, she had to take a moment to compose herself. "They're burning our houses. The Guild aren't going to stop them," she gulped. "We have to get you to safety; they'll be here any minute!"

Vincent looked to Reva. Her mouth was set in a thin line, and her fists were clenched in white-knuckled fury. "No," she said in a voice as hard and cold as iron. "Sister, find the others. Tell them to arm themselves with anything they can. Takashi," she called, and the decaying man raised his head. "Get ready. Follow the smoke."

She strode to the door, her cloak billowing behind her. "Vincent," she commanded. "With me." Her voice brooked no discussion.

Outside, the air swirled with ashes. Another of Reva's inner circle waited nervously, holding the reins of the horse that had first carried them here. Vincent helped Reva into the saddle and began to explain the path she should take to avoid the conflict, but she cut him short.

"We do not run. We are not cowed by those who would do us harm. We are not *helpless*."

Other devotees began to emerge from the clinic, armed with whatever had come to hand: kitchen knives, surgical implements, fireplace pokers. One of them wore a saucepan, hastily beaten into shape to form a makeshift helmet with the handle still attached. Mara was among them, and Vincent was surprised to see that she had managed to find an old rusty Guardian sword and shield, the items almost comically oversized for her. They all wore expressions of grim determination and gathered in a circle around Reva as she spoke.

Vincent scanned the area. *There's not enough of us to handle a mob.* His thoughts were interrupted by the voice of Reva, cutting through all the sound and chaos.

"These are our streets, our homes, our people. Who will defend them, if not us? If others bring us a war, then we shall be warriors!" She raised her fist, and the group let out a shout, some wordless battle cry, motley weapons held aloft. In the thickening smoke, Vincent would have sworn that Reva shone with inner light, and that it was reflected in the upturned eyes of her small congregation.

I have to stop this, Vincent thought. *She's going to get them all killed.* She had seemed so lucid, so thoughtful and self-possessed for such a long time that he'd banished his concerns about her supposed madness, but now they came flooding back in an unstoppable tide. The confinement, the isolation, the sedation - perhaps they hadn't meant to hide her family's shame, but simply to protect others from being swept up in her insanity. Her devoted followers, willing and eager to follow her into certain death, were they merely filling a role in some deranged narrative she had woven around herself?

The next thought was even more chilling: *Is that what has happened to me?* Vincent reviewed the decisions he'd made since meeting Reva: betraying the Guild, kidnapping her from her family, building a life in the slums, associating with the undead. Were those choices truly his own?

He shook his head, trying to clear his mind, to sort the nagging doubts from the truth. *No*, he decided, *I'm here because it is right. Her suffering was unjust, and I rescued her. People were in need, so we helped them. The zombies… well, somebody has to be ready when they inevitably turn on us. And she's right - these people are losing their homes and their lives, and nobody else is going to save them.*

His eyes met Reva's as she surveyed her troops, now whipped into a fervor. She nodded to him, and he returned the gesture.

There must be retribution.

By the time they rounded the corner of Thimble Street, the air was choked with thick smoke. Ahead, they could just make out vague human figures and the looming shapes of buildings, illuminated by the flames that roared around them. As they watched in horror, one of the burning structures collapsed into the street, the impact shaking the ground and scattering smoldering rubble across the cobbles.

Jets of flame shot out from the hands of several figures in the haze, turning the fallen house into a blazing wall of fire. Even above the roaring of the inferno, Vincent could hear distant crashing and tearing sounds: something large and very heavy was attempting to force its way through the debris. The figures began moving further down the street, heading in their direction, more incandescent streams leaping from them to the surrounding buildings. Whatever mob Simeon had gathered had dissipated with the ash and smoke, leaving just the mages before them.

"This is wanton destruction," Vincent growled.

Reva gave him a look of approval. "You're beginning to see beyond the surface," she murmured, and Vincent got the impression she meant more than just the current destruction. This scenario had played out again and again all over Malifaux; innocent civilians caught between rival forces that saw them as nothing but an inconvenience. To the others, who were standing in shocked silence, she shouted, "Charge!"

The devotees surged forward, howling in rage. They fell upon the nearest mage before he had a chance to react and bore him to the ground. He vanished, screaming, as the ragtag group overwhelmed him, makeshift weapons plunging into the fray and emerging bloody, only to stab down again with frenzied vigor.

The second mage caught sight of Reva on her horse and began an incantation, elemental forces gathering between his hands. Acting entirely on instinct, Vincent stepped in front of Reva and fired his crossbow, the bolt cleanly piercing the man's throat and snapping his head back. The heat from his interrupted spell swept over Vincent like a desert wind as he collapsed.

Simeon, fingers dancing in some arcane pattern, whirled to face the group. "You!" he bellowed at Reva. "Meddling ghoul! All this is on your head; you forced our hand. Look at what you've wrought!"

One of the devotees rushed at him, but a sweep of Simeon's hand engulfed him in fire, his scream drowned by the flames. In a heartbeat, the man's body fell smoking on the cobbles, unrecognizable. "Call off your dogs, Reva! This is between you and me!"

Reva shook her head, looking down at him sadly. "No, Simeon. This is between you and the dead."

She gestured to the burnt body that had just fallen moments before, casually raising her hand, and the scorched body was rising - not struggling to its feet as one of the walking corpses might, but floating weightlessly like ash in a gentle breeze. A stark purple light welled up within it, spilling from its blackened eyes and mouth and the cracks in its charred skin. As

it drifted, it turned slowly to face Simeon. The light extended, flowed into luminous tendrils that swelled and streamed toward Simeon, growing thicker, longer... *sharper.*

With a snarl, Simeon threw both arms forward to incinerate the apparition. Quicker than Vincent's eye could follow, a glimmering curl lashed out from the floating body, fast as a striking whip but without a sound, barely disturbing the smoke that swirled around them.

Simeon's hands landed on the cobbled street a few feet from where the man still stood, staring in disbelief at the stumps of his forearms. Blood spurted, bright crimson, and he slumped to his knees.

With a shocking crash, the hulking form of a Peacekeeper burst through the burning rubble blocking the street. Vincent heard the blast of air from its pneumatic launcher and a sickening crunch as the barbed harpoon impacted flesh and bone. For a split second, Mara stood transfixed, a look of surprise on her face, her rusty sword slipping from nerveless fingers to clatter on the stones. Then the cable snapped taut, and she was yanked off her feet, into the waiting arms of the steel monster. She gave one brief cry as it wrenched the harpoon free, then its great piston-driven fist simply crushed her and cast her mangled body aside.

A Peacekeeper? Here? Vincent frantically tried to make sense of what was happening. Looking around, Vincent realized that the battle was close to the barricade the Guild had set up when it established quarantine. They must have assumed the battle was coming to them and responded. Of course, they couldn't have gotten cleared for a Peacekeeper this quickly. Vincent clenched his fists as he realized the implication: the Guild had been mobilizing to wipe out the people here already. The Guild weren't going to let a few consumption-ridden poor folk relegate any more of their precious city to the Quarantine Zone.

"Take cover!" Vincent shouted, and the remaining followers scattered. Vincent crouched behind a chunk of masonry and tried to assess the enemy forces. Behind the Peacekeeper, shapes wearing Guard uniforms and gas masks were moving through the smoke, but he couldn't be sure how many. The Peacekeeper was swinging its low-slung head from side to side, searching for new targets.



Beside the huge construct, Mara's shattered remains began to glow. The light was darker this time, rising higher to form a human shape. Vincent's breath caught in his throat. Though the smoke was thick, every detail of Mara shone clearly in a dark light. Her ghostly form erupted free from her body, her ethereal face a mask of grim determination. Sweeping up her discarded sword and shield, Mara wasted no time rejoining the battle.

To his right, Vincent saw Reva raise a hand. She was still astride her horse, standing in the open, but the swirling smoke must have kept the Peacekeeper from noticing her. Vincent wanted to shout at her, to make her see the danger, but she wore a look of such intense concentration that he kept silent.

Despite Mara's spirit having left her body, slender streams of light continued to drift from it, and as Reva gestured they grew and flowed together into a crooked shape that reminded Vincent of a praying mantis' upraised limbs, poised and ready to strike.

Mara charged the looming construct, her huge blade clattering just like steel against its thick armor plates. It lurched to face her, a massive claw sweeping a deadly arc through the smoke. Reva made a sharp gesture, and the light from Mara's body lashed out, once, twice. With a shower of sparks and the sound of shearing metal, the Peacekeeper's left leg came free, and, unable to balance, it crashed to the ground. Mara, triumphant, batted one of its claws aside with her shield and speared her sword through its head, pinning it down and twisting. With a horrendous grinding sound, the construct shuddered and stopped moving.

Shouts of "Retreat!" filtered through the smoke, along with a few stray shots of covering fire.

"They'll be back, with reinforcements," Vincent called to Reva. "Do we pursue them?"

She smiled. "That won't be necessary," she told him, just before the first distant scream began and was abruptly cut off. "The unliving finally caught up to us. Come, we must see to Simeon."

Simeon was still kneeling in place, his face deathly pale under the smeared ash, a pool of blood soaking into the street around him. His eyes were a little glassy, and his gaze was fixed on his hands, lying a few feet away in the dirt.

Reva guided her horse closer, ghostly light playing around her hands. "I can help you, Simeon," she soothed. "It's time for you to take the next step on your journey. I know you're in pain, but it will be over soon. I will guide you through the veil. Are you ready?"

Simeon stared up at Reva as if seeing her for the first time. His mouth fell open in a silent, terrified scream.

"Good," Reva said, and the spectral light sliced from her outstretched hand. Simeon's head landed with a thump, followed shortly by the rest of his body.

When the fires were under control and the dead had all been accounted for, Vincent found Reva sitting alone by the clinic's fireplace. She raised her head as he approached.

"Vincent, do you think me a monster?" He couldn't read her expression, but her voice wavered ever so slightly.

"I asked myself that question, after how you killed Simeon."

"And?"

"I choose to believe that you acted for the right reasons. I don't trust your power, but..." He shrugged, "I trust *you*."

"Thank you," she said quietly.

"The Guild will send soldiers to investigate the fires. We can't stay here. We should leave and take any who are willing so we can reorganize and plan what comes next."

Reva nodded, looking distant. "Very well, Vincent. I trust you, too. Gather up those who are loyal and we shall make our way. There may be others who can help us."



BREAK QUARANTINE

The Guild has set up a quarantine, and you need to get through…

DEPLOYMENT

Randomly determine an Attacker and a Defender. The Attacker first chooses any board edge as their Deployment Zone. Then, the Defender deploys her Crew with every model touching the Centerline of the board. Then, the Attacker deploys her Crew with every model touching her chosen board edge.

SPECIAL

Defending models that succeed with a Melee Attack against an Attacking model may choose to deal no damage to push the target up to 8" in any direction and give it the **Slow** Condition.

Attacking models may not be pushed, moved, or placed by anything other than the Walk or Charge Action (or actions generated by the Defender) while within LoS of one or more Defending models.

VICTORY

At the end of the game, the Attacking Crew gains 1 VP for each friendly model within 6" of the board edge opposite of where they deployed.

At the end of the game, the Defender scores 1 VP for each enemy model still on their starting half of the board.

RESURRECTIONIST VIGNETTES

In a way, the death of the Governor-General had been a boon for McMourning. In the chaos that followed, everyone seemed to forget about the morgue and its slightly eccentric Coroner.

The Guild was simply too preoccupied to pay much attention to anything going on within its own walls. He took advantage of their distraction, letting his helpful nurses fill out coroner reports as he focused on his research. Years earlier, Nicodem had brought him an ancient corpse that had been fitted with strange, mechanical augmentations, and it was to these preserved remains that Douglas McMourning now returned.

Whether it was the voices in his head finally revealing their secrets or simply the focus that came with not having to put up with the distraction of Guild paperwork, McMourning finally achieved a breakthrough in his research and learned why the corpse refused to decay.

The next day, a grinning McMourning visited Sonnia Criid's home and, while Sebastian distracted her nurse, he had a frank and personal conversation with the horribly burned woman. He could repair the damage to her face and body, he claimed, taking away the pain and with it, the need for the morphine that clouded her thoughts. All she had to do was sign a few requisition forms and he'd begin preparing for the operations right away. Sonnia was reaching toward the clipboard before he had finished talking.

The next day, the first of many Arcanist prisoners were transferred to the morgue for vivisection. He needed body parts that were accustomed to channeling aetheric energy, and in her desperation, Ms. Criid had given him access to a whole prison filled with test subjects. It was the dawn of a new era of necromancy, and McMourning was full of all sorts of new ideas.

For Kirai Ankoku, the death of the Governor-General was like a strong punch to her gut. Four years ago, her lover had been murdered while protecting her from the Governor's assassins, setting her on the path of revenge that she had dutifully walked since that day.

But now, that had been taken from her. She wandered the streets for days afterward, trying to determine whether she felt angry that she had not been the one to kill him or pleased that he was finally dead. In truth, she found it difficult to feel much about anything. The burning ball of anger that she had built her life around had been taken from her, leaving only emptiness in its place.

Despite that emptiness, however, she was still busy. Working with her friend, Molly, the two of them had all but put an end to the larger forced prostitution rings in the city: the Gray Lord, the Rearing Unicorn, and the Silver Talisman Club had all been washed away in a river of blood, leaving only the Qi and Gong.

Kirai had a history with the establishment, but its time was coming, as surely as the setting of the sun. As she stood across the street from the establishment, watching the patrons come and go and marking their faces, a woman in a dark cloak approached Kirai with an offer.

She claimed to be acting on behalf of a group who called themselves the Court of Two who had been watching Kirai for some time. The Court needed Kirai's assistance to help them harness the spirits of the dead on a mass scale.

Kirai was unimpressed with the offer, until the woman added that the Court had discovered a ritual that would return a spirit to life, though none of them were capable of performing it. Heart fluttering at the possibility of seeing her lover once again, Kirai agreed to meet with the woman's masters and discuss terms.

Nicodem saw the death of the Governor-General as a moment of opportunity. In the weeks that followed, he hunted down many lesser Resurrectionists in the Quarantine Zone, killing them and absorbing their undead minions into his own growing horde.

When the time was right, he marched on the Eastern Slums, sending its residents screaming in terror as they fled from his shambling army. The zombies focused on the railroads, tearing up every rail they came across in order to limit the Guild's ability to rapidly redeploy to the area. With each killed resident or guardsmen, Nicodem's army grew, until it seemed as if it would be unstoppable by the time it reached the Industrial Zone.

What Nicodem hadn't counted on was the intervention of the Ten Thunders. While his zombies were pushing westward against the Guild barricades, the crime syndicate struck against the horde's southern flank, felling zombies by the score with precision sniping and strike-and-fade attacks. By the time Nicodem realized what was happening and adjusted his tactics, his southern flank had collapsed and the Guild was pressing their advantage to the west.

Rather than remain behind to fight a losing battle, Nicodem retreated from the fighting, leaving his zombies behind to stall the advance of the Guild's forces. It had been a costly loss for him – it would take months, if not years, to drudge up that many zombies again - but an enlightening one nevertheless.

Most importantly, perhaps, it had revealed the presence of a legitimate threat in the Little Kingdom. The Ten Thunders had always been an annoyance, but with the true scope of their power revealed to him, Nicodem realized that he could no longer ignore the crime syndicate.

With all the chaos around him, Seamus kept on keeping on. Of all the people who had been blessed with the ability to manifest into Avatars, he felt the loss of that power in the wake of the Governor-General's death most keenly. Had it not been for the small object given to him by the Carrion Emissary – the object that was safely tucked away beneath the floorboards of his favorite hideout – he might even have questioned the terrible purpose he had set before himself so many years earlier.

Instead, he was hopeful. The Emissary had shown him that, while the path had changed and he had taken a right blow to his soft parts, the road was still in sight. The only thing that had changed was how difficult it would be for Seamus to walk it.

Of course, Seamus had never been fond of taking road trips by himself, so after a brief visit to see whether or not his Molly had regained her wits (and a much lengthier escape from a deformed, hulking brute that seemed quite determined to keep Seamus away from its mistress), he decided to do a bit of recruiting.

The papers called him "the Star Slasher," thinking that he was some new killer that had become obsessed with the showgirls at the Star Theater. Had he not been so engrossed with prettying up his "new girls," he might even have been a bit offended that after so many years (and so very many bodies), the Guild still didn't recognize the artistry of his work.

His new showgirls in tow, Seamus returned to the business of having fun and leaving some good looking corpses behind him. The issue of what to do with his new bauble still lingered in the back of Seamus' mind, but as far as he was concerned, he had all the time in the world to answer that question.

Much like Seamus, Molly found it difficult to care too much about the Governor-General's death. Truthfully, she was too preoccupied with her own troubles to spare him much thought at all.

Her only living friend, Kirai, was spiraling downward into deep depression, Seamus kept showing up at inopportune times to "take her back," and Philip had been stolen from his nanny by people in the employ of the Guild. All in all, it was a rather unfortunate series of events, and if there was any silver lining to her situation, it was that Molly had at least grown accustomed to such happenings.

Her primary concern was for Philip. Seamus was a persistent annoyance and Kirai eventually became distracted with a necromantic cabal that wanted to raise up an entire army of enslaved ghosts, but Philip was just a head and couldn't care for himself. Dreading what sort of dreadful things the Death Marshals might be doing to her companion in unfortunate undeath, Molly attempted to infiltrate the Guild to learn where they were keeping him.

The weakest link in the Guild's security was coincidentally the one with which Molly was the most familiar: the Malifaux Tattler. Disguising herself as a freelance reporter, she was surprised when the new Editor-in-Chief, Nellie Cochrane, hired her on the spot and gave her three different assignments to finish before the end of the week.

Molly kept to herself after that, relying on perfume and makeup to conceal her undead condition as she worked to uncover where the Guild had hidden Philip. Despite the false name on her bylines and the temporary nature of her employment, she found a great deal of pleasure in working again... so much so that she began to consider staying on with the Tattler after rescuing Philip.





REVA

Reva was born to a wealthy family that was well-established within the ranks of the Guild. She was always an awkward child and never quite fit in, but all of that took on a whole new meaning when her family moved to Malifaux. She began taking walks through graveyards late at night and whispering to spirits that weren't there. Most disturbingly, she instilled a sense of purpose and devotion in those around her that should have been beyond the ability of a child.

Her family took her to every doctor they could find until finally seeking the help of an Exorcist. However, instead of helping to tame the girl, he freed her. Now Reva wanders the slums and Quarantine Zone, gathering followers around her as she goes. She even feels an affinity for the undead, which she treats with the same respect and dignity as any who follow her.

When angered, Reva reveals a far darker side to her personality. In these moments, her ethereal scythes slash out from any nearby corpses, cleaving her victims' souls from their bodies and strengthening Reva with each death.



REVA
Master, Living
REVENANT

CACHE 4

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	7	13	5	10	3

ABILITIES

Strength of the Fallen: When performing an Attack, if this model is not Engaged, this model may draw LoS and measure range for **Ca** Attacks from Corpse Markers within 18" and LoS. This Ability is ignored when determining Engagement.

Unimpeded: This model ignores penalties for severe terrain when moving.

Forgotten Dead: At the start of this model's Activation, this model may discard 1 card to summon a Corpse Candle within 8" and LoS.

The Final Veil: When another non-Peon model is killed within ❶8, this model heals 1 damage.

REVA

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Ethereal Reaping (**Ca** 6✗ / Rst: **Df** or **Wp** / Rg: ⫻ 3): Target suffers 3/4/5 damage. This model chooses if the Attack is resisted by **Df** or **Wp**.

✗ ***The Withering:*** Before flipping damage, discard a Corpse Marker within 3" of the target to deal +1 damage.

✗ ***Corpse Calling:*** After damaging, push the target 3" towards a Corpse Marker within its LoS.

✗ ***Stolen Vitality:*** After damaging an enemy, this model heals 2 damage.

(0) Life Drain (**Ca** 6✗ / TN: 10✗ / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 3): Target enemy model suffers an amount of damage equal to the amount by which this model's final duel total exceeded the target's, up to a maximum of 5.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Death Shroud (**Ca** 6✗ / TN: 14✗ / Rg: 5): Place this model into base contact with target Corpse Marker, regardless of LoS. If this happens, this model counts as being in soft cover while in base contact with the target until the end of the Turn.

✗✗ ***Rear Up:*** After succeeding, and after completing the placement, enemy models within ❶3 must pass a TN 13 **Df** duel or suffer 2 damage.

(1) Look On My Works (**Ca** 6✗ / TN: 12 / Rg: 5): Place a Scheme Marker in base contact with target Corpse Marker. Discard the Corpse Marker.

✗✗ ***...and Despair***: After succeeding, take this Action again.

50mm

CORPSE CANDLE

The first undead to come to Reva's side were two zombies she found in the slums. She protected them, gave them aid, and helped guide them as they tried to find their way in their new unlife. She gave them a place to belong, a purpose, and a guiding light to follow.

Their devotion for her is so strong that every time they are destroyed, their spirits find a new corpse to use as a vessel, so that they are always at her side. Their presence allows Reva to extend her power through them, often striking out at her enemies who come too close.

They gladly expend what little energy is left in the corpse to help aid Reva - only to seek out a new vessel with which to follow her. They are Reva's servants, not bound to her through magic like most other Resurrectionists and their creations, but bonded to her by true loyalty.



CORPSE CANDLE

COST 2

Peon, Undead, Totem (Reva), Rare 2

SPIRIT, REVENANT

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
2	2	2	4	-	2

ABILITIES

Eternal Dead: Friendly models may count this model as a Corpse Marker while performing Actions that do not summon models. If the Action discards the Corpse Marker, sacrifice this model.

Reva's Omens: This model may not be Hired, and it may only be summoned by Reva. When this model is summoned, sacrifice all other friendly non-Corpse Candle totems.

Insignificant: This model may not take Interact Actions.

CORPSE CANDLE

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Possessed Flailing (**MI** 4 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 1): Target model suffers 1/2/3 damage.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(1) Light the Way: Push all Corpse Markers within (↑)3 of this model up to 3" in any direction.

(0) The Essence Remains: Kill this model and choose one of the following:

Ancestral Visage: Target friendly model within 6" gains the following Condition until the start of its next Activation: "**Disguised**: This model may not be the target of the Charge Action."
Death Omens: Target enemy model within 6" must discard a card or gain the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Death Omen:** Attack Actions targeting this model gain ⚑."
Blind Sacrifice: Target friendly model within 8" may draw a card and then discard a card. The target may Activate immediately after the current Activation ends as a Chain Activation.

30mm

VINCENT ST. CLAIR

Vincent St. Clair originally became a Guild Exorcist to help people. He saw the terrifying works of the Resurrectionists, and he intended to stop them before they could claim any more innocent lives. But as the years wore on, he realized that he was just as much of a monster as those he faced. For every undead abomination he put down, he found his orders requiring him to cut down an innocent; whether they were possessed or simply in the way.

All of that changed the day he met Reva. She was an embarrassment to her family, and they sought his help to rid them of their "problem." Instead of attempting a ritual on the girl, he set her free. He still wonders why he did it; perhaps he had finally had enough, or perhaps he fell sway to the girl's strange power.

Now he is Reva's right hand. He is always by her side, giving her advice and watching her back. In part, he watches for the Guild and those who would seek to harm her, but he'll also be there when the vile undead which follow her inevitably turn on her.



VINCENT ST. CLAIR

Henchman, Living, Rare 1

REVENANT

COST 8 Cache 5

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	6	9	5	6	2

ABILITIES

The Final Veil: When another non-Peon model is killed within 8, this model heals 1 damage.

Breathe Out Their Essence: Once per Activation, when a Corpse Marker is discarded within 6 during another model's Activation, this model may draw a card and then discard a card.

Funeral Rites: When this model Activates, choose a suit. For the remainder of the Activation, after both players have had the opportunity to Cheat Fate during an opposed duel, this model may discard a Corpse Marker in 6" and LoS to add the suit to its duel total.

Df/Wp ( ) Where You Call: After resolving, push this model up to 3".

VINCENT ST. CLAIR

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Profaned Crossbow (**Sh** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 10): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage. This Attack ignores **Incorporeal** and **Hard to Wound**. When randomizing into an engagement, this Attack does not flip a card for friendly Spirits.

- ***Unhallowed Strike:*** When damaging, this attack deals +1 damage for each Corpse Marker within 3" of the target, to a maximum of +2.
- ***Repeating Crossbow:*** After damaging, immediately take this Action again. It may not declare Triggers.
- ***Nothing Wasted:*** After killing an enemy model, add 1 Soulstone to this Crew's Pool.

(0) Light at the End (**Ca** 6 / TN: 10 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 10): Target model gains the following Condition until the start of this model's next Activation or until this model is removed from play: "**At Peace**: Damage suffered by this model cannot be reduced or prevented."

- ***Hide In Shadow:*** After succeeding, move this model up to 3".

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(1) Funeral Pyre (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12 / Rg: 8): Target a Corpse Marker and place a in base contact with it. Any models touched by the must pass a TN 15 **Wk** duel or suffer 2 damage that may not be reduced. Discard the Corpse Marker.

- ***Cremation:*** After succeeding, place instead of .
- ***Mass Grave***: After succeeding, don't discard the Corpse Marker.

30mm

ARCHIE

Archie lives a simple unlife. He follows Molly because she is the only person who was kind to him, despite his fearsome appearance.

Sometimes she asks him to smash things. He usually does what Molly says; he is drawn to her for some reason, even beyond her kindness, that he does not entirely understand. Sometimes people try to hurt him; he doesn't understand why, and it always makes him angry. When that happens, he goes into a rage, smashing down doors, tearing off limbs, and stomping people into bloody puddles. But when it's all over, Molly is always there for him with kind words, and sometimes even an ice cream cone.

Archie likes how things are now. They're far better than before, when the cruel doctor would hurt him. The doctor would always smile while sewing on a new limb or giving him another shot.

Archie considers his decision to smash the doctor's lab to pieces and escape out into the city to be one of the better ones he has made during his unlife.



ARCHIE — COST 13, Cache 0

Henchman, Undead, Rare 1

HORROR

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
4	6	12	5	6	3

ABILITIES

Terrifying (All) 12: Enemy models must pass a TN 12 Horror Duel if they end a Walk Action within this model's engagement range or target this model with an Action.

Hard to Wound +1: Damage flips against this model suffer ⌸.

He Dropped His Ice Cream Again: This model may not heal more than 4 damage during a single Activation.

Attack Expert: This model gains 1 additional AP that may only be used to take Attack Actions.

ARCHIE

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Pummelled Into A Fine Mist (**Ml** 6✕ / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻3): Target suffers 4/5/6 damage.

✕ ***Limbs To Spare:*** After damaging, discard an Upgrade attached to this model to heal 2 damage.

Knockabout: After damaging, push the target up to 5" in any direction.

(1) "What Did It Just Throw?!" (**Sh** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 10): In order to take this Action, discard an Upgrade attached to this model or a Corpse Marker within 3". Target enemy model suffers 3/3/4 damage. Place a Corpse Marker in base contact with the target. This Action may only be taken once per turn

✕ ***"Oh... ugg... ew":*** After damaging, the target and all models within (r)2 of the target must take a TN 12 Horror Duel.

Extra Pieces: After damaging, if this model discarded an Upgrade to take this Action, immediately take the **Stapled On** Action and gain +⌨ to the **Ca** for the duration of the Action.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Stapled On (**Ca** 6 / TN: 13⌨): Attach an Upgrade with the Restriction of "Archie" to this model, following the usual restrictions for attaching Upgrades at the start of the game. Then, this model suffers an amount of damage equal the Upgrade's cost plus two, which may not be reduced. This model may discard up to two target Corpse Markers within 6" to prevent 2 damage for each Marker discarded.

50mm

SHIELDBEARER

Shieldbearers are from the slums of Malifaux. A chance meeting with Reva has inspired them to fight anew, fighting for themselves and those around them. They are drawn to her by Reva's strength of character, her ability to ease the passage of the dying, or maybe just the magic that surrounds her. Whatever the reason, each Shieldbearer is loyal to Reva and has taken up arms to join her fight.

They fight with what they can find, often the broken swords and shields left behind by fallen Guildsmen. This strange militia is more effective than it should be, driven by their belief in the one they follow and guided by Vincent St. Clair's tactical experience.

Even death cannot stop them. Reva has promised to take care of them, and she does so even as they give their lives. Any Shieldbearer that falls in combat at Reva's side rises once again as a spirit to carry on the fight. And each time this happens, it only sharpens the beliefs of those who witness it.



SHIELDBEARER — COST 6

Minion, Living
REVENANT

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
4	6	4	5	6	2

ABILITIES

Chosen: If this model would be killed and it does not have a Soulbound Upgrade attached, it is not killed. It heals all damage and attaches a Soulbound upgrade ignoring all restrictions, then places a Corpse Marker in base contact with itself.

Vigor: Whenever a friendly model within 6" uses or discards a Soulstone, this model gains **Fast**.

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

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Salvaged Sword (**Ml** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 1): Target suffers 2/3/5 damage.
- ***Dismember:*** After damaging an enemy, place a Corpse Marker in base contact with the target.
- ***Shield Press:*** After failing, target suffers 1 damage.

(1) Shield Slam (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 1): Target suffers 1 damage and is pushed up to 2" in any direction.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Sword and Board: This model gains one of the following Conditions until the start of its next Activation:

"**To The Death:** Damage flips this model makes gain ."

"**Not Today:** This model gains +2 **Df**."

SHIELDBEARER

30mm

DRAUGR

Malifaux is known to awaken latent magical abilities in people as they cross the Breach. But not every magical talent can be used in life. There are some with the ability to return from the grave even stronger than they were in life. Of course, the individual often has no idea they have this talent until they have been put into the grave. These people rise as the Draugr.

Although Draugr retain some of the intelligence and will that they had in life, they are often driven mad by their transition. They awaken in the cold ground, abandoned there by those they loved, and they are forced to claw their way free. Sometimes getting out of the grave takes weeks of struggling through the cold, unyielding earth.

Some Draugr seek out those who wronged them in life. Some retreat to the wilderness, hiding from the humans that will now shun them. Others simply go stark, raving mad, grabbing the most intimidating weapon they can find and unleashing their anger on the living.



DRAUGR COST 8

Minion, Undead

REVENANT, HORROR

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	6	8	5	6	3

ABILITIES

Mutable Form: At the start of this model's Activation, this model may choose to change its **Ht** stat to 1, 2, or 3 until the start of its next Activation.

The Draugr's Blessing: Other friendly models within ❶6 that have an Upgrade with the Soulbound restriction Attached gain ↯ to Attack flips. This Ability does not stack.

The Final Veil: When another non-Peon model is killed within ❶8, this model heals 1 damage.

Bulk: While this model is **Ht** 3, it has the following Ability: "**Hard to Wound +1:** Damage flips against this model suffer ⌸."

DRAUGR

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Massive Axe (**Ml** 6✕ / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Target suffers 0/1/2 damage. Increase the amount of damage this attack deals by this model's **Ht**.

✕ ***Distraction***: After succeeding, if this model is **Ht** 1, the target must discard a card if able.

(0) Trollskap (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 6): This Action may only be taken while this model is **Ht** 2. Target enemy model must discard a card, if able. Apply one of the following depending on the card's suit:

♥ ***Poisoned Future:*** Look at the top three cards of the target's deck and replace them in any order.

🂠 ***Stolen Knowledge:*** This model's controller draws a card.

♦ ***Stolen Vitality:*** This model may take a (1) Action.

✕ ***Infliction:*** The target suffers 2 damage.

Either Joker: This model gains **Reactivate**.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Joined In Death (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12✕ / Rg: 6): This Action may only be taken while this model is **Ht** 1. Attach an Upgrade with the Soulbound restriction to target other friendly non-Leader, non-Peon model that does not already have a Soulbound Upgrade attached, ignoring the usual restrictions for attaching Upgrades. This may not exceed the Upgrade's Rare limit for the Crew.

40mm

GORYO

Goryo are the spirits of strong-willed warriors or lords who martyred themselves in battle. Their will is such that they are able to bind lesser spirits to themselves, gaining power and skill from the spirits they subsume. They sometimes haunt the places where they died, but they can be called into the material world by a Resurrectionist with enough skill.

Those who seek to summon a Goryo are playing a dangerous game. The spirits are often filled with rage at the living, constantly re-enacting the final battle that put them in the grave. The spirits that follow them are significantly less powerful, but they are still a danger.

If a Goryo can be controlled, it may prove to be well worth the effort. Unlike most spirits which act out of sheer rage or hunger, the Goryo brings with it all of its knowledge of martial prowess and tactical skill. They have been known to cut down skilled swordsmen and outmaneuver elite mercenary units.



GORYO — COST 7

Minion

SPIRIT, RETAINER

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	5	7	6	7	2

ABILITIES

Incorporeal: This model ignores, and is ignored by, other models and terrain during any movement or push. Reduce all damage this model suffers from **Sh** and **MI** Attack Actions by half.

Driven By Revenge: When another friendly model within ❶3 is killed by an enemy Attack Action, this model gains **Fast**.

Eternal Fury: This model may take the (2) Charge Action as a (1) Action when targeting a model with the **Adversary** Condition.

GORYO

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Spectral Blade (**MI** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 2): Target suffers 2/4/5 damage, ignoring **Armor**.

Mutilate: After damaging, the target receives the **Slow** Condition.

(0) Sunder The Soul (**Ca** 5 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 6): Target Living or Undead model suffers 1/1/2 damage.

Condemnation: After damaging, the target gains the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Adversary:** Spirits gain to Attack flips targeting this model."

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(1) I Free You Of My Will (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12): This model may suffer 2 damage that may not be reduced or prevented to summon a Seishin into base contact. This Action may only be taken once per Turn.

50mm

March 4th

I died today. I know that must seem mad, maybe I am. The consumption had finally taken me. I closed my eyes and slipped off into blackness; I knew it was the end. But hours later I awoke. At first I thought it was a miracle!

The consumption was gone; that wretched cough which had plagued me for so many months had simply ceased. But soon I realized that my breathing had as well. I could not find a pulse either. I don't know what to make of it. Out here in the wastes, there is nobody else to judge me for my new 'condition.' Eventually I suppose I may to make my way back to civilization for supplies But what supplies do I need now? Surely not

March 5th

I have never heard of this happening before. Necromancy is usually performed by a Resurrectionist, isn't it? Their creations end up mindless slaves. But my mind is intact, my will is my own. Perhaps this is simply a miracle! And along with my new 'condition' I have noticed that I now have certain...abilities. I can grow larger seemingly at will. My muscles perform feats that I never could in life! Yesterday I was able to plow the field without the help of that ox which cost me so much scrip to bring across the Breach. Though why I would need to grow a crop I suppose I do not know. Habit, I guess...

I even went to open the door this morning and it swung open before I put my hand on it! Has death granted me some forbidden magic which I couldn't wield in life?

March 6th

Today I began to rot. My limbs are bloated, and the skin has started to peel away and decompose. Worst of all, I can feel it. I can feel the sting as my flesh dissolves. I can feel the pressure in my ribs as my organs bloat. I feel every ache. I feel every nagging little agony as nature tries to reclaim my body.

I can barely hold the pen to write this entry.

March 7th

At first I tried the rope, but I just ended up swinging in the wind all afternoon, wondering what the hell I thinking. Then I tried the pistol, but that just left a gaping wound. I. Can't. Die. But I feel everything... Oh, how I envy those who are still living! And those who are dead and in peace! Even the mindless toys of the Resurrectionists at least do not have to endure their inhuman existence with their minds intact. But what am I? What did I do in life to deserve this punishment? There are so many more who deserved so much worse. All those worthless people, squandering their lives. They don't know pain. They should know pain. They will know pain...

March 8th

Spent the day sharpening my axe.

This is my final entry.

REVENANT UPGRADES

Guises of Death

Cost: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Guises of Death: This model may benefit from the **Strength of the Fallen** Ability while engaged.

  The Ever-Burning Candle: After determining initiative on the first Turn, this model may summon a Corpse Candle on the enemy half of the board, not within 8" of any enemy models.

RESTRICTIONS

Reva, Limited

Beyond Death

Cost: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Regeneration +1: When this model Activates it heals +1 damage.

- This model gains the following Trigger to its **Ethereal Reaping** Attack Action:

  ✕ ***The Screaming Death:*** After succeeding against an enemy model, instead of dealing damage, this model takes a Charge Action against a different target. This Charge may be taken while this model is engaged and ignores LoS, terrain, and other models during the move. This Trigger may be taken once per Activation.

RESTRICTIONS

Reva, Limited

Blood Mark

Cost: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (1) Blood Mark (**Ca** 6✕ / TN: 12 / Rg: 10): Target other friendly model that was not already targeted by this Action this Turn is pushed up to 5" in any direction. Then, if the target is a Spirit or Revenant, it may take a (0) Action.

  ✕ ***The Reaping***: After succeeding, the target gains the following Condition until the start of its next Activation: "**Death Follows:** This model counts as a Corpse Marker for the purposes of the **Strength of the Fallen** Ability."

RESTRICTIONS

Reva

Litany of the Fallen

Cost: 2 SS

- This model gains the following Trigger to its **Ethereal Reaping** Attack Action:

  ✕ ***Death Touches All:*** Damage from this Attack may not be reduced.

RESTRICTIONS

Reva

Deal With Death

Cost: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  From the Shadows: This model may be deployed anywhere on the board that is at least 6" away from the enemy Deployment Zone. This model may not take Interact Actions on the first Turn.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Retreat to Cover: Discard a card to push this model up to 4" in any direction. This Action may only be taken while this model is engaged.



RESTRICTIONS

Vincent St. Clair

My Fight Is Not Finished

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may not be discarded or removed.
- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Powerful Soul: If this model has the Revenant Characteristic, then it gains the Spirit characteristic and loses the Living Characteristic.

  Soulfire: After an enemy model kills or sacrifices this model with an Attack Action, the enemy model must pass a TN 14 **Df** duel or this model's controller performs a 2/3/4 damage flip against it that may not be cheated.



RESTRICTIONS

Soulbound

The Gift Of Death

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may not be discarded or removed.
- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Powerful Soul: If this model has the Revenant Characteristic, then it gains the Spirit characteristic and loses the Living Characteristic.

  Finish the Job: When this model is killed, it may place a Scheme Marker in base contact with itself before it is removed.



RESTRICTIONS

Soulbound

Another Purpose

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may not be discarded or removed.
- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Powerful Soul: If this model has the Revenant Characteristic, then it gains the Spirit characteristic and loses the Living Characteristic.

  Another Purpose: When this model is killed, you may discard a card to add 1 Soulstone to your Pool.



RESTRICTIONS

Soulbound, Rare 2

RESURRECTIONIST UPGRADES

Corpse Armor

Cost: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

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

RESTRICTIONS

Archie

Hulking Leap

Cost: 0 SS

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Hulking Leap (**Ca** 6 / TN: 14): Place this model within 3" of its current location.

  Rough Landing: After succeeding, all models within (↕)3 are pushed 3" away from this model

RESTRICTIONS

Archie

Doc Found A Squid Today

Cost: 0 SS

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Instinctual: This model may take two (0) Actions during its Activation, so long as they are both different.

  Writhing Tentacle: When this Upgrade is removed or discarded from this model, this model gains the **Focused +1** Condition.

- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (0) "A... Tentacle?" (**MI** 6 / TN: 12 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 3): Target model is pushed into base contact with this model.

RESTRICTIONS

Archie

Wronged Spirits

Cost: 0 SS

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Wronged Spirits: Friendly Onryo within ↕12 gain +1 **Wk** and +1 **Cg**.

  Clarity In Vengeance: At the start of this model's Activation it may discard this Upgrade. If it does, all friendly Onryo in play gain the **Focused +1** Condition.

RESTRICTIONS

Rare 1



Haunting Cries

Cost: 0 SS

- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (1) Haunting Cries (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 12): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

  Terrible Whispers: After damaging, all models damaged by this Attack must make a TN 10 Horror Duel.

Restrictions

Philip And The Nanny

Admiration

Cost: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Admiration: After a model is summoned within 6, this model may discard a card to be pushed into base contact with it.

Restrictions

Non-Master, Rare 2

My Little Helper

Cost: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  My Little Helper: When this model is killed or sacrificed, you may summon a Mindless Zombie into base contact with it before removing it.

  An Errand For Master: Once per game, after determining Initiative, this model may choose to draw a card. If it does, it gains the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Dark Protection:** This model may not be targeted by the Actions of enemy models unless the enemy models are within 3" of this model. This model may take an additional (0) Action during its Activation (this may be used to take the same Action a second time)."

Restrictions

Rare 2, Non-Master


SANDEEP
ARCANISTS

BURNING KNOWLEDGE

BY: JUSTIN GIBBS

India, 1900

"You are not ready, Sandeep." The Acharya regarded the paper in his hand carefully before folding his arms. A cool breeze blew across the hill the two were standing on, which overlooked their temple.

Sandeep clenched his fists but managed to maintain a calm voice when he spoke. "But why, master? Of all the students in this *matha*, I am clearly the most capable. Who else has summoned and bound Gamin? What other student has a better understanding of the proper use of Soulstone? Clearly some of my papers on the relation of current aetherical breakthroughs to our ancient philosophies and mantra have made their way to Malifaux itself, or I would not have received this message. Imagine what I could accomplish in a land where the aether is more attuned to the human will!"

The Acharya waited patiently for Sandeep to finish. "This is not of what I speak."

"Then what, master?" The edge in Sandeep's voice could have cut steel.

The Acharya let out a long, slow breath and put a hand on Sandeep's shoulder. "You are a brilliant student, but you mistake knowledge for wisdom. Talent for virtue. Anger for courage. I have no doubt that you can accomplish many great things, but to what purpose?" The Acharya began to slowly walk along the hill. "Perhaps you will find a great purpose, but what means will you use to accomplish it? I have been told that Malifaux is a land that corrupts even the best men and women, and you have much growing still to do. It would be irresponsible of me to allow you to go, no matter how prestigious the teaching position sounds, even if it is directly under this," the Acharya looked at the paper in his hand again, "Viktor Ramos."

"My purpose is the same as yours, master!" The edge in Sandeep's voice had formed a blade. "The Guild has oppressed and murdered our people! What do you do to stop them, other than meditate and pray?"

"This is what I mean." The Acharya stopped moving and looked at Sandeep with soft eyes. "We are doing much to stop them. We have organized the boycott of numerous cash crops which benefit the Guild. We have prevented their tax collectors from-"

"And what will that do against Guild rifles?" Sandeep spat. "What good are boycotts and prayers against bullets and blades? In Malifaux, I can study magic which they could never match. I could undermine them from the seat of their power."

There was a long silence. "In Malifaux you would become like them."

Sandeep stared with cold eyes.

The Acharya sighed heavily and unslung the heavy mace from his back, holding it out handle first towards Sandeep. "Take it."

Sandeep's eyes widened.

"If you truly believe you are ready, take the gada." The Acharya watched Sandeep's hand reach out and then hesitate. "I have born the burden of Banasuva's anger every day for thirty years. Surely you can resist it for a few moments."

Sandeep's eyes narrowed, and he snatched the gada from his master's hands by the handle. Instantly the world spun and he felt nauseous. After a few moments, he got a hold of himself and raised his head to look around. For the first time in his life, everything was clear to him. How had he never seen this before? The people of his *matha*, the Guild: nothing but insects squabbling for crumbs... and they were squabbling at his table. He looked at the gada he held. Crushing insects was such an easy thing.

A voice that sounded like rending steel echoed in his skull. "**Kill the old man. We will both be free.**"

Sandeep's eyes focused on his master.

"So long as I am bound to him, I am limited. Crush him and free us both! The fool deserves it. He handed you the gada. I have watched you all these years, Sandeep. You don't need the old man. Together we can-"

Sandeep threw his head back and let out a primal shout as he tossed the cursed gada to the ground, before falling to a knee. He was panting, and beads of sweat had formed on his forehead. "How... how have you resisted that for thirty years?"

The Acharya picked up the gada and regarded Sandeep for a long moment. "Banasuva, the asura trapped and bound within this gada, is a being of flame. He is a flame which feeds on anger. If you give him no kindling, he has no power; but the stronger your anger, the stronger Banasuva's hold on you." The Acharya tilted his head. "You hold knowledge in such high regard, Sandeep, you should have known this. All knowledge becomes useful, eventually."

As Sandeep considered this, another student approached the hill and bowed to them. "Mitul," the Acharya greeted him. "I am giving Sandeep a private lesson."

Mitul bowed. "I know, master, but a Guild magistrate has come to see you."

The Acharya sighed. "Never a pleasant visit. I suppose we will pick up the discussion later, Sandeep. Perhaps you can meditate on our conversation."

The Acharya inclined his head and began walking down the hill as Mitul helped Sandeep up. "What happened to you?"

"I held the gada..."

"Ah, he gave it to you when you were already riled up, didn't he?" Mitul smiled.

Sandeep nodded.

"It could have been worse. The first time I held it, I tried to take the old man's head off with it. He made me regret it." Mitul rubbed his shoulder as if remembering a past injury and his eyes narrowed. "He never listens to reason," he added under his breath.

Together they followed their master down and into the temple, where the Guild were waiting for them, as well as a worried crowd of students.

The magistrate was an overweight man whose muddy boots had left an obvious trail to where he stood. With him was a squad of riflemen, all with their guns at the ready.

The Acharya's brow furrowed. "What is the meaning of this? You disgrace this holy place with your weapons."

The magistrate removed a paper from his pocket and unrolled it. "Himmat Patel, Acharya of the-" he squinted at the paper. "Nevermind the gibberish. Mr. Patel, you have been tried in absentia for the crime of unlawful disruption of Guild activities and the aiding and abetting of known anti-Guild agents. You have been found guilty and sentenced to a life of forced labor."

"Tried in absentia? I don't understand, what is the meaning of thi-"

The magistrate motioned to one of the riflemen, who lifted his rifle in one smooth motion. The Acharya had just enough to time to realize what was happening before the air was split with a thunder crack of smoke and fury. Clutching the blossoming wound in his chest, the Acharya slumped to his knees, his mouth working in silent disbelief.

A collective gasp of surprise rose from the gathered students.

"Stop resisting arrest," the magistrate said, as if the sudden execution were simply a matter of routine. "Alright, round up the rest of them."

Chaos erupted in the temple. Some students tried to flee, while others attempted to fight. The riflemen began firing indiscriminately throughout the *matha*, many not even bothering to take aim before pulling the trigger. The coppery smell of blood and the sulfur smell of gunpowder filled Sandeep's nostrils as he tried to fight his way to his fallen master. From the corner of his eye, he saw two riflemen dragging Mitul away and out of the temple, but there was nothing he could do to help his struggling friend.

He finally reached the Acharya and knelt down next to him, grabbing his master's bloody hand. The wound in his chest was a nasty one.

"Sandeep, run." Blood was flecking between the Acharya's lips. "There is nothing you can do here. Run!"

Sandeep looked around at the indiscriminate slaughter. He saw the pools of blood and watched as the magistrate wiped his muddy boots on the fallen body of one of Sandeep's fellow students. Rage flooded through him. His vision went red.

"No!" The Acharya saw the look in Sandeep's eyes, but it was too late.

Sandeep grabbed the gada from the old man's weakened grip. Once again the world spun, and Sandeep could see clearly. He felt his muscles tighten and his breath quicken. The Guild had come here this day for death, and he would make sure they found it.

He hefted the gada above his head and brought it down on the ground with all of his strength. The floor splintered and fell away from the blow, the wood searing black and then bursting into a circle of flame. Those closest to the fire screamed and leapt back, while others simply watched in stunned silence. Out of the flaming pit rose a hulking blue form. It was vaguely human in shape, but too large and with too many limbs; a twisted version of humanity that simply should not be. Flames wreathed its head as it spoke. "**Sandeep, you are the first to free me in a hundred years. What burden may I take from you?**"

Sandeep's command was simple. "Burn them. Burn anyone in a Guild uniform."

A look of pleasure that could almost be called a smile crossed the creature's face. "**Gladly**."

The asura raised its arms above its head, and the flames surrounding it leapt upward, twisting into curling tongues of fire that lashed upward as if with a mind of their own. The riflemen, many of whom who had been staring in surprise at the sudden appearance of the abomination, now reacted with trained reflexes, whipping their guns around and firing round after round into the hulking blue demon.

Banasuva laughed as their bullets punctured his body, releasing small bursts of flames from each wound. "**Such insects with their stingers!**"

The flames found each of the riflemen and wrapped tightly around them, setting their clothing alight as each strand bound its victim in place. When they opened their mouths to scream in pain or anger or plead for mercy, the flames rose up like snakes and dove inside them, cooking each shaking and shuddering rifleman from the inside.

The magistrate shrieked and ran for the door. Banasuva merely raised a hand toward the foolish human, incinerating him in a flash of heat and light. Black, charred bones clattered to the ground.

Banasuva's work was quick and brutal. A hundred years of bottled rage were unleashed inside of the temple that day; a wildfire that burned Sandeep's enemies to the bone.

A lesser man would have turned away. Sandeep held his head high, his fingers clutching the gada tightly as he watched them die. He barely even blinked. One of the riflemen tried to flee past him, but Sandeep firmly planted the gada in the man's chest with a sickening crunch that shattered ribs. Despite its size the weapon moved easily, as if it were an extension of Sandeep's own body.

When the carnage died down Banasuva's voice echoed in Sandeep's skull once more. "**That was an excellent feast for my flames, but my power is still… limited.**"

Sandeep's gaze turned down toward the prone form of the Acharya.

Malifaux, 1906

Sandeep knocked on the door to Kudra's small apartment. After a brief wait he heard the bolt slide and then the door opened. Kudra moved with the grace of a dancer. She was dressed in blue as usual, and she bowed her head before gesturing for him to come in.

"I can't say I was expecting you. Did I miss a class?" she asked.

"No." Sandeep shook his head as he stepped into the apartment. "I'm actually here to ask you for a favor."

"Ah. Shall we discuss it over some tea?"

"That would be lovely," Sandeep replied.

As Kudra prepared the tea, Sandeep seated himself in one of the two wooden chairs that furnished the humble apartment. "Your studies are going very well. Your paper on potential energy in regards to the charge of Soulstones was excellent."

"Thank you," Kudra replied. "I only wish we could have our sessions in regular lecture halls. That abandoned warehouse wasn't so bad, but the basement of the Star Theater, even during the off hours, is distracting."

Sandeep sighed. "Yes, well, we always have to keep things one step ahead of the Guild. They are not terribly benevolent when it comes to training new magic users. However, I am assured that we will have something more permanent soon."

"I should hope so; otherwise, I may just give up and become a showgirl myself." She smirked as she brought the tea to the table and seated herself across from him. "You spoke of a favor?"

"Yes, the favor." Sandeep frowned slightly and removed the gada strapped to his back, inspecting it.

Kudra eyed the gada suspiciously. "I hope you aren't feeling angry at the moment?"

A smile flickered across Sandeep's face briefly. "No. No, I haven't felt that way in quite some time. Anger is a flame, and in its wake, it leaves only the ashes of sorrow. With the things I have done..." His voice trailed off. "Well, ashes are difficult to burn. But that is not what I came here to discuss. Members of the movement intercepted a Guild message this morning describing the location of a prisoner. His name is Mitul, and he and I were students together."

"Interesting." Kudra crossed her legs and sipped her tea. "What do you need from me?"

"I feel I owe this man a debt. Anyone from my old *matha*, I feel, well... I would like you to help me rescue him."

"You are my teacher. Surely your skills are enough."

Sandeep shook his head. "The circumstances of his imprisonment are most unusual. For one, he is not being held in a Guild prison. He is in a building in the Quarantine Zone."

Kudra raised an eyebrow.

"It's near the Sink. I am unsure why they are keeping him there, but the building is almost solid stone, with few windows, and the outside of it is carved with subtle warding runes. I suspect that the Guild have set up a dampening field."

Kudra sipped her tea again. "The message contained all that information?"

Sandeep waved a hand dismissively. "Just the location and the name of the prisoner. The rest was basic research."

"So, there's a building in the middle of nowhere where they are holding your old friend. The magical wards will prevent you from summoning Banasuva inside it or near it, and you can't work your spells once inside. It seems designed to keep you out."

"Or in." Sandeep frowned.

"It would be difficult to make a more obvious trap," she nodded.

"Even so," Sandeep replied. "They chose their bait well. I have to try."

"Very well. What would you like me to do?"

"There will be guards, and I'm going to need somebody to handle them. I've seen you fight. Those cobras that you keep, there's nothing magical about them, is there?"

Kudra smiled. "Just simple flesh and blood."



"Where are we headed again?" Kudra wrinkled her nose at the stale air.

"Just below cistern seven," Sandeep replied as he held his lantern aloft, shedding light on the decaying walls of Malifaux's sewers. "We should be almost there."

"I can't say I like the idea of seeking the help of a Resurrectionist."

Sandeep shrugged. "The undead do not bother me. Do you know how many members of the Guild I have allowed to be burnt to a crisp by a flaming demon? Who am I to judge a man by his tools?"

Kudra furrowed her brow. "There is always a madness with Resurrectionists. They cannot be trusted."

"Von Schtook and I have history. Who do you think loaned him his first book on necromancy?"

Kudra gaped.

Sandeep ignored it. "Though, he never did return it, so maybe you are on to something."

A snarl rumbled from the deep shadows just outside of the light from Sandeep's lantern, and a mass of rotting flesh and rusted metal hurtled towards Kudra. She bent like a reed in the wind, ducking underneath the first blow from an oversized scythe and followed it up with a quick series of kicks to the creature's leg. It wasn't enough to cripple the thing, just knock it off balance. It sprawled onto the ground, and Kudra circled it slowly.

The thing thrashed and squirmed, deadly blades and bloated limbs striking out at random, but Kudra was always too quick. Sandeep held out a hand which emitted a soft blue light. "Calm, friend. Calm," he chanted under his breath.

The creature slowed and then stopped. It lay still on the ground, staring up at Kudra with suspicious eyes.

A soft clapping echoed through the sewer and Professor Albus Von Schtook stepped out of the shadows. He was a scrawny man with wild hair and spectacles pushed too far up onto his nose. What had once been a fine suit hung from him in tatters, and a belt of bloody tools was strapped around his waist. "Sandeep, old boy! Impressive show! It has been quite some time since someone has dealt with one of my students without damaging them in the process."

Sandeep gave a brief smile. "I feel bad hurting the poor creatures too terribly. What is it you always say? They're more afraid of us than we are of them?"

"Quite right!" Von Schtook clapped his hands, a strange gleam in his eyes. "You seem to have brought a friend. Perhaps she would be interested in joining my University?" His eyes gleamed disturbingly as he looked her up and down.

Kudra shot an icy look at Von Schtook and then at Sandeep.

Sandeep gave a shallow cough. "I don't think Kudra is interested in any... higher education."

"We'll see." The smile he gave her implied that the matter was far from settled. "Very well, what brings you two to my house of learning? We were just about to step out for a field trip. Do you have any news about Ms. Squidpiddge?"

"I wouldn't come here without it." Sandeep flashed a grin.

Von Schtook adjusted his spectacles. "You always were my most well informed colleague."

"All knowledge is power. I collect it wherever I can, but I would like a favor in return."

Von Schtook sighed, removed his spectacles, and began to clean them. "It can never just be a nice deed for an old friend. Well, out with it."

"I'd like to borrow the use of one of your creations. It must have some talent with the arcane, and it must be quick on its feet. I'll need it tomorrow night, in the Quarantine Zone just outside of the Sink. Do you think you can make that happen?"

Von Schtook rubbed his chin thoughtfully, replaced his spectacles, and then put his fingers in his mouth and let out a shrill whistle. After a few moments of silence there was the scraping sound of metal on stone and a hulking, rotting thing with the body of a snake crudely fashioned from metal tubes and the torso of a man slithered from one of the side passages. It circled Sandeep and began sniffing at his clothes.

"This is one of my top scoring students, Student number one hundred and two. He had some talent for the arcane in life and retains it now. I assume that 'quick on its feet' was just a figure of speech?"

The student shot a dark glare at Von Schtook.

"Your grade depends on it," Von Schtook growled, his mood turning to anger in the blink of an eye.

Sandeep handed Von Schtook an envelope. "Very good. Here are maps and the instructions which he will need."

The professor looked the contents of the envelope over for a moment before handing it over to the Student. "That should make for an interesting assignment. Now, what do you have about the unfortunate Ms. Squidpiddge?"

Sandeep fished in his pocket and came up with a newspaper clipping which he handed to Von Schtook. The professor looked it over with intensity.

"Corruption in the rat catcher's brotherhood? There is nothing about her here!" he growled, glaring up at him.

"Look at the name of the author," Sandeep said, pointing. "Polly Tortalin."

Von Schtook looked back to the article, reading it over with new attention to detail. "It does seem to be her writing style... a false name, interesting. No doubt that fiend Seamus put her up to this..." Von Schtook's voice trailed off as his fallen creation righted itself, and then he carefully tucked the article back into his pocket.

"Thank you, Sandeep. This will be quite helpful in seeing that she gets the rest she deserves." He took one final look at Kudra. "The next semester begins in one week," he reminded her. "Do not be late, or I shall have to send a truancy officer to fetch you."

Kudra rolled her eyes at Sandeep who shrugged as the professor and his undead creations shambled off into the sewers. Once they were out of sight, the two of them began their long ascent back to the city above.



The book store was small and cramped, but every nook and corner that could be filled had a book in it. Kudra followed behind Sandeep, being careful not to accidentally knock over any of the large stacks of leaning books which threatened to topple at any moment.

"We're about to close for the night. You can come back-" a woman's voice said and then cut off short as she caught sight of the visitors around a stack of books. "Oh, it's you."

"Nice to see you as well, Emily." Sandeep replied.

Emily shrugged. She was a short woman with her brown hair in a practical pony tail. Goggles were pushed up on top of her head. "I was expecting an actual customer. How many times have I told you that this isn't a library, Sandeep?"

Sandeep gave a genuine smile. "I have always been of the persuasion that knowledge is free and open to all." Behind him, Kudra snorted quietly as she inspected one of the books.

"And I have always been of the persuasion that rent and food cost scrip," Emily smirked. "What do you need?"

"I'm going to call in my favor."

The smile faded, and for the first time Emily looked serious. "I see."

"Have you kept up on your lock picking?"

Emily raised an eyebrow. "Well, I can't say that selling books exactly pays all the bills in this city, so, yeah, I've kept up on it as well as I can."

Sandeep nodded. "Then I'll need your help tomorrow night. It won't be an easy job, but after that, we'll be even."

Emily sighed and nodded her head.

"Thank you." Sandeep nodded. "I shall see you tomorrow night."

As they left, Kudra turned to Sandeep. "Why does she owe you a debt?"

"She used to be a librarian for the Freikorps." Sandeep stroked his beard as they walked. "Unfortunately, she has sticky fingers and likes books a tad too much for their tastes. They're not the sort of organization you want to be caught stealing from. She had been to a few of my classes, and I thought she might be useful later, so I intervened."

Kudra lifted an eyebrow. "How?"

"I knew a few things about one of the commanding officers."

"Who don't you have something on?" Kudra asked.

"Not all knowledge is academic, but almost all knowledge can be leveraged like a weapon, given the proper opportunity. I find it best to keep my eyes open and my memory long."

The next night, Sandeep and Kudra met Emily outside of her shop and then headed towards the Quarantine Zone. It didn't take long to find an unguarded section of the barricade, and a rope made the crossing relatively short and easy work.

The buildings on this side of the barricade could have easily passed as any other part of the city, which made the fact that they were uninhabited even more disconcerting. Darkened windows and doors swinging on the wind loomed around every corner, promising any manner of inhuman monstrosities lurking inside.

The darkened streets stretched out into the night, beckoning the party forward. The farther they got from the barricade, the more decrepit and empty the city seemed. But any wise traveler in the Quarantine Zone knew that emptiness was an illusion. The absence of humanity was an inviting feature for many of the denizens of Malifaux.

Soon they could see the buildings begin to slant at strange angles up ahead. "There is the beginning of the Sink," whispered Sandeep. "That's our mark," Sandeep said, pointing to a large, stone building just on the outskirts of the Sink. It was two stories high, and strange runes were etched into the walls, which were arranged at awkward angles. Two Guild Guard stood watch outside the front door.

In the shadows near the building, light glinted off of a pair of metal talons and Sandeep nodded to student number one hundred and two.

"Come on." Sandeep motioned to a nearby sewer entrance, and three travelers slid quietly into the dank undercity.

Sandeep held a lamp as they traveled. "It should be about coming up-"

"Halt! Who goes there?" A voice shouted as they turned a corner, revealing two guards standing in front of a steel grate a mere two paces away.

Kudra immediately danced into motion, leaping forward and planting a kick firmly into the neck of the first guard. She pivoted and knocked the gun out of the second guard's hand with her hand, and punched him with her other. As she landed the punch, one of her pet cobras slid down her arm and delivered a quick series of bites. In moments, both men were on the ground, foaming at the mouth.

"Emily, the lock," Sandeep said, motioning.

Emily rushed forward, removed two metal picks from her hair, and began working them into the lock on the heavy grate with well-practiced motions. As she worked, she squinted and bit the tip of her tongue. There was an audible click and the lock fell away. "Done! Not even anything sophisticated."

Sandeep sighed. "That may not be a good sign." He motioned for his companions to help, and together the three of them lifted the heavy, metal grate. It made a low grinding noise as it rose, but not enough to alert anyone inside.

The air was dank and oppressive. Strange runes and blood stains marked the walls. "I don't even want to think of what the Guild uses this building for," Sandeep mumbled.

Kudra nodded but didn't say anything.

As they climbed up the stairs to the first floor, they almost ran into a patrolling guardsman, but Kudra grabbed him before he could make a sound and snapped his neck, her snakes landing a few cautionary bites in the process, just in case.

On the second floor, they found two more guards protecting a door. Kudra leapt forward and incapacitated the first with a few quick and precise blows, and Sandeep landed a heavy blow with his gada on the second man's head. There was a sickening crunch and some gurgling as the man fell. Sandeep's method wasn't as silent as Kudra's, but it was equally effective.

Emily had her picks out again without being told. She made short work of the lock and Sandeep swung the door open. The room was well lit, revealing a man who was sitting at a desk, writing what looked like a letter. There was a bed in one corner and evidence of a recently eaten meal in dishes on a tray on the floor.

"Mitul..." Sandeep murmured, his voice trailing off.

Mitul turned from his writing desk with a smile and looked at Sandeep over his glasses. "Hello, old friend."

The sound of boots thundered on the stairs and the shouts of guardsmen filled the air as an unseen detachment rushed up the stairway.

"You're under arrest!"

"Halt!"

"Get down on the... is that a snake?!"

While the guardsmen had clearly been ready for intruders, few people are ever prepared to have a cobra land at their feet. The first man up the stairs screamed and pointed his gun towards the snake, giving Kudra a chance to send him flying over the railing. The men on the stairs below began firing and Kudra jumped back just in time.

Sandeep raised a cautionary hand and slowly lowered to the ground. He placed his gada on the floor, gesturing for the two women to surrender as well. Kudra scowled, but followed his lead after a warning shot was fired over her head from the stairway below. Once they were on the ground, the guardsmen made their way into the hall.

"I don't understand..." Sandeep whispered.

"Sandeep Desai not understanding something?" Mitul let out a rich laugh, pacing in front of the prone Sandeep. The guard had taken up positions at the top of the stairs and the corners of the hall, rifles at the ready. "Imagine that."

"How long did it take them to break you?" Sandeep looked up at his old friend. "I should have rescued you sooner. I searched, but... it's not too late, Mitul! I'm here to help you!"

“Break me?” Mitul’s booted foot caught Sandeep on the chin, spraying blood across the floor. He leaned in close, looking the other man in the eye. “Nobody broke me. Who do you think tipped the Guild off that the Acharya was encouraging rebellious activity?”

Sandeep’s eyes widened.

“Who else would have realized this was such a perfect location to deal with your unique... talents? You thought I was being arrested, but I was being put into protection. It’s a good thing they got me out of there, too, before your little fire show.”

Sandeep gritted his teeth and clenched his fists.

“The old man should have listened to me. We needed to work with the Guild. Progress has a price, but he couldn’t understand that and now he’s dead, and I’m on my way to being in charge of an entire province back home! Especially after your capture; oh, my superiors are very interested in asking you some questions.”

Sandeep shot Mitul a deadly glare. “You betrayed us.”

“Come now.” Mitul smiled. “I’m not the one who killed our master.”

There was a low rumbling sound, and then a shriek split the air. The building rumbled and the hallway filled with light as the runes on the walls glowed and then faded.

Mitul looked around in confusion. “Enough of this! Bind them and bring them back to the Guild Enclave!” He motioned to the guards.

The hall filled with the sound of Sandeep’s laughter as he lifted himself to his feet. He turned his head and spat out blood. A guard behind him tried to smash the butt of his rifle against Sandeep’s temple, but Sandeep dodged the blow and grabbed the man’s wrist. As he did, his hand began to glow with a soft, blue light and the guard began to shake and writhe. Blue flames shot from his mouth and eyes, and then his smoking corpse collapsed to the floor.

Before the rest of the stunned guards could react Sandeep lifted his arms and there was a flash of light, blinding them temporarily.

Shouts broke out among the confused guardsmen and some began to fire blindly. Kudra hopped to her feet and landed a blow on one of the guards in the corner. Emily rolled out of the way, backing up against a wall.

Sandeep began chanting in a low voice and raised his arms. Blue blasts of Arcane energy danced from his fingertips and leapt through the air, cutting down any Guardsmen who were still standing. Their smoking corpses fell to the ground, cut cleanly where the Arcane light had touched them.

As the last of the guards fell, Mitul backed up into a corner, drawing a knife from his boot. “How?” He shouted, his eyes darting around wildly. “You can’t do that here! Anyone who would have tried to dispel the dampening field would have been killed in the process!”

Sandeep grinned. “Not all of my friends are burdened by petty thoughts like staying alive.”

Mitul lunged at Sandeep, but Sandeep grabbed the other man’s arm and twisted it. There was a loud snapping sound and Mitul dropped the knife with a shout. Sandeep kicked the knife away and then punched Mitul in the throat, who fell to the floor gasping for air.

“Kudra, Emily.” Sandeep’s voice was iron. “Leave us.”

“But, teacher-“ Kudra began.

“Leave us!” Sandeep’s eyes were wild, his voice echoed through the hall.

Without further protest, the two women made their way down the stairs.

Sandeep picked up his gada from where he had dropped it earlier and paced slowly towards Mitul. “I’m sorry, master,” he said quietly under his breath. “I’m going to disappoint you again.”

“No,” Mitul pleaded. “We were friends, Sandeep...”

Sandeep raised the gada above his head and Mitul flinched, but the blow was not aimed at him. The weapon came down on the floor and splinters of stone exploded outwards, forming a burning pit. Out of that pit came laughter that sounded like rending steel.

Sandeep turned his back and slowly began walking away. “Burn him.”



Behind him, the building burned to the ground, and once more Sandeep's past was burned by his anger and left in ashes.

KILL THE TRAITOR

Treachery cannot be forgiven, and it cannot be forgotten. It can only be avenged.

SET UP

Select one player to be the Attacker and the other the Defender. The Defender must hire one additional model with a cost of 6 Soulstones or less, chosen from the Attacker's Faction (this model can be hired regardless of the Defender's Faction, and does not count against the Crew's Soulstone total). This model is the Traitor. The Defender places three 30mm, **Ht** 0 Ward Markers within 3" of the center of the board, not in terrain.

DEPLOYMENT

The Defender deploys first. The Defender's Crew may deploy anywhere on the table, not within 6" of another friendly model or in terrain. The Attacker then chooses a board edge and deploys her Crew within 6" of the chosen board edge. The Defender's deployment zone counts as being within 6" of the board edge opposite of the Attacker's for Scheme purposes.

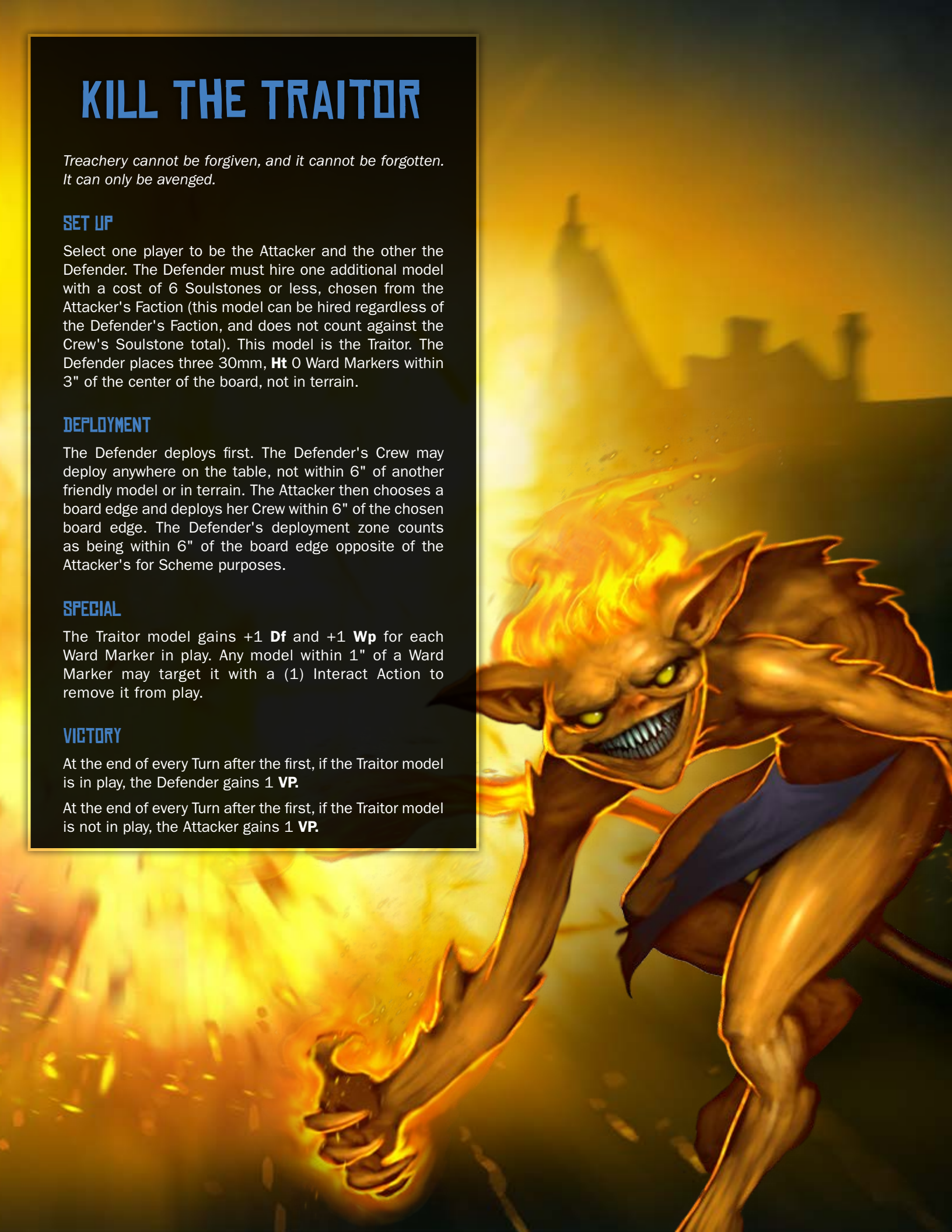
SPECIAL

The Traitor model gains +1 **Df** and +1 **Wp** for each Ward Marker in play. Any model within 1" of a Ward Marker may target it with a (1) Interact Action to remove it from play.

VICTORY

At the end of every Turn after the first, if the Traitor model is in play, the Defender gains 1 **VP.**

At the end of every Turn after the first, if the Traitor model is not in play, the Attacker gains 1 **VP.**



ARCANIST VIGNETTES

The death of the Governor-General presented a great opportunity for Viktor Ramos. He helped to fan the flames of the chaos that followed with a number of coordinated Arcanist attacks against key Guild strongholds and personnel. These attacks were bolder than any before and often carried out in broad daylight, in direct defiance of the Guild's authority.

While the Guild pinned the murder of the Governor-General on the Union and began rounding up its members for execution, Ramos took advantage of the situation. Protests were organized across Malifaux, and hidden printing presses worked constantly to churn out flyers and rag sheets that drew attention to just how unfair the Guild's legal system was to the common citizen.

Of course, Ramos always had more gears in motion than anyone could see on the surface. In addition to his political agenda, he also returned to one of his most ambitious projects. The Soulstone that powered the massive Leviathan construct had been damaged in the battle of Kythera, and despite years of trial and error, Ramos had been unable to find a Soulstone powerful enough to animate the colossal machine for more than a few minutes.

The survey reports, yield charts, and divination summaries that had crossed his desk in the past few months, however, had given him hope. He had always dismissed the rumors of the Soulstone Geode as nothing more than fanciful stories, but it was hard to argue with so many data points.

The next week, Ramos left on an expedition to the Ten Peaks, confident that his plans would spin out without him... and that the slumbering Leviathan would soon rise to conquer Malifaux in his name.

When Ramos left on his expedition to the Ten Peaks, he left Kaeris in charge of the Arcanists in his stead. He gave her a false story about investigating a new leyline, but she saw through his lies and realized the true nature of his expedition. She kept that knowledge to herself, though, reasoning that it could prove useful at a later date.

At first, Kaeris tried to follow in Ramos' footsteps, keeping a low profile and engaging in hit-and-run strikes against the Guild as he had instructed. Gradually, though, she began carrying out missions that Ramos would have considered too risky, such as burning the Guild's supply warehouses, assassinating troublesome officials, and terrorizing known anti-Arcanist citizens.

Kaeris had always been a fixer; when there was a problem, she didn't hide from it or turn away, hoping that it would resolve itself in time. Instead, she threw everything at it, using her talent, training, and resources to resolve the problem in the most efficient way possible.

To Anasalea Kaeris, the Guild was a problem.

Where Ramos led the Arcanists in secret, hiding behind the mask of the Union, Kaeris did so openly and brazenly, as if daring the Guild to stop her. Her golden wings soon became a frequent sight above the city; always foretelling a new attack that was just moments away. By the end of the first month, she had become one of the most prominent (and wanted) Arcanists in Malifaux City.

Despite being the poster-woman for the Guild's anti-Arcanist propaganda, Kaeris cared little for the philosophies of the Arcanist movement. She was always a mercenary at heart, and while her loyalty to Ramos remained unwavering, she eagerly awaited his return to the Arcanists to give her back her freedom.

Just as Ramos placed Kaeris in charge of the everyday workings of the Arcanists, he set Toni Ironsides up as the public face of the Union in his absence.

This was not an easy transition for her. Her previous roles were breaking the legs of anyone who didn't pay their dues and hunting down rogue Arcanists; she had never been the sort to play politics or attempt to win over the hearts of others.

In this sense, it made her the perfect choice to temporarily lead the Union. Her dangerous reputation kept the Union's more outspoken members in line during Ramos's absence, while her questionable popularity insured that she would never be able to replace Ramos as its leader, should she attempt to turn on him.

Ironsides gritted her teeth and accepted her new role without complaint, but she hated every minute of it. She never wanted the spotlight and detested the legal red tape that her new position necessitated. The city was plastered with posters bearing her upturned face and raised arm, but she sneered every time she passed one in the street.

Only when she was personally hunting down and punishing those who caused the Union trouble did she feel free of the burdens of her position. This earned her an odd sort of respect from the members of the Union; they still loved Ramos, but it was clear from the start that Toni was willing to get her hands dirty and didn't want to hide behind lawyers and politics.

Ramos had assumed that Ironsides' rough demeanor and distaste for authority would prevent her from earning the love of the Union, and to an extent, he was correct.

He just hadn't counted on her earning their respect.

Unlike Ironsides, Colette loved the spotlight, and she started seeing more and more of it after the Governor-General's death.

The uncertainty that fell over the city after its leader's death resulted in waning attendance at the Star Theater, and the Guild's round-up of Union workers certainly didn't improve the situation. To help bring in more patrons, Colette took a number of measures that would have been unthinkable a year prior.

Working with Angelica, she reorganized the sets and routines of her girls, pushing them to develop larger and more elaborate dance and song numbers that would draw in larger crowds. She also hired a handful of male "Showgirls" to appeal to the growing population of young women in the city, which proved to be a much-needed shot in the arm for the Star's attendance numbers.

Behind the curtain, things were also starting to turn. Ramos's sudden and unexplained absence and Kaeris' campaign of terror meant that nobody was keeping a close eye on Colette, and she used that time to slowly wiggle her way out from under the thumb of the Arcanists.

When Kaeris eventually arrived at the Star Theater and demanded that Colette return to her smuggling duties, the showgirl insisted that she be given more control over the Arcanists' smuggling operation; Colette would still ensure that the Arcanists' Soulstones would reach Earth, but she wanted to set her own schedules for the shipments.

Colette's determination and business acumen impressed Kaeris, who agreed to her demands on the condition that her employees remained available for other Arcanist assignments. The agreement suited them both, and over the course of subsequent meetings to discuss their arrangement, they became steady and unlikely friends.

Now, Colette could spend each night in the spotlight, dancing and singing to distract the masses of Malifaux City from the troubles of their lives.

She has never been more content.

The death of the Governor-General meant little to Marcus, who had grown into the habit of shunning the trappings of civilization. The rumors surrounding the opening of Nythera intrigued him, however, and he set off on an expedition to the Badlands to investigate the ruins for himself.

What he found was a large area of the Badlands that was covered in dense growth. He had passed through the region the year before and was surprised to see that a barren wasteland had somehow become a flourishing forest in such a short time.

Marcus set up camp in the forest and began a vigorous study of the new growth. He catalogued countless species of new plants and animals, many of which he had only seen as fossils and had believed to be extinct. As Marcus continued this line of thought, he realized that nearly all of the extinct species had disappeared or mutated into unrecognizable forms at the time of the Tyrant War, and that he was standing within a forest that simply should not exist.

It was too much to resist. He took samples of the plants, climbed the trees, and stalked the reborn animals of the forest, learning their ways and habits by becoming one of them.

It did not take long for him to cross the path of the Fae, who seemed to share an affinity for this strange new forest. His expertise in tracking and survival allowed him to stay one step ahead of them, but when their paths crossed, he quickly dispatched the wretched creatures and returned to his research.

Marcus knew, however, that it was only a matter of time before he crossed paths with their terrible, undead Queen, and he looked forward to that day with anticipation.

What stories would she tell him, once he had proven his dominance?

December whispered to Rasputina of the danger of Nythera and what lay sleeping there. When she learned that the Freikorps were leading an expedition to unleash the Autumn Queen imprisoned within, she quickly set off to stop them.

Although she fought fiercely, even encasing Von Schill in ice, she was unable to stop the opening of Nythera and the release of the terrible entity within. Retreating from the woman who had shattered December's mortal form, she returned to the Ten Peaks, the seat of her (and December's) power, to decide how to handle the Queen's return.

In the howling mountain winds, Rasputina heard December's voice calling out to her again, but this time, His typical demands and threats were replaced with a thoroughly uncharacteristic tone of deference and respect. He claimed that Titania would destroy them both and that if Rasputina would agree to stop her, He would give her complete control over His powers.

She was skeptical of such a one-sided agreement, but she had felt the power of the Autumn Queen herself and knew that December was not exaggerating her potential for destruction. After a moment's hesitation, she agreed to His deal, and power the likes of which she had never thought possible poured into her body, a waterfall of aetheric power where before there had only been a slow trickle.

In the weeks following, the Cult of December began raiding the Northern Hills more frequently, snatching up miners and their families to sacrifice in obscene rituals meant to concentrate December's power. Some of the people captured in these raids – those who were strong, hardy, and ruthless - were allowed to live, so long as they swore fealty to December. Eventually, Kaeris sent messengers northward to warn Rasputina that such hostility will not be tolerated, and all those sent have gone missing. She killed and ate every one.

Rasputina's power has increased with each passing day, and in the shadows of her soul, December watches her grow stronger with eager anticipation.



SANDEEP DESAI

Sandeep Desai was born in Guild-occupied India. He was orphaned at an early age and grew up at a temple. There he was given the time to study, and he proved a quick student. He devoured books on the arcane and soon proved to be a powerful user of magic in his own right, but his peaceful life of learning came to a violent halt the day that the Guild came to arrest his master for undermining their authority.

Sandeep was asked to come to Malifaux personally by Viktor Ramos in order to help train a new generation of Arcanists in the ways of magic. He holds his classes in secret, instructing his students in the art of manipulating the aetherical currents of Malifaux and the proper use of Soulstones.

The locations of his classes frequently move, always staying one step ahead of the Guild. In quiet moments of reflection and meditation, Sandeep often regrets the upheavel and wishes for a peaceful, quiet environment where his students could grow and prosper. However, he knows the tyranny and cruelty of the Guild all too well, and he will not rest until all people are free of their oppression.



SANDEEP DESAI
Master, Living
ACADEMIC

CACHE 4

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	6	12	5	6	2

ABILITIES

Beacon: Other friendly non-Peon models within 12" and LoS may take **Ca** Actions printed on this model's stat card at -1 **Ca** during their Activations. An Action taken in this way may not be taken again via **Beacon** (by any models in this Crew) until the next Turn.

Impossible to Wound: Damage flips against this model suffer ⌸. Damage flips against this model may not be cheated.

Student of All: Once per Turn, after another model successfully uses one of this model's Actions with a 🕮 in the final duel total, this model may discard a card to take a (1) Action.

Arcane Shield: If this model has not Activated during this Turn, reduce all damage it suffers by 1, to a minimum of 0.

SANDEEP DESAI

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Gada (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Target suffers 1/2/3 damage.

(1) Arcane Storm (**Ca** 6🕮 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 10): Target suffers 2/4/5 damage.
Mantra of Unraveling: When damaging, the damage flip gains +1 for each in the final duel total.

(1) The Mind Among The Senses (**Ca** 6 / TN: 11 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 12): Push target model 6" towards this model.
Healing Mantra: After succeeding, heal up to 2 damage on this model.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) The Path To Salvation (**Ca** 6 / TN: 11🐏): Place this model within 6" of its current location; it may not be placed in terrain or in base contact with another model or Marker. Only Academics and Minions may take this Action.

(0) As Your Deed, So Your Destiny (**Ca** 6 / TN: 11): This model may immediately perform a (1) Interact Action.
🕮 *The Mantra Of True Self*: The Interact Action may be declared while this model is engaged.
🐏 *The Traveler's Mantra*: Before performing the Interact Action, push this model up to 3".

40mm

BANASUVA

Not all nightmares are born in Malifaux. Earth is an ancient place and it has its share of demons and abominations that prey on the weakness of men.

Banasuva is one such creature. He is an Asura, a demon who stalked the land of India in ancient times. He was born of anger and flame, and he feeds on the rage of those around him.

It is said that a great hero challenged Banasuva to a duel and defeated him, forever trapping him inside of the hero's weapon of choice: his gada. But the victory was both a blessing and a curse. While Banasuva could no longer stalk the countryside and slaughter at will, the one who wields the gada must forever resist the temptation of Banasuva's wrath.

Sandeep now wields the gada. He only unleashes Banasuva at times of dire need. When Sandeep's anger flares too brightly, however, Banasuva grows in strength and can temporarily escape his prison, wreaking the carnage which is his only solace.



BANASUVA COST 8

Minion, Totem (Sandeep Desai), Rare 1

GAMIN

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	4	8	5	7	3

ABILITIES

Jealous Fire Lord: This model may not be Hired. After this model is summoned, it is sacrificed unless another friendly Gamin within 6" and LoS of it suffers 2 damage that may not be reduced, then sacrifice all other friendly Totems in play.

Flaming Demise: All models in (↯)2 suffer 1 damage and gain the **Burning +1** Condition when this model is killed (not sacrificed).

Melee Expert: This model gains 1 additional AP which may only be used to take **Ml** Actions.

BANASUVA

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) The Thousand Arms Of Justice (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Target suffers 3/4/5 damage.

- ***Flare:*** After damaging, the target gains the **Burning +1** Condition.
- ***Burst Damage:*** While dealing Moderate or Severe damage, this Attack gains +🌪 to damage.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(1) Toss: Target a **Ht** 1 model within 1". Push the target up to 10" in any direction. If the target ends in base contact with impassable terrain or one or more models, the pushed model and each model in base contact with the pushed model must succeed on a TN 13 **Df** duel or suffer 2 damage. The target gains the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Insignificant:** This model may not take Interact Actions."

(0) Blessing In Flame: Target a friendly Gamin within 8" and select one Ability or Action printed on the target's stat card that this model does not already have. This model gains the chosen Ability or Action until the end of the Turn as if it were printed on this model's card.

50mm

KUDRA

Kudra's family was slaughtered by the Guild. She was tempted into joining the Arcanist movement by a mixture of revenge and her own magical talent.

Now she is one of Sandeep's best students. He does what he can to avoid showing favoritism, but Kudra's mastery of both the Arcane and martial arts are the best in all of Sandeep's classes. It also helps that she often shoots down stupid questions from the other students and points out flaws in their logic, which Sandeep finds greatly amusing (though he would never humiliate one of his students himself).

Since crossing the Breach, Kudra has found a new affinity for animals, most prominently snakes, and is often able to gently bend them to her will. Although her talents are not nearly great enough to command the fearsome Malifaux wildlife in the same way Marcus does, smaller animals from back on Earth are no problem, and she often goes into combat wielding a pair of cobras as a weapon.



KUDRA
Henchman, Living, Rare 1
ACADEMIC

COST 7
CACHE 6

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	5	8	6	7	2

ABILITIES

Butterfly Jump: After this model is successfully targeted with a non enemy Attack Action, it may discard a card to push up to 3" in any direction. Range, LoS, and cover are drawn from its new position and, if it is no longer a legal target, the Action immediately fails.

Df/Wp ( ) Lessons Learned In Blood: Once per Turn, after failing against an enemy, draw a card.

A Worthy Student: Once per Turn, after this model spends a Soulstone, it may discard a card to add 1 Soulstone to this Crew's Soulstone Pool after resolving the current Action.

Serpent Speed: This model may take four **(1) Cobra Strike** Attack Actions as a result of the Charge Action instead of the usual Attacks granted by Charge.

KUDRA

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Cobra Strike (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 1): Target suffers 1/2/3 damage and gains the **Poison +1** Condition.

(1) Elemental Bolt (**Ca** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 10): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.
- ***Flare:*** After damaging, the target gains the **Burning +1** Condition.
- ***Mighty Vault:*** After damaging, place this model within 4" of its current location, not in terrain.
- ***Burst Damage:*** While dealing Moderate or Severe damage, this Attack gains + to damage.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Minor Illusion (**Ca** 5 / TN: 12 / Rg: 10): Place one 50mm Illusionary Forest Marker within range. This Marker is treated as **Ht** 4 terrain with the dense, severe, and soft cover traits. Remove this Marker the next time this Crew takes this Action.

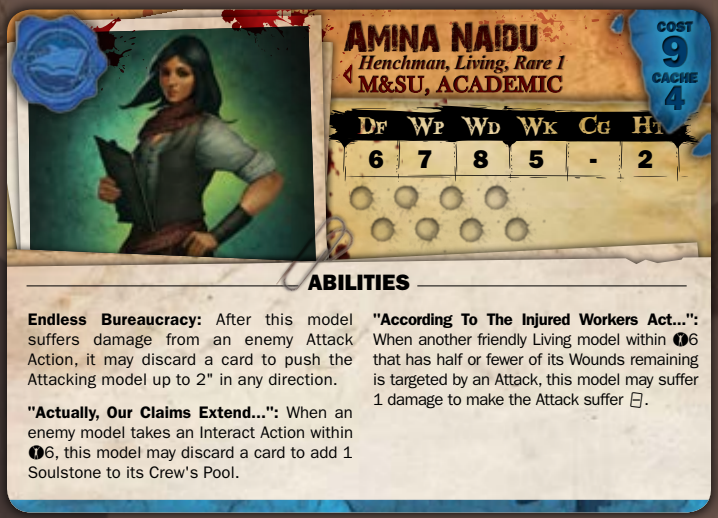
30mm

AMINA NAIDU

Amina is a lawyer in Ridley who protects M&SU interests. Unlike many other practitioners of the legal arts in Malifaux, she genuinely cares about people and fights diligently for the rights of the common man against the oppressive Guild.

Many of the people of Ridley know her as a bustling whirlwind of papers with a half-smile that only stops to make a witty comment. Amina's dry sense of humor often goes over people's heads, but she never slows down long enough to mind.

Her work in Ridley has had great results, and she is a significant reason as to why the Guild has never been able to establish a true legal foothold there. Despite her diligent work for the Union, she pays homage to mysterious patrons from Earth, who originally sent her to Malifaux to gather intel on the political workings of things beyond the Breach. Even so, her compassion for those she represents is genuine, and she never gives up on a case.



ABILITIES

Endless Bureaucracy: After this model suffers damage from an enemy Attack Action, it may discard a card to push the Attacking model up to 2" in any direction.

"Actually, Our Claims Extend...": When an enemy model takes an Interact Action within ❶6, this model may discard a card to add 1 Soulstone to its Crew's Pool.

"According To The Injured Workers Act...": When another friendly Living model within ❶6 that has half or fewer of its Wounds remaining is targeted by an Attack, this model may suffer 1 damage to make the Attack suffer ⍈.

AMINA NAIDU

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Sharp Wit (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Target gains the **Slow** Condition.
🕮 ***"You Made That Word Up!"***: After succeeding, the target gains the following Condition until the end of its next Activation: "**Inchoate Rage:** This model may not declare Attack Actions that target a model other than Amina Naidu."

(1) Collier Navy (**Sh** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⌐12): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

(1) Summons (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 12): Push target enemy its **Cg** towards this model.
🕮 ***Liability***: After succeeding against a non-Master, the target gains the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Liable:** This model may not target models that have fewer Wounds than their **Wd** stat with Actions."

(0) Mountain of Paperwork (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 6): Target suffers 4 damage. It may discard up to 2 cards to reduce the damage by 2 for each card discarded.
🐈 ***"You Forgot Section D18..."***: After succeeding, take the **Missing Forms** Action.

(0) Missing Forms (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 6): Target gains the following Condition until the end of the game or this model is killed or sacrificed: "**Missing Forms:** This model counts as a Peon for Strategy and Scheme purposes and may not take Interact Actions."
🦶 ***"Eh, Why Fuss About?"***: After succeeding, this model may take the **Collier Navy** Action, if able.

30mm

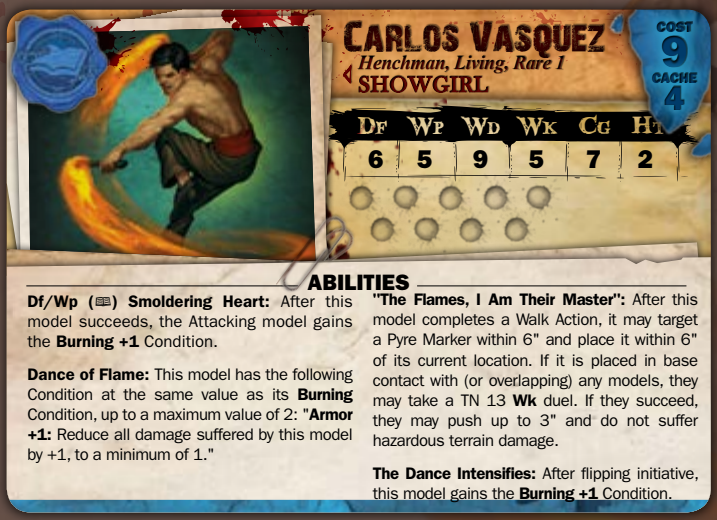
CARLOS VASQUEZ

A young, shirtless man walked confidently out onto the stage of the Star Theater. Sweat gleamed off the curves of his muscles.

"Tonight I will dazzle you with my daring deeds of danger," he said, flames erupting in a circle around him. "I will ignite you with intrigue." He raised his arms and tumbled through the air, the flames dancing next to him. "I will fascinate you with my flaming feats of fantasy!" He raised his arms, the flames seeming to engulf his body. The audience gasped, and the entire theater went dark as the flames extinguished.

A single spotlight snapped on, highlighting the unsinged and unharmed young man. "My name is Carlos Vasquez, and I will make love to this stage."

Backstage, Cassandra rolled her eyes and glared at Colette, who shrugged. "There are more and more young women in this city these days, and we needed to sell tickets. Deal with it."



ABILITIES

Df/Wp (📖) Smoldering Heart: After this model succeeds, the Attacking model gains the **Burning +1** Condition.

Dance of Flame: This model has the following Condition at the same value as its **Burning** Condition, up to a maximum value of 2: "**Armor +1:** Reduce all damage suffered by this model by +1, to a minimum of 1."

"The Flames, I Am Their Master": After this model completes a Walk Action, it may target a Pyre Marker within 6" and place it within 6" of its current location. If it is placed in base contact with (or overlapping) any models, they may take a TN 13 **Wk** duel. If they succeed, they may push up to 3" and do not suffer hazardous terrain damage.

The Dance Intensifies: After flipping initiative, this model gains the **Burning +1** Condition.

CARLOS VASQUEZ

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) The Flaming Fist Of The Great Carlos Vasquez (**MI** 6📖 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 3): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

📖 ***Stoke the Flames***: After succeeding, the target gains an additional **Burning +1** Condition for each 📖 in the final duel total.

📖 ***"The Audience Was Told To Stand Back!"***: After damaging, the target suffers an amount of damage equal to the value of this model's **Burning** Condition, to a maximum of 3. End the **Burning** Condition on this model.

📖 ***True Showmanship***: After damaging, this model gains the **Burning +1** Condition.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) "Do Not Try This At Home" (**Ca** 6📖 / TN: 12📖 / Rg: 6)**:** Place a 50mm Pyre Marker within range, at least 1" from any models or other Markers. This Marker is **Ht** 5, blocking, hazardous terrain. At the end of every Turn, remove all Pyre Markers.

(0) "And Now, The Most Deadly Dance Of All!" (**Ca** 6📖 / TN: 11📖)**:** Push this model up to 4" in any direction and give it the **Burning +1** Condition.

Extinguish: After succeeding, end the **Burning** Condition on this model.

40mm

POISON GAMIN

Each type of Gamin is the physical embodiment of a force of nature, and the Poison Gamin are no exception. They are created by the very essence of venom; their aura is described by some as if it could drain the very essence of life.

As a Poison Gamin draws near, those around them begin to feel sickly and weak. Their touch can spread a deadly toxin, and they wield a lethal, barbed tail which can deliver a deadly mix of the most virulent toxins.

Poison Gamin are some of the most difficult Gamin to summon and control due to their deadly nature. More than one wayward Arcanist has summoned one, only to accidentally brush against it and succumb to their own creation. Because of this, only the most skilled mages attempt to call the creatures into the material plane. Among them is Sandeep, who considers the Gamin perfect for helping him to collect some of his more dangerous magical items.



POISON GAMIN

Minion, Construct

GAMIN, BEAST

COST 5

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	5	5	5	6	1

ABILITIES

Deadly Reflex: All models in (↑)2 suffer 1 damage and gain the **Poison +1** Condition when this model is killed (not sacrificed).

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

Leave Them To Die: At the end of this model's Activation, if it took an Attack during the Activation, it may push up to 3" in any direction.

Mithridization: When this model would suffer damage due to the **Poison** Condition, instead it heals 1 damage.

POISON GAMIN

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Barbed Tail (**MI** 5✕ / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻2): Target suffers 1/3/4 damage and gains the **Poison +1** Condition.

✕ ***Corrosive Toxins***: When damaging the target, this Attack deals +1 damage if the target had the **Poison** Condition when it was selected as the target.

(1) Spit Venom (**Sh** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⌐8): Target suffers 1/3/4 damage.

✕ ***Infect:*** After succeeding, target gains the **Poison +1** Condition a number of times equal to the number of ✕ in the final duel total.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Karait's Blessing: This model gains the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Karait's Blessing:** Other models with the **Poison** Condition that begin their Activation within ↑4 of one or more models with this Condition immediately suffer 1 damage from the **Poison** Condition and then lower their **Poison** Condition value by 1."

30mm

SHASTAR VIDIYA GUARD

The students of Shastar Vidiya are members of an ancient and secret sect that teaches a lethal form of hand to hand combat. They consider their study of combat to be about more than just martial prowess; it is about learning one's own true nature.

Shastar Vidiya Guards use a wide variety of weapons from their homeland of India, back on Earth. These weapons range from the fearsome Ten-Fist-Long Sword to the deadly Chakram. Each weapon must be mastered before a new weapon can be acquired, and the study begins again. As such, only the most elite of the Shastar Vidiya Guards are capable of using their full arsenal.

The Arcanists have begun smuggling the students of Shastar Vidiya into Malifaux to make use of their deadly talents. They are often disguised as new recruits for the M&SU and put on the payroll as miners, even though they may never spend a day in the mines. Instead, they are used as guards during some of the Arcanists' more dangerous missions.



SHASTAR VIDIYA GUARD

COST 8

Enforcer, Living
M&SU, ACADEMIC

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	6	8	5	6	2

ABILITIES

Know The Warrior: Once per Turn, if this model Cheats Fate during a **Df** duel, draw a card after the current Action is resolved.

Know The Weapon: At the start of this model's Activation, it may discard a card to gain the **Focused +1** Condition.

Hard to Kill: While this model has 2 or more **Wd** remaining when it suffers damage, it may not be reduced to below 1 **Wd**.

SHASTAR VIDIYA GUARD

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Ten-Fist-Long Sword (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 2): Target suffers 2/4/6 damage.
- ***Bird Style:*** After damaging, take a **Chakram** Attack against the target.
- ***Snake Style:*** After damaging, the target gains **Slow**.
- ***Bull Style***: Damage from this Attack may not be reduced.
- ***Wild Boar Style***: While damaging, the damage flip gains .

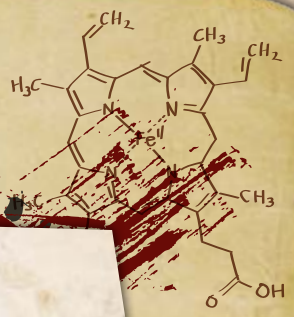
(1) Chakram (**Sh** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 10): Target suffers 1/2/2 damage.
- ***Ouroboros:*** After damaging, take this Action again against an enemy model within 2" and LoS of the target that was not already targeted by this Action during this Activation.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Follow My Path: Push target other friendly model within 6" up to 2" in any direction.

30mm

This should not be possible!



My experiments with the black blood of the Nephilim are thus far inconclusive. At least, that is the only outcome that a sane, scientific mind could possibly make of them. I have achieved a certain level of precision with my results, but everything that my research points to thus far is pure madness. I must have made a mistake somewhere.

I have been able to obtain new reagents and glassware (that accursed black blood is even slowly eating away glass given enough time, which should not be possible), but further samples of the blood itself are almost impossible to come by. Luckily I have found that it reacts with human blood, converting it into the black, Nephilim ichor. I have been 'feeding' it samples of my own blood to obtain the proper quantities to get decent, scientific results.

I will continue until I have found how it spreads, and its exact composition. My current results must be erroneous. I shudder at the notion of even writing them down. They simply cannot be true in a sane world. I will endeavor to prove that these 'Nephilim' are not nightmares made flesh or monsters, but simple animals which that obey the laws of nature like the rest of us. Any other conclusion is inconceivable...

complete madness

These results are an abomination against both science and nature.

ACADEMIC UPGRADES

ENLIGHTENED SOUL

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  No Life Is Wasted: Once per Turn, after this model kills an enemy model, draw a card.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) The Formless Mantra (**Ca** 6 / TN: 13): Target other friendly model gains the following Condition until the end of its next Activation: "**Incorporeal:** This model ignores, and is ignored by, other models and terrain during any movement or push. Reduce all damage this model suffers from **Sh** and **MI** Attack Actions by half."



RESTRICTIONS

Sandeep Desai

UNALIGNED SAGE

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  The Student And The Master: Crews led by this model may Hire models with the Academic Characteristic that are not the Crew's declared Faction. Friendly Academic models may benefit from this model's **Beacon** Ability regardless of LoS (they must still be within 12").

- This model gains the following Tactical Actions:

  (1) Action Through Inaction: This model gains the following Condition until the start of its next Activation: "**Action Through Inaction:** Once per Activation, when another friendly Academic in play discards (not cheats) one or more cards, this model may suffer 1 damage that may not be reduced to draw a card."

  (1) The Sight Beyond: Until the end of the Turn, other friendly Academics do not randomize when shooting into an engagement when the target is within ❶6 of this model.



RESTRICTIONS

Sandeep Desai

TO BEHOLD ANOTHER WORLD

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Sunburst: After a target suffers damage from this model's **Gada** Attack Action, if the damage was Moderate or Severe, the target gains **Paralyzed**.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (1) To Behold Another World (**Ca** 6 / TN: *): Name a Gamin Minion model. The TN of this Action is 10❤ plus the Soulstone Cost of the named model. Summon the named model within 6" and LoS and choose one of the Upgrades listed below, that is not already attached to a friendly model in play, to attach to it (if all three Upgrades are on friendly models in play, this Action may not be taken):

  Visions In Earth
  Visions In Wind
  Visions In Flame



RESTRICTIONS

Sandeep Desai, Limited

TO COMMAND ANOTHER PLANE

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Heavenly Weapons: This model's **Gada** Attack Action deals 3/4/5 damage instead of 1/2/3 damage.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (1) To Command Another Plane (**Ca** 6 / TN: *): Name a Gamin Minion model. The TN of this Action is 10❤ plus the Soulstone Cost of the named model. Summon the named model within 6" and LoS and choose one of the Upgrades listed below, that is not already attached to a friendly model in play, to attach to it (if all three Upgrades are on friendly models in play, this Action may not be taken):

  Commands In Earth
  Commands In Wind
  Commands In Flame



RESTRICTIONS

Sandeep Desai, Limited



FREE OF MORTAL SHACKLES

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  The Ice In The Storm: While at least one friendly Ice Gamin is within ❶6, this model gains the following Ability: "**Armor +1:** Reduce all damage suffered by this model by +1, to a minimum of 1."

  The Flames In The Night: While at least one friendly Fire Gamin is within ❶6, this model gains +❤ to all of its duel totals.

  The Wind In The Trees: While at least one friendly Wind Gamin is within ❶6, this model gains +1 **MI**.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Your Purpose Is Served (**Ca** 5 / TN: 10✕ / Rg: 10): Kill target friendly Gamin.

RESTRICTIONS

Kudra

GAMIN UPGRADES

Visions in Earth

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may not be attached at the start of the game.
- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Shackles of Earth: This model may not be moved or pushed.

  Constant Yammering: Enemy models within 6 must discard two cards when declaring an Interact Action or the Action immediately fails.

Restrictions

Gamin, Rare 1

Visions in Wind

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may not be attached at the start of the game.
- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Shackles of Wind: This model may not take Attack Actions.

  Life Is Brief: This model may take Interact Actions on the Turn it is summoned.



Restrictions

Gamin, Rare 1

Visions in Flame

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may not be attached at the start of the game.
- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Shackles of Flame: This model may not Cheat Fate.

  Don't Mind Me: This model may take Interact Actions while engaged.

Restrictions

Gamin, Rare 1

Commands in Wind

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may not be attached at the start of the game.
- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Shackles of Wind: This model may not take Attack Actions.

  A Mighty Vengeance: Other friendly models within 3 gain + to all Attack duels.

Restrictions

Gamin, Rare 1



Commands in Earth

Cost: 0SS

- This Upgrade may not be attached at the start of the game.
- This model gains the following Abilities:

Shackles of Earth: This model may not be moved or pushed.

Reach Of The Heavens: Increase the Rg of this model's /// Attack Actions by +1 and ⌐ Attack Actions by +3.

Restrictions

Gamin, Rare 1

Commands in Flame

Cost: 0SS

- This Upgrade may not be attached at the start of the game.
- This model gains the following Abilities:

Shackles of Flame: This model may not Cheat Fate.

In Flame Redeemed: This model is immune to **Slow**.

Restrictions

Gamin, Rare 1

ARCANIST UPGRADES

Stunt Double

Cost: 1 SS

- If this Crew contains Colette, reduce the Cost of this Upgrade to 0.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Stunt Double: When this model would suffer damage due to the **Burning** Condition, it may discard a card. If it does, it does not suffer damage from the **Burning** Condition and heals an amount of damage equal to the value of its **Burning** Condition instead.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (1) Pyrotechnic Prop (**Ca** 5 / TN: 12 / Rg: 8): Target a Scheme Marker. All models within (↑)3 of the target must pass a TN 13 **Wp** duel or gain the **Burning +2** condition then, discard the target Marker.

RESTRICTIONS

Carlos Vasquez

Circus Bear

Cost: 0 SS

- The Slate Ridge Mauler may attach this Upgrade as if it were an Enforcer.
- This model gains +1 **Wk** and +1 **Ml**.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) "Dance, Boris! (**Ca** 5 / TN: 13): Push this model up to 2" in any direction.

  ↳ ***"Wave To The People, Boris."***: After succeeding, take a different (0) Action.

RESTRICTIONS

Slate Ridge Mauler

BORIS

For years, there have been rumors circulating about a circus that had tamed a Slateridge Mauler and used it as a dancing circus bear. Whether these rumors were true all along or an entrepreneur took advantage of the myth is up for debate. What is known is that Madame Celeste's Celestial Circus recently acquired just such an animal.

Of course, it was short lived. Half way through one of the performances, the Mauler went berserk, killing most of the performers before fleeing into the night.

It is said that Boris still stalks the wilds of Malifaux in his fez hat, seeking revenge on the humans who had once enslaved and humiliated him. Or, at least, that's how Madam Celeste tells the story. It is more likely the creature just made its way home, but anything is possible.

TEMPORARY SHIELDING

COST: 0 SS

- This Upgrade does not count against this model's maximum number of Upgrades.
- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Strength In Unity: If this Crew contains 3 Oxfordian Mages, reduce this model's Cost to 5 for hiring purposes.

  Temporary Shielding: When this model suffers damage, it may discard this Upgrade and one card to reduce the damage by 2.

RESTRICTIONS

Oxfordian Mage

WELL REHEARSED

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Well Rehearsed: When a Scheme Marker is placed within ❶3 of this model, this model may push up to 2" in any direction.

  The Last Number: When a friendly Living model within ❶3 is killed, you may discard this Upgrade. If you do, the model is not killed and heals 1 damage.

RESTRICTIONS

Enforcer, Rare 1

BLADE AND CLAW

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Blade And Claw (**Ca** 6 / TN: 13 / Rg: 8): Target a friendly non-Master, non-Peon Beast. Place a Scheme Marker in base contact with the target, then place the target in base contact with target friendly non-Master, non-Peon Construct within 8" and LoS of this model. Finally, place the target friendly Construct into base contact with the Scheme Marker placed by this Action and discard the Scheme Marker. This Action may only be taken if there is a friendly Beast and a friendly Construct within range and LoS. This Action may not be taken during the first Turn of the game.

RESTRICTIONS

Rare 1




TITANIA
NEVERBORN

THE RETURN OF THE QUEEN

BY: GRAEME STEVENSON

Silence. Indefatigable silence.

And then deafening grinding. White light. Sweet air.

Ancient rusted beams screeched and rumbled; pylons, vast and hooked, toppled outward, crashing to the ground around the opening pit like fingers of an upturned hand relaxing in death. They shattered the encrusted ice that clung to every surface and threw clouds of snow into the air.

The air shimmered, invisible barriers tearing in tandem to the physical. Aetheric bonds snapped and a rush of foul air – held back for countless centuries – belched from the pit. It stank of rust and blood.

Most of the figures around the pit scattered, but a mesmerized few stood their ground. This would prove to be a mistake.

A figure emerged from the pit, floating skyward on the warm subterranean drifts. Long wings filled out and stretched to catch the rising air. They were exquisite – iridescent crimson feathers that shone with supernatural luster, deepening to absolute black on the tips of the primary and secondary feathers – and shaped like those of a sleek raptor.

As the steam from the pit cleared, the figure solidified into a female of slender build. Her skin was white as a cave worm and spattered in red gore that had somehow defied congealing during long centuries of captivity. Lank black hair clung to her face, and when she lifted her head, it was revealed that her eyes were gone. Only ragged, black sockets remained, issuing blood in slow rivulets. The wounds looked freshly inflicted, but the escapee moved her head this way and that to survey her surroundings, clearly unimpeded by their absence.

Her face was strong and undeniably beautiful despite her physical injuries, but there were shadows of arrogance and cruelty beneath the pleasing lines of her cheeks and jaw.

She alighted on the snowy stones of the pit's lip. If the cold troubled her bare feet, she gave no sign. Something about the way she moved and held herself belied the ragged white robes that hung about her, transcending their shabby appearance and embossing her with a sense of nobility.

A spot of ruby blood fell from her cheek and landed in the snow. Almost immediately, a tiny green shoot pushed through the droplet and began to curl skyward, spreading bronze-colored petals.

"Freedom," she breathed. Her voice was cultured, her accent foreign. It sounded almost archaic.

Behind her, other shapes were emerging.

A second female, less physically striking, but as pale and dark-haired as the first, emerged from the pit and stood to the right, a pace or so behind. Her robes were heavier and had withstood the test of time better, though they were far from serviceable. She held a long black staff decorated with the bones of small creatures, teeth and thorns, and topped by an elongated skull of a carnivore that had long since departed the world. She too, was eyeless, and from the crown of her head sprouted long twisted structures somewhere between tree roots and a stag's antlers.

More figures emerged: strange warriors made of flesh and wood or sporting armor of cunning design that seemed comprised of vines and bark. They were covered in thorns and brandished ancient but vicious-looking weapons. Each face that rose from the pit was the same: white flesh, black hair, and ragged holes instead of eyes.

Around them, the ground erupted, vines and creepers and flowers pushed through the snow and chunks of shattered ice, rising in a thick sweltering carpet around the escapees, oblivious to the freezing temperature and lack of soil or even anchorage on the stone beneath.

Common sense finally reached the onlookers that had remained, and they began to edge away, but by then it was too late. The winged leader had finally noticed them, and her white brow creased.

"Vermin," she muttered.

"I shall bleed them for you, my Queen," said the antlered female, reaching for a stone knife on her belt. The blade was so fine and sharp it was almost translucent. "Their red sap will strengthen you, thin though it is."

"Wait," the Queen said, raising a pale hand. "I have another use for them."



"What now, my Queen?" Aeslin asked at her shoulder.

It had taken scant seconds to replace her most trusted lieutenants. The Three had been lost in the final battle, and she would need them for the task ahead. She had selected the three most capable looking of the peons inhabiting Nythera's shell and transformed them – twisting their flesh, growing and hardening them until her favorites emerged from the pulped red masses.

The Claw. The Thorn. The Tooth. It was decreed that they would ever be at her side, and here they stood now, risen once again from the flesh of lesser beings.

The Claw stood silently, armor formed of dark, twisted wood; in his gnarled hands he held an iron-hard bladed spear. Spines and thorns coated his outer surface, and the cold of winter billowed from his undead mouth, colder even than the frigid air around them.

The Thorn was shorter and supple as a reed, armored in the pale greens of spring. Her flesh was ever-wrapped in shifting tendrils, moving like a nest of contented serpents. Vines hung from her wrists and forearms, studded with glinting razor barbs that could rip the flesh from a man with a single lash.

The Tooth's stature was somewhere in between: female, but more angular with corded muscle across her shoulders and back. Her long hair was the color of her armor, green like grasses growing from the depth of summer. In her hands was a large bladed sword whose cutting edges were keen as a razor, but it quickly softened into a brilliant confusion of vines and leaves.

The other peons had gone under Aeslin's knife. It was likely a grander fate than they deserved to be flayed by the Queen's own Dryw, but she had always considered her generosity to be one of her faults.

Walking beyond the spreading border of bright vegetation, beyond the blooms of crimson where Aeslin had worked her art, Titania crunched into the snow of Nythera and fixed her sightless gaze on the middle distance.

She had been buried a long time, and the world above her had changed. As the world opened to her sight, she began to realize how much.

Once, this land had belonged to her and had been bursting with life. It had stretched from the boundaries of the city to beyond the scope of the hardiest traveler. Now, it was an expanse of desolation with only isolated pockets of life struggling against the waste and rot.

Before, the battle lines had been clearly drawn; now, she sensed many fractal powers interlaced across the land, perpetually at war.

And there was a great void – she felt the raw edge of it the way a blindfolded man feels the lip of a chasm with questing toes. Something very mighty had been thrown down or destroyed, and the world around it still shook from the cataclysm. The fractal Powers swarmed around it like rats on a tiger's carcass, their Captains locking horns as each vied for supremacy.

The city squatted at the very heart of it. Diminished and partly ruined, its light was now no more than a glimmer of its former brilliance, but there was a poisonous hue to that glimmer that suggested that as its health had failed so had its treachery multiplied. It had once been filled with the bright vibrant lives of the Fae; now there were only patches of indeterminate movement – a weak, insignificant form of life, much like the peons she had discovered upon her release.

"I no longer know this land," she said.

"It matters not," Aeslin said, shaking her antlered head. "You shall rule, as you did before."

There was a time, an ancient time almost forgotten, when Titania would have laughed at this. She would have thrown her hair and reveled in her power and the conviction of her Court, in the assurance that she reigned supreme. That she would *always* reign supreme. She had been a Queen then, a true Queen with dominion over all the lands of the Fae, and her subjects had lived in fear and awe of her strength. Her Court had been wise and all-knowing, evergreen in its vibrancy.

Then had come the rise of the Tyrants, the manipulation of the Grave Spirit, and the endless dark of Nythera.

The betrayal was still a keen wound, though she had been granted many centuries to tend it. Her own people had turned against her, poisoned by the lies of the self-appointed wise men of the city. They had bent their knees to science and bureaucracy and, in their arrogance had thought to question the will of their Queen. They had undone her, and in the same stroke, themselves.

And where were they now, these wise men? There lay their city, like a stone corpse on the landscape, but what had become of their learning and foresight?

Of the Fae, she sensed very little. There was life of a sort within the city – the vermin – but of her own people there was almost no sign; isolated pin-pricks of sentience here and perhaps there, but the legions of her race were gone to death or distance beyond her ability to see. Her armies were dust, her people ghosts.

She felt irreparable loss. Her torment and imprisonment had been at the hands of her people, subverted by the accursed fools who thought they knew better, and there was a deep anger in her for the injustices and torment she had suffered. The wounds inflicted by the Grave Spirit would never heal, but she still felt an overarching responsibility for the welfare of her race, misguided or otherwise. She was their Queen, and without her wisdom and guidance they had lost their way and ultimately perished.

"Your Grace?" Aeslin prompted.

Though the Fae had all but vanished, she was still their sovereign – appointed by ancient order and imbued with the will to lead. She would regather the scattered wreckage of her people and she would nurture them. In time, they would grow again.

The Fae were no more than an echo now, but Titania was detecting another, newer form of life. It was concentrated in the hollows, forests, and swamps many leagues from the city, and its light permeated the veil of this world and shone beyond, as had the Fae's. Most had the bright impetuous flare of youth, but there were gatherings of older, stronger individuals, and it was from here that the remaining flickers of the Fae also emanated. It seemed that these newer spirits shared kinship of a sort – perhaps they were descendants of the Fae; her new people, her new subjects.

And there was one Captain in particular among the struggling powers that drew Titania's attention. His aura was a masked anomaly with one foot in the affairs of the inhabitants of the city and the other in the world of the descendants of the Fae – a tightrope that he seemed to walk with great skill. What was most apparent to her was that this Masked Captain dwelled among the vermin and influenced a great many of them, but he was not one of them. She saw glimmers of a different light behind his Mask.

She understood from this Captain's spreading tendrils of influence that he was one of the architects of the shattered gulf that had so recently been torn in the land. An endeavor on that scale would have taken cunning and wisdom, and the vermin under his rule smacked of exploited, ignorant labor.

Good qualities to have in a subject.

"What do you see, my Queen?" Aeslin asked. There was no irony in her question – her eye sockets were as raw and bloody as the Queen's.

"I will go to the city," Titania said. "There is one there with whom I must speak."

There was a long beat while her Dryw digested this and phrased her response carefully.

"I dislike these vermin. They have no loyalty. Two of the ones I bled at Nythera stood behind opposing Captains, yet each put his own preservation ahead of the mandate of his commander."

"And yet I may still find use for their limited service," the Queen said. "Weak subjects are better than none at all."

Titania reached out with Fae muscles that had atrophied from centuries without use and stirred the clouds. They boiled into a threatening purple mass that began to spread across the sky towards the distant city; shadows pooled in dry creek beds and washed over bald hills until they reached the distant ruined towers of her hated enemy, throwing miles of open badland into an obscuring gloom.

Much had changed since Titania's imprisonment, and though her mind and determination had survived the grave, her strength had suffered greatly. She felt the weakness inside her, the parched salt flat where an ocean had once thundered. It would be rash to charge into a potential enemy's camp uninformed and unprepared. The storm would hide her approach and give her much-needed time to appraise the Masked Captain. She would know soon enough whether he could be used.

As the winds rose and distant lightning strobed the cumulus, Titania spread her wings. In a single beat she was aloft, rocketing into the glowering sky and leaving her courtiers far below.

"Await my return," her voice called down and then with another wingbeat she was a defiant speck speeding against the building storm clouds. A breath, and then she was gone.

Lucius watched the ash cylinder gradually crawl the length of the cigar, following the faint gray smoke as it twined like a monochrome creeper up from his leather-padded desk to furl around the highly polished mahogany ceiling fan.

He had no interest in smoking it; its refined flavor was lost on him, and yet he enjoyed the minor spectacle of destruction. It was to him a symbol of the inherently transient nature of material things. A craftsman had sweated and agonized over its creation, selecting the very finest ingredients and only the most exacting method of manufacture. It had been packaged with care and attention, and shipped countless miles to be presented as an article of the finest luxury.

And he'd just set fire to it.

Since the death of the Governor, the Secretary had made it a point to surround himself with the finer things in life. Many of them he took a genuine pleasure from; supple calf-skin boots, the finest silken shirts, even a modest flash of ostentation in his collection of jeweled tie pins and the occasional ring.

The consumables, however, had always been difficult to find enthusiasm for. His sustenance did not depend on such base materials, but he understood their importance to men of stature, and they were essential ingredients in the glamor of being wealthy and powerful. It would have been remiss of him *not* to surround himself with the trappings of success.

And so his office held a decanter of the finest brandy available on either side of the Breach, and the cigars in his humidor each carried a price-tag large enough to cast a shadow over any mid-level Guild employee's salary.

This particular cigar he was burning was an import from Cuba and was the last of a box presented by the Governor-General himself.

Ashes to ashes, he thought, watching the smoldering nub snuff itself out and collapse into the ceramic ashtray.

Outside, the wind scratched at the glass of his balcony door. The weather had taken a suspiciously sharp down-turn, and the gathering storm overhead carried a whiff not of ozone but of something very much more dangerous.

He stood at the glass, hands clasped behind his back, and looked out into the darkness. A pale mask looked in. Rain began to tap against the pane, distorting his reflection so that his mask seemed to contort and squirm with unreadable expression.

He might have wandered, then, down the paths of his long memory to a time when duplicity was something he would not have understood and his face still felt the touch of the sun, had his reflection not changed entirely into something else.

The washed-out gold of his mask curdled and turned to fish-belly white, and the faint jade glow of his eyes became empty black holes that somehow still conveyed ancient fury and purpose. The expressionless face slit became a woman's mouth, sensuous at one time but now malformed by troubled memory. Black hair moved like oil as the face floated closer through the rain, an inch from the glass at most. There was not a single breath from the other side to fog the window. Whatever it was that watched him, it wasn't living.

A voice sounded in his head, a low timbre that was barely feminine and strangely accented.

The Masked Captain, it said, and though the apparition's lips did not move, there was no doubt as to the source of the voice.

Lucius was not especially alarmed. Far more than a single pane of glass protected him from an exterior assault – there were layers of magical wards between them that only the mightiest could have broken through, and in doing so they would alert every Guildsman in the building. Not that Lucius was incapable of defending himself, only that he preferred to task others to take the risk in his stead.

"It is more usual to contact my assistant for an appointment before appearing in person," he said mildly. "With the recent demise of the Governor-General, I'm afraid you may find my appointment book rather full."

You have surrounded yourself with the effects of these vermin, the visitor continued, unabated. Y*ou stand among them, are counted as one of them. They heed your council. They obey your laws. They bear your yoke.*

"As they should," Lucius said. "I serve in the capacity of acting Governor-General."



These lesser men mark you as their creed, but they do not see beyond the mask, the visitor said, and the blood-rimmed sockets in her face crinkled with sudden shrewdness. *They do not see how one they recognize as their own could ever yearn to be free of duplicity. They do not see how he who wears a mask could ever wish for the warmth of the sun on his face.*

The pithy comment Lucius was preparing about an eyeless woman seeing died in his throat.

The peons are blind sheep, the voice in his head said. *But not I.*

"Who are you?" he whispered.

I am Titania, said the woman, her voice rising like a wave inside his skull. *I am Queen of the Fae. I am the Third Law. I am Keeper of the Old World. I am the Storm and the Withered Rose. I am the Autumn Queen, and I am returned to this world once again.*

Lucius might have scoffed with incredulity, but the figure seemed to transform as she spoke, gaining height and spreading razor-edged wings the full length of the balcony, and the rain on her tattered garments seemed to shimmer into flowing robes of spectral majesty. The sheer force of her will as she delivered her impassioned monologue buckled the barrier between them like a canvas tent in a gale.

The glass shrieked as it deformed, prevented from shattering by the warding spells, but bent out of shape by the undeniable presence beyond.

"Impossible," Lucius managed after taking an involuntary step back. "A legend. A myth."

Legend and myth were once truth, Titania said. *Waylaid and distorted with Time, but truth nonetheless. I am returned.*

There was no denying the conviction. Lucius had never met a queen in his capacity as a Guild official, but he knew that she would sound like the voice in his head. It was the voice of a ruler, burdened with the office of law and judgement, tempered with self-sacrifice and abstinence, shadowed by terrible power.

"But how?" he asked.

There will be a time for explanations, Titania said. When she didn't elaborate, he assumed she had decided that time had not yet arrived.

"And what do you want of me?"

There is a kinship between your kind and mine, she said. *You are not Fae, but you carry an inner light as we did. And we share many sentiments: your people also yearn to be free of the vermin. To take back your world and be rid of their menace and tyranny.*

I seek a moot with the other Captains of your kind to declare my return to the world and to strike a banner for my cause.

"Which is?"

Annihilation of the Tyrants, she said instantly. *It is the price of freedom for my people. And, if my cause is deemed worthy, perhaps to strike an accord – even an alliance – with your kin against a common foe.*

The Secretary speculated on the situation. If this creature's heritage was genuine – if this really *was* Titania – how would her reappearance affect the power balance among the Neverborn? A legendary Queen from the annals of history had returned to modern-day Malifaux, and a notorious one at that. The specifics of Titania's rule and eventual downfall had been muddied by the passage of centuries, but her name was synonymous with the defeat of the Tyrants, a staggering accomplishment. And, of course, with betrayal.

Titania was momentarily illuminated in stark contrast by a lightning flash, and Lucius had a startling instant of staring at a lost, dead soul – a skull-faced relic of a former age, animated yet devoid of life or love. A wraith driven by duty and revenge.

He drew back from the glass.

Titania sensed his change of heart and she frowned, her black sockets weeping blood as the rainwater cascaded down her face.

Call your Captains, she said. *Let them hear my council, as I shall hear theirs. I ask only for an opportunity to speak. The path your people follow afterward will be your decision and yours alone.*

"As you wish," Lucius said. "But I do not speak for them. They may not come."

For the first time, Titania's hard mouth curled into something like a smile.

They will come, she said.

He knew she was right. Any claimant to Titania's throne would garner a lot of attention from the Neverborn. Only, Lucius suspected it was the sort of attention she might live just long enough to regret.

Without another word, the Queen vanished with a single huge stroke of her wings, hammering wind and rain against the glass and leaving Lucius once again staring at his streaky, pale reflection.

The resurgence of the Queen of the Fae represented great danger and upset for the Neverborn. The legends suggested she had sacrificed many of her subjects for personal gain and that her dabbling in dangerous forces had nearly been the death of them all. She was an unpredictable force; a rogue agent.

She was also a creature out of her time. Even if her claim to the throne was accepted by the Neverborn, there was little enough left of her queendom to rule over.

There was something else she represented besides upheaval, though. Something that would perhaps overpower even the specter of perfidy.

She represented unity.

Were the forces of the Neverborn to ally under her flag, they would be united under the most credible leader their people had seen in a long time. Titania's regal presence was undeniable. Her diplomatic prowess remained to be tested, but if nothing else she was a seasoned battle commander who had ruled her people without rival for centuries.

She might genuinely represent the Neverborn's best chance for freedom from persecution.

Lucius stared at the figure in the glass, wondering whether he would still recognize the face behind the mask.



It had survived. After a fashion.

Many lifetimes ago, the Court of the Autumn Queen had been a spectacular thing. Far from the city, two wyrdwood trees grew on a hill carpeted in lush ankle-deep grass and flowers of every hue and description. The trees intertwined around each other and their branches formed a lattice of waxy bark in the shape of a fan, over a hundred feet in height and breadth. Lesser wyrdwoods grew in a ring around the crown of the hill, completely encircling the Court in dense woodland but for a corridor through the trunks at the far end wide enough for five men to walk abreast.

These wyrdwood trees retained their leaves all throughout the year, even in deepest winter. The leaves were abnormally broad and plentiful and shone with hues of brilliant copper, bronze, and gold under the caress of the sun. All the colors of autumn surrounded the Court, and at dawn and dusk, when the sun was low, the hilltop would blaze like a flame when the glinting leaves shivered and rustled in the gathering winds.

In the center of the court lay the Letting-Stone, a finger of granite that thrust up through the rich turf, long ago cut into a sacrificial table that was engraved with symbols and scored with channels. This was one of the anchors of the Queen's power, or more specifically, her Dryw's power. Blood magic was the most primal of the ancient arts, and life force was a potent energy. The ground beneath the Letting-Stone had drunk deep of this red life, and Titania's power had swelled over the centuries like a leech on pink flesh.

At the base of the golden wyrdwood fan sat a throne, formed from the same gnarled branches that comprised the rest of the Queen's Court. It was a simple, unadorned thing hidden behind wreathes of shining leaves that would draw in to clothe the Queen whenever she sat in attendance, bedecking her in a living cape that spanned the full circumference of her domain.

But no longer.

The grass was gone now. Bald, brown earth crowned the hill in an arid and blasted land where it seemed impossible to believe that anything green had ever grown here, or would again.

The trees still stood, their roots sunk deep into the bones of the world, but their beautiful metallic foliage had blackened, withered, and blown away in the empty centuries since her fall. Now the Court was a tombstone of bare branches scratching at the sky – a jagged fan of brown corpse fingers.

Dead leaves shifted around her feet as she walked the circumference of the hall, surveying what remained of her ancient seat. Green vines unfurled from her footprints. The branches shivered as she stroked them, bursting into blossom, and there was a murmur on the air of her return. The entire wood rustled softly, carrying the whisper of the return of the Autumn Queen.

Titania took a breath, drawing the smell of earth, wood, and wind into her lungs. There was still life here, she knew, and as her strength grew, so too would her Court flourish. In time, it would regain its former glory.

As would she.

"It is not as I remember," Aeslin said, her voice full of sorrow. "Time has been cruel to this place."

"Time can heal as well as destroy," Titania said, brushing dead leaves from the seat of her throne.

"My Queen is wise." The Dryw nodded, her twisted root-antlers bobbing sagely. "What is your command?"

"The Masked Captain has done as I bade him. I sense the approach of many of his kin. These *Neverborn*."

The brilliance of their life force was distracting, even at a distance. They were moving in from all directions, and the first of them would arrive soon.

"Several of their greatest Captains are among them," Titania added.

"They will kneel," Aeslin said without a shred of doubt.

"In time, perhaps," the Queen acquiesced, "but they are proud and at the height of their strength. They will not accept me readily."

"Then we shall *teach* them how to kneel," Aeslin growled, and tendrils of fine black vapor curled from her long staff. The woven bones and thorns around it rattled dangerously. "With blood. And war."

"This is not the time for war," Titania snapped, and the Dryw bowed her head, taking a pace backwards. "You would have us do battle now? With my strength at its lowest ebb and few enough subjects at my side to count in one breath?"

"Forgive me, my Queen," Aeslin spoke quickly. "My words were foolish but spoken from the heart. This world is yours by right, decreed by ancient order. It burns me to think another might flaunt that right."

"Then heed me well," Titania said. Her Autumn Knights stiffened as her empty gaze washed over them. "These Neverborn have known no rule other than their own. They will have no courtly manner, nor are they likely to address me with the respect I am due."

"I shall-" started Aeslin.

"- do nothing, without my order," finished Titania with a frown. "These Neverborn will need cause to swear themselves to me. Something more tangible than myth or ancient law. I must give them reason for their pledge of fealty."

"But...you are Queen," her Dryw said.

"Aye," Titania nodded, a bitter smile flitting across her white face. "Uncontested ruler of a scattered and all but extinct people, gone from this world a hundred lifetimes. Little enough now remains of that ancient order. The Fae that have endured will answer my summons, but they alone will not be enough. I need the Neverborn."

There was no sound other than the breath of the world, moving through the trees.

At last, Aeslin spoke again.

"As you will, my Queen," she said. "How then shall you accept their fealty, should they...wish... to give it?"

"The old way," Titania nodded. "If any will consent to be bound to me, take them to the Letting-Stone. I foresee how it will begin, with the tumbling of small stones leading to the landslide, and in time perhaps a great many will be persuaded to accept my wisdom. The strong ones, however – the Captains – they will resist me."

"It will be as you say, your Grace," Aeslin bowed.

"Leave me, now," the Queen said. "I must prepare for their arrival."

Her subjects bowed and retreated.

Titania lowered herself slowly into her throne. It felt at once foreign and familiar, yet when the whip-slender branches of the wyrdwood throne curled with tentative greeting around her pale wrists and shoulders, the sense of dislocation faded.

Gold and bronze leaves erupted from the vines and began to spread, chasing one another up the boughs of the wyrdwoods, reaching higher and higher, unfurling the banner of the Autumn Queen's return.



The first of the Neverborn reached the edge of the woods some hours later as the burnished disc of the sun began to slip behind the horizon.

Titania felt their apprehension as they lingered at the edge of the tree line, watching with bright eyes but unwilling to step into the open Court. They would grow bolder as their numbers grew, and before long she would receive the first of their Captains. Then it would begin in earnest.

Much of the Court's former splendor had returned, and thick, pulsing vines now clambered up every tree, threading crimson and violet flowers among the brilliant metallic leaves. The parched earth was now a lush fur of grass and meadow flowers, and the air was thick with the scent of pollen and lazy dandelion fluff.

On the Queen's left stood the Three – the Claw, the Thorn, the Tooth – silent and watchful; on her right waited Aeslin the Dryw, her poise regal despite the ragged white robes that hung from her thin form.

The remainder of her Autumn Knights encircled the Court, as motionless as the others, weapons at their sides. Awaiting her command.

Soon enough, Titania sensed something much more significant approaching and stirred on her throne. The wyrdwood branches rustled and resettled around her.

A slender figure strode boldly into the Court, flanked by a long procession of winged and horned guards. As with all objects of great mass, lesser ones were drawn along in the Captain's wake, and the Neverborn began to filter through the trees, their burgeoning confidence permitting curiosity.

The blue winged creatures were massive, heavy boned, and brutish. Bred for war. As they streamed into the Court, Titania lost count of their number. A message, there. And fear, also.

Their Captain was tall and athletic, clothed in red and gray leather. Flame-red hair framed a strong, fearless face. The hilt of a great-sword projected over one shoulder.

They had come ready for battle.

This one is proud, Titania thought. *Proud and savage. Good.*

"So this is what a queen looks like," the Captain declared in a loud voice that carried all the way around the Court. "Not quite what I was expecting."

Titania waited, watching the gathering Neverborn beyond the ring of Autumn Knights. There lay the hearts she had to win, not this fiery youth.

"Where is the splendor? Where is the majesty? Where is your crown?" the Captain continued. "Shouldn't you at least have robes befitting your station? Or can queens also be beggars?"

Titania smiled without mirth, training her raw eye-sockets on the newcomer.

"I welcome you to the Court of the Autumn Queen," she said.

"Is that what this is?" asked the Captain, taking a look around and wrinkling her nose. "Looks more like a briar patch to me."

Titania could feel the anger building in her subjects, but her command would hold them a while yet. She had to admit that it was galling for one so young to speak with such arrogance, but there was no opportunity to tutor proper humility just yet.

"I am Titania," she said. "I am the Queen of the Fae."

"Mattheson mumbled something to that effect," the Captain said, her arms folded and an unimpressed expression on her face. "What are you doing here?"

"In my time, it was considered a courtesy to know the name of those one sought parlay with."

"Times change," the Captain said bluntly. "What are you doing here?"

"Insolent cur!" Aeslin snapped. Black vapor exploded from her like squid ink, and her staff swung into the air. The Neverborn Captain pivoted to meet this new threat, one arm already reaching over her shoulder for her weapon.

"NO!" bellowed Titania with such force that everyone within the Court staggered. The trees swayed and came to rest in a fluttering of falling bronze leaves.

The Autumn Queen's power was not what it had once been, but much of her strength was derived from this place and the Letting-Stone, and her command still carried enough weight to stall the carnage that would otherwise have engulfed them all.

"There will be no blood shed here today," she continued when the echo of her voice had ebbed.

"Glad to hear it," said a new voice.

All eyes turned as a pixie-faced youth in green gossamer trotted out of the woods at the edge of the Court. She joined the taller Neverborn Captain before the Queen's throne and offered a winning smile to everyone watching.

"Welcome, child," Titania said, regarding this new player with interest. For such an unassuming physical presence, she gave off waves of formidable energy. "I am Titania, the Autumn Queen."

"Your grace," the girl said and curtseyed, surprising the Queen. "My name is Pandora, and this is Lilith. Sorry about her temper – she's actually not so bad once you get to know her."

She is impetuous and out-spoken, Titania thought. *Just what I need.*

"Well met," the Queen replied, indicating her courtiers. "This is Aeslin, my Dryw." The blank expressions made Titania smile. "Forgive me. It is a word from the Old World. It means blood-witch. Wise-woman. Sage."

Aeslin nodded stiffly, obviously still fuming at the Neverborn's insolence.

Titania took stock of the two Captains. The volatile one, Lilith, looked as taciturn and suspicious as before, but there was a wariness in her eyes now – she had felt the power of the Autumn Queen and was no longer so certain of an easy victory. Her smaller companion, however, was much more difficult to read.

"So, are you really the Autumn Queen?" asked Pandora.

"I am, child."

"Fair enough," the Neverborn sniffed amiably.

Lilith glowered at her associate. "What? Are you demented? You don't believe this old corpse, do you?"

Pandora shrugged. "Why shouldn't I? What difference does it make?"

"What difference..?" Lilith gaped. "You're just going to accept her as the Autumn Queen? Just like that?"

"Sure. Why not?"

Lilith stepped away from the throne, hauling Pandora after her by the arm, hissing under her breath to discuss the issue in privacy. It was a futile gesture: there were no secrets that could be kept from the Queen in her own Court.

"Why not? Why not??" Lilith was saying. "I'll tell you why not. Because if this *is* the real Autumn Queen, she's more treacherous than Zoraida. She's the one that opened Kythera, remember? She overthrew the Tyrants – *all* of them. At the *same time.* Her *own people* had to imprison her to prevent their destruction."

Pandora was nodding eagerly. "Yeah! Sounds like fun."

"She's a liability that we can't afford," Lilith continued. "We let her take root now and it could be the end of us all."

"And if she's not the real Autumn Queen?"

"Kill her anyway. It's not worth the risk."

"It is true that my own people imprisoned me," Titania interrupted, making both Neverborn turn in surprise. "It is the burden of every ruler that their subjects do not always see the true motive behind their actions. They have not the clarity of vision to

see what is yet to come. I took a tremendous risk to safeguard my people against the might of the Tyrants, but there were those among the Fae who misconstrued it as a grasp for unobtainable power, and I was undone."

She raised a white hand to gesture at the ring of trees around them.

"Now you see the crop sewn by the faithless. Without my foresight, without my guidance, my people fell into decline. There are almost none of us left."

"And you expect us to believe you've returned just to save us poor Neverborn from stumbling blindly into the same fate?" sneered Lilith.

"Blindly?" echoed Titania, her bloody sockets creasing with amusement. "Far from it. I believe you know only too well the fate that awaits you and all of Malifaux."

Lilith was silent, but the thin line of her lips told the Queen that the blow had hit home.

"You say that I overthrew the Tyrants," Titania said. "That also is true. I cast Them down, I broke Their physical forms. But I did not destroy Them. I was thwarted in my moment of triumph by the very people I sought to protect."

The gathered Neverborn waited.

"And now Their time has come around again," Titania said. She could feel the eyes of the Neverborn on her now, not just the Captains but the throngs that had gathered in the trees and around the edge of her Court. They were listening, and their hearts were open to hope. "Their power is in ascendance, and you have not the strength among you to stand against Them."

"And you do?" snapped Lilith.

"I am older than you know, child," said the Queen, leaning forward on her wyrdwood throne. The trees behind her shifted in sympathy, their foliage rustling angrily. "I drove Them to Their knees once before, and I could do it again. Alone, I could suppress them. For a time."

The branches sounded like grinding teeth. "But with the power of the Neverborn at my side?"

The Queen left the statement hanging, the trap baited.

"Oh, I see," Lilith said, rolling her eyes. "You could destroy them, is that it? If only we bend the knee."

And there it was. The words had been spoken, and most importantly, by the Neverborn Captain. The gathered witnesses would remember, and they would believe.

"I said nothing of fealty," Titania replied after a carefully-timed beat. "It is an alliance that I propose."

Lilith laughed long and hard, but the Queen could sense the thoughts of the gathered Neverborn around her, and she waited patiently for the Captain to compose herself.

"You?" Lilith prompted. "An alliance with the Autumn Queen? Do you expect anyone who knows your legacy to actually *trust* you?"

"And you, child?" Titania shifted the focus of the conversation to Pandora, knowing now that Lilith was too stubborn to admit doubt aloud, no matter what she harbored privately. It did not matter – she had served her purpose. "How do you propose to deal with the menace of the Tyrants?"

The girl hugged a box to her midriff, swinging from side to side as she considered. There was something about that container that troubled Titania; the aura around it was staggeringly powerful, yet the girl seemed oblivious to the danger.

"Your plan sounds like a good one," she said at length, "and there's no doubt in my mind that you are who you say you are."

Titania would have smiled but for the foresight that something else was coming.

"But, *because* there's no doubt in my mind that you are who you say you are, I just don't trust you. And I'm not so easily led as my friend, here."

"Huh?" Lilith glanced over.

"We came here tonight to assess you as a possible threat, your Grace," Pandora said. "And I see now that you have the potential to be a greater danger to us than the Tyrants."

The Queen recoiled imperceptibly on her throne. This was not the answer she had expected.

Pandora broke into a blinding smile. "You should take that as a compliment. I didn't think that was possible."

"You are wiser than you look, child," Titania acknowledged. "Trust is the hardest of all to foster. Painstakingly cultivated and if lost, never regained. My legacy precedes me, and our search for it may end fruitlessly. But search we must, if the Tyrants are to be defeated."

"I've heard enough," Lilith snarled, stabbing a finger at the Queen on her throne. "You are not welcome here. We protected Nythera for generations to prevent your escape, and we know the truth of what you did. You will never be trustworthy. And you will never rule us."

The Queen's smile was as raw as her eye sockets.

"If you speak for all Neverborn, then so be it. My war against the Tyrants will continue bereft of a powerful ally."

With a snort of contempt, Lilith spun on her heel and marched away. Her hulking guards fell into step behind her, shouldering their way insolently past the Autumn Knights.

When the Court was virtually empty, Titania turned again to Pandora.

"Your friend fears me," she said.

Pandora shook her head. "She fears what you represent for our people, your Grace, but she does not fear you. She does not fear anyone."

The Queen's empty gaze bored into the young Neverborn. "Let her face the Grave Spirit before stating such a claim."

Pandora returned the intense look, undaunted. “All in good time, your Grace.”

The Queen laughed, a musical sound that spread smiles across all the listening Neverborn, and the moment was broken. “You lighten my heart, child. It is my hope that one day we may be friends.”

Pandora giggled lightly and turned away. “One thing at a time, your Grace,” she called over her shoulder as she vanished into the trees.

A silence fell over the Court as the Queen mused over this confrontation.

It could have gone better, but it also could have been far worse. The Neverborn were clearly no fools, and they had both strength and wisdom, but they were not openly hostile, despite claiming to know the truth of Nythera and the events that had befallen the Fae there.

And some of them were still here. Many had left in the wake of their Captains, but she sensed a residue beneath the canopy, crouched and watching.

“Come forward, friends,” she called out. “You need not fear me.”

A few uncertain faces moved to the edge of the tree line. Bright, inquisitive eyes blinked at her from the shadows.

“Come forward, I say. I will not harm you.”

They began to drift closer in small clumps of two and three. At her signal, her Autumn Knights parted soundlessly, opening a path to the base of the throne.

Titania sensed a fledgling hope among them; a hope for salvation and a shield against the encroaching darkness.

Aeslin was suddenly there, the flensing knife in her hand as the Neverborn gathered before the throne of the Autumn Queen. Before the Letting-Stone.

One by one, they began to kneel.



PERSUADE YOUR FORCES

You must prove to your followers that you are the strongest and best suited to lead them…

SET UP

This is a scenario for three players. Each player hires a 25 Soulstone Crew, led by a Master. Before deploying, randomly determine a player to go first. Then each player places their Master within 3" of the center of the board.

DEPLOYMENT

Once the Masters are placed, players take turns deploying their Crew anywhere on the board not within 6" of another model. Models may not start the game buried.

SPECIAL

All models other than Masters start the game as Unaligned. Unaligned models don't belong to any Crew, may not Activate, and may not be targeted in any way.

Each Master may take the following Attack Action: "(1) Issue Challenge: Target an enemy Master within 6" and choose Wp, Df, or Wk. Perform an opposed duel with the target of the chosen type. The winner of the duel may choose the Unaligned model with the lowest Soulstone Cost to join their Crew permanently. If multiple models are tied for the lowest Soulstone Cost, this model's controller may choose among them."

Once an Unaligned model joins a Crew, it counts as if it had been hired by that Crew for all purposes, and may Activate as normal. Note that players may choose Unaligned models that they did not bring to the table originally.

The first time a Master is killed or sacrificed, the player that was not involved (they neither killed or sacrificed the Master, nor was their Master the one that was killed or sacrificed) may choose up to three Unaligned models (of any Soulstone Cost) to join their Crew permanently.

VICTORY

At the end of the game, each player scores 1 VP for every model they control in play, other than their Master.

The return of the Autumn Queen cast the Neverborn into chaos. She was another wedge shoved between their already-disparate ranks, dividing them when unity was needed the most.

Or at least, that was Lilith's opinion. From the moment she had laid eyes on Titania, she knew that the woman was a dire threat to their cause, and her conversation with the Queen had only solidified that belief in her mind.

However, Lilith could not afford to move against her just yet. Zoraida had become indisposed in the wake of the Governor's death, too caught up in her own visions and plots to be of any great use. Once, the two of them had considered using the Governor-General to seal off the aether tear created by the fall of the Red Cage, as they had done with Daw so long ago. Looking back at how much power the man had managed to accumulate before his end, she wondered if they had made a mistake in discarding the idea so quickly.

Shaking the thought from her head, she turned her attention back to the small frontier town. The Terror Tots at her heels fidgeted in anticipation for the coming meal, and Lilith allowed herself a pang of regret; they were still too young to undergo the change, but she needed capable fighters, and she needed them now.

With a gesture from her hand, heavy clouds rolled over the moon, plunging the frontier town into darkness. She glanced down at her children and nodded, sending them scurrying toward the nearest house with surprising speed. The screaming started a few minutes later, but rather than take joy in the slaughter of humans, it only saddened her.

She was sacrificing the future of the young ones for the present, but what other choice did she have?

Pandora stood in the court of the Autumn Queen, feigning respect for Titania while quietly prodding at Lilith's psyche, needling her toward rash behavior with subtle whispers of power lost and reminders of her sister's ambition. The box watched the Queen, weighing its options as its puppet kept her distracted with insipid banter.

That night, Pandora met with a handsome Guild lawyer and convinced him to claw out his own throat. The box drank in the dying man's last moments, wallowing in his terror and confusion as the last of his life bled out on the cold cobblestones.

The box strode confidently into the frontier town, Pandora clutched tightly in its...

Pandora raised a hand to her forehead, pausing at the edge of the town as she tried to gather her thoughts. She reminded herself that she was not the box and then wondered why she would ever have to do such a thing.

Holding the box up in front of her, she frowned, regarding it for what felt like the first time. Where had she even found it? She couldn't remember ever *not* having the box, and yet...

The thought disappeared, plucked from her mind like a ripe fruit. She regarded the box in her hands for a moment, then looked around in confusion, trying to remember what she was doing. Faded wooden buildings, people looking at her strangely from behind windows...

Pandora shrugged her shoulders. It must not have been too important, she thought as she opened the box, releasing countless screaming, gibbering horrors out into the world and dooming the frontier town to madness.

The box smiled with her mouth.

Zoraida had planned to shield herself from the ramifications of the Governor-General's failed attempts at ascension, but rather than merely consume him, the ritual flooded his body with an unexpected surge of aetherial energy, and when he was gone, that energy snapped outwards like uncontrolled lightning.

The effigies that Zoraida had created years earlier, tied as they were to the pattern of Fate, served as grounding points for this energy, harnessing and containing it, and in that moment, Fate slipped from Zoraida's grasp.

It took her weeks to find the frayed threads of Fate and bring them back under her control, but by then the damage had been done. The Governor had manifested on Earth as the Burning Man, the barrier between the two worlds had begun to collapse, and Nythera had opened, releasing an ancient threat back into the world.

Unfortunately, there was just too much to be done, and Zoraida could sense that her time was beginning to run short. She had to prioritize, and that meant leaving Titania to Lilith and the Burning Man to the people of Earth, where her ability to influence anything was much reduced. The barrier between the worlds, however... that was something she had some control over.

She had once before used Jack Daw as a mystical wedge to seal away the aether, and now, it was time for a similar ritual. That would require her to find the right person and trick them into accepting the bargain, but Zoraida had plenty of tools at her disposal, so there was little doubt that she would find another suitable wedge.

The only question was whether she would find one in time.

The Dreamer, awake and terrified, hid in his closet as London burned around him. The streets had flooded days ago, trapping his family in their mansion. His father waded outside with a fire poker to search for a member of the police or military – anyone who could help them – and never came back.

His mother attempted to comfort him when they heard the voices outside, claiming that everything was alright, but the Dreamer knew better. It wasn't the first time he had heard someone being eaten by a monster.

A patrol of English policemen eventually came to their house in a motor boat, rescuing the Dreamer and his mother and evacuating them from the doomed city. As the Dreamer looked back on the flooded, flaming ruins of his home and the man-shaped star that burned overhead like a midnight sun, he realized that he had been squandering his power.

All the games he played with Lord Chompy Bits, all the inconsequential races and games of tag... he had been living in the past, trying to hold onto a childhood that seemed more and more distant with each passing year, when he should have been thinking bigger.

When the Dreamer fell asleep in the refugee camp that night, the version of him that appeared in Malifaux was older, appearing more like his twelve-year old waking self than the younger form he had clung to for so many years. Neither was he dressed in his sleeping gown; instead, he looked the part of a mischievous street scamp with a cricket bat cocked over one shoulder.

When Lord Chompy Bits questioned his new appearance, the Dreamer informed the Tyrant that they were done playing "kid games."

Now they were going to have some *real* fun.

Collodi put the final touches on its latest creation and carefully placed it on the shelf inside its wagon, next to its other creations. The puppet carefully smoothed out its stitched costume as it stirred to life. After a moment, it slowly raised its tiny wooden hands up to its painted face, as if seeing them for the first time.

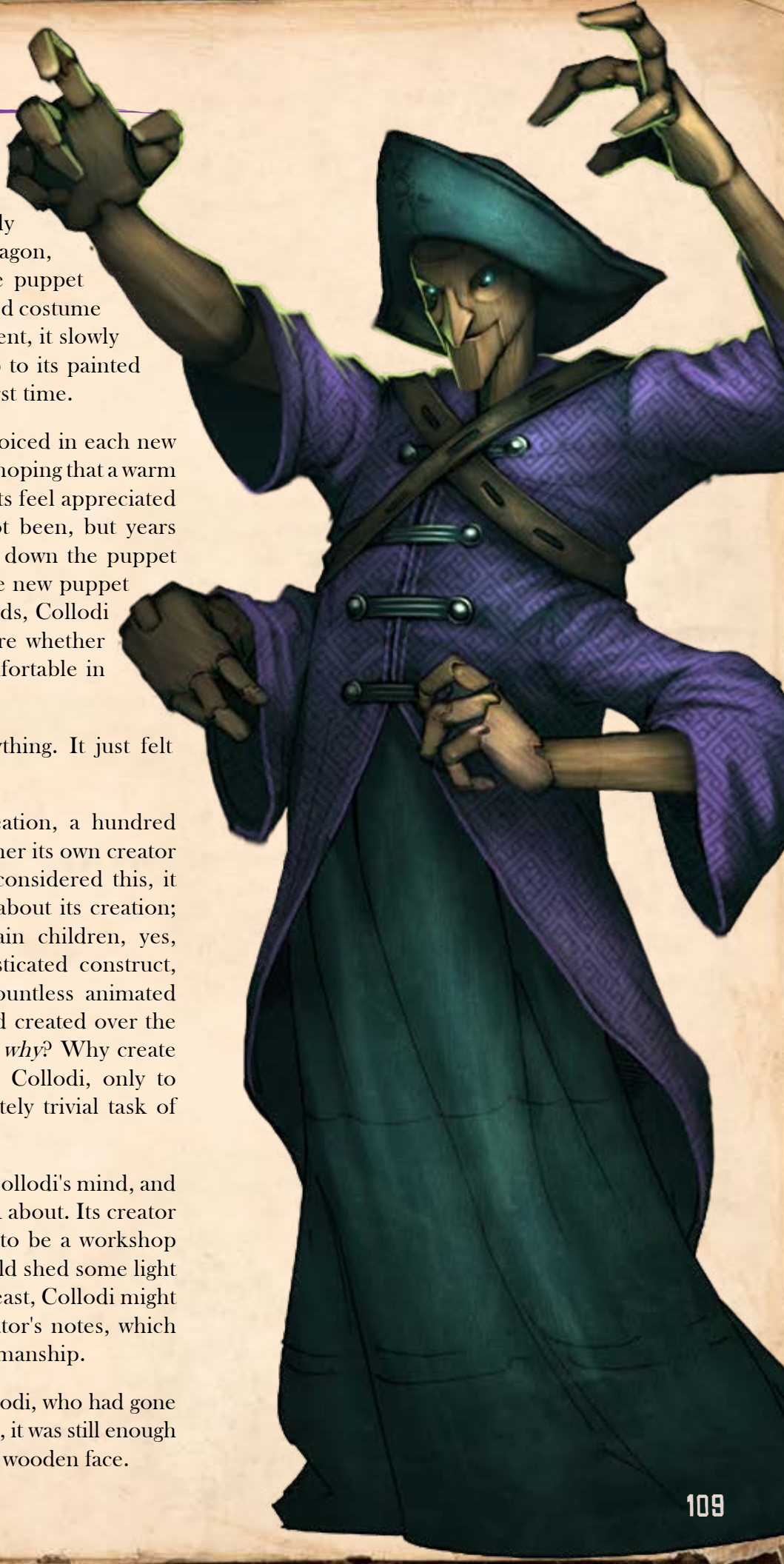
Once, long ago, Collodi had rejoiced in each new puppet it added to its collection, hoping that a warm welcome might make the puppets feel appreciated in the way that Collodi had not been, but years of travel and conflict had worn down the puppet master's spirit. As it watched the new puppet pantomime weeping into its hands, Collodi realized that it simply didn't care whether or not the new puppet felt comfortable in its collection.

In fact, Collodi didn't feel anything. It just felt lonely. Lonely and empty.

It thought back to its own creation, a hundred years prior, and wondered whether its own creator had felt the same. As Collodi considered this, it realized that it knew very little about its creation; it had been created to entertain children, yes, but why? Collodi was a sophisticated construct, far more advanced than the countless animated dolls and marionettes that it had created over the course of the past decade... but *why*? Why create an advanced construct such as Collodi, only to give it the enjoyable but ultimately trivial task of entertaining children?

The questions refused to leave Collodi's mind, and soon, they were all it could think about. Its creator was surely dead, but there had to be a workshop or a journal somewhere that could shed some light on these questions. At the very least, Collodi might be able to find some of its creator's notes, which would help it with its own craftsmanship.

It was a distant hope, but for Collodi, who had gone for so long without any hope at all, it was still enough to bring a long-absent smile to its wooden face.



TITANIA

Titania is the Queen of the Fae. The Third Law. The Keeper of the Old World. The Storm and the Withered Rose. She is the Autumn Queen, and she is returned to this world once again.

In ancient Malifaux, before humans had ever seen a Soulstone, Titania ruled the Fae. Her rule was a long and prosperous one, until the Tyrants came. She led her people against the Tyrants and was instrumental in the construction of Kythera. But some of her followers believed she had grown too strong, and they betrayed her, locking her away for centuries.

Now she has returned to Malifaux to find her people scattered to the wind and everything she built in ruin. Her power has waned, but she is still the rightful Queen. Her legend is still whispered among the Neverborn, and she has begun to gather those who are willing to pledge loyalty to her at the seat of her ancient power. The Tyrants must be defeated once again, and the vermin known as humanity must be wiped from her realm.



TITANIA
Master, Undead
FAE

CACHE 4

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	7	12	5	7	2

ABILITIES

Impossible to Wound: Damage flips against this model suffer ⍈. Damage flips against this model may not be cheated.

Flight: This model is immune to falling damage and may ignore any terrain or models while moving.

The Thirsty Roots: Enemy models within ❶6 that begin their Activation in base contact with one or more Scheme Markers friendly to this model must succeed on a TN 13 **Wp** duel or suffer 2 damage that may not be reduced.

Rejoice In Rebirth: When another model places a Scheme Marker within ❶6, this model may heal up to 2 damage.

TITANIA

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) A Wicked Silence (**Ca** 6🜏 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Place a Scheme Marker in base contact with target enemy model, then the target suffers 2 damage.
🜏🜏 ***A Whisper Of Bone***: After succeeding, push this model up to 4".

(1) Bloody Command (**Ca** 6🜏 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 8 or ⫻ 2): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.
🜏 ***Into Thorns:*** Before flipping damage, discard up to 2 friendly Scheme Markers within 2" and LoS of the target to deal +1 damage for each Marker discarded.
✕ ***My Loyal Subject:*** After succeeding, target other friendly model within 4" of the target heals 2/2/3 damage.
🜍 ***"Deal With Him":*** When damaging, reduce the damage to 0. Another friendly model within 8" and LoS of the target may push into base contact with the target and then take a (1) ⫻ Attack against it.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) A New Harvest (**Ca** 6🜏 / TN: 13): Each enemy model within (❦)6 must pass a TN 12 **Wp** duel or this model may place a friendly Scheme Marker in base contact with it. Raise the TN of the **Wp** duel by 1 for each ✕ in this model's final duel total.

(0) The Queen Has Risen (**Ca** 6🜏 / TN: 13 / Rg: 6): Discard between one and three Scheme Markers within (❦)6. Push target friendly model up to 2" for each Marker discarded in this way.

30mm



THE GORAR

The idea of death and rebirth is important to the Fae, particularly to those who were members of Titania's court. Titania is the queen of autumn, a time of change where the lines between life and death are the weakest. Her power waxes and wanes in this way; she is strongest at sunrise and sunset.

The Gorar is a living embodiment of Titania's power. The serpent is a symbol of death, and the egg in its coils is a symbol of new life. It defends its master without hesitation, leaping into danger to defend her. Despite this, it always manages to keep hold of the egg and the new life it represents.

When the time is right, the Gorar may be sacrificed where the Ley Lines are strongest in order to bring one of Titania's favored servants back from the grave, hatching from the precious egg the Gorar has protected for so long.

When Titania's power swells once again, a new Gorar will manifest and the cycle will begin anew.



THE GORAR

Peon, Living, Totem (Titania)

FAE

COST 3

DF	WP	WD	WK	CG	HT
6	5	4	6	7	2

ABILITIES

From Malifaux We Are Born: When a friendly Minion model is killed or sacrificed by an enemy Attack Action, if this model is within 6" of the Center of the board, you may summon the model that was killed or sacrificed into base contact with this model, then sacrifice this model.

Companion: After a friendly model ends its Activation within 6" of this model, this model may Activate immediately as a Chain Activation.

Unimpeded: This model ignores penalties for severe terrain when moving.

Insignificant: This model may not take Interact Actions.

THE GORAR

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) A Wicked Silence (**Ca** 4🜸 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Place a Scheme Marker in base contact with target enemy model, then the target suffers 2 damage.

🜸🜸 ***A Whisper Of Bone***: After succeeding, push this model up to 4".

(1) The Serpent's Call (**Ca** 4 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 10): Target model with the **Slow** Condition gains the **Paralyzed** Condition.

40mm

AESLIN

"Your hubris damned you before you even touched your pathetic weapon."

The man writhed on the ground, twisting vines burrowing into his skin. His gun was just beyond his reach.

"You stand before the personal Dryw of The Autumn Queen herself. I am the Wind and the Silence, keeper of the Letting-Stone. Vermin like you can never understand the glory that is bestowed upon you. To be killed by the Queen's Dryw was once an honorable death. But now that we are so few in number, it pains me to have to stoop to dealing with the likes of you."

The man screamed as thorns began digging into his flesh, feeding the thirsty roots beneath him with his blood.

Aeslin sighed.

"You have no idea how lucky you are."



AESLIN
Henchman, Undead, Rare 1
FAE

COST 9
CACHE 4

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	7	9	5	6	2

ABILITIES

The Curse Of Autumn: Enemy models that begin their Activation engaged with one or more models with this Ability must succeed on a TN 13 **Wp** duel or gain **Slow**.

Hard to Wound +1: Damage flips against this model suffer ⍈.

Casting Expert: This model gains 1 additional AP which may only be used to take **Ca** Actions.

Wild Magic: When declaring a **Ca** Action, this model may discard a friendly Scheme Marker within 2" of the target. If it does, the Attack does not randomize due to engagement.

AESLIN

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) A Wicked Silence (**Ca** 6🗡 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Place a Scheme Marker in base contact with target enemy model, then the target suffers 2 damage.
🗡🗡 ***A Whisper Of Bone***: After succeeding, push this model up to 4".

(1) Rot and Rend (**Ca** 6🗡 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⌐10 or ⫻ 1): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.
🗡 ***Into Thorns:*** Before flipping damage, discard up to 2 friendly Scheme Markers within 2" and LoS of the target to deal +1 damage for each Marker discarded.
🕮 ***A Trophy For The Queen*:** After succeeding against an enemy, place a Scheme Marker in base contact with the target.
🗡🗡 ***Secrets Kept***: After succeeding, push target 6" towards this model.
🗡✕ ***A Darkness Falls***: After succeeding, the target must discard a card or gain the **Slow** Condition.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) As Leaves On Wind (**Ca** 6🗡 / TN: 12): Discard target friendly Scheme Marker within 6". If this happens, enemy models within ❶6 suffer ⍈ to **Ca** duels until the end of the Turn.

(0) Bound And Rooted: Until the end of the Turn, friendly models within ❶6 may not be moved, pushed, or placed by the Actions, Abilities, or Triggers of enemy models.

30mm

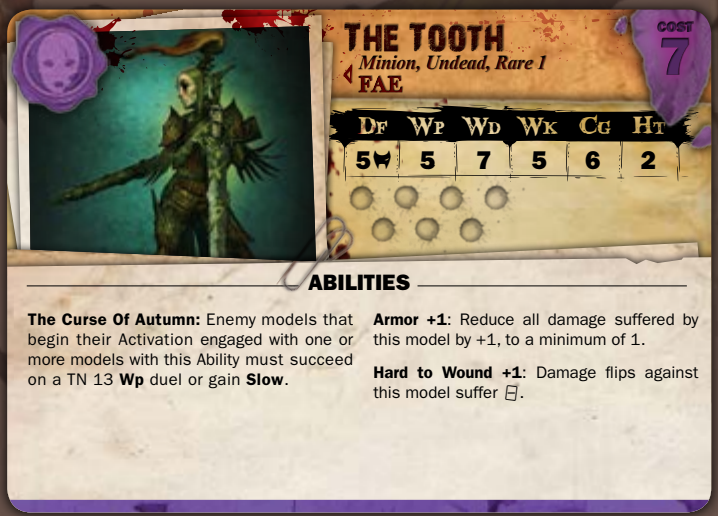
THE TOOTH

The Tooth darted and dodged through her foes, her movements forming some sort of elaborate dance. Wherever her sword struck home, another of the human mercenaries died. As they fell, branches and vines twisted forth from their corpses and immediately bloomed into an array of colorful flowers.

As the last man fell, the woman stopped to admire her work. She was clothed in the forest itself, thick roots and vines forming armor around her slight frame. She gazed at the blossoming corpses that lay strewn around her through gaping, empty sockets where her eyes should have been.

"An excellent summer garden for my Queen," she said with a sigh. A frown darkened her face. "Dahlias. I'm missing Dahlias." With a sigh, she set off towards the camp from which the mercenaries had come as she flicked the blood from her sword.

"A knight's work is never done," she mused.



THE TOOTH

Minion, Undead, Rare 1
FAE

COST 7

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	5	7	5	6	2

ABILITIES

The Curse Of Autumn: Enemy models that begin their Activation engaged with one or more models with this Ability must succeed on a TN 13 **Wp** duel or gain **Slow**.

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

Hard to Wound +1: Damage flips against this model suffer ⍈.

THE TOOTH

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) The Blossoming Blade (**MI** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 2): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage. Then this model may push the target up to 4" away.

***A Trophy For The Queen*:** After succeeding against an enemy, place a Scheme Marker in base contact with the target.

Brambles: When damaging, if the target is within 2" and LoS of at least one Scheme Marker friendly to this model, the damage flip gains .

(0) Challenge of Summer (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 8): Target enemy model is pushed its **Cg** towards this model. Then, the target must make a (1) **MI** Attack against this model, if able. Any resulting damage flip from this Attack receives ⍈. Then, if this model is still in play, it may make a (1) **MI** Attack against the target, if able.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) A Clear Path: This model may discard a card. If it does, push it into base contact with target Scheme Marker within 4".

30mm

THE CLAW

I walk the path of winter. How long I have walked this path, I know not. I just know that my journey must continue. The icy path I have chosen is long, and it is all in the service of my queen.

My sisters are bold and brave; they honor our queen with the seeds they sow and the life that springs forth. They honor her with the tales they tell and the songs they sing. But I was never meant to create life. I was not meant for songs or stories.

As the forest quiets and the animals sleep, I stand guard. I am the Cold and the Chaenomeles. I am the watcher in the dark. And to those who would threaten my Queen or her court in the long, frozen months of my command, I am death.

The Autumn Queen is my mistress, and I am her Claw.



THE CLAW

Minion, Undead, Rare 1

FAE

COST 7

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	5	7	5	6	2

ABILITIES

The Curse Of Autumn: Enemy models that begin their Activation engaged with one or more models with this Ability must succeed on a TN 13 **Wp** duel or gain **Slow**.

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

Hard to Wound +1: Damage flips against this model suffer ⍈.

THE CLAW

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) The Winter Spear (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 8 or 2): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

***A Trophy For The Queen*:** After succeeding against an enemy, place a Scheme Marker in base contact with the target.

Brambles: When damaging, if the target is within 2" and LoS of at least one Scheme Marker friendly to this model, the damage flip gains .

(0) Challenge of Winter (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 8): Target enemy model is pushed into base contact with this model.

Winter's Chill: After succeeding, if the target is in base contact with this model, it gains the following Condition until the end of the Turn unless it discards two cards: "**Winter's Chill:** This model suffers ⍈ to **Df** flips."

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) A Clear Path: This model may discard a card. If it does, push it into base contact with target Scheme Marker within 4".

30mm

THE THORN

The guardsman ran frantically through the thick underbrush, branches clawing at his face and tearing his uniform. His unit was dead, but the message he carried had to get back to headquarters.

Something caught his leg, and he fell heavily onto his face. He turned in horror to see the lithe woman who had slaughtered his unit. Her body was cloaked in leaves and branches. Where eyes should have been she had black, gaping sockets crying tears of blood.

She smiled as she pulled on the vines that had lashed around his ankles. "Foolish little rodent," she hissed. "Did you think you could scurry about, talking behind the queen's back? Hmm?"

The guardsman squirmed, trying to reach his weapon, but the vines lashed his hands tight. "I wasn't talking behind anyone's back! Just following orders... please..." His voice trailed off.

Thorns sprouted from the vines and the man's screams echoed through the crisp, spring air.



ABILITIES

The Curse Of Autumn: Enemy models that begin their Activation engaged with one or more models with this Ability must succeed on a TN 13 **Wp** duel or gain **Slow**.

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

Hard to Wound +1: Damage flips against this model suffer ⍈.

THE THORN

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Lashing Vines (**MI** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 3): Target suffers 1/3/4 damage. This Attack ignores **Armor**.

The Queen's Spies: After damaging, if the target is within 2" and LoS of at least one Scheme Marker friendly to this model, draw a card.

Brambles: When damaging, if the target is within 2" and LoS of at least one Scheme Marker friendly to this model, the damage flip gains .

(0) Challenge of Spring (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 8): Target enemy model is pushed up to 8" towards this model then, this model may place a Scheme Marker in base contact with it.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) A Clear Path: This model may discard a card. If it does, push it into base contact with target Scheme Marker within 4".

30mm

BANDERSNATCH

We found her alone in the house, surrounded by her slaughtered family. The house was bolted tight; it was one of the rich downtown places, so the locks and shudders were decent pieces of work. She must have done it, but she isn't talking.

Since we brought her in for questioning, she insists on standing under the brightest light possible. She just keeps repeating this damn rhyme:

Skitter, skitter and scratch,

Here comes the Bandersnatch!

Watch my shadow, I'll watch yours,

Lock the windows and lock the doors.

Skitter, skitter and scratch,

Here comes the Bandersnatch!

Nowhere to hide, it's already begun,

Your shadow will follow wherever you run!

Skitter, skitter and scratch...



BANDERSNATCH COST 5

Minion, Living, Rare 1

FAE, NIGHTMARE, SPIRIT

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	5	4	5	6	2

ABILITIES

Incorporeal: This model ignores, and is ignored by, other models and terrain during any movement or push. Reduce all damage this model suffers from **Sh** and **MI** Attack Actions by half.

Shadow Spirit: This model Activates as normal while buried and may declare Triggers while buried.

Shadow Hunting: While measuring Range for an Attack Action this model has declared while buried, this model may add the **Ht** of the model from which it is measuring to the Range of the Attack.

BANDERSNATCH

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Grab (**MI** 5🗡 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 2): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

🗡 ***Snatch***: After damaging, push the target into base contact with the model from which Range and LoS for this Attack were drawn.

🗡🗡 ***False Suspicion***: After damaging a non-Leader, the target must perform a (1) Attack Action against the model from which Range and LoS for this Attack were drawn, if able. This model's controller controls the target for the duration of the Attack. The Attack may not declare Triggers.

(0) Crawl Into Shadow (**Ca** 6🗡 / TN: 13 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 6): This Action may not be taken while this model is buried. Bury this model and do not end its Activation. Target model that does not have the Shadow Lair Upgrade attached attaches the Shadow Lair Upgrade, regardless of restrictions. Unbury this model in base contact with the target when the Shadow Lair Upgrade on it is removed or discarded, or before the target is removed from play. This Action may not be taken if there is already a Shadow Lair Upgrade in play that this model caused to be attached.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(1) Dart Out: Unbury this model in base contact with any model that has a Shadow Lair Upgrade that was attached by a friendly model, then discard the Shadow Lair Upgrade from that model.

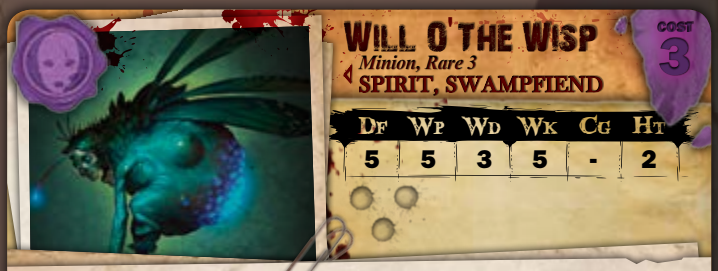
40mm

WILL O' THE WISP

We saw the lights on our fourth night out. At first, we mistook them for other travelers and attempted to make contact, but we got turned around in the murk and the overgrowth. The Bayou is not an easy place to navigate even without phantom lights to taunt you. We couldn't find out way back after that.

Charles was the first one they took. He just got this look in his eyes and kept saying, "They're singing to me. They're singing to me." We tried to stop him, but he wandered out into the brush after the lights. After that I started seeing them, really seeing them. Sometimes they appeared as my dead wife. Other times they appeared as terrible monstrosities. The lights morphed and floated, always trying to lure us off the path. We lost Jeremiah next; he mistook a real gator for one of the hallucinations.

Now it's just me left. The thing that terrifies me, more than visions or gators, is that I am no longer convinced that the lights are random. They don't just lure weary travelers off the path. They are leading me somewhere...



WILL O' THE WISP COST 3

Minion, Rare 3

SPIRIT, SWAMPFIEND

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	5	3	5	-	2

ABILITIES

Incorporeal: This model ignores, and is ignored by, other models and terrain during any movement or push. Reduce all damage this model suffers from **Sh** and **MI** Attack Actions by half.

Insignificant: This model may not take Interact Actions.

Feed On The Lost: After an enemy model within 3 of one or more models with this Ability fails a **Wp** duel, one model with this Ability may place a Scheme Marker in base contact with the enemy model.

WILL O' THE WISP

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Twisting Illusion (**MI** 4 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 1): Target suffers 1/2/3 damage.
Horrendous Visage: After damaging, the target must succeed on a TN 11 **Wp** duel or gain **Slow**.

(1) The Wisp's Call (**Ca** 5 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 10): Target model gains the following Condition until the end of the game or until this model leaves play: "**Whispers In The Night:** This model may not Charge. The next time this model takes a Walk Action, it must end as close to the model that applied this Condition as possible, then end this Condition."

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(1) Ever Changing Form: Target a friendly Neverborn model within 10". Take a (2) Tactical Action printed on the target's stat card or one of its Upgrades. This Action may only be taken once per Turn and only during this model's Activation. A single model may only be targeted by **Ever Changing Form** once per Turn.

30mm



ROUGAROU

Rougarou are massive, wolf-like creatures with empty sockets for eyes. They are skilled hunters, using their keen senses to track prey for miles, and Titania uses them as her hounds. They were some of the few members of her court deemed dangerous enough to be doomed to imprisonment in Nythera with her, but now that Titania is free, so are they.

Despite their bestial appearance, Rougarou have a keen intelligence and dangerous cunning about them. Titania uses them to hunt down those who have displeased her. Once they are close, they tear their target to shreds with tooth and claw.

When needed, they can walk on their hind legs, which has reignited superstitions about werewolves among those who have glimpsed them doing this. Of course, that's all nonsense; the only thing a Rougarou's bite spreads is death, quickly followed by a severe case of being devoured.

At least, that's the order if their prey is lucky.



ABILITIES

Fresh Meat: At the start of this model's Activation it may discard target friendly Scheme Marker within 3" to choose to either heal 2 damage or push up to 3" in any direction.

Hard to Kill: While this model has 2 or more **Wd** remaining when it suffers damage, it may not be reduced to below 1 **Wd**.

Pounce: When an enemy model ends a push or move within this model's engagement range that is not part of a Walk or Charge Action, this model may immediately take a 1 AP **MI** Attack Action against the model without spending AP.

ROUGAROU

ATTACK ACTIONS

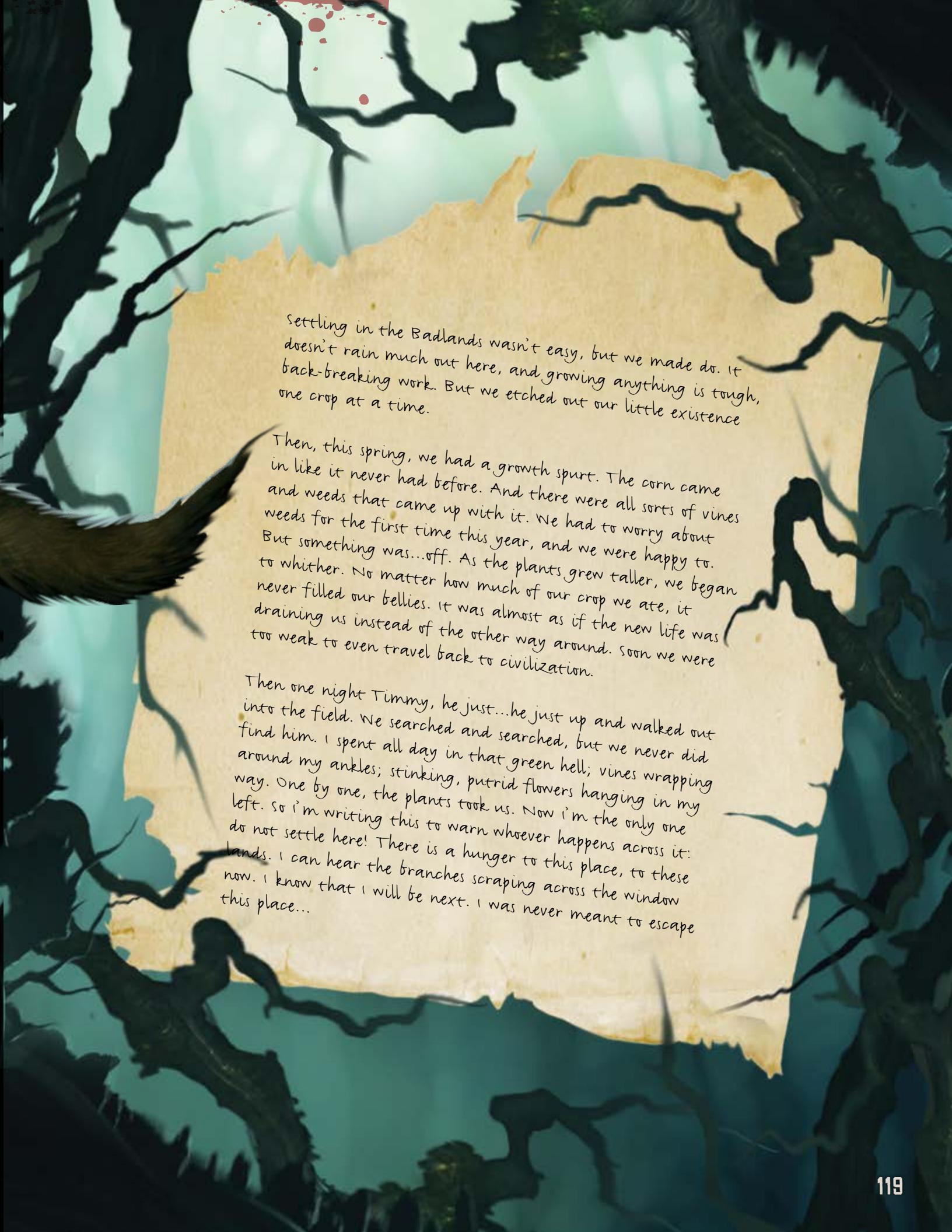
(1) Wulfen Claws (**MI** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 2): Target suffers 2/4/6 damage.
Crushing Strike: When damaging, the damage flip gains for each in the final duel total.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Challenge Of The Alpha (**Ca** 6 / TN: 13): All enemy models in (1)4 must pass a TN 13 **Wp** duel or be pushed into base contact with this model.
On The Hunt: After succeeding, and after completing all pushes, place this model into base contact with a model that passed the **Wp** duel.

(0) Howl To The Blood Moon: Target model within 2" must take a TN 13 **Wp** duel. If it fails, this model may make a (1) Attack against it.

50mm



Settling in the Badlands wasn't easy, but we made do. It doesn't rain much out here, and growing anything is tough, back-breaking work. But we etched out our little existence one crop at a time.

Then, this spring, we had a growth spurt. The corn came in like it never had before. And there were all sorts of vines and weeds that came up with it. We had to worry about weeds for the first time this year, and we were happy to. But something was...off. As the plants grew taller, we began to whither. No matter how much of our crop we ate, it never filled our bellies. It was almost as if the new life was draining us instead of the other way around. Soon we were too weak to even travel back to civilization.

Then one night Timmy, he just...he just up and walked out into the field. We searched and searched, but we never did find him. I spent all day in that green hell; vines wrapping around my ankles; stinking, putrid flowers hanging in my way. One by one, the plants took us. Now I'm the only one left. So I'm writing this to warn whoever happens across it: do not settle here! There is a hunger to this place, to these lands. I can hear the branches scraping across the window now. I know that I will be next. I was never meant to escape this place...

FAE UPGRADES

Behold My Glory

Cost: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Trigger to all of its Attack Actions:

  "Behold My Glory": After succeeding, the target gains the following Condition until the end of its next Activation: **"She Will End Us All!:** If this model declares an Attack Action that does not target an enemy Titania, the Action immediately fails unless this model discards two cards."



RESTRICTIONS

Titania

An Audience With The Queen

Cost: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (1) An Audience With The Queen (**Ca** 6 / TN: 13 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 8): Place target non-Leader enemy model in base contact with this model.

  "***A Trophy For, Well... Me":*** After succeeding (and completing the placement), place a Scheme Marker in base contact with the target.



RESTRICTIONS

Titania

The Forest Claims All

Cost: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  The Forest Claims All: Whenever a Corpse or Scrap Marker is placed within 4" (regardless of LoS) by an enemy model (including Markers dropped when an enemy model is killed), the opposing player may discard a card. If she does not, this model may place a Scheme Marker in base contact with the Corpse or Scrap Marker and then discard the Corpse or Scrap Marker.



RESTRICTIONS

Titania

The Queen's Champion

Cost: 2 SS

- When another friendly model kills an enemy model with an Attack Action, if this Upgrade is attached to Titania, you may discard a Soulstone. If you do not, discard this Upgrade from Titania and attach it to the Attacking friendly model, regardless of restrictions.
- While this Upgrade is attached to a model other than Titania, the model gains the following Abilities:

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

  The Queen's Champion: This model gains to Attack flips it makes.

  Gifts To My Queen: After damaging one or more enemy models with an Attack Action, place a Scheme Marker in base contact with each model damaged by the Attack Action.



RESTRICTIONS

Titania



TAPROOT

COST: 1 SS

- All friendly Fae models within ❶10 gain the following Ability:

  Df/Wp (🗡) The Forest Hides Us: After resolving an Attack Action against this model, this model may discard target friendly Scheme Marker within 3" to push up to 3" in any direction.

RESTRICTIONS

Fae, Rare 1

NEVERBORN UPGRADES

SHADOW LAIR

COST: OSS

- This Upgrade may only be attached using the **Crawl Into Shadow** Action.
- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Shadow Lair: The model that attached this Upgrade to this model may draw range and LoS from this model for the purposes of making Attack Actions.

  Unstable Lair: At the start of this model's Activation, it suffers 1 damage that may not be reduced or prevented. The second time it suffers damage in this way, discard this Upgrade.

RESTRICTIONS

SATISFYING PUNISHMENT

COST: OSS

- This model gains +1 **Df**.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Satisfying Punishment: At the end of this model's Activation, it may suffer 1 damage to draw 1 card and then discard 1 card.

RESTRICTIONS

Lelu

ENRAGED TANTRUM

COST: OSS

- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (1) Enraged Tantrum (**MI** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 2): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

  - ***Hide In Shadow:*** After succeeding, move this model up to 3".

RESTRICTIONS

Iggy



A THOUSAND FACES

Cost: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Avenge Our Brethren: After this model is killed or sacrificed, the friendly Leader may take a (1) Action after the current Action is resolved.

  A Thousand Faces: At the start of this model's Activation it may discard this Upgrade to name another Upgrade and attach the named Upgrade, following the usual restrictions for attaching Upgrades at the start of the game. If the named Upgrade has a higher Cost than this Upgrade, this model must discard a number of Soulstones equal to the difference in Cost or discard the named Upgrade. Then, if the Upgrade chosen was Pact, draw a card.

RESTRICTIONS

Non-Master, Rare 2

MALIFAUX PROVIDES

Cost: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Malifaux Provides: At the end of this model's Activation, it may discard a Scheme Marker within 3" and LoS of this model to heal 2 damage on this model.

  The Land Hides Us: When this model would gain a Condition from an enemy Action or Ability, it may discard this Upgrade. If it does, it does not gain the Condition and draws one card.

RESTRICTIONS

Non-Master, Rare 2

THE AUTUMN KNIGHTS

Titania's personal guard are known as the Autumn Knights. These elite Fae warriors are armored by the forest itself, with vines and branches twisting around their bodies to protect them. Despite their feral appearance, they are the guardians of the royal court, and they act with the honor and duty that comes with that responsibility. They answer directly to Aeslin, the Queen's second in command, who wields the power of autumn itself.

Out of all the Autumn Knights, there were always three that wore the great mantles of power: The Tooth, The Claw, and The Thorn, each instilled with the power of a season other than autumn. In this way, Aeslin or one of her most trusted knights will always be at the height of their power. When Titania was awakened from Nythera by some wayward adventurers, she blessed them by reshaping their flesh and granting them the mantles of her most powerful servants.


PARKER
OUTCASTS

PAID IN FULL

BY: JUSTIN GIBBS AND MASON CRAWFORD

Dr. Mitchell gazed sullenly out the window of the train and took another sip from his flask. They were an hour out of Ridley, and the terrain had yet to change. The rolling red shapes of the Northern Hills stretched as far as he could see. Even the horizon was muddied by a plume of reddish dust. The doctor could imagine that outside the rest of the world had fallen away, swallowed by the dull monotony of the landscape. Out of that gloom something caught his eye, a pitch black form on one of the hills. If he didn't know any better he would have sworn it was a jackal, and it was looking right at him. Not at the train, but him.

He took another long swallow from his flask and shook his head before looking again, but the jackal was gone. That was all he needed right now, to start seeing things. He already had one failed marriage and two failed medical practices under his belt – the one Earthside and the one he had tried to start in Ridley – why not have his mental faculties fail him as well? He grimaced and took another drink.

"Do you know the easiest way for a man to torture himself?" A voice spoke up from beside him.

Mitchell turned and inspected the man who occupied the seat next to him for the first time since he had boarded the train. He was lean and tall, his clothes the same muted tones as the dust outside. His hat was low, hiding most of his face, but two piercing blue eyes peered at the doctor, set above a strong jaw covered in a few days of stubble. "No, I don't suppose I do," Mitchell replied.

"To misunderstand his place," the stranger said. "A man can be happy digging coal his whole life. But he gets it in his head he needs to own the mine and suddenly he's miserable." The stranger shrugged. "You look like a man who might be trying to find his place."

The doctor eyed the man and took another long swallow, emptying the flask. "I practice medicine. I damn well know my place; it's stitching wounds and sawing legs. I just need to take a trip back to Malifaux City to drum up some more funding for a practice, not that it's any of your business." Mitchell grimaced and stuck his empty flask back into his bag. "I suppose you know your place?"

The stranger tilted his hat. "Nice to meet you, Doc. The name's Parker. And at the moment, my place is right here on this train, robbing it."

Mitchell stared at the stranger for a moment before he threw his head back in laughter. The stranger smirked in amusement. A few other passengers gave the two sidelong glances before the Doctor's laughter wheezed to a stop. "That was good. There's a whole car of Guild Guard behind us."

"I know," Parker replied, pulling one of his pistols from its holster and planting it into the Doc's ribs. "Now, is there a gold pocket watch attached to that chain?"

After declining the doctor's battered old pocket watch, Parker slid his bandanna over his mouth and rose into the aisle, a six-shooter in each hand. "Ladies and gentlemen," he bellowed, "I'm afraid that your trip will experience a minor delay due to robbery." Three more people in bandannas stood up at each corner of the car, weapons raised.

Within minutes, Mitchell and the rest of the passengers had been herded into the front of the car. Two of the robbers, both women, kept their Clockwork Revolvers trained on the passengers as they methodically relieved them of any valuables and weapons.

"Do you have any idea who I am?" a man in a black, tailored suit roared. He was stocky and balding, with a weak chin. "I'll have your hides for this!"

One of the women stepped forward and smashed the butt of her pistol into his face. She peered at him over her red bandanna, blond locks of hair framing her face as she pressed the revolver to his chest. Her voice was low and controlled. “Do you want us to know who you are?”

The man’s eyes widened, and he shook his head frantically.

“Very good,” she said as she relieved him of his money clip.

“Any trouble back there?” Parker called. He had jammed the door to the adjoining car shut and taken up a position at the rear, away from the passengers. Across from him was another robber with a thick build and bright red hair, toting a shotgun; he had taken up position at the window across from Parker.

“Just some folks who aren’t accustomed to being robbed,” the blonde woman called back.

“That's good!” Parker shouted. “They generally have more to take! “He turned back to the red-haired man. “Alright, we’re almost to the horses. I’m giving the signal.” With that he opened his window and waved a spare bandanna. The train immediately began to slow.

Mitchell realized there must be another accomplice with a gun on the engineer. He shook his head at the madness of it all.

Parker leaned out his window and began shooting at the car behind them, quickly emptying one pistol and then the next. The red haired man was firing his shotgun out the opposite side. Whenever one of the men stopped to reload, the blonde woman would run to that side of the car, lean out the window, and provide covering fire, ensuring that the hail of bullets never fully let up as the last woman kept an eye on the Doc and the other passengers. Together, they kept a steady stream of fire raining down both sides of the train, keeping the Guard pinned in their car.

The blonde woman let out a sharp hiss and clutched her arm. A shot from one of the guardsmen in the other car had winged her. Parker turned his head briefly. “We’re slowing, it’s time!” He pointed at Mitchell. “That one’s a doctor; grab him and another hostage, and we'll make him patch you up once we're in the clear.”

The woman gestured to the Doc and the argumentative man in the fine suit. “You two are coming with us. Any of the rest of you get any ideas, you’ll end up coming along too.”

Mitchell swallowed hard and looked around. It didn’t look like anyone else was going to be putting up much of a fight. And why should they? The bandits weren’t interested in them.

As the train slowed to a near halt, the blonde bandit shoved Mitchell and the other man out of the car and off the train. The doctor hit the ground in a hard roll, coughing and spitting dust out of his mouth as he came to a stop. The bandits hopped down more gracefully, as if it were second nature to them, and took up positions around the train car containing the Guild Guard, guns firing all the while.

Not far from the train, Mitchell could see a dozen horses tied to a few of the barren, twisted trees that dotted this bleak landscape. A single bandit was waiting near them, no doubt a guard of some sort.

Three more bandits came jogging up from the front of the train, guns drawn, bandannas hiding their faces. They quickly joined their accomplices in keeping a steady stream of lead flying at the car containing the guardsmen. Mitchell counted eight outlaws total: six assaulting the train car, one with the horses, and the wounded woman that had been put in charge of him and the other hostage, as well as keeping a wary eye on the passenger car.

Mitchell occasionally saw a guardsman quickly stand up to take a shot or a red-sleeved arm fire blindly out of a window now and then, but it looked like the outlaws were doing a good job of keeping everyone in the guardsman’s car pinned down. Parker shouted orders at the other bandits, coordinating their fire so that it never let up; while some reloaded, others always picked up the pace. “Alright, time for the fun part,” he grimaced as he began to sprint along the stopped car. As he did so, he pulled glass jars of sickly looking liquid from his coat and tossed them, one at a time, through the shattered glass windows of the stopped car.

Parker quickly jogged back to his fellow bandits as they provided covering fire, diving behind a rough mound of dirt near Mitchell. It was hardly necessary; the guardsmen had completely ceased any attempts to return fire. “That should do it,” Parker panted.

It dawned on Mitchell what Parker had done when he caught a rancid pickle smell on the wind. He recognized the smell of formaldehyde from his training in medicine. “Oh, the poor bastards,” he muttered.

Parker flashed him a wicked grin. “Figured we’d save the coroner the trouble.” He motioned to the other bandits to cease fire and listened, but the guardsmen had fallen silent. “Think it was enough to kill ‘em?”

The doctor shook his head.

“Amelia,” Parker called to the blonde woman. “Go take care of the express car. I’ve got a bad feeling about this.”

The woman nodded and sprinted away, past the car containing the guardsmen and toward the next one in line.

Once she was out of range, Parker carefully peeked out from behind his cover. “Drop your weapons and come out with your hands in the air and you won’t be harmed!”

There was no response from the car, only shuffling sounds and the crunch of broken glass under moving weight.

“The name’s Parker Barrows,” he shouted. “You’re probably familiar with my work. I don't kill guardsmen when I don't have to, but you folks aren't giving me much of a choice here.”



“I’ve seen the wanted posters!” The wheezing voice belonged to a woman. “Why would you let us go? We know who you are!”

“Because killing people makes it less likely that people will just give up. It's bad for business.

Besides,” he added, his voice taking on a lighter tone, “if you keep shooting blind like that, you might hit one of my horses! Do you know how much the Guild charges for a good horse these days? It’s robbery!”

There was a tense moment before the woman shouted, “You’re out-numbered!” It sounded desperate. “Surrender now and I’ll see that you get a fair trial. I won’t give you another chance.”

“A fair trial?” Parker scoffed. “Why would I want that? They’d hang me! You could at least offer a crooked trial.”

Mitchell felt everything go silent. The bandits were pressed flat against the ground or crouched behind whatever cover they could find, guns trained on the car. He held his breath. In the distance, one of the horses snorted.

Then the silence was shattered by gunfire. Guardsmen kicked open the doors of the train car and rushed out from both sides. Their companions still inside the car stood up and started shooting. Their faces were all a hideous, metallic black, and it took Mitchell a moment to realize that they were wearing gas masks.

The ground exploded in puffs of dust as bullets ricocheted off the dry ground like falling rain. The first guardsmen out the door were immediately gunned down, and their bodies were now blocking their way for those behind, but the bandits had precious little cover in the open, desolate ground.

Parker kept up a steady stream of fire, fanning the hammer of his smoking gun as he showered the car with lead. There was an explosion from down the line, and then Amelia came running back, a sack in her hands.

“We’ve got it!” Parker shouted. “Let's get the hell out of here!”

As they turned, one of the bandits took a shot to the head and dropped like a rock. Parker cursed but didn’t go back for her.

Suddenly, there was a hand gripping Doc’s shoulder and a gun in his ribs as he was forced to his feet. His captor pushed him toward the horses, and he saw the other hostage being dragged along with him.

The red-haired bandit with the shotgun stood like a sentinel as they retreated, laying down fire with his shotgun until everyone else had made it to the horses. Bullets whined as they flew past the man's head, one opening up a long cut on his cheek. He didn’t even flinch until Parker called for him.

“We’ve got hostages!” Parker shouted back at the guardsmen as the gang rode off, shooting over their shoulders. “Follow us and they’re dead!”

It struck Mitchell that the Guild probably didn’t care much if he lived or died. Without horses, he wasn’t even sure how the guardsmen would follow them, even if they were so inclined.

As they rode out, Mitchell thought he saw a black jackal in the distance, watching him.

The man in the fine suit was named Leo, and he would not stop scowling. He scowled at the horses, the outlaws, and even at Mitchell. He scowled at the dust, as if upset that it dared to be kicked up and land on his fine clothing.

At first, he had tried making vague threats about how well-connected he was in Malifaux city, but the Barrows Gang simply ignored him. Mitchell thought he caught a half smile on Parker’s face during one of Leo’s longer tirades. When that failed, he turned to bribery. He offered huge sums of scrip, pardons (through his connections, of course), and all manner of unreasonable things. Finally, he tried to find common ground with the bandits.

“I’m a criminal too, you know.” Leo licked his lips and glanced side to side.

This finally got Parker's attention. "Oh?"

Leo beamed a smile on his thin, bloodless lips. "Oh, yes! I handle funds for the Guild, and sometimes, things go missing, if you know what I mean."

"Let's say I don't." Parker replied, his face darkening.

"The Guild has vast resources, as I'm sure you know, and someone needs to direct it, oversee it. There are so many different accounts funding all sorts of things from civic projects to legal fees. Money flows from one account to another every day, and it frequently crosses my desk. If some guardsman's pension disappears every so often, who notices?"

"The guardsman, I would imagine." There was ice in Parker's voice, and Mitchell shot Leo a desperate look of warning that was entirely ignored. He couldn't understand why the self-professed criminal kept babbling.

"Oh, no, that's the beauty of it. It's all one big fund, you see. It's not for any one guardsman in particular. If it comes up short, why, there must have been an accounting error somewhere." Leo grinned. "Honestly, I've probably stolen more money than any one of you. And without any blood or guns." He wrinkled his nose. "No dust or any of this hostage business. It's a completely victimless crime, but it's a crime none-the-less. So, you see, we're not so different, you and I."

Parker stopped his horse and turned to look at Leo.

Leo seemed to take this as a sign to go on. "I could show you. It's really very eas-"

Leo's words were cut off as Parker whipped out one of his six-shooters and put a bullet right between Leo's eyes. The sound of the shot thundered and was swallowed by the wind.

Mitchell yelped and dove from his horse, scrambling over to Leo. He put his bound hands on the man, feeling for a pulse. He may have been a drunk and a failure, but he was still a doctor. He had sworn an oath to save lives, but there was no life to save here. "You... you killed him."

Parker nodded. "That was sort of the point of shooting him."

"B-but why?"

Parker regarded Mitchell for a moment from atop his horse, his duster fluttering in the dry wind. "A man who takes from others, and who doesn't earn his living, doesn't deserve to live."

The doctor's mouth fell open and he stared at Parker with a look of confusion. He considered pointing out the hypocrisy of what the bandit had just said, but that seemed like a decision that could be hazardous for his health, so he forced himself to shut his mouth.

Parker snorted. "I know what you're thinking. But I earn my living. I earn it with my guns, and I earn it with my fists. If I steal from a man, he damn well knows it. And if he has issue with that, well, he's welcome to try to take it back from me."

Parker tugged on his reigns, turning his horse away from the Doctor and the corpse. "Come on Doc, we'll be riding hard till sunset."

Mitchell was still laying prone on top of the dead man; he had been forced to so that he could look for a pulse with his hands bound. There were no eyes on him as the gang readied their horses to move again, and beneath him, he could feel the hard bulge of a weapon in the dead man's coat. With shaking, tied hands he grabbed it and shoved it into his waistband before covering it with his shirt. It was a little flintlock, but lethal enough.

"Hurry it up Doc, it ain't your job to bury the bastard," the blonde woman called.

He climbed to his feet and sprinted back to his horse, where one of the bandits helped him back into the saddle. As they began to ride again, he felt the cold steel of the weapon digging into his side.

A day passed. Mitchell couldn't tell where they were going. The long, rolling red hills seemed to have swallowed the little party. He sometimes couldn't even get a good glimpse of the sun through the vast, swirling clouds of dust that robbed even the sky of its individuality, turning everything around them into a bleak, red nothing. Besides the odd, gnarled tree or bit of brush, the only thing Doc ever made out on the horizon was the hideous black jackal that he was now sure was following him.

Amelia had loaned him a bandanna to cover his mouth and nose from the dust after he had bandaged her arm. He pulled it down from his face and turned to her. "Is it just me, or is that jackal following us?"

"What jackal?" Amelia asked with a frown.

"It's pure black... you must have seen it. I don't have the eyes for this sort of business."

Parker glanced back at them. "What's all the chatter back there?"

"Doc's seeing the black jackal," Amelia called up to him.

Parker just scowled and turned away.

"What's the black jackal?" Mitchell asked, looking confused.

Amelia shook her head. "Not really sure. One of the men who used to ride with us started talking about it one day. Nobody other than him ever caught a glimpse of it, but once it started happening, his luck turned. Everything that could go wrong for him did. He blamed it all on a black jackal only he could see, right up until the day he turned on us and Parker put a bullet in him. We thought he was going mad, but..." She shrugged.

Mitchell stared for a second, then burst out into a fit of nervous laughter. "Oh, is that all? Bad luck? Well, you're too late for that, you stupid mutt!" he shouted into the wind. He kept laughing until his guffaws had turned to tears.

It was another hard day's ride through rough terrain before they came to the hideout of the Barrow's Gang. Along the way, Mitchell had tried to get to know some of the gang. In part, it was a survival mechanism; if they knew him, he reasoned, then maybe they would be a bit more hesitant to kill him. In part, though, it was just something to help him whittle away at the oppressive monotony of the trip. If nothing else, it had convinced them that he was harmless, and that had led to them removing his restraints, allowing him to discreetly transfer the flintlock to the bottom of his medical bag.

He had tried to talk to the red-haired man Parker had called Mad Dog, but he never got more than a grunt out of the man. Eventually, Mad Dog had simply glared at him, and Mitchell had taken it as a sign to back off. Strangely, the man seemed to have just as few words for his companions. This surprised Mitchell, who had gotten to know all of the other outlaws at least a little, but not enough to risk pressing him.

The hideout of the Barrows Gang was an old, abandoned ghost town. The crumbling wooden buildings were slowly being swallowed by the red dust as the land did its best to wipe away the structures with which it had been marred. The town was built into a small ravine, not large enough to put it at risk for the flash floods Mitchell had been told were frequent in the rainy season, but enough to keep it from being visible on the horizon.

"What do you think, Doc?" Parker asked once they had arrived, spreading his arms and puffing out his chest. "Home sweet home! All of the conveniences of modern living. That there is the general store," he said, gesturing to a building whose roof had caved in.

"...over there is our finest five star hotel..." Parker pointed at a half-burned building that was collapsing in on itself.

"...and, of course, our fully-stocked saloon." The saloon was actually completely intact, and it even looked as if some recent repairs had been made to the old structure. The gang tied their horses to the hitching posts outside it and went in.

To the Doc's surprise, the inside of the Saloon was luxurious. There were fine carpets spread out on the floor, though they had obviously been trampled with boots covered in that infernal red dust. An aethervox even sat in one corner.

Parker gestured to the back of the bar as the blonde bandit guided Mitchell inside. "Have yourself a drink, Doc. I wasn't lying when I said it was fully stocked."

Mitchell's eyes widened at the sight of the many different liquor bottles stacked against the far wall, then narrowed as he took an involuntary step backwards. He pointed at the man slumped over the side of the bar. "Is that man dead?!"

"Hmm?" Parker glanced at the skeleton, who was still wearing a tattered vest. "Oh, that's Lloyd, he owns the place. Fellow was here when we showed up, and it seemed rude to disturb him."

Mitchell ignored the chuckles of the other bandits as he carefully made his way over to the whiskey. He opened the first bottle he saw, took a tentative sniff of the contents, and then started drinking, more out of habit than anything else.

The bandits made themselves at home, unpacking their gear. Parker took a seat on the stool next to Mitchell and began fastidiously disassembling his pistols, cleaning them and sighting down the barrel, before reassembling them and moving on to the next pair.

Amelia dumped the contents of the bag she had stolen from the train onto the counter next to him, and out flowed more Soulstones than Mitchell had ever seen in one place. His eyes widened, the bottle frozen halfway to his mouth. Amelia cursed under her breath. "I didn't have time to measure the charge properly. I think I blew half our score to high hell."

"Not your fault." Parker snapped the chamber of a pistol into place and started meticulously filling it with bullets, inspecting each one as he did. "We were set up. Gas masks aren't standard issue guard equipment, and we haven't done the trick with the formaldehyde before. They knew we were coming, and they knew our plan." He sighted down the length of his pistol. "I have an inkling of who set us up, and I intend to make them pay for it. In full."

Amelia nodded. "And Rory..."

Parker grimaced at what Doc presumed was the fallen woman's name. He holstered one of his pistols and then whipped it out faster than Doc could even track and fired, blowing one of the liquor bottles on the far shelf into shards of broken glass and foam. "She'll be paid in full, too."

The night wore on, and as it did, Mitchell started to understand the bandits a little better. On the outside they were callous and meticulous, but there was a certain franticness to them that they couldn't quite hide. They laughed too hard, drank too much. They were outcasts, living on the fringes of society for their own reasons, and each of them knew they were destined for an early end. They lived as well as they could, while they could. Well, all of them except for Parker and Mad Dog, both of whom continued to be silent, brooding mysteries.

Hours later, after most of the other bandits had retired upstairs to their beds, Mitchell slumped down in a cushioned chair opposite Parker, who was nursing a tall glass of whiskey. "From the stories they tell back in town," the doctor chuckled, his voice only slightly slurred from his own half-bottle of the stuff, "I would have thought that the life of an outlaw would be harder than this." He looked around appreciatively, nodding his head in silent approval. "It's not a bad set..."

Mitchell's voice trailed off as he turned back to Parker and found the man glaring death at him from over the top of his glass.

After a long moment, Parker leaned forward and carefully set his glass down on the table between them. “You think I'm an outlaw? Whose laws do you think matter out here?” he asked, his eyes never leaving the doctor's own.

“Er, um...” Mitchell laughed nervously. “Just... trying to make conversation,” he mumbled.

“There's no law out here in Malifaux. There's the lie that everyone follows in order to keep the Guild from taking away everything they have, but that isn't the law. It's fear and extortion.” Parker's gaze was like two burning embers, and Mitchell squirmed in his seat. “The people in Malifaux City, in Ridley, on that train,” the bandit continued, “they follow the so-called law so they can pretend that they're safe and sleep at night.”

Mitchell nodded furiously in agreement, and it seemed to mollify Parker; the bandit picked up his drink and leaned back in his chair, suddenly seeming very tired. “I can't be an outlaw in Malifaux. You can't be outside something that doesn't exist.”

Before he realized what he was doing, Mitchell's mouth had given voice to the question in his mind. “So you're stealing to... prove a point?”

Instead of becoming angry, however, Parker just grinned and swirled the whiskey in his glass. “Nah. I do that 'cause it's fun.”

After a few days, the Barrows Gang set out for Ridley. Parker said he knew a fence there that would be interested in purchasing a few of the stolen Soulstones. When Mitchell asked, Amelia explained that unloading the entire haul at once would draw too much attention, so most of the Soulstones had been tucked away carefully in a hidden corner of the hideout.

The days spent riding were long and monotonous. The unchanging terrain still bothered Mitchell, and he couldn’t understand how Parker and his gang were able to find their way in it. He asked Amelia about it once, and she simply shrugged. "You get used to it,” she said, as if that explained everything. He hadn’t pressed her for more; he was feeling less talkative the longer he rode. Maybe this was why Mad Dog didn't seem to speak very much; maybe the dry, uncaring land in which he lived had simply drained him of any desire to do so.

The whole way, Mitchell kept seeing the damned black jackal. He saw it before they bedded down at night, and again when he awoke in the morning. He glimpsed it out of the corner of his eye as they rode through the red, dusty haze. He even thought he saw it smiling once, but that was surely just his imagination. Every time he glimpsed it, he thought about the gun at the bottom of his bag. He could use it on the jackal. Or he could make his escape in the night and use it on one of the bandits if they caught him. They were ruthless killers; they knew the life they had chosen might end that way. They deserved it.

But he just couldn’t do it. He couldn’t find his own way back to civilization, in any case. Maybe later, when he didn’t need them. When he worked up the courage. When he had a few drinks in him and didn't feel so scared about all the things that could go wrong...

They made it to Ridley after what seemed like an eternity, even though Mitchell knew that it had only been a few days. He was glad to be in the familiar city after the great dead nothing of the Northern Hills. He felt at home among the streets and the people there, even though he winced as they passed the boarded up shop that had once been his practice.

Mitchell spoke up as they paused to let a carriage pass them in the street. “Well, Mr. Barrows, I must say it’s been fun, but as it seems you no longer need me-"

“Not so fast, Doc,” Parker said holding up a hand. “We can’t have you running off to the authorities while we’re in town. We'll let you go when it's safe for us, and not a moment before then.”

The doctor slumped. “Well, it was worth a try,” he muttered. He figured he could make his break for it now, but there were too many people around, and he didn't think that Parker would think twice

about shooting through a crowd of innocent people to kill him. Maybe later, if they had to get a room for the night.

They met with Parker's fence in a small, poorly-lit bar. The man wore spectacles high on his nose, and puffy white hair framed his face. His clothes looked too nice for the part of town they were in.

"Mr. Barrows, good afternoon," the man said as the bandits sat down at his table. "I am told you have something of interest to me

Parker nodded. "You were told correctly, Mr. Worthington." He passed a small sack across the table.

Mr. Worthington peered into the sack briefly before closing it and glancing nervously about him. Then he slid a leather satchel across the table. "The agreed upon price. You'll find that it's all there."

"That's not quite what I had in mind," Parker replied. There was a click as he cocked the pistol he had drawn beneath the table. "That was a mighty fine tip you gave me about the Guild's Soulstone shipment. Even gave me the idea to use poisonous gas to knock them out, didn't you? Somehow, though, I can't help but feeling like they knew I was coming."

Worthington tried to act offended. "What? That's ridiculous."

"Don't waste my time." Parker sneered. "We both know it was you. Now, we're going to take a little walk back to your home and see if we can't find enough cash to properly honor the woman who died because of your lies."

"Do you know who I am?" Worthington huffed. "Do you know who I represent? You were useful to us, for a time, but disrupting the Guild only goes so far. You're becoming a liability, Parker."

"I don't give a damn who you are," Parker hissed.

"Then perhaps," Worthington replied, "you should at least pay more attention to *where* you are."



The bandits glanced around and noticed all eyes on them. The other patrons were drawing concealed weapons from beneath tables, and others had eyes or hands that were beginning to glow with the tell-tale signs of forbidden magic.

Parker gritted his teeth and slowly holstered his weapon. “Fine,” he growled, motioning to the other bandits. Moving carefully, they backed out of the bar, their eyes scanning the occupants as they did. Mitchell could feel a tenseness to the air, as if all it would take was a single word for all hell to break loose.

Parker was the last to leave, and he stopped at the door. “Worthington.”

The man regarded him with a scowl. “Our business is done, Mr. Barrows.”

Parker whipped out one of his pistols in a blur of motion, and it thundered as Worthington’s head snapped back, spraying fragments of skull behind him. “Now it is,” Parker hissed.

A fireball chased Parker from the bar, where the other bandits were scrambling onto the horses Mad Dog had waiting for him. Mitchell was surprised to see the man; somehow, Mad Dog... or Parker, he reflected... had known exactly how the meeting was going to go down. Together, the Barrows Gang made a mad dash out of Ridley, kicking up clouds of dust and firing wildly over their shoulders at the angry Arcanists who were pouring out of the bar behind them.

Despite the frantic escape, Parker insisted that they needed to get into position for their next job. Mitchell almost fancied he was starting to get used to the dreary trudge through the barren north, but he would never get used to the damned black jackal that kept haunting him along the trail. Every time he saw it, he glanced down at his bag and thought about the pistol hidden there.

They bedded down about a half mile from the train tracks. “This section should be secluded enough,” Parker said.

To Mitchell, it all looked secluded, but the other members of the gang seemed to nod in approval, so he just got ready for another, long, cold night outdoors.

He awoke just before dawn; Parker was tapping him with his boot. “You’ll need to be ready to ride,” he said. “The train is due through here around dawn, and we’ll need to move. Mad Dog is already setting the charges.”

“Charges?” The doctor blinked the sleep from his eyes. “You’re going to derail the whole train? What about boarding it first, like the last one?”

Parker shook his head “No time. Besides, with as many Soulstones as we pulled out of the last one, and the people we robbed, the Guild's going to be making a big show of packing the trains full of as many guardsmen as they can fit in there.”

Before long, they were all hidden behind a small hill, watching the train approach from atop their horses. “Wait,” Mitchell said, his brow creasing in thought. “That train is headed towards Ridley from the city. It can’t be carrying Soulstones from the mines.”

“Nope,” Parker replied. “Even better. The express car's carrying this month's Union payroll. We won’t need to bother fencing any Soulstones; we can just walk off with as much Guild scrip as we can carry.”

Amelia leaned over in her saddle and held up her hand, mimicking a stage whisper. “The Union's lousy with Arcanists, so hitting them in their wallets will really get a bee in their bonnet.”

“The Union is working with the Arcanists?” Mitchell's tone made it clear that this was the first he had heard of such a thing.

“Sure.” Parker thought about it for a moment, then shrugged. “Probably.”

When the train was almost on the charges, Mad Dog thrust downwards on the plunger, sending a plume of dust up in front of the speeding locomotive. A shriek of wrenching metal split the air as the engineer applied the brakes as quickly as possible, but it was of no use. The train’s momentum hurtled

it into the break in the tracks and the massive machine flipped onto its side, skidding along the ground and kicking up a horrendous cloud of the red dust as the cars detached and plowed into each other. The entire event took only a few seconds, but to Mitchell, it seemed like an eternity.

Before the derailed cars had completely ground to a halt, the bandits were riding over the hill, giving wild yells and shooting randomly into the storm of dust and debris. The Doc could hardly see a thing through the dust cloud, which was likely part of the plan. It would be impossible for any guards on the train to get a bead on the attacking bandits, assuming they could even collect themselves after the crash. Amelia held the tether of Mitchell's horse and kept him close at hand, ensuring he couldn't make his escape in the chaos.

It didn't take them long to find the express car and blow the safe. The gang quickly set their minds to stuffing as much scrip as they could in their saddle bags, and Mitchell wasn't excluded from the frantic loot-gathering. As he shoved more scrip than he had ever seen in his life into his bag, light glinted off metal and caught his eye. It was a torn bag of metal pins that had been polished to a shine. Etched onto the face of each pin was the phrase "Union And Proud." Mitchell wasn't sure why the bag was near the express car, but for all he knew, it had been thrown from one of the other cars in the crash. Looking around to make sure he wasn't spotted, he grabbed a handful of the pins and stuffed them into his coat pocket.

"Alright, that's all we can carry!" Parker shouted. "Time to go!" He fired one of his six-shooters into the air twice, signaling their retreat, and the bandits were galloping back toward their hideout before the dust from the wreck had started to fully settle.

It was the same monotonous ride back to the hideout. The only break in the routine was when Mitchell would drop one of the shiny, metal pins behind him when he was sure none of the other bandits were watching him. And every time he did so, he could swear he caught a glimpse of the black jackal in the corner of his eye.

That night, they reveled in their victory again. The next day, Mitchell emerged slowly from sleep. Days of hard riding had left him rigid, and the dust in his lungs left him gasping for breath even now.

When Amelia started shouting, he finally bounded down the stairs. He was the last of the gang to make it to the first floor. Everyone was already armed.

"What's going on?" he asked, panting.

"Riders just came over the ridge," Amelia replied. "They're already in the town, spread out. They probably have us surrounded."

"Who?" Mitchell asked, his heart in his throat.

"Those Arcanist bastards." Parker scowled.

Mitchell looked around frantically. He had hoped to be rescued by the Guild, not the Arcanists. "So what do we do?"

"They're in town, which means they have cover," Parker replied. "They must be mounted, and they've probably got eyes on the horses, so escape is a bad idea. If I were them, I'd just set this building on fire and then pick us off as we ran out."

"That...sounds bad for us," Mitchell replied. He winced as he began rethinking his decision to leave a trail back to the hideout. How would the Arcanists know that he wasn't one of the bandits?

"Well, I said that's what I would do. Fortunately, I'm in here and not out there." Parker jerked his thumb at the carefully counted scrip laid out on the bar. "They probably want their scrip back, and that tends to burn. They have to come in, which means that we need to get ready for them. I want three rifles on the upper levels. Everyone else down here. Stay away from the windows unless you're shooting. Mad Dog, cover the door."

The big man with the shotgun nodded.

“Doc,” Parker said, “go hide somewhere. When everything is done, patch up anyone who survives. You’re useless in a shootout, and I'm sure as hell not giving you a gun.”

Mitchell let out a huge sigh of relief through trembling lips. “I’ll be behind the bar.”

When the attack began, Parker stood up from behind his overturned table and fired one of his six-shooters out of the window. He just held down the trigger and played his hand across the hammer, emptying the entire chamber in a heartbeat. He didn’t bother reloading the gun; he just dropped it and drew his second one, repeating the process, the revolver spitting out bullets at a pace that should have been reserved for a Gatling gun, as far as Mitchell knew. Amelia was ducking low, reloading the pistols as Parker dropped them and then handing them back up.

The glass of the saloon's window shattered to nothing, the wooden walls exploding around Parker as one of the unseen Arcanists lobbed some sort of exploding rock at the building, sending sharpened splinters flying in every direction. Parker just grimaced and kept shooting, the barrels of his guns smoking as he sent volley after lethal volley out into the street. Amelia couldn't keep up with him, though, and eventually he crouched down again, muttering a curse as he slammed bullets into the chambers of his gun. “Used to be, you put six bullets in a man, that's the end of it.” He shook his head. “I really hate this damned place.”

A man burst through the door, raising hands that glowed with a pale blue light. He had been shot multiple times in the abdomen, and he let out a feral howl as he barged into the room. Mad Dog put him down with a blast from his shotgun, right in the head.



"Thanks," Parker called back to him. Mad Dog nodded and turned back to firing out his window.

Two men in long coats ran in next, their pistols firing blindly as they came around the corner. Amelia gunned one down, but she was hit in the shoulder by one of their shots, and she spun before hitting the floor. Parker put two bullets in each of their skulls.

The entire time, the rifles from upstairs kept thundering.

Suddenly, a storm of blue energy hit the wall of the saloon like a freight train. Wood ripped from the wall, furniture went flying, the bandits were blown to the ground, and when it was over, there was a massive hole in the side of the building. Part of the ceiling gave out, and two of the rifle-wielding bandits from the top floor plummeted to the ground.

A hulking mage stepped through, energy rippling up and down his arms. He raised a hand and incinerated one of the fallen bandits, filling the room with the stink of roasting meat.

Parker was the first to react, rolling out of the way of the second blast and grabbing his pistols. One of the bandits charged the mage, wielding his rifle like a club, and landed a solid blow to his throat. The mage barely flinched. He grabbed the bandit's wrists, and Mitchell could hear his flesh sizzle as a scream was ripped from his lungs.

Parker aimed his pistols and let out another volley of fire, shooting through his fellow bandit and into the mage, ripping holes in both their bodies before the two collapsed into a tangled heap. "Sorry, friend," Parker whispered.

Silence fell on the saloon, and Mitchell peeked out from behind the bar. Amelia was bleeding and unconscious, and Mad Dog was on the floor, gripping his stomach where one of the mage's blasts had seared his flesh. The only person still fully aware was Parker, bleeding and panting.

Mitchell waited one minute, then two. Finally, when he was sure that the fighting was done, he crawled out from behind the bar, his medical bag clutched in trembling hands.

Mad Dog was still breathing. Amelia was finally starting to groan and get up. Parker stared up at the Doc, those cold, blue eyes studying him as he pulled a cigarette out from a pocket and placed it between his lips. A bloody box of matches followed, and he fumbled weakly with them in an attempt to get one out.

Mitchell could see that Parker was wounded; blood was pouring down his shoulder, and it looked as if the adrenaline was starting to give way to pain and exhaustion. The doctor reached into his bag and gripped the flintlock at the bottom in a shaking hand.

"When we first met," Parker mused, his head leaning back against the upturned table behind him, "I could tell you were looking for your place, trying to figure out what kind of person you were." He winced as he finally got a match free from the box and struck it, lighting it in a flare of flame. "Right now, you're probably wondering about me. Wondering if I even have the strength to light this damn cigarette."

Mitchell's palm was sweating as he clutched the hidden gun so tightly that his knuckles had surely turned white. Outside, he heard the mocking, laughing howl of a jackal.

Parker stared at him with those cold, blue eyes as he slowly, deliberately raised the match to his cigarette, turning the end of it into a glowing cherry.

The doctor's shoulders slumped, and he drew his hand from the bag, revealing the steel tongs he used to remove bullets.

Parker relaxed, his eyes closing as he took a long pull from his cigarette. "Good choice, Doc." He exhaled a cloud of swirling, acrid smoke. "Good choice."

Mitchell never saw the jackal again.

TRAIN ROBBERY

Scrip. Soulstones. Valuables. There's no telling what they have back there in the express car…

THE TRAIN

Randomly choose one board edge to be the Starting Line. The board edge opposite to the Starting Line will be Ridley. Before deploying Crews, randomly determine a player to be the Defender (the other will be the Attacker). The Defender places a 3" wide by 6" long Train terrain piece with the 3" section flush with the Starting Line board edge. The train will travel in a straight line to the opposite board edge over the course of the game, so move other terrain as necessary to allow this. The sides of this terrain are blocking, impassable, climbable, hard cover. Models may climb up and move freely once on top of the Train. The Train is Height 2.

At the end of every Turn, push the Train 12" towards the Ridley board edge. Any models on top of the Train remain on top of it and are pushed along with the Train, ending the push in their same position on top of the Train. (Note: The models do not count as having been pushed for Ability purposes.) The Train ignores models in its way during this push. If the Train would end the push on top of a model, the model's controller pushes it up to 3" and it suffers 2 damage. If the train comes into contact with the Ridley board edge, it stops. If it is pushed again on a subsequent Turn, it leaves play.

When the Train is Pushed, if its path would cross a Scheme Marker belonging to the Attacker, the Train is Derailed. When the Train is Derailed, it stops in base contact with the Scheme Marker and the Scheme Marker is removed. The Train will not Push again during the game; it is now stationary terrain. Any models on the Train when it is Derailed must take a TN 10 Wk duel or suffer 2 damage. When the Train is Derailed, the Defender places four Ht 0, 30mm Loot Markers in base contact with it. Any Attacking models may make a (1) Interact Action with a Loot Marker to discard it.

DEPLOYMENT

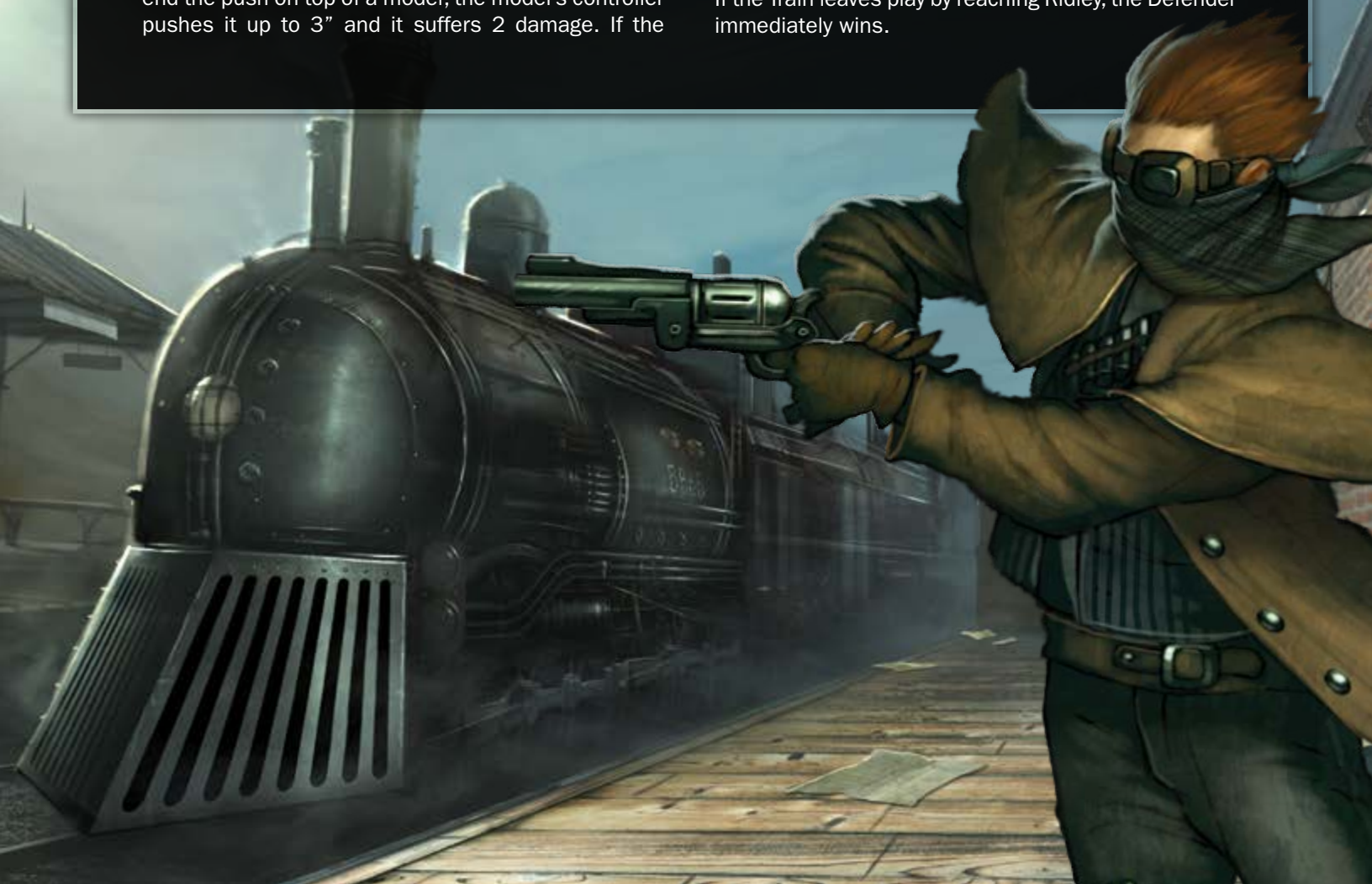
This scenario uses Standard Deployment, with the Defending Crew using the board edge with the Train as their Deployment Zone. At least two Defending models must be deployed on the Train.

VICTORY

The Attacker gains 1 VP when the Train is Derailed and 1 VP for each Loot Marker which is discarded.

The Defender gains 1 VP for each Loot Marker which remains in play at the end of the game.

If the Train leaves play by reaching Ridley, the Defender immediately wins.



OUTCAST VIGNETTES

In the wake of the Governor-General's death, the Viktorias found themselves beset by opportunity on all sides. The Arcanists, Union, and Resurrectionists all saw his death as an opportunity to move against the Guild, and the Guild met each such challenge with all the force it could muster. The Viktorias sold their services to both sides of this conflict, amassing a small fortune in mercenary fees as they ignored the power struggles of their employers.

When Nythera opened some weeks later, the sisters suddenly withdrew from the public eye. Their former associates caught sight of them from time to time in Duer's Library, flipping through ancient tomes and speaking in low voices, always in the company of their younger sister Vanessa. Some even claimed that one of the Viktorias had developed a habit of arguing with her sword, which only seemed to draw concerned looks from the other two.

When word came that the Viktorias were looking for reliable men and women to accompany them on a special mission, the response was far greater than anyone could have expected. Mercenaries live or die based on their instincts, and all of them sensed that the sisters were preparing for something big... a hunch that was confirmed when the Viktorias left the city, marching into the Badlands with five dozen of the most dangerous sellswords and hired killers in Malifaux at their backs.

They would need no less to kill an immortal queen.

While the Viktorias had stayed within Malifaux City to reap the rewards of the Guild's weakness, another mercenary group had set their sights on a greater prize. Marshalling his mercenary forces, Von Schill led the bulk of the Freikorps south into the blasted wastelands to investigate stories of Nythera, the ancient ruins that had been discovered there.

After driving a cabal of Resurrectionists away from their stronghold in Kethsora, the Freikorps discovered clues supporting Von Schill's suspicions that the Neverborn had hidden a weapon within the ruins of Nythera: the same weapon they had used to defeat the Tyrants. A thwarted Nephilim attack– led by Lilith herself, no less – only served to confirm Von Schill's belief that he was on the right track.

When the Freikorps reached Nythera, however, they found themselves plunged into a freezing snowstorm created by Rasputina, who was determined to reinforce the magical seals holding Nythera closed. During the ensuing battle, the Winter Witch engulfed Von Schill in a blast of her frozen magic, freezing him beneath an inch of solid ice.

The Freikorps rallied to their leader's side, sacrificing their lives to buy enough time for the librarians to extract his frozen body from the battlefield and return him to Kethsora. In the end, they managed to save the legendary mercenary's life, but frostbite had claimed his arm and leg, necessitating their removal.

When he regained consciousness, Von Schill regarded his missing limbs for a moment, pulled out a cigar, and started barking orders to the surviving Freikorps. He had a shattered mercenary company to rebuild, prosthetic limbs to commission, and an Arcanist to introduce to the business end of his clockwork pistol.

When Nythera opened, a man in a tattered cloak a hundred miles away snapped His head upward in surprise. Hamelin – or rather, the Tyrant Plague - felt Titania's return like a dagger between His ribs, and in that moment, He realized that the careful game of maneuvering He had been playing with the other awakened Tyrants had just been ruined, as surely as if the Queen had flipped the table on which the game board had been resting onto its side.

Plague had been accustomed to a certain languid pace with His plans. He had once before seen victory slip through His fingers due to His haste, but the return of a player who could legitimately hurt Him – who could *kill* Him – meant that He could no longer afford that sort of luxury. Hamelin had to consolidate His power as quickly as possible, in case the Queen still retained some measure of her former strength.

By the time Von Schill and his surviving Freikorps had limped back to Malifaux City, the Guild was working desperately to contain numerous outbreaks of tuberculosis all across the city.

It wasn't surprising, then, that they failed to notice that there was another sickness – a far more fatal contagion – slowly working its way through the city's poor and homeless. The rat catchers complained about the sudden increase in the city's rat population, but the Guild was too distracted by the tuberculosis outbreak to pay them much attention. Nicodem's undead horde and the Guild's round-up of the Union was an unexpected boon for Hamelin as it only served to provide an even greater distraction to those who might move against Him.

It was only when Hamelin once against donned his wide-brimmed hat, stepped out onto the midnight streets of the city, raised his pipes to his mouth, and started to play his haunting song that the city's inhabitants finally began to notice that the Piper's Plague had returned to their city... but by then, it was far too late.

Plague wasn't the only Tyrant to notice Titania's return. The night after Titania was freed from Nythera, the shuffling corpse of a Death Marshal shambled up to the heavily fortified gates of the Guild Enclave and was quickly gunned down by the surprised guardsmen. After ensuring that the zombie was quite dead, they dragged it inside, and – in accordance with protocol – had its sealed pine box sent to the warded storage vault in the basement, where it would be inspected by the Death Marshals in the morning.

When the pine box snapped open an hour later, allowing Tara to climb out of the nothingness within, there was nobody in the heavily warded room to sound an alarm. That came hours later, when the Witch Hunters opened the vault and discovered that someone had stolen hundreds of dangerous and uncatalogued magical artifacts and tomes. The only object still remaining in the vault was a single, unremarkable pine box.

As the panicking Witch Hunters sent runners to find Samael Hopkins and inform him about the theft, Tara was halfway across the city. She and the Tyrant bound to her undead soul had decided that Titania's power should be their own, but imprisoning an entity as powerful as the Autumn Queen within the void so that they could leech away her power would be difficult... almost impossible, really.

Tara grinned as she held one of the stolen artifacts – a mirror of polished obsidian – up in front of her. Almost impossible, she mused, wasn't quite the same thing as entirely impossible.

Across the depths of the void, she could sense the approval of Obliteration, and together, they began to plan out the next step of its ascension.

That same night, Jack Daw found himself deep in the wilds of Malifaux, floating before a flame-ringed Breach that had opened twenty feet above the ground. These fluctuations called to him, drawing him to their vicinity in the same way that a scream draws the attention of a patrolling guardsman.

He had peered through these Breaches many times, and each time, he felt some forgotten memory stirring in the back of his mind before the flaming Breach collapsed, taking the half-formed recollection with it. This time, however, something was different. This time, someone peered back at him through the Breach.

The man was wreathed in blue flames, his head thrown back in a scream that did not pierce the boundary between dimensions. He floated in the air, a terrible star burning in the night sky, and Jack felt the noose tighten around his neck as the man caught his gaze.

The Burning Man reached out toward the portal with a flaming hand, blackened, cracking fingers reaching desperately toward Jack, pleading with him for assistance... or, perhaps, asking the floating specter to join him in the other world.

Jack raised his hand toward the portal, the runes beneath his flesh flaring up in bright green light as he mirrored the gesture of his counterpart in the other world. As their hands drew close to touching, two worlds shuddered beneath the force of the paradox, blurring lines that had always been – that must always be – distinct.

Then the flaming Breach collapsed with a flash of blue light, leaving Jack Daw floating in the darkness of the night, alone again.

The next morning, Jack Daw was back on his tree, watching the Breach... and waiting.

As his fellow Outcasts were struggling to come to terms with the death of the Governor-General, Leveticus was engaged in a struggle of his own. More and more steampunk abominations were turning up throughout the city, the product of lesser necromancers attempting to duplicate his work.

By the time that he and his companion, Rusty Alyce, had hunted the last of them down, Leveticus realized that his body was beginning to decay: his skin was flaking away and his blood had turned a sickly, dark brown color. He suspected that it was merely a curse from one of the necromancers they had been pursuing, but when he died and returned to life in a new body, the problem had not abated.

In fact, it seemed to have worsened.

The cause of the change didn't matter to him; whether it was a result of the time he spent in the void, untethered to one of his Hollow Waifs, something taken from him by the Hodgepodge Emissary, or merely the inevitable result of fraying his soul and returning from death one too many times. All that mattered was reversing the process or, at the very least, halting it before it spread further.

Leveticus was no stranger to the Necropolis, but now he began making forays into the crypt-like ruins beneath Malifaux City with increasing frequency. There had to be some spell, some relic, some scientific device that he could find and use to halt the slow creep of decay that worsened with each death he experienced.

Zoraida had claimed that Leveticus was the fulcrum upon which Malifaux's destiny turned. If he was dying, did that mean that the burden of that destiny had shifted... or just that his destiny was far darker than even he could imagine?

PARKER BARROWS

Parker Barrows was supposed to inherit a fortune, but it was taken from him by his scheming brother. The coward didn't even have the nerve to steal it honestly. He hid behind lawyers and a judge.

Now Parker roams the Northern Hills with the Barrows gang, a group of outlaws and bandits just as contemptuous of the law as Parker. They steal anything that isn't bolted down, hitting caravans, robbing trains, and shaking down travelers. Parker has his standards, however; he looks the people he robs in their eyes, never hiding his crimes behind a judge or a piece of paper.

The gang has proven to be a thorn in the side of everyone in the region, from the Guild to the Arcanists. The Barrows gang isn't worried about taking any sides; they'll steal from anyone who has valuables to take. Parker has only become more daring with each heist, hitting everything from the Guild's Soulstone transports to Union payroll trains. His only concern is making sure his next take is even bigger than the last.



PARKER BARROWS
Master, Living
BANDIT

CACHE 4

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	6	14	5	7	2

ABILITIES

Go Through Their Pockets: When an enemy model is killed within ❶6, draw a card. Then, if the enemy was not killed by a friendly Bandit, discard a card.

Limited Supplies: Once per Turn, after this model discards an Upgrade, add one Soulstone to this Crew's Soulstone Pool.

A Fistful Of Scrip: At the end of this model's Activation, it may discard up to four cards to select a number of enemy Scheme Markers within (↕)4 equal to the number of cards discarded. Place a friendly Scheme Marker into base contact with each selected Marker, then discard each selected Marker.

PARKER BARROWS

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Six-Shooters (**Sh** 6📖 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⌐12 or ⫻ 2): Target suffers 2/3/5 damage. This Action's Attack flip gains 🃏.

📖 ***Empty The Chamber:*** Before flipping damage, discard any number of Upgrades from this model to deal +1 damage for each Upgrade discarded.

📖 ***Drop It!:*** After damaging an enemy model, place an enemy Scheme Marker within 3" of the target.

🐺 ***Hide In Shadow:*** After succeeding, move this model up to 3".

(1) "Hands In The Air!" (**Sh** 6📖 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 8): Target model gains the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Pay Up:** When declaring a Tactical Action (including Walk, Charge, etc.), this model must discard two cards or the Action immediately fails."

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(1) "The Job's Not Done Yet!" (**Ca** 5 / TN: 13 / Rg: 18): Push target friendly model up to its **Wk** in any direction.

(0) Five Finger Discount (**Ca** 5 / TN: 9): Discard any number of Soulstones or enemy Scheme markers within 3" (in any combination) to attach an Upgrade of equal or lower Soulstone Cost to this model (the Upgrade must have the restriction of Parker Barrows and follow all other restrictions for attaching Upgrades at the start of the game).

🐺 ***Changing Plans:*** After succeeding, take a different (0) Action. This Action may not declare Triggers.

30mm



Doc Mitchell

Doc Mitchell's life hasn't gone quite how he had planned. His wife left him, and he took to drinking. His medical practice dried up, and he took to drinking more. Eventually he ended up in Malifaux City, but he couldn't make things work there either so he set out to Ridley. That's how he ended up all tangled up with the Barrows Gang. They needed a doctor and, well, at least he was that.

Of course, it wasn't his choice. So long as they want a doctor and he wants to keep breathing, everyone gets along just fine. Unbeknownst to Parker, though, the Doc keeps an old Flintlock at the bottom of his medicine bag. He just needs to find the right time to use it and make his getaway.

Somehow, it's never the right time. Parker is looking in his direction. His palms are too sweaty. It could endanger another innocent hostage.

But someday, someday he'll look Parker Barrows in the eye, reach into his bag, and pull out something other than his flask. That day's just not today.



Abilities

Insignificant: This model may not take Interact Actions.

Drunk and Pathetic: This model is immune to the **Focused**, **Defensive**, and **Poison** Conditions.

"Doc! Get Over Here!": At the start of this model's Activation, it may discard a card to push up to 5" towards a friendly Bandit model within 12" and LoS.

Doc Mitchell

Attack Actions

(1) Doctor's Bag (**Ml** 4 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 1): Target suffers 1/2/3 damage.

(1) Hidden Flintlock (**Sh** 4 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 6): Target suffers 3/4/5 damage. This Action may only be taken once per Turn. After resolving this Action during this model's Activation, if this model has LoS to a friendly Parker Barrows, sacrifice this model.

Tactical Actions

(1) Stitch Up (**Ca** 4 / TN: 10 / Rg: 5): Target model heals 1/2/3 damage.

X ***"This'll Numb The Pain.":*** After succeeding, the target gains the following Condition until the start of its next Activation: "**Hard to Wound +1**: Damage flips against this model suffer ."

30mm

MAD DOG BRACKETT

Everyone in the Barrows Gang has a role to play. For some of the bandits, that role changes with each new heist, depending upon the task at hand. On one heist, a bandit might be in charge of gathering hostages, while on the next, she's tasked with watching the horses.

Only two members of the gang have roles that never change: Parker picks the target and decides on the plan, and his second-in-command, Mad Dog Brackett, fixes any problems that might come up with restrained violence.

Hostages yapping too much? Jab a lit cigar into one of their eyes to make a point.

Guard won't hand over the keys? Shoot him and blow the door open with a few shotgun blasts.

Door reinforced too well for a shotgun? Send soemone to fetch the dynamite.

To Mad Dog, life is simple. He takes what he wants, and if anything gets in his way, he blows it apart.



MAD DOG BRACKETT

Henchman, Living, Rare 1

BANDIT

COST 9

CACHE 4

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	5	8	5	7	2

ABILITIES

Bulletproof +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model from **Sh** Actions by +1, to a minimum of 1.

Life of Crime: At the end of the game, all enemy Scheme Markers within ❶2 count as friendly Scheme Markers for the purposes of Strategies and Schemes.

Loot Their Corpses: After this model kills an enemy model, place a friendly Scheme Marker in base contact with the enemy model before it is removed.

Foaming at the Mouth: When this model has four or fewer Wounds remaining, it gains ❹ to its Attack and damage flips.

MAD DOG BRACKETT

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Chesterfield Shotgun (**Sh** 6🗡 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⌐10): Target suffers 3/4🌩/5🌩 damage.

🗡 ***Blown Back:*** After damaging, push the target up to 4" away from this model.

(1) Burning Cigar (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 1): Target gains **Burning +2**.

✕ ***"AHHH, MY EYE!":*** After succeeding, the target suffers 2 damage. Then, push the target up to 3" away from this model.

🗡 ***"Say Hello to my Little Friend":*** After succeeding, immediately take the Chesterfield Shotgun Attack Action against the target. This Action is treated as Rg: ⫻ 2.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(2) Rapid Fire: This model may discard a card. If it does, this model may make 3 **Sh** Attack Actions with an AP cost of 1 against a single target.

(0) Blow It To Hell (**Sh** 5🗡 / TN: 9🗡💀): Place a 30mm, **Ht** 0 Blown Apart Marker within 8" and LoS then, discard any other Blown Apart Markers placed by this model. Models within 3" of a Blown Apart Marker may not benefit from cover when targeted by **Sh** Actions.

30mm

AIONUS

He has had many names over the long years, but none can fully capture the true essence of Aionus. He is the guardian of time, waiting patiently and watching silently as mortals are born, live, and die. The cogs of time continue to turn as the vast possibility of the future is slowly snuffed out, leaving only the unchangeable past, like ash after a flame.

Through all of this, Aionus keeps his watch, slave to neither Fate nor Chance. He serves no master, exerting his will onto the flow of time as he sees fit. He slips in and out of the material world, influencing the vast tendrils of possibility in minor ways as the world hurtles towards its future.

All things must end. Mountains erode, oceans dry, and cities turn to dust. All that remains constant is time, slipping away like the lifeblood of the world.

It was there in the Beginning, and so it will be in the End.

And with it, Aionus.



AIONUS

Henchman, Mercenary, Rare 1

COST 12 CACHE 1

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	7	12	5	8	2

ABILITIES

A Stitch In Time: When another friendly non-Peon, non-Leader model with a Soulstone Cost of 1 or more Activates within 4, it may discard a card with a value higher than its Soulstone Cost to receive **Fast**.

Between the Seconds: This model's Actions which deal damage deal +1 damage to models with the **Fast** or **Slow** Condition.

Stolen Time: This model generates 1 additional AP when it Activates. During Turns 1 and 2, this AP may only be used to take Walk Actions. From Turn 3 onwards, this AP may only be used to take **Ca** Actions.

Beyond Your Magic: Reduce all damage this model suffers from **Ca** Attack Actions by half.

AIONUS

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Bony Fingers (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 2): Target suffers 2/3/5 damage, ignoring **Armor**. This Attack can target buried models, regardless of range and LoS.

Temporal Flux: After dealing Severe damage to a model in play, bury the target. Unbury the target in base contact with this model at the end of the Turn, or before this model is removed from play.

A Life Wasted: After damaging, the target gains **Slow**.

Shifting Sands: After damaging an enemy, place a friendly Scheme Marker in base contact with each enemy Scheme Marker in 3 of this model, then discard each enemy Scheme Marker in 3 of this model.

(1) Out of Time (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 10): Target model gains the **Slow** Condition.

The Wasting: After succeeding, models within 2 of the target must succeed on a TN 12 **Wp** duel or gain the **Slow** Condition.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Time Changes All (**Ca** 6 / TN: 9 / Rg: 6): Target a Marker within 6" that is not a part of the Strategy. You may place the Marker within 6" of its current location, not in base contact with other Markers, models, or terrain.

(0) Midnight (**Ca** 6 / TN: 16): Push all friendly Scheme Markers in play up to 2".

Look to the Future: After resolving, place a friendly or enemy Scheme Marker (your choice) within 2" of this model.

40mm

BANDIDO

The Barrows Gang, as they have come to be known, are notorious outlaws that plague the Northern Hills and Footprints near Ridley. Most people, the Guild included, focus on "Barrows" more than they focus on "Gang," and that's just fine for the men and women who ride alongside Parker. They all take the same share of loot (Parker sees to that), and only one man's face ends up on the wanted posters.

They come from all walks of life but, for their own reasons, have forsaken it all and ridden out to become outlaws. Some were members of the Union, others were guardsmen, and word has is that one even used to work at the Star Theater.

Of course, they have many things in common, too. They're all dead shots with a pistol, experts on horseback, and adept at making a quick getaway into the harsh terrain of the Footprints; any who weren't died long ago.



BANDIDO — COST 5

Minion, Living
BANDIT

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	6	5	5	6	2

ABILITIES

Bulletproof +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model from **Sh** Actions by +1, to a minimum of 1.

Life of Crime: At the end of the game, all enemy Scheme Markers within ❶2 count as friendly Scheme Markers for the purposes of Strategies and Schemes.

Finish the Job: When this model is killed, it may place a Scheme Marker in base contact with itself before it is removed.

Df (🗡) Quick Getaway: After resolving against an enemy, push this model up to 5" in any direction.

BANDIDO

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Clockwork Revolver (**Sh** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⌐10 or ⫻ 2): Target suffers 2/3/5 damage.

📖 ***Drop It!:*** After damaging an enemy model, place an enemy Scheme Marker within 3" of the target.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(2) Run and Gun: This model may discard a card. If it does, push this model up to 5" in any direction then, perform a (1) **Sh** Attack Action that receives 🃏 to the Attack and damage flip. After resolving the Attack and any Triggers, push this model up to 3" in any direction.

30mm

DEAD OUTLAW

He sat up in the Badlands. He stretched his arms, turned his head, and tried to suck in a breath before realizing that he didn't need to. The gut-shot he had taken was bad, and he'd been walking for days before he blacked out.

His name was William. Yes, that was it. William. He scooped up the bloody satchel full of scrip next to him.

This is mine, he thought. *All mine. They tried to take it from me; they tried to take my life from me. But it's mine. All mine.*

William pulled himself to his feet and continued shambling through the Badlands, free of the burdens that he had suffered in life: the need for drink, for food, for company. Now, all of that was gone, and in its place was a deep, black hole that needed to be filled.

He needed more scrip...



DEAD OUTLAW

COST 6

Minion, Undead

BANDIT, TORMENTED

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	5	6	5	6	2

ABILITIES

Hard to Wound +1: Damage flips against this model suffer -1.

Too Greedy To Die: If this model has 5 or fewer **Wd** remaining, whenever an enemy Scheme Marker is placed within 6" by another model, this model may heal 2 damage and then discard the Marker.

Stolen Goods: When this model is killed or sacrificed by another model, this model may choose to place a Scheme Marker in base contact with itself before being removed. The Scheme Marker is friendly to the Crew that killed this model.

DEAD OUTLAW

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Sand In The Eyes (**MI** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 1): Target suffers 1/1/5 damage.
- ***"My Eyes!":*** After succeeding, the target gains **Slow**.
- ***Reposition***: After succeeding, push this model up to 3" in any direction.

(1) Cursed Collier Pistol (**Sh** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 10): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.
- ***The Curse Spreads:*** When damaging a target with one or more Upgrades attached, this Attack deals +1 damage.
- ***Reposition:*** After succeeding, push this model up to 3" in any direction.
- ***Drop It!:*** After damaging an enemy model, place an enemy Scheme Marker within 3" of the target.
- ***Piercing:*** When damaging, this Attack ignores **Armor**, **Hard to Wound**, and **Hard to Kill**.

(1) Curse of the Covetous (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 6): Target model gains the following Condition until the end of the game: "**Curse of the Covetous:** This model may only take Walk and Interact Actions. End this Condition when this model places a Scheme Marker. This model may choose to suffer 3 damage at the start of its Activation to end this Condition."

30mm

WOKOU RAIDER

There are many pirates who plague the seas surrounding the Three Kingdoms back on Earth. Of them, the Wokou Raiders are the most feared, carrying out lightning raids on Guild shipping lanes and slipping back out to the open ocean.

Of course, it's no surprise that many of these raiders are affiliated with the Ten Thunders. Misaki originally brought some across the Breach in the hopes of putting their seamanship to use on the rivers of Malifaux. But navigating a river turned out to be very different from navigating the open ocean, and the experiment ultimately failed.

Even so, many of the raiders remain, putting their knowledge of quick attacks and close-quarters fighting to good use. Some have even developed an affinity for the wind and the weather as their nautical skills were brought to life by the ambient magic of Malifaux. The loyalty of a gang of pirates is a tenuous thing, however, even for the Ten Thunders. They remain unpredictable allies, often ignoring any orders that do not come directly from Misaki herself.



WOKOU RAIDER COST 8

Minion, Living

BANDIT, LAST-BLOSSOM

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	6	8	5	8	2

ABILITIES

Combat Finesse: Enemy models may not Cheat Fate while taking Attack Actions that target this model's **Df**.

Bulletproof +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model from **Sh** Actions by +1, to a minimum of 1.

Ever Changing Wind: When an enemy Scheme Marker is placed within 6, this model may push up to 3" in any direction.

WOKOU RAIDER

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Twin Sabers (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 2): Target suffers 2/4/5 damage. This Attack flip gains .

Drop It!: After damaging an enemy model, place an enemy Scheme Marker within 3" of the target.

Coordinated Raid: After damaging, another friendly model engaged with the target may make a (1) Attack against it. This Attack may not declare Triggers.

Critical Strike: When damaging the target, this Attack deals +1 damage for each in the final duel total.

(1) Collier Pistol (**Sh** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 10): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

Reposition: After succeeding, push this model up to 3" in any direction.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) A New Horizon (**Ca** 5 / TN: 10 / Rg: 6): Target a Scheme Marker. Place the Marker within 6" of its current location not in base contact with other Markers, models, or terrain.

30mm

WANTED

DEAD OR ALIVE

2,000§ REWARD



32 YEARS OLD

WEIGHT 195 POUNDS

LIGHT COMPLEXION

PALE BLUE EYES

AMERICAN NATIONALITY

5 FT 11 INCHES TALL

MEDIUM BUILD

PARKER BARROWS

HIGHWAYMAN, BANK ROBBER, TRAIN ROBBER, MURDERER, HORSE THIEF, ILLEGAL USER OF SOULSTONES, ENEMY OF THE GUILD AND THE M&SU

BANDIT UPGRADES

BLACK MARKET

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Bulletproof +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model from **Sh** Actions by +1, to a minimum of 1.

  This Looks Valuable: At the end of this model's Activation, if it took an Action that removed one or more enemy Scheme Markers, add one Soulstone to this Crew's Soulstone Pool.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Stick to the Plan (**Ca** 5 / TN: 10 / Rg: 6): Target other friendly model may immediately take a (1) Interact Action. After resolving, if the target was not a Bandit, discard this Upgrade or 1 Soulstone.

  Changing Plans: After succeeding, take a different (0) Action. This Action may not declare Triggers.

RESTRICTIONS

Parker Barrows, Limited

HIGHWAYMAN

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Bulletproof +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model from **Sh** Actions by +1, to a minimum of 1.

  This is Worth a Few Scrip: Once per Turn, after resolving an Action that removed one or more enemy Scheme Markers, draw two cards and then discard one card.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) No Witnesses (**Ca** 5 / TN 10 / Rg: 6): Target other friendly model may immediately take a (1) Attack Action. After resolving, if the target was not a Bandit, discard this Upgrade or 1 Soulstone.

  Changing Plans: After succeeding, take a different (0) Action. This Action may not declare Triggers.

RESTRICTIONS

Parker Barrows, Limited

CRATE OF DYNAMITE

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (1) High Explosives (**Ca** 6 / TN 14 / Rg: 8): All models within (R)3 of target Scheme Marker must succeed on a TN 13 **Df** duel or suffer 4 damage. Discard the Scheme Marker; then discard this Upgrade or 1 Soulstone. This Attack does not need LoS when targeting an enemy Scheme Marker.

RESTRICTIONS

Parker Barrows or Mad Dog Brackett, Rare 1

HAIL OF BULLETS

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (1) Hail of Bullets (**Sh** 6 / TN: 13 / Rg: 12): Place two 50mm **Ht** 0 Hail of Bullets Markers in LoS touching each other within 12" and not in base contact with any other model or Marker. These Markers are a Hazardous Terrain piece dealing 2/3/4 damage and soft cover. Remove these Markers at the start of this model's next Activation or when this model is removed from play. This Action may only be taken once per Turn.

  "That Should Hold 'em, Take A Breath.": After succeeding, discard this Upgrade to heal 2 damage.

- This model gains the following Trigger to its **"Hands In The Air"** Action:

  "The Valuables, Please.": After succeeding against an enemy model, place an enemy Scheme Marker within 3" of the target.

RESTRICTIONS

Parker Barrows

STICK UP

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (1) Stick Up (**Sh** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 8): This Action can only be used once per Activation. Target enemy Enforcer, Henchman, or Master may choose to suffer 4 damage; if it does not, it must discard 1 Soulstone if able and this Crew may add 1 Soulstone to its Pool.

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Fast Getaway: At the start or end of this model's Activation, it may discard this Upgrade to take a Walk Action.

RESTRICTIONS

Parker Barrows

HUMAN SHIELD

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Human Shield: While within ❶2 of at least one other model, this model benefits from soft cover.

  "Sorry, Friend": After an Attack from an enemy model succeeds against this model, this model may discard this upgrade to make target friendly model within ❶2 of this model suffer the effects of the Attack Action instead of this model.

RESTRICTIONS

Parker Barrows

COORDINATED HEIST

COST: 2 SS

- All other friendly Bandits within ❶8 gain the following Ability:

  Scout the Field: After Initiative is determined on the first Turn, this model may take a Walk Action.

- This model gains the following Ability:

  "You Were Told To Duck...": When this model targets an engaged model with a ⌐ Action, this model may discard this Upgrade. If this happens, it does not randomize its target. Instead, it makes the declared ⌐ Action against every model that it would have flipped a card for if the Attack was randomized, in an order of its choosing. Then, all friendly models that were Attacked in this manner may push up to 5" in any direction.

RESTRICTIONS

Parker Barrows

LUCKY PONCHO

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Hard to Kill: While this model has 2 or more **Wd** remaining when it suffers damage, it may not be reduced to below 1 **Wd**.

  "You Ruined It...": At the start of this model's Activation, if this model has 1 **Wd** remaining, it may discard this Upgrade to gain the **Focused +1** Condition.

RESTRICTIONS

Mad Dog Brackett

OUTCAST UPGRADES

Advanced Sight

Cost: 0 SS

- This model gains +1 **Wk**.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Advanced Sight (**Ca** 5 / TN: 12): This model gains the **Focused +1** Condition.

RESTRICTIONS

Hans

Brick By Brick

Cost: 0 SS

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Brick By Brick: Enemy models in base contact with this model that declare an Attack must discard a card or the Attack immediately fails.

  Hard to Wound +1: Damage flips against this model suffer ⊟.

RESTRICTIONS

Montresor



RETURN FIRE

Cost: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Df/Wp (X) Return Fire: After resolving, this model may take an **Sh** Action against the Attacker, if able.

RESTRICTIONS

Enforcer, Rare 2

THE BIGGER THEY ARE

Cost: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  The Bigger They Are...: This model's /// Actions which deal damage deal +1 damage to non-Master models with one or more Upgrades attached.

RESTRICTIONS

Rare 1

THE DEAD MAN'S CANDLE

Not everyone can die in the comfort of Malifaux city, where their body is sure to be attended to (at least so that it doesn't spread disease or become fodder for the Resurrectionists). For those living on the fringes of society out in the wastes, dying alone only to be forced to walk Malifaux once more is a common fear.

To help ease these fears, some shops in Ridley and various settlements have begun selling Dead Man's Candles. These are enchanted candles that set alight with an intense flame once the person who carries it perishes. In this way a lonely traveler can ensure that his or her corpse will be burned to ash, rather than coming to more nefarious usages.

Of course, this has also led to a number of fake knock-offs being sold. After all, by the time anyone discovers the item doesn't work, the buyer has already expired.


XXX
XXX
XXX
ZIPP
GREMLINS

LED ZIPP'LIN

BY: GRAEME STEVENSON

Nobody wants to be hit on the head by a Gremlin; especially not a flying one.

However, life isn't always fair, as Chester discovered when the heavy wyrdwood club connected with the back of his head. His sailor's hat took some of the sting out of it, but there was still enough momentum and force behind the blow to knock him clean off the wagon. He went one way, his scatter gun the other.

The ground here was a slope of dusty earth and scrub that led down to the lip of a standing swamp, and Chester slid through the full gamut of pebbles and prickly undergrowth before sinking to his hips in brackish green water and foul-smelling algae. The wagon rattled on, unmanned.

Altogether, he was in an unenviable position.

His day had started out promising enough; being the scatter gunner on a Malifaux City Bank & Loan coach wasn't as perilous as one might think, and the pay was good. He saw a lot of the country in his job, threading through all the mining towns, dropping wage remittances and collecting land deeds from the branches to take back to the city vault. Chester enjoyed whiling away the miles by shooting any small furry things that happened to wander within range of his scatter gun – the cuter the better, but he'd take a pot-shot at most anything, in all honesty.

The unexpected, random gun reports had bugged Flat Joe, the driver, something awful until Chester had conscientiously adopted the habit of murmuring "fluffy" just before he pulled the trigger, to tip Joe off that a discharge was imminent. Chester was considerate that way.

They'd done this route a dozen times before and never had a lick of trouble, so neither man had seen the ambush coming.

One minute Chester was lazily scanning the grassy verge for his next fuzzy conquest, and the next the air was full of screaming green and black birds. Then one of these 'birds' landed on the roof of the coach, and he got a good look at a Bayou Gremlin with a crude glider attached to its back made from oil-cloth and wood, wearing an iron mask and carrying a pry-bar.

"Iron Skeeters!" the Gremlin had hollered, and then attacked the heavy padlock on the side of the wagon.

This new arrival was neither cute nor fluffy, but under the circumstances Chester had felt he'd best put some buckshot in him just the same. Before he got the chance, a second flying Gremlin swooped in at speed and knocked Flat Joe clean out of his seat. The horses didn't register the reins falling slack and kept on trotting, oblivious.

Chester swiveled to retaliate, but a third Gremlin flashed past and tried to snatch the scatter gun out of his hands. Chester managed to keep ownership of the gun and saw the foiled Gremlin execute a wobbly, flapping half-turn before nose-diving into the dust, his momentum spent.

They weren't flying, they were gliding.

Sure enough, another wing of small black and green shapes detached from the upper branches of a tree and swept down on him, arms spread wide to catch the air. Again, he heard the piping crow of "Iron Skeeters!" and realized this was some sort of war-cry.

He finally got one in his sights, absently muttering "fluffy" as his finger curled around the twin triggers, and would probably have cut the little varmint in half had the blow from behind not taken him completely by surprise.

Now, he was disarmed, half-submerged in a swamp that smelled worse than year-old long johns, with an egg-sized welt swelling on the back of his head, while the coach trundled away, rider-less, into the distance. Things didn't seem like they could get much worse.

The blocky grinning snout of a Silurid rose slowly to the surface of the murky water, a foot away.

Well, how about that, Chester thought. Things could get worse after all.



It was a beautiful evening. One of those cool, clear spring evenings where the ground was still warm from the day's sun, and the breeze was full of honeysuckle and jasmine. The suffocating heat of the summer was still a ways off yet, when the sweating stench of the Bayou would permeate everything, and the agreeable temperature was made all the more poignant by the knowledge that it wouldn't last.

Zipp sat on the bluff and looked out across the darkening terrain. There had been a great river here once, or perhaps a lake, which had carved the tear-drop bowl below. The ground was firm on the western fringes of the Bayou, but there was still enough moisture in the soil to propagate furious plant growth. Every inch of ground below the bluff was carpeted in a vivid, lustrous green.

To the south was the orange glow of Ridley. The buildings looked like a collection of toothpicks and matches scorched black by a fire, but Zipp had been to Ridley before and knew that up close they were considerably more impressive, at least by Gremlin standards.

The excited hooting behind him indicated that his crew had found a decent haul in the compartmentalized bowel of the bank carriage. Zipp turned, disappointment furrowing his brow. "Is this what you think being an Iron Skeeter is all about?"

A gap-tooth Gremlin popped his head out of the wagon. "Beatin' folks about the head and takin' stuff? Er, yeah? That was the idea..."

Zipp sighed. "No, gentlemen." Why Zipp had started referring to the other Gremlins as 'gentlemen' none of them knew, but it seemed to make him happy. "We don't steal because we need the things we take. We aren't scavengers. We are the bastards of the Bayou! The terror that swoops down from the skies! We are Iron Skeeters, and our business is not coin; our business, gentlemen, is infamy. We are not simple thugs. With the gliders I taught you to soar, and I will lift you up with every new heist, and together we will claim the skies and- are you listening?!"

The gap-toothed gremlin briefly stopped stuffing scrip into his pants. "Yeah, sure boss. Infamy. Can we still keep the loot?"

"Buck," Zipp began, "I made you second in command because I thought you showed promise, but I'm starting to find that you lack vision, a certain essential element to what it means to be a Sky Pirate. You see-"

Zipp was cut off by a shrill scream as a Silurid wearing a soggy hat leapt up to the carriage and caught Buck's foot in its jaws. "Zipp, help! Help!"

The other Sky Pirates started to raise their weapons, but Zipp stopped them with a held-out hand. "Who?"

Buck shrieked as the Silurid swallowed him up to the waist. "Captain! Captain, help me!"

"You see, Buck, this is what I'm talking about. A true Sky Pirate needs to understand the proper chain of command, even in a crisis. We have the looting and robbing down, yes, but it's about the spirit of the thing. It's about-"

The Silurid let out a loud belch; Buck was no more. Zipp hadn't intended to allow the beast to eat his second in command; he fancied that might be seen as a sign of weakness. However, he was never one to let an opportunity go to waste. He gazed into the eyes of the horrified Iron Skeeters. "Buck was not showing the proper state of mind. This beast, however, showed initiative! It saw an opportunity and it leapt for it, grabbing it with its very teeth! That is the spirit of an Iron Skeeter! Why, he's even dressed for the part!" Zipp gestured towards

the soggy sailor's hat. “Gentlemen, meet your new second in command! Meet your new First Mate! With his support, we will raise ourselves from the muck of the Bayou into the-"

There was a shrill scream as the First Mate grabbed another Gremlin and began gnawing on its leg.

Never one to be interrupted, Zipp smacked the creature on the snout, forcing it to drop the squealing Gremlin. “Gentlemen, would one of you please bring out some of the smoked pork we packed for lunch. The First Mate is clearly hungry.”

It didn’t take the Gremlins long to convince the First Mate that it was more profitable, on the whole, to eat the smoked pork that they tossed to it than to waste time chasing any of the Sky Pirates. Even so, it eyed the Gremlins with a hungry gaze, licking its lips. Zipp explained to them that this was good for morale; that it was, in fact, the First Mate’s job to keep the ‘crew’ in line. Secretly, he was surprised the creature kept following his directions, but then, he had once fed a wild pig and had it follow him for a week, so he supposed it wasn’t unusual animal behavior.

“Some of you may say that today was a good haul.” Zipp’s monologue never seemed to stop. “We made off with the scrip, as we always do. That is the pirate way. But who remains to tell our tale? Who did we leave behind to spread the word about the fearsome Iron Skeeters? What is the point of stealing if nobody knows it was you? A coward might say that makes it easier to get away.



But remember, gentlemen, that we do not trade in coin. We do not humble ourselves before scrip and petty loot. Our currency is infamy, and infamy must be sown so that it can be reaped. You see-"

Another Sky Pirate interrupted Zipp. Normally interrupting the head Gremlin was a dangerous prospect but, if you worked for Zipp, it was really the only way you'd ever get a chance to speak. "I dun' even know what yer sayin', boss. Where'd ya learn all them fancy words?"

"He weren't always like that." An older Gremlin nudged the Sky Pirate who had spoken. "Stole hisself an Aethervox one night. One o' them talkin' boxes the humans use. He started listenin' to these stories on there, an' ever since..."

Zipp ignored them and continued talking. "We are true pirates. The name of the Iron Skeeters will be whispered in hushed voices. Our legend will soar into the skies..."

He trailed off. It had finally dawned on him that something odd was happening in the distance. Far off to the south, the final rays of the sun had brushed momentarily against a shape emerging from the area near Ridley.

Whatever it was, it had to be big to be visible at this distance. Black as a shadow and already vanishing against the brooding darkness of the sky, Zipp watched as a long, cylindrical object slid up from among the buildings and floated off into the sky.

Floated. Into the sky.

"Well, what do you suppose that was?" the older Gremlin asked in a curious voice. Evidently, he'd seen it too.

Zipp knew that he'd caught a glimpse of something special and secret. Something deliberately stained or painted black to be invisible against the night sky. Had the vanishing sun not hit its flank just at the right moment, he'd never have seen it.

"I'll tell you what that was," Zipp said. "Infamy."

All in all, it had been a good field test.

Earl could tell this because the Professor was relatively quiet. Had he not been pleased, there would have been a long and scathing monologue about all the inexcusable faults he had discovered.

"The hydraulics are a touch sluggish," Professor Tewolde said as they walked down the gangway into the hangar. "I want you to flush the valves and replace the fluid to the airfoil motors."

"Yessir."

Earl hurried along at the Professor's elbow as he strode off the end of the gangway and struck out vigorously for the cargo door at the far end of the hangar. The scientist possessed an intimidating vitality for a man of such advanced years, and his long legs never seemed to tire.

"Check the lamps again," Hackeem said a few moments later. "When I finally reveal her, I want her symmetry to be perfect. There can't be a single one out."

"Yessir." Earl made a quick note on his pad, adding it to the already enormous list of revisions and maintenance tasks.

Being head engineer sounded pretty official, pretty senior, and one could be forgiven for imagining that a certain degree of authority would come with the position. Under other circumstances, that would probably be the case, but Earl had learned to his immediate dissatisfaction that this didn't apply when the scientist in charge of the project was Professor Hackeem Tewolde.

It didn't matter that Earl oversaw a crew of engineers, welders, and pipe-fitters, nor that the funding for the Bloody Sky project came from the Guild's Science Division. As far as Hackeem was concerned, it all belonged to him: the men, the tools, the hangar, even the airship – all his.

Admittedly, Hackeem had a certain genius when it came to the defiance of gravity. The Guild had brought the Abyssinian in specifically for the advancements his people had made in this technology. He was even mentoring a handful of other scientists who were using the airship to test new devices to see how they operated at an altitude, but his true expertise was with equations, chemical formulae, and the application of directional force. Turning the countless pages of crabby handwriting and ink-spotted blueprints into a physical reality was Earl's task and Earl's alone.

So, for the last three years he and his staff had been ensconced in this hangar doing just that. Despite his dissatisfaction with his position, Earl had to admit that the ship was a beauty.

At a hundred and fifty-six feet in length, the Bloody Sky cast a big shadow. Much of her bulk was comprised of the outer framework, skinned in black fabric, and about forty hydrogen gasbags made of rubberized cotton that gave her lift. Beneath the framework were three gondolas; two smaller units housed the drive propellers and engines, and a long, central gondola housed the cockpit, passenger berths, and control unit for the Mechanism.

The real magic of Bloody Sky was hidden in the nose of the airship's frame – the Science Division's trump card for the International Science & Technology Exposition.

Earl tried hard to avoid the political aspects of his work, but he understood that the success of this project had doubled in importance since the death of the Governor General. The Guild's hold over Malifaux had been badly shaken and there were a lot of financial backers needing reassurance that it was still on top of its game.

Bloody Sky would prove that the Guild was stronger than ever. If it worked.

"Pressure tests," the Professor was saying. "It's less than three months to the Exposition, and I will not be thwarted by an ill-fitting pipe. I want the entire system checked for faults."

"Yessir," Earl nodded, making another note. I'll be here all night, he thought to himself, but he was careful to keep his expression neutral and business-like. If this project was a success, Earl would get his pick of juicy assignments, all paid for by a grateful Guild.

The Professor stopped at the hangar door and turned back to give the airship a final appraisal.

"And get someone up there to polish the brass housings," he said, slamming the door behind him as a final punctuation.

"Yessir," Earl said to no one in particular, and turned back into the hangar.

Zipp was finally ready.

It had taken weeks of continuous scouting and spotting, but he and his crew had monitored the skyline for a reappearance of the mysterious floating object and managed, over a series of sightings, to triangulate the position of its emergence.

At first, the other Gremlins couldn't see the point of the exercise, but a few judicial cuffs - and hungry glares from the First Mate, he was really pulling his weight, Zipp noted - had enforced its importance on them, and they had fallen into line.

Whoever owned the flying ship (for ship it was – his spotters had seen faces through the portholes on the craft's underside as she lifted into the sky) had taken great pains to keep her hidden. The hangar was a huge crumbling structure at the heart of a ghost town on the outskirts of Ridley that wouldn't warrant a second look from even the most curious bystander. As for the ship herself, her entire surface was black and it was only the brass fittings and pipework that gave her away. Some damned fool had polished the metal to a high luster, and it was those telltale glints and flashes that had helped Zipp's scouts pin down the location of the secret hangar and its stealthy occupant.

The first time Zipp had crouched in the rubble at dusk and watched the vessel lift gracefully into the night sky, he had known that she was his destiny. This wonderful ship, whatever she was, was meant to be his. She was the missing piece. She completed him.

The grandeur and notoriety he had always desired was finally within his grasp. He would swoop down out of the night sky and strike terror into the populace (while separating them from their valuables, obviously). His crimes would be beyond belief, impossibly daring, and the whole world would tremble and crouch at the mention of the Iron Skeeters.

He would be a sky pirate.

And tonight was the big night. They'd been watching the comings and goings from the hangar and most of the workmen seemed to leave after dark. The airship herself only took flight once a week or so and she'd been out only last night, so the hangar ought to be quiet.

There were guards, of course; a contingent of guardsmen was always on hand in two rotating shifts, but they had clearly been on this assignment for a long time. They were lazy and inattentive and regularly clumped together in quiet corners of the hangar to smoke and play cards. By the time they knew something had gone wrong, Zipp planned to be well away with his prize.

The fact that neither he nor any of his crew had the faintest idea of how to operate an experimental airship was an insignificant detail.

"Alright, boys," he whispered, beckoning them close. "It's time."

White grins broke out in the darkness.

Earl wasn't sure of the hour, but judging by the ache in his back and the way his eyes were stinging with fatigue it was likely after midnight.

He stood for a moment and stretched, grimacing as his back cracked. At his feet lay a series of oily washers and copper piping and a partly disassembled gas valve. He'd finished refilling the hydraulic fluid reservoirs and testing the controls and was now checking the gas valves for fatigue and cracking. Exposure to hydrogen gas made the metal brittle over time, and he wanted to replace any suspect joints before they were subjected to high pressure.

In truth, any one of his engineers could have done these basic maintenance tasks, but the entire crew had pulled a double-shift to get the ship ready for yesterday evening's test flight and he didn't have it in him to make them stay late again to finish these few paltry tasks before the Professor's inspection in the morning. Better he gets them done himself and let the crew rest.

They had the first field test of the Mechanism coming up in four days, and he'd need his entire staff to be sharp as tacks for that. A single miscalculation and...

Best not dwell on it.

Earl crouched over the gas valve and began to piece it back together, cleaning off the excess grease with a rag before screwing each section back into place.

Valves and washers and hydraulics were all plain enough fare for an engineer, but the thing that waited in the airship's nose was several orders of magnitude more complex. Its construction had been so secret that only Earl and the Professor had been present for the final assembly. As for its purpose, well, Earl understood the premise, but the actual physics behind its function was something that only the Professor could truly comprehend.

As Earl would be on board when they tested it, he hoped that his faith in the man was well-placed.

With the valve back in place, Earl checked the nuts one last time to make sure they were tight and shuffled on to the next. Only four more valves, then back to his bunk for a cold meal of beans and sliced bologna and a few hours of blissful sleep before the morning inspections.

The last valve was in place and Earl had just begun to push his tools back into his belt when his nose twitched.

He'd had a number of heated discussions before with the guard commander about the dangers of his guardsmen having a crafty smoke in the immediate vicinity of a hundred and twenty-five thousand cubic feet of hydrogen gas, but they never quite seemed to get the message, and sooner or later, one of them always sparked up again.

Muttering under his breath, Earl stepped out onto the gangplank to find the culprit. He had a suspicion that it would be Stewart again – no matter how many times he was educated about flammable products in the hangar, he always seemed eager for his cigarette breaks. Earl would just have to ask for him to be transferred this time, as much as he liked Stewart on a personal level.

When he got to the side of the ship, Earl paused. The hangar was on fire.

"Oh," he said.

About a dozen crates and their straw packing had gone up in a savage conflagration that was already licking hungrily at the northern wall of the. The flames were also starting to reach up for the airship's hindquarters only twenty feet or so overhead. That was bad.

"Fire!" Earl screamed, hopping up and down on the gantry, mostly because the panic of his discovery had momentarily robbed him of the ability to do anything else. "Fire!"

Nothing really happened for a second or two. Stewart's head appeared from behind a brick partition at the far end of the hangar, a self-rolled cigarette hanging out of his mouth.

"Huh?"

"Fire!" Earl screamed again, pointing frantically down at the spreading disaster.

Stewart's eyes widened and the cigarette dropped from his mouth. The hefty Guardsman snatched up a steel bucket filled with sand and began to lumber across the hangar.

"Never mind the bucket, you damned fool!" Earl clapped his hands to the sides of his head with exasperation. "We have to get the airship out! The mooring ropes, man! The mooring ropes!"



Stewart skidded to a halt, dropped the bucket, and began to run back the way he had come, fumbling for his bayonet.

By now, the alarm was starting to spread and faces were appearing from doors all around the hangar. Smoke was pooling against the underside of the roof, and the dorsal half of the airship's superstructure was softening through the haze. In less than a minute, it would be obscured completely.

Professor Tewolde came hurtling out of the dormitory, his long legs flying under his nightshirt.

"Open the hangar door!" he howled, arms overhead as he ran for the huge roller door at the west end. "Open it, I say!"

Guardsmen were streaming in now. A few of them were pitching buckets of sand over the fire, but it had already spread to the huge coils of hempen rope at the rear of the hangar, switching the smoke from gray to a thick, noxious black. Others were sawing at the mooring ropes with knives, but the bulk of them had congregated at the roller door and were struggling to disengage the lock from the inside.

"Earl!" Hackeem shouted as he joined the struggle at the door. "Start the engines! We'll ram the door if we have to!"

The engineer ducked back inside, tripped over his tool box and stumbled to the engine console. Electric start buttons had been considered a risk during the design phase, and so each engine gondola had its own manual starter handle. Earl began to frantically pump the first handle and was rewarded seconds later by a throaty roar as engine number one burst into life.

The Bloody Sky began to push forward and to the right. The mooring ropes creaked in response and a few that were mostly sawn-through snapped under the increasing tension.

The roller door finally began to screech open under the combined efforts of about twenty frantic guardsmen and one very irate chief scientist. Smoke immediately lunged through the opening gap, swirling up into the night sky.

Engine number two sputtered, coughed, and then revved into life, pushing the airship forward again, the direction of thrust evening out as both propellers got up to speed, agitating the growing smoke cloud overhead.

The last mooring rope came away with a loud twang and the airship started to pick up momentum. The gangway scraped and sparked its way across the hangar floor.

Earl gripped the pilot yoke, trying to keep the airship level as it moved with increasing speed towards the still-widening gap of the roller door. Quite apart from whether the door could be opened in time, there were only fifteen feet of clearance between the airship and the top of the door frame, and if he misjudged it, he'd at best rip off the dorsal airfoil and at worst rupture the entire upper superstructure. Extraction was normally done by hand at a walking pace, but there was just no time for that now.

"Push, men!" Professor Tewolde cried, his attention batting between the slowly widening door and the rapidly approaching airship, which was now a black silhouette against a rising wall of orange flame. The whole back of the hangar was now on fire.

Other scientists were stumbling out of the dormitory, coughing and looking around with consternation.

"My Magneto-Propulsive Velocipede!" Dr. Forbes shouted, looking forlornly up at the airship as it continued on.

"There's no time!" Hackeem replied testily. "We must save the airship!"

"But our work was on board, too!"

"If we save the airship, we save it all!"

Earl wiped sweat from his brow, peering through the forward window and trying to ignore the screeching sounds of the trailing gangplank. As much as he wanted to pull up and give it clearance, he knew he just didn't have the room.

Something exploded behind the airship and it shuddered. Black smoke had almost completely filled the hangar now, and even the scientists were running for their lives. The hangar door was only about three-quarters open, but they were out of time. It was now or never.

Earl rammed the throttle to maximum as flames licked against the airship's rear. The Bloody Sky roared forward into the gap, barely squeaking through like a cork from a bottle. It scraped the paint from the top of the airfoil and knocked woodchips and plaster out of the doorframe, but the ship was free.

Soot-stained and half-clothed, the scientists whooped and applauded as Earl steered the airship further out and away from the burning hangar. He knew that the gas tanks that held spare hydrogen and the manufacturing plant in the adjoining building wouldn't take long to overheat and explode, and he was determined to be as far away as possible when that happened.

He was just beginning to think that the Science Division's prize asset might have been saved after all when big, black birds began to thud against the sides of the gondola.

Zipp had watched for the perfect moment, which he knew wouldn't be long in coming.

It had been child's play to start the fire. Most of the guardsmen on shift were either asleep or smoking down at the western end of the hangar, and Zipp had been able to sneak over to the pile of empty packing crates and straw left in a corner to set it alight. It went up easily and he made a sharp exit along with his gang down the corridor, up the ladder, and onto the roof.

There, they just crouched and waited, listening to the cries of alarm from within. Pretty soon, smoke was sifting through the rusty holes in the corrugated iron roof and a growing orange light lit their grinning faces.

When the nose of the huge airship began to push through the hangar door, Zipp knew they had it in the bag. The fools had been so desperate to get the airship out that they hadn't given a thought to security. The craft was completely undefended and probably had nothing more than a skeleton crew aboard.

"Ready, boys," he said as the bulk of the huge craft pushed through the door and out into the night. "Teach them to fear the Iron Skeeters!"

The Iron Skeeters vaulted over the side of the hangar roof, spreading their wings and swerving down onto the flanks of the airship. They bounced against the superstructure and scrabbled against the trailing mooring ropes, but by and large they managed to catch hold of the underslung gondola and flapping gangway; it was a touch undignified, but effective.

While his crew did the grunt work, Zipp set himself to more important matters. He adjusted his harness and leapt off of the hangar roof, swooping down – rather majestically, he thought – over the heads of the frantic scientists. "You have had the great honor of being the first-" His sentence was cut off as he rose too high to be heard. He adjusted for another dive. "...to be robbed by true Sky Pirates. This was the work of the Iron Skeeters!"

A bystander might have said that the scientists and guards were too busy dealing with the fire or watching the assault on the actual ship, to even notice the shouting Gremlin, but Zipp knew they were too terrified to acknowledge him. He turned on the wind and made for his new airship.

Professor Tewolde's expression did a complicated jig from frantic worry to ecstatic relief to confusion to recognition to dawning horror. He watched his airship escape the flames only to come under attack by an unexpected flock of large, black and green birds.

"Thieves!" the Professor suddenly exclaimed. "They're trying to steal my airship!"

The night-shirted scientists began to race in a bandy-legged manner after the craft, waving in the air and shouting with indignation. The Guardsmen were still busy fighting the fire.

A burly shape plowed through the scientists, knocking them to the ground and leaving them choking on smoke and brushing themselves off.

“Was that...was that a Silurid?” Professor Forbes stuttered.

“Have you ever seen a Silurid wearing a hat?” Hackeem shot back.

The Silurid built up speed and made a magnificent leap at the airship, which still hung relatively low. It grabbed the side with a clawed hand and pulled itself up. The hat stayed proudly atop its head the entire way.

Quick as a snake, the marauder was on his feet, brandishing a pistol. Earl surreptitiously slid the wrench back into his tool belt. He wouldn’t get two steps before being gunned down.

“Alright, nobody move!” the gremlin cried, waving the weapon around in a manner that made the engineer cringe. After a minute, the new arrival seemed to realize that Earl was the only one there. “Just you?”

“That’s right.”

The Gremlin grinned. He had a fly stuck between his teeth. Earl tried not to stare.

“My crew and I are commandeering this vessel. I am Captain Zipp, Sky Pirate.” He put a lot of emphasis on the ‘Sky Pirate’ part and Earl cottoned on that he was meant to be impressed. He nodded dutifully.

“Right. Goodness me. Well, how can I help you, Captain?”



"You are now our prisoner, as this is our ship. You will be treated fairly. You will be fed, clothed, and cared for, as we are honorable buccaneers, though the terror of the skies we may be." Zipp said, as more Gremlins started to file in through the open gondola door. They looked around with interest, jostling and shoving each other. "We're the Iron Skeeters. Heard of us?"

Earl glanced again at the pistol. "Oh, yes. Absolutely. The famous sky pirates. Yes."

This seemed to take the Gremlin by surprise, but he quickly hid it. "Of course you have! And soon the entire world will know the name of Captain Zipp and his Iron Skeeters." He paused. "Where did you hear of us?"

Earl swallowed hard. "Um. Heard it on the Aethervox?"

Zipp beamed. "Right! Yes, the Aethervox! Of course they tell our tales there, spreading the word across all of Malifaux that we, the-"

An older Gremlin cut Zipp off. "Um, Cap'n. Do ya know how ta fly this thing?"

Zipp paused for a second. Confusion and then horror crossed his face before he straightened himself and adjusted his coat. He turned to Earl, eyeing his tool belt. "Are you this vessel's mechanic?"

"Engineer," Earl corrected.

"You know how to fly it?"

"Yessir, I do."

Zipp turned to the older Gremlin. "As I planned, we have captured the ship's engineer, an expert in flight. As our prisoner, he is bound to do as we say. He will fly the ship until I have sufficiently learned the controls. Engineer," he turned to Earl, "take us up."

Earl complied by throttling up the engines and angling the airfoils while chewing his lip. It made no sense to defy them, at least not until he had formulated a plan of escape. Even without the weapons, there were too many of them for him to handle alone. He'd have to think of something else.

He noticed that Zipp was watching his actions carefully.

"What's that you're doing there?" Zipp asked, waving at the pilot yoke with the pistol muzzle.

"That's the yoke," Earl explained. "It controls yaw and roll."

"And that?"

"Throttle control for engines number one and number two. And this lever controls the pitch airfoils."

The Gremlin had him go through each lever and panel methodically, his quick eyes running over the dials and gauges, soaking it all up with an obvious hunger.

"And this?" The pirate Captain pointed at the control panel for the Mechanism.

Earl's mouth dried up. He'd forgotten about that. Heaven help them all if the Gremlins realized just exactly what they'd stolen. If they figured out how to switch it on...

"Gas valves," he stammered. "Uh, gas valve controller."

Just then, a huge shape in the still-open gondola doorway blocked the firelight from outside. Earl watched in astonishment as a Silurid loped into the cockpit. It was wearing a sailor's hat.

It noticed Earl standing alone at the front of the cockpit and stared at him. Stared at him like a starving man stares at a roast chicken dinner.

Earl swallowed nervously.

"This here is the First Mate," the Captain was saying. "After me, he's next in line of command. If I am incapacitated, you are to follow his orders to the letter."

"Yessir," Earl nodded.

The First Mate hadn't blinked. It licked its lips.

"Oh boy," Earl whispered.

"Very well," Zipp said. "I will leave the First Mate to watch you as I inspect my new ship."

Earl began to sweat.

The First Mate showed its teeth.

"This place is a treasure trove!" Zipp whispered hoarsely.

They had crept through the ship, checking room to room. It was fully stocked with food and supplies, and it seemed like it had been preparing to transport some unusual items.

There were windows along the wall out of which Zipp could see the open night sky and Malifaux's twin moons peering back at him. There were some rooms more like cells; these door-less chambers were festooned with files and clip boards stuffed with papers and countless rolls of drawings and schematics, none of which made any sense to the Gremlins.

What did catch their immediate attention, however, were the objects in each room. Many were only partly constructed or an unrecognizable scattering of components without purpose, but there were a number of other devices on tables and stands whose properties were immediately recognizable.

The first thing Zipp had found was some kind of pistol; it was heavier and bulkier than a conventional revolver, but an experimental pull of the trigger had lit the room up with a blue-white flash and sent an arc of jagged electricity ripping across the far wall.

"It's a lightnin' gun!" the older Gremlin breathed, his eyes wide.

"No, it's my lightning gun," Zipp corrected, thrusting the weapon into his belt.

"Hey!" cried one of the others, staggering out of an adjoining room with his arms wrapped around a weighty metal object. It looked rather like an oversized bucket with a water tank on top and copper piping threaded around its circumference. "Whadya reckon this is?"

Zipp cast his eye over it. While devoid of any engineering qualifications and blissfully ignorant of everything that could conceivably be bracketed under the heading of 'science,' Zipp enjoyed fireworks as much as the next Gremlin and this thing looked kind of like a big metal firework. His pulse quickened when the object was turned around to reveal a heavy leather shoulder harness and belt affixed to the underside.

"Do you know what this is?" he breathed, stroking the cool steel with reverent fingers.

"A still?" one hopeful voice piped up.

"I think..." Zipp said, his voice quavering with excitement, "I think this might be a rocket pack."

"Say what now?" said the other voice, mildly disappointed that the sloshing tank didn't contain alcohol.

"A rocket pack. For flying. I have heard tales of these on the Aethervox. They say-"

Zipp was interrupted by a collective oooh as the Gremlins gathered round to touch its magnificence.

"Get back there!" Zipp snapped, protectively hunkering over the device. "This is a precision instrument."

"Hey Boss," called the older Gremlin from a doorway near the end of the corridor. "If you like that, you're gonna love this."

They stampeded over to the doorway and stared in.

The machine was obviously meant to be ridden. There was a padded leather saddle and foot stirrups on either side. A curious metal bar projecting from the front held a series of dials, switches, and levers and looked like it could be moved through several axes judging by the joint at the base. Metal pipes projected from the sides and back, marked with the rainbow discoloration of extreme heat, and four large paddle-shaped appendages protruded from the machine's midsection, made of wire and steel rods with some kind of thin, silvery fabric stretched over them.

"It kinda looks like..." started the older Gremlin.

"...a big skeeter," finished Zipp.

The sense of building excitement was irresistible. All the Gremlins could taste something special in the air. Zipp had been ranting for weeks about how this was all meant to happen, and now that they were here they'd found a lightning gun, rocket

pack and a giant flying mosquito-thing, and they hadn't even gotten around to really using the airship yet. It had to be destiny.

"This is it, boys," Zipp said. "This is our destiny – to take to the skies. To claim what is ours by force and by cunning. This was not mere chance. We are the Iron Skeeters, and we are Sky Pirates!"

A cheer ripped through the crew.

The Gremlins made their way back to the cockpit just as the First Mate had edged a bit too close to Earl. They carried with them an array of gadgets, one of which he recognized as Dr. Forbes' Velocipede.

Captain Zipp glanced out of the side porthole and, seemingly satisfied with the altitude they'd gained, turned his attention to the Velocipede.

"Do you know how to work this?" he asked, nudging it with his foot.

"I've seen the schematics," Earl said. "I understand the physical principles, so I... sure, I could, I mean yes. Yes, I know how it works."

Zipp was grinning.

"So, you can build more of them? If I get you the parts?"

"Uh, sure, okay." Earl nodded, feeling the Silurid's hungry eyes crawling over him. Its long claws were moving indecisively as though it was unable to decide which juicy morsel it wanted to eat first.

"Hear that, boys?" Zipp said. "A fleet of flying machines!"

The Gremlin crew cheered.

"Of course, there is no sense in simply having a flying machine," Zipp continued. "It must be done with style. Flare. People need to know the name of the terror that is swooping down from the skies. Could these be formed to look more like skeeters? Magnificent iron noses, which plummet from the air, thirsting for the blood of those-"

"I want mine to look like a Pig!" One Gremlin shouted.

"And a Pig for Roscoe." Zipp rolled his eyes.

Earl couldn't take any more. "Yes, I can make them look however you like." He took a nervous step away from the First Mate, still gripping the controls at a now-awkward angle.

"Excellent," Zipp said, noting the human's discomfort at the First Mate's presence. "What is your name?"

"Earl."

"Alright, Earl – you make me copies of this here flying machine – with style – and keep us in the air, and I'll keep the First Mate away from you. Deal?"

The engineer nodded. What other choice did he have?

"Alright Earl, set the Infamy on course for the Bayou."

"Infamy?" Earl asked.

"Indeed," Zipp said, tossing some smoked pork to the First Mate, who caught it in his jaws. "The ship needs a fitting name. Infamy."





BURN THE HANGAR

Just one little fire and some massive theft, and then the sky is the limit…

SET UP

Place a 6” by 6” Hangar Terrain piece in the Center of the board. This terrain is Ht 2, blocking, impassable, climbable, hard cover. Select one player to be the Attacker and the other the Defender.

DEPLOYMENT

The Defender must deploy first, within 3” of the Hangar (or on the Hangar). The Attacker deploys second, and may deploy their models within 4” of any board edge.

SPECIAL

Attacking models in base contact with the Hangar may target it with a (1) Interact Action to try to set it alight.

VICTORY

The Attacker gains 1 VP every time an Attacking model Interacts with the Hangar that had not already interacted with it this game.

The Defender gains 1 VP for every enemy model that is killed or sacrificed within 6” of the Hangar.

GREMLIN VIGNETTES

Other than the brief loss of control caused by the aetheric shockwaves of the Governor-General's death, the passing of one of Malifaux's most powerful individuals went relatively unnoticed in the Bayou. Of all the Gremlins, Som'er Teeth Jones cared the least and was, in fact, surprised to learn that there had been a Governor-General in charge of the city in the first place.

Far more important, at least in his estimation, was the nearby LeBlanc family. They had been sneaking into his lands and poaching wild pigs for months, but when Dempsey LeBlanc, one of the bosses of the LeBlanc family, bumped into Som'er at a Bayou Bash and spilled the bigger Gremlin's drink, that was the final straw.

Som'er got his family all riled up on fiery speeches and moonshine, marched them south to the border they shared with the smaller LeBlanc family, and made his intentions known by ordering his minions to "shoot the LeBlanc lands to death." A truly withering amount of gunfire was pumped into the surrounding land, and when Som'er finally trudged off atop his riding pig, the trees, mud, and underbrush of the LeBlanc family had been taught a dire lesson.

Dempsey LeBlanc responded to this insult by showing up at the next Bayou Bash with two tall hats that had been sewn together, making a single, double-tall hat. There was a great deal of debate as to whether or not this counted as a single hat, but regardless of the legitimacy of the double hat, it was clear to everyone that Dempsey had offered a serious insult to Som'er.

The insult sparked off a bitter feud between the Jonses and the LeBlancs, and while the smart money was on the Joneses, nobody could deny that Dempsey LeBlanc had a mighty fine hat.

As the Joneses to her south became embroiled in a feud, Mah Tucket turned her family's attention westward, across the Frostrun and toward the Hollow Point Pumping Station. The humans had hollowed out a mountain and filled it with all manner of complicated and noisy machines, all of which had piqued her interest.

Her Bushwhackers crept into the Pumping Station in the middle of the night and set up a camp in the bowels of the humid and often insect-infested machinery. The humans rarely spent much time in the half-flooded tunnels as the humidity and nesting insects bothered them, but to the Bushwhackers, it wasn't much different than the Bayou, save that the insects all tended to be smaller than their thumbs.

Bit by bit, the Bushwhackers began to steal from the humans at the pumping station. At first, it was just clothing and tools; a set of overalls would go missing, or a mechanical wrench would disappear from someone's workbench when they weren't looking. There were reports of things glimpsed or overheard in the tunnels and access vents, but these were dismissed by the Union leadership as the result of hungover workers trying to blame their forgetfulness on an outside source.

It was only when a crate of Abyssinian lightning rifles that had been earmarked for reverse engineering disappeared from the research labs that the leadership realized that their workers had been telling the truth. They sent constructs into the tunnels to run the Gremlins out, but their advance was stalled by crude traps and a cackling Gremlin with a large spoon.

Despite numerous meetings, the Union has been unable to come up with a good way to drive the Gremlins out of their tunnels, which amuses Mah Tucket to no end.

The LaCroix family, meanwhile, were locked in a battle with a much more dangerous enemy. Four years prior, the Red Cage had fallen from the sky and landed in the northern portions of their land. The initial impact took the lives of countless Gremlins, but more worrying were the twisted creatures of desiccated flesh that crawled up from the resulting crater.

Since that day, Ophelia has been forced to defend her lands against a never-ending tide of twisted abominations. The number of abominations crawling from the crater has ebbed and flowed over the years; some months, the abominations pour forth from the crater in waves as thick as skeeters over standing water, and other months, the LaCroix family can count the number of abominations they were forced to put down on both hands.

The Governor's death triggered another surge of abominations, putting Ophelia and her family on the defensive once again. Hiding behind their barricades, they pumped countless bullets, shells, musket balls, and catapulted pigs into the encroaching tide, but no matter how many of the things they destroyed, more clamored their way up out of the Red Cage.

Realizing that her family would eventually run out of ammunition and be overrun, she hatched a clever plan to get the humans to fight the undead in her stead. All it took was a few dozen LaCroix spanking their bare bottoms within eyeshot of Latigo to draw the Ortega family into the Bayou, at which point the LaCroix family scattered, leaving the humans to face the abominations.

The LaCroix lingered at the edges of the conflict, picking off stragglers when they could, but for the most part, they were content to let the Ortega family do the brunt of the fighting.

Halfway across the Bayou, Wong tinkered with dangerous forces that should probably have just been left alone. Most Gremlins considered the sunken ruins of Kythera to be cursed and avoided them as best they were able, but Wong didn't believe in all that superstitious nonsense. Or rather, he did, but the voices in his Three Demon Bag had been nagging him for so long that he had simply ceased to care whether or not the spirits at Kythera turned him into a frog.

Once he had stolen a boat and poled it out to the center of the ruins, Wong opened his Three Demon Bag as the voices within had instructed. The oni trapped within the bag immediately began to wail and shriek in unholy glee, their spectral forms rising upwards and swirling overhead in a storm of flashing lights and sinister laughter.

Wong waited patiently on the boat until the oni had finished being sinister and returned to their bag, at which point they instructed him in how to perform a ritual to contact their long-lost master, Lingxuzi.

By that time, however, Wong was getting a bit bored of being at Kythera, so he just sat down in the boat, chewed his toenails down to a respectable length, and lied to the voices, claiming that the ritual hadn't worked. After some initial confusion, they decided that Wong would need to consult with a more powerful summoner in order to complete the ritual.

Thinking that the voices had said "Som'er-ner," Wong happily agreed to seek out the Bayou boss to see what he knew about dark rituals and powerful oni. He didn't think Som'er would be much help, but if the voices thought differently, who was Wong to argue?

Besides, Som'er usually had some pretty good hooch, and it had been awhile since Wong had sampled some of his moonshine.

In the weeks after the Governor's death, the Turner family began to have issues with the steadily increasing numbers of Bunyip along their southern borders. The seal-like creatures had occasionally come upriver to prey upon the pigs that were plentiful in Turner lands, but never in any significant numbers.

Now, however, they were starting to carve out a niche for themselves in the Bayou's ecosystem, and that niche seemed to be preying upon the corralled pigs of the Turner family (as well as the Turners themselves). Unwilling to watch as their lives and livelihood were eaten out from under them, they turned to wise old Ulix to help them devise a way to keep the Bunyips away from the family's corrals.

With his specially-designed fences and clever "pig sheets" – which were just large, camouflaged sheets that the Gremlins would throw over their pigs at night to hide them from the Bunyips – Ulix managed to significantly reduce the number of pigs the Turners were losing to the ravenous predators.

Despite the relief of his kin, however, Ulix realized that this was a temporary solution at best; their pigs were dying less often, but the Bunyip population continued to increase with each passing day.

Ulix proposed that he and his fellow ranchers start breeding the smallest and meanest pigs they could find to fight the Bunyips. It would take time, he reasoned, but with selective breeding and a steady diet of Bunyip meat, they could soon have a sizeable number of surly pigs with an innate dislike for their one-time predators.

It would take some effort to convince his fellow Turners that breeding smaller, meaner pigs was a good idea, but he was confident that once the first generation of anti-Bunyip pigs had been born, the others would see the wisdom of his plan and follow his lead.

The Brewmaster disappeared from the Bayou for a time, ostensibly to return over the mountains to secure more of the secret ingredients used to make his most intoxicating and coveted concoctions. Taking his Tri-Chi with him, he traveled north toward the Ten Peaks... and then took a familiar detour toward the mountain town of Promise.

There, he met with his contacts in the Ten Thunders, who were pleased to learn that he had ingratiated himself so thoroughly with the various Gremlin families of the Bayou. His next assignment, they said, was to start agitating the families along the northern borders of the Bayou.

The Ten Thunders wanted the Gremlins to launch larger attacks against the Guild and Union on the other bank of the Frostrun, and to help with that, they had crates of guns and ammunition for the Brewmaster to take back to the Bayou and distribute to the most aggressive of the Gremlin families.

The Brewmaster bowed and accepted the offered weapons without complaint, but he was silent on his journey back to the swamp. He was beginning to have doubts about his partnership with the Ten Thunders; they had given him what he wanted, that was true, but now they were turning his entire race into a weapon against their enemies. Gremlins did not care overly much for the survival of their kin, but the Brewmaster had a larger perspective than most Gremlins, and now, that same perspective was bothering him.

As he passed through Tong lands, he "accidentally" left the weapon crates behind in one of their villages. The Tongs had always been antagonistic toward Promise and the Ten Thunders, and the Brewmaster needed to buy some time to consider the repercussions of his actions and the ultimate fate of his people.



ZIPP

Zipp is a sky pirate extraordinaire, the most feared Gremlin in the skies and ruthless leader of the Iron Skeeters. Or, at least, that's what he rambles on about to anyone who seems interested (which, in Zipp's determination, is just about everyone).

Ever since the day Zipp discovered an aethervox and heard stories of grand adventure being broadcast across it, he knew he was destined for great things. He started by robbing caravans with a crew of other Gremlins, but it was never quite daring enough for him. He had dreamed of being a fearsome brigand or a dastardly clever villain, not a common thief.

Everything changed the day Zipp stole an experimental airship from the Guild. He's christened it the *Infamy*, and with it he terrorizes Malifaux from the skies.

Leaping from the ship on his jetpack, Zipp wields his purloined lightning gun against his unfortunate victims... or rather, he does so once his victims have heard a proper monologue.

After all, you can't just go around killing and robbing folks without a proper monologue. How else are they supposed to know who robbed them?



ZIPP — CACHE 4

Master, Living
GREMLIN, SKY PIRATE

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	6	12	8	5	2

ABILITIES

Df/Wp (🗡) Blasting Off Again: After resolving against an enemy, place this model anywhere within 6" of its current location.

Constant Yammering: Enemy models within ❶6 must discard two cards when declaring an Interact Action or the Action immediately fails.

Flight: This model is immune to falling damage and may ignore any terrain or models while moving.

Insignificant: This model may not take Interact Actions.

ZIPP

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Zipp Zapper (**Sh** 6🗡 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⌐8 or ⫻ 2): Target suffers 2/3/4☠ damage.
🗡 ***BZZZAP!!***: All models damaged gain the following Condition until the end of their next Activation: "**Can't Stop Twitching:** This model has -2 **Wk** and cannot declare Charge Actions or (0) Actions."
✕ ***Convulsions***: After damaging, move the target up to 3" in any direction. Then the target may discard a card; if it does not, move it up to 3" in any direction.

(1) "Up We Go!" (**MI** 3 / Rst: **Ht** / Rg: ⫻ 2)**:** Place the target anywhere within 5" of its current position, not in terrain. Then, the target suffers 2/4/5 damage that may not be reduced.
🗡 ***My Work Done, I Race Triumphantly Into The Clouds***: After succeeding, this model may take a Walk Action.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(1) Noxious Smoke: Place up to three 50mm Noxious Smoke Markers in base contact with this model and not in base contact with any other models or Markers which were not placed by this Action. These Markers are **Ht** 5, blocking, impassable terrain and are removed at the end of the Turn. This Action may only be taken once per Turn.

(0) "Grab A Rope!" (**Ca** 5 / TN: 10 / Rg: 6): Push target other friendly model up to 8". Then, the opponent may push the target up to 2" in any direction.

30mm

EARL BURNS

Earl Burns was once the lead engineer on a top-secret Guild project. He was in charge of a team of laborers making good pay. Now, he is a prisoner of a bunch of Gremlins who fancy themselves pirates and keep mucking about with the controls of his airship.

It all happened one night, just before the airship's debut. The Gremlins stole the ship and Earl along with it. It seemed they hadn't quite planned on how they would fly the thing and were happy to find Earl at the controls. Since then, he's spent his days repairing everything they have destroyed, explaining why firing guns around a hundred and twenty five thousand cubic feet of hydrogen gas is a bad idea, and generally trying to avoid losing the ship in a fiery death spiral.

The worst is the damned Silurid that Zipp keeps around. Earl is certain that he will never be able to teach it to fly the ship, despite Zipp's demands, and it always licks its lips when it looks at him...



ABILITIES

"Get Your Hands Off Me!": When a friendly Sky Pirate within ❶1 declares a Walk Action, this model may be placed in base contact with the Sky Pirate after it completes the Walk Action.

Used To It: This model is immune to **Burning** caused by (🔥) effects. This model is immune to damage caused by (☠) effects.

Df (🗡) "Squeel!": After this model is damaged by an enemy **MI** Attack Action, push this model 4" away from the Attacker.

EARL BURNS

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Wrench To The Head (**MI** 4📖 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Target suffers 1/1/2 damage.

📖 ***"That Shouldn't Have Worked..."***: If the target is a friendly Construct, the target heals 2 damage instead of suffering damage.

📖 ***Dismantle for Parts***: After damaging an enemy Construct, place a Scrap Marker in base contact with the target.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(1) Regular Maintenance (**Ca** 5 / TN: 10 / Rg: ❶6): Discard a card. If you do, until the end of the Turn, all friendly Leaders and friendly Constructs within ❶6 add the suit of the discarded card to all duel totals. This Action may only be taken once per Turn.

📖 ***The Right Parts***: After succeeding, this model may discard target Scrap Marker within 6" to gain the following Condition until the end of turn: **"Turned Up to Eleven":** Friendly Leaders and Constructs within ❶6 gain 🗡 to their Attack Actions.

(0) Tasty Human (**Ca** 5 / TN: 10): Target friendly Pig or Swampfiend within 6" is pushed into base contact with this model.

⚔ ***"Help! Someone Help Me!"***: After succeeding, this model suffers 1 damage and the target heals 1 damage.

30mm



THE FIRST MATE

The First Mate became Zipp's second in command by eating the previous second in command. That hadn't been The First Mate's intent, and it's questionable as to whether he fully realizes that he is in charge of most of the Gremlin crew, but Zipp can't argue with the results.

The watchful eye of The First Mate always seems to stop any complaining dead in its tracks. The crew works harder when he's around, quickly scurrying out of his way as they get back to work lest the First Mate decide to properly discipline them for slacking off. Sure, he eats one or two of them here and there for no reason that anyone can suss out, but how else is he supposed to remind them who's in charge?

The First Mate seems to enjoy his new station in life; everything from his regular meals of smoked pork (provided by Zipp) to his new outfit to the stash of cigars he found in his quarters seems to suit him.

The First Mate even gets his own share of the loot, although he has a habit of eating it from time to time.



THE FIRST MATE

Henchman, Living, Rare 1
SWAMPFIEND, SKY PIRATE

COST 9 Cache 4

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	6	8	5	7	2

ABILITIES

Carry The Loot: Whenever an enemy Scheme Marker within 8 is discarded, this model's controller may draw a card and then discard a card.

Perfect Camouflage: Attacks generated by the Charge Action and **Sh** Actions receive while targeting this model if this model has not yet Activated this Turn.

Pounce: When an enemy model ends a push or move within this model's engagement range that is not part of a Walk or Charge Action, this model may immediately take a 1 AP Attack Action against the model without spending AP

THE FIRST MATE

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Silurid Beat Down (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 1): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.
Bite: After damaging, the target receives the **Poison +1** Condition.
Knock Unconscious: After damaging a model with the **Slow** Condition, the model gains the **Paralyzed** Condition.

(1) Swallow You Whole (**Ml** 6 / TN: 13 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 1): Sacrifice target non-Leader model unless it discards two cards or two Soulstones. The target must be **Ht** 1 or have the **Paralyzed** Condition. If the target is sacrificed in this way, this model heals 2/3/4 damage.

(1) Menacing Croak (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 8): Push target enemy model up to 6".
Blank Stare: After succeeding, this model gains the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Staring Into Space:** This model does not count as having Activated for the purposes of its **Perfect Camouflage** ability."
Always Eating: After succeeding, discard target Scheme Marker within 3" of this model.
Gaping Confusion: After succeeding, the target gains **Slow**.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Leap (**Ca** 6 / TN: 10): This model immediately moves up to its **Cg**, ignoring intervening terrain and models during the move.

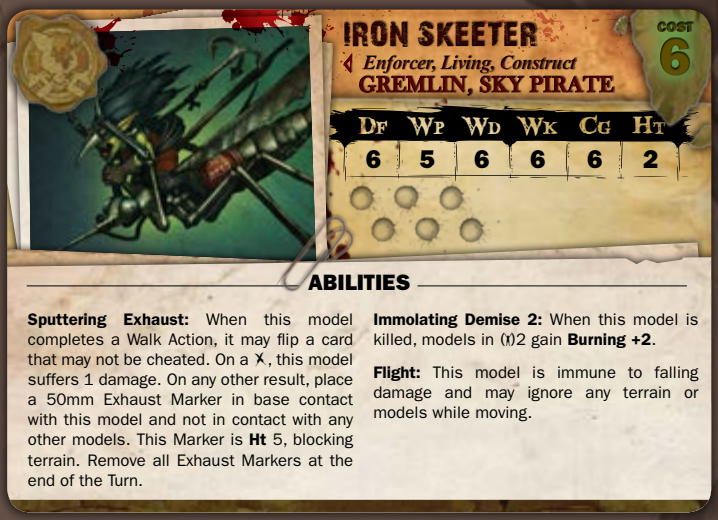
40mm

IRON SKEETER

The Iron Skeeters are Zipp's loyal sky pirate crew aboard the airship Infamy. They ride into battle on flying mechanical creations that they stole when they took the ship itself. They have even convinced Earl Burns to stylize the machines to look like giant, metallic mosquitoes. Zipp felt that added a certain flare to their raids and better suited their name.

These Gremlins have been loyal to Zipp since long before he stole the airship. They have gotten used to him not doing his full share of the pirating and talking while he should be working, but that's no different from most Gremlin bosses. Although they find him annoying from time to time, Zipp's plans and ideas always seem to pan out, so why fix what isn't broken?

When they aren't busy pirating, the Iron Skeeters amuse themselves by gambling, pulling the ship's control levers to see what happens, and placing bets on which crew member the First Mate will eat next.



ABILITIES

Sputtering Exhaust: When this model completes a Walk Action, it may flip a card that may not be cheated. On a ✕, this model suffers 1 damage. On any other result, place a 50mm Exhaust Marker in base contact with this model and not in contact with any other models. This Marker is **Ht** 5, blocking terrain. Remove all Exhaust Markers at the end of the Turn.

Immolating Demise 2: When this model is killed, models in (⍟)2 gain **Burning +2**.

Flight: This model is immune to falling damage and may ignore any terrain or models while moving.

IRON SKEETER

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) "Ramming Speed!" (**MI** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.
- ✕ ***Choking on Exhaust:*** After succeeding, the target gains **Poison +2**. Move this model up to 3".
- 👂 **or** 🐱 ***Dirty Fighting***: After damaging a target with the **Slow** Condition, take this Action again against the same target.

(1) Grappling Hook (**Sh** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⌐8): Target suffers 2/2/3 damage.
- ✕ ***Gaping Confusion***: After succeeding, the target gains **Slow**.
- 🐱 ***String 'em to the Ship***: After damaging, push the target 5" in any direction.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) "Hop Aboard!" (**Ca** 5 / TN: 11 / Rg: 1): Target a friendly **Ht** 1 non-Leader model without the **Flight** Ability. At the end of this model's activation, place the target in base contact with this model. This Action must declare a Trigger if able.
- 👂 ***"We're Coming In Too Fast!"***: After placing the target, push it 3" directly away from this model; then, the target suffers 2 damage.
- 🐱 ***"A Whole New World..."***: After succeeding, the target heals 2 damage.
- ✕ ***"PUT ME DOWN BEFORE... BLAARGH!":*** After succeeding, the target gains **Slow**.
- 📖 ***"What a Rush!"***: After succeeding, the target gains **Fast**.

40mm



AKANAME

Akaname are Oni which embody filth. They're squat, orange-brown slabs of muscle with gaping mouths and sharpened tongues that will eat just about anything, from refuse to bloaded corpses.

They are drawn to putrid, disgusting cesspools, which they feed on in order to become stronger. Given this, it should be no surprise that many of them are drawn to Gremlin villages where they revel in the muck and refuse of their pig pens.

At first, the Gremlins chased the little Oni away, reasoning that they were trying to eat their pigs. Over time, however, the Gremlins eventually came to a sort of agreement with the ravenous little oni, who were all too happy to devour the refuse left behind by the pigs so that the Gremlins didn't have to deal with it themselves.

The Gremlins now leave the Oni to their filth, and the Oni help to defend the Gremlins' villages from invaders. The Oni are only happy to do it; nobody creates a mess like a Gremlin, and a battlefield offers just as many tasty treats as a befouled pig pen. They often squabble amongst themselves for the most vile treats, and gambling on which Oni will win has become a popular Gremlin pastime.



AKANAME COST 4

Minion, Rare 3

ONI, TRI-CHI

DF	WP	WD	WK	CG	HT
5	5	5	5	7	1

ABILITIES

Filth Eater: At the start of this model's Activation, it may transfer the full value of the **Poison** Condition from target model within 6" of this model to this model.

Lick Their Corpses: After another non-Akaname model places a Scrap or Corpse Marker within 6" of this model, this model may push 2" towards the Marker and gain **Poison +1**.

Wretched: This model is immune to damage from its **Poison** Condition and may choose not to lower the value of its **Poison** Condition during the Upkeep Step.

AKANAME

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Razor-Edged Tongue (**MI** 5X / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 2): Target suffers 1/3/4 damage. This Attack gains a bonus to **MI** equal to the target's **Poison** Condition value, up to a maximum bonus of +3.

X ***Infect***: After succeeding, target gains the **Poison +1** Condition a number of times equal to the number of X in the final duel total.

Tongue-Lashing: After succeeding, the target gains the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Embraced:** This model may not declare Walk Actions while engaged."

(1) Spray Filth (**Sh** 5X / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 8): Target gains the **Poison +1** Condition.

X ***With Great Enthusiasm***: After succeeding, reduce the **Poison** Condition value on this model by up to three, to a minimum of 0. For each value of Poison lowered, the target gains **Poison +1**.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) A Foul Gift (**Ca** 5X / TN: 10): If this model has the **Poison +2** Condition or higher, end the **Poison** Condition on this model to place a Scheme Marker in base contact with this model.

Putrification: After succeeding, place a Corpse or Scrap Marker in base contact with the Scheme Marker; then, discard the Scheme Marker.

30mm

BANJONISTA

Every Gremlin enjoys a good banjo from time to time, but there are certain Gremlins who have found their calling in music. They spend all their time perfecting their instrument of choice (usually a banjo, but jugs and washboards are not uncommon), and they travel from village to village playing their songs.

These Gremlins have become known as Banjonistas. The best Banjonistas always draw a large crowd of their brethren and can lead hootenannies that can last all night. Of course, every Banjonista had to start somewhere, and most have stories of being threatened by their kin for playing too often and too loudly.

It's has become a sort of badge of honor among the Banjonistas; they say you're not really a Banjonista until someone has tried to choke you with your own banjo strings for keeping them awake all night.

When a performance goes well, however, it all becomes worth it. Nobody gets a larger share of the bacon or the booze than a talented Banjonista, and the roar of an appreciative crowd is like music to their ears.



ABILITIES

Foggy Bayou Hoedown: When this model Activates, all friendly non-Rooster Gremlins within (↑)6 may push 2" in any direction.

Bayou Blues: After another friendly non-Pig model is killed or sacrificed within ❶6 of one or more models with this Ability, draw a card.

Df (↑) High Pitched Squeel: After resolving an enemy **MI** Attack Action against this model, push this model 4" away from the Attacker.

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Banjo Bash (**MI** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫽ 1): Target suffers 1/2/3 damage.
- ✕ ***Kabong!***: When damaging, this attack deals +1 damage. End this model's Activation.

(1) Banjo "Music" (**Ca** 5 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 8): Target suffers 2/2/3 damage. This Attack ignores **Armor**.
- ***Flaming Banjo:*** After damaging, the target gains the **Burning +1** Condition.
- ***Banjo Roll***: After succeeding, take this Action again against a different target. This Attack may not declare Triggers.
- ***Next Target:*** After damaging, push this model up to 4" in any direction.

(1) Pluck the Strings (**Ca** 5 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 10): Target model gains the following Condition until the end of the game: "**Paranoid:** At the start of this model's Activation, it must discard a card or suffer 2 damage. Then end this Condition." All enemy models within (↑)3 of the target must succeed on a TN 14 **Wp** duel or gain the **Paranoid** Condition until the end of the game.
- ***Dueling Banjos:*** After succeeding against an enemy, another friendly Banjonista in play may immediately take the **Pluck the Strings** Action.

BANJONISTA

30mm

SWINE-CURSED

The humans aren't the only ones who have left hideous, failed experiments wandering Malifaux and wreaking havoc. Swine-Cursed are a Gremlin creation, half pig and half Gremlin, cursed to stalk the Bayou as they shift uncontrollably from one form to another. Their tortured existence brings a chill to all who witness it.

It was Wong who created the first Swine-Cursed. He wanted to combine the strength of a pig with the cunning of a Gremlin. His volunteers (the ones who ran the slowest) were unable to control their transformation, however, and would change from pig to Gremlin at random intervals.

Despite being a failed experiment, Wong never fails to put his Swine-Cursed to good use. Although they are shunned by most Gremlins, the Swine-Cursed are strong and terrifying to their enemies, and when one dies, it's easy enough to just grab an unlucky volunteer and make another one.



SWINE-CURSED COST 7

Minion, Living, Rare 2

GREMLIN

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	5	7	5	8	2

ABILITIES

Blast Resistant +1: Reduce all damage this model suffers from (1) and ☗ effects by +1, to a minimum of 1.

Reckless: At the start of this model's Activation, it may suffer 1 damage to generate 1 additional General AP.

Failed Experiment: When this model is deployed, it gains the following Condition for the rest of the game: "**Magical:** Damage dealt by this model ignores **Armor**, **Hard to Kill**, and **Incorporeal**."

SWINE-CURSED

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Transforming Tusks (**Ml** 6⚔ / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Target suffers 2/3/5 damage. This Attack must declare a Trigger if able.

⚔ ***Help Me!***: After succeeding, the target gains the following Condition until the end of turn: "**Embraced:** This model may not declare Walk Actions while engaged." This Trigger may only be declared if this model has the Gremlin Characteristic.

Frenzied Oinking: After succeeding, this model must Charge the closest legal non-Pig target that it is not engaged with. This Charge may be made while engaged. This Trigger may not be declared more than once per Activation, and only if this model has the Pig Characteristic.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(1) "Not Too Close...": Target friendly model within 4" is pushed 4" away.

(0) "What's Happening to... OINK?!" (**Ca** 5 / TN: 12): If this model has the Gremlin Characteristic, it loses the Gremlin Characteristic, gains the Pig Characteristic, and heals 1/2/3 damage.

(0) "OINK OINK... to me?!" (**Ca** 5 / TN: 12): If this model has the Pig Characterisitic, it loses the Pig Characteristic, gains the Gremlin Characteristic, and heals 1/2/3 damage.

40mm



ATTENTION HUMANS

~~PUT DOWN EVERYTHING I SAY, EARL. YES, EVEN THIS! THANK YOU.~~

ATTENTION HUMANS. I AM

× CAPTAIN ZIPP ×

SKY PIRATE AND LEADER OF THE IRON SKEETERS.

THIS MESSAGE IS TO ALERT YOU THAT YOU WILL BE PILLAGED, PLUNDERED, AND **OTHERWISE TERRORIZED BY MYSELF AND MY CREW**

YOUR VALUABLES ARE OURS TO TAKE.

YOUR SCRIP IS OURS TO SPEND.

WE ARE THE MOST CUNNING, DEVIOUS, FEARSOME, AND PIRATICAL GREMLINS TO EVER FLY THESE BLOODY SKIES. YOU WILL SEE A BLOTCH IN THE DISTANCE AND YOU WILL ASK YOURSELF, 'WHAT IS THAT? IS IT A CLOUD? SOME SORT OF UNUSUAL BIRD THAT'S SHAPED LIKE A BLIMP?' NO! THAT IS YOUR DEATH APPROACHING! WE WILL SWEEP IN ON THE COLD WINDS OF FATE. WE WILL–

~~EARL. HE JUST NIPPED AT YOUR LEG. PLEASE STOP BEING SO DRAMATIC.~~

~~I DIDN'T SAY STOP WRITING! YES, PUT IT ALL DOWN! WHERE WAS I? AH, YES.~~ YOU WILL KNOW US BY OUR IRON MASKS, FASHIONED AFTER THAT MIGHTY BAYOU PREDATOR, THE FEARSOME SKEETER. AS THE SKEETER DRAINS BLOOD FROM THE HAPLESS TRAVELER, SO TOO SHALL WE DRAIN YOUR WEALTH!

WE ARE THIEVES, PIRATES, AND SCOUNDRELS.
WE WILL SWOOP DOWN FROM THE AIR AND TAKE WHAT IS OURS. WE WILL–
~~I DON'T CARE IF HE HAS YOUR LEG, EARL!~~

SKY PIRATE UPGRADES

THE GIFT OF GAB

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Abilities:

Fully Equipped Airship: If this Upgrade is attached to a Master when hiring Crews, for each Upgrade attached to this model, the cost of one Upgrade with the restriction Sky Pirate attached to another model is reduced to zero.

Dramatic Monologue: Anytime an enemy model within 6 uses or discards a Soulstone, it must discard a card as well, if able.

Zipp Laughs At Your Ancient Curses!: At the start of this model's Activation, you may discard a Soulstone to end all Conditions on this model.



RESTRICTIONS

Zipp, Limited

NO QUARTER

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Abilities:

Fully Equipped Airship: If this Upgrade is attached to a Master when hiring Crews, for each Upgrade attached to this model, the cost of one Upgrade with the restriction Sky Pirate attached to another model is reduced to zero.

Confusing Rant: Anytime an enemy Master or Henchman within 6 declares a (0) Action, it must discard a card, if able.

Already Distracted: At the start of this model's Activation, you may discard two cards to end all Conditions on this model.



RESTRICTIONS

Zipp, Limited

RAMBLING DIATRIBE

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Attack Action:

(0) Rambling Diatribe (**Ca** 5 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 8): Name a suit. Target model's controller must reveal their hand, discard all non-Joker cards of the named suit, and then draw that many cards.

- ***Gaping Confusion***: After succeeding, the target gains **Slow**.
- **or** ***"Give Up The Goods!":*** After succeeding, place a Scrap Marker in base contact with this model.



RESTRICTIONS

Zipp

TREASURE MAP

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

Buried Treasure: Whenever a friendly model within 10 discards an enemy Scheme Marker, it draws a card and then discards a card. Apply one of the following depending on the discarded card's suit:

- ***Whiskey!:*** The model heals two damage.
- ***Scrip!:*** The model's controller may draw a card.
- ***Stones!:*** The model's controller may add 1 Soulstone to their Crew's Pool.
- ***Fuel!:*** The model may push up to 3".



RESTRICTIONS

Sky Pirate, Rare 1

Hovering Airship

Cost: 1 SS

This model gains the following Attack Action:

(1) "Drop The Pianos!" (**Sh** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 12): Target suffers 3/4/5 damage. This Attack ignores LoS but not cover. This Action must declare a Trigger, if able.

My Work Done, I Race Triumphantly Into The Clouds: After succeeding, this model may take a Walk Action.

"They've Been Practicing": While damaging, the damage flip gains .

"Are They... Dropping The Loot?": After succeeding, both players draw a card.

"Mutiny!": After resolving, the target may take this Action against this model. This Action may not declare Triggers.

RESTRICTIONS

Sky Pirate, Rare 1

Poorly Handled Explosives

Cost: 1 SS

This model gains the following Attack Actions:

(1) "Catch!" (**Ca** 5 / TN: 12 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 8): Target non-Pig model gains the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Volatile Explosives:** When this Condition ends, this model and all models within 2 suffer 2 damage. If this model is killed, all models within 2 suffer 4 damage instead." This Action may only be taken once per Turn.

(1) "Disable It!" (**Ca** 5 / TN: 12 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 8): Place a Scheme Marker friendly to the target in base contact with the target. The target gains **Slow**.

RESTRICTIONS

Sky Pirate, Rare 1

Airship Spotlight

Cost: 1 SS

This model gains the following Attack Action:

(1) "Light 'em Up!" (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wk** / Rg: 8): The target gains the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Exposed**: Attacks targeting this model ignore cover."

"MY EYES!": After succeeding, the target gains the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Blinded:** This model may not take **Sh** Actions. At the start of this model's Activation, it may discard two cards to end this Condition.

Magnifying Lens: After succeeding, the target gains **Burning +2**.

Stumble Around Blindly: After succeeding, push the target 2" in any direction.

"It's Too Bright!": After succeeding, the target must discard a card if able.

RESTRICTIONS

Sky Pirate, Rare 1

Where the Captain Can't See

Cost: 1 SS

This model gains the following Ability:

Down the Gullet: Whenever this model removes an enemy Scheme Marker, it gains the following Condition until the end of the game: "**Armor +1**: Reduce all damage suffered by this model by +1, to a minimum of 1."

This model gains the following Trigger to its **Leap** Action:

"Slurp!": After succeeding and placing this model, discard target Scheme Marker within 3".

RESTRICTIONS

The First Mate

GREMLIN UPGRADES

Barrel Up

Cost: 0SS

- This model gains the following Trigger to its **Barrel to the Face** Action:

  or ***Barrel Up:*** After succeeding, take the **Smokey Finish** Action.

RESTRICTIONS

Whiskey Golem

One Pig Against the World

Cost: 0SS

- The War Pig may attach this Upgrade as if it were an Enforcer.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  One Pig Against The World: At the start of this model's Activation, it may discard this Upgrade. If it does, until the end of the Activation, it ignores the **Set'er Off** Ability, gains +2 **Wp**, and gains to all flips.

RESTRICTIONS

War Pig, Rare 3

THE BAYOU BASH

Every so often - usually two to three times a year, depending upon who is feuding with whom - the various Gremlin families get together to hold a Bayou Bash. These gatherings are combination social mixers, competitions, swap meets, and war councils all rolled together.

Bayou Bashes draw Gremlins from all over the Bayou. The hosting family makes a big show of how strong they are by giving away moonshine and pork, while the visiting families all puff out their chests and brag about how well things are back in their own lands.

Once the initial posturing is done, the Gremlins break out their instruments, pour each other some tall mugs of moonshine, and start having fun. When the Bash finally ends a week later, the visiting Gremlins stagger back to their homes with new stories, reignited rivalries, bartered guns, and massive hangovers.



Pork Whisper'n

Cost: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Pork Whisper'n: Friendly Pig models Activating within 8 may ignore the **Set'er Off** Ability for the duration of the Activation.

  Pig Call: At the end of this model's Activation, this model may discard this Upgrade to push target friendly Pig within 8" up to its **Wk** in any direction.

Restrictions

Gremlin, Rare 3

Do Over

Cost: 1 SS

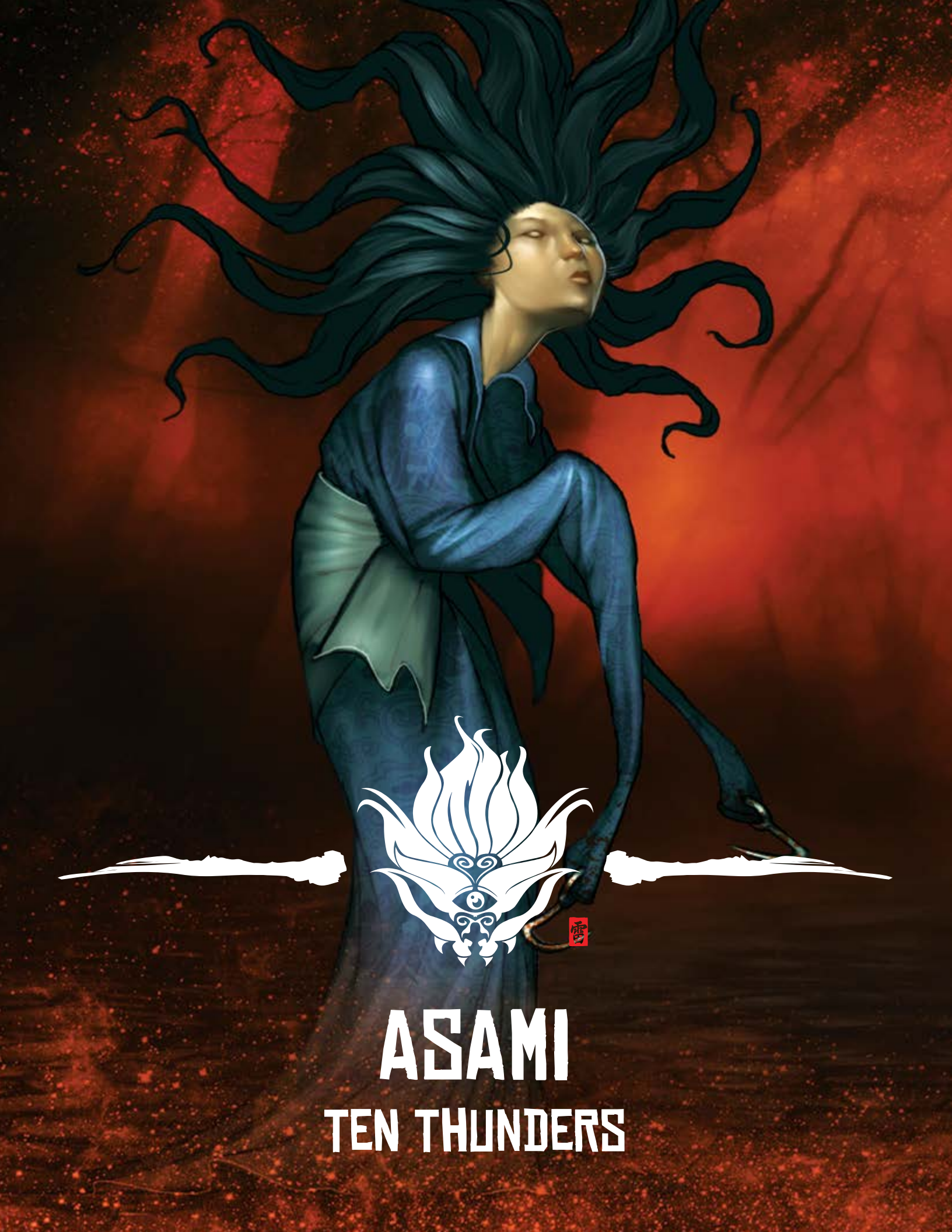
- This model gains the following Ability:

  "Do Over!": Once per Turn, after resolving an Attack Action that randomized due to engagement and ended up targeting a friendly model, this model may discard a card to take the same Attack Action again, if able.

  Trade In: At the start of this model's Activation, it may discard this Upgrade to draw two cards.

Restrictions

Rare 1



ASAMI

TEN THUNDERS

HUNGER UNBOUND

BY: N.A. WOLF

The pale siren thirsts / For what is no longer hers / A dream now denied

– Matsuo Basho, *Songs of the Three Kingdoms*

He had always watched the pale little girl from Beyond.

The oni could remember every moment of her lifetime with pristine clarity. The day she was born was especially unforgettable. It was the same day that she had taken her mother's life. The crying wretch had come out the wrong way; her feet had emerged first in a tangle, and her arm was so tightly wrapped around her spindly neck that she would have suffocated had her father not made the ultimate sacrifice to cut her free.

The panic of the mother's death had been delicious, the anguish almost savory. It felt sweet upon his tongue. He let the taste linger there until he could stand it no more. He hated himself for being so indulgent, but then again, there was simply nothing comparable to the melancholy flavor of death.

Yet he could not remember the mother's passing as pleasing. He had already invested so much time shaping her into a perfect vessel for his ascension, and she was to be his one hope of escape from the world Beyond. Lingxuzi had done it. Ama had as well. But they were bigger and stronger than he was, and he could not leave like they did without a companion from the other side.

Shackled like a sick dog and forced to contemplate the threads unravelling from afar without spinning them himself, he conceded that it was better to let this puppet die than to suffer his own unmaking at the hands of laws beyond his control. If he were to cross and come to her aid, the pain would have been unimaginable.

Grudgingly resigning himself to wait for another perfect vessel, the oni watched the weeping man swaddle his child with one hand while stroking the locks of her mother's corpse with the other.

His gaze fell upon the babe.

The little one had taken his first vessel away. It now seemed like divine justice that a new vessel be supplied. Thinking quickly, the oni enshrouded the infant in a blinding crown of heavenly gold to mark her as his own. In the looming darkness, all cried out into the night as one: the little girl squirming in a pool of her mother's blood, the father who had lost his one true love, and the oni trapped behind the labyrinthine walls where the fabric of reality met the impossible world Beyond.

She could see the lights and hear the voices for as long as she could remember.

They had both been faint at first, but if she really concentrated, she could make out the tiny, whispering orbs as they fluttered through the air like lightning bugs. In the beginning, they terrified her, but she soon learned that the lights seemed to enjoy it when she played with them. She remembered how, as a toddler, she would try to catch them in her tiny hands, but each time they bobbed wistfully beyond her reach.

"Can you sense them too?" she had once asked her father, Yukio, as he tucked her gently into bed. She liked the way he always folded the embroidered edges of mother's silky, lilac quilt beneath her tatami sleeping mat. Whenever he kissed her goodnight, she was always snug and warm. It was the closest thing to a mother's embrace that the little girl would ever experience.

"No, but don't be afraid, Asami-chan. Those from Beyond have chosen you for great things, just like they chose your mother."

The little girl's wide eyes danced with fear. "If she was chosen, why did they take her away? Will they take me away too?"

The smile slid from her father's face. “They will love you and your children as your mother loves you still,” he replied, blowing out the lamp and leaving Asami to her own devices.

Fighting her fear as Asami did every night when the lights were brightest and the whispering the loudest, she traced the floral designs of her mother’s quilt over and over again with a pale, thin finger. Alone in the dark, the little girl focused on the one thing that gave her comfort: The thought of a family. Father had said that those from Beyond would love her children.

Could she really have children one day? She hoped so. Father wouldn’t let her have any friends because they might find out about the lights. She was so lonely. Maybe she could be the mother to her own children that her mother never was to her.

I will raise them well, Asami promised herself as she slowly drifted away into a dreamless sleep. *Maybe they will see the lights too, and we can all play with them together.*

He watched her as she grew slowly but surely. She was shaping up just the way he hoped she would. The oni was incapable of nostalgia, but whenever he watched her, he could sense that fetid feeling linger somewhere on the periphery of his senses. It was nowhere near as strong as his love of slaughter, but then again, could anything really compare?

In contrast, the process of caring for this new vessel was repetitive and thankless. So much threatened her, yet she would never know. Since he was unable to manifest himself in her world, the souls of the departed were his eyes and ears. They all feared him, small as he was, and at his command, they surrounded the oni’s little charge in a haze of gold, glowing and whispering fiercely whenever danger was close by.

Many times had the girl been threatened, and many times had the oni and his spirit slaves intervened. On any given day, when her father was too occupied to watch her, she might wander dangerously close to the river, slip while climbing one of the cherry-blossom trees, or even fall prey to the ruthlessness of other mortals, which rivalled even that of his own kind. Yet each time, the oni’s lights guided her to safety.

There was simply no cost too great to pay for her survival, and there was nothing he was afraid to do when it came to preserving her livelihood. Nothing... except crossing before it was time. The pain would still be unbearable. In fact, he had told Ama that he was afraid of nothing the last time they met – the time when she had showed her back to him as she left the prison of Beyond to join Lingxuzi on the other side.

But even to her he had lied.

For deep down, the oni knew that there would come a day when the pale little girl would no longer heed his warnings. When she outgrew their novelty, she might dismiss the lights altogether. He would have to cross then, even if she wasn’t ready for his ascension.

As a young woman, Asami finally learned to accept the way her eyes saw what others could not. She had embraced her clairvoyance just like all the other strange happenings in her life. The bodiless footprints in the sand that kept pace during her twilight strolls along the ocean, the lamps which relit themselves no matter how many times she blew them out, and even the distorted, shadowy reflections she saw in mirrors and glassy puddles that skulked just behind her own: all were part of a haunting menagerie that she shared with no one but Yukio. Afflicted by visions that she accepted but never understood, Asami lived a sheltered existence. She helped her father maintain the family temple, never once leaving Kamakura, the place of her tragic birth.

Kamakura would seem just like that of any other sleepy prefecture but for the hundreds of pilgrims who flocked to its central shrine every day. Asami liked to watch them as she performed her daily chores to maintain the temple under Yukio’s stern eye. Her family had cared for it for centuries, and its future rested upon her own shoulders just as it

had rested upon those of her father. She would nod in feverish excitement every time Yukio told her that she was destined to continue passing the shrine's maintenance down to future generations. The responsibility of raising a family of her own filled her with great pride. It gave her a sense of purpose, which she applied zealously to all the tasks her father set upon her. Oh, how in her desperate loneliness she wanted a family of her own for company. More than anything, she wanted a loving husband and children that she could keep close – the same children whom she would imagine as a source of comfort as a child when the whispering lights scared her so badly.

Yet her loneliness had also cultivated a rare sense of curiosity. As she would sweep the brittle flagstones, rake the *iwakura*, and polish the incense burners, Asami could not help but notice the habits of the pilgrims whom she served. Though many were clearly from Nippon, others had travelled from as far as Zhong Guo and Cho'sen, or even the Southern Kingdoms, sacrifices and offerings in hand.

Today was no exception; during her morning rounds, Asami noted that the selection was just as foreign as ever. Many of the pilgrims had garbed themselves in humble orange robes, shaving their heads and eyebrows in the traditional fashion - a way of deprecating themselves before the oni and the ancestors. Yet others wore regal *yukatas* of rich purple and blazing saffron, putting each foot upon the earth as if it were theirs to keep.

Some brought burnished prayer wheels engraved with swirling characters in strange languages, or little effigies of their ancestors garbed in soft, silken cloth. Popular were the beaded necklaces gleaming with opal, jade, and emerald – or whatever simulacra those less fortunate could scavenge.

Others carried thin wooden curio boxes of lavish red and lustrous black, each concealing home-baked cakes, candied fruits, and bottles of rice wine within. These boxes were of particular excitement to Asami, although she had learned the hard way that it was bad luck to eat the food meant as sacrifice for the oni.

Yukio had caught her doing this once when she was six. He didn't care that the lights made her do it. She never forgot the hours of penance prayer he had made her recite beneath the flickering incense burners as the halo burst before her eyes. The sweets that had so sorely tempted her would forevermore taste like ashes in her mouth, every bite thereafter reminding her of the harsh rap of Yukio's broom handle on her sore knuckles...

Asami brought herself back to the present as she sprinkled breadcrumbs to feed the koi. The little fish swam in the sparkling stream at the place where all the pilgrims – rich or poor, humble or bold, walking alone or laden with sacrifices - ended their great journey at last:

The Obsidian Gate.

At least, that was what the villagers of Kamakura called it. It was an odd name for a divine structure whose own magnificence and grandeur transcended human understanding. There was, of course, nothing gate-like about it. It was instead a massive effigy, taller than the surrounding mulberry trees and the size of a small ship, a breathtaking depiction of a great deity, who had supposedly travelled from Bharat Ganarajya to the ends of the Earth before ascending to Beyond.

Atop his polished head was a shimmering stone of milky emerald that glittered every time the sun rose and fell behind the greying sea: a third eye, forever watchful of those who bowed below.

There was a legend about that third eye. The locals said that it was a barrier between worlds, a thin window through which the oni could spy upon the living with the help of traitorous ancestors whose spirits found no peace after passing. As haunting as it was, the deep richness of the emerald never failed to captivate Asami. It filled her with curiosity rather than fright. *Where had it been found? How was it so bright? What was it?* Every time she looked at it closely, she thought she could see the same lights that had always accompanied her, gleaming thinly beyond its glassy veneer. There must have been thousands of them arrayed in an infinite expanse, trapped like little stars...

“Excuse me.” The voice came from behind in surprise, and Asami dropped her bag of koi feed into the pond. A swarm of gleaming orange fish encircled the bag like a carrion over fresh kill.

Looking up, she saw a big man at least a head taller than her. His Nipponese was broken and imprecise, and Asami noticed that he wore not a *yukata* like the other pilgrims, but instead a sweeping grey trench coat and thick, brown leather boots. Atop his head glimmered a pair of silver-rimmed steamfitter goggles.

As the stranger lifted an arm to brush his matted hair out of his eyes, Asami caught sight of a strange tattoo on the underside of his forearm. It looked like a sickle crossed with a candle-lamp, but her glance had been so brief that she couldn’t be sure. He shuffled, fiddling with the sleeve of his coat before she could take a second look.

“How late is the shrine open tonight?” He did not look her in the eye, instead casting a nervous glance up at the Obsidian Gate, locking his gaze with the glittering gem in the center.

Asami was about to answer when the lights burst in front of her and the muffled boom of hundreds of whispers filled her ears like the roar of a storm cloud. The voices were louder than they ever had been before, and the lights almost blinded her. She reeled back in shock, tripped on her own kimono, and fell harshly to the ground, skinning her elbow.

“Miss!” the foreigner shouted. The other pilgrims turned and gawked at the hulking giant of a man towering over the young woman on the ground. He backed away nervously, cursing under his breath.

“It’s alright, it’s alright,” Asami pleaded, picking herself up from the ground, still blinded and deafened. She could barely hear herself, and she was sure that the voice she used wasn’t her own. “I tripped.” She turned away from the foreigner. “All visitors must leave by sundown,” she said sheepishly, trying her best to check her embarrassment.

When the lights and the whispers finally died away, Asami washed the blood from her scrapes. This time, her visions had been especially severe, but she was consoled knowing that her father had not seen her shame.

Asami and Yukio sat alone at the foot of the Obsidian Gate, their preferred place to dine on warm summer evenings. The sun had already set and a pale moon began its lonely vigil over the hydrangea fields. The chirping of cicadas had long since drowned out the muffled crash of the ocean waves and the clopping of horses' hooves. Even the usual din of the tatami makers, paper pressers, blacksmiths, and millet merchants that usually haunted the bustling streets had dissipated, lifted away by the gentle sea breeze into the rolling hydrangea fields in the distance.

“You need to find a husband soon, Asami-chan. If you wait much longer, I may never meet my grandchildren.” Yukio passed Asami a steaming bowl of soup. She gave a sigh of relief before picking at the tender pieces of pork and seaweed floating inside. She could not really taste them, her thoughts as lost as the mist of miso swirling in the porcelain bowl. Thank the ancestors, Yukio had not heard about her embarrassing fall. But the foreign man from earlier had been so... strange.

The way the lights had fluttered around him, and the whispers... she had never seen anything like it before.

Her father seemed to sense her dismay. “Children... they’re what you’ve wanted for all of these years, aren't they? Why are you so glum?” He stared at her intently. “You know, there are quite a few eligible bachelors who would give their right hand just to join the remaining one to yours. What about Kai, the fisherman’s son? He has a good heart, and he’s quite strong.”

“How would I know? You never let me spend time with him... or anyone else, Father.”

Yukio chuckled at her scowl. “You must understand, it’s for your own good. But maybe it’s time for me to trust you a little more.” His gruff voice descended into a whispery hush. “I know that the lights are real, Asami. I know that you can see those Beyond. But can anyone else?” He sighed. “To them, you’d be mad. And who would marry you then? From where would your children come?”

Asami continued to scowl at him, but soon, she could resist no longer and smiled. Yukio laughed with her as she put her hand in his. She would forever remember his expression; a look of peace, accomplishment, and pride...

A bolt of magical energy blasted the flagstones beneath them and showered both father and daughter in splinters of stone and bronze.

Yukio went flying across the court, and Asami was thrown backwards against the breast of the great deity. The backside of her head smashed against the hard obsidian, and she slumped slowly to the ground, winded as all began to fade to black. She could sense the blood congealing in her hair, but paralyzed from shock, she could not resist the five foreign men standing over her. The blue fire dying from their palms seemed to flicker out with a will of its own. All were dressed in dark black, their steamfitter's goggles glinting in the pale moonlight along with their oily prosthetics. With sickening realization, Asami recognized the mysterious stranger whom she had seen earlier, barely perceptible in the hazy gloom. The lights were still fluttering over his head, and the whispers grew so loud that they roared like a thunderbolt in her ears.

"The Doc said no survivors," one of the men offered nervously as he stared at Asami's broken body. "C'mon Titus, stick her, damn it, so we can grab the stone and go. The Katanakas can't know we've been here."

Another one of the thugs glanced around, pacing from foot to foot in the shadow of the great deity. "This place scares the shit out of me. Haven't you heard the stories? It's a damn wonder why the Doc wants to get mixed up in this mystic nonsense."

"Shut it, both of you. Get the rock while I take care of this." Titus distributed crowbars to his crew before he drew a sharp knife from the inside of his boot. Licking his lips, he locked his eyes with Asami's quivering gaze. "It's a shame, miss, but, doctor's orders," he said without the slightest hint of remorse. Before Asami could even utter a whimper, Titus ruthlessly plunged the blade deep into her stomach with a savage twist.



Trapped Beyond behind the glassy surface of the third eye, the oni howled with uncontrollable rage as his second vessel bled out before him. He had tried so hard, and yet her stomach was split no differently than her mother's.

He had failed. Twice.

Without his vessel, he could never join Lingxuzi. How could this happen again? Had he not warned her? He had seen what she could not – the pure predatory, greedy nature of a lost soul? Mortals were so easy to read. He could see the man's past flicker before him like a sputtering candle: a troubled childhood, some time in prison, and an oath of allegiance to a syndicate unknown to those of the East, but whose name had been uttered thousands of times by bureaucrats and law enforcement from Vienna to Cairo. He had seen it all in the blink of an eye. And the old coot lurking at the center of it all like one great spider spinning in a web.

Yet unbelievably, the vessel was still living. The oni's fears had come true, and he knew what he had to do; there was still time, and it was now or never. He braced himself for the agony, before prematurely forcing his essence across the barrier between worlds. If he had entered her spirit but a fraction of a moment later, he would have been unmade by the pain.

The first thing Asami remembered after the agonizing pain in her stomach was the voice. It filled her up like song, and she could see the lights burst and pulsate in time with every syllable. Her agony palpitated with every word like an ebbing tide, as though the voice was trying to shut the pain out. It was utter delirium.

You're hurt, it cooed. *You need to let me in. You can trust me. I've been with you for as long as you can remember.*

Shocked as she was, Asami lay stock-still, eyes closed as if dead. She could sense the other attackers begin to climb the Gate, directed by Titus' barking orders from the ground. The harsh rebuke of their cobbled boots on the sacred obsidian was sickening.

Stay away from me, she answered. *Let me die, whatever you are. I don't care anymore.* The lights had made her suffer. They had made her different. They had even taken away Mother. How could she trust them now? *Leave me alone! Haven't you hurt me enough?*

The voice was quick to retort. *Hurt you? I've saved you.* She could feel it ringing inside her skull, trying to ensnare her. *Let me in, foolish girl! You are running out of time! Do you not fear death?*

I fear death less than I fear you, she retorted defiantly.

Then came pain like she had never experienced before. It pierced her brain like a knife as the voice tried to force itself upon her. *Let me in,* the voice shrieked again. Though the pain was so agonizing that she could not even cry out, Asami stood firm, resolute although beaten by waves of agony in a never-ending crescendo. The lights had controlled her in life, but they would not do so in death. She would die alone but free.

Stubborn girl!

Suddenly, a bright flash forced Asami to open her eyes. Searing fists of aquamarine met a gleaming Nipponese blade hardened with enchanted steel. Miraculously, Yukio had reappeared to strike at two of the mages who had not yet begun the climb, katana in hand.

Although they were swift, the Arcanists were no match for Yukio's precise, measured strikes. One of them was decapitated with a graceful slash delivered in mid-air, and the second felt the full force of a flawless, back-handed swing collide with his chest, cleaving him in two. For the briefest of moments, even the lights in Asami's head stopped glimmering as though in surprise when Yukio's eyes met hers. The corners of his mouth twitched in relief when he registered that although she was injured, she was still alive. It was that same second that cost him everything.

Yukio never saw Titus' bullet come from behind as it tore through one temple and burst out of the other in a spray of blood and skull fragments. The ghost of a smile still danced upon on his lips as his body fell to the ground in a crumpled heap. Within an instant, her greatest protector and confidant was gone forever. There was nothing left to lose now.

The voice uttered a single word: *revenge.*

As grief, desperation, and shock overcame her, Asami let the voice in at last.

The pain in Asami's stomach and head immediately evaporated, and she felt rage coursing through her veins like she had never experienced before. *Now girl,* the voice crowed. *Let us show these fools the true meaning of suffering.*

Titus gasped as he saw the same battered, bloodied woman whom he had so arrogantly presumed dead just moments before she picked herself up gingerly from the ground. Her fingers were clenched into fists, and her black eyes glared at him with hunger. Swearing, he aimed his derringer straight at her head, but his finger never made it to the trigger.

Impossibly, Asami's jet-black hair, lustrous and sticky with blood, floated eerily above her head with an unnatural, arcane glow. Coiling into obscene tendrils, they shot for Titus' throat faster than a bolt of lightning, wrapping a tightening noose around his thick neck. His derringer clattered to the floor as he gasped for air through purpling lips. Slowly and lovingly, the locks of hair, animated by their own malice, inched the flailing mage closer and closer to Asami's outstretched fingers. The lights were pounding behind her eyes once more, and the voice rang through her skull.

Finish him.

Asami screamed in triumph as her neatly-kempt nails dug into the soft flesh of Titus' ruined throat. As a crimson shower washed over her fingers, Asami knew that the thirst for vengeance had not just been a product of the voice: it was wholly hers. For the first time in her miserable, sheltered life, she felt as free as the blood flowing in her hands. Panting with exhaustion and covered in gore, Asami finally collapsed beside the corpses of both Titus and her father. Her hair fell at her shoulders once again, all animus gone from the sterile locks. She did not see the five saffron-robed arrivals pour from the surrounding rooftops into the courtyard like hornets from a hive, nor did she notice how hidden snipers struck the two remaining Arcanists with divine precision. Too delirious to grieve that help had arrived so late, Asami felt nothing but emptiness as five pairs of strong arms lifted her broken body gently onto a bamboo stretcher and away into the night.



Asami's eyes flickered open, and pain burst through her body once more in an agonizing crescendo. Her vision blurred, and she could taste blood and bile in her mouth. The back of her head felt swollen and stiff.

"Drink, girl. You need to drink."

She felt something cold and wet trickle down her throat. It washed away the metallic taste lingering between her teeth in a purifying stream. She spluttered and coughed, wincing as the pain in her stomach doubled with each contraction.

"Asami, it's alright. You're safe."

Several seconds passed, and finally, her vision began to clear. She was lying on a tatami mat, wrapped snugly in her mother's quilt. Her other possessions started to materialize around her one by one, until she finally recognized that she was back in her own room.

And then she remembered.

The blast. The stranger. The voice. The battle. Asami began to shudder uncontrollably as an unknown man pressed a cold rag to her forehead. "Where is my father? Where is Yukio?" She grabbed his wrist. She tried to sit up, but the pain was too great, and the man forced her back down. "Who are you?"

"Slow down, girl, slow down, or else you'll hurt yourself and all of the work we did to keep you alive will have been for naught." He turned to pour her a cup of tea. "My name is Keita. I was a friend your father's."

She was not deterred. "My father... where is his body?"

The man called Keita knelt down and held her hand tightly in his. "I'm sorry, Asami. He fought bravely. So did you, and you saved the shrine. You would have made him proud." He lifted one of the sheets with a tender gesture, exposing the serene face of her father lurking below. The bullet hole glared up at her like a third, angry red eye.

He could not watch you forever. It's my turn now.

Asami jumped. She had prayed that the voice would disappear, but even this seemed like too much to ask. Keita cast a shifty glance at her, as though he could sense that she was communicating with something that he could not see. "You're lucky to be alive. That bastard really wanted you dead. He cut deep, and even my magic couldn't completely save you. You should have been gone by the time I got to you, but somehow, you kept going." He stared into her eyes, as though searching for something that she couldn't identify.

The lights burst before her again, and she was forced to blink.

He knows about me.

"The wounds at the back of your head and in your stomach will heal," Keita noted. "They will hurt for a while, but no harm will come of them..." Keita looked up nervously, beside himself with embarrassment, as if unsure of what to say.

"Tell me," she said. She had already lost her father; what could possibly be worse?

"You can never have children. The cut was too devastating, and no magic is powerful enough to fix something so complex..."

Asami felt the blood drain from her face as she stared in shocked silence. She opened her mouth to say something, then closed it. Her family. Her dreams. She would be destined to this loneliness forever...

"Asami?" Keita placed a gentle hand on her shoulder. "Asami? I'm sorry."

She had lost everything. Her mother. Her father. And now even the hope of raising her own family. Her next words barely escaped her throat in between violent, shuddering sobs. "There is nothing left for me here... Keita, where can I go now?"

For the first time since they spoke, Keita offered Asami a wide smile. "Did your father ever tell you about a place called Malifaux?"

The lights burst before her eyes once more.

Take me there and accept my blessing, and I will fix you.

Although several weeks had already passed since Asami's crossing, Promise's barren sands and nocturnal, emerald sky continued to haunt her with their savage beauty. That life could exist in such a craggy wasteland of scattered settlements while her own future was so desperately barren seemed like a sort of sick joke, and not a night went by when she did not reflect upon her own suffering.

And the suffering had been immense.

In the span of just a few hours, Keita had brought down her entire world. "You must understand, Asami," he had told her the night he accompanied her into the aether, "that you survived the attack on the Obsidian Gate because you are special, just like your mother was before she died." He spoke quickly, as though he had rehearsed carefully what he was going to tell her. "The lights you see and the voices you hear are signs that you were chosen by one from Beyond. You are gifted with martial abilities which are necessary for the cultural survival of our people, and you have an obligation to hone and train them." He placed a gentle hand on her shoulder. "It's what your father would have wanted."

"My father wanted me to have children and to maintain the family shrine, not to be fighter," she said angrily. "What if I refuse?" Her gifts had robbed her of any chance at a normal life; the freedom she had experienced in tearing open Titus' throat seemed so fleeting now.

"I'm afraid you can't," was all Keita said. Then he blindfolded her and tossed her through the gateway into the new world.

Thus did the entry into Malifaux mark a new beginning for Asami. The Ten Thunders offered her a sense of purpose which she never knew she was capable of possessing. Asami would not cry anymore; Keita taught her that weeping was a sign of passivity and weakness which could bring back neither her father nor her lost future. Still, the new environment confused her, and so she found little solace in her surroundings, especially since Keita's revelations about her family history and its allegiance to the Ten Thunders brought her further away from the father she thought she knew.

Worse still, Keita kept insisting that her father wanted her to let the oni in, but she continued to fight the voices and the lights. They were evil, she kept telling herself. The blood she had shed the night her father died – and the way she had savored it – was undeniable proof.

But Asami could feel herself changing each day she spent away from Kamakura. She saw the lights everywhere now, and the voice in her head never grew quiet.

It even had a body now.

One morning Asami awoke to find a squat, impish creature with jovial, apish features and pointed, gnashing teeth staring at her from the other side of her bed. She could barely muffle her scream of incredulity and disgust so as not to wake the rest of the Hidden Temple.

"You look surprised to see me, Asami." The lights would still burst behind her eyes every time the imp opened its mouth. "But why? You know exactly what I am."

"You have a body!" she croaked, untangling herself from her sheets to get a closer look.

The little imp gnashed its teeth. "I am the Amanjaku. I have always had a body, but the magic of your world is so abysmally poor that I can't manifest it there. Only here in Malifaux."

"What would Keita do if he knew that you existed?"

"In the same way that only you can hear my voice and see my lights, only you can see my form, if I so choose. Anyway, Keita already knows I exist. That's why you are here. The Thunders seek to manipulate the blessings I have given you for themselves."

"It will not be a problem, because I'll never let you in again," Asami replied coldly. She could still feel Titus' blood boil in her hands. She turned away from the oni. "Why won't you leave me in peace?"

"Because we can help each other," the imp responded. "It's time to renegotiate. I feel like you will take me more seriously now that I am a body instead of just a voice. Remember my offer:

I will give you the ability to have the child you so desperately want if you open yourself up to me so that I may finish my crossing."

Every morning thereafter, the Amanjaku would awaken Asami with the same proposal, and each time, she refused to subordinate her own humanity, until one chance encounter during one of Keita's routine security sweeps along the rail lines changed everything.

The Nephilim descended from the sky in a storm of leathery wings and blue fur. The rail workers farthest from the barracks were the first to die. They barely had time to register the flock of lightning-fast beasts before razor-sharp talons ensnared their flesh. Some managed to offer a few blows before they succumbed to the tide or escaped to safety, and steel limbs met swords, claws, and horns in a hiss of mangled metal, snapped tendons, and boiling blood.

Asami could tell that although Keita and his torakage bodyguard were badly outnumbered, they were protected by their considerable martial prowess. Chain bolas shattered the cartilage of pinned wings with a sickening crunch, and flying shuriken doused with unspeakable poisons severed black-blooded arteries. Still, the swarm of incoming Nephilim was too great, and within the next few minutes of furious fighting, the caravan was overrun. With their foremen dead or dying, the railworkers threw aside their shovels and mallets and sprinted for cover in the surrounding cliffs. Few made it to safety before more Nephilim cornered them in between the craggy rocks.

"Will you do nothing now, girl?" the Amanjaku asked as he watched a boisterous Nephilim youth gore a torakage through the eyeholes of his porcelain mask. He chuckled with relish as he saw another Thunders brother ripped to shreds from the ankles by four of the smaller Nephilim, which looked no older than infants.

"NO!" said Asami. "I remember what it felt like when you possessed me the night my father died. That monster was not me!"

"So you would rather die than allow me to help you defend yourself and all of these other people?"

Asami ducked out of sight as one of the winged Nephilim swooped over her. "If I die, so be it. But at least I'll die free from you."

"And what about their lives?" he asked with mock-concern, gesturing at the railworkers. "Are they not worth saving?"

"Asami, we have to get out of here!" Keita's call between the sounds of flapping wings spared her from answering. He flipped gracefully over several of the smaller creatures and speared them all with one, elegant stroke of his polearm. His next strike decapitated another and sent its head flying into its neighbor, horns-first with a sickening *squelch.*

"Not while you can protect the others," she answered, scrambling for cover.

"I'm sorry Asami, but I can't. These people are disposable. You're not."

The Amanjaku raised an eyebrow. The biting callousness of Keita's words stung. "Well?" the imp asked again. "He won't save them. Only you can."

And in that moment, Asami made her choice.

She felt the Amanjaku's power wash over her for the second time as her hair began to form thick, spidery ropes that floated above like hungering serpents in search of a fresh kill. She screamed as the old wound at the back of her head forced itself open, elongating and stretching the ruddy, cracked skin into a massive, sickening maw with concentric rings of carnivorous, gnashing teeth. Keita froze, uncertain as to whether the woman he strove to protect was human or something else entirely.

Alerted by the sounds of her cries, the Nephilim looked up from their slaughter and paused only briefly before charging at this new threat. As though anticipating the fresh wave of blue horrors, Asami's slithering locks stretched hungrily towards the charging beasts. The tentacles searched the throng of blue bodies for the smallest targets, which they enwrapped and shoveled whole down the gaping mouth at the back of Asami's head.

The Nephilim stopped in their tracks, horrified at the fate of their younger comrades. But what happened next was almost more obscene. With a sickening gurgle, fresh, new bodies began to emerge from the maw at the back of Asami's head. In a perverse mockery of birth, these newly summoned monstrosities crawled out of nothingness itself as Asami's maw remolded into impossible, unnatural dimensions to accommodate their arrival. As much to his own disgust as that of the enemy, Keita recognized the bird-like forms of Tengu, the simian-visages of Yokai, and even the stone bodies of Obsidian Oni emerge from the inconceivable abyss at the back of Asami's head as a bestial menagerie of raw chaos.

Asami's newly summoned oni scattered the Nephilim horde and cut them down as they ran back into the cliffside caverns from whence they had come. In their wake they left a trail of black blood so thick that it turned the desert sand into a putrid slurry. With the battle over at last, Keita and his torakage sheathed their weapons.

Yet oni continued to rage.

Overcome with insatiable bloodlust but left with no more Nephilim to target, the gibbering demons set themselves upon Keita and his guard. Keita barely had the opportunity to regret his own foolishness before the swipe of an oni's razor-sharp claw severed his head from his shoulders in one fell stroke. His mouth was still agape at the madness he thought he could tame as his skull met the ground. Within seconds, the remaining saffron-clad torakage were similarly cut to crimson ribbons, leaving Asami alone with nothing but corpses.

Surrounded by slain Nephilim and torakage alike, Asami and the Amanjaku knelt over Keita's headless body as the other oni snapped and snarled at each other. Asami's eyes were still closed. Her beautiful locks drifted eerily, suspended once again by some force beyond the young woman's control.

Writhing as though serpentine, the strands of Asami's hair braided themselves into razor-like tendrils that shoveled chunks of Keita's flesh into Asami's gaping maw.

"You shouldn't feel so glum. You saved a lot of people... although you killed a few more," the Amanjaku cooed. "This is exactly what you were born to be, just like your mother," he chuckled.

Asami said nothing, but she felt the tears pour down her cheeks. She couldn't control the burning feeling inside of her – the shame was too great. She reached for Keita's cold hand and clutched it tightly in her bloody fingers. "You protected me, and I hurt you. I'm sorry. I'm sorry!" she sobbed, pressing her forehead to his ruined chest. She felt her tears congeal with his blood, but she didn't care. Keita's demise was her fault. All her fault. She had been too trusting to let the Amanjaku in again, and she had paid the price.

And what would the Thunders do to her now? She was a loose cannon. They would surely kill her like a show beast which had slain its handler.

Unless she killed herself first. Just like on the night when she had first allowed the Amanjaku to enter her body, she would ensure that her death was her own; it would be no one else's to savor.

Asami scrambled in the dust for Keita's polearm. "Uh-uh-uh," the squat little oni said mockingly. He wagged a wan finger at her with a flourish, and the polearm levitated of its own accord out of her reach. "You've come too far for that, girl."

There was a crunching sound, and Asami realized the mouth on the back of her head was chewing bones.

"You're still hungry, aren't you?"

Her stomach lurched. The thought of Keita's flesh almost made her vomit. She shook her head, fighting back more tears.

"No, no silly girl. Not for the meat. You've forgotten the other part of our deal, haven't you? Ah, yes, you've forgotten about the child. *Your child.* I did promise you one, after all."

"What child would take joy in being the offspring of a *monster*!" she wailed.

"You are not a monster, Asami. You will learn to control your hunger, but you will need my help to control your blessing. That's how it works."

Suddenly, Asami fell to her knees. "*Get out of my head! Get out! You don't own me*!" Her entire face contorted with a violent shriek, and a sudden shockwave pulsed through the air. As it reached the other oni that had spilled from her maw, they crumbled to ash and drifted on the wind.

After several tense seconds, there was only cool silence. Asami panted from exhaustion as the maw at the back of her head licked its lips and closed itself, and her hair fell back into place to conceal it. She was covered in blood and dust, but somehow, she looked just like the pale, timid young woman whom she had once been.

"I can see that you are becoming more adroit at learning to use my gifts already," Amanjaku said, a hint of fear creeping into its voice.

"I don't need you anymore. I refuse to be anybody's pawn," Asami choked, looking around at the carnage she had caused mere moments ago. As the rage built inside her, she took a furious swipe at the oni, but frustratingly, he danced beyond her reach with glee.

"So you're willing to sacrifice the child I offered to grant you? I thought we had a deal. What you want more than anything in the world in exchange for what I want more than anything in your world and mine combined. More than fair, was it not?"

"There is always another way," spat Asami through gritted teeth. She tore at her own hair, as though hoping to strangle any future life out of the now dormant tendrils. "It wasn't supposed to be like this."

The Amanjaku laughed sourly. "You think it's that easy, girl? You'd have to find something else that possesses the same kind of power I do. Do you think that these pitiful, primitive creatures" – he made a disdainful gesture at the slain Nephilim– "have the answers you seek? Only one other being from Beyond can give you a child like I can. And Lingxuzi wouldn't want to talk to you. He has enough–" The demon stopped himself abruptly.

"You say that like you know him... like he's already here in Malifaux." Asami paused to contemplate the expression of evident worry etched on the Amanjaku's impish visage.

"It seems as though I've said too much," he groaned. "I misspoke. Forget it."

Asami ignored this. "If I find this Lingxuzi for myself, then what? You will have no leverage over me, no hold. You will be nothing, and I will be free! I can have my child without your curse. He may be another oni, but at least the choice to deal with him is my own."

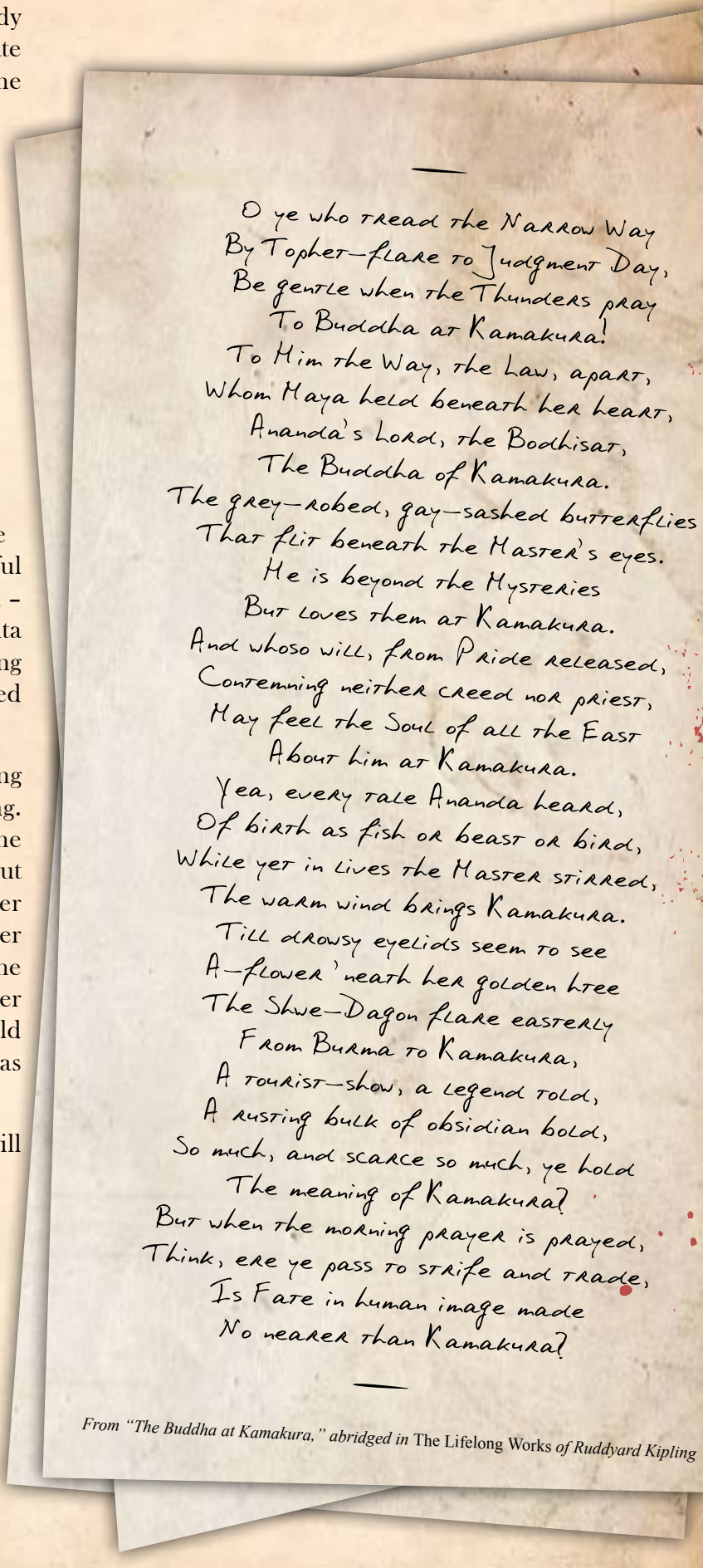
"I saved your life – twice! I thought we had an agreement!" the Amanjaku barked.

"Not anymore. Your gifts have poisoned me enough. If there's another oni more powerful than you in Malifaux, then I'm going to find him – without your help. I can always lie about how Keita died; I will have the Thunders by my side so long as I continue to serve them." Her hands clenched into fists.

Asami stared into the eyes of the monster facing her. She would not be a pawn, or a play thing. Fate had taken her family from her; both those she had known and those she could never know. But it could not take her will, and she would make her own way. The Amanjaku had granted her power at a cost, but it was a power she could control; she had seen how the Amanjaku had quivered after she banished the other oni. Even so, Asami could not escape the creeping notion that her skin was no longer her own.

"I will find this Lingxuzi," Asami said, "and I will win what is mine without your help."

As Asami turned her back, Amanjaku smiled.



O ye who tread the Narrow Way
By Tophet-flare to Judgment Day,
Be gentle when the Thunders pray
To Buddha at Kamakura!
To Him the Way, the Law, apart,
Whom Maya held beneath her heart,
Ananda's Lord, the Bodhisat,
The Buddha of Kamakura.
The grey-robed, gay-sashed butterflies
That flit beneath the Master's eyes.
He is beyond the Mysteries
But loves them at Kamakura.
And whoso will, from Pride released,
Contemning neither creed nor priest,
May feel the Soul of all the East
About him at Kamakura.
Yea, every tale Ananda heard,
Of birth as fish or beast or bird,
While yet in lives the Master stirred,
The warm wind brings Kamakura.
Till drowsy eyelids seem to see
A-flower 'neath her golden tree
The Shwe-Dagon flare easterly
From Burma to Kamakura,
A tourist-show, a legend told,
A rusting bulk of obsidian bold,
So much, and scarce so much, ye hold
The meaning of Kamakura?
But when the morning prayer is prayed,
Think, ere ye pass to strife and trade,
Is Fate in human image made
No nearer than Kamakura?

From "The Buddha at Kamakura," abridged in The Lifelong Works *of Ruddyard Kipling*



PROTECT THE WORKERS

You have been tasked with seeing that these rail workers are able to do their jobs in peace and safety…

SET UP

Randomly determine one player to be the Attacker and the other the Defender. The Defender deploys four Rail Workers (M2E Core Book pg. 262) within 3" of the Center of the board. These models count as being part of the Defender's Crew for all purposes and Activate normally (the Defender does not need to pay the Soulstone cost to add these models to their Crew).

DEPLOYMENT

The rest of the models in the Defender's Crew are each deployed within 6" of at least one of the Rail Workers.

The Attacker's Crew begins the game buried. On the first Turn of the game, when the Attacker has the opportunity to Activate a model, she may choose one of her buried models and unbury it within 4" of any board edge before Activating it.

SPECIAL

Any time an Attacking Minion model with a Soulstone Cost of 5 or less is killed or sacrificed, the Attacker may summon a copy of the model in base contact with any board edge.

VICTORY

The Attacking Crew scores 1 VP every time an enemy Rail Worker is killed or sacrificed.

The Defending Crew scores 1 VP for each Rail Worker that remains in play at the end of the game.

Due to the wounds she suffered during her battle with the Governor-General, Mei Feng was not conscious for his death. Instead, she slept fitfully, mumbling under her breath as her face scrunched up in frustration and fear.

Through it all, her savior-turned-babysitter, English Ivan, was at her side, copying down every sound she made into his battered leather journal. Whenever her sleep became more peaceful, he would retire to the safe house's small wooden table, open his Chinese-English dictionary, and attempt to piece together her ravings into something intelligible.

It soon became clear that Mei Feng was serving masters beyond the Arcanists, and with each page Ivan filled in his journal, the identities of those masters became more and more clear.

When Mei Feng finally regained consciousness, Ivan lied to her, claiming that he was one of the workers in her mob and that he had saved her after her encounter with the Governor. Given that she was still alive and not in prison, she had little reason to doubt him.

Mei Feng was determined to return to the Foundry and her people, but Ivan convinced her that she was still weak and needed to rest. Over the next few days, they talked frequently as Ivan helped change her bandages, becoming close... and, once Mei Feng was feeling like her old self, far closer still.

It wasn't anything approaching romance, but it was a connection nevertheless, and when they finally returned to the civilized parts of the city, the two parted with fond looks and a promise to speak again soon. Once Mei Feng had gone, Ivan slinked off to inform Dr. Ramos that the plan had succeeded; he had made his first steps toward infiltrating the Ten Thunders.

Shenlong threw back his head and screamed as the aetherial entity that called itself the Dragon burst forth from its mortal shell, splattering meat and bone in every direction. The twisting, sinuous creature glowed with all the radiance of the sun as it floated above the temple, reveling in its freedom. Shenlong felt himself burning away within the heart of the Dragon, his soul consumed like kindling before the inferno.

And then, as soon as the change had come over him, the Dragon was shrieking in pain, twisting back in on itself as its essence was torn apart and ground into several knots of power. In a last, desperate act of self-preservation, the Dragon subsumed its essence back within its mortal host, burying everything that it was deep within the newly-reformed monk.

In the weeks that followed the failed ascension of the Governor-General, Shenlong became reacquainted with the sensation of being alone. The Tyrant within him was still recovering from its wounds, and for the first time in decades, Shenlong's thoughts were wholly his own.

A lesser man might have indulged in his freedom. For Shenlong, the respite was an opportunity for self-reflection. He had mastered the styles of the Four Temples and the Essences of Control and Plurality, but in his union with the Dragon, he had neglected to study the other essences and their chakras.

He had been foolish. Now, Shenlong meditated upon the essence of Rejection, reflecting upon the scrolls of the temples to learn how to balance the Dragon's essence with his own, how to reconcile separation and unity. The Dragon stirred within him, restless, but Shenlong knew that if he wanted to survive another manifestation of its power, he would have to become the stronger of their two wills.

When the Ten Thunders first asked Lynch to find out whether any of his patrons knew anything about Nythera, he flashed his usual smile and promised them that he would get right on it. This was especially difficult to do with the voice of the Hungering Darkness hammering inside his skull, demanding that he not tell them anything.

After the Ten Thunders' representatives had left, Lynch tossed back a few stiff drinks and listened as the Hungering Darkness explained that Nythera was the prison that held the greatest enemy of the Tyrants, and that while the entity inside it could certainly help the Ten Thunders in their goal of defeating the Tyrants, she was just as likely to turn on them and eradicate all life in Malifaux.

Lynch wasn't too keen on that happening – he lived in Malifaux, after all – so it didn't take much convincing on the part of the Hungering Darkness to get him to investigate the rumors of Nythera. What he found sent a chill up his spine; not only had the Freikorps learned the location of the ruins, but they had left the city with the intention of claiming the "weapon" at the heart of the ruins as their own. Being the brave man that he was, Lynch promptly sent his assistant, Mr. Graves, to warn Lilith about the Freikorps in the hopes that she could prevent them from ever reaching Nythera.

It didn't work. Nythera opened, releasing Titania back into the world and prompting the Hungering Darkness to withdraw a portion of its power from Lynch, lest she sense its presence. It wasn't a Tyrant, but it doubted that Titania would care too terribly much about the distinction.

The Hungering Darkness' strength was its Brilliance, and to help it quietly build up that strength, Lynch began using his wealth to buy up small taverns all across the city. None of them could compare to the Honeypot, of course, but by the end of the month, all of them were carrying liquor that was tainted with the Hunger Darkness' corrupting essence.

When Nicodem's undead pushed westward across the city, the Guild found itself unable to mount a proper response. Misaki watched the battle from the rooftops of the Little Kingdom; the undead had little in the way of strategy, but sheer numbers were on their side. By all accounts, it seemed as if the shuffling corpses would succeed in pushing the Guild back to the Industrial Zone... and perhaps out of Malifaux entirely.

It was not a difficult decision for her to make. She was content to allow her enemies to spill each other's blood in the streets, as any weakness on their part only made the Ten Thunders stronger, but she could not allow the city to fall into the hands of a Resurrectionist overlord who could not be predicted and exploited in the same manner as the Guild.

Leading a strike team of Torakage and snipers, Misaki struck against the southern flank of the undead, cutting down zombies like wheat before a scythe. As the southern flank collapsed, Misaki and her forces withdrew, allowing the Guild to assume that they had routed the undead on their own. There was no reason to allow them to learn the true strength of the Ten Thunders, and if a victory against the undead left them confident about their martial strength, then it was a weakness she could exploit in the future.

When she returned to the Little Kingdom, her father, the Oyabun, was waiting for her. He chastised his daughter for acting on her impulses without consulting him first, claiming that it put the Ten Thunders at risk. When she tried to explain her actions, he backhanded Misaki across the face, knocking her to the ground. He was seeking obedience, he claimed, not excuses.

That night, Misaki took up her bisento and disappeared into the night. It had become impossible for her to ignore the threat her father's willful ignorance posed to the Ten Thunders, and if she was to have any hope of cutting the sickness from her Clan and finding her own path, she would need allies with sharp knives and steady hands.

The Governor-General was dead, and in a very real way, it had been Lucas McCabe's fault. He wasn't a man for bragging, but after the spasms of transformation triggered by the Governor's death had passed, he finally allowed himself to breathe a sigh of relief. It was over.

He had been reporting back to the Ten Thunders for years, keeping them abreast of the artifacts the Governor sent him to retrieve. It had taken them two years to work out what the Governor was planning and another year to figure out a way to sabotage his efforts. He had heard rumors that the Hungering Darkness had been involved with the latter effort, but the exact details were never made available to him.

In the end, his part in the plan had been relatively easy. The Governor had sent him into the Quarantine Zone to retrieve a collection of hand bones from a Resurrectionist's lair, and while McCabe had given him bones, they weren't the ones from the Resurrectionist's lair.

Having to keep a straight face as he lied to the Governor hadn't been easy, and when McCabe saw him stuttering and jerking as he floated in the mansion's hallway, he had been certain that the Governor would notice the deception instantly. He hadn't, however, and when the Governor attempted to anchor himself to the bones of a Tyrant's mortal form, the resulting overload of aetheric power had ended him.

Unfortunately, McCabe's tie to the Guild went up in flames along with the Governor. Over the next few weeks, he took whatever jobs he could, endeavoring to remain useful until the new Governor-General arrived in Malifaux. Men in power always needed someone to do their dirty work off the books, and McCabe had a feeling that Franco Marlow wouldn't be any different.

The destruction of the would-be Tyrant took a concerted effort from the Ten Thunders, years of careful planning and maneuvering, and when it was finally finished, Yan Lo returned to the Oyabun to collect his reward. He did not kneel to the brutish man, but neither did Baojun Katanaka bend his knee to Yan Lo.

The Oyabun had promised to tell Yan Lo what he knew of his history once the Governor had been undone, and now he made good on his promise. Many centuries earlier, Yan Lo had summoned a mighty oni named Lingxuzi that terrorized China before being banished by seven sages. The sages then turned their attentions to Yan Lo, cursing him for his actions.

Yan Lo returned to the spirit world with this knowledge, mulling it over in his mind. The longer he thought about the oni, the more memories returned to him, but he still could not determine how he had summoned such a powerful oni or for what purpose. Placing his feet on the Path of Spirit, he followed it into the realm Beyond, torturing the lesser oni he came across for information about where he might find Lingxuzi.

The screaming oni told a different story than that of the Oyabun. In their version of the tale, Lingxuzi had not been banished, but rather had possessed the sages that sought to banish it and turned against its master, destroying his spirit with a terrible curse. When the Breach first opened, the possessed sages – who had survived for centuries, thanks to the oni's influence – crossed over to Malifaux, granting Lingxuzi a physical form.

Stepping back upon the Path of Bone, Yan Lo began the long journey back to Malifaux. He had an oni to track down and a great many questions to ask it before he settled their score, whatever that might be.

ASAMI TANAKA

Asami has experienced more pain in her relatively few years than most people are capable of enduring in a lifetime.

Following an attack on her family shrine, she lost not only her father, but also her fertility, and with it the hope of escape from a life of debilitating loneliness as a solitary temple attendant. Mortally wounded, Asami let the Amanjaku inside her soul, bestowing her with the bestial power of the oni – power which escalated as she let the demon even deeper within her, lured on by its promise to grant her a child.

The exchange was worse than a devil's deal; the ravenous maw splitting the back of her head is both a constant reminder of her own insatiable hunger for the life she lost and the cruel mark of her would-be oni master.

The Thunders have recruited Asami into their number, hoping to use her demonic strength for themselves, but whether they will be able to control her is another matter entirely.



ASAMI TANAKA — CACHE 3

Master, Living ONI

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
7	5	10	5	6	2

ABILITIES

Rush of Magic: During the Draw Phase draw an additional card and then discard a card.

Hard to Kill: While this model has 2 or more **Wd** remaining when it suffers damage, it may not be reduced to below 1 **Wd**.

Wrath Of The Oni: Other friendly Oni within 4 may deal 1 damage to this model to take the (2) Charge Action as a (1) Action.

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Another Mouth To Feed (**MI** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 1): Target suffers 2/4/6 damage.
Hide In Shadow: After succeeding, move this model up to 3".
Devoured Whole: After damaging, the target must take a TN 11 **Ht** duel. If it fails, it is sacrificed unless it discards 2 cards.

(1) Reaching Tendrils (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 8): Target model is pushed into base contact with this model.
Pulled Here And There: After succeeding, push this model up to 6".

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) An Insatiable Hunger (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12): Discard all Scheme Markers in 2 and heal 2 damage for each Marker discarded in this way.

(1) Oni's Strength (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12 / Rg: 8): Target Oni or Minion gains **Focused +2**.

(1) From The Maw, They Come (**Ca** 6 / TN: * / Rg: 6): Name a non-Totem Ten Thunders Oni Minion model. The TN of this Action is 10 plus the Soulstone Cost of the named model. Summon the named model and give it the following Condition for the rest of the game: "**Flicker +1:** At the end of the Turn, lower this Condition's value by 1. If this Condition ends or is removed, sacrifice this model." Discard all Corpse and Scrap Markers within 1 of the summoned model and increase the value of its **Flicker** Condition by the number of Markers discarded, to a max of **Flicker +3**.

ASAMI TANAKA

30mm



AMANJAKU

Trapped behind the veil separating the mortal realm from the world of the oni, the Amanjaku needed the perfect vessel to facilitate his crossing. Without mortal aid, a being of such complex demonic chaos such as himself could not hope to survive in the mortal realm. For this purpose, he used Asami, guiding and protecting her from a young age in order to transform her into the perfect host.

When Asami crossed into Malifaux, Amanjaku found that he could physically manifest in a way that hadn't been possible on Earth. Thus it was that Asami finally saw the true form of the voice in her head: that of a diminutive, ruthless imp with an unhealthy appetite for destruction rivaled only by his love of trickery and deceit.

Unfortunately for it, Amanjaku underestimated Asami's strength. Now the woman he sought to use and control holds sway over him, and he must carefully manipulate her to achieve his goals.



AMANJAKU — COST 3

Peon, Totem (Asami Tanaka)

ONI

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	5	4	6	6	2

ABILITIES

Insignificant: This model may not take Interact Actions.

Disguised: This model may not be the target of the Charge Action.

Manipulative 13: If this model has not yet Activated this Turn, when an enemy model targets this model with an Attack Action, the enemy model must pass a TN 13 **Wp** duel or the Action immediately fails.

AMANJAKU

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Trickster's Claws (**MI** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 1): Target suffers 1/2/3 damage. This Attack deals an additional amount of damage equal to the amount of **VP** the opposing Crew has, to a maximum of 2 additional damage.

Flay: The damage flip resulting from this Attack may be cheated if it suffers one or more .

(1) A Taste Of Life (**Ca** 5 / TN: 14 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 6): Select a Condition on the target model that has a value and increase the Condition's value by 1. This Action may not target the same model more than once per Activation.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Onwards Into Night (**Ca** 5 / TN: 10): Until the end of the Turn, **Sh** Attack Actions that target models within 6 suffer .

30mm

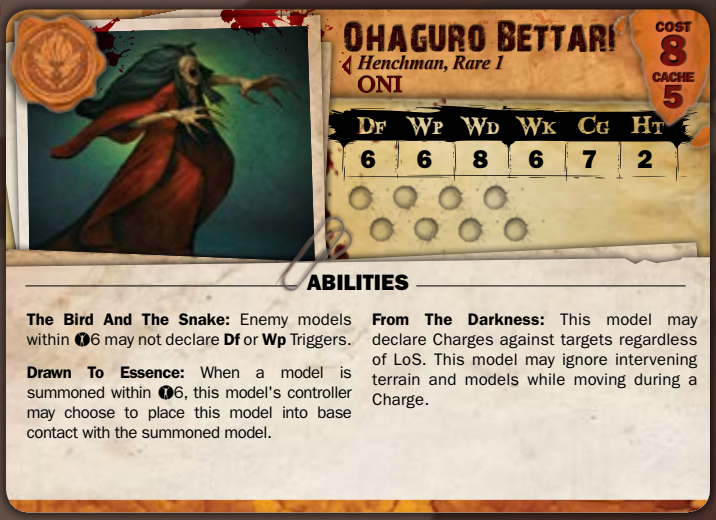
OHAGURO BETTARI

From the maw she came, and she was more haunting than anything Asami had ever seen. The process of her birth created a blinding, splintering pain as Asami's already-distended maw forced itself open into sick proportions that even she did not think were geometrically possible. With a tight pull and a sickening squelch, the creature forced itself free of her dark portal.

"Do you like her? You knew her human half once," the Amanjaku mocked. The thing had no eyes. Flaps of pale skin stretched tight around its gaunt skull, and impish teeth glistened, razor-sharp nails on its bony fingers, tingling thirstily like parasitic insects waiting to bore into the body of a new host.

Asami looked at the creature's face, beholding an alien form without eyes. Even so, she sensed a certain familiarity there. Then, terror forced its way inside her. One word escaped Asami's numb lips in a shuddering rasp.

"Mother?"



ABILITIES

The Bird And The Snake: Enemy models within ❶6 may not declare **Df** or **Wp** Triggers.

Drawn To Essence: When a model is summoned within ❶6, this model's controller may choose to place this model into base contact with the summoned model.

From The Darkness: This model may declare Charges against targets regardless of LoS. This model may ignore intervening terrain and models while moving during a Charge.

OHAGURO BETTARI

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Blackened Teeth (**MI** 6🗡 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Target suffers 2/3/6 damage.
🗡🗡 ***Flay***: The damage flip resulting from this Attack may be cheated if it suffers one or more ⍈.
🗡🕮 ***Ploughed Over:*** After succeeding against an enemy model, instead of dealing damage, push the target 4" away from this model. Then, this model takes a Charge Action against a different target if it is not engaged. This Trigger may be taken once per Activation.
✕ ***Just A Taste:*** After succeeding against an enemy, place a Corpse Marker in base contact with the target.

(1) The Hunting Song (**Ca** 6✕ / TN: 12✕ / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 12): Target model gains the following Condition until the end of the game or until this model leaves play: "**Whispers In The Night:** This model may not Charge. The next time this model takes a Walk Action, it must end as close to the model that applied this Condition as possible; then, end this Condition."

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) An Oni's Call (**Ca** 6✕ / TN: 10✕🕮 / Rg: 6): Target other friendly Oni performs a (1) Interact Action.

(0) The Flaying Song: Until the end of the Turn, friendly Oni within ❶4 gain +🗡 to **MI**.

30mm



YOKAI

What Yokai lack in intelligence, they make up in sheer brutality. Considered among the lowest of the oni, these simian creatures love nothing more than a blood-drenched frenzy during which they might boast their considerable fighting skills. Wielding their magical kama, sharp sickles imbued with soul-rending curses from beyond, Yokai leap into battle with unhallowed frenzy, relishing each new opportunity to tear apart the enemy into a gory mist. Their ape-like call is rightly feared by many as a sign of coming doom.

Despite their fighting prowess, such simple creatures are also fickle; they do not have the willpower to remain eternally in the mortal realm. As the fight comes to an end and the Yokai sense that their own strength ebbs, they allow themselves to transcend back to Beyond from whence they came. Still, better that these foul creatures disappear than turn their burning wrath upon erstwhile allies once there is nothing else left to kill.



YOKAI — COST 5

Minion
ONI

DF	WP	WD	WK	CG	HT
5	5	5	5	7	2

ABILITIES

Frenzied Charge: This model gains to the Attack flips of any Attacks it generates due to the Charge Action.

The Fading Fight: When this model is deployed at the start of the game, it gains the following Condition until the end of the game: "**Flicker +5:** At the end of the Turn, lower this Condition's value by 1. If this Condition ends or is removed, sacrifice this model."

Fickle: When this model is summoned, it may choose to gain the **Flicker +1** Condition.

Ephemeral Warriors: After the value of the **Poison** or **Flicker** Condition on this model is lowered, if this model is still in play, this model may be placed within 3", not in terrain, after completing the current Action. (If the Condition is ended or removed without lowering the value, this Ability does not come into play).

YOKAI

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Kama (**MI** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 1): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.
- ***Flay***: The damage flip resulting from this Attack may be cheated if it suffers one or more .
- ***Soul Burn:*** While damaging, gain to the damage flip. Then, lower this model's **Flicker** Condition by 1.
- ***Just A Taste:*** After succeeding against an enemy, place a Corpse Marker in base contact with the target.
- ***Stolen Life:*** After succeeding against an enemy, this model gains the **Flicker +1** Condition until the end of the game.
- ***Vital Strike:*** After succeeding, lower this model's **Flicker** Condition by 1. Then, if this model is still in play, take this Action again.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Corrupting Essence (**Ca** 5 / TN: 10): Lower this model's **Flicker** Condition by 1. Then, if this model is still in play, it may take a (1) Interact Action.
- ***Roots In The World***: After succeeding, heal up to 2 damage on this model.

30mm

TERRACOTTA WARRIOR

"I take it that your latest assignment in Shaanxi was a success?" Lucius stared at McCabe from behind the gleaming mask.

"I have friends in high places who connected me with some... rarer findings that should prove useful to you, Secretary Mattheson." At the relic hunter's nod, three warriors of living clay strode into Lucius' office. They had dusty boots of worn earth, sightless eyes, tight buns of muddied hair, and they sneered from haughty features. The Secretary drank it all in with subtle amusement betrayed only by a dark chuckle.

"And what do these puppets do?" Lucius purred. Without warning, McCabe lashed his whip at one of the clay statues. Impossibly, the terracotta warrior caught the weapon mid-strike. Before Lucius' eyes, the clay began to morph and bubble like an infectious virus until a perfect leather replica whip sprouted from its hand.

Lucius twirled his spidery fingers in evident delight. "Bring me more."



TERRACOTTA WARRIOR COST 5

Minion, Construct, Rare 3

MIMIC

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	4	4	5	5	2

ABILITIES

Thousands Strong: When this model suffers damage from anything other than an Action that targeted it, it may reveal a card from its hand and then place it on the bottom of its deck to prevent the damage.

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

Unimpeded: This model ignores penalties for severe terrain when moving.

TERRACOTTA WARRIOR

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Clay Fist (**MI** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 1): Target suffers 1/3/5 damage.

Until I Shatter: After succeeding, this model may suffer 2 damage that may not be reduced to deal 2 damage to the target.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(1) Mold of the Other (**Ca** 6 / TN: 13 / Rg: 6): This Action may only be taken once per Turn. Target friendly non-Terracotta Warrior Minion or Enforcer gains the following Condition until the end of the game: "**Ancient Protection:** When this model suffers damage, a friendly Terracotta Warrior within 12" and LoS may suffer the damage instead. This damage may not be reduced and counts as having been caused by this Condition. Then, end this Condition."

(0) Ancient Treasures (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12 / Rg: 6): Target a friendly model and discard a face-up Upgrade with a Cost greater than 0 from the target. If this happens, attach a different Upgrade to the target following all of the usual restrictions for attaching Upgrades at the start of the game. If the new Upgrade has a higher Cost than the one that was discarded, you must discard a number of Soulstones equal to the difference in Cost or discard the Upgrade.

30mm

SUN QUIANG

Sun Quiang is a famed healer from the Three Kingdoms. He is an expert in the arts of medicine, and his talents were sought from across the land by the sick and the dying.

The Guild arrested his son on false charges of treason and the sale of illegal weapons. Desperate, Sun Quiang sought the aid of the dreaded Ten Thunders, who agreed to raid the prison where his son was held, so long as Sun Quiang agreed to serve them. They kept their word, and the Thunders whisked Sun Quiang to Malifaux, where he now plies his trade aiding their injured warriors and keeping their Rail Workers on the lines far longer than human stamina should allow.

Secretly, he curses his new masters, but Sun Quiang is a man of his word. He has resigned himself to his fate. The only line that he will not cross is to do harm. He has sworn himself to heal the sick and the dying, and he does so regardless of who they are. The Thunders allow this, so long as he remains useful.



SUN QUIANG COST 8

Enforcer, Rare 1, Living

RETAINER

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
7	6	7	5	5	2

ABILITIES

Thirteen Measures: Enemy models beginning their Activations within ❶4 of this model must pass a TN 12 **Wp** duel or gain **Slow**.

Don't Mind Me: This model may take Interact Actions while engaged.

Absolute Sincerity: When this model Activates, all models in (↾)4 heal 1 damage.

King of Medicine: Whenever another model within LoS suffers damage, this model may reveal a card from its hand and then place it on the bottom of its deck to push up to its **Wk** toward the model that suffered damage. If this model pushed at least 3", it may take a (1) Interact Action.

SUN QUIANG

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Yin and Yang (**Ml** 7 / TN: 13 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 6 or 1): Target a model. This Action must declare a Trigger if able.

Cleanse: After succeeding, discard all Scheme, Corpse, and Scrap Markers within (↾)2 of the target.

Duality: After succeeding, choose to heal 2 damage on the target or deal 2 damage to it.

Marked By The Ancestors: After succeeding, the target gains the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Adversary:** Spirits gain to Attack flips targeting this model."

Hole In The World: After succeeding against an enemy engaged with this model, place the target within 6" of its current location, not in terrain.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(1) A Recitation of the Essential Formulae (**Ca** 5 / TN: 13): This model gains the following Condition until the start of the next Turn: "**5,300 Formulae**: Enemy models within ❶4 count as having the Peon Characteristic in addition to any other Station Characteristic they have."

Surge: After succeeding, draw a card.

(0) Study (**Ca** 5 / TN: 13 / Rg: 8): Target a Scrap, Corpse, or Scheme Marker. Place a friendly Scheme Marker in base contact with the target, then discard the target.

30mm



YASUNORI

The oldest legends from the Three Kingdoms say that Yasunori was once a kabuki actor without peer. He could captivate his audiences with a voice that boomed louder than thunder or movements that whirled more gracefully than a swirling stream. His performance was so perfect that it was almost divine... inhuman, even.

One night after a particularly mesmerizing show, the audience begged him to take off his mask so they could see the true face of the man underneath. Yasunori complied, but the crowd could not accept the truth behind the demonic visage of the oni staring back at them. They turned on the actor they had cheered but a moment earlier, chasing him into the forest with drawn weapons and powerful curses.

Memories of that painful night still haunt Yasunori, and his own shame burns inside him hotter than molton iron. Riding upon his fearsine longma, a winged steed he tricked into serving as his mount, the oni now wreaks vengeance upon those whom he had once dedicated his whole life to pleasing.



YASUNORI COST **12**

Enforcer, Rare 1, Living
ONI

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	6	12	6	10	3

ABILITIES

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

Stubborn: Enemy models suffer a ▯ to the Attack flip of Attack Actions that are resisted by this model's **Wp**.

Flight: This model is immune to falling damage and may ignore any terrain or models while moving.

Scales of Heaven: Once per Turn, when this model suffers damage, draw a card.

YASUNORI

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Vengeful Katanas (**MI** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 2): Target suffers 3/4/5 damage. This Action gains ▯ to the Attack flip.

or Wind and Water: After succeeding, take this Action again. This Trigger may only be declared once per Activation.

or Earth and Fire: After succeeding, take this Action again. This Trigger may only be declared once per Activation

(0) Kodoku (**Ca** 7 / TN: 13 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 8): Target Minion model immediately performs a (1) Attack Action chosen and controlled by this model's controller. During this Action, the target gains the following Trigger with the chosen Action: "***Wrath of the Heavens***: If this Attack deals damage, this Attack deals +1 damage for every **VP** the target's Crew has, to a maximum of +3."

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Great Sage (**Ca** 7 / TN: 13): Look at the top 3 cards of your Fate Deck and then return them in any order.

50mm

NOTES:

may 8th
sday,

"even hand of the Guild"
this has potential

too real... need "BETTER" photos

Push this more

Ux Tattler
Vol. CIII
NO. 550
Monday, July 7th, 1906



Oni, Or Obvious Obfuscation?

By Nellie Cochrane

There have been numerous reports of creatures (which the superstitious locals refer to as 'Oni') in the Little Kingdom over the past several weeks. People have been found flayed alive, strange creatures have been seen in the night, and numerous temples have been broken into and vandalized.

While strange things most certainly happen in Malifaux, it is clear that there is more going on here than simply meets the eye. Tensions have been growing between the immigrants from the Three Kingdoms and the malignant M&SU since the death of the Governor General. There have been disagreements over contracts to lay new rail lines and worker compensation, which would normally have been resolved by the even hand of Guild intervention.

It is clear that these attacks are staged by the M&SU to terrorize their opponents into submission. An anonymous source has gone on record as saying that Union members were seen in strange masks and wearing steel claws to impersonate beasts from the lore of the Three Kingdoms. Stooping to vandalizing sacred shrines is a particularly low tactic, but we really should no longer be surprised at what the Union is willing to resort to when it comes to bringing the populace – which it was designed to protect – to heel.

ONI UPGRADES

Feigned Weakness

Cost: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Feigned Weakness: If the opposing Crew has more **VP** than this Crew after the opposing Crew scores 1 or more **VP**, this model may summon a non-Totem Oni Minion model. The Soulstone Cost of the summoned model must be equal to or lower than the difference between this Crew's **VP** and the opposing Crew's **VP** plus three. The model is summoned within 6" and LoS of this model and gains the **Flicker + 2** Condition. This Ability may not be used if the game has ended. (Note that **VP** earned at the end of a Turn are earned by both Crews simultaneously.)

RESTRICTIONS

Asami Tanaka

A Heavenly Design

Cost: 2 SS

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) A Heavenly Design (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12): Place this model within 6" of its current location, not in base contact with terrain, Markers, or other models.

- This model gains the following Ability:

  An Oni's Spirit: When a friendly model is sacrificed within 10, place a Scheme Marker in base contact with the model before removing it.

RESTRICTIONS

Asami Tanaka

Grasping Strands

Cost: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Grasping Strands: Enemy models that end the movement portion of a Charge Action within 4 of this model reduce the number of Attacks generated by the Charge Action by one.

- This model gains the following Trigger to its **Reaching Tendrils** Attack Action:

  With Teeth: After succeeding, take a (1) **MI** Attack against the target.

RESTRICTIONS

Asami Tanaka

Nefarious Pact

Cost: 2 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Nefarious Pact: At the end of this model's Activation, draw a card.

  Otherworldly Protection: Friendly models within 10 of this model that would have a Condition ended or removed due to the Action or Ability of an enemy model may choose not to end or remove the Condition.

RESTRICTIONS

Asami Tanaka



THE FATE OF MORTALS

COST: 2 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  The Power Beneath: Once per Turn, after an opponent scores 1 or more **VP**, target friendly Oni within 6" may gain the **Flicker +1** Condition until the end of the game.

- Friendly Oni Minions in ❶10 gain the following Ability:

  The Fate of Mortals: After killing or sacrificing an enemy model, draw a card.

RESTRICTIONS

Oni, Rare 1

A TASTE FOR FLESH

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Eat Your Fill: After killing or sacrificing an enemy model, this model may choose to heal all damage it has suffered and end its Activation.

RESTRICTIONS

Ohaguro Bettari

TEN THUNDERS UPGRADES

A MEMORY OF HONOR

COST: 0 SS

- This model gains +1 **Wk**.
- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (1) With My Bare Hands (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 2): Target suffers 2/4/6 damage.

RESTRICTIONS

Fuhatsu

THE PEACEFUL WATERS

COST: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if this Crew contains one or more Monks of Low River.
- Friendly Monks of Low River within 12 gain the following Tactical Action:

  (1) The Peaceful Waters (**Ca** 5 / TN: 12 / Rg: 6): Target model heals 1/2/3 damage.

  or ***As The River Bends:*** After succeeding, place a Scheme Marker in base contact with the target.

RESTRICTIONS

Rare 1

Friday, July 8th, 1853

COMMODORE PERRY SUCCESSFUL, TREATY OF KANAGAWA OPENS NIPPON TO GUILD TRADE

His Excellency Commodore Matthew C. Perry of the Guild Imperial Bureau's Eastern Division today completed his two month tour of Nippon aboard the venerable steamship GMS Mississippi. Impressed Nipponese foreign ministers have at last opened coastal ports including Yamato, Kamakura, and Edo to authorized Guild traders. The Eastern Division anticipates that with Nippon at last integrated into the Western sphere, ports in Zhong Guo, Cho'sen, and Borneo will soon follow suit. A war of shadows between the aristocracy of the Tokugawa shogunate and an unknown criminal syndicate continue to disrupt business efforts between Guild officials and their Nipponese counterparts



Katanaka

PHOTO BY: THE CHRONICLES PRESS



Equality

Cost: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Equality: Once per Turn, after the opposing Crew scores 1 or more **VP**, choose one of the following:

  Equal Knowledge: Draw a card.

  Equal Wealth: Place a Scheme Marker in base contact with this model.

  Equal Health: Heal 2 damage on this model.

Restrictions

Rare 1

Death Contract

Cost: 1 SS

- When this Upgrade is purchased, it is attached to this model face down. This Upgrade does not count against this model's Upgrade limit, nor does this Upgrade count as attached to this model for the purposes of the Abilities of friendly models. If this Upgrade is discarded, reveal this Upgrade to all players.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Death Contract: When this model is killed or sacrificed by an enemy model's Action or Ability, the enemy model must discard two cards or two Soulstones or be killed.

Restrictions

Rare 1

False Target

Cost: 0 SS

- When this Upgrade is purchased, it is attached to this model face down. This Upgrade does not count against this model's Upgrade limit, nor does this Upgrade count as attached to this model for the purposes of the Abilities of friendly models. If this Upgrade is discarded reveal this Upgrade to all players. This Upgrade may only be attached if another model in the Crew has the Death Contract Upgrade.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Decoy: When this model is killed or sacrificed, reveal this Upgrade. This Upgrade has no other effect.

Restrictions

Rare 1

RIPPLES OF FATE

BY: MATTHEW FARRER + MASON CRAWFORD

July 18, 1906

Some stories claimed that the Soulstones in the Lucius Mattheson's mask glowed green from nightfall to sunrise. It wasn't true. The carefully cut gems that fitted into the eyes of his mask generated no glow, nor did any light shine from behind them. When the light was low, however, an observer might be forgiven for thinking that the green-tinted lenses were reflecting more light than was falling upon them.

The only light that was falling on them now was from the hundreds of lanterns that lit up the holding pens below him. Lucius stood on the battlements that made up the roof of Malifaux City's courthouse, leaning elegantly against the parapet as he watched the turmoil below. It had been two months since the death of the Governor-General, and he had used every hour of that time seizing as much power as he was able. He had taken his time with it – a few words in the right ear here, an intimidated Guard captain there, a few troublesome clerks murdered on their way home from work so that their more amenable subordinates could receive a promotion - but he had seized it nevertheless, one subtle move at a time.

A wagon was pulling away from one of the yards, bound for the convict barracks in the Industrial Zone, no doubt. His proclamation – it was couched in all the proper deference for the Guild's protocols and the empty seat of the Governor-General, but it was proclamation just the same – had named the Miners and Steamfitters Union as accomplices in the death of the Governor-General, and the past two weeks had been a flurry of patrols and arrests. Even with his lawyers holding their trials all through the night, they were simply unable to keep up with how quickly the Guild Guard kept bringing them in. The holding zones were a temporary solution for keeping the men and women of the Union contained while they awaited their sentencing, but Lucius was toying with the idea of keeping them, even after the trials were over.

The sound of a faint chime from behind his shoulder distracted him from his thoughts. "It has been five minutes," a tired voice pointed out. "I will not wait another five."

Lucius took his time turning to regard the speaker, the light falling away from his mask until it became just a featureless patch of gloom beneath the curls of his wig. Standing there in his metal walking harness, Charles Hoffman looked just as dispirited as his voice sounded.

"My apologies, Mr. Hoffman. I must not have heard you arrive." He shifted his pose a little, leaning forward and folding both of his hands atop his cane as he regarded his fellow Guild administrator. On paper, they were both technically equals, but in Lucius' mind, there was simply no comparison between him and the tired mechanic. "Did you have any trouble with the stairs? I should hope that my messenger was considerate enough to warn you. Some of them are rather shallow." He glanced down at the massive metallic legs of Hoffman's walking harness.

"I managed, thank you." A flicker of annoyance crept into Hoffman's voice. "What was it you wanted? I have paperwork to finish."

"Ah, yes, your paperwork." Lucius began slowly strolling along the edge of the battlements, his cane marking every second step. "I had a few questions about some of the paperwork you filed yesterday, actually. You see, I had been under the impression that we were both working together in order to capture the murderer of our late employer."

Hoffman was forced to turn in order to keep Lucius in his field of vision. "That is your own crusade, Mattheson. I've assigned my Watchers as you've asked, but there are other tasks that need attention as well. Someone has to sign the payroll

checks and ammunition requisition forms, and with Sonnia still recovering from her burns and Lady Justice fighting back against the undead in the Eastern Slums, there is nobody else of sufficient rank save for the two of us."

"I am certain that the accountants–"

"Still need approval for each purchase order and dispensation of Guild funds," Hoffman interrupted. "There are reports that must be filed and sent back to Vienna, troop movements that need to be coordinated with the captains of the Guard, quarantine procedures for the tuberculosis outbreak in the Southern Slums that still need to be approved, meetings with the representatives of Condor Rails over what we intend to do about the railroad blockades in the Northern Hills..."

"All of which-" Hoffman started to interrupt him again, but Lucius took a single step toward the other man as he continued, drowning Hoffman out through sheer force of personality. "All of which can be handled by your subordinates." His gloved fingers tapped against the head of his cane. "Interrupt me again, Mr. Hoffman, and this discussion will take a much less pleasant turn."

Hoffman waited for the span of three heartbeats before he replied, just to be certain that Lucius had finished speaking. "My apologies, Secretary. My office has been inundated by complaints from the manufacturers in the Industrial Zone over the sudden lack of Union steamfitters, many of whom are languishing down there in those pens of yours. Every time your courts send a steamfitter to hang on the tree, it hurts the city's ability to keep our forces supplied. We're bleeding from a thousand little cuts, and your trials aren't helping things."

Lucius sighed, as if unconcerned with the entire affair. "I never claimed that you were not *busy*, Mr. Hoffman. I merely have a few questions about some anomalies that were brought to my attention." He kept walking, taking a petty sort of pleasure in how Hoffman kept having to turn around in a circle. It was tempting to increase his pace, just to see if he could make the other man dizzy, but it was merely a passing fancy. "Two days ago, two Watchers disappeared over the Eastern Slums."

"Both accounted for," Hoffman replied, a little too quickly. "One was sabotaged by scavengers and is now back in our hands, Soulstone included. We know the other is in custody of the Katanaka Trading House. I reported as much to you at the time. If you recall, you claimed that it was a political issue and that you-"

Lucius waved his hand dismissively. "Yesterday, a squadron of Guardians disregarded their rendezvous at the Half-Six Southern Gate and struck out into the Quarantine Zone instead."

"And arrived in the Burns without undue damage. They were serviced at the Glamis Street depot and have been stationed at the outpost there until an aircar can be spared to retrieve them."

"The foot platoon that those Guardians were to accompany on their patrol-"

"-had the good sense to remain at their Wallhouse for a replacement squadron before they began their assignment," Hoffman finished, his annoyance growing.

"You mean to say that they collected a day's worth of wages to cool their heels in the Howling Slums instead of carrying out my instructions," Lucius corrected him. "This morning, the Death Marshals in the Eastern Slums were expecting the assistance of four Hunters which they – and I – had been told would be helping them clean up the last of the undead wandering the area. I can only imagine where they might have gotten off to."

Hoffman reached up to massage his temples with one hand. "A lot of constructs haven't returned from the Eastern Slums," Hoffman said. "Behavioral tics in constructs are as routine as worn bearings or leaky connections, and we can't fully rule out the possibility of Arcanist interference. Zombies can pull a machine apart just as easily as a living, breathing person. Are you honestly surprised that some of them haven't returned?"

"Very little surprises me these days, Mr. Hoffman." Lucius abandoned his circular pacing and glided back into the shadows by the battlements and turned away. "Tell me, Charles... where is your brother these days?"

Hoffman's eyes narrowed, and at his side, his hands clenched into fists. He managed to keep his anger from spilling out into his voice, however. "If you have a problem with the way I'm managing my constructs, file a formal report with the new Governor-General when he arrives next week. Until then, I have more important work to do." He turned and let the metal legs of his walking harness carry him toward the doorway up ahead.

Lucius was a dozen yards away, but his voice carried clearly through the night. "I worry that you think you're getting away with it, Charles."

Hoffman didn't look back as he approached the stairs. His casualness to Lucius about how difficult they had been to navigate had been a lie. They were bloody murder, almost literally. Each step was so shallow that even a normal human foot would have barely found purchase, let alone the great metal boots of Hoffman's leg struts. Twice he had to turn around, extend his frame's upper limbs, and go down backwards, fitting his metal limbs into finger and toe holds like a rock climber. There was no question that Mattheson would have known how hard it would be for Hoffman to get up to the roof. That would have been the whole point to meeting with him there, to set him off balance.

As Hoffman reached the ground floor of the courthouse, his mechanical attendant fell into step behind him. It was a rounded little thing perched on delicate steel legs, and as they walked, he felt inside of it with his mind, letting the machinery sink its shape into his awareness as though it were displacing water in a basin. He could feel the tiny aethervox antenna inside it, and with a thought, gears clicked into place and sent a pulsing signal out to his Watchers.

He stomped through the crowded hallways of the courthouse, rudely pushing past Lucius' lawyers but waiting patiently for the guardsmen and their string of Union prisoners to pass him before continuing forward. One of them, a young boy with a fresh black eye, craned his neck upward and spit on Hoffman's face as he passed. Grimacing, he pulled out a handkerchief and wiped the unpleasantness away as the boy was beaten to the ground by a bald Guard captain. "Sorry 'bout that, Mr. Hoffman!" the captain shouted after him as Hoffman heard the snap of breaking bones.

Hoffman forced his eyes closed and let his harness carry him the rest of the way, not opening them again until he reached the courtyard. The fresh night air was a welcome change from the stuffiness of the courthouse, but the view – the fenced in yards, cloaked in shadow and lantern light, each packed full of Union members shouting about their rights – wasn't much of an improvement at all.

There was a metallic screech from overhead, and Hoffman glanced upward as the Watcher he had sent for descended from the darkened sky and landed in front of him. "Alright then," he said, holding his hand out toward the winged construct. "Out with it."

There was a clicking sound from within the construct's chest, and then a compartment in its chest slid open, allowing him to reach inside and collect the thin cylinder within. "Any luck?" he asked, knowing full well that the Watcher couldn't answer him.

Hoffman glanced down at the roll of 120mm film for a moment, as though hoping it would magically develop itself, then handed it off to his mechanical attendant to take care of. "Let's hope we have her this time."



Essie wasn't sure how the Guild had found her.

Sure, she had gone out on a limb a few days ago, but since then she had been following all of the normal Arcanist protocols for laying low and keeping out of sight. Street clothes, avoid any Union contacts or meeting spots, stay indoors and out of sight... she had done everything right.

The operative across the street was supposed to put a red flag in his window if he noticed any Guild Guard approaching the building, and she had made it a point of glancing out the window every twenty minutes or so just to make sure that she was still in the clear. It was tedious work, but there wasn't much else for her to do in the empty, second-story apartment.

She had just turned away from the window – coast clear yet again – when it exploded inward in a shower of glass. Essie had shrieked in surprise and was just starting to turn when the mechanical panther slammed into her like an iron fist. There was a burst of pain and a flash of light as her head hit the floor, and when she had blinked away the pain, the Hunter construct had locked its steel jaws around her fleshy neck.

It had taken the Guild Guard five minutes to show up and slap the control collar on her. Five long minutes that had felt like an eternity as she stared up into the construct's unblinking glass eye lenses. Even now, hours later in her cell, she could almost swear that she could feel those steel fangs pressing against her flesh. It was enough to send a shiver up her spine.

Essie sat up and stretched her arms above her head. Instead of putting her into one of the holding pens in the center of the Enclave, the Guild had tossed her into a cell in the prison. It was little more than a tiny box, barely longer than the wooden bench bed along one wall. Three of the walls were stone, and the fourth was a steel door with a covered viewing slit about as wide as three of her fingers. On the floor sat a basin of wash-water, a bar of soap, and a metal pail whose intended purpose was both obvious and loathsome. A small lantern, recessed in the wall behind sturdy metal grating, provided light. She assumed that she should be washing herself or working on an escape plan, but she couldn't find the energy.

Her stupor was broken by the steady sound of slow, metallic footsteps coming from outside her cell. Her first terrifying thought was that the Guild was going to let the Hunter finish off what it had started, but as the footsteps drew closer, it became clear that the footsteps were far bulkier than the hunters. One of the Guild's Warden constructs, then? Essie knew that they used them to patrol their work camps, so it wouldn't have been out of place to find one stalking the halls of their prison.

The footsteps stopped outside her door, and Essie pressed her ear against the steel door as she heard talking on the other side.

"...but she's not physically hurt?" The voice was masculine and cultured, with a strong British accent.

"Bit of a coin toss whenever one of your Hunters is involved, sir, no offense intended, but she looked fine to me." The second man's voice was deeper and rougher around the edges.

"And the control collar is in place?"

"Yes, sir. Shouldn't have any problems with this one's finger-waggling."

"Good show. If you would, please?"

Essie heard a jangle of keys, and she quickly hopped back and sat herself down on the wooden wall bench in about as nonthreatening a manner as she was able. When the door opened, she at first thought that the Guild had brought in some sort of construct to interrogate her. Then her eyes adjusted to the light and she realized who she was looking at. It was a man in an elegant, prosthetic framework of struts, braces, and calipers, all gleaming with polish from the metal boots all the way up the second arms and the shoulder frame. Slipped into the framework, like a prize to be won at a carnival, was a slender little man in a slightly dowdy brown suit, his bald head catching the lamplight almost as brightly as his frame did.

Essie knew him. Every engineer in Malifaux did.



She raised her hands defensively in front of her. "I don't know what you think I might have done, sir," she pleaded, "but I can promise you this, Mr. Hoffman. I have never in my life done anything to bypass the guidelines set down by the Amalgamation Charter." When he didn't answer, she tried to insist. "Never, sir, not ever."

"Jolly glad to hear it," Hoffman said distractedly. He turned his head toward the unseen guard. "Shut the door behind me and leave us. I will lock it back up when I am finished."

He waited until the cell's door was shut and the man's footsteps had faded to silence before reaching into his coat and producing a stack of photographs. He didn't even glance at them as he handed them over to Essie. "Miss Esther Sitch. Steamfitter First Class, Miners and Steamfitters Union for three years since your arrival in Malifaux, and an Arcanist operative for, well, I assume roughly the same length of time."

"Whoa, hold on," she protested, leaning back from Hoffman. The cell was cramped, and his mechanical frame had no option but to loom over her. "I'm not an Arcanist, Mr. Hoffman. This is all a mistake."

Hoffman gestured to the photographs. "The proof is right there, Ms. Sitch. Do take a look."

Essie glanced down at the black and white photographs. They were all of her, at an angle that seemed to imply that the photographer had somehow been above her. One showed her channeling bolts of electricity into a walking corpse that was clutching for her throat. Another had her bending down, helping a fallen woman to her feet with one hand as the other created a shimmering, semi-transparent dome of force around them.

She turned her gaze back up toward Hoffman, expecting a grin of victory from the man but finding only a blank expression. "So," she said, holding them back out to him as she spit out the words. "What now? Is this the part where you offer to spare me from the noose in exchange for rolling on some of my fellow Arcanists?"

Hoffman made no attempt to reach for the photographs. "Yes, it is. Specifically, the woman in the picture on the bottom of the stack."

Essie shuffled past more pictures of herself, these less incriminating than the others, including one that showed her looking out through the window of the safe house, until she found the photograph he was referring to. In it, a tall woman with long, dark hair was leading a hulking amalgamation of steel and sutured flesh away from what looked to be the corpses of three Guild Guards. Something about the woman's clothing was odd, and as Essie peered closer, she realized that it was actually some sort of clockwork device fashioned in the shape of a dress.

She stared at the picture for a moment longer, then shook her head and looked up to Hoffman. "Sorry, I've never seen her in my life."

"Truly?" His expression fell in disappointment as he took the pictures back from her and tucked them back into his coat. "A pity. Good luck with the gallows, Ms. Sitch."

He began to turn back toward the door, prompting Essie to leap to her feet. "Wait!"

Hoffman paused and looked back over the mechanical shoulder of his walking harness. "Did something prompt your memory, Ms. Sitch?"

Essie held her hands in front of her in a 'hold on' gesture. "No, no, I've truly never seen her before. But! I know people out there, other Arcanists, ones involved in recruiting. One of them has to know who she is, and I can talk to them and find out for you."

The sound of Hoffman's metal boots clomping on the stone filled the silence as he turned back to face her. "You have no issues with betraying your fellow Arcanists to save yourself?"

"Of course I have issues!" She scowled as she stared up at him, unwilling to back down from his imposing stature. "I'm also out of choices. Things have been uncomfortable since..." *Since Kaeris took over,* she thought. "...the Guild started these round-ups. Maybe this is just a sign that it's time to get out of the game."

She exhaled in resignation and sat back down on the bench, looking up at him. "Besides, Mr. Hoffman, you're one of the good ones, right? You and Lady Justice?" Her expression softened, betraying a bit of her fear. "In the three years I've been here, I haven't heard a word about you or the Death Marshals coming after someone that didn't deserve it. If that woman's messing around with amalgamation like the photo makes it seem, then she's more Resurrectionist than Arcanist in my book."

A pained look crossed Hoffman's face, but he forced himself to smile nevertheless. "Glad to hear it. It will take the rest of the day to push the paperwork for your release past Mattheson's lawyers, but I expect that everything should be in order by tomorrow morning. I will pick you up at five to eight."

Essie watched him turn and exit the cell, locking it behind him with a deafening thud. "Do try to behave until then, Ms. Sitch," he said, his voice muffled by the door, and then she could hear him walking away, his metallic footsteps echoing down the hallway.

She slumped back against the wall, trying to forget about the hunk of metal around her neck and force her shaking arms to be still. At some point, sleep did come to her, but her dreams were chilly and dark, filled with steel jaws and clomping footsteps.

Essie was released from her cell shortly before eight the next morning. When she stepped outside into the seemingly blinding morning sunlight, he was already waiting for her in a carriage. The door was open, and as she sat down, the carriage lurched into motion at some unseen signal.

"Good morning, Ms. Sitch. Your arm, please." Hoffman held out his hand as Essie looked nervously up at the bulky device held in one of the calipers of his harness. Outside the carriage windows, the spacious streets of Downtown clattered past at a steady clip. Essie cautiously held her arm out to Hoffman, and he took in his hands, turning it wrist-side up.

"This will only sting for a moment," he assured her.

"What will-" Before she could finish her question, his calipers darted down, pressing the bulky device against her arm. There was a sound like a muffled gunshot, and Essie swore in pained surprise. "The hell was that?!" she demanded, jerking her arm back from Hoffman and rubbing at the new bruise on her flesh.

"Insurance." The calipers rose, folding back above his harness into a less threatening position. The carriage had been customized for him, with a trough in the floor in place of a rear bench seat in which Hoffman stood in his walking frame.

Mechanical clamps had clicked into place to hold it secure, anchoring Hoffman at about the level a seat would have been. It didn't look terribly comfortable, but he didn't seem to mind. "The device that I injected into your arm is powered by a small fragment of Soulstone. It emits a steady, low-frequency signal that can be tracked by anyone who knows the frequency."

Essie glowered at him as she rubbed her hurting arm. "Not very trusting, are you?"

"Unfortunately, circumstances have limited my options." He expression was sympathetic. "Finding this woman is too important to be left to chance, and your Arcanist allies are unlikely to help you if you are wearing a control collar."

"Wait, so you're taking off the collar?" Essie sat up straight, the pain in her arm momentary forgotten. The bulky collar around her neck had been an uncomfortable burden, but it wasn't until she tried to sleep while wearing it that she realized just how much she hated it.

Hoffman nodded and motioned for her to lean forward, which she did. He placed his fingers on the device and concentrated, feeling the mechanisms inside it. He willed two of them to push together, turn, and slot into a third, and with a soft click, the collar sprung open. "Nevertheless," he said, pulling the collar away from Essie's neck, "I am trusting that we have enough of an understanding that you will not attempt to electrocute me with your powers."

"Yeah, we're fine," she reassured him as she rubbed her sore neck. "I know you hate the Arcanists and all, but I'm a woman of my word. I'll find out who the lady in the clockwork dress is."

Hoffman turned to stow the deactivated control collar in one of the carriage's side compartments. "You are quite mistaken, Ms. Sitch. I respect the Arcanist ideology of exploring one's magical talents for the purposes of self-discovery and improvement. It is the criminal applications to which those talents are often applied that I find distasteful." He turned back to her and folded his hands in his lap. "Truthfully, I would be taking this query to Viktor Ramos himself, had he not decided to make himself scarce since these past few weeks."

Essie felt her heart leap up into her throat at Ramos' name, but she still managed to feign confusion despite her surprise. "Ramos? He's the head of the Union, not the Arcanists. I'm not sure where you're getting your information, Mr. Hoffman, but-"

He held up a hand, silencing her. "Yes, I must be quite mistaken. In any case, I believe we are a few blocks from our destination. I will let you out here and wait for your return. Is that acceptable?"

The carriage came to a stop, and Essie nodded. "It might take some time, and there's no telling whether anyone here will recognize her or not. It might take a few days of asking around."

Hoffman closed his eyes and slowly shook his head. “Ms. Sitch, we do not have that much time. Please do everything in your power to expedite the process.” He reached to the side and opened the carriage door for her. “I will have a construct waiting at your former safe house. When you have found her, return there and I shall join you as quickly as I am able.”

Essie hovered in the doorway of the carriage, looking back over her shoulder at Hoffman. “Not a Hunter, alright?”

“Not a Hunter,” he agreed, smiling reassuringly. After she had hopped down and shut the door behind her, Hoffman leaned back in his harness and reached up to rub at his temples. “Hang in there, Ryle,” he murmured, letting his professional façade fall away to reveal the concern and worry underneath. “I’m coming for you.”

“I think you heard me,” Essie said, placing her hands on the table and leaning forward. “My name is Esther Sitch, but you might have heard Essie. Either way, I’m sick and tired of being bounced around like this.”

The foreman, a small man with thick muttonchops, leaned back in his chair and took a sip from his mug. The bar was Union, but there were only a handful of people inside, despite the lateness of the hour. “I don’t know what to tell you, Ms. Sitch. With the Guild still set on rounding up everyone with a Union card, everyone’s gone to ground. That goes for the legitimate workers and the troublemakers like you.”

Essie stood back up and ran a frustrated hand through her hair. She had been asking questions and turning over Union rocks for hours without much success. It seemed as if the other Arcanists really had gone underground. Heck, that had been her first instinct; if she hadn’t been jumped by that Hunter, she’d still be in hiding.

“Look,” she pleaded, trying another tactic. “I just need to find someone who can identify a member.” She withdrew the photograph Hoffman had given back to her from her jacket and set it down on the table, using two fingers to slide it in front of the foreman. “The Guild’s looking for her, and she’s in a lot of danger, and that’s putting other people in danger. I need to find her and get her out of the city before they do, or they’re going to find out all sorts of stuff about the people at the top that we don’t want them to know.”

The foreman stared at the photograph for a moment, then looked back up to Essie as he slid it back across the table. “Look, I didn’t say anything,” he began, glancing around the nearly empty bar to make certain that nobody was listening in, “but maybe you heard that Elliot Rosser up in Ridley might know something. Someone looking for him would do well to ask around the Steamfitter’s Hall in the Smelt district.”

Essie shoulders slumped in relief. “Thank you so much. I owe you one.”

The foreman shook his head and raised his mug to finish it off. “You don’t owe my anything, miss. I didn’t say a damned word.”



Ridley was one train ticket away. From the moment Essie stepped off the train, she could feel the tension in the air. Two cars ahead of her, a group of about a dozen Guild Guard had started to disembark from the train, only to find Ridley's citizenry waiting for them with thrown bottles, brandished pipes, and loud shouting. Essie adjusted the collar of her jacket to shield her face and slipped away just as the guardsmen began to retreat back into the train.

She was surprised to see so many Union people walking the streets of Ridley, but as she made her way to the Smelt district, it began to make more sense. The sides of the buildings were plastered with pro-Union propaganda and flyers, some of them less subtle than others. Many of them were the same ones that she had seen all across Malifaux in the past, but some of the newer flyers depicted a tough-looking black woman with raised fists, almost like a trained boxer. "Union Brave, Union Strong!" one proclaimed. "Strong Like Ironsides!" read another. It didn't take a genius to figure out where most of the Union's people had fled in the wake of the Guild's round-ups.

When she arrived at the Steamfitter's Hall, Essie pushed through the crowd gathered outside and toward the building, only to be cut off by a blond man with a full beard. "Steamfitters only."

Essie dug in her jacket for her Union card and held it up for him to see. "Esther Sitch. I'm First Class. Do you know where I can find Elliot Rosser?"

The blond man looked the card over and stepped aside to let her pass. "Third door back on the right, ma'am. Glad to see that the Guild hasn't snatched you up yet." She mumbled a half-hearted agreement and continued into the building.

Elliot Rosser turned out to be a tall man with a heavy belly and a series of chins hidden under the brown fur of his beard. He had been working on reconstructing some sort of Soulstone engine in a room that looked like a workshop, but after she had introduced herself, he clasped her hand in a firm handshake. "Welcome to Ridley! You must not come through these parts much, huh?"

"No," she admitted, shaking her head. "I've ridden the train through a few times, but mostly I keep to the city."

"Nothing wrong with that," Rosser said, chuckling. "Bad times down there, from what we're hearing. The Guild's gonna have a hard time cracking Ridley open, though! We've got recruiting stations all across the city. Plenty of people that aren't happy with these round-ups and looking to fight back any way they can."

Essie nodded as she looked around the room. "Yeah, about that. I heard that you're the person to talk to about putting a name to a face."

Rosser was immediately on guard. "Might be, might not be. Depends who's asking?"

In response, Essie held out her hand and splayed her fingers, letting electric sparks dance between them. "Let's just say that I'm someone in the know."

He whistled at the demonstration of magical power. "That's good enough for me. What do you need?"

She produced the photograph and handed it over to him, but after a moment of looking it over, he shook his head and handed it back. "Nobody I recognize. Want to ask the boss about her?"

Essie felt her heart skip a beat. "*He's here*?"

"The new boss," Rosser said, correcting her. "She's been taking stock of our resources for the past few weeks. If there's anyone who can tell an Arcanist at a glance, it's her."

Rosser led her back out into the hallway, into a side room, around a wooden partition, and down a flight of stairs so narrow that he had to turn side-on to fit, and even then, his belly scraped against the wall. The stairs led to a crypt-like basement, and after a quick check to make sure they were alone, he struck a match and held it against the rough stone wall, against a chunk of rock that looked like any other. A moment went by, then another, and then a straggly, spidery symbol swam into visibility as through the match had sweated it

out of the stone. There was a grinding sound as the wall swung open to reveal a long stone hallway.

He sent her on alone, with only the dim light at the end of the tunnel to guide her forward. She placed her hand against the rough wall and followed it to its end, an enormous vaulted chamber that seemed to have been carved from the stone itself. It was large enough that it could have been the station for any of the Guild's biggest trains, and as Essie stood on the staircase overlooking it all, she could hardly believe her eyes. It was lit brighter than day with great clusters of blue-white electric lights, glittering tool racks, and dozens of constructs moving this way and that, carrying heavy metal beams, wooden crates, or objects she was at a loss to give any sort of proper name to.

Essie slowly descended the stairs, still in awe at the massive workshop, and nearly had to jump back as a knee-high silver spider construct skittered up to her. It turned its glowing blue eye up toward her, make a whirring sound, and then took a few steps back from her.

"...do you want me to follow?" she asked, and was rewarded with another whirring sound as the spider construct turned and began clattering forward through the mechanical chaos, weaving back and forth around other, larger constructs and stacked crates. Essie did her best to keep up, but it was difficult not to be distracted by the flamboyant machinery around her. At one point, her steps slowed to stop as she found herself staring at a disquietingly human-looking steel torso that was hanging by chains from the ceiling. The machine was fitting a crank into a socket in its belly, and as she stared, it paused in its winding to look up at her with blank eyes. Then the spider construct was beside her, poking her thigh with a sharp metal leg, and she was following it once again.

It finally came to a stop next to an intimidating blonde woman in a long, red jacket. The spider made its whirring sound again, and Anasalea Kaeris looked up from the machine she was building and pushed her goggles up onto her forehead. "Essie Sitch," she called out, setting her welding torch aside as she stepped forward to shake Essie's hand. "We had heard that you got picked up."

"Temporarily," Essie lied, forcing a relieved smile that she didn't feel onto her lips. She had always been uncomfortable around Kaeris. To her, Viktor Ramos was a visionary and a political genius, the sort of man who remade the world in his image regardless of whether or not the world was ready for it. Next to him, Anasalea Kaeris was little more than an attack dog. "I slipped away before they got a collar on me. I guess they didn't know who they were dealing with."

Kaeris just stared at her, and for a moment, Essie was sure that she had seen through her lies. When the blonde raised her hand, Essie flinched, expecting a wave of fire that would incinerate her to ash on the spot... but instead, Kaeris only adjusted her goggles. "Good job of it. Staying here in Ridley, then?"

Shaking her head, Essie reached into her jacket and produced the now-familiar photograph of the woman in the clockwork dress. "No, I'm trying to find this woman. The Guild's looking for her, and I'm trying to get to her before they can catch her."

"Why do they want her?" Kaeris took the photograph and looked it over, frowning slightly.

For once, Essie didn't have to lie. "I have no idea, but it can't be good."

The other woman made a vague sound that might have been an agreement, then handed the photograph back to her. "Well, she's not one of ours, but she's done some work for us in the past. Freikorps, from what I remember. You'd probably have better luck talking to Von Schill about it."

"Thank you, I'll do that."

She tucked the photograph back into place and started walking away, only to be stopped in her tracks by Kaeris's voice calling out after her. "Watch out for the Guild, Sitch. They've got spies everywhere these days."

Essie glanced back over her shoulder, heart pounding in her chest, but Kaeris had already pulled her goggles back over her eyes and turned back to her welding project. Not wanting to tempt fate any more than she already had, Essie hurried back the way she came. The workshop was far less entrancing this time around.

"I'll be honest," Essie said, looking around the room. "This wasn't exactly what I expected."

She had slept on the train ride back to Malifaux City and had spent the morning hunting down a Freikorp agent and arranging a meeting. When she had shown the photograph of the woman in the clockwork dress to the agent, however, he had dropped it like it was hot. He claimed that the questions she was asking were above his pay grade and that she would have to speak with someone higher up the chain of command than him to get the answers she wanted.



That had led to a somewhat terrifying blind-folded walk through the Quarantine Zone alongside the recruiter, who made certain to impress upon her, multiple times, just how rarely outsiders were allowed to visit the Freikorps Compound. At one point she heard distant gunfire and her escort grabbed her arm, forcing her into a crouch and bidding her to be quiet. She wasn't sure how long had passed before he grabbed her arm and told her to keep moving, but it felt like an hour.

Finally, he announced that they had arrived and removed her blindfold, revealing a fortified compound comprised of blocky, multistory buildings in a rough rectangle. The center of the complex was an open field, and as the agent marched her past it, she saw and heard dozens of men and women in the distinctive armor of the Freikorps practicing their marksmanship on captive zombies. The stench of gunpowder hung in the air almost as heavily as the powdery dust that seemed to be everywhere, and she was glad when they finally entered one of the buildings.

Now she was seated in a completely typical office, complete with file cabinets and a diploma on the wall from some Earthside university. Seated across from her, on the other side of the room's large, knotwood desk, was a dark-haired woman wearing spectacles with her hair pulled back into a prim and tidy bun. It was impossible not to notice her resemblance to the woman in the photograph.

"I had a Gatling gun hanging on the wall, but they took it away," the woman joked, smiling in the manner of a polite bureaucrat. "Hannah Lovelace. I'm the Chief Archivist here." She paused just long enough to get Essie's name. "I'm told that you've been asking about my sister."

"It would certainly seem so," Essie said as she placed the photograph on the desk. "I've been told that she's one of the Freikorps, but when I mentioned it to your man, well..." She motioned to the room around them, as if to say 'here we are.'

Hannah glanced down at the photograph, sighed, and climbed to her feet. "Care for a drink?"

Essie sat up a bit straighter. "Bourbon, if you have it."

"A southerner?" She cast a curious glance back at Essie as she made her way over to a small cabinet and removed two glasses and a bottle. She poured a generous amount of the amber liquid into each glass, handed one back to Essie, and then reclaimed her seat. "I never had a taste for the stuff until I attended university in Oxford. I apologize for the dust; it gets everywhere around here."

Essie was already halfway through her drink. "Mmm... nothing to worry about. Good stuff." She licked her lips, then lowered the cup into her lap. "So... your sister...?"

Hannah stalled by taking a long sip of her own, then swirled the remaining whiskey in her cup for a few silent moments longer. "While my sister Anna is technically on the active member duty roster, she has... let us say, fallen from grace. I do not expect her to return to the compound any time soon, so if you are looking for her..." Her eyebrows raised in curiosity. "...presumably as a matter of revenge?"

"No, nothing like that," Essie assured her, shaking her head. "I'm just a middle man for someone else."

"Oh?" Hannah leaned back in her chair. "Who might that be?"

Essie unconsciously rubbed at the bruise in her arm where Hoffman had implanted his tracking device. "Ahh... I would rather not say, Ms. Lovelace. It's sort of a confidential situation."

"May I remind you, Ms. Sitch, that you are in the middle of the Quarantine Zone, surrounded by a great many heavily armed men and women who have, on multiple occasions, killed people simply because I asked it of them?" She took another sip from her drink as she watched the other woman.

"...that is a very good point," Essie conceded with a nervous laugh. "Charles Hoffman. He snatched me out of the prison and set me after her like one of his Hunter constructs. I don't have any love for the Guild, but... well, frankly, it was either this or the noose."

"Hoffman?" Hannah pressed her free hand to her face and took a deep breath, releasing it in a sigh of frustration. "She did something to him, didn't she?"

"I'm... not sure, ma'am." Given her previous comments about the mercenary army outside, Essie felt that it was in her best interest to be as respectful as possible to the mercenary leader. "I don't have much in the way of details, and I don't think that he does, either. Until I walked into this office, that photograph and a tenuous connection to the Freikorps were the only leads I had."

"You'd be wise to stay out of this one if you can," Hannah warned her. "My sister is convinced that Ryle Hoffman stole her research back when they were in university together. I have no idea whether it actually happened or if Anna was just trying to discredit someone she saw as a rival, but either way, the administration sided with Ryle Hoffman and Anna was expelled. She's been nursing a grudge ever since."

Essie turned her half-filled glass in her hands. "I don't understand... Ryle Hoffman?"

"Charles' older brother. He died coming through the Breach, well, it must have been four years ago by now. It was in all the papers, even all the way back in Oxford." She shook her head. "Terrible shame. The man was a genius. I'm told that back in England, they declared a day of national mourning when they found it."

"That can't be true." Essie blinked. "How did Anna take the news?"

Hannah shrugged. "I have no idea. By that time, we were well and properly estranged, after..." She shook her head. "Some family business that isn't relevant to the matter at hand. But if Anna's in Malifaux and a Hoffman is involved... "

Essie nodded dutifully. "I just want to give him what he wants and forget about this entire business."

Sensing that her meeting was coming to a close, she took the opportunity to finish off the last of her bourbon. “I hate to ask, but... do you have some way I can get in touch with Anna? Maybe I can warn her away from the city until Hoffman gives up on her?

“Or tell Charles Hoffman where he can find her, so that he can slap her in chains and throw her into the darkest pit of the Guild’s dungeons?” Essie started to protest, but Hannah cut her off before she could start. “Frankly, that is the option I would prefer. My sister is dangerous as few others ever hope to be.”

Hannah finished her drink, then set the glass back down on her desk and stood. “My sister’s last paying assignment was with a Resurrectionist. The deal was arranged through a talking vulture, of all things, so I cannot give you any more information than that.” She fixed Essie with a meaningful stare. “I hope that stresses just how little you want to be involved in this matter.”

Essie stood as well. “Yes, ma’am. Thank you for your time, ma’am.”

“I’ll have someone show you out.” Hannah walked around the desk and opened the door for her. “Oh, and Ms. Sitch?”

She paused, halfway through the door. “Yes?”

“Tell Mr. Hoffman that if my sister ends up in the darkest Guild cell he can find for her, I will personally ensure that he receives a hefty discount the next time he wishes to employ the Freikorps.”

Essie returned to her safe house to find the construct – a Watcher and not a Hunter, thankfully – waiting for her. Being in the same room where she had been attacked only a few days earlier made her nervous, especially when she happened to glance in the direction of the shattered window, so she sent the flying construct swooping out to signal Hoffman and spent the rest of her time waiting for him on the curb.

It took less than an hour for a carriage to arrive, but when it did, instead of a human driver, there was a bulbous little construct perched atop the front seat. She was disappointed to find that Hoffman wasn’t waiting for her inside, however, and after a long moment spent trying to decide whether or not she trusted a construct to steer horses down a crowded street, she eventually gave up and climbed inside.

Thankfully, the construct proved her concerns unjustified, and soon she was back in Hoffman’s office, seated backwards in a chair with her arms folded over the back of it.

“Anna Lovelace? I believe I recall my brother mentioning her...” Hoffman was behind his desk, still strapped into his walking harness.

“That’s what her sister Hannah told me. She also said that she had been working for the Resurrectionists and that she really hated your brother. I got the impression that the Freikorps had lost track-”

Hoffman raised a hand to stop her. “They told you that she hated my brother?” There was a new tenseness in his voice, but she couldn’t tell if it was due to excitement or fear.

“Yeeaah, so...” Essie sat up, resting one hand on the back of her chair as she rubbed her neck with the other. “Hannah said that it had something to do with your brother stealing her research back when they were both attending the same university.”

The scowl that appeared on Hoffman’s face looked very out of place on his otherwise studious features. “Ah yes. He did mention an accusation when he was still in school, but my brother would never steal someone's work so I didn't give it much thought.”

Essie raised her hands to quell the anger she heard in his voice. “I never said that he did, just that Anna accused him of such. It must have been just a story, ‘cause they kicked her out over it.”

There was a brief silence, then Hoffman sighed. “My apologies, Ms. Sitch. This is very useful information. It explains... quite a bit, honestly.”

“Just why are you trying to find this woman?” She had returned to leaning forward on the back of her chair.

"She... took my brother," he admitted, his shoulders slumping with the revelation. "The other person in that photograph of Anna, the one with the mechanical augmentations, that... that is Ryle."

Essie's eyes widened with surprise, and her mouth pursed into a small "O" shape. "She dug up your brother and turned him into... that thing? I guess she really did hate him. I'm... I'm really sorry about that, Mr. Hoffman."

Hoffman had raised a hand to the side of his face and was slowly rubbing his temple. "I appreciate the sympathy, Ms. Sitch, but my brother is not among the undead. He suffered an accident coming through the Breach four years ago, and desperate measures were required to save his life. That is how I first met Viktor Ramos."

Essie glanced at the open office door, then leaned over and pushed it shut. "...sure." She clawed around for a way to change the topic. "So she... what, used some sort of mind-control spell on him? Cause in the photograph, he didn't seem to be putting up much of a fight against her."

Hoffman nodded, absently, and began tapping a pen against his desk as he mulled the problem over. The tap-tap-tap filled the growing silence like the tick of a flawlessly precise pocket watch, until every tap felt like a nail being driven into Essie's ears.

"Right, so." Essie hopped up to her feet, pulling Hoffman out of his thoughts as he looked to her. "The way I see it," she continued, "is that I've done a pretty good job of finding out who this woman is for you. You tapped me for my Arcanist connections, and this has moved well beyond the sphere of their influence and into Resurrectionists and amalgamations and family histories and frankly, I don't care what else." She held out her arm, the one with the fading bruise from where he had injected her. "How about we pull this thing out of my arm, you write that pardon for me, and we both shake hands and go our separate ways?"

"I have one more request for you, Ms. Sitch, and then our business is concluded." He gestured to the chair, and Essie sank back into it with a groan of exaggerated suffering.

He flashed her a look of sympathy, then leaned forward, the servo motors in his walking harness whirring quietly as he folded his hands together and rested them on his desk. "I am aware of a certain former member of the Elite Division who recently spent some time infiltrating the Resurrectionist organization, and I would like for you to speak with her regarding this Anna Lovelace. It is a long shot, but it is possible that she knows something or overheard something about where I can find her."

Essie ran a hand through her hair in impotent frustration. "Right, sure. Why don't you just send one of your Watcher constructs out to fetch her?"

"As I said, Ms. Bellerose is a *former* member of the Elite Division. In all likelihood, she will not take kindly to Guild personnel – living or mechanical – showing up on her doorstep, and we have a much better chance of convincing her to cooperate if we do not unduly agitate her in the process."

"Wait..." Essie frowned as something clicked in her mind. "Elite Division? I thought that was just something the Union made up to scare new recruits. You're telling me that it's real?"

Hoffman grimaced. "Unfortunately so, Ms. Sitch. Unfortunately so."

Emeline Bellerose had been surprised when Essie showed up at her door, but she had nevertheless opened it and invited her inside. "I hope you don't mind if I pack while we talk," the French woman had said as she pulled a suitcase out from under the bed. "I'm curious how you found me, Miss...?"

"Sitch," Essie replied as she stood awkwardly near the door. The apartment was small and cramped, consisting of just a desk and a small bed, both of which were piled high with uneven stacks of books and drawing supplies. She wasn't sure where the woman managed to sleep. "One of Mr. Hoffman's flying constructs snapped a picture of you as you were entering the building. He got me in pretty much the same way."

Emeline smirked as she held up two dresses, one dark purple and one blue. "It's a marvel what espionage is becoming in the modern era, is it not? Pretty soon, even the greats like Margaret Belle may be replaced by machines." Making up her mind, she set the blue dress aside and folded the purple one into her luggage. "Since you are not here with a compliment of guardsmen, I assume that he wishes for something in return for my freedom?"

"More or less." Essie shoved her hands into her pockets, watching as the blonde woman packed with practiced speed. "I'm supposed to tell you that he doesn't intend to tell anyone where you're hiding. This is supposed to be him asking a favor and not some sort of extortion."

"I think it's precious that he believes there is a difference." She snapped the suitcase shut, then walked to the edge of the bed, pushed aside some books, and demurely sat, gloved hands folding in her lap. "Well, darling, let's hear it out, shall we?"

"He's looking for his brother, Ryle," she blurted out, blinking in surprise as the words left her mouth. "Someone named Anna Lovelace took control of him, and Hoffman's trying to get her back. He wants to know whether you have any idea where she might be."

Emeline smiled in a way that Essie found oddly disarming. "And does Mr. Hoffman intend to keep my location a secret?"

"I believe so," Essie heard herself saying. Even though she had just met the woman, she couldn't quite shake the feeling that she was completely trustworthy and needed to know everything Essie could tell her. "He's just interested in finding his brother. You're the only lead that we have left. You and this photograph." She pulled the latter from her jacket and held it out for Emeline to take.

"Oh my. That is quite the position you have put me in." Emeline scooted over and patted the bed next to her, and before she had consciously realized what she was doing, Essie had crossed the room, sat down next to Emeline, and handed her the picture. This close to the other woman, Essie could detect the scent of a floral perfume masking something fainter and less pleasant.

"Ah, the woman in the clockwork dress." She smiled as she looked the picture over, then handed it back to Essie with a soft sigh. "I suppose I can help out this once. Mr. Hoffman has always been the very picture of a gentleman, even if he is English. Still, I shall not hold that against him if he seems willing to overlook my own unfortunate condition."

Essie's thoughts felt slow, as if she were trying to find them in a thick fog, but something about that statement was setting off a distant alarm bell in her head. She glanced over toward the other woman, and when Emeline met her gaze, she finally noticed that Emeline's eyes were clouded over like those of a corpse. How did she not notice that before? "You're... you're an und-"

"-unfortunate victim of a dreadful condition," Emeline finished, pressing a gloved finger to Essie's lips to silence her. "A secret that I trust we can keep between ourselves?"

Despite the distant screaming in the back of her mind to leap up and run from the room, or to call up a lightning bolt to defend herself against the undead monstrosity pretending to be a person, Essie felt herself nodding in agreement.

"Delightful." She removed her finger, patted Essie affectionately on the cheek, and then stood up and returned to her suitcase. "I do not have much contact with the Resurrectionists any longer, but there are still a few who 'keep me in the loop,' as the Americans say. Just last week, I overheard one of my acquaintances that I still keep in touch with – lovely girl, a bit rough around the edges but still quite personable despite having a hole in her chest – mention that a new colleague of hers had taken up residence in the wreckage of the *Majestic*. A colleague who, as it turns out, had the most peculiar clockwork dress."

"The *Majestic*?" It was still difficult for Essie to think, but the name seemed familiar to her. "Is that... the Governor-General's landship? The one that he used to spearhead the New Reclamation movement?

"For all the good it did him. The man always did have a flair toward the dramatic. I suppose that it's only appropriate that his life ended in an explosion." Emeline pulled the suitcase from the

bed and strode toward the door, opening it and turning back to face Essie. "I do hope that what I told you helps Mr. Hoffman. You'll be so kind as to remind him about that favor that he owes me now? Oh, and I still owe the landlord for the past two weeks of rent; I trust that you can take care of that on your way out?"

Essie found herself nodding again. "I'll take care of everything, Ms. Bellerose."

Emeline rewarded her with a pleased smile, and Essie returned it. Her smile gradually faded as the mental fog began to clear away from her thoughts, but by that time, Emeline was long gone.

With a sigh, Essie tucked the photograph back into her jacket, stood up, and headed outside into the afternoon light. She barely even noticed as she detoured toward the landlord's office and started digging in her pocket for her wallet.

Essie slumped back into the chair in Hoffman's office. "I could really use a drink after that."

"Never while on duty," he chided her, setting aside the paperwork he had been filling out. "Did Ms. Bellerose tell you anything useful?"

There was a sigh of annoyance from the younger woman. "Yeah, but I think she has some sort of... I don't know, influencing powers or something. From the moment I saw her, it was like she was more in my head than I was."

Hoffman nodded. "Yes, her file said as much. Did she tell you anything useful? Did she know where to find Ms. Lovelace?"

Essie shot him a dirty look. "Thanks for the heads up, boss." Sitting up, she took a deep breath and relayed everything Emeline had told her back to him. "...turns out she's undead, too. I suppose that was in her file as well?"

"I believe there was a mention of it." Hoffman tidied up the stacks of paper on his desk and started toward the door, his metal feet clomping heavily on the floor. "Thank you for your service, Ms. Sitch. You can pick up your papers of pardon from the front desk. I believe that I can handle everything from here."

"Whoa, hold on!" Essie hopped up and jumped in front of him, blocking the door. She bared her bruised arm to him. "What about this thing you put in me? You said that you'd take it out!"

A thin smile appeared on Hoffman's lips. "That was a small fiction on my part, Ms. Sitch. I apologize for the deceit, but I simply did not have the time to ensure your loyalty in a more traditional manner. You have provided me with a valuable service in a difficult time, on a venture with which I would have struggled on my own."

Essie stared down at her arm, suddenly feeling very stupid. "...oh."

"Now, if you will please move out of the way, it would be unfair to involve anyone else in this matter from this point forward." He pushed past her and began clomping down the hallway, only to find Essie hurrying to keep up with him. "Was there something else, Ms. Sitch?"

"Are you really going out there alone?" She pushed past an accountant who shouted rudely after her. Essie didn't even glance back. "If this Anna is really a Resurrectionist, then she's going to have who knows how many undead things skulking around that wreckage."

Hoffman turned a corner, sidestepped a sneering lawyer as best he was able, and continued stomping down the hallway toward the front doors. "The Death Marshals are already stretched thin dealing with the recent incursion into the Eastern Slums, and trying to round up the Guild Guard or the Witch Hunters would take too much time. Time that my brother may not have. I have already wasted too much time trying to find him."

Essie ducked past a group of bureaucrats who were being rudely stripped of their briefcases by Guild officials in uniforms she had never seen before. "Fine, then I'll come with!"

The statement stopped him in his tracks, and he glanced down at her in confusion. "Perhaps I was not clear before, Ms. Sitch? Our arrangement has come to its conclusion; you no longer owe me anything."

"Yeah, well..." Her insistence had surprised even her, but now that she was thinking about it, she didn't regret making the offer. "I figure, if you run out there and get yourself killed, the Guild's just going to think that I had something to do with it, won't they? And knowing the Guild as well as I do, they'd probably just fill your position with some idiot who was more concerned with throwing people into prison than in trying to keep the city safe for the good people out there."

Hoffman stared at her for a long moment. Then, his lips curled up in a genuine smile of affection. "Ms. Sitch, I am truly touched at your sentiment."

Essie rubbed awkwardly at the back of her neck as she lowered her eyes. She could feel herself starting to blush. "Don't get all emotional on me or anything. You're still gonna owe me and the... the people I work for a favor or two after this is all said and done."

He nodded and started back down the hallway. "I am certain that Viktor would be quite proud of your growing political acumen, Ms. Sitch."

"He doesn't..." She threw her hands up as she chased after him. "Would you *please* stop saying stuff like that in public!"



Despite not bothering to requisition any human reinforcements, Hoffman did not intend to travel into the Quarantine Zone alone. As they were waiting for his carriage to arrive, a Warden construct – absconded from the nearby holding pens – stomped over to join them, its restraint claw flexing as though it were eager for a fight.

Once they were in the carriage – once more piloted by Hoffman's round mechanical attendant – they picked up more recruits as they sped from the Guild Enclave toward their destination. Two Watcher constructs swooped down from the sky in front of them, screeching loudly and sending the crowds in the streets diving for cover as the carriage clattered through the created opening without stopping.

A few miles later, they passed two Guardian constructs that were waiting for them on either side of the road, their oversized swords and shields raised like an honor guard. They fell in behind the carriage, their metal footsteps making a clatter as their long strides kept pace with the speeding the carriage. At one point, a loping Hunter dashed past them, taking point along with swooping Watchers to help clear the street. Essie caught sight of it through her window and shivered despite herself.

With such a retinue in tow, they didn't exactly catch the Barricade watch by surprise.

It took them just under two hours to reach the hastily built Quarantine Zone fortifications whose demolition two months earlier had marked the beginning – and the abrupt end – of the late Governor-General's New Reclamation. The original time-locked clockwork gate that all the Quarantine Zone entrances boasted was still in place, but the Barricade walls to its left had been hastily rebuilt from where the titanic *Majestic* had originally plowed through them.

The gate was shut as it always was, but there was a mob of Guild guardsmen in their distinctive red and gray uniforms gathered in front of it. As the carriage and its accompanying constructs pulled to a stop in front of the gate, a bearded guardsman hefted himself up and peered into the carriage's window, making both Hoffman and Essie jump.

"No access, sir, orders have just come through on the 'vox. Supposed to tell you to kindly return the constructs to wherever you borrowed them from, Mr. Hoffman." He looked back and forth between the two of them. "Orders from some Captain with the sort of clearance I've never seen before."

"Thank you for passing that on," Hoffman replied. "Now, open the gate."

"Sir, I explained why I can't do that. Besides, even if I wanted, it's time-locked. We can only open it at two in the morning, no matter what orders you or anyone else wants to toss around."

"Are you being quite serious?" Hoffman asked. Essie heard the clicks and hisses of the constructs outside shifting on their feet, and then some shouts of surprise from the guardsmen. Glancing out the window, she saw an enormous, brutal Peacekeeper construct bearing down on them at a canter, scattering the people in the street with shouts of alarm. She looked back to Hoffman and noticed his hands starting to flex and work against one another in his lap.

"Sir," the Guard said, his voice growing nervous as he watched the Peacekeeper approaching through the opposite window. "You know orders is orders an' all, even with what's going on back at the Enclave. We're just trying to keep on the right side of things, despite all the stuff we're hearing. New officers, new orders, all sorts of chatter over the 'vox of people giving orders and others countermanding them. Then just an hour ago, young Nicolosi, he came riding out with a new set of stamped orders and some gabble about half the brass being stood down."

He gave a pleading look to Hoffman. "So please sir, all I'm asking is that with all the confusion going on right now, please don't make things worse for us by forcing the issue."

"I am on the clock and acting within the full boundaries of the Amalgamation Charter," he replied, his voice firm. "I do not have time to argue with you. Open the gate."

"Sir, as I said..."

"Oh, for the love of..." Hoffman growled, and to Essie's astonishment, he actually bared his teeth in anger. "Alright, alright," he murmured, falling silent and closing his eyes.

"Here now, what's he-" the guardsman began before Essie motioned him to silence. She didn't know either, but she knew absolute concentration when she saw it.

Hoffman's breathing started to become more noticeable. His hands shook a little. He moved his head from side to side, as though reading a billboard or a chart, and his hands opened and closed.

Essie became aware of a sound. It was a loud, mechanical ticking from somewhere outside that grew into a clicking and then a clattering. The guardsmen outside let out a shout of surprise, and then the enormous metal bolts holding the clockwork gate in place drew back with loud, metallic thuds and the gate swung open on its oversized hinges.

When the guardsman looked back to Hoffman, the amalgamation director was pointing a neatly manicured finger directly in his face. "You," he demanded. "Off."

The guardsman fell back out of the carriage as if Hoffman's finger had been a pistol. "Bloody useless," Hoffman murmured under his breath, and then his attendant snapped the reigns of the carriage. It accelerated so quickly that it actually jerked Essie back into her seat. By the time she had sat back up and looked out the window, the gate was behind them and they were in the Barrows district of the Quarantine Zone.

The ground was an open plain of collapsed and shattered masonry, a testament to the passing of the Governor-General's massive landship, and the carriage began to jounce heavily over the debris and broken ground. Hoffman was anchored in place via his walking frame, but Essie bounced back and forth from one end of the bench seat to the other. She finally managed to brace herself as best she could as the *Majestic* came into view.

Hoffman's throat worked as he tried to swallow. "I am truly glad you are here, Ms. Sitch. If the worst has come to bear and my brother is no more, I am not certain that I could bear it alone."

Essie knew that she should say something, but she found herself at a loss for words.

"Well," Hoffman said. "Enough of that. Let's get on with it."

The carriage rolled to a halt and the Guardians stepped aside, letting them climb out of opposite doors and step down their separate sides of the carriage. Essie's eyes scanned the gloomy outline of the *Majestic*, and she balled her hands into fists to keep them from shaking.

She had never seen the landship in its brief glory days before it was destroyed, but she had seen pictures and heard plenty of stories. In truth, it was difficult to reconcile the wrecked thing ahead of her as the gleaming metal juggernaut that had once cowed settlement after settlement into renewed obedience of the Guild's will. It was hard to make a coherent mental picture of it at all. She kept seeing the enormous, shattered machine in pieces; a crooked set of giant treads here, a pock-marked metal skirt there. The landship was a crooked, leaning silhouette against the darkening night sky, its lines distorted by darkness and the internal explosion that had finished it off.

Essie was so intent on scanning the area for movement that she didn't even notice the woman standing on the *Majestic*'s blast-skewed rear deck, her hands folded demurely on the railing as she looked down at them. Her hair was long and dark, but her eyes were hidden behind a pair of spectacles that reflected the moonlight. "Hello, Charles. Come for your brother, I take it?"

Hoffman's movements were smoother now, almost graceful as he stepped forward. The Guardian protecting him kept pace, ready to interpose its shield between him and the necromancer at a moment's notice. "Yes, I have. Anna Lovelace, I presume?"

She nodded her head. "I assumed that it would just be a matter of time before you showed up to collect poor Ryle. I really was surprised, you know. I thought he had died in the Breach accident. Imagine my surprise when I opened a newspaper in Bristol and saw a photograph of the monster you turned him into on the front page." She began walking along the railing, keeping one hand on its surface. "I didn't know for sure, of course. It wasn't until I lured him here and removed his faceplate that I knew for certain. It still took me a few moments, of course, what with the state of decay his face is in these days."

Hoffman's face was twisted in equal parts pain and rage. "If you return him to me, you can still walk away from this, Ms. Lovelace. I don't care about whatever it is you're doing out here. I only want my brother."

"Oh, no, I don't believe that I'll be doing that at all." She shook her head in the manner of a disappointed schoolteacher. "After everything he stole from me, can you imagine what a thrill it is to have him obedient to my every wish? The great Ryle Hoffman, finally brought low as a-"

She was interrupted by a shout of anger, but surprisingly, it came from Essie and not Hoffman. Anna barely had time to register the danger before the electrical bolt struck her raised arm in a flash of bright light. In that illuminated moment, they could both make out the elaborate dress she wore, a clockwork sculpture of dark, dull metal that encapsulated her arms and torso before expanding into a series of bell-like hoops below her hips.

Hoffman cast a surprised glance toward Essie and her outstretched hand. Essie just shrugged. "I hate monologues."

Anna cursed and flung herself into an open hatch as a large shape reared up from some nearby wreckage. It was twice Essie's height and was no single corpse but a collection of them in one, segments of a human torso stapled and strung together along steel cables. It was topped with a human head, stripped almost to the bone but with its eyes still intact and wobbling behind crude steel caging. Its arms were bundles of severed human arms, harnessed together and somehow working in dreadful coordination. The arms ended at the wrists, where their hands had been replaced with heavy, spiked chains.

Above it, through the landship's upper windows, more creatures appeared, their once-human bodies hacked apart and recombined into hideous jigsaws with salvaged engine parts and scrap metal. Some swung apelike down the pitted metal side of the wreckage, others scampered down it head-first like lizards or spiders, and some limply leapt from the windows and landed on the ground with echoing clangs.

Hoffman was already in motion, striding toward the deck, his graceful lope a weird echo of the Hunter pacing alongside him. The Guardian kept pace beside him, moving with a smooth choreography that Essie had never before seen in constructs. On the other side of her, she heard a hiss of steam and saw the peacekeeper charging toward the towering undead monstrosity as the Warden followed up behind it.

Then her vision was blocked out as the Guardian nearest her swung its shield in front of her face. A moment later, something clanged off the metal, heavily enough to knock the Guardian's arm backward for a moment. Essie flinched back by reflex as the Guardian stepped toward the undead thing that leapt down at her from the wreckage. It was a potbellied corpse with its dead lips stretched in a grin and cleaver blades grafted to the stumps of its forearms; its legs were half-curled under it in a complex mesh of springs, cables, and struts. Essie's nose filled with the sickly stink of it as it tried to scramble up and slash at her legs.

The Guardian knocked it back with a kick, then swept its shield around, sending the dead creation flying backward. It slammed into the side of the *Majestic*, slid to the ground, and started to stand up again, but Essie finished it off by flinging a bolt of white-hot electricity at it, electrocuting rotting flesh and delicate machinery alike.

She caught movement to her left and turned as a second undead thing launched into a high leap off the landship's railing, but the Guardian was quicker than she was and split it in two midair. It fell apart in a gush of foulness, its rusty-spiked fingertips scrabbling at the gravelly ground.

Nearby, two more of the undead horrors vaulted down onto the Peacekeeper, clawing for a weak point. It tilted to the side, exposing them to the Warden at its side, who slammed its restraint claw against each one in turn, smashing them between its steely fist and the Peacekeeper's outer shell.

Essie motioned for the Guardian to move forward, and as she advanced under the cover of her shield, she saw one of the creatures leap straight at Hoffman, but the crack of a firearm pierced the sounds of fighting and killed the abomination in the air. Hoffman's little construct attendant was standing on the roof of the carriage, extending a spindly limb that terminated in a pistol mount.

Even with the assistance from the attendant, Hoffman was in trouble. He was at the center of a churning brawl between his Guardian, his Hunter, and a mob of mechanized zombies. They were circling and ducking, trying to get past the Guardian to reach him with a rusty snipper-claw or a sharpened hook. As she watched, one ducked a lethal sword-swipe and clambered onto Hoffman's walking frame like a child trying for a piggyback ride from an unwilling parent. Strapped into the frame, Hoffman had no escape... but a moment later, the dead thing convulsed madly on his shoulders as its metal joints locked up. It fell to the ground, where the Guardian smashed it into pieces beneath its heavy steel foot.

There was no way through to him that Essie could see. She blasted another of the creatures that drew close to her with lightning, but the thought of being swarmed over and picked apart for pieces was unbearable. The shower of sparks lit up the darkness as one of the undead creatures drove its drill-arms into the shield of her Guardian, anchoring itself on as it tried to reach for the construct's head. The Guardian tried beating the abomination with its sword, but it was lodged on there too tightly. Essie stepped forward to deal with it, but then it opened its jaws and a bright yellow-white light blazed out: the thing had the nozzle of a gas torch set in its mouth where a tongue had been. It leaned into the Guardian's face as if for a kiss, melting its helmet-like head into a hot slag. The destroyed Guardian teetered for a moment, and with a flash of inspiration, Essie threw her shoulder into its back, pushing it forward and onto the scrambling creature who was still stuck in its shield.

To her right, the Peacekeeper was engaged in a brutal battle with the giant undead amalgamation. The undead giant had torn a forelimb off the hulking construct and had its chains wrapped around the machine's chimney pipes. The Peacekeeper was clawing at it with its remaining arm, and the Warden was as its side, brutally pummeling the giant's side with its large restraint claw.

"Esther!" It was Hoffman calling out to her. He had pulled his goggles down over his eyes and was wielding a glowing torch in one hand, its head a dazzling white spark in the gloom. As she watched, he jammed the torch into the eye socket of one of the creatures, and in the pulsing streak of the after-image it left across her vision, she saw the thing's head glow like a lampshade. Smoke curled from its ears and mouth, and it sagged and collapsed. "Go after her, Esther! Find Ryle! Find him and help him, but be careful!"

Essie took off toward the landship, electrocuting two more of the scrambling undead creatures as she reached the remains of a ladder, jumped up to catch the bottom rung, and pulled herself steadily upwards toward the rear deck. As she was gaining on the top, she felt it jolt as something grabbed onto it from below, and turned to look down, electricity already crackling across her fingers as she prepared to blast the overeager abomination. Instead of a rotting visage staring back at her, however, she saw the rounded top of Hoffman's attendant climbing up the ladder with fussy, insect-like precision.

With a shake of her head, she climbed the rest of the way up and then helped the attendant over the railing. "Still doesn't trust me enough to go alone, eh?" She smirked at the machine, which just stared back at her blankly. "If you were human, that would have been endearing. C'mon."

She could see the open hatch that Anna had retreated into and darted toward it, the mechanical attendant clambering behind her as quickly as it was able. Ryle Hoffman had to be in here somewhere. If nothing else presented itself, she at least wanted the satisfaction of wiping a certain haughty expression off a certain pale, chilly face.

The hatch led to a short, metal compartment like that of a steamship, but the bulkheads were ribbed with heavy steel struts and everything was coated in a fine grit that Essie hoped wasn't human ashes. There was a sickly, greenish-white light ahead of her, but she still moved down the passage more by touch than sight.

Essie knew better than to trust an apparently open passageway. She had built any number of alarms and deadfalls for Arcanist compounds, but none of that prepared her for the howl that came out of thin air in front of her face. She staggered backwards as the howl dropped into a hissing snarl and something clutched at Essie's neck. The chill took the strength from her legs and she fell against the wall, sliding down it.

She could see something now, the faintest outline of half a human form made of misty light, withering from the belly down into a meaningless twist of corpse-glow. The whole, foul shape jerked like a captive balloon, waxing and waning between a bare skeleton and a full-fleshed corpse in a rhythm like breathing. There was an echoing report as the mechanical attendant behind her fired off a salvo of bullets at the thing, followed by the clang of those bullets ricocheting off the walls of the narrow hallway and zipping past her head. "No bullets!" she shouted back at the attendant as she scrambled away from the spirit.

Her hand and knee hit something in the gloom, and as low as she was to the ground, she could hear the faint tick and click of clockwork gears. A filthy chill touched the back of her neck as the spirit wrapped its insubstantial hands around her.

On instinct, Essie hammered at the sound, felt something break like bone, and hammered harder. The ticking faltered and the wraith above her moaned. Essie grabbed at the source of the ticking, shoved her hand as deep into it as she could manage, and turned away as she unleashed her magic into the heart of the device, frying it out in a bright white flash of electricity. The sound died, and with a burst of foul air from above her, the grip on her neck vanished.

"There goes the element of surprise," she murmured as she pulled herself up to her feet. In the flash of light, she had seen a glimpse of a clockwork array covered in etched and painted symbols, wired to a human ribcage and skull. She kicked the apparatus in disgust, motioned for the attendant, and walked forward.

The greenish-white light she had seen from the end of the passage came from half a dozen lanterns, all floating about in midair with a stately disregard for gravity. Each had been secured to a little metal tray underneath it, in which mechanisms twirled, crackled, and glowed, producing the light or flight or both.

The space they lit up was a gloomy cavern that made up the guts of the *Majestic*. To Essie, it looked like some titanic explosion had eviscerated the landship, leaving its corpse with this hollow heart. Looking up, she could see layers of crumpled metal and dark openings where the great machine's internal levels had been blown away by the explosion. She shivered as the attendant clicked its way up to stand beside her.

A dozen paces away stood a scorched and splintered wooden desk and a leather-upholstered chair that had no doubt been salvaged from some other compartment. Anna Lovelace stood at the desk, directly under one of the floating lamps, briskly loading books and papers into a battered Gladstone bag held open by a swaying corpse in a dirty and bloodied convict's uniform. Strangely, the clockwork dress she wore did not drag or hang from her but seemed to float around her, as though it were suspended from an invisible crane that moved it weightlessly around with its owner.

A handful of other zombies stood around Anna, dressed in the same convict uniforms or in the red and gray of the Guild Guard, all of them holding sacks and trunks. Echoes of the battle outside reverberated in through the open ceiling.

For a moment, Essie thought that the commotion in the passage had gone unnoticed until Anna turned, still with the same eerie, weightless grace, and made the tiniest gesture with her arm. There was a chorus of clicks and crackles as the motion aligned the components of her dress just so, and then Essie's

feet left the floor. She hung in space for a second, eyes wide and arms windmilling, and then shot backwards, wailing in surprise. The same force had snagged Hoffman's attendant, and together, the two of them were sent crashing into the far wall and then onto the misshapen metal floor.

Essie gripped at her side, wincing in pain. She was certain that at least one of her ribs was broken.

"I don't intend to risk everything I've worked for in a fight to the death," Anna told her, as emotionlessly as if she were noting the time. "Consider that payback for the lightning bolt." She motioned to her zombies, sending them and the luggage they carried down the shattered hallway, away from Essie.

There was a gunshot from the mechanical attendant at her side, and a bullet chimed off Anna's metal sleeve and punched through the heavy book she had just picked up. Behind her elegant, rimless glasses, Anna's eyes narrowed. She gestured toward the persistent machine, but this time, instead of flinging it backward, the little construct was strung up in the air in a screaming vortex of spectral arms and jaws that ripped at its casing and wrenched at its limbs. The phantoms spun faster and faster until they coalesced, forming a lashing, serpentine body that constricted its coils around the attendant's battered casing. It crashed to the floor, rolling and struggling with its ghostly attacker, and then Anna's clockwork dress whirred again, catapulting it up through the ceiling and out of sight.

Essie hadn't watched it go. What she had been watching instead was Anna's dress. While her position within the Union was primarily a fictional cover for her Arcanist activities, she was still a steamfitter, and she had been watching the way the dress floated around her and thrummed with mechanical power each time Anna drew upon its power. Whenever she gestured with her arm, the moving parts in the skirt accelerated to a blur, which meant that the power generator had to be housed somewhere else... most likely in the small of her back, just above her hips. It was the only place where a generator that strong could fit.

She pulled herself up into a crouch, still clutching her side. "Wait!" Essie winced in pain at the shout. Punctured lung, then, too. "What about... Ryle Hoffman? Is he even still here, or was... was that all just empty boasting?"

Anna paused, arm already stretched out toward Essie, and then lowered it as she smirked. "Oh, no." She glanced at something in the distance and made a 'come here' gesture with her hand. "Ryle? Please come here."

Essie could hear slow, ponderous footsteps growing louder, and then the hulking brute from the photograph stepped into the green-white light. Its flesh was pale and sheened in dirt, riven with seams and bright metal studs but firm and unrotting. Its arms terminated in weapons: one a military-model Gatling gun and the other a powerful steel claw. For a moment, Essie thought they were in mounts fitted over the thing's hands, until she saw livid scar tissue along the boundary of metal and flesh. The creature's face was a mangled and scarred mess, and despite looking for it, she saw no resemblance between its twisted visage and that of Charles Hoffman.

"You see? He's all mine now." Anna turned toward Ryle, as if to admire her trophy. In the instant that she exposed the back of her dress, Essie shouted and poured everything she had into a burst of lightning, aiming it right at what she could only guess was the suit's power regulators.

The bolt struck home with a brilliant flash of light, the power flooding into the clockwork dress' power systems and overloading them in a single instant. Anna screamed as she and Ryle both lurched a dozen feet into the air, fell halfway back down, and then hung suspended in the air, tilting from side to side. There was a rattling flurry and a thump of imploding air as everything near her was dragged upwards toward her, and for a moment, Anna hung at the center of a miniature solar system of orbiting books, tools, and junk.

Essie's ears popped as the ball of compacted air around the other woman boomed back out, and then the litter crashed back to the floor along with Anna and Ryle. They had no sooner hit the ground than Essie was in motion, pushing aside the agony

in her chest as she snatched up a fallen metal bar and wound up to bring it down on the other woman's head. Anna's eyes widened in surprise, and she flicked a finger toward Ryle, who lifted his Gatling gun and unleashed a deafening salvo of bullets into Essie's chest.

There was a brief sensation of intense pain, and then falling. Essie didn't even feel herself hit the floor. She tried to gather enough energy for another blast of electricity, but her fingers just twitched in the growing pool of blood beneath her. Everything seemed to be rushing in on her, and the world quickly faded to darkness.

Hoffman had arrived just in time to watch his brother murder Essie.

He had been following her progress through the eye of his mechanical attendant as his constructs battled with the undead outside. He had seen Anna draw upon the mechanisms in her clockwork dress to create a minor gravity well and had seen her summon terrifying spirits from another world before she tossed the attendant out of the ceiling. He could still feel it on the fringes of his perception, dragging itself to him with its one remaining arm.

He knew that Essie was in danger without his protection, but he hadn't been able to get there in time. He had tried. He had failed. His walking frame stomped into the room as Anna and Ryle pushed themselves to their feet. His fists were clenched tight at his sides and cords were standing out on his neck. "You... *monster.*"

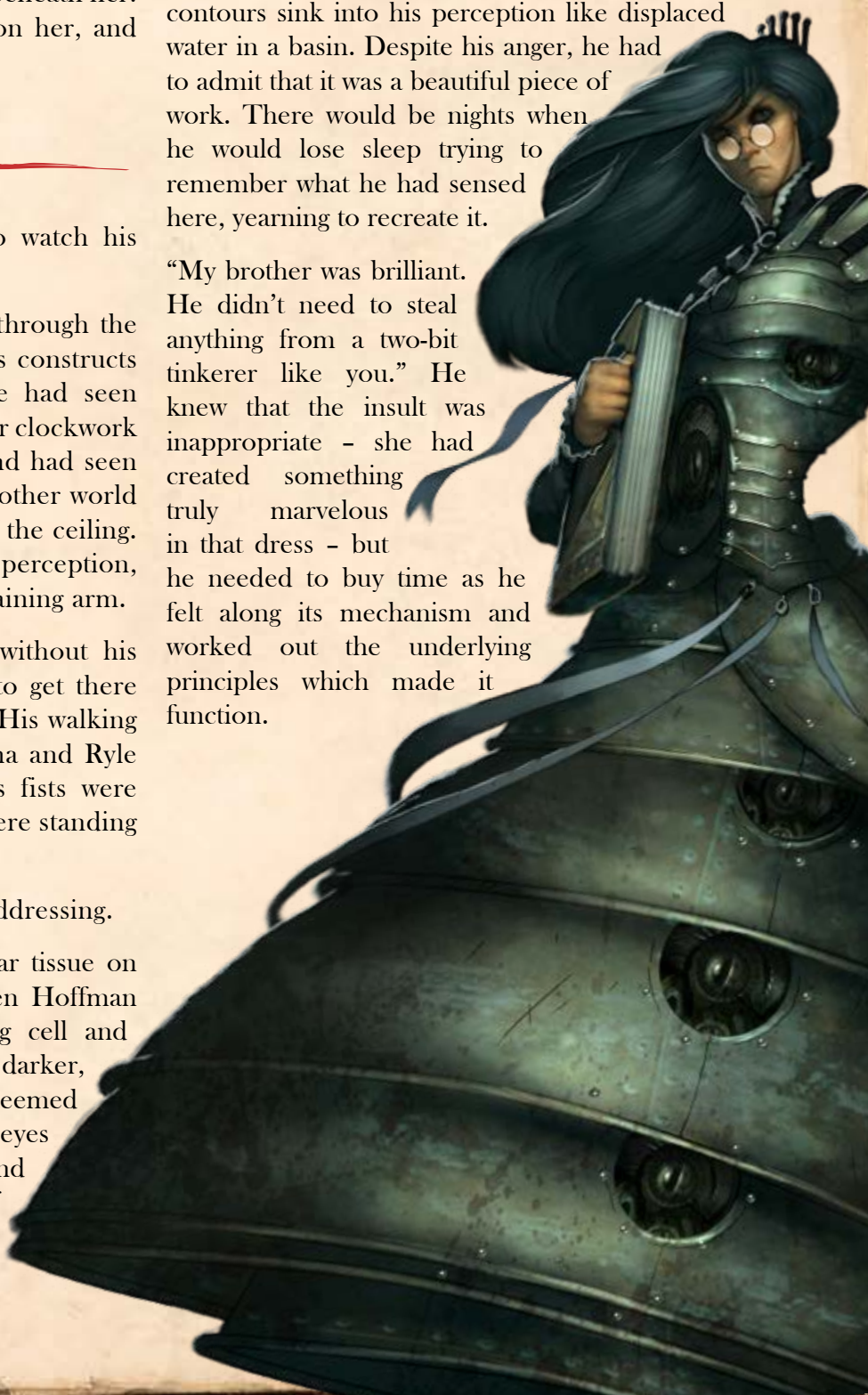
It was unclear which of them he was addressing.

His brother's face was vacant. The scar tissue on Ryle's face looked different from when Hoffman had last visited his brother's sleeping cell and helped to clean him. Now it was darker, tinged with gray, more ridged, and it seemed to stretch further over Ryle's face. His eyes were sunk deeper into their sockets, and there were odd, geometrical patterns of scars up his ribs and hips that Hoffman didn't remember. They weren't battle wounds, but he couldn't think of a surgical purpose for them. "What did you do to him?!"

"I improved him," Anna explained as she checked the servos in her dress's arm. "He stole my work and had me discredited by the university so that nobody would listen to my complaints about his thievery. Now, the work that he so desperately wanted is part of him. Don't you find the irony amusing?"

Charles stomped forward, feeling out the mechanisms of her dress with his mind, letting their contours sink into his perception like displaced water in a basin. Despite his anger, he had to admit that it was a beautiful piece of work. There would be nights when he would lose sleep trying to remember what he had sensed here, yearning to recreate it.

"My brother was brilliant. He didn't need to steal anything from a two-bit tinkerer like you." He knew that the insult was inappropriate – she had created something truly marvelous in that dress – but he needed to buy time as he felt along its mechanism and worked out the underlying principles which made it function.



Anna's eye twitched as she stepped toward him, her hand raised. "Ryle? Shoot him."

Hoffman had been expecting Anna to draw upon the power of her dress and was prepared to stop such a thing from happening. He hadn't given any thought to the idea that Ryle would attack him. It was inconceivable. Yet, as he saw Ryle bring up his Gatling gun, Hoffman instinctively reached out with his mind and seized control of his brother, forcing the already-spooling barrels to lock into place.

And then, his eyes widened in horror at what he had just done. "No..." His power only extended to machines. Not to living creatures. Not to *people.*

The full enormity of the past four years hit him like a crashing wave, and a terrible revelation gathered like a storm at the edge of Hoffman's awareness. There had always been hints that his brother was still in there somewhere, that he and Ramos had saved some fraction of Ryle's mind even as they saved his body. Sometimes, Ryle would turn his head unexpectedly as Hoffman entered a room, or when he was at his most hopeless, Ryle would sometimes place a clawed hand on the shoulder of his walking frame, as if to quietly reassure him that he was still a person. To reassure him that there was still some fragment of Ryle hidden within the mass of undead flesh and mechanical parts that now housed his mind.



But it was a lie. It had been him all along, subconsciously controlling Ryle like a puppet to assuage his own guilt at surviving the accident. He didn't want to lose the only family he had left, so instead, he had created a puppet out of his brother's remains to comfort himself.

Essie had been right when she had first seen the photograph of Ryle in her cell. He was no better than a Resurrectionist.

Anna watched dispassionately as Ryle stood there, pointing the barrel of his gun-arm harmlessly at his brother. "Useless," she sighed, shaking her head. "You really did turn him into something pathetic, Charles. It would have been better if my device had killed him." Her brow furrowed as she considered something. "Had killed you both, really."

The comment snapped Hoffman out of his spiraling thoughts. "Device? What do you mean?"

"His accident traveling through the Breach?" Anna smiled, but it was as cold as steel. "You never figured it out, did you? I flirted with him at the train station. He didn't even remember me. I think that hurt more than anything else. After everything he stole from me, he didn't even remember my face."

Hoffman clomped toward her, his hands once again clenched at his side. "What device, Anna? What did you do?"

She splayed her fingers out in front of her, as if to look at her nails. "I slipped an aetheric resonator into his pocket. Just a little thing, perfectly harmless until you cross over into another dimension. Then it gathers all the aetheric energy and releases it in a buildup of electrical energy and... "She blinked, her attention drifting to Charles. "Well, you were there. You tell me what happened."

"I see." A pause. "I'm going to kill you, Anna." His words were carefully measured, focusing his anger like a blow torch. He no longer needed to figure out how to safely disarm the dress. Now, he just needed to break it. That was much, much easier.

Anna tilted her head. "You are unarmed, Charles. What is it that you think-"

Her words were lost in the booming thrum that suddenly welled out from the machinery in her dress. She looked down, eyes wide, as the plates in her skirt began to accelerate of their own volition. The air around her began to shimmer and distort, and Hoffman spared a thought to march his brother – no, the thing that had once been his brother – out of the way.

He felt a bizarre vertigo in the air as the gravity around them fluctuated, and he closed his eyes to keep his concentration. He poured every ounce of his anger, his hatred into the machine, flipping safety switches and redundant power controls open like latches on a suitcase. Anna's outline blurred and shook as she spun, trapped within the dress as the gravity well around her – the one that the dress' safety systems had been designed to protect her against – pulled her in every direction.

The floor of the landship buckled beneath them, groaning as the metal distorted beneath the force of the energies being unleashed above them. Once again, books, tools, and furniture were yanked through the air toward her with splintering force, and a cyclone of air howled around her as it picked up ash and dust.

"This is for my brother!" Hoffman shouted into the screaming blur that had once been Anna Lovelace. Screws and bolts joined the whipping cyclone as they tore away from the dress, and Hoffman caught a glimpse of Anna's eyes, which were full of pure, reptilian hatred. Through great force of will, Anna grabbed hold of her left arm, forcing it back against her own stomach as she glared down at Hoffman. "This isn't over!" she shouted, before clicking open a latch on the wrist.

Hoffman had sensed the concealed blade in the dress's arm and deemed it mundane and uninteresting, and it was... from a purely mechanical viewpoint. As the blade sprung out from its sheath and pierced Anna's stomach, however, he caught a glimpse of magical runes flaring to life along its edge. One moment, Anna was in front of him, and then there was a flash of yellow light and she was gone, as if magically whisked away to someplace else.

Without the machinery to power it, the suspended objects fell to the ground in a great clatter. Hoffman winced as his ears popped, and when it was clear that it was over, he stomped closer and peered up at the space where she had hung a moment earlier. "Magical blade," he murmured, mentally cursing at himself for not considering the possibility that the blade had been enchanted. He had watched her summon spirits to attack his attendant. He should have known that she might have worked something similar into her dress.

He had a consuming urge to beat his fists against the wall and scream until he was hoarse, but instead, he just hung his head and motioned to Ryle. "Fetch Ms. Sitch," he commanded, his slow, heavy footsteps taking him in the direction of the hatch. He could sense the constructs waiting outside; they had dispatched the rest of the undead abominations. One of the Guardians and the Hunter had fallen, he noted, more out of habit than any conscious thought, and the Peacekeeper would need some significant repairs, but they had won the day.

As Ryle's footsteps joined his own and he looked into the shocked, dead face of Esther Sitch, however, he didn't feel like much of a winner.

In fact, he felt as if he had lost everything.

Lucius Mattheson had vanished from his office for a few days. The situation unfolding between Lilith and the returned Titania was certainly full of opportunities and possibilities, but both of them required no end of assurances that he was on their side and theirs alone. He enjoyed the little subtleties of his performances.

It thrilled Lucius to watch Lilith try to work out just what sort of Neverborn he was whenever they met, and he always made certain to drop a few clues to lead her mind down the wrong path. He knew that it aggravated her, but she was too proud to admit that she didn't know, and he was enjoying the game too much to spoil it for her. It had almost been too easy to bait her this last time – she was distracted and seemed to want little more than repeated pledges of his loyalty.

He lied as he always did, assuring her that he was loyal to her and her alone.

Titania was an entirely different challenge. She knew *what* he was, or at the very least suspected, but she didn't yet know just how dangerous or crafty he actually was. Similarly, however, he was still in the process of feeling her out and seeing which of her weaknesses could be exploited, which was exhilarating in and of itself.

In contrast to the subtle manipulations of those two powerful women, the thought of dealing with the new Governor-General was almost enough to bore him to a yawn. He had provided a bit of amusement in arriving early – Lucius had returned to the city to find the courthouse closed and the holding yards emptied out – but that was only a minor inconvenience, the discordant sounds that were to be expected whenever one first picked up a new instrument.

As he strode into the Governor's Manor, he debated just how long it would take to bring the new Governor-General into line. His head would already be swimming in stories and rumors about Malifaux, of course, just as the last one had been. This time, however, he would arrive and see the effect that Lucius' name had upon *his* staff and officers. Their first private meeting, private but for Lucius' scribe, would see him assessed and the first tuning conducted. There would be another private meeting each day to refine his understanding of the instrument, and ten days from now, Lucius would be playing the new Governor-General like the Stradivarius he kept locked in his quarters.

It was all so mundane and droll that he barely found it interesting. It was fortunate that-

"Sir?" Lucius froze as a guardsmen dared to step in front of him. He immediately committed the man's face to memory; he knew exactly who he was sending out along the western wall during the next hunter's moon. Lilith could owe him a favor for sending her ever-hungry children a snack.

When it became clear that Lucius wasn't going to comment, another guardsman stepped forward and took the first by the arm. "That's Secretary Mattheson," he whispered, pulling the first man aside. "He's on the list."

The first guardsman's face lit up in understanding as he looked Lucius up and down. Lucius, who had a cat's loathing of indignity, submitted to this with silent, fuming contempt. "Jolly good then, sir. My instructions are to direct you straight to the Crown Room. His Excellency is expecting you there."

"I shall be delighted to meet His Excellency's expectations," replied Lucius. "As should we all."

"This way, sir." The guardsman motioned for Lucius to follow him, and he fell into step behind the loathsome man, despite being able to navigate his way around the mansion blindfolded.

There were more people milling about the mansion that he didn't recognize. Lucius got one or two curious looks but no salutes, no doffed caps or nervous wishes of a good day. The only familiar faces he saw were on a handful of non-commissioned officers clattering grim-faced down the stairs while pulling on caps and gloves, and two teams of specialists fussing over the wall sconces. Lucius had ensured that the mansion's sconces were filled with candles and old-fashioned lamps. He liked shadow. The new lamps were electric: bright, angular things that fully illuminated each room. Lucius paused in the brisk white glow of one, glanced up at it, and then moved on.

They stopped outside the doors of the Crown Room, his escort stepping aside to allow him admittance. Lucius had always favored the Crown Room. Inside, the room boasted a high ceiling, a roaring fire, and deep armchairs. Tall, stained glass windows at the end of the room admitted tinted light but offered no view of the outside world, and even the light that entered was dimmed by the heavy, overhanging eaves beyond. He had taken many meetings with the previous Governor-General in there. It was only fitting that he and the man's replacement would sit together for the first time in the same room. It had the trappings of a ritual to it, and there was strength in such things.

He stepped to the double doors and pushed them open. A dozen faces turned and looked at him.

A voice barked out from the end of the long, paper-scattered conference table under its bright, electric lights. "Who's that, then? Ah, Mattheson, is it? Good, come in. There's a spot for you at the end there, you see it. Edward, place the Secretary's papers there for him, will you?"

Lucius glided into the room, more catlike than ever now that his guard was up. "Your Excellency. You were not expected until next week. I had anticipated that we would meet in private to begin our work. If you will just allow me a short moment to make the arrangements-"

"Unfortunately, you missed the meeting I scheduled with your office two days ago. Nobody seemed to know where to find you or when you would be back. Terribly unprofessional, that." Governor-General Franco Marlow stood up from the head of the table and approached him. He was a little below medium height, wiry and compact with a face as sharp as a hawk's and a dark-eyed gaze that was just as fierce. His deep brown skin was weather-beaten and lined, and the lines were not kind ones. His glossy black hair, dusted gray at the temples, was pulled straight back from his head into a ponytail.

He gripped Lucius' hand and shook it without smiling. "I'm glad that I arrived early, for if I hadn't, who would have been running the city in your absence these past few days?"

"I-"

"No time to waste, Mattheson. Come and get caught up." Marlow stalked back to his seat. "You heard what happened to London? San Francisco? Relations with Constantinople? Things are going to hell Earthside ever since that blasted Burning Man showed up. A strong, stable Malifaux settlement is more important than ever." He pulled his chair up to the table and then glared at Lucius. "Sit, Mattheson, sit! Don't worry, my staff are perfectly polite to bureaucrats when I remind them to be." A dutiful murmur of laughter went around the table.

"Your staff, Your Excellency...?"

"My personal staff. You might have noticed one or two of them about." Another dutiful laugh from the table.

Lucius slowly sank down into the chair. It was one he recognized. He had had it shipped from Earth as part of a set that had furnished a dining room elsewhere in the mansion. The dining room where he had been in the habit of meeting with his staff.

A sheaf of papers was put on the table in front of him. Lucius stared at them, then pushed them aside as he leaned forward and spoke to Marlow in a firm voice. He had to reassert his control. "Shall we begin with a matter of pressing concern? Charles Hoffman, tasked with overseeing the Guild's constructs, has become insubordinate and has taken to using Guild resources for his own personal goals." He paused for effect, but he found that it was not the effect he intended.

"Charles Hoffman?" Marlow's eyebrows raised in disbelief. "Without him, the Guild might have fallen apart these past two months. While you were off gallivanting who knows where and wasting Guild resources on rounding up and executing every Union worker you can find – and we will *certainly* be touching upon that bit of bad decision making in this meeting – Charles Hoffman was making sure actual work got done." The Governor-General paused. The effect was far more chilling.

"On to legitimate business," Marlow continued. "We've been hearing about this mess with Ridley that you caused, Mattheson, and coming up with ideas on how to deal with the council there and get them back on friendly terms. You and my predecessor really fouled up this whole Union situation from the start, but what's done is done, I suppose."

He turned a page, scanning ahead on his agenda. "After that, Benecke is going to brief us on the recent battle between that mob of walking corpses and... oh, for the love of... do you really call them 'Death Marshals'? Whose brilliant idea was that?" Governor-General Marlow looked up from his paperwork and scowled. "Are you really going to wear that blasted mask for the whole meeting, Mattheson?"

Lucius snapped the pen he had picked up in two.

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Ripples of Fate

Malifaux 2E

Wyrd

RIPPLES OF FATE

CHAOS HAS ENGULFED MALIFAUX.

The Governor-General is gone, undone by his attempts to become a Tyrant, and the Guild is reeling from the blow. As it struggles to keep the opportunistic Arcanists and dreaded Resurrectionists at bay, an ancient power reawakens deep within the Badlands, gathering the scattered Neverborn to her side in preparation for the coming war with the Tyrants… and then, the scouring of all human life from Malifaux.

Amidst the chaos, daring bandits take advantage of the Guild's distraction to line their own pockets with Soulstones, Gremlins soar through the sky in a stolen airship, and the Ten Thunders turn to a power they can neither understand nor control in order to expand their holdings.

And through it all, a shrouded woman rides slowly through streets clogged with bodies, taking measure of the dead and recruiting the strongest as soldiers for the coming war…

Ripples of Fate expands the world of Malifaux, bringing seven new Masters into the battle between fate and mortal willpower. New models, new stories, and new scenarios provide a glimpse of how each Faction intends to capitalize upon the vacuum of power left behind in the wake of the Governor's death.

The battle for control of Malifaux has begun.

Wyrd

No longer do you have to trust the fickle fate of a dice roll. In Malifaux you use cards, a Fate Deck, as you lead your Crew to victory with strategy, tactics and resource management, and if that isn't enough, you can Cheat Fate.

Looking for scalability? Malifaux has it. Jump in with nothing more than a single Crew for a quick and brutal fight, or take your time to gather allies and mercenaries and field a much larger force. Each character brings unique skills and abilities. But don't waste a single Soulstone; it may be your final mistake.

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