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Games

UNBIDDEN



A ROLEPLAYING GAME OF HORRORS, SECRETS, AND LEGENDS.

UNBIDDEN

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We all see our own version of reality, and it is never exactly the same as another's. In fact, reality is a nebulous thing; we never really see it. We can only try to perceive it through our own flawed perceptions. But what if the reality you once knew suddenly shattered into a million tiny fragments of half-truths and false impressions? As if everything you once knew as gospel suddenly fell apart, leaving you with a veracity that is equal parts horrifying and awe inspiring.

Imagine having your life ripped out from under you and replaced with the horrifying truth that the world is going to hell in the proverbial hand basket, and you're the only one who can do anything about it, provided you know the Secret Stories. But you're unprepared for a life of running, fighting, and surviving. You're still holding on to a ruined idealism that everything is white-picket fences, that good will prevail, and everyone has an equal shot at living the good life if they work at it.

Such is the life of the Unbidden men and women who once held station in life, but suddenly had it taken away. Their exultant lifestyle has been replaced by a growing despondency and they are cursed with a task to serve on the front lines of a Secret War against the dark horrors that feed off the most ignoble and dangerous of human emotions and proclivities: jealousy, hate, anger, fear, lust. To make matters worse, the Unbidden do it alone. Once cursed with a life of unnatural persistence, they cannot count on society to lend them a hand. There's no going to the police; how would you explain the fact that you've just witnessed the brutal murder of a homeless man, who died at the hands of some perverse unnatural creature? How do you tell your friends and family that your dreams have dissolved into recurrent nightmares so vivid that they take possession of your soul and subdue its faculties?

It is this overwhelming fear and notion of powerlessness and amazement that eventually fosters the Unbidden's endurance and tenacity, ensuring that the truths survive regardless of their own fate; it is a duty felt deeply by them all.

THE SECRET STORIES

Unbidden is a role-playing game of horror predicated on legends and myths, more commonly known as the Secret Stories and perpetuated by a displaced people seeking a sense of mission. They live in a world where violence and death are commonplace, and where it is more to one's advantage to grovel before the powerful and shun the weak, and where salvation is nowhere to be found.

But unlike traditional myths and legends, at least as we know them, the Secret Stories of Unbidden are as real as the sky is blue, as a multi-faceted allegorical narrative and a state of being that encompasses three core fundamentals: Truth, Mythos Lore, and Endowments. What you will not find in Unbidden are the traditional urban legends that fuel peoples imaginations with tall tales of kidney thieves, alligators living in sewers, and serial killers with hooks. Rather, these myths and legends in Unbidden are truths transmitted from person to person by oral or written communication and only adhered to by a certain group of people. The Secret Stories typically comprise outlandish, terrifying, and supernatural events, and serve as a way for the Unbidden to impose meaning upon their existence and fuel the mystical Endowments they call their own, for in knowing the Secret Stories, the Unbidden are given a fighting chance against ancient, dark forces.

ROLEPLAYING

The goal of each player is to act out his or her character's personality, abilities, and personal demons. It is the same as performing in a play, except that each player picks his own lines; a form of improvisation. One player must be the gamemaster, who acts as referee and narrator. His job is also to project the proper atmosphere, advance the plot, and assume the role of all characters in the game who are not controlled by the other players. If you would like more information on roleplaying or gamemastering check out:

► <http://roleplaygames.about.com>

► <http://www.roleplayingtips.com>



THE TRUTH

The first step to learning the Secret Stories comes from discovering the Truth. That is, to learn that reality is a manufactured conjuncture propagated by demons hiding in shadow who feed off of humanity's base emotions and fuel discord within the world, leading to its slow and eventual death. Once an Unbidden discovers the Truth his consciousness is opened to a higher state of being and he is imbued with knowledge of Mythos Lore, a mystical/supernatural force that provides one with an ability to bend reality to his own means, within a defined ideology based on a particular set of beliefs. As part of this core fundamental, an Unbidden also learns of the Secret War and those who fight it.

THE SECRET WAR

The Secret War is a two-fold battle—a war of personal sacrifice and a fight for the fate of humanity. To some that may sound like a cliché, but for the Unbidden it is a scary reality and, in most cases, an unwelcome and unsolicited responsibility.

The Secret Stories tell of demons who found doors to our world and, once here, discovered a place ripe for perversion and corruption. Mankind is their plaything, serving as reservoirs of delectation and nourishment, for they are only satiated by dark human emotions. And much like the Secret War, the demons gateways are equally inconspicuous: abandoned refrigerators, mirrors, dark alleyways, steam tunnels, and shadowy corners all serve as conduits for their infernal visitations.

The war, its beginning partially lost to the Unbidden, has largely been waged behind the backs of an unwitting society, primarily because the demons feed in secrecy. Still, their presence is felt in all aspects of society and no one is safe from their hunger. Every day that the world slips further into misery, selfishness, and indifference the power of darkness expands and the Unbidden grow more desperate.

THE UNBIDDEN

For those who are chosen, the Secret War is a fight for survival, yet it is also one that many resist or have difficulty accepting. The Unbidden were once like you and me, normal people living normal lives, until that life was turned upside down. For them, the price of learning the Secret Stories is an emotional and psychological dichotomy. On the one hand, the Endowments they receive open up new perceptions of reality (no matter how horrifying that may be), on the other, these endowments come at a great personal cost.

As one of the Unbidden you begin your transformation from a lower psychological state, in which you are unaware of the nature and complexity of the problems that now confront you. Circumstances suddenly propel you into a dilemma that demands action, yet you do not have a say in the matter. There is no opportunity to take the low road or the easy way out, and you will often balk at doing the right thing because sacrificing yourself is never easy. Sacrifice is typically that which requires one to give something up in return for accomplishing a higher ideal; unfortunately, as one of the Unbidden, you are ostracized for being different. It is hard to justify doing something for the good of humanity when they shun you. And you can never impart to them the Secret Stories, for that would surely increase the weight of the burden which you already shoulder.

Being imbued with the supernatural Endowments and knowledge of the Secret Stories also makes you a target. The demons that pervert reality and bend it to serve their own ends would just as soon see you dead for the threat you represent. It is all of these factors that cast the Unbidden as comrades-in-arms, regardless of ethnicity, religion, class, and creed, for you know that in numbers lies strength against abyssal adversaries.

THE DARKNESS

The Darkness is an all-encompassing term used to describe the legions of demons and evil spirits that have poured into our world. Some of the Unbidden believe that there were cycles during which demonic activity and influence increased, and use this theory to explain various occurrences. For instance, the elder Unbidden view the demonic theory at work in relation to the rise of occurrences such as Nazism, World War II, the Jonestown Massacre, and the like.

Whatever the case may be, their reasons for being here seem simply to feed on base human emotions and to cause as much destruction as they can in the process. Human beings are pawns to them, playthings for amusements that are quickly tossed aside once the fun has lost its charm. Then it is time to move on to the next victim, and the cycle continues. Most mortals, specifically those not privy to the Secret Stories, are completely unaware of the malignant forces at work. They are ignorant to the fact that otherworldly entities are fueling negative emotions and perpetuating the violence and degradation that continues on a daily basis.

If there is any consolation to this, it is the fact that these demons are unable to interact on a personal basis with humanity (although there are and have been exceptions). That is to say, they have no way of blending in with society and so must remain under cover of shadow and darkness, where they safely manipulate mankind. Were it not for the fact that the Unbidden are able to sense the presence of a demon, these malevolent beings would literally have free reign and a veritable king's banquet of sinister emotions to feed upon. So, what you will not see is a demon in the guise of a corporate CEO, furthering its own agenda behind a mask of human flesh. That is not say you won't find a demon influencing said corporate CEO, fueling his subconscious greed and depravity. These

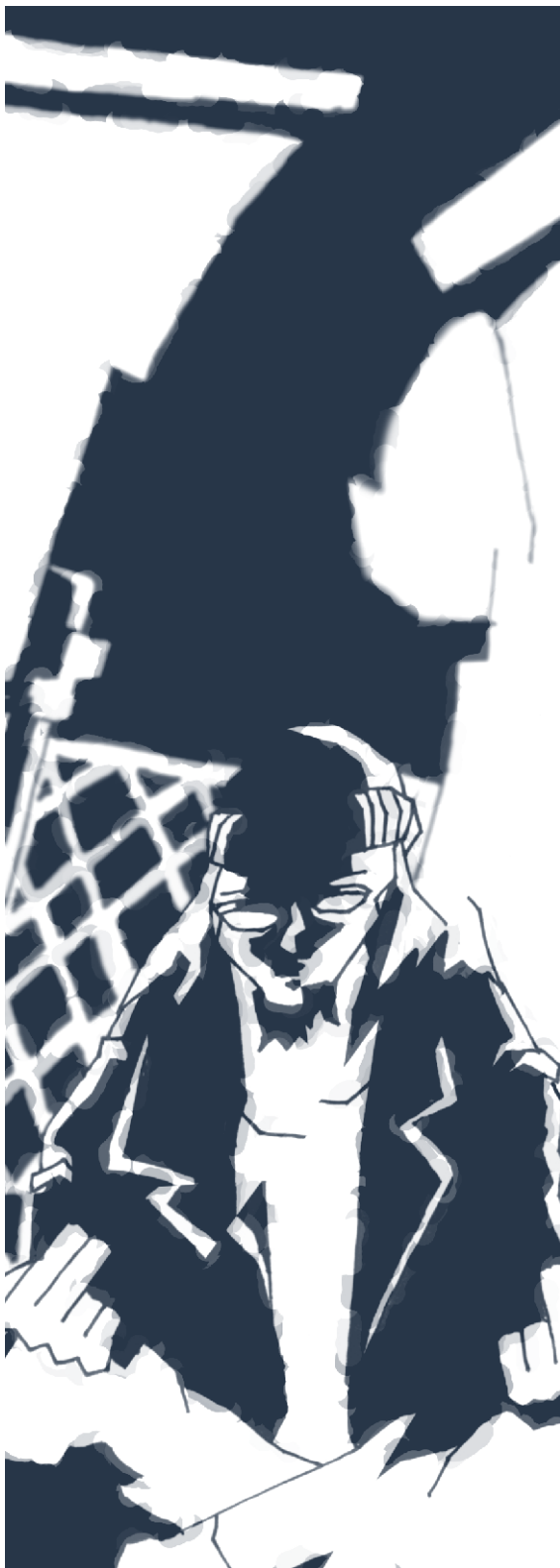
unwitting human agents can be some of the Unbidden's most dangerous opponents because they can operate within the safe confines of society, while the Unbidden cannot. And they do not even know that they are playing puppets to a higher power.

Demons are creatures of shadow and blackness, each one a different substance and form. They are not like the garden variety you'll read about in the Bible, with barbed tails, cloven hooves, horns, and red scaly skin. Rather, they embody principles founded on specific proclivities, such as discord, ignorance, fear, hatred, etc. For example, an entity known as Mastiphal, whose principle is fear, may appear as a swirling mass of ethereal blackness, thick like oil and just as opaque, yet he has no single definable form.

The Unbidden currently do not know if there is a specific hierarchy to the demons that now inhabit the world, and if there is one, who commands it. But there are certain categories of demons and their agents, which you will soon discover.



MYTHOS LORE



The second fundamental of the Secret Stories is Mythos Lore and its direct relation to Endowments. Think of the following concepts in terms of traditional fantasy worlds where magic and spells are interrelated, with the former being a general term to describe a phenomenon and viewpoint and the latter being a specific power that one can command and bend to his will.

Mythos Lore is a phenomenon, a cosmic state of supernatural existence, that powers an Unbidden's Endowments and opens his mind to an intense revelation. No one is certain whether the Unbidden are born with a propensity to wield Mythos Lore or if it just comes to them like a sudden thought or an abrupt revelation. Whatever the case may be, this fundamental is the single greatest ally in the Secret War because it is the Mythos Lore of the Secret Stories that invigorate and encourage the Unbidden.

There are six distinct castes of Unbidden and each hold different beliefs. Each adheres to a certain ancient lineage, propagated by Loremasters. They act as hosts to several Mythos Lore which are studied as part of their traditions and used to determine their perceptions of the Secret Stories. While each caste has the same fundamental goal, they pursue it by different means.

THE LOREMASTERS

Of special importance to the Mythos Lore are the Loremasters, a cabal of eminent men and women who hold high positions among the counter-culture of the Unbidden and who ensure the survival of their caste throughout the Secret War. Each Loremaster embodies the principles and core beliefs of his or her caste and passes that wisdom to other Unbidden who share the same views. They are mentors, protectors, guides and demigods in their own right. They may be compassionate, nurturing, and supportive (like a good parent), but they are also fleeting, eclectic, and sometimes dangerous (like a vengeful god).

ENDOWMENTS

Endowments are the third and final fundamental of the Secret Stories. Once one learns the Truth and commands Mythos Lore he can wield Endowments, mystical powers that each Unbidden wields. It is up to the Loremasters to teach newly awakened Unbidden how to use these powers.

It has been noted by many that when in the presence or atmosphere of an Unbidden, strange happenings take place. Knocks, raps, and other sounds may be heard that are caused by no known agent. There may be the ringing of bells and sounds of musical instruments. Furniture perhaps moves of itself, and other household objects become disarranged. There may appear in the air what seem to be human hands and faces and ultimately complete figures. This is essentially an Unbidden's power mucking about with the collective reality of a world blind to the truth. Endowments go against the very fabric of reality, regardless of whether it has been manufactured, and thus form a paradox of impossibility and improbability.

Folk who often encounter Unbidden have a tendency to grow uneasy, because their unconscious minds have no way of

categorizing and relating to this strange phenomenon that is raw yet bridled supernatural power. This is one of the reasons why the Unbidden must live a solitary life, often living on the streets among their own kind.

When an Unbidden uses an Endowment, he is drawing on a mystical reservoir of power that is stored and shared among the communal existence used by all of his kind. It is like siphoning electrical power from a transformer in Chicago to power a neighborhood in downstate Illinois, but it is farther reaching than that, and its influence knows no bounds. So, in effect, one who is endowed with supernatural ability will never lose that power unless, of course, The Darkness manages to kill every last Unbidden on the face of the planet. And while that is very unlikely, since no one but the Loremasters truly knows how many Unbidden exist, it is certainly not from a lack of trying. The Darkness fear little, no doubt, but they do fear the Unbidden and their opponents ability to wield powers matching their own. It is for this reason that The Darkness continually seek out the Unbidden.

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Chapter One

GAME MECHANICS

This game requires at least two six-sided dice in order to play. Although one set of two is sufficient, you may want to provide a set plus a few extra dice for each player.

The dice are always rolled in pairs taking the sum of the two. This sum is called the **DICE TOTAL**. Some special abilities or actions may also call for a number of bonus dice or penalty dice to be rolled with the pair.

The two lowest dice are added together when using **BONUS DICE**, while the two highest are added together when using **PENALTY DICE**. Bonus dice and penalty dice cancel each other out.

Penalty dice are represented as **-1** and bonus dice as **+1**, with the actual number of dice in the circle.

➡ EXAMPLE

Joe is attempting a task which calls for 1 penalty die (-1) and 3 bonus dice (+3). One of the bonus dice is canceled out by the penalty die, leaving 2 bonus dice (+2). Joe now rolls a total of 4 dice (the 2 original dice plus the 2 bonus dice). He rolls a 2, 4, 6, and 5. Because he is using bonus dice, Joe takes the sum of the two

lowest dice which are the 2 and the 4, making a dice total of 6.

the sum of the appropriate skill rating and its corresponding trait (see next chapter ■■■).

BASIC TASKS

1. Compute Skill Total
(trait + skill)
2. Roll Dice and Compute Dice Total
3. Determine Success
Dice total must be less than or equal to skill total

During the course of a gaming session, you will want to accomplish tasks. Rolls of the dice are used to determine if these tasks succeed. Task rolls provide a balanced system which reflects a character's skill and ability levels. The more skilled a character is, the higher his chance of success.

A character accomplishes a basic task when his **DICE TOTAL** is less than or equal to his skill total, which is equal to

ADVANCED TASKS

1. Compute Skill Total
(trait + skill)
2. Roll Dice and Compute Dice Total
3. Compute Margin
(skill total - dice total)
4. Determine Outcome
Cross reference the margin with the difficulty of the task on the success table

Advanced task rolls add realism by utilizing varying levels of difficulty assigned by the gamemaster. Varying degrees of success are also determined by the outcome of the roll.

DIFFICULTIES

Difficulties make it easy for the gamemaster to determine when and how to roll for tasks. They also affect the outcome of a task.

Simple

Simple tasks do not require a roll unless the gamemaster wishes to know the character's degree of success, or if the task is contested by another character. Simple tasks represent trivial labors that usually require little or no training. We generally take them for granted.

Easy

Easy tasks, also do not require rolls unless contested or a specific degree of success is required. Easy tasks are mundane, every day labors that require very little skill.

Average

Average tasks always require rolls and represent innocuous actions that must rely on training and experience. They also require some thought or effort.

Challenging

Challenging tasks are slightly more difficult than average ones and require

some effort and/or thought. They are usually harmless and require the dice total to be less than the skill total by at least one to be successful.

Hard

Hard tasks typically require above average skill and represent some action unfamiliar to a character. They can also be fairly dangerous and require the dice total to be less than the skill total by at least four to be successful.

Impossible

Impossible tasks cover all dangerous or unfeasible situations. Characters

DIFFICULTY

MARGIN		SIMPLE	EASY	AVERAGE	CHALLENGING	HARD	IMPOSSIBLE
	LESS THAN -6	FAILURE	FAILURE	FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE
	-6 TO -1	FAILURE	FAILURE	FAILURE	FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE
	0	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	POOR	FAILURE	FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE
	1-3	GOOD	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	POOR	FAILURE	FAILURE
	4-5	GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	POOR	FAILURE
	6-7	EXCELLENT	GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	POOR
	8-9	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	POOR
	10-11	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	AVERAGE
	12-13	CRITICAL SUCCESS	CRITICAL SUCCESS	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE
	14 AND UP	CRITICAL SUCCESS	CRITICAL SUCCESS	CRITICAL SUCCESS	CRITICAL SUCCESS	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT
	RANGE	POINT BLANK		SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG	EXTREME
	CONTESTED	POOR		AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	CRITICAL SUC.
	SITUATION	BENIGN	VIOLENT	SUPERNATURAL	HORRIFIC	CATASTROPHIC	EARTH SHATT.
	PERSONAL DEMON	1	2	3	4	5	6

attempting such actions are either very brave or very stupid. They require the dice total to be less than the skill total by at least six to be successful.

Task difficulties may be increased or decreased by a character's actions or his environment. Difficulties may not be reduced less than simple or greater than impossible. An increase in difficulty is represented as **1** and a decrease in difficulty as **1**, with the actual number of difficulty levels changed in the arrow.

OUTCOME

To determine the success of a task, we must first compute the difference between the skill total and the dice total (skill total - dice total). This value is called the **MARGIN**.

Once we know the margin, consult the success table. Compare the margin on the left of the table with the difficulty at the top. The degree of success describes the outcome of the task. Keep in mind that not all rolls require this level of detail and simply succeeding at a roll may be enough. There are seven possible outcomes:

Critical Failure

Critical failure represents a horrible mishap or backfire. This could be missing an opponent and accidentally shooting a friend or a chase down a flight of stairs resulting in a serious fall.

Failure

Failure represents a failed attempt at a task. Unlike critical failures, it does not necessarily indicate a harmful outcome.

Poor Success

Poor success represents a grazing hit when in combat or a vehicle repair which may only last a few hours. It does not guarantee that the result will last.

Average Success

Average success represents a typical

outcome. This could be a solid gun shot to the chest or a forged passport which looks real under standard inspection.

Good Success

Good success represents a better than average outcome. This could be landing on one's feet when jumping a great distance or designing a computer program which operates slightly better than anticipated.

Excellent Success

Excellent success represents an outcome far beyond the intentions of a character. This could be a physical feat such as a flip which wins a competition or a dance performance which receives a standing ovation.

Critical Success

Critical success represents a miraculous outcome. This could be incapacitating an opponent with one punch or convincing an enemy of your good intentions.

There are two special situations which cause the success table to be ignored. If the two dice used for the dice total are both ones (snake eyes) the task is a critical success. And, if the two dice used for the dice total are both sixes (box cars) the task is a failure (but not a critical failure).

UNTRAINED TASKS

All skills except endowments and those based on reasoning can be attempted without prior training unless otherwise noted. These rolls are considered untrained tasks and the skill total is equal to the associated trait only. Untrained task rolls are also used in situations where a single trait would govern the outcome.

EXAMPLE

Joe is attempting to remember what time Mary

told him to meet her. Joe rolls two dice. If the sum of the dice are less than or equal to his reasoning rating (trait only) then he succeeds. This sort of roll would be extremely difficult. But, then again if the person playing Joe could remember the time, he wouldn't have to roll.

CONTESTED TASKS

There will be situations that place two people at odds with each other in some sort of struggle. To resolve this conflict, both parties make task rolls and the character with the highest margin wins the struggle. If neither roll is actually successful both parties fail.

Some skills allow an effect to be contested by rolling against a difficulty level determined by the original task's degree of success. The difficulty of these situations is noted on the success table. Contested rolls use the same trait and skill as the original roll unless otherwise noted.

EXAMPLE

Joe is attempting to discover if Chris' passport (forged by Chris) is genuine. Chris' forgery roll resulted in a good success. This means that Joe must succeed at a Challenging task in order to determine the document's authenticity (or lack thereof).

DEMENTIA TASKS

Characters must make dementia rolls when faced with extreme terror, supernatural occurrences, or events which lead them to question their reality. Skill totals for these rolls comprise of willpower and composure. The difficulty of a dementia roll is determined by the situation, but may also be adjusted by environmental factors.

Poor successes **REDUCE** the amount of

dementia gained by one, while critical failures INCREASE the amount by two.

As a character loses dementia points, he is driven closer to madness and becomes incapable of discerning delusion from reality. This makes it extremely hard for him to concentrate on reasoning and willpower based tasks (and other dementia rolls); all such rolls receive **1** for each complete block of dementia points gained during play (see next chapter **11**). Characters also display one or more symptoms of shock if they receive an amount of dementia points greater than or equal to their willpower rating.

When a character has gained a number of dementia points equal to his dementia rating, he develops a mental illness (see *Secrets and Legends Chapter 11*).

CAUSES OF DEMENTIA

Benign	simple (1)
Violent	easy (2)
Supernatural	average (3)
Horrific	challenging (4)
Catastrophic	hard (5)
Earth Shattering	impossible (6)
Personal	varies (varies)

There are several situations (or classifications) which cause characters to gain dementia. Each is noted with the roll's default difficulty and amount of dementia gain.

Benign

Benign situations include nightmares, visions, and betrayals; occurrences which are physically harmless. [*simple*, 1]

Violent

Violent situations include murders, suicides, natural disasters, and gun fights; occurrences which could lead to physical harm. [*easy*, 2]

Supernatural

Supernatural situations include witnessing endowments, banes, agents of Darkness, and other unexplainable events. [*average*, 3]

Horrific

Horrific situations include facing rabid animals, bloody crime scenes, gore, and dismembered corpses; occurrences which sicken the soul. [*challenging*, 4]

Catastrophic

Catastrophic situations include all violent and horrific occurrences which take place on a massive scale. [*hard*, 5]

Earth Shattering

Earth shattering situations include facing mythological creatures or the supernatural on a massive scale; occurrences which turn someone's world upside down. [*impossible*, 6]

Personal

Irrational situations take place when one of the following events occurs:

- A character finds incontrovertible evidence that a delusion is wrong, or commits an act which defies his delusion.
- A character faces one of his fears or triggers.
- A character divulges one of his secrets or learns that a secret has been exposed.

The difficulty is determined by the appropriate rating (one to six) as noted on the success table. The amount of dementia points received is equal to the rating.

SYMPTOMS OF SHOCK

Roll one die to determine how the shock manifests. Once a character displays a symptom of shock, he must attempt another dementia roll each turn in order to gain control (*dementia points are not sustained from this roll unless a new source of dementia is present*).

1 Catatonia

The character's consciousness cannot cope with events and his mind withdraws from the real world, leaving him in a zombie like state. This could be a good point to introduce the character to his subconscious fears and struggles in a dream-like sequence.

2-3 Cower/Flee

The character runs away in panic, hides, or withdraws to the fetal position. Anyone witnessing this act could rethink their opinion of the character.

4 Denial

The character denies witnessing the cause of the shock. It becomes a secret.

5 Enraged

The character freaks out and physically attacks the source of shock with all his might.

6 Outburst

The character lets out a piercing scream, begins to shout obscenities, or even relieves himself in his pants. This could also cause others nearby to make a dementia roll for benign situations.



Chapter Two

CHARACTERS

Every character possesses traits which describe his potential and talent derived from the mind, body, and spirit. Traits affect a character's ability to use and learn skills and are divided into two categories: *primary* and *secondary*. Most characters will also have *personal demons* which plague their existence.

PRIMARY TRAITS

Primary traits are used to compute skill totals and range from zero (0) to six (6).

Strength

Strength determines a character's size and muscle mass. It also affects how much physical damage a character can inflict upon someone.

Rating	
0	<i>brittle</i>
1	<i>weak</i>
2	<i>typical physical strength</i>
3	<i>muscular</i>
4	<i>athletic build</i>
5	<i>body builder</i>
6	<i>legendary physical strength</i>

Dexterity

Dexterity represents a character's hand-eye coordination and grace. It also affects how well a character can fire a gun, climb a rope, perform a dance, etc.

Rating	
0	<i>physically disabled</i>
1	<i>clumsy</i>
2	<i>typical physical grace</i>
3	<i>agile</i>
4	<i>athletic build</i>
5	<i>graceful</i>
6	<i>legendary physical grace</i>

Perception

Perception is the power of observation and intuition. It indicates how well the character notices little details or is able to communicate them to others.

Rating	
0	<i>oblivious to surroundings</i>
1	<i>slightly intuitive</i>
2	<i>typical intuition</i>
3	<i>excellent intuition</i>
4	<i>insightful</i>
5	<i>appears paranoid to most</i>
6	<i>legendary intuitive ability</i>

Reasoning

Reasoning gauges how well a character can analyze information. It is the driving force behind skills that require study.

Rating	
0	<i>irrational</i>
1	<i>easily confused</i>
2	<i>typical intelligence</i>
3	<i>above average intelligence</i>
4	<i>highly intelligent</i>
5	<i>genius</i>
6	<i>legendary intelligence</i>

Willpower

Willpower is a character's control over his fears, emotions, and discomforts. It allows him to press on in the face of danger or conquer personal demons.

Rating	
0	<i>feeble will</i>
1	<i>easily persuaded</i>
2	<i>typical mental discipline</i>
3	<i>excellent mental discipline</i>
4	<i>strong will</i>
5	<i>iron will</i>
6	<i>legendary mental discipline</i>

Mythos

Mythos represents the character's supernatural connection with the Secret Stories, which in turn, powers endowments.

Rating

0	unaware
1	neophyte
2	apprentice
3	journeyman
4	accomplished
5	mentor
6	Loremaster

SECONDARY TRAITS

Secondary traits are determined by the values of primary traits. They are not used when working with skills, although they play a very important part in the game.

Reaction

Reaction measures a character's nerves, reflexes, and general speed. It is equal to twelve minus dexterity and perception.

Stamina

Stamina measures a character's physical health and resistance to injury and illness. It is equal to the sum of the character's strength and willpower multiplied by two. Stamina is represented by the symbol .

Dementia

Dementia measures a character's psychological health. Too much strain can distort his reality and cause irrational behavior. It is equal to the sum of the character's reasoning and willpower multiplied by two. Dementia is represented by the symbol .

Locate the stamina section on the character sheet. Starting from the bottom, fill in one blank box from each group of five on the character sheet until the total number of filled boxes is equal

to twenty-five minus the stamina rating. The remaining unfilled boxes should equal the character's stamina rating. Repeat in the same manner for dementia.

EXAMPLE

Cyril has a Stamina rating of 14. Starting at the bottom, he checks off one box in each group until 11 (25-14) are checked. That leaves 14 unchecked boxes, or the character's Stamina rating.

☐	☐	☐	☒	☒	1
☐	☐	☐	☒	☒	2
☐	☐	☐	☒	☒	3
☐	☐	☐	☒	☒	4
☐	☐	☒	☒	☒	5

PERSONAL DEMONS

Everyone has something from their past that haunts them and some would do anything to keep it from surfacing. Personal demons can take the form of *delusions, fears, triggers, temptations, or secrets* and range from one (mild) to six (severe). Interacting with personal demons can directly increase a character's dementia (see previous chapter ) and is an important part of play.

Delusions

Delusions represent false beliefs and misconceptions which a character may or may not be able to ignore or change. Doing so requires a successful willpower roll with a difficulty based on its rating.

Fears

Fears represent irrational panic and dread often brought on by phobias. Overcoming a fear requires a successful willpower roll with a difficulty based on its rating.

Triggers

Triggers represent situations which cause irrational rage or hatred. Overcoming a trigger requires a successful willpower roll with a difficulty based on its rating. A failed roll indicates that the character turns

abusive with the potential of physical violence.

Temptations

Temptations represent compulsive behavior, subconscious desires, and addictions. Resisting a temptation requires a successful willpower roll with a difficulty based on its rating.

Secrets

Secrets represent some aspect of the character's life which he prefers to keep confidential. The exposure of a secret has the potential to shatter the character's reality.

When using personal demons, they are noted in the form of $x(y;z)$, where x is the type of demon, y is the nature of the demon, and z is the severity.

EXAMPLE

Kate has a severe fear of spiders. For game purposes, it is noted as: FEAR (SPIDERS; 5). If Kate is faced with a spider in her soup, she must make a dementia roll with a difficulty of hard. If she fails the roll, she gains 5 dementia points (modified by a critical failure) and screams uncontrollably (she probably also runs away).

SKILLS

Skills represent knowledge and training gained through study and practice. Each skill has a corresponding trait which is used to compute skill totals. Skill ratings signify the following:

Rating

0	untrained
1	passign knowledge
2	undertrained
3	basic knowledge
4	working knowledge
5	solid ability
6	highly trained
7	elite
8	expert
9	leader in field
10	master
11-12	legendary

LORES

Lores are distinct fields of knowledge which are used by the Loremasters to train their disciples. Each includes only a portion of the Truth and various endowments. The whole of the Lores are known to but a few. It is unlikely that any Loremaster will ever instruct a disciple in more than three Lores. This is mainly due to time constraints or the view that particular Lores may be part of the Darkness.

Lore of Providence

This Lore propagates the Truth about reality—it has been clouded and obscured by both the Darkness and unknown forces. This gives Unbidden the power to sense and experience stimuli which are undetectable by mortals. After considerable study, they also become aware of the universal consciousness and the information it can provide.

Lore of Prestigious Air

This Lore propagates the Truth about mortals—they are weak and should be used by the Unbidden in their war against the Darkness. This gives the Unbidden limited control over mortals.

Lore of Harmonious Center

This Lore propagates the Truth about essence—whether you call it chi, ki, or life force, it is a form of energy present in mortals and Unbidden alike. With training, they have unprecedented control over inner functions such as immunity, metabolism, and balance.

Lore of Cognizance

This Lore propagates the Truth about an Unbidden's senses—they are far superior to that of mere mortals.

Lore of Essence

This Lore is an extension to the Lore of Harmonious Center (which is required to use this Lore) and teaches an Unbidden how to focus his essence

outward or for more specialized applications.

Lore of Gentle Touch

This Lore propagates the Truth about an Unbidden's connection with reality—they are capable of harmonizing their movements and mass with elements of nature, such as light, sound, and matter.

Lore of Enchantment

This Lore propagates the Truth about perceptions of reality—Unbidden can create illusory (sometimes real) stimuli which can be perceived by mortal and Unbidden senses.

Lore of Warding

This Lore propagates the Truth about primal energy—Unbidden can focus this so called 'primal energy' into a sphere or within selected components. This concentration of energy acts as a purifying energy and removes specified elements which are harmful to living creatures. Other beneficial effects from this energy have also been discovered over time.

Lore of Silent Contact

This Lore propagates the Truth about the inner workings of the human consciousness and ego—Unbidden can interact with the minds of others.

Lore of Crafting

This Lore propagates the Truth about material echo—items, when created in a certain way, emanate mysterious forces which alter or otherwise optimize their use. The exact cause of these changes are unknown—only existing designs can be duplicated.

ENDOWMENTS

Endowments represent the special abilities which the Unbidden possess. They work like skills, except that all endowments use the mythos trait to compute the skill total.

Each endowment has a minimum mythos rating required for its use. If the character's mythos rating is not equal to or greater than the listed value, he may not possess that endowment.

Default Endowments

Endowments with a minimum rating of zero (0) are automatically available to the character if his mythos rating is at least one (1) and he has access to that specific lore. No skill ratings are ever used with default endowments since they are all automatic successes.

EXAMPLE

Cedrick has a mythos rating of 1 and has access to the Lore of Warding. He automatically gains the Scarecrow endowment because it has a minimum rating of 0 (a default endowment). Cedrick is also skilled in Veiled Circle (it has a minimum rating of 1). His skill rating in that endowment is 6. He does not require a skill rating in Scarecrow since it is a default endowment.

CREATING CHARACTERS

Creating characters is a simple process of choosing a background and caste, and allocating points to traits, skills, and endowments.

STEP ONE: BACKGROUND

Choose a background for the character. Background determines which skills the character has developed as part of his upbringing and education before he was forced to leave society. If you can't find an appropriate background for your character, use the guidelines presented with the *Free Spirit*.

Athlete

If you've ever wondered what happened to that professional athlete who landed his face on a box of

breakfast cereal only to drift away into obscurity several years later, chances are he learned the Secret Stories. Surviving on the streets is tough, but with athletic training and knowledge of sports medicine, life is a bit easier. You miss competition with fellow athletes, but your skills will hardly atrophy; the streets will see to that.

Artist

Being an artist was never an easy job, so in a sense, you're used to living hand-to-mouth. If one of your paintings or sculptures didn't sell that month, well, it was back to eating bologna sandwiches and drinking water. For some reason, you have a natural affinity towards your endowments, and so you accepted the knowledge of the Secret Stories with open arms. Perhaps it's because, being an artist, your mind was open to learning and experiencing new things.

Clergy

Islam, Judaism, Christianity...the Secret Stories affects all religions and those who hold its tenements to be sacred. For holy men and women, learning the Truth can be either a spiritual awakening or a horrifying reality, for the demons and devils in their sacred texts are now manifested as real entities. Of all the Unbidden, the Clergy remain the most steadfast soldiers in the Secret War.

Criminal

Unlike the others, you had very little to lose upon learning the Secret Stories and, in fact, your endowments have proved to enhance your lot in life. Some criminals use their endowments to further their illicit schemes against innocents; these make perfect candidates for Screamer packs. You, however, decided to change your life and use your power for better or for

worse. Of course, when you need to bend the law a little in your favor for the good of humanity you certainly won't hold back.

Detective

You worked hard for five years as a regular beat cop before being promoted to detective at your precinct. The job was exhilarating, dangerous, and stressful, but you loved every minute of it. Then you suddenly had the Truth revealed to you and that changed everything. Now, the tables have turned, and you're no better than the dregs you once arrested. Your former comrades are of no help in the Secret War because they do not understand what you have just gone through. To them, you finally succumbed to the rigors of the job.

Dilettante

As one of society's upper crust, you have always lived a comfortable and



privileged life. In fact, your skills reflect that. Afternoons spent practicing your archery, boating on the still waters of the lake behind your house, and playing polo have not necessarily made you soft—just cultured. Life really is a bitch now, isn't it?

Executive

Out of all the Unbidden, you've probably had the most to lose in terms of your life. It is hard getting used to eating out of dumpsters and sleeping in abandoned warehouses when you once made a six-figure income and lived in a cushy house in the suburbs with your wife and 2.5 children. Nonetheless, you are a soldier now, but your business acumen isn't all for naught—instead of being shrewd in the boardroom you are now an astute fighter on the streets.

Government Agent

The Unbidden ranks are filled with former government agents, from FBI special agents to CIA undercover operatives. Your skills at investigation, tracking, and special ops have proven extremely valuable in successfully tracking down Fiends, Screamer packs, and several Fates. The downside is that you have lost all of your former contacts, so now more than ever, you have to rely on your own skills and special training.

Journalist

Before learning the Secret Stories you dedicated your life to finding out the truth. Since becoming endowed with supernatural powers, you've learned more than you ever cared to know. Now, instead of tracking down and investigating corrupt CEOs and politicians for the Sunday paper, you hunt Fiends and Screamers through darkness and shadow. The Truth is still out there, but instead of reporting it, you're going to kill it dead.

Professor

As a tenured professor at a local college or university, you were tasked

with educating impressionable young students, imparting a sense of culture and edification, and giving them the tools and skills they need to make it in the work force. Now, your mentoring skills are used to much greater effect, teaching the Secret Stories to those younger and brasher than yourself.

Soldier

Regardless of whether you saw combat, since learning the Secret Stories you now have a new enemy—The Darkness that threatens to thrust society into the throws of chaos and despair. You always preferred actions to words, so you gladly take the fight straight to the source, standing toe-to-toe with demons and evil spirits on a daily basis.

Free Spirit

You were always your own person. You learned whatever trade inspired you at the moment and jumped from job to job. Now, you can put your diverse skills to better use—fighting the Darkness.

STEP TWO: CASTE

Choose a caste for the character. This determines the teachings and lore the character was taught by his loremaster. Castes determine which endowments are available to the character, as well as the personal demons they are plagued with.

The following are the only castes available to player characters.

Artisans

Artisans believe that they can only defeat the Darkness by understanding both their powers and those of nature. They are taught physics, chemistry, and other physical sciences in order to achieve that goal. Their first duty is to protect the lives of mortals, which are even more important than their own. They fear seeing any harm come to

mortals and would gladly put their lives in danger to prevent that. They call themselves Artisans because they wish to become the artisans of peace and well being for mankind. They understand that without mankind, they too would perish.

Cardinals

Cardinals believe themselves to be the leaders of the Unbidden and totally infallible. They feel that the other castes typically pursue wild dreams and erroneous beliefs. Cardinals are taught to trust their instincts and senses, which allows them to understand and perceive



things well beyond the abilities of most others. This tends to lead to false perceptions and causes delusional behavior. Many are also afraid that they will be betrayed by the other castes out of jealousy. Cardinals are taught to observe rather than to interfere—interference should be left to other castes, but they must act when necessary.

Elders

Elders have been living amongst mortals for centuries. They have succumbed to their desire to continue to live in society. Many return to their families only to be rejected, often because of their violent outbursts, substance abuse, or general uneasiness when in their presence. They believe that the only way to protect humankind is to better understand them and their affinity with the Darkness. Elders are believed be the oldest caste of the Unbidden and strive to be dominate the others.

Prophets

Prophets are taught that they were created by a supreme being to usher mankind into a new era of prosperity. They believe that the darkness is, in fact, a manifestation of mankind's evil ways. They recruit mortal acolytes in order to spread their gospel. While the Prophets do not disclose their true selves to their followers, they convince them of their divinity. Unfortunately, since mortals are driven mad by the Unbidden presence, their followers are rarely allowed to have direct contact with the Prophets, which lends even more mystery and wonderment when they do appear.

Shadows

Shadows feel guilty about their effect on mortals' sanity. They prefer to remain in the shadows and avoid mortal contact. They will, however, protect a mortal when called upon. They have

developed the ability to create illusionary appearances and disguises in order to avoid discovery. They fight the darkness by keeping their existence secret and avoiding confrontation with the darkness in the presence of humans. Shadows believe that the Darkness can only be defeated by preventing the knowledge of it from reaching humankind. They fear that mortals will be seduced to the Darkness if confronted with it.

Warriors

Warriors see themselves as the saviors of mankind by way of their ability to defend mortals from the Darkness. They are highly skilled in the martial ways and often hire mortals to run dojos in which they spread their beliefs to the masses and teach them how to fight the darkness. Since Warriors are taught to be sensitive to their surroundings in order to be ready to fight, many become jumpy or easily set off by various stimuli.

STEP THREE: ALLOCATE POINTS TO TRAITS

Distribute twelve (12) points between all primary traits except for mythos. No trait rating may be less than one (1) or greater than five (5).

The character's mythos rating is equal to one half the roll of one die, rounding up (1-3).

STEP FOUR: ALLOCATE POINTS TO SKILLS

Distribute twenty-four (24) points between any and all skills listed with the character's chosen background. No skill rating may be greater than twice the related trait or seven (7), whichever is lower.

Athlete

Athletics, Performance, Medicine, Trivia, Composure

Artist

Design, Computers, Local Knowledge, Negotiation, Streetwise

Clergy

Performance, Psychology, Local Knowledge, Theology, Composure

Criminal

Firearms, Finesse, Stealth, Local Knowledge, Streetwise

Detective

Brawling, Firearms, Driving, Investigation, Local Knowledge, Composure

Dilettante

Athletics, Archery, Equestrian, Boating, Seduction

Executive

Commodities, Negotiation, Financial, Law, Gambling

Government Agent

Brawling, Firearms, Driving, Investigation, Computers, Psychology, Composure

Journalist

Finesse, Performance, Investigation, Legends, History

Professor

any five reasoning based skills

Soldier

Brawling, Firearms, Stealth, Tracking, Composure, Survival

Free Spirit

any five skills

Distribute ten (10) points (plus half of the unused points from above) between any desired skills. No skill rating may be greater than twice the related trait or seven (7), whichever is lower.

STEP FIVE: ALLOCATE POINTS TO ENDOWMENTS

Distribute fourteen (14) points between any endowments which are part of the lores listed with the character's chosen caste (and which have a minimum rating less than or equal to the character's mythos rating). No endowment rating may be greater than twice the character's mythos rating. Points not used in this step can be allocated to other skills, provided the rating does not go above seven (7) or twice the related trait.

Artisans

Warding, Crafting

Cardinals

Providence, Cognizance, Enchantment

Elders

Warding, Silent Contact

Prophets

Providence, Prestigious Air

Shadows

Gentle Touch, Enchantment

Warriors

Harmonious Center, Cognizance, Essence

STEP SIX: PERSONAL DEMONS

Make a note of all personal demons listed under the character's chosen caste on the character sheet. Roll one die for each to determine their rating.

Artisans

FEAR (HARM TO MORTALS): *Artisans cannot stand to see harm come to mortals, whether it be from Unbidden, the Darkness, other mortals, or even coincidence. They fear that each mortal subjected to pain or death draws the Darkness closer.*

Cardinals

Choose only two personal demons from the list below:

DELUSION (TRUE LEADERS): *Cardinals don't just believe that they are natural leaders, they base their faith around it.*

DELUSION (INFALLIBLE): *Part of the Cardinals' faith is that they are not capable of making mistakes. If one occurs, they blame others for disturbing their plans and will most likely, not forgive them.*

DELUSION (ERRONEOUS STIMULI): *Cardinals often make irrational conclusions based on their first impressions of a situation. For example, upon seeing a fast moving, blurry shape out of the corner of their eye, a Cardinal may assume that it was a creature of Darkness until he can actually examine it in detail.*

FEAR (UNKNOWN LORES): *Cardinals fear witnessing endowments which come from Lores not practiced by them. They believe that these Lores bring man closer to the Darkness.*

Elders

Choose only one Temptation and one Trigger from the list below:

TEMPTATION (POWER): *While most Unbidden often yearn for what they cannot have in mortal society, Elders commonly try to obtain it—they seek both financial and social power over mortals and other Unbidden.*

TEMPTATION (SUBSTANCE ABUSE): *All too often, Elders become trapped in the seedier lifestyles of mortals. They commonly turn to drugs or alcohol in order to escape reality.*

TEMPTATION (SEX): *Since they can't take part in loving relationships with mortals (for some reason, Unbidden romance is just not the same for them), Elders seek out meaningless one-night stands or even prostitutes to satisfy their urges.*

TRIGGER (REJECTION): *Many Elders cannot handle being rejected by mortals. Whether it be romantic, political, or voluntary situations, Elders commonly lash out when rejected.*

TRIGGER (DISRESPECT): *Because Elders view themselves to be of the dominant caste, they tend to anger when treated with disrespect by Unbidden from other castes.*

Prophets

DELUSION (GRANDEUR): *Prophets believe that they are divinely inspired beings and far superior to mere mortals or even the other castes.*

Shadows

SECRET (APPEARANCE): *Shadows do not want mortals or even other Unbidden to be able to recognize their face and will therefore always wear a mask or otherwise hide it.*

SECRET (IDENTITY): *Shadows believe that their safety (and that of their abandoned families) depends on keeping their true identities secret. They will make up false names and backgrounds in order to do so.*

Warriors

TRIGGER (SUDDEN MOVES): *Warriors are always expecting trouble. As a result, any sudden movement can send them into action.*

TRIGGER (THREAT TO SELF OR FRIENDS): *Warriors are always prepared to defend themselves or their friends against those who would harm them.*

TRIGGER (INCOMPETENT FIGHTING): *Warriors despise it when others fail to defeat an adversary or place them in harm's way as a result of negligence and incompetence in battle.*

In addition, all Unbidden as player characters must have the following personal demon:

Secret (Unbidden)

All castes hide the Truth about themselves and other Unbidden from mortals.

You may choose to remove up to two personal demons, but must also reduce any trait rating by one (1) for each. No more than one trait can be reduced below one (1). Be warned, a character with a trait of zero (0) is severely disabled.

Conversely, you may add up to three personal demons in order to add one (1) point to any trait or endowment rating or three (3) points to any skill rating for each. No more than one trait can be increased above five (5) and no skill or endowment rating may be increased above ten (10) or twice the related trait (whichever is lower). Each new personal demon must increase a different skill or endowment rating.

STEP SEVEN: COMPUTE SECONDARY TRAITS

Reaction = $12 - (\text{dexterity} + \text{perception})$

Stamina = $2 \times (\text{strength} + \text{willpower})$

Dementia = $2 \times (\text{reasoning} + \text{willpower})$

STEP EIGHT: FINALIZE CHARACTER

After all other steps have been completed, it is time to jot down a description of the character. What was his life like before discovering the Secret

Stories? What does he look like? In what manner does he carry himself? Where does he live now and what does he do to stay alive? What possessions does he hold most dear? How did he meet his Loremaster and comrades? How do his personal demons affect his life?

Write down anything that provides a good picture of what he is all about.



Step 1: Background

Step 2: Caste

Step 3: Primary Traits

Allocate 12 points to Strength, Dexterity, Perception, Reasoning, and Willpower (1-5).

Roll one die and divide by 2 (round up) to determine Mythos.

Step 4: Skills

Allocate 24 points to skills listed under selected background (0-7; or twice related trait).

Allocate 10 points (plus half of the unused background points) to any skills (0-7; or twice related trait).

Step 5: Endowments

Allocate 14 points to endowments which are part of the Lores listed under selected caste (up to twice the mythos rating).

Unused points can be allocated to other skills (0-7; or twice related trait).

Step 6: Personal Demons

Note all personal demons listed under the selected caste plus *SECRET* (UNBIDDEN).

Remove up to two personal demons by reducing a trait by 1 for each. No more than one trait can be reduced below 1.

Add up to three personal demons to add 1 point to any trait or endowment rating, or 3 points to any skill for each. No more than one trait can be increased above 5 and no skill or endowment may be raised above 10 or twice the related trait.

Step 7: Secondary Traits

Reaction = 12 - (dexterity + perception)

Stamina = 2 x (strength + willpower)

Dementia = 2 x (reasoning + willpower)

Step 8: Finalize

Write down a description of the character.

BACKGROUNDS

Athlete

Athletics, Performance, Medicine, Trivia, Composure

Artist

Design, Computers, Local Knowledge, Negotiation, Streetwise

Clergy

Performance, Psychology, Local Knowledge, Theology, Composure

Criminal

Firearms, Finesse, Stealth, Local Knowledge, Streetwise

Detective

Brawling, Firearms, Driving, Investigation, Local Knowledge, Composure

Dilettante

Athletics, Archery, Equestrian, Boating, Seduction

Executive

Commodities, Negotiation, Financial, Law, Gambling

Government Agent

Brawling, Firearms, Driving, Investigation, Computers, Psychology, Composure

Journalist

Finesse, Performance, Investigation, Legends, History

Professor

any five reasoning based skills

Soldier

Brawling, Firearms, Stealth, Tracking, Composure, Survival

Free Spirit

any five skills

CASTES

Artisans

*Warding, Crafting
Fear (harm to mortals)*

Cardinals

*Providence, Cognizance, Enchantment
Any two: Delusion (true leaders),
Delusion (infallible), Delusion
(erroneous stimuli), Fear (unknown
lores)*

Elders

*Warding, Silent Contact
Temptation (power), Temptation
(substance abuse), or Temptation (sex)
Trigger (rejection) or Trigger (disrespect)*

Prophets

*Providence, Prestigious Air
Delusion (grandeur)*

Shadows

*Gentle Touch, Enchantment
Secret (appearance), Secret (identity)*

Warriors

*Harmonious Center, Cognizance, Essence
Trigger (sudden moves), Trigger (threat
to self or friends), Trigger (incompetent
fighting)*

SKILLS

Strength

Brawling

Dexterity

Archery

Athletics

Boating

Design

Driving

Equestrian

Finesse

Firearms

Melee Specialty

Piloting

Staff Specialty

Stealth

Sword Specialty

Perception

Commodities

Gambling

Investigation

Negotiation

Performance

Seduction

Tracking

Reasoning

Computers

Chemistry

Electronics

Financial

History

Trivia

Law

Legends

Local Knowledge

Mechanics

Psychology

Medicine

Theology

Willpower

Composure

Streetwise

Survival

ENDOWMENTS

Providence

0 Gospel

1 Resonance

2 Imagery

3 Material Existence

3 True Destiny

3 Mortal Existence

4 Unfettered Senses

4 Tongues

5 Material Trail

5 Mortal Trail

5 Premonitions

6 Rend

Prestigious Air

0 Nobility

1 Creed

2 Intimidating Stare

2 Influence

3 Enthusiasm

4 Decree

5 Earthly Entitlement

5 Rally

6 Sovereignty

Harmonious Center

0 Phantom Center

1 Vigor

2 Tolerance

3 Rooted Center

3 Ukemi

4 Resilience

4 Expansive Center

5 Dynamic Center

6 Rigidity

Essence

0 Flowing Essence

1 Piercing Essence

2 Inertial Feat

3 Healing Essence

3 Thunderclap

4 Seizure

4 Suppression

5 Explosive Winds

5 Kindle

6 Life Force

Gentle Touch

0 Feathered Touch

1 Way of the Owl

2 Way of the Wind

3 Way of the Cat

4 Meld

4 Feathered Rise

5 Enigma

6 Celestial Journey

Enchantment

0 Allure

1 Trinket

2 Material Glamour

3 Personal Glamour

3 Glamour

4 Siren's Call

5 Heaven's Tone

5 Resting Place

6 True Glamour

Warding

0 Scarecrow

1 Veiled Circle

2 Protective Circle

3 Barrier

4 Siphon

4 Channel

5 Sanctify

6 Primal Law

Silent Contact

0 Communion

1 Empathic Touch

2 Utterance

3 Trespass

3 Bewilder

4 Torment

4 Forge

5 Vagary

5 Unveil

5 Enslave

6 Gestalt

6 Soothing Touch

Crafting

0 Celestial Map

1 Avid Blade

2 Inspiration

3 Impervious Seal

3 Protective Amulet

4 Mirrored Portal

4 Suppressive Amulet

5 Mirrored Entity

6 Regenerative Amulet

Cognizance

0 Sensitivity

1 Silent Focus

2 Sensory Awakening

3 Serenity

3 Crafted Impulses

3 Chatter

4 Exposed Posture

4 Subconscious Awareness

4 Unbound Vision

5 Mythic Knowledge

6 Facet of Darkness

LET'S CREATE A SAMPLE CHARACTER.

Step 1: Background

We want our character to come from a religious background, so we'll choose CLERGY.

Step 2: Caste

Let's make our character a PROPHET. This should make for an interesting twist. He was once a priest, but now he sees himself as a divine messenger.

Step 3: Primary Traits

Since the character is more of an intellectual than an athlete, we will allocate points in the following manner:

STRENGTH: 1; DEXTERITY: 2; PERCEPTION: 3; REASONING: 4; WILLPOWER: 2.

We roll one die for a result of 6; dividing it by two yields a 3:
MYTHOS: 3.

Step 4: Skills

Let's choose the following skills and ratings (for background):
PERFORMANCE: 6; PSYCHOLOGY: 7; THEOLOGY: 7; COMPOSURE: 4.

The additional 10 points are used as follows:
DRIVING: 4; COMPUTERS: 3; LEGENDS: 3

Step 5: Endowments

Let's choose the following endowments and ratings (for caste):
ENTHUSIASM (3): 6; CREED (1): 4; TRUE DESTINY(3): 4

The character automatically possess the following endowments since he has access to the *Providence* and *Prestigious Air* Lores:
GOSPEL and NOBILITY

Step 6: Personal Demons

Since the character is from the Prophets caste, let's choose the following personal demons and roll one die for each:

SECRET (UNBIDDEN): 6; DELUSION (GRANDEUR): 1

We might as well add one more person demon so that we may raise mythos by one point (our ex-priest enjoys his cigarettes):

TEMPTATION (TOBACCO): 4 (MYTHOS IS RAISED TO 4)

Step 7: Secondary Traits

Let's figure out the character's secondary traits:

REACTION: 7 ($12 - 2 - 3 = 7$); STAMINA: 6 ($1 + 2 = 3$; $3 \times 2 = 6$); DEMENTIA: 12 ($4 + 2 = 6$; $6 \times 2 = 12$)

Step 8: Finalize

Now that we have completed our character's traits, skills, etc., we can invent a short description and biography for him.

Step 1: Background

Step 2: Caste

Step 3: Primary Traits

Allocate 12 points to Strength, Dexterity, Perception, Reasoning, and Willpower (1-5).

Roll one die and divide by 2 (round up) to determine mythos.

Step 4: Skills

Allocate 24 points to skills listed under selected background (0-7; or twice related trait).

Allocate 10 points (plus half of the unused background points) to any skills (0-7; or twice related trait).

Step 5: Endowments

Allocate 14 points to endowments which are part of the Lores listed under selected caste (up to twice the mythos rating).

Unused points can be allocated to other skills (0-7; or twice related trait).

Step 6: Personal Demons

Note all personal demons listed under the selected caste plus *SECRET* (UNBIDDEN).

Remove up to two personal demons by reducing a trait by 1 for each. No more than one trait can be reduced below 1.

Add up to three personal demons to add 1 point to any trait or endowment rating, or 3 points to any skill for each. No more than one trait can be increased above 5 and no skill or endowment may be raised above 10 or twice the related trait.

Step 7: Secondary Traits

Reaction = $12 - (\text{dexterity} + \text{perception})$

Stamina = $2 \times (\text{strength} + \text{willpower})$

Dementia = $2 \times (\text{reasoning} + \text{willpower})$

Step 8: Finalize

Write down a description of the character.

Chapter Three

SKILLS AND ENDOWMENTS

STRENGTH BASED SKILLS

Brawling

Brawling covers the ability to punch, kick, grapple, and throw. It can represent a wide assortment of fighting styles, such as street fighting, boxing, and martial arts.



DEXTERITY BASED SKILLS

Archery

This skill provides the training to correctly utilize all forms of bows and crossbows in combat.

Athletics

Athletics covers a wide assortment of skills requiring physical prowess such as gymnastics, sports, climbing, swimming, throwing, and running.

Climbing Difficulty

SIM	<i>ladder</i>
AVG	<i>lots of foot holes</i>
CHA	<i>few foot holes</i>
HAR	<i>steep surfaces</i>
IMP	<i>smooth surfaces</i>

Swimming Outcome

Characters can hold their breathe for a number of turns equal to twice their willpower rating, less one. The outcome of a swimming roll can modify that time.

CF	-2 turns
AV	+1 turn
GD	+2 turns
EX	+3 turns
CS	+5 turns

Boating

Boating allows a character to operate a motor boat, sail boat, or yacht, as well as performing minor repairs which are part of general maintenance.

Design

Design represents the ability to create works of art and the training required to sculpt, paint, or illustrate. This skill can also be used for metal working and photography.

Driving

Driving allows a character to operate an automobile, truck, or motorcycle, as well as performing minor repairs which are part of general maintenance.

Equestrian

This is the ability to ride horses and control them under stressful situations. Equestrian also covers the knowledge of caring for horses and other beasts of burden.

Finesse

Finesse is the skill most dear to criminals. It allows characters to

forge documents, pick pockets and locks, and perform sleight of hand tricks.

This is contested with an investigation or finesse (or perception if unskilled) roll against the outcome.

Firearms

Firearms provides the knowledge and training to correctly operate and repair pistols, rifles, and shotguns.

Melee Specialty

This skill provides the training to correctly utilize all forms of knives and non-standard melee weapons (such as axes and flails) in combat.

Piloting

Piloting allows a character to operate both airplanes and helicopters, as well as performing minor repairs which are part of general maintenance. The character must choose either plane or helicopter as a specialty; the other receives -2 on all rolls.

Staff Specialty

This skill provides the training to correctly utilize a style of staff fighting. This can also be used with baseball bats, clubs, or similar bludgeoning weapons.

Stealth

Stealth is the ability to sneak around without being seen or heard, in addition to not leaving tracks.

This is contested with a perception (or investigation if under surveillance) roll against the outcome.

Sword Specialty

This skill provides the training to correctly utilize any one specific style of sword fighting. Using this skill with a type of sword not covered under the style adds -2 to the task roll.

Sword Style

FENCING	<i>rapier</i>
KENJITSU	<i>katana</i>

KUNG FU	<i>broadsword</i>
MILITARY	<i>saber</i>
REENACTMENT	<i>long sword</i>

PERCEPTION BASED SKILLS

Commodities

This skill covers the ability to appraise valuables (such as jewelry or antiques).

Gambling

Gambling allows a character to play most games of chance and grants the ability to deduce the odds of winning in any given situation. The character is also knowledgeable of how and when to bluff.

This is contested with a gambling (or perception if unskilled) roll; best outcome wins.

Investigation

This skill covers all aspects of detective work, such as surveillance, fingerprinting, and interrogation.

This can be used to contest the outcome of a stealth roll if the target is under surveillance.

This is contested with a composure (or willpower if unskilled) roll against the outcome for interrogation attempts.

Negotiation

This is the ability to barter, persuade, and even intimidate others.

This is contested with a negotiation (or willpower if unskilled) roll; best outcome wins.

Performance

Performance is not only the art of public oration, singing, and acting, but also distraction, misdirection, and charisma. A successful speech can increase morale. Make a performance

roll for each audience member (modifying it with any penalty dice due to dementia which the audience member may have). A success indicates the audience member receives +1 on his next composure roll, provided nothing in the speech conflicts with his personal demons or beliefs.

Seduction

Seduction is the art of temptation. It is used to entice others (typically members of the opposite sex) to do as you wish.

This is contested with a composure (or willpower if unskilled) roll against the outcome.

Tracking

This skill provides a character with the knowledge required to use tracks and other signs of disturbances in the wild to locate a target. The character can also use this skill to cover his own tracks and stay out of sight.

This can be used to contest the outcome of a tracking or stealth roll made to cover tracks.

REASONING BASED SKILLS

Computers

This skill provides the knowledge required for a character to operate computers and retrieve information efficiently.

Chemistry

This skill allows characters to mix, analyze, neutralize, and compare chemical formulas. Characters may also use this skill to predict their effects.

Electronics

This skill allows characters to design, build, and repair electronic devices

and components such as computers and security systems.

Financial

This is the knowledge and application of banking, accounting, business management, and trading.

History

History is the knowledge and study of civilization, government, race, and all the past events which have shaped the world in which we live.

Trivia

This is the knowledge of mostly useless information, but it can prove useful when confronted with out of the ordinary situations.

Law

This skill is the general knowledge of corporate, criminal, tax, and probate law, with specialization in a specific state or city.

Legends

Legends is the knowledge of superstitions, the occult, fairy tales, and mythology. It may be possible for a character with this skill to unwittingly possess knowledge about the Unbidden or the Darkness.

Local Knowledge

Local knowledge represents a character's familiarity with a specific city or area.

Mechanics

This skill allows characters to design, build, and repair mechanical devices and components such as car engines and elevator pulley systems.

Psychology

Psychology is the study of the mind and covers classic theories and methods of treatment. A successful task roll (in appropriate surroundings) once per week can alleviate dementia. A successful task roll (in appropriate surroundings) once per six months can alleviate symptoms from a

personal demon or mental illness.

Treatment Difficulty

SIM	<i>patient has no penalties from dementia</i>
EAS	<i>patient has -1 from dementia</i>
AVG	<i>patient has -2 from dementia</i>
CHA	<i>patient has -3 from dementia</i>
HAR	<i>patient has -4 from dementia</i>
IMP	<i>patient has -5 from dementia</i>

Treatment Outcome

CF	<i>patient sustains 2</i>
AV	<i>patient heals 1</i>
GD	<i>patient heals 2 or loses 1 point from a personal demon</i>
EX	<i>patient heals 3 or loses 1 point from a personal demon</i>
CS	<i>patient heals 5 or loses 2 points from a personal demon</i>

Medicine

Medicine is the study of healing and covers a wide assortment of methods for treatment. This skill can be used to assist characters who are recovering from wounds or to stabilize those who are on the verge of death. A successful task roll (in appropriate surroundings) once per week can increase healing. A successful task roll made to revive a patient who has lost all stamina points indicates that he is unconscious and will heal normally.

Treatment Difficulty

SIM	<i>patient has no penalties from stamina</i>
EAS	<i>patient has -1 from stamina</i>
AVG	<i>patient has -2 from stamina</i>
CHA	<i>patient has -3 from stamina</i>
HAR	<i>patient has -4 from stamina</i>
IMP	<i>patient has -5 from stamina</i>

Treatment Outcome

CF	<i>patient sustains 2</i>
GD	<i>patient heals +1</i>
EX	<i>patient heals +1</i>
CS	<i>patient heals +2</i>

Theology

Theology is the study of religion. It covers practical application, origins, doctrine, tradition, and mystical beliefs.

WILLPOWER BASED SKILLS

Composure

Composure is the ability to remain calm in the face of danger or temptation. It can be portrayed by characters as courage, stoicism, and cool.

Streetwise

Streetwise is the ability to scrounge for food in urban areas and make contact with black market and other underground sources.

Survival

This skill indicates both the character's will to survive in the wild and his knowledge of building shelters, locating food, and determining location.



LORE OF PROVIDENCE

0 Gospel

The character can sense if a fact which is spoken to him face to face by another person is true.

1 Resonance

The character can hear things well beyond the range of ordinary hearing. The character can focus his attention to a distant location with which he is familiar and can hear any noise within the immediate area. The difficulty is based on range and only sounds audible by the human ear are detectable. The character is incapable of hearing sounds in the area where he is physically present while using this endowment.

Range

⚔ ₅₀	50 miles
⚔ ₅₀₀	500 miles
⚔ ₂₀₀₀	2000 miles
⚔ _{half}	half hemisphere
⚔ _{full}	full hemisphere

2 Imagery

The character can see things well beyond the range of ordinary vision. The character can focus his attention to a distant location with which he is familiar and can see whatever is present within the immediate area. The difficulty is based on range and only spectrums of light visible to the human eyes are detectable. The character is incapable of seeing anything in the area where he is physically present while using this endowment.

Range

⚔ ₅₀	50 miles
⚔ ₅₀₀	500 miles
⚔ ₂₀₀₀	2000 miles
⚔ _{half}	half hemisphere
⚔ _{full}	full hemisphere

3 Material Existence

The character can determine the history of certain objects by holding them in his hand or placing them against his forehead. The history is then experienced by the character as a series of rapid visions that occur simultaneously. The character must determine the order of events through logical deduction. He receives -1 on all rolls for a number of turns after the use of this endowment based on his success. Difficulty is based on the age of the item.

Difficulty

SIM	less than 1 day old
EAS	less than 1 week old
AVG	less than 1 year old
CHA	less than 5 years old
HAR	more than 10 years old
IMP	more than 20 years old

Outcome

CF	receive -1 for 5 turns
PR	receive -1 for 3 turns
AV	receive -1 for 2 turns
GD	receive -1 for 1 turn

3 True Destiny

The character can add a number of bonus dice to any task roll as an act of intervention by the forces of fate and destiny. The number of bonus dice is determined by the outcome and this endowment may only be used a number of times per gaming session equal to the character's mythos rating.

Outcome

CF	receive +5 on next task roll
F	receive +3 on next task roll
PR	receive +1 on next task roll
AV	receive +2 on next task roll
GD	receive +3 on next task roll
EX	receive +4 on next task roll
CS	receive +5 on next task roll

3 Mortal Existence

The character can determine the history of another person by embracing him in his arms. The

history is then experienced by the character as a series of rapid visions that occur simultaneously. The character must determine the order of events through logical deduction. He receives -1 on all rolls for a number of turns after the use of this endowment based on his success. Difficulty is based on the mythos rating of the target.

Difficulty

AVG	target's mythos is 0
CHA	target's mythos is 1-2
HAR	target's mythos is 3-4
IMP	target's mythos is 5-6

Outcome

CF	receive -1 for 5 turns
PR	receive -1 for 3 turns
AV	receive -1 for 2 turns
GD	receive -1 for 1 turn

4 Unfettered Senses

The character can see through illusions created by endowments and banes. This is a contested task against the success of the task used to create the illusion.

4 Tongues

The character can speak and understand any language known to man. Communication with animals can also be accomplished but is of *hard* difficulty. Each task roll remains in effect until the character loses sight of the person with whom he was communicating.

5 Material Trail

The character can sense the presence of an object which has been in his possession for at one day. The exact location of the object cannot be determined, but the character can track it by sensing its direction. The difficulty is determined by the length of time the character has possessed the object.

Difficulty

SIM	in possession for 20 years
EAS	in possession for 10 years

AVG *in possession for 5 years*
 CHA *in possession for 1 year*
 HAR *in possession for 1 week*
 IMP *in possession for 1 day*

5 Mortal Trail

The character can sense the presence of any person which he has met at least once. The exact location of the person cannot be determined, but the character can track him by sensing his direction. The difficulty is determined by the length of time the character has known the person and modified by the person's mythos rating.

Difficulty

SIM *has known for 20 years*
 EAS *has known for 10 years*
 AVG *has known for 5 years*
 CHA *has known for 1 year*
 HAR *has known for 1 week*
 IMP *has known for 1 day*

- 1 *target's mythos is 2-4*
- 2 *target's mythos is 5-6*

5 Premonitions

The character can contact a higher plane of existence and catch a glimpse of future events, but he has no control over what is actually seen. The gamemaster must decide the exact nature of the information, which is experienced as short cryptic phrases or even rhymes. He receives 1 on all rolls for a number of turns after the use of this endowment based on his success.

Outcome

CF *receive 1 for 5 turns*
 PR *receive 1 for 3 turns*
 AV *receive 1 for 2 turns*
 GD *receive 1 for 1 turns*

6 Rend

The character can open a rend in nature, causing a gateway to appear. This gateway leads to another location with which the character is familiar. It cannot be a place which he

has not visited. The difficulty is based on range.

Range

PB *line of sight*
 S *100 miles*
 M *1000 miles*
 L *half hemisphere*
 E *full hemisphere*

LORE OF PRESTIGIOUS AIR

0 Nobility

Mortals have an unconscious respect for the character and cannot openly insult, defame, or otherwise verbally abuse him in public. This endowment does not regulate behavior when less than three mortals who do not know the character are present, however. It also does not require a task roll; it is automatic.

1 Creed

Mortals will believe what the character is telling them, provided the information is true. This endowment does not require a task roll; it is automatic.

2 Intimidating Stare

The character can focus his attention on a mortal. If he notices the stare (after a task roll), the mortal panics and must make a *benign* dementia roll of which the difficulty is modified by the outcome.

Outcome

GD *target receives 1 on dementia roll*
 EX *target receives 1 on dementia roll*
 CS *target receives 2 on dementia roll*

2 Influence

The character can alter the emotional state of a mortal. The difficulty is modified by the desired degree of change. This task may also be contested with a willpower roll.

Difficulty

- 1 *moderate change (sad to complacent)*
- 2 *polar change (happy to hostile)*

3 Enthusiasm

The character can instill enthusiasm in a mortal, thereby increasing his morale. The target receives a number of bonus dice on his next willpower roll based on the outcome.

Outcome

CF *target receives 2 willpower roll*
 PR *target receives 1 willpower roll*
 AV *target receives 1 willpower roll*
 GD *target receives 2 willpower roll*
 EX *target receives 3 willpower roll*
 CS *target receives 4 willpower roll*

4 Decree

The character can issue simple verbal commands (face to face) to a mortal. These commands must be obeyed as if the target has the desires to do so, although they cannot force him to perform actions that would be a danger to his well being. Each command requires a separate task roll and may be contested with a willpower roll.

5 Earthly Entitlement

Mortals have an unconscious respect for the character that elevates him to a status beyond suspicion and dishonesty. The character may still be feared, but his name is beyond reproach and will not be considered a suspect of any crime or act of betrayal or dishonesty even if he did commit said actions. This endowment does not require a task roll; it is automatic.

5 Rally

The character can instill enthusiasm in a group of mortals, thereby increasing their morale. The targets receive a number of bonus dice on their next willpower roll based on the outcome.

Outcome

CF *targets receive 2 willpower roll*

PR	targets receive +1 willpower roll
AV	targets receive +1 willpower roll
GD	targets receive +2 willpower roll
EX	targets receive +2 willpower roll
CS	targets receive +3 willpower roll

6 Sovereignty

The character can issue simple verbal commands (face to face) to a group of mortals. These commands must be obeyed as if the targets have the desires to do so. Each command requires a separate task roll and the difficulty is based on the number of people in the group.

Difficulty

SIM	1-5 people
EAS	6-12 people
AVG	13-25 people
CHA	26-35 people
HAR	36-49 people
IMP	50+ people

LORE OF HARMONIOUS CENTER

0 Phantom Center

The character can instinctively get out of the way of an incoming strike or thrown object. He receives +1 on all parrying and dodging rolls. This endowment does not require a task roll; it is automatic.

1 Vigor

The character can focus his internal energies and concentrate them in order to increase the potency of a physical strike (punch or kick) or act of strength. He receives an increase of one point in strength for a single task.

2 Tolerance

The character can focus his internal energies in such a way to raise his tolerance of pain. He may ignore a number of penalty dice received from

injuries equal to his mythos rating. This lasts a number of turns equal to the character's willpower rating.

3 Rooted Center

The character can focus his internal energies in order to root his center to the ground. He may not be knocked down as a result of an attack for the remainder of the turn, although this does not affect injuries received.

3 Ukemi

The character can focus his internal energies in order to regain his balance once it is lost. He can return to his feet by the end of the same turn in which a knockdown occurred with a successful roll. The outcome also affects the distances used to determine damage from falls on land. *See falling rules* ■■

Outcome

CF	roll 1 die for every 5 feet if falling more than 5 feet
PR	roll 1 die for every 8 feet if falling more than 8 feet
AV	roll 1 die for every 9 feet if falling more than 8 feet
GD	roll 1 die for every 10 feet if falling more than 10 feet
EX	roll 1 die for every 12 feet if falling more than 10 feet
CS	roll 1 die for every 15 feet if falling more than 10 feet

4 Resilience

The character has a very efficient metabolism which makes him impervious to poison and illness, and doubles all times associated with taking damage from suffocation.

4 Expansive Center

The character can focus his internal energies in order to unbalance an opponent who has successfully grappled or pinned him. He receives +2 on all tasks to break free from a successful grapple or pin.

5 Dynamic Center

The character can focus his internal

energies and concentrate them in order to balance his movement with the flow of nature. He receives an increase of one point in dexterity for a single task.

6 Rigidity

The character can focus his internal energies to increase the resilience of his muscles. His opponents receive -2 on all physical attacks directed at the character.

LORE OF COGNIZANCE

0 Sensitivity

The character can sense the life essence of another Unbidden within a one-half mile radius. The difficulty is based on the target's mythos rating.

Difficulty

SIM	target's mythos rating is 6
EAS	target's mythos rating is 5
AVG	target's mythos rating is 4
CHA	target's mythos rating is 3
HAR	target's mythos rating is 2
IMP	target's mythos rating is 1

1 Silent Focus

The character can quiet his thoughts in order to focus on the task at hand. He receives a number of bonus dice on his next willpower or reasoning roll based on the outcome.

Outcome

CF	receive -1 on roll
PR	receive +1 on roll
AV	receive +1 on roll
GD	receive +2 on roll
EX	receive +2 on roll
CS	receive +3 on roll

2 Sensory Awakening

The character has the ability to process sensory information at a heightened level. He receives a number of bonus dice on his next perception roll based on the outcome.

Outcome

CF	receive -2 on perception roll
PR	receive +1 on perception roll
AV	receive +1 on perception roll
GD	receive +2 on perception roll
EX	receive +2 on perception roll
CS	receive +3 on perception roll

3 Serenity

The character can compartmentalize his mental functions, thereby ignoring a number of penalty dice received from dementia equal to his mythos rating.

3 Crafted Impulses

The character's reflexes can be fine tuned to a particular situation, allowing him to act with greater intuitive ability. He receives a number of bonus dice on his next reaction roll based on the outcome.

Outcome

CF	receive -2 on perception roll
PR	receive +1 on perception roll
AV	receive +1 on perception roll
GD	receive +2 on perception roll
EX	receive +2 on perception roll
CS	receive +3 on perception roll

3 Chatter

The character can detect and isolate individual voices from a crowd and hear them as if he was directly involved in the conversation. The difficulty is based on the range and modified by the number of people present.

Range

Ⓟ	20 feet
Ⓢ	50 feet
Ⓜ	100 feet
Ⓛ	500 feet
Ⓛ	1,000 feet

Difficulty

- 1** 2-20 people
- 2** 21-50 people
- 3** 51+ people

4 Exposed Posture

The character can detect truthful

statements by analyzing the emotional condition of a person and reading his posture and facial expression. It also allows him to predict the person's next action.

4 Subconscious Awareness

The character can detect if someone has invaded his thoughts, caused him to see false memories, or manipulated his dreams. He cannot determine the exact nature of the intrusion, however.

4 Unbound Vision

The character can see in total darkness and receives no associated penalties. This endowment does not require a task roll; it is automatic.

5 Mythic Knowledge

The character can detect another person's relative (none, low, moderate, or high) mythos ability.

6 Facet of Darkness

The character can determine the exact nature of an Agent of Darkness and its banes.

LORE OF ESSENCE

0 Flowing Essence

The character can focus his internal energies in order to increase the amount of kinetic force used in an attack. A successful brawling attack made by the character or a failed attack that was parried by the character unbalances the target as indicated by the outcome.

Outcome

PR	target stumbles backward a few feet
AV	target stumbles backward and falls
GD	target stumbles backward and falls
EX	target stumbles backward and falls
CS	target stumbles backward, falls, and receives +2

1 Piercing Essence

The character can focus his internal energies in order to increase the amount of kinetic force used in a brawling, melee, or thrown weapon attack. If successful, the character causes extra damage to his opponent as indicated by the outcome.

Outcome

AV	inflict +1
GD	inflict +2
EX	inflict +3
CS	inflict +5

2 Inertial Feat

The character can focus his internal energies in order to increase his athletic endurance. His next athletics roll associated with running, swimming, or jumping receives a number of bonus dice based on the outcome of the inertial feat roll in order to simulate greater distances and speeds.

Outcome

CF	receive -2 on athletics roll
PR	receive +1 on athletics roll
AV	receive +2 on athletics roll
GD	receive +3 on athletics roll
EX	receive +4 on athletics roll
CS	receive +5 on athletics roll

3 Healing Essence

The character can focus his internal energies in order to correct the flow of essence in another person, thereby healing injuries previously sustained. The amount of wound points recovered is based on the outcome.

Outcome

CF	lose 2
PR	restore up to 1
AV	restore up to 2
GD	restore up to 3
EX	restore up to 4
CS	restore up to 6

3 Thunderclap

The character can focus his internal energies in order to release a loud

booming sound with any punching attack. The attack cause no extra damage to his opponent, but will surprise anyone who hears it—they must make a *benign dementia* roll. Even if they succeed at the roll, witnesses are still surprised if they have not yet acted.



4 Seizure

The character can extend his internal energies to an another person or object like an elastic band which springs back to the character, carrying the target as well. By using this power, the character can make people and objects fly through the air towards him which he may then attempt to catch or dodge with an athletics roll. The difficulty is based on range and modified by the size of the object.

Range

⚡PB	5 feet
⚡S	10 feet
⚡M	20 feet
⚡L	35 feet
⚡E	50 feet

Difficulty

⚡1	cup-sized
⚡2	person-sized
⚡3	car-sized

4 Suppression

The character can extend his internal energies to another person, causing their own energies to become slightly scrambled. This results in their reduced capacity to use endowments and they receive a number of penalty dice on their next endowment roll based on the outcome. In addition, the target's automatic endowments may not be used for one turn.

Outcome

CF	receive -2 on his own roll
PR	receive -1 on endowment roll
AV	receive -2 on endowment roll
GD	receive -3 on endowment roll
EX	receive -4 on endowment roll
CS	receive -5 on endowment roll

5 Explosive Winds

The character can focus his internal energies in order to create an amount of kinetic force which can be projected at a target over a distance. The difficulty is based on range and the damage is indicated by the outcome.

Range

⚡PB	5 feet
⚡S	10 feet
⚡M	15 feet
⚡L	30 feet
⚡E	50 feet

Outcome

PR	inflict 1
AV	inflict 2
GD	inflict 3
EX	inflict 4
CS	inflict 6

5 Kindle

The character can focus and direct his internal energies toward a nearby flammable material, causing it to ignite. The flames will last until extinguished or burn themselves out normally. See fire rules ➡

6 Life Force

The character can replenish his internal energies so that he does not age, succumb to illness, or die by natural means. In essence, he becomes immortal, but may be killed by normal means. This endowment does not require a task roll; it is automatic.

LORE OF GENTLE TOUCH

0 Feathered Touch

The character has a particularly light touch and receives +1 on his next legerdemain roll. This endowment does not require a task roll; it is automatic.

1 Way of the Owl

The character can move quickly and quietly. He receives a number of bonus dice on his next stealth roll based on the outcome.

Outcome

CF	receive -2 on stealth roll
PR	receive +1 on stealth roll
AV	receive +1 on stealth roll
GD	receive +2 on stealth roll

EX receive +3 on stealth roll
CS receive +4 on stealth roll

2 Way of the Wind

The character can reallocate his body weight so that he can walk on surfaces without pressure and without leaving tracks. The difficulty is based on the type of surface.

Difficulty

SIM stone
AVG dry dirt/underbrush
CHA mud/sand
HAR deep snow/thin ice
IMP water

3 Way of the Cat

The character assumes a cat-like grace and receives a number of bonus dice on his next athletics roll based on the outcome. All injury received from falling is also reduced by half.

Outcome

CF receive -2 on athletics roll
PR receive +1 on athletics roll
AV receive +1 on athletics roll
GD receive +2 on athletics roll
EX receive +2 on athletics roll
CS receive +3 on athletics roll

4 Meld

The character can blend in with other faces in a crowd and cannot be recognized. More than ten people must be present for this to work. Any attempt to spot the character is contested by the degree of success.

4 Feathered Rise

The character can lift himself off of the ground up to five feet and hover for a number of minutes equal to his mythos rating. The character can not move horizontally unless he pushes off of an object or is pushed by another person.

5 Enigma

People cannot consciously remember what the character looks like after they have left his sight. They are

incapable of describing his appearance, although this information is still available in their subconscious and can be recovered under hypnosis or by reading their memories. This endowment does not require a task roll; it is automatic.

6 Celestial Journey

The character can disassociate his mental energies from his body and travel in an incorporeal state which cannot be detected by other people. He can pass through solid objects and travel vast distances in short times. This state may be maintained for a number of hours equal to the character's mythos rating and he will receive 1d6 for every hour spent past this limit. This damage may be recovered by resting for one hour for every wound point accumulated, however.

LORE OF ENCHANTMENT

0 Allure

People have an unconscious attraction to the character and are drawn to his presence. This attraction can be of a sexual nature or out of a desire for a platonic friendship, causing people to want to remain in his company. This endowment does not require a task roll; it is automatic.

1 Trinket

The character can change the function and appearance of any small, trivial item such as a comb, pencil, or cigarette lighter from one object to another.

2 Material Glamour

The character can alter an object's appearance, making it look like something else. This is purely illusionary, however; the object's true

image will appear on photographs and video. The difficulty is based on the size of the object and modified by its complexity.

Difficulty

SIM stone
AVG book-sized
CHA trunk-sized
HAR oven-sized
IMP bed-sized

- 1 rounded edges
- 2 full spectrum of colors
- 3 reflective
- 3 self-illuminated

3 Personal Glamour

The character can alter his own physical appearance, making others believe him to be someone else. This is purely illusionary, however; the character's true image will appear on photographs and video.

3 Glamour

The character can alter another person's physical appearance, making others believe him to be someone else. This is purely illusionary, however; the person's true image will appear on photographs and video.

4 Siren's Call

The character can create a compulsion to approach him (either of a sexual nature or out of duty) in any person with whom he shares visual contact. The compulsion is gone once the person has found the character. This endowment is contested against the target's willpower.

5 Heaven's Tone

The character can alter the apparent weather conditions. This is purely illusionary, but can act as a distraction to other characters. For example, a stormy night or cold, dreary day can cause dementia rolls to receive -1 or -2.

5 Resting Place

The character can put another person into a state of deep hibernation which makes him appear dead to even the most highly trained doctor. This will only work on relaxed individuals and cannot be performed while in combat or stressful situations. The person will awaken within a number of hours determined by the degree of success. This endowment is contested against the target's willpower.

Outcome

PR	1 hour
AV	2 hours
GD	6 hours
EX	12 hours
CS	24 hours

6 True Glamour

The character can alter the outward appearance of any object. For example, a book can have a different cover, but its contents are unchanged; or a sports car can have the body of a luxury sedan, but the engine and interior will remain the same. These changes are real and not illusionary. The difficulty is based on the size of the object.

Difficulty

EAS	book-sized
AVG	trunk-sized
CHA	oven-sized
HAR	car-sized
IMP	house-sized

LORE OF WARDING

0 Scarecrow

The character radiates a field of energy which prevents animals from approaching. This field has a radius equal to five feet for each point of the character's mythos rating. This endowment does not require a task roll; it is automatic.

1 Veiled Circle

The character can create a field of energy which makes all those enveloped by it invisible to those on the outside. This field has a radius equal to five feet for each point of the character's mythos rating and is present for a number of turns equal to the character's mythos rating. Any attempt to spot an invisible character is contested by the degree of success.

2 Protective Circle

The character can create a field of energy which offers protection to all those enveloped by it from endowments used by people outside of the field. This field has a radius equal to five feet for each point of the character's mythos rating and is present for a number of turns equal to the character's mythos rating. Any endowments targeted at a character inside of the field is contested by the degree of success.

3 Barrier

The character can create a field of energy directly in front of him which acts as a physical barrier (full cover). Whenever the character moves, the barrier moves with him, but it is always in front of him. This barrier is present for a number of turns equal to the character's mythos rating.

4 Siphon

The character can negate the power of an endowment or fundamental. The task roll for the target endowment or fundamental is contested by the degree of success.

4 Channel

The character can channel wounds directed at another individual to himself. The number of wounds is based on the degree of success.

Outcome

CF	lose 2
PR	channel up to 1
AV	channel up to 2

GD	channel up to 3
EX	channel up to 4
CS	channel up to 6

5 Sanctify

The character can remove all bacteria, viral strains, and toxins from food and drink.

6 Primal Law

The character can heal his or another person's wounds, as well as remove all infections and toxins. The number of wounds recovered is based on the degree of success.

Outcome

CF	lose 2
PR	restore up to 1
AV	restore up to 2
GD	restore up to 3
EX	restore up to 4
CS	restore up to 6

LORE OF SILENT CONTACT

0 Communion

The character can send and receive simple telepathic messages with other Unbidden who are knowledgeable of the Lore of Silent Contact. The maximum range is five miles and this endowment does not require a task roll; it is automatic.

1 Empathic Touch

The character can sense the general emotional state of another individual within sight and whether the person has any hostile intentions toward him. Task rolls involving physical contact receive 1.

2 Utterance

The character can transmit simple telepathic messages to other individuals within sight. This can only be used on someone who is willing to accept the message. Task rolls

involving physical contact receive .

3 Trespass

The character can read the surface thoughts of another individual within sight. If the target has accumulated penalty dice from dementia, they are also applied to this task.

3 Bewilder

The character can implant random thoughts into the target's mind, causing confusion. The target's next task roll receives a number of penalty dice based on the degree of success.

Outcome	
CF	receive +2 on next roll
PR	receive 1 on next roll
AV	receive 2 on next roll
GD	receive 3 on next roll
EX	receive 4 on next roll
CS	receive 5 on next roll

4 Torment

The character can implant terrifying and emotionally upsetting images into an individual's mind, causing great anguish. The target must make a *horrific* dementia roll.

4 Forge

The character can implant false memories into an individual's mind. If the target has accumulated penalty dice from dementia, they are also applied to this task. The false memory may be ignored by making an *earth shattering* dementia roll contested against the success of this endowment.

5 Vagary

The character can enter and manipulate an individual's dreams. Upon waking, a dementia roll may be required depending on the theme of the dreams.

5 Unveil

The character can delve into an individual's subconscious and discover

his personal demons and background. If the target has accumulated penalty dice from dementia, they are also applied to this task.

5 Enslave

The character can implant personal demons into an individual's subconscious. The rating of the personal demon is based on the degree of success.

Outcome	
PR	rating of 2
AV	rating of 3
GD	rating of 4
EX	rating of 5
CS	rating of 6

6 Gestalt

The character can call upon the power of other Unbidden in his immediate vicinity in order to make an endowment roll using the highest trait and skill rating of the group.

6 Soothing Touch

The character can heal another person's dementia as well as remove personal demons. The number of dementia points recovered is based on the degree of success. The difficulty to remove a personal demon is based on its rating.

Difficulty	
SIM	rating of 1
EAS	rating of 2
AVG	rating of 3
CHA	rating of 4
HAR	rating of 5
IMP	rating of 6

Outcome	
CF	lose 2
PR	restore up to 1
AV	restore up to 2
GD	restore up to 3
EX	restore up to 4
CS	restore up to 6

LORE OF CRAFTING

0 Celestial Map

The character can tell the time of the day, day of the month, month of the year, and year of the calendar by sensation alone. He can also determine his location relative to longitude and latitude by looking at any world map. This endowment does not require a task roll; it is automatic.

1 Avid Blade

The character can forge a bladed weapon (knife, sword, etc.) which inflicts +1 damage. This endowment requires the expenditure of five experience points per use.

2 Inspiration

The character can inspire other people to create works of art—music, photographs, paintings, and speeches. The target receives a number of bonus dice on his next design or performance roll based on the outcome.

Outcome	
CF	receive 2 on his next roll
PR	receive +1 on his next roll
AV	receive +1 on his next roll
GD	receive +2 on his next roll
EX	receive +2 on his next roll
CS	receive +3 on his next roll

3 Impervious Seal

The character can make any locking mechanism (including mechanical and electronic) or door impervious to being opened or broken. The lock or door can only be opened by characters with this endowment; an attempt by someone to open another character's seal requires a contested task against the original task's outcome. This endowment requires the expenditure of five experience points per use (creating seals only).

3 Protective Amulet

The character can forge an amulet

which protects its wearer from damage inflicted by a single source: wood, metal, or fire. The outcome of the task attempted to create the amulet determines its potency. This endowment requires the expenditure of five experience points per use.

Outcome

CF	wearer receives 2♠ per turn
PR	protects against 1♠ per turn
AV	protects against 2♠ per turn
GD	protects against 3♠ per turn
EX	protects against 4♠ per turn
CS	protects against 6♠ per turn

4 Mirrored Portal

The character can alter the nature of a portal (door, archway, etc.) from passable to impassable. For example, a door can be changed into a wall or

vice versa. This endowment requires the expenditure of five experience points per use.

4 Suppressive Amulet

The character can forge an amulet which suppresses the wearer's ability to use endowments. All endowment rolls attempted by the wearer are contested by the degree of success. In addition, no automatic endowments will work. This endowment requires the expenditure of ten experience points per use.

5 Mirrored Entity

The character can summon an entity which mirrors the appearance of any non-Unbidden. It has a distinct personality from that of the original, but can easily be trained by the

character. This endowment requires the expenditure of ten experience points per use.

6 Regenerative Amulet

The character can forge an amulet which regenerates the wearer's health. At the end of every turn, the amulet will restore a number of wound points to the wearer equal to the degree of success. This endowment requires the expenditure of twenty experience points per use.

Outcome

CF	wearer loses 2♠ per turn
PR	restore up to 1♠ per turn
AV	restore up to 2♠ per turn
GD	restore up to 3♠ per turn
EX	restore up to 4♠ per turn
CS	restore up to 6♠ per turn



Chapter Four

VIOLENCE

This is a game of personal exploration—psychological, social, and paranormal. How a character faces these aspects is dependent on his personality and ability. People resort to violence when they are afraid or determine that there is no other choice. While Unbidden should not be solely about violence, it is present nonetheless. This chapter will explain the proper procedures and outcomes when violence is required.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

When combat occurs, characters perform actions in blocks of time called turns. Generally, one action may be performed per turn. The game turn is an abstract measurement of time and the actual length is determined by the gamemaster, but each turn can vary from five to fifteen seconds. Turns are used to help regulate the game by providing a structured system which

allows actions and events to occur in a dynamic and simple manner.

Events within a game turn are broken down into steps. First, all characters involved in the exchange declare their actions for the turn. They can attack, defend, use a skill or endowment, or simply move or run away.

Once actions are declared, the gamemaster must determine the order in which characters may act. This is called the reaction order. The characters may then proceed to attack or use abilities in this order.

Each attack works like a skill task, consulting the success table to determine damage inflicted. Damage is then subtracted from the character's stamina. If a character receives an amount of damage equal to or greater than his stamina, he falls unconscious. Any further successful attacks directed at the character will kill him.

Once this process is completed, the other character(s) finish their actions. It then repeats until all parties have ceased hostilities.

DECLARATION OF ACTIONS

Each character present in the combat exchange must inform the gamemaster of his actions. These actions may be: ATTACK, DEFEND, USE SKILL OR ENDOWMENT, MOVE, RELOAD, or AIM. Players need not know what the others have planned.

Each character then rolls two dice and adds his reaction rating. This sum is called the reaction total and is compared to the other players' rolls. The roll is also modified by injuries, intoxication, and other factors (see below).

Modifiers

<i>wearing kevlar/armor</i>	-1
<i>knocked down</i>	-1
<i>surprised opponent</i>	+2
<i>holding many items</i>	-1
<i>holding bulky items</i>	-1
<i>injured</i>	-1 to -5

The players act in order from lowest to highest. If two or more characters get the same reaction total, the one with the highest perception rating goes first. If

they have the same perception rating, the one with the highest dexterity goes first.

All actions are affected by other characters' preceding actions in the same turn, since they do not occur simultaneously. A character suffers a penalty on his actions if he has received enough injuries to do so before acting in a turn. Likewise, if a character was incapacitated before he gets to act, his action is forfeit.

Declared actions can affect the way a turn plays out as follows:

Attack

The character must complete his attack.

Defend

The character must defend his position or wait in readiness. He may use the action to block, parry, or dodge an attack which then becomes a contested task against the defending character's degree of success.

Weapons may be used to block all weapon and unarmed attacks, while only non-weapon attacks may be blocked by an unarmed character. The character may perform another action at the end of the turn if he has not been attacked.

EXAMPLE

Jacob is attempting to block Donovan's punch. The outcome of Jacob's roll is a good success. Donovan's difficulty for the punch would therefore be challenging plus any other situational modifiers.

Use Skill or Endowment

The character must attempt a skill or endowment task.

Move

The character must attempt to move or run to a specific area, duck, jump, or dive. Ranged Attacks may also be attempted while moving, but with -2

on the task roll, and they do not receive aiming modifiers.

Reload

Weapons such as bows require reloading after each shot, while firearms require reloading only after its ammunition is exhausted. Reloading can be combined with the MOVE action only if the character does not run or sprint.

Typical Ammunition Capacities

Revolver	6
Semi-Auto Pistol	7 - 20
Rifle	10 - 100
Shotgun	2 - 5

Aim

The character must attempt to aim his ranged weapon attack giving him +1 on the next turn. Being struck by an attack causes a character's aim to be interrupted and he loses the use of the aiming bonus dice.

BASIC COMBAT TASKS

There are different combinations of traits and skills used to make attack rolls. These are referred to as the attack total. There are also combinations used to make defense rolls. The base difficulty for all rolls is average unless otherwise noted.

Strength + Brawling Attack

This is used for punch, kick, and grapple attacks.

Dexterity + Melee Specialty Attack

This is used to attack an opponent with a knife, axe, or similar weapon.

Dexterity + Sword Specialty Attack

This is used for sword attacks.

Dexterity + Firearms Attack

This is used for pistol and rifle attacks. The difficulty of these rolls is based on range. See Ranged Weapons later in this section ■■■.

Dexterity + Archery Attack

This is used for bow and arrow attacks. The difficulty of these rolls is based on range. See Ranged Weapons later in this section ■■■.

Dexterity + Staff Specialty Attack

This is used to attack an opponent with a staff, baseball bat, club, or similar weapon.

Dexterity + Athletics Attack

This is used for all thrown weapons such as rocks, knives, and spears. The difficulty of the attack roll is based on range. See Ranged Weapons later in this section ■■■.

Strength + Brawling Defense

This is used to block punches and kicks.

Strength + Staff Specialty Defense

This is used to block a melee or brawling attack with a staff or club.

Dexterity + Brawling Defense

This is used to parry punches, kicks, and grapples. Melee attacks can also be parried with bare hands, but the difficulty is challenging.

Weapon Ranges (in feet)

	ⒶPB	ⒶS	ⒶM	ⒶL	ⒶE
Thrown Object	15	30	45	60	90
Bow	30	75	150	225	300
Pistol	15	30	75	120	225
Rifle	15	30	90	150	300
Shotgun	15	30	50	100	150

Dexterity + Sword Specialty Defense

This is used to parry specialty attacks with a sword.

Dexterity + Athletics Defense

This is used to dodge thrown weapons or specialty attacks. Ranged weapons can also be dodged, but the difficulty is impossible.

RANGED WEAPONS

Since ranged weapons are used from a distance, their difficulty to hit is determined by the range to target as noted on the Success Table. Each range value includes distances from the previous range plus one up to the number listed. Ranges from closest to farthest are: point blank (PB), short (S), medium (M), long (L), and extreme (E).

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Various factors can effect the outcome of an attack. They can be environmental or situational in nature. The gamemaster is free to add bonus/penalty dice or change the difficulty of the roll in order to simulate special actions and situations. A few examples are listed below.

Target Moving

Ranged attacks targeting moving characters receive 1D.

Cover

Characters may take cover behind walls, boulders, and other obstructions for protection against ranged attacks. Characters shooting at targets taking cover receive 1D or 2D, depending on the quality of cover. Characters who are completely hidden from view may not be targeted.

Partial Light

Characters receive 1D on all combat actions attempted in partial light. Any attempt to attack in total darkness has a difficulty of impossible and only if the gamemaster even permits the attempt.

Aiming Ranged Weapons

Ranged weapons such as guns and bows can be made more accurate by spending time aiming them. If the character spends one turn aiming his weapon at a target he can add +1 to the attack roll. Weapons fitted with scopes, such as rifles, can be used to hit distant targets with better accuracy. The difficulty of the attack is 1 at M, L, and E when at least one turn is spent aiming at the target. The gamemaster may also add bonus dice to the roll for larger than normal targets or penalty dice for smaller targets.

Surprised Opponent

If a character is caught off guard, he may only declare defend or move actions and the attacker receives +2 on his attack. Surprise may occur if an opponent jumps out in front of a character or quickly readies a weapon and attacks. If a character is surprised from behind, he loses his action for that turn.

In/Under Water

Characters may fight while submerged in water. Combat situations that occur completely under water give the character -2 unless he has the athletics skill, in that case he only receives -1.

If the attacking character is not fully submerged, but is at least waist deep in water, he receives -1.

On the Ground

When a character is knocked down, he receives -2 on all combat rolls.

Armor

Attacks targeting characters wearing armor such as kevlar receive -2. If a

called strike is aimed at a location on the target's body which is protected by armor (for example, a bullet proof vest does not protect the target's arms, legs, or head), the attack does not receive the penalty die.

Injury

Characters receive -1 for each group of stamina blocks completely checked. This is applied to all rolls.

Dementia

Characters receive -1 for each group of intoxication blocks completely checked. This is applied to reasoning and willpower rolls only.

Injury/Dementia Modifiers

- ① first block
- ② second block
- ③ third block
- ④ fourth block
- ⑤ fifth block

ADVANCED COMBAT TASKS

Characters may also perform advanced actions which are particularly difficult or require special training.

Quickdraw

A character may attempt to draw his weapon and attack with it the same turn. The difficulty of the roll is 1D.

Second Weapon

Two weapons may be used in combat at the same time. Each weapon must be rolled for separately and the difficulty of each is 1D.

Second Attack

Two attacks may be attempted at the same target. Each attack must be rolled for separately and the difficulty of each is 1D.

Second Target

Two attacks may be attempted at different targets. Each attack must be rolled for separately. The difficulty of the first roll is 1 and the difficulty of the second is 2.

Called Strikes

Characters may aim for specific body parts while attacking. The difficulty of the attack roll is 1 for brawling and non-ranged specialty attacks, and 2 for all other attacks. Successful called strikes to the hand causes the target to drop his weapon. Strikes to the head by firearms can prove fatal if the gamemaster decides to play God, and he has every right to do so.

Grapple

Characters may pin opponents to the ground or lock their joints in order to immobilize them. All grapple attacks may be contested with a strength + brawling (or athletics) defense roll.

Characters may also choke their opponents once they have successfully immobilized them (from a grappling attempt, for example). See the asphyxiation rules later in this chapter.

Burst Fire

Semi-automatic firearms are capable of firing three round bursts which increase the damage inflicted by 2 when directed at a single target. The difficulty of this kind of attack is 1 at M or L. Any additional attacks attempted with this weapon receive 1.

Spray Fire

Automatic firearms are capable of firing a large number of rounds at a high rate (approximately twenty rounds). This increases the damage inflicted by 4 when directed at a single target. The difficulty of this kind of attack is 1 at M or L, and 1 at P and S. No other attacks are possible in a turn when spray fire is used.

Scopes

Rifles fitted with scopes can be used to hit distant targets with better accuracy. The difficulty of the attack is 1 at M, L and E when at least one turn is spent aiming at the target. The gamemaster is also free to add penalty dice if the target is unusually small (do not forget to modify for moving targets as well).

DETERMINING DAMAGE

Each type of weapon or attack has a set of damage values which vary by the outcome of the task. This damage reduces the character's current Stamina and the player checks off a number of stamina boxes on his character sheet (starting at the top-most group) from left to right equal to the damage.

If a character receives damage equal to or greater than his willpower rating in one attack, he stumbles backward and falls to the ground. He may not stand up until the next turn. While down, the character receives 2 on all combat rolls.

Fire

Characters on fire lose a number of stamina points equal to the roll of one

die. This occurs each turn until the fire is extinguished. Characters in enclosed areas must roll an additional die due to smoke inhalation.

Asphyxiation

Characters who are immersed in water longer than they can normally hold their breath (see athletics skill) receive 1 per turn. Characters who are being choked are not typically in a position to voluntarily hold their breath, so they receive 2 per turn.

EXAMPLE

Jody is attempting to hide underwater in a pool. She can hold her breath for 5 turns (willpower of 3 x 2, -1). She has already been holding her breath for 6 turns, so she receives 1 this turn and 1 for each turn after in which she remains under water.

Falls

Characters take damage equal to the roll of one die per eight foot drop if they have fallen more than six feet.

Characters falling into a body of water suffer damage equal to the roll of one die per eight foot drop if they have fallen more than sixteen feet.

EXAMPLE

Cindy has fallen 7 feet down a dry well. Since she has fallen more than 6 feet, she rolls one die. The result is a 2. This means that she receives 2. If

Weapon Damages (6)					
	PR	AV	GD	EX	CS
Unarmed	1	2	2	3	5
Rock	1	2	3	4	6
Club/Staff	1	2	4	6	10
Knife	1	2	3	6	8
Axe	1	2	4	8	10
Sword	1	3	4	8	10
Arrow	1	2	4	6	8
Pistol	2	3	5	8	10
Rifle	2	4	6	10	12
Shotgun	1	3	7	12	15
Assault Rifle	2	5	7	11	14

she had fallen 16 feet, she would need to roll 2 dice because the distance is equal to 2 eight-foot drops.

WOUND RECOVERY

Wound points are recovered at a rate equal to one-fourth the character's stamina rating (stamina / 4; rounding down) per week. Individuals with the Medicine skill may attempt to revive a character who has lost all wound points. Once revived, the character is then unconscious and may heal normally. There is no way to revive a character once a failed Medicine roll is made. The Medicine skill can also be used to help a character heal more quickly (*see medicine skill* ■■■).

Dementia points are recovered at a rate equal to one-fourth the character's dementia rating (dementia / 4; rounding down) per week. Individuals with the Psychology skill may provide treatment in order to help alleviate dementia or symptoms of mental illness or a personal demon (*see psychology skill* ■■■).

Permanent Scars

If a character was wounded by an opponent who achieved a critical success on his roll or was revived from near-death, there is a chance that his injuries will not heal properly. The outcome is determined at the end of an adventure by rolling one die and consulting the table below. All affected traits may be raised back to their original values through experience.

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1 | SMALL SCAR |
| 2-3 | DISFIGURING SCAR |
| 4 | MUSCLE ATROPHY
<i>The character's strength or dexterity rating is reduced by one. Do not forget to change the character's stamina or reaction rating, respectively.</i> |
| 5 | DAMAGED VISION
<i>The character's perception rating is permanently reduced by one. Do not forget to change the character's reaction rating.</i> |
| 6 | HEAD INJURY
<i>The character's reasoning rating is permanently reduced by one.</i> |





Chapter Five

THE DARKNESS



The Webster's II New Riverside Dictionary describes evil as something morally bad; wickedness; a cause of suffering or illness.

Although a source like a dictionary may not seem profound enough to encompass an idea as complex as evil, it is nonetheless a useful starting point to help define the Darkness and its agents (or entities). Most people living in today's society assert that evils are committed by others just for the sake of doing evil. Unfortunately, such is not the case with the Darkness. How can it be when agents of dark intent see nothing wrong with their actions?

Others often claim that the presence of evil is an argument against the existence of God. For example, the Christian God is supposed to be both loving and all-powerful, yet despite these characteristics, *He* seems to be unable or unwilling to prevent the countless acts of evil and innocent suffering in the world caused by the Darkness. This concludes that either God is not loving or not all-powerful, or

that God does not exist. If *He* did exist, *He* could stop all the suffering.

Unfortunately, like the very definition of the word evil, proving or disproving the existence of God based on evil's propagation is difficult at best and sheer folly at its worst.

Evil and the Darkness as portrayed in the world of *Unbidden* act independently of religious dogma and convictions; they are not in anyway related to the Biblical terrors which plagued mankind over two millennia ago. Some of the more righteous *Unbidden* may certainly believe the Darkness to be earthly manifestations of Biblical demons, but this is not the case. The abyssal terrors that pour through this world's inconspicuous gateways are inter-dimensional beings of great power, hunger, and deprivation. Whether they come from another world or another dimension is not important. What is important is that they are here to stay.

CHARACTERISTICS

As previously stated, demons are creatures of shadow and blackness, each a different substance and form. They are not like the garden variety you read about in the Bible—those with barbed tails, cloven hooves, horns, and red scaly skin. They embody principles founded on specific proclivities, such as discord, ignorance, fear, and hatred. Regardless of their physical makeup, most of the entities comprising the Darkness share similar characteristics.

For one, agents of the Darkness seek total control over their environments and seek to promote specific patterns of behavior and emotion in a particular manner. They want it to appear as if the patterns have arisen spontaneously from within the environment, and not as the actuality of their supernatural orchestration. It should be apparent that the Darkness feeds on base human emotions and seeks to perpetuate them whenever possible. Many may seem all-powerful and omnipotent, but this is not entirely true. (with the obvious exception being the Fates; more on them later).

Each Unbidden will eventually come to hold certain aspects of the Darkness' nature and unnatural existence as truth. There are several assumptions which are held as gospel when describing the characteristics of the Darkness.

1. *Demons are immortal, but not eternal. They can certainly withstand inhuman amounts of physical trauma and seem impervious to physical attacks. This does not mean that demons cannot be banished entirely, however. An Unbidden's best weapon against the Darkness is his endowments.*
2. *They are powerful, but not omnipotent and thus are limited in their approach to dealing with the Unbidden. While a demon can ruin a mortal on a whim, it cannot foresee nor necessarily prevent its*

own demise at the hands of a worthy opponent.

3. *Agents of the Darkness are knowledgeable and possess a keen intellect, but they are not omniscient. Certainly, a demon that has been around for thousands of years has much knowledge at its command, but that does not necessarily make it all-knowing of every earthly proclivity. Indeed, many demons fail to understand the complexities of the human mind. This is understandable, since they only see mundane folk as food and toys.*
4. *Demons are unchanging and immaterial entities which do not grow up physically or age as mortals do.*
5. *All demonic entities are volitional, having a will of their own and unique desires. This is why there is no discernable hierarchy to the Darkness. It is not as if Fiends take orders from the Fates, who in turn take orders from a higher power. Most seem determined to operate alone and become territorial when confronted with others of their ilk. The exceptions to this are Screamers and Hordes, who frequently hunt in packs.*
6. *Most agents of the Darkness are not immaterial and are capable of touching, moving, and affecting our physical world. That being said, they still operate exclusively from the shadows so as to not betray their presence to mortal senses.*
7. *The Darkness is comprised of evil, perverse, and depraved spirits—the very natures in which they have been hardened. Agents of the Darkness are wretched and miserable, having been separated from emotions like happiness, love, and passion. As Loremasters are fond of saying, their's is a kingdom, not of light, but of darkness.*
8. *Demons are incapable of doing good and will never willingly perform a good deed, unless it causes some evil in the end.*

MOTIVATIONS

In a large sense, the Darkness may be described as the sum of the opposition

to the benign desires and needs of mortals. There is no aspect of human life in which its presence is not felt and the discrepancy between what is and what ought to be has served to hide their presence from billions of people.

With regard to the nature of the Darkness' evil, its motivations stem from performing acts of physical evil which cause harm to mortals. These acts can take the form of bodily injury, thwarting their natural desires, or preventing the full development of their abilities. The manifestation of these acts can be physical (sickness, accident, death, etc.) or social (poverty, oppression, and prejudice). The result of these manifestations can cause mental suffering in the form of anxiety, disappointment, remorse, and mental illness.

SCHEMES

Agents of the Darkness are tempters. They seek to lead mortals into evil and misery. Demons are not necessarily drawn toward people of exceptional evil, however. Their victims come from all walks of life and live all kinds of different lifestyles. Corrupting or tormenting someone who already possesses immoral proclivities is an easier task, but nonetheless, the Darkness' influence knows no bounds.

Typically, once a demon marks someone as a target, it begins to appeal to that individual's weaknesses by influencing him by way of his dreams (in the case of Nightmares and Familiars) or emotions (in the case of Fiends, Fates and Hordes). The Darkness' schemes are very subtle and entities never make their presence known unless warranted by extreme circumstances.

Once a person has become host to an agent of the Darkness, his base emotions will become exaggerated and amplified—a victim may become more

fearful over the course of days, months, or years, until finally he is pushed to the edge of full-blown paranoia. Some might experience a developing rage, growing in intensity until they explode into a killing rampage. Others grow catatonic as their once harmless bout with depression strangles them from within. Regardless of the outcome for the victim, once the demon has pushed a mortal over the edge, it moves on to the next. In some cases, it will continue to haunt the victim and feed off the emotions of those his host affects.

In instances where the Darkness targets exceptionally upright and moral people (*yes, there are some left in the world*), they will use their abilities to actually bestow a moral weakness on the victim which they can further exploit. A demon will particularly enjoy causing the embarrassing and often devastating fall from grace of the victim, destroying personal lives and credibility in the process.

TRAITS

Agents of the Darkness use traits just like regular characters. They even have a mythos rating, although it is used to describe their malevolent energy (used for banes, the equivalent of endowments for the Darkness) rather than their connection to the Secret Stories. In reality, both uses of the mythos trait stem from the same source, but like everything else in reality, one's perception determines how that source is used.

There are no set guidelines for creating agents other than they may not use endowments unless otherwise noted. They are meant to give characters a run for their money, so the gamemaster is free to create his own mix of traits, skills, and banes to challenge players. There is also a list of ready to use entities at the end of this chapter which can be used as-is (choose skill and bane ratings

or roll two dice to determine their values randomly) or modified as needed.

Since these creatures of the Darkness feed off base emotions, they become more powerful as people around them gain dementia. Agents cannot gain dementia on their own, but do track the number of dementia points they witness being received by mortals and Unbidden. For every five points witnessed, they receive **1** on all willpower tasks and mythos tasks directed at mortals (non-Unbidden). Dementia can be a vicious cycle—as a mortal reaches closer to madness, the Darkness becomes stronger, and as the Darkness becomes stronger, mortals are in even more danger of being driven mad.

EXAMPLE

*Jerome (an Unbidden) has just received 3 points of dementia from witnessing what appears to be ghostly lights following him. Since this was caused by an agent of the Darkness purposely, it now receives 3 points of dementia. Patty, who is a mortal nearby has just had a terrible fright after stumbling upon a bloody crime scene; she gains 4 points of dementia and so does the entity since it has been following her for this very purpose. The entity now has 7 (3 + 4 = 7) points of dementia. Since this has filled one complete group of boxes, the entity can apply **1** on mythos tasks directed at only the mortals present (it can still use the **1** on any willpower task).*

	+1
	+2
	+3
	+4
	+5

BANES

In most cases, the use of banes requires a successful bane task. This is performed in the same manner as an endowment task (mythos + bane ratings). Characters witnessing or experiencing banes (just like endowments) must make a dementia task with a difficulty based on the

entity's mythos rating. This goes for both Unbidden and mortals alike.

Bounding

This bane allows a demonic entity to leap great distances with little effort. The effect can be quite spectacular. When used, the demon can jump forward a number of feet equal to ten times its strength rating.

Chilling Touch

This bane gives an entity the ability to inflict damage upon a victim simply by touching him (determined by the outcome). Although contact with the entity is painfully cold, the actual damage is supernatural in nature.

Outcome

PR	inflict 1
AV	inflict 3
GD	inflict 4
EX	inflict 5
CS	inflict 8

Craze

Using this bane, an entity can force itself into a crazed state, requiring violence and gore. When activated, all strength, dexterity, reaction, and willpower tasks made by the entity receive a number of bonus dice as determined by the outcome. This lasts for a number of turns equal to its mythos rating. Once the craze ends, the entity receives **1** on strength, dexterity, reaction, and willpower tasks for a number of turns equal to six minus his mythos rating.

Outcome

PR	receive 1 on tasks
AV	receive 2 on tasks
GD	receive 3 on tasks
EX	receive 4 on tasks
CS	receive 5 on tasks

Dark Airst

This bane allows an entity to defy the laws of gravity and levitate short distances or cling to walls and ceilings. This can be due to prehensile

or insect-like appendages, or just a strange supernatural occurrence.

Dark Armament

This is a catch-all bane which indicates that the entity has some sort of natural weapon, such as claws, fangs, horns, barbed tail, and the like. The damage can vary, but should use the damage charts for rocks, clubs, and knives.

Dark Aura

This bane allows a demon to create an aura of uneasiness around itself and its location. The radius of the aura is equal to ten times the entity's mythos rating in feet. Any mortal or Unbidden stepping within the bounds of this emanation must make a successful dementia task or receive a number of penalty dice on all tasks (determined by the outcome).

Outcome

PR	receive 1 on all tasks
AV	receive 2 on all tasks
GD	receive 3 on all tasks
EX	receive 4 on all tasks
CS	receive 5 on all tasks

Dark Cloud

This bane allows an entity to form and control a thick cloud-like mist of pure blackness. It can fill a radius as large as five times the entity's mythos rating in feet. The cloud will dissipate after a number of rounds equal to the entity's mythos rating. Traditional light sources cannot pierce this darkness and anyone operating within its dark embrace suffers from partial light penalties (See Combat chapter **III**).

Dark Emanation

With this bane, an entity can emit a particularly terrifying growl, scream, shriek, or demonic appearance. This is an automatic dementia task for anyone who witnesses and the difficulty is determined by the entity's

mythos rating (a minimum difficulty of challenging). This bane requires no skill task.

Dark Instincts

This bane provides an entity with **+2** on all reaction rolls when no Unbidden are present. Should even one Unbidden be present, the entity only receives **+1**. This bane requires no skill task for the reaction bonus. Alternatively, the entity can choose to take an extra action in a turn, but must make a successful task roll to do so.

Dark Movement

Whether the entity has bat-like wings or a ghostly form, this bane allows it to take to the air. This bane requires no skill task.

Dark Paralysis

This is a powerful bane which causes a part of a victim's body to become completely rigid. In order to use this bane, an entity must physically touch its target. If successful, the body part remains paralyzed for a number of turns equal to the entity's mythos rating. Additionally, the victim receives **2** on all tasks which require the use of that body part. This is contested with a composure (or willpower if unskilled) roll against the outcome.

Dark Pestilence

This bane is used to cause a victim to contract a disease which strikes immediately. The entity may infect the victim with any number of diseases including, but not limited to, *Bubonic Plague*, *Ebola*, *Hepatitis*, *Sweating Sickness*, *Botulism*, *Cholera*, *Dysentery*, *Malaria*, *HIV*, and the like. These diseases should cause both stamina loss and dementia to set in. Since this disease is administered via supernatural means, traditional medicine will not work in treating it. A character infected with this bane

must be healed by the use of endowments only.

Dark Pleasures

An entity possessing this bane has an extremely high pain threshold. In fact, at times, the entity takes pleasure from the pain it feels. Because of this, any bonuses which the entity has received due to dementia can be used to cancel out penalties from injury. This bane requires no skill task.

EXAMPLE

*An entity receives **2** because of stamina loss. It also receives a bonus of **+1** (for willpower tasks and mythos tasks targeted at mortals) because of the dementia it has accrued. The **+1** from dementia cancels out **1** from stamina, leaving a penalty of only **1** due to stamina loss.*

Dark Presence

This bane allows an entity to mask itself from human vision or video equipment. This does not work on animals, and children who may be given the opportunity to make a perception roll in order to see through the illusion. The entity can remain invisible for a number of turns equal to its mythos rating, but cannot perform any offensive actions unless it wishes to drop its shroud. This bane requires no skill task.

Dark Reverie

This bane allows an entity to take control of its victim's body and mind. This makes it possible to shut down essential organs, causing a painful death. A successful task causes a vital organ to shut down in a number of hours equal to the roll of one die. For example, the shutdown of the heart or lungs will kill a character in a matter of minutes. The targeted character may circumvent its effects by immediately fleeing the area and making a successful composure task. Bear in mind that the entity will try to prevent this at all costs.

Dark Senses

Unbidden who move about in spirit form are invisible to the senses of mundane folk, but not agents of the Darkness with this bane—the entity can see and hear astral travelers who are otherwise undetectable to normal perception. This bane requires no skill task.

Dark Shade

This bane allows an entity to blend in with dark and shadowy backgrounds. While it is not completely invisible, the entity can move about undetected unless someone is actively looking for it and makes a successful perception task with a difficulty determined by the outcome.

Outcome

PR	receive ❶ on perception task
AV	receive ❷ on perception task
GD	receive ❸ on perception task
EX	receive ❹ on perception task
CS	receive ❺ on perception task

Dark Swarm

This bane causes a swarm of small, shadowy sprites to encircle a victim. They appear from the shadows as if a valve is opened, releasing a flood of incorporeal shapes. These imps cannot be attacked by physical means nor can they cause physical harm. Instead, they attempt to annoy, confuse, and get in the way of their victim. This causes their victim to receive ❷ on all skill tasks for a number of turns equal to the entity's mythos rating. The swarm also prevents a victim from successfully aiming firearms. This bane requires no skill task.

Dark Touch

This bane allows an entity to corrode metal-based structures and objects. If used against something the size of a cup, weapon, or lamp, it will disintegrate in two turns, often taking the appearance of metal shavings let

loose from a magnet. This bane requires no skill task.

Decay

This bane gives an entity the ability to cause part of a victim's body to decay upon touch. This not only causes an initial form of damage to the victim, but he also receives 1☉ per turn until healed (he may not be healed by normal means—only endowments can be used to heal this damage). The physical decay is quite obvious and

should prompt a dementia task by anyone looking at it.

Outcome

PR	inflict 1☉ initially
AV	inflict 2☉ initially
GD	inflict 3☉ initially
EX	inflict 4☉ initially
CS	inflict 5☉ initially

Dreamsend

An entity with this bane is able to communicate with a victim through dreams or waking visions. This is not



used to scare a victim into submission, but rather, is a preferred method of communication with folk under the influence of a Familiar, Nightmare, or Incubus. This bane requires no skill task unless resisted by a victim. In that case it is contested with a composure (or willpower if unskilled) roll against the outcome.

Hardening

This bane increases an entity's resistance to one form of injury. It could be cold, heat, electricity, or even kinetic (projectile) based damage. Treat this as if the entity is wearing armor. This bane requires no skill task.

Hellfire

This bane gives an entity the ability to launch balls of fire at targets. No skill task is required to generate the fire, but an athletics task is required to hit the target. In order to determine damage, roll a number of dice equal to the entity's mythos rating.

Insomnia

This is a favorite of many agents of the Darkness. Insomnia prevents a victim from sleeping for a number of days equal to the entity's mythos rating. The victim gains 1 for every day he goes without sleep.

Life of Darkness

Using this bane, an entity can see in perfect darkness and is not required to take penalties for operating in partial or no-light conditions.

Night Terrors

Some entities such as Nightmares, are fond of torturing their victims through recurring night terrors and horrifying visions. When targeted with this bane, the victim is plagued with disturbing and terrifying dreams on a nightly basis. As a result, he must make a dementia task with a difficulty determined by the entity's mythos rating each night he is afflicted. This bane requires no skill task.

Renewal

This bane allows an entity to regenerate itself by removing two points of dementia in order to restore one point of stamina. This bane requires no skill task.

Soulless

This bane allows an entity to steal the life essence away from a victim. A successful physical attack (requires physical contact) not only inflicts damage to the victim, but the entity can also drain one point from any of the victim's traits. Traits reduced in

this manner may only be restored by expending experience points (see *Character Advancement* ■■■).

Spoil

This bane allows an entity to cause large quantities of food and drink to become spoiled. A successful skill task by a nearby entity indicates how much time must pass before the food spoils.

Outcome

PR	spoilage takes 4 hours
AV	spoilage takes 3 hours
GD	spoilage takes 2 hours
EX	spoilage takes 1 hour
CS	spoilage is immediate

AGENTS OF THE DARKNESS

Familiars

Familiars are impish creatures who influence mortals interested in learning the *black arts* of witchcraft and sorcery. Unlike other agents of the Darkness, Familiars adopt physical forms (usually as a terrestrial animal) and contact their victims in the flesh or by way of their dreams. Since the Darkness does not imbue or lend powers to any mortal,

Familiars

4 Dexterity	2 Reaction	6 Perception
3 Strength	5 Mythos	5 Reasoning
6 Willpower		

Stamina: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

Dementia: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

Banes & Skills

Dark Armament (claws)
Dark Movement (wings)
Dark Reverie
Dark Senses
Dark Shade
Dreamsend
Hardening
Life of Darkness
Renewal
Brawling (4-7)
Stealth (6-10)
Performance (8-12)

Fiends



Banes & Skills

Dark Armament (claws)
Dark Aura
Dark Cloud
Dark Emanation
Dark Instincts
Dark Presence
Dark Senses
Hellfire
Life of Darkness
Negotiation (8-12)

Familiars delight in making mortals believe that their powers are now the mortals' own. They are mischievous scamps who promise mortals dabbling in witchcraft unbridled power if they swear a blood oath and make sacrifices to the Darkness. Once bound by the oath, the Familiar slowly consumes and corrupts the soul of the mortal until he is either overcome by dementia or death.

Fiends

Fiends come in all shapes and sizes, and serve as the backbone of the Darkness' army of abyssal entities. They delight in propagating mortal violence and the misery which typically follows. Fiends do not operate in the open. Instead, they prefer to control their victims under cover of shadow and

darkness. Since these entities have no basis in our reality and ordinary folk are oblivious to them, Fiends can take on any form they wish. Most, however, prefer to embody the emotion they most enjoy and will adopt a form similar in conception. For example, a Fiend who is drawn to jealousy may manifest as forbidden love letters, mysterious night-time strangers, or even one of a spouse's ex-lovers.

Hordes

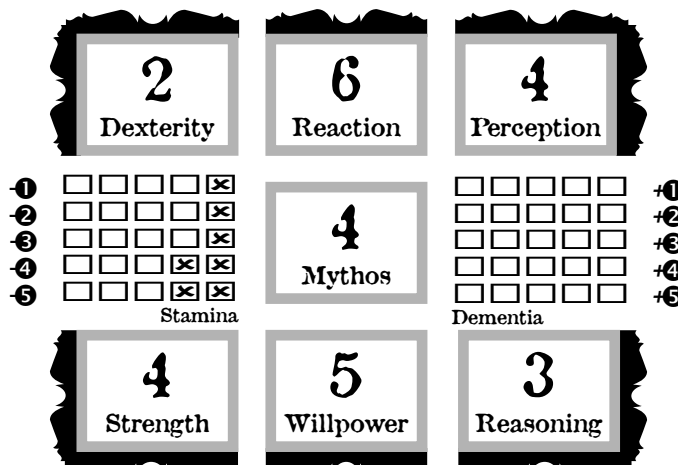
Hordes are undead monstrosities which are commonly found haunting the sites where large-scale violence and destruction once occurred. Some examples are where riots, gang wars, or mass murders may have taken place. They are also a common cause of these events as they stir up negative emotions

and instigate discord. Because of their unnatural and hideous appearance, Hordes often mask themselves behind the guises of frail and infirm drifters and vagabonds aimlessly wandering the streets and alleyways. Their sickly facades belie their true power as harbingers of death and wretchedness.

Incubi

These are unique entities which embody a single emotion, rather than running the whole gamut. Incubi (singular: *Incubus*) can either take on a male or female appearance—one of great beauty. They are masters of seduction and all the pains associated with love and lust. Incubi especially delight in making marriages and unions fall apart by tempting one or both of the people into an adulterous affair. They

Hordes



Banes & Skills

Chilling Touch
Craze
Dark Aura
Dark Cloud
Dark Senses
Dark Touch
Renewal
Life of Darkness
Brawling (6-10)
Melee Specialty (4-8)
Performance (5-10)

Incubi

①	□	□	□	□	⊗
②	□	□	□	□	⊗
③	□	□	□	□	⊗
④	□	□	□	□	⊗
⑤	□	□	□	□	⊗

Stamina

2
Dexterity

5
Reaction

5
Perception

4
Mythos

①	□	□	□	□	□
②	□	□	□	□	□
③	□	□	□	□	□
④	□	□	□	□	□
⑤	□	□	□	□	□

Dementia

3
Strength

5
Willpower

5
Reasoning

Banes & Skills

Chilling Touch
Dark Aura
Dark Emanation
Dark Movement (wings)
Dark Senses
Dark Shade
Dreamsend
Life of Darkness
Performance (8-12)
Seduction (10-12)

have also been known to topple entire countries and corporations through their lustful machinations.

Kinder

These entities, as their name implies, masquerade as small children who are in danger, alone, scared, or otherwise in need of assistance. They rely on their victim's feelings of sympathy and sadness to fuel their powers, and are extremely weak by the Darkness' standards. Their real strength is the need in mortals to come to the aid of the innocent. Kinders will go out of their way to remain in the presence of someone caring enough to want to help, leaving only when feelings of sympathy subside. They commonly haunt playgrounds, shopping malls, and fair grounds.

Nightmares

Nightmares are spirits who make their presence felt through a person's dreams (or nightmares, as the case may be). Because of this, they are some of the most difficult entities to hunt and defeat. The fact that they can become immaterial at will doesn't help either. Nightmares can only be attacked by those who are in an incorporeal state such as by using the Celestial Journey endowment (see *Skills and Endowments chapter* ■■■). Additionally, Nightmares can pass through solid objects at will and always move silently.

Plague Bearers

Plague Bearers are a unique type of agent which spread disease and pestilence in order to satiate the hunger for human emotions. There have been

several devastating plagues throughout the course of human history and all are thought to be the handiwork of several Plague Bearers. Like Fiends, these entities typically assume a form which resembles a certain concept. For example, some of the Plague Bearers responsible for spreading the Black Death appeared as walking emaciated corpses, their misshapen bodies littered with black, puss-filled sores.

Screamers

Screamers are human agents—rogue Unbidden who have either been unable to come to terms with their endowments or refuse to believe the Secret Stories. They wash away their fears and anxieties in a hazy sea of vices. Most are raging drug addicts, hell bent on taking their aggressions out on the

Kinder

①	□	□	□	□	⊗
②	□	□	□	□	⊗
③	□	□	□	□	⊗
④	□	□	□	□	⊗
⑤	□	□	□	□	⊗

Stamina

3
Dexterity

5
Reaction

4
Perception

3
Mythos

①	□	□	□	□	□
②	□	□	□	□	□
③	□	□	□	□	□
④	□	□	□	□	□
⑤	□	□	□	□	□

Dementia

2
Strength

4
Willpower

4
Reasoning

Banes & Skills

Dark Cloud
Dark Pestilence
Dark Shade
Dark Swarm
Insomnia
Night Terrors
Spoil
Soulless
Performance (6-10)

Nightmares

①	□	□	□	⊗	⊗
②	□	□	□	⊗	⊗
③	□	□	⊗	⊗	⊗
④	□	□	⊗	⊗	⊗
⑤	□	□	⊗	⊗	⊗

Stamina

3
Dexterity

3
Reaction

4
Mythos

6
Perception

①	□	□	□	□	□
②	□	□	□	□	□
③	□	□	□	□	□
④	□	□	□	□	□
⑤	□	□	□	□	□

Dementia

3
Strength

3
Willpower

5
Reasoning

Banes & Skills

Chilling Touch
Dark Movement
Dark Presence
Dark Reverie
Dark Senses
Dark Swarm
Dreamsend
Insomnia
Life of Darkness

Unbidden. Screamers are dangerous since they are indistinguishable from everyday folk. They can be created using the standard character generation rules. Screamers should have several temptations and triggers as personal demons, but since they have abandoned their brethren, personal demons associated with castes can be ignored unless it fits a back story used to introduce the Screamer as a nemesis for the characters. Hint, hint...

Fates

These dark agents deserve special mention, because they are some of the most powerful entities aligned with the Darkness. Fates should rarely, if ever, be introduced into a new campaign with starting characters, because even the most powerful Loremasters would (and

should for purposes of the power scale) have a difficult time combating one of the Fates. These cosmic beings are enigmatic and highly evolved—a species which is truly alien in its thought processes and motivations. They are quite perplexing to Loremasters, who wonder and debate why the Fates have not made bolder moves to completely and utterly destroy humanity. Their powers would easily allow them to do so.

Some suspect the Fates are planning to do just that and the horrors which currently threaten the world are simply here to soften the mortal world for the final blow. Others believe there is a definite hierarchy to the Darkness and it is the Fates who call the shots (there is no concrete evidence to support this theory, however). Whatever their

motivations, the Fates are terrible and awe-inspiring creatures with the inhuman ability to obliterate anything that gets in their way.

If you do decide to pit your players against the machinations of a Fate, be sure to make such an experience a challenging one at best. They have access to a wide range of powers and abilities which dwarf even the most dangerous Fiend. In fact, do not even bother using traits and skills for Fates, and they typically favor banes which inflict pain and suffering on mortals and Unbidden alike. The gamemaster should control their actions within the story and allow them to accomplish whatever is needed to further the story. Make the game story-driven when using Fates. Since they are incredibly powerful, they can pretty much do

Plague Bearers

①	□	□	□	⊗	⊗
②	□	□	□	⊗	⊗
③	□	□	□	⊗	⊗
④	□	□	□	⊗	⊗
⑤	□	□	⊗	⊗	⊗

Stamina

2
Dexterity

5
Reaction

5
Mythos

5
Perception

①	□	□	□	□	□
②	□	□	□	□	□
③	□	□	□	□	□
④	□	□	□	□	□
⑤	□	□	□	□	□

Dementia

2
Strength

5
Willpower

4
Reasoning

Banes & Skills

Dark Emanation
Dark Paralysis
Dark Pestilence
Dark Pleasures
Dark Swarm
Dark Touch
Decay
Hardening
Life of Darkness
Spoil

whatever they want. The characters should always have a chance, however slim it may be.

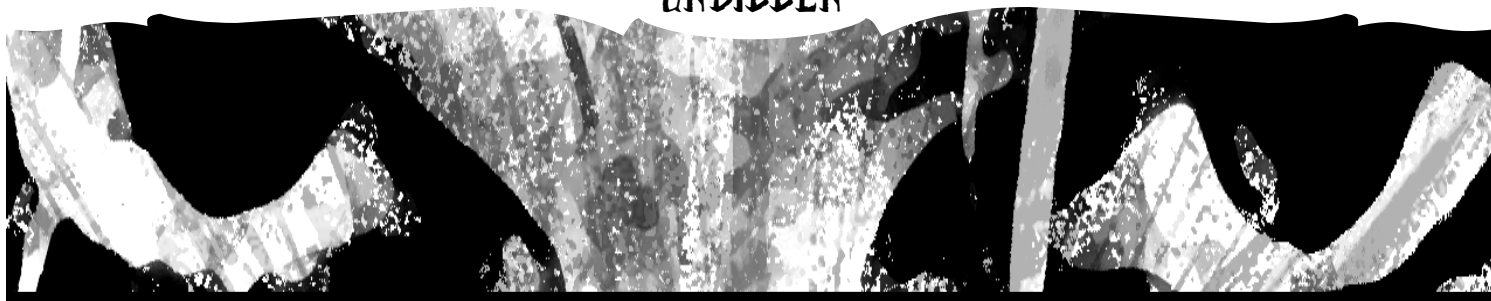
What else is out there?

The possibilities are endless. You can create anything which fits the concept of the story. There are plenty of banes to work with and it can be somewhat unsettling when players encounter agents modeled after mythological creatures and monsters (or villains) from horror movies and books (as long as you don't overdo it).

Creativity is the key. The more twisted and bizarre your creations are, the more fun your players will potentially have.

BANES

Bounding
 Chilling Touch
 Craze
 Dark Airs
 Dark Armament
 Dark Aura
 Dark Cloud
 Dark Emanation
 Dark Instincts
 Dark Movement
 Dark Paralysis
 Dark Pestilence
 Dark Pleasures
 Dark Presence
 Dark Reverie
 Dark Senses
 Dark Shade
 Dark Swarm
 Dark Touch
 Decay
 Dreamsend
 Hardening
 Hellfire
 Insomnia
 Life of Darkness
 Night Terrors
 Renewal
 Soulless
 Spoil



Chapter Six

SECRETS

AND LEGENDS

Acting as *gamemaster* for Unbidden can be both a challenging and rewarding experience. It is assumed that you are already familiar with the basics of refereeing a role-playing game and understand the ins and outs of good storytelling. If not, we recommend you pick up a copy of *Gamemastering Secrets* by Grey Ghost Press or *Robin's Laws of Good Gamemastering* by Steve Jackson Games. Both are excellent resources on how to run successful gaming events.

This chapter delves into the specifics of running an Unbidden campaign and which themes should be explored throughout. Bear in mind that these are only suggestions, not hard and fast rules. You will most likely have your own ideas on what type of game to run.

THE PATH TO KNOWLEDGE

There are two ways to catapult an Unbidden campaign—you can assume

that the player characters have already come to terms with their new life and are going to do something about it or you can roleplay each character's descent into initial madness and final revelation. This section offers advice on how to incorporate the characters' awakenings and introduction to the Secret Stories.

CHANGING OF THE SELF

At its core fundamental, Unbidden is a roleplaying game about the player characters and their newly discovered powers and personal goals. Since Unbidden is a character-driven roleplaying game, it makes sense to give players the option of exploring the human condition and what it means to transform from a mundane human being to someone with near god-like powers. This is facilitated through the introduction of two concepts which deal with personal conversion—metamorphosis and transformation. Both are interrelated; you cannot have one without the other.

Metamorphosis is about change on a physical and emotional level. The physical and emotional characteristics of the Unbidden are altered once they learn the Secret Stories, because they now command forces which were once relegated to those portrayed in fantastic tales and legends. So, it is essential to incorporate this theme if you decide to have your players roleplay their characters' awakenings. And despite traditional thinking, an Unbidden's metamorphosis is not the result of a curse placed as a consequence for a wrongdoing or offense against nature. If anything, this device should teach the players that a metamorphic event can and should salvage their characters from their basic instincts, because they know the Truth and can actually do something about it.

The characters' metamorphoses should illustrate their gradual conversion from mundane folk to one of the Unbidden. Initially, it should present a mystery to the characters—what have they done to warrant this

change? Did they do something wrong? Are they going crazy? Until they realize the full extent of the change, the characters will most likely be asking themselves, “*what can we do to prevent this from happening?*” Through it all, be sure that the players understand that their characters will become burdened by their new positions. As a gamemaster incorporating an awakening into an Unbidden campaign, it is your job to make the player characters’ lives complicated by rituals and prohibitions. For instance, they will never be able to hold down a real job and most will lose their friends and families.

Once the Darkness learns of their existence, the characters will be unable to operate within the normal boundaries of society. And while there is a way for the characters to solve their predicaments, it typically involves even more sacrifice because it will entail an acceptance of change.

FINAL TRANSFORMATION

As human beings, we are always trying to understand who we are, what our purpose in life is, and the essence of human nature. But sometimes we make discoveries which are horrifying. These discoveries are even worse for the Unbidden, because those answers are mostly available to them once they learn the Secret Stories—a malignant force manufactures reality. Thus, a mental transformation must take place, requiring the characters to search for information which can shed light on their new identities. More often than not, this requires them to explore the darkest recesses of the human psyche. At this point, it is your responsibility as the gamemaster to make sure the story concentrates on the nature of the characters’ change and how it will affect them throughout the experience.

The final climactic element to a player characters’ descent should contain a clarifying incident which represents the final stage of the transformation. The player characters should be able to understand the true nature of their experience and how it has affected them. Generally, this is the point where your plot can begin. This is an example of one Unbidden’s descent into awakening.

Michael Archer is a father and husband who works as a press relations specialist and editor for a large consumer advocacy group. Life is great for Archer—he has a nice house in the suburbs, a beautiful wife, a healthy and happy child, and a great job. It is the embodiment of the great American Dream.

One day, Archer starts having vivid, reoccurring nightmares. In fact, they are so terrifying that it starts affecting his daily life. He is afraid to sleep at night, and his personality changes as he grows despondent, weary, and fearful. Eventually, Archer’s family, friends, and co-workers grow concerned. His wife suggests therapy and his boss tells him to shape up or he will be let go before the next fiscal year.

As time passes, Archer begins to experience what he thinks are psychotic delusions. At first it is fleeting glances of dark shapes moving in the shadows, hearing faint whispers, and getting a sense that he is constantly being watched. This is the Darkness creeping into his life. In Archer’s case, it is a Nightmare haunting his dreams and feeding not only off of his fear, but also the fear which his family experiences as they witness him spiral downward mentally, physically, and emotionally.

This would normally continue at the whim of the Nightmare. Most likely, it would haunt Archer until he was committed, took his own life, or flew into a murderous rampage. Fortunately, for Archer, he has been predestined for a greater purpose and chosen to receive the knowledge of the Secret Stories and the endowments which accompany them.

Thus begins Archer’s physical metamorphosis. Now Archer can see and hear things which ordinary folks cannot.

*Eventually, he gets to meet the thing that has been haunting him (one thing of special note is that demons always keep close by to the object of their terror). It knows this and becomes fearful since that is **not** supposed to happen. Most likely, Archer will be attacked by a manifestation of the Nightmare or it will intensify its powers against him. Archer also begins to discover that he can command strange but subtle supernatural powers. Over time, these will become more powerful and overt.*

Archer now thinks that he has gone over the deep end and must make a choice—he can either embrace what has happened to him and learn more about it or he can deny all of it, feel sorry for himself, wallow in self-pity, and grow bitter for what has been taken away. Archer begins the transformation from mundane to an endowed entity.

If Archer were to chose the former, he would most likely be consumed with discovering the object of his terror so he can get rid of it and go back to living a normal life. Yet somehow he gets the feeling that life will never be the same. Like others before him, this is the turning point for Archer. People begin to look at him differently and feel uncomfortable around him. They will most likely think that he has gone crazy.

The confrontation with his terror, while learning of his new station in life, is a final clarifying incident that provides him with an understanding of what is really going on and how it has affected him physically, mentally, and emotionally. Archer is now ready to face his new life, or at the very least, accepts that he has no choice if he wants to survive.

TIME: THE ABSTRACT

In order to maintain ease of play, this game utilizes four abstract

measurements for time. They are *turns*, *scenes*, *episodes*, and *stories*.

Turns

Turns are primarily used for combat and contested actions. As previously mentioned, a turn represents a period of time from five to fifteen seconds. It is an approximation used to ensure that players may respond in an entertaining manner rather than a purely realistic one.

Scenes

Scenes are even more abstract than turns. They do not represent an actual range of time. Instead, scenes

encompass an entire exchange of dialog or events in one particular location. Their purpose is to allow a quicker passage of time, which in turn permits the game to run more smoothly, ignoring tedious events.

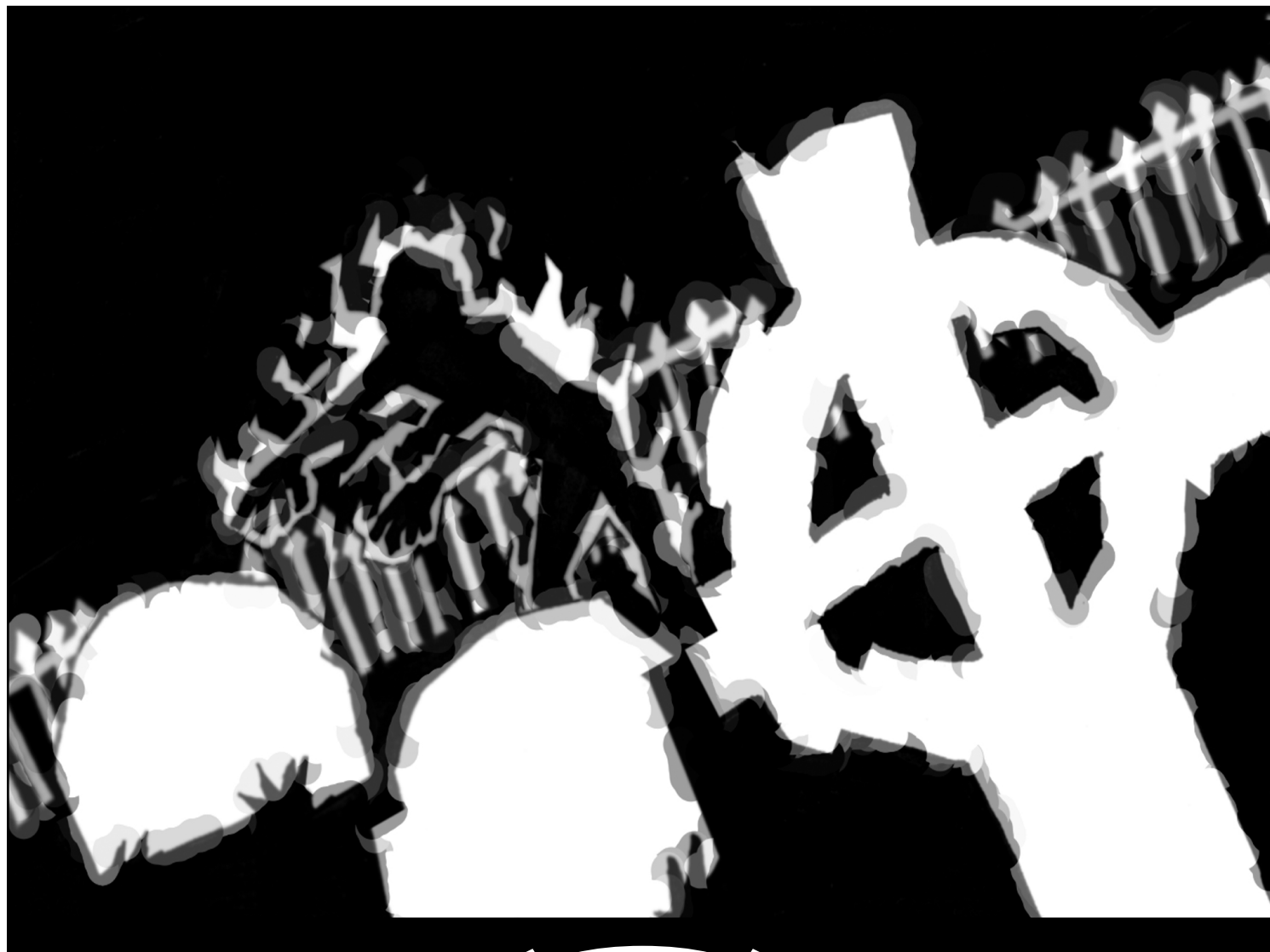
An example of a scene would be a heated debate between brothers which almost turns violent. Since neither brother has resorted to violence, we have no need to break their actions down into turns. Therefore, this scene covers an abstract measurement of time which is of little importance to the story—that is, the time spent is trivial, not necessarily their actions.

Episodes

Each time a group gets together to play, they are participating in an episode. Although it is not a measure of time, the term is used as a reference point and a break to award experience to the players. An episode is also referred to as a *gaming session*.

Stories

Stories do not technically measure time. They represent whatever period of time is used to complete the on-going story. Characters always gain experience at the conclusion of a story. Think of it as an entire season of a television program.



PLOT THEMES

The following themes lend themselves nicely to the mood of Unbidden. There is nothing wrong with a recurring theme so long as each occurrence introduces a new and interesting twist.

REVENGE

Many Unbidden adventures can be centered on revenge plots—situations which pit the player characters in retaliation against a foe that has committed some form of injury (be it physical, emotional, or mental) against either the player characters themselves or someone they know, such as fellow Unbidden, Loremasters, their now-abandoned family members, and the like. An important catalyst for the revenge plot requires the characters to take matters into their own hands, typically because traditional law enforcement agencies cannot be counted on to help matters. In fact, the authorities may even hinder the situation. Some examples of the revenge plot include:

- *dispensing street justice to a drug dealer who murdered a loved one*
- *tracking down an agent of Darkness that made a comrade-in-arms go insane*
- *planting drugs and informing on a rogue Unbidden who injured your Loremaster.*

It is important to remember that the player characters should always be at the heart of a revenge plot and more than likely, they will be forced to resort to vigilante-style justice against the target of their antagonism. In order to really get the characters involved, however, attention must also be given to the victim of the crime (unless the victims are the characters themselves). The victim is, of course, expendable, at least in terms of the plot, but enough importance should be placed on the person seeking vengeance so as to arouse

the sympathies of the player characters. If not done properly, there is no real reason for the characters to place themselves in a dangerous situation for someone they could care less about. This in and of itself can create problems, because many victims are ordinary folk completely ignorant of the Darkness and the threat it poses to the world. Because of who they are, the Unbidden are perpetually looked down upon by the very people they have been charged to protect.

So, how does a gamemaster make the characters care for people who could care less about them? Moral justification is one way to spur them into action. They may need to be reminded of this.

At one point, the characters were normal people living normal lives. They could just as likely have been the helpless victims of a heinous crime if it weren't for their endowments. The characters will doubtlessly be bitter, angry, and reluctant about their new lot in life, holding disdain for those who haven't learned the Secret Stories, but they can only look the other way so many times. Even the most hardened of Unbidden have heartstrings that can be tugged once and awhile.

Another option is to create a situation which just cries out for justice—something so heinous and debasing that it registers on a deep emotional level with the player characters. This is especially effective when the victim is completely undeserving of the violation. It is like saying, “*if it could happen to this person, it could happen to you, too.*” Just because the Unbidden are endowed with supernatural powers, it does not make them any less of a target. If the violation or crime is chilling or mortifying enough it could very well incite the player characters to demand swift and complete justice. Some particularly chilling avenues to explore are incidences involving children, the

elderly, those with mental or physical handicaps, and of course, members of the family who cast them aside.

RIVALRY

The Secret Stories are filled with rivalries between Unbidden and their demonic foes—trying to thwart the machinations of a superior foe in a position of power, as did a Fate named Ashuti who ascended into godhood in 1316 and began subjugating mortals in a small African kingdom, or racing to obtain an object of great power. Whatever the source of the rivalry, establishing the conflict and struggle is paramount to this plot theme.

Rivalry is perfect for providing continuity in long-term campaigns. It can pit the player characters against a reoccurring foe competing for the same object or goal; provide the foundation for a dispute against the prominence or superiority of another; or encompass two groups seeking the same goal or object, but with very different ideas as to how it should be used or the goal be accomplished.

An important element to the rivalry plot is that adversaries are relatively unequal in terms of strength and resources. For instance, the characters may have strength in numbers and through the diversity of their endowments, but they may face a single inhuman foe with powers of its own and a ferocity that is unmatched by any human antagonist.

Accordingly, the strength of the characters should constantly be tested as they attempt to usurp their rival. In some cases, they will be victorious in certain situations, while their foes will be in others. It is through this constant pendulum swing that the characters are sure to always remain on their toes lest they want the opposition to gain the upper hand. The struggle between the

characters and their foes should be a struggle of power curves, with one usually inversely proportional to the other—as the protagonist rises on one curve, the antagonist falls, and vice versa. Without struggle and conflict there can be no rivalry (or victory for that matter—success without challenge is a boring existence).

QUESTS

Plot themes which revolve around the quest are epic in scope and can also facilitate an extended campaign—it can be one with many twists, turns, and unexpected challenges and situations. Quests encompass the player characters' search for either something tangible (a person, place, or thing) or something intangible (knowledge, understanding, or realization). Quest plots also center around the player characters more than the plot itself, as their search reflects heavily on their character and usually alters it in some way.

This plot theme is perfect for gamemasters who like to base campaigns and adventures around the desires of the players and the directions in which they would like to see their characters advance and develop. Some may desire to find a way to return to their normal lives, but in the process, they realize that is not possible. Perhaps the players have something more general in mind, such as a desire for their characters to rid the entire world of the Darkness' influence or to amass enough power and knowledge of the Secret Stories to obtain the title of *Loxmaster*. In either case, the characters should each find themselves changed in fundamentally different ways at the end of the campaign.

The hallmark of quests is that the action is typically non-stop. The characters should constantly be on the move, searching for the object of their quest. In the process, they learn

something about the world and a lot about themselves. They may know what they want to accomplish, but they should not fully understand what lies ahead. The experience may provide them with something totally different from what they were seeking (an object, knowledge, or friendship).

EXAMPLE

Martin wants to regain a sense of normalcy back into his life by trying to forsake the Secret Stories and return to his family. In the process, however, he quickly discovers that no matter what he tries, the Darkness is always just around the corner, waiting for him to slip up. It will eventually become apparent that living a normal life is a delusion and he must now either reject the lessons learned or accept them by confronting the reality that presents itself.

The final outcome of the quest plot is that the players should find their characters changed in fundamental ways. Remember, the plot is about the characters' search, not the object of the quest itself, so it takes the form of self-realization for the heroes.

ACTION-ADVENTURE

Unlike the quest plot, an action-adventure revolves around physical action and daring-do on the part of the player characters. Instead of focusing on the characters during their journey, the action-adventure plot concerns itself with the actual excursion and all the excitement that entails. What this boils down to is that the adventure is a descent into the unknown. Some examples of the action-adventure plot include:

- *Unbidden battling Hordes and Fiends in dark alleys*
- *usurping Fates from their shadowy thrones*
- *laying waste to infested communities*
- *investigating hidden agent enclaves in faraway locales*

As gamemaster, you should carefully plot out events and locations which are equal parts dangerous and awe-inspiring, whether that awe is unbridled terror, macabre fascination, or wondrous enthrallment. Refrain from leading the characters by their noses, however, and make sure that your events and locations serve to further the story through continuity and logical progression. Of course, the characters can enjoy the events for all they are worth, but do not abandon cause and effect. The player characters are still important elements to the story and there will need to be a correlation between their actions and the plot—if you have the characters exploring an abandoned factory or sewer tunnels underneath the city, make sure you provide a logical reason for being there.

When mapping out the locations and the journey of the player characters, be sure to dispense as much detail as you can. It is not just knowing the names and location of places, but knowing the little details that make the action-adventure plot a thriving, living character in its own right. Details provide the players with an unparalleled immersion factor. It gives them the impression that their world is a real place—one populated with individuals who have their own agendas and motives, and one that continues to move forward regardless of what they do (although they can certainly influence the world around them by taking direct action).

PURSUIT

Playing the victim can sometimes be an exhilarating test of cleverness, cunning, and nerve. For the most part, the Unbidden have to constantly look over their shoulders or at least keep a keen eye on their surroundings—one never knows when the Darkness will make a bold strike. And while playing

the victim can get tiresome after awhile, there is no doubt that when used in moderation, eluding capture can be quite exciting.

Since this is a physical plot, the chase is just as important as the people who take part in it. Pursuit plots also rely heavily on dramatic twists and reversals, and the stakes are always high. For the Unbidden, surviving pursuit and turning the tables on the hunter can mean the difference between life and death. Pursuit plots also rely on copious amounts of tension. After all, how exciting can a chase be if the pursued get too far ahead of their pursuers?

If the characters are being pursued, it is very easy to make this tension a focal point of the scenario—as they try to elude a foe hell bent on running them down, the tension should increase as the pursuer gets closer. When they try to give their pursuer the slip, it stays with them. Tension is very, very effective and at its greatest just before it seems that capture is inevitable. Then suddenly something happens and the inevitable is foiled. This works just as effectively if the characters are the pursuers.

The key to making a pursuit plot successful is that it should always be unpredictable. That is not to say that events should not fit a specific pattern, but they should be varied and filled with enough surprises so that the players cannot predict what will occur next. Basically, stay away from clichés or at least apply new twists to the old one or your players may eventually catch on and avoid the situation entirely. This can be particularly devastating if your plot, or a major portion of it, depends on the characters plummeting to safety (for whatever reason). In the end, the pursuit plot should have a real danger of the pursued getting caught, while at the same time the pursuer should have a reasonable chance of catching the pursued.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

The following story seeds are based within the Los Angeles area and surrounding communities that have been outlined in the previous chapter. The adventure ideas are general enough, however, that gamemasters can place them in any city without destroying plot continuity. If you are a player, please do not read the entries below because your gamemaster may intend to use them.

BROTHER IN ARMS

A rogue Screamer and ex-convict named Michael Hauser has just recently escaped from the California State Prison in Sacramento after being imprisoned for more than a year on capital murder charges. Hauser was once a member of the Spook Town Compton Crips who used his endowments to slaughter rival gang members and innocent citizens alike with impunity. A group of Unbidden were able to stop his rampage and lead police to Hauser's eventual arrest. While imprisoned, Hauser's anger at his arrest due, in part, to the actions of the Unbidden, had festered. He has recently broken out of prison and is about to begin a murderous rampage once again. This time, however, his targets are the Unbidden.

The characters are drawn into the investigation once the killings start. Over the course of several days, the local media will continually broadcast reports of a killer stalking the streets of Compton and killing homeless people. Clues should lead up to the eventuality that the homeless victims are actually Unbidden. If the players need a little incentive, perhaps a loved one or a friend can fall victim to Hauser's vicious anger.

This plot seed can be potentially very dangerous for the characters, since they will be primarily moving about the

streets of Compton. Foes could include other Screamers aligned with Hauser, members of his old gang, or even law enforcement personnel investigating the ex-convict's killing spree. As for atmosphere, the characters will most likely be digging through the grimmest and darkest parts of the city—crack houses, gang hideouts, condemned tenements, abandoned alleyways, and the like.

FALSE PROPHET

Henry Valentine is a religious zealot and crackpot street-corner preacher. In fact, he has a permanent spot on Hollywood Boulevard and a reputation to boot. Many visit him just to hear his inane rants and warnings of impending doom and the inevitable Armageddon. The majority, including the police, see Henry as a harmless lunatic. Until several months ago, that may have been the case, but the street-corner rector is under the influence of a Fiend which feeds off resentment and fervor. In order to satiate its hunger, the Fiend has imbued Henry with a charismatic allure that draws in and enraptures fervent spiritualists.

One day, Henry stops preaching on his street corner and resurfaces as a spiritual leader of a movement calling itself the Church of Reunification. He and his followers begin a seemingly benevolent campaign of street ministry, establishing work exchanges with local organizations and traveling where they feel *God takes them*. Members claim their way of life is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ as found in the New Testament, but the truth is that the group (under the influence of the Fiend) is a psychologically destructive cult.

In reality, the Church has become dangerously misguided, often participating in pseudo-satanic ritual abuse that incorporates psychological,

sexual, or physical assault forced on an unwilling human victim and committed by one or more members according to a ritual prescribed by the influenced mind of Valentine. The group is hard to track because they are nomadic, but they mostly stay within the greater Los Angeles area, preferring to kidnap their victims in and around the downtown area when night comes calling.

Unbidden characters can be involved in this plot in several ways. Perhaps a Reunification member, trying to coax the character into the Church, approaches one of the them. Maybe someone close to the characters is kidnapped and later found mutilated in a city park. Another option is to involve a Loremaster—upon hearing of the Church and its innocuous message, the Loremasters become suspicious and ask a group of Unbidden to infiltrate the organization and learn of its true purpose. Whatever the case, the characters should eventually realize that Henry is not a wicked person at all, but rather a cursed mundane with an intrinsically harmless nature. Now, instead of having to deal with a religious sociopath, their opponent is a dangerous Fiend with many devout followers at its disposal.

WE SOLD OUR SOULS

Not only does Los Angeles have a thriving mainstream nightclub scene, but an underground one as well. One place in particular, Bar Sinister (an industrial nightclub located in downtown Hollywood) is a favored hangout of goth posers and fetish freaks. It is also the place to see Hollywood's most infamous techno band, *The Crux*.

The night after a particularly frenzied Crux concert at Bar Sinister, local news stations report of a riot occurring around the music of the techno band, in which six people die. Several weeks

later, another riot breaks out at the club during a Crux concert and more people are reported dead after being trampled by several hundred attendees. City officials are up in arms and many are screaming to have the club closed down permanently.

The truth is that it is not the club that should be held responsible for the deaths, but the band itself. Members of The Crux are actually under the influence of a Fiend that feeds off panic and alarm. It has found a way to imbue the music of the band with a dark power which fuels these emotions in people, causing them to riot and cause destruction. The fact that innocents are killed in the process is a bonus as far as the Fiend is concerned.

This particular scenario explores the dark side of Hollywood and all of its decadent glory. The city is a place where the brightness of Tinsel Town dims at night to make way for an underbelly of unbridled lust, deviancy, and perversion (depending on your mindset). These elements should be expounded and explored more fully as the characters enter Hollywood's debauched night scene.

BOOK OF THE DEAD

One of the characters's old friends contacts him, desperate for a late night meeting in secret. The friend will not say why he needs to meet the character, only that it is urgent and he is in desperate need of help. If the character agrees, he or she will be asked to meet the friend in the alley behind an abandoned movie lot in Burbank.

Once there, the friend approaches with a leather tome held tightly in both hands. Dispensing with pleasantries, the old friend shocks the character by stating he knows about the strange powers of which he is afflicted. While he does not understand them entirely, he

realizes that the character is probably the only one he can turn to for help. Dismissing the inevitable questions, the friend thrusts the leather tome into the character's hands and asks him to protect it at all costs. The character should be given a chance to examine the tome briefly. It is a digest-sized book roughly two-hundred pages thick, with a leather cover decorated with strange red-embossed symbols (almost Asian in nature). When the character looks up from the tome, he discovers the friend is gone.

The tome is actually a hand-written manual written by a long-dead Loremaster who perished at the hands of a Fate nearly one-hundred years prior. The manual contains graphic images of demonic monstrosities, depictions of human suffering, and strange text which cannot be deciphered. In actuality, the book is a Secret Tome, a recounting of the Secret War from ages past. Ordinarily, such a book would only be of interest to the Unbidden, except this book also contains a collection of arcane guidelines on how to banish the Fates.

The Darkness is originally unaware that the book has resurfaced, but that will not be the case for very long. When they find out, the character will become the target of a citywide manhunt for the tome and its new keeper. This plot is one of many unanswered questions—why has the book remained in hiding for so long? How did its existence escape the Darkness? And what happened to the character's friend after the book was delivered? Perhaps there is more to his story than meets the eye...the details are up to the gamemaster.

This scenario should take the characters on an exhilarating cat-and-mouse chase through the entire city as they dodge human agents in Beverly Hills, battle Screamer packs on the streets of East L.A., seek answers from

Chinese mystics in Asian neighborhoods, and implore the help of the enigmatic Loremasters who watch over the city.

HOCUS POCUS

Chinese immigrants living in Los Angeles' Asian communities have long had their share of organized crime, making life for citizens living in Chinatown, Little Tokyo, and Korea Town very hard indeed. In fact, there are several Tong outfits that control a good deal of the businesses in Los Angeles' Chinatown. Local law enforcement agencies know much about their members and illicit activities, but they are far from making any arrests. This is primarily because the folks living in Chinatown have adopted a code of silence in order to protect themselves from Tong reprisals should any of the gangs come under fire from police.

One of these leaders is an Asian woman named Lucy Chu who is not only one of the most powerful Tong leaders in the city, but also under the influence of a Familiar that has been haunting Chinatown for hundreds of years. Chu is one of only a handful of folk who have actually had contact with the Darkness and lived to tell about it. This is due, in part, because Chu is a sorceress obsessed with death and was able to contact a demon through a demonic ritual thousands of years old. Instead of killing her outright for discovering its existence, the Familiar made a pact with Chu—devise a way for it to feed upon the emotions of unsuspecting mortals and it would grant Chu unbridled power.

Ever resourceful, Chu had a massive theatre constructed in Chinatown called *The Great Star Theatre*. The main attraction is Chu's magic, where she constructs elaborate acts of illusion and enchantment for her nightly audience.

These strange powers which she claims to hold command over are actually those granted by the Familiar, which is a frightening proposition in and of itself, since there have been few recorded instances of folk being actually imbued with dark powers.

During her illusory act, Chu is able to charm a few select audience members whom she leads to a secret chamber under the theatre. As the other guests single out of the Great Star, the demon is summoned to the basement to feed upon the fear and terror which the allured guests experience upon seeing an agent of the Darkness in its true form. Eventually, the guests are murdered and their bodies disposed in ways which they will never be found. As such, local law enforcement has been unable to pin any murders or disappearances on Chu.

BLOOD URGE

Stephen Medula became fascinated with the art of tattooing since he stumbled into a tattoo parlor more than twenty years ago. Stephen taught himself the art of inking human flesh and eventually opened his own parlor in Westwood. Most of Stephen's work is influenced by a variety of Asian and Middle Eastern cultures and mythology. He is known as one of the best tatoo artists in the greater Los Angeles area.

A few years ago, he came into possession of an antique tattooing set crafted in the late eighteenth century. It was in pristine condition and according to the seller, an aged Chinese immigrant who owns a pawnshop in Chinatown, the set was extremely rare. Stephen began to use it on his customers, creating elaborate designs which mystified and delighted both young and old alike.

Stephen began to receive requests to do work with his antique tattoo set—his business and reputation flourished. Life

was good for the artist until a string of news stories began surfacing in Los Angeles about a number of people turning up mutilated. The police began to see a connection—all of the killers were adorned with fresh tattoos of a Middle and Far Eastern motif.

Unbeknownst to Stephen, the tattoo set was once a ritual object used by Malaysian sorcerer-priests in league with agents of the Darkness. When adorned with tattoos from the set, the priests would be able to contact their dark masters and open themselves to possession by Fiends and, in some cases, the Fates themselves. Once possessed, the demons could walk among humans in mortal guise. Most would embark on a campaign of perverse behavior,



including serial murder, torture, rape, and anything that would fuel their dark desires. When tired of their rampage, the demon would leave the host to his own devices. With the set back in use, Stephen is unwittingly creating human hosts for the Darkness to use to infiltrate society in human guise. Should the set fall into hands of Dark Agents, it could present disastrous and horrifying implications for the entire world.

PERSONAL DEMONS

Although there are only five types of personal demons, characters can possess any combination, with each one being unique and molded to the character. This lends itself to a rather customized experience for each character (and in the process, each player). While many examples of personal demons have been included as part of character generation (those related to the castes), a few more sample are listed below to aid gamemasters and players alike in creating facets of personality for characters and story extras.

Delusions

Delusions can take many forms and encompass either false ideological perceptions or imaginary stimuli. False ideologies cannot usually be altered without re-education by a trusted mentor. Imaginary Stimuli are almost impossible to cure and unless the person is willing to undergo therapy. There are rare cases where willpower alone is enough to overcome delusions, but such cases are rare and often accompany some sort of revelation. This can be simulated by expending experience points as described later in this chapter. Here are some common examples of delusions:

- *Satanism; deifying and worshipping the Darkness as false gods*
- *Grandeur; believing oneself to be of great importance or power*
- *Schitzofrenia; experiencing false stimuli such as seeing things which aren't there*
- *False Memories; believing oneself to have been abducted by aliens*

Fears

Fears can often be brought on by delusions, but the two are not necessarily intertwined. Fears range from slight insecurities to full blown phobias. They can manifest as just about anything. A few examples are:

- *heights, confined areas, darkness*
- *social interaction*
- *spiders, cobwebs, smell of must*

Triggers

Some things just set people off for no apparent reason. In fact, there is always a reason, but it is sometimes buried deep in the psyche of an individual. Deep emotional scars can resurface in a variety of ways and more often than not, they do so in an aggressive manner. The source can be just about anything.

- *disrespect; insulting one's parents or immediate family*
- *gossip; discussing a person's private life behind his back*
- *impatience; having to wait for something or someone*
- *failure; perhaps the person is spoiled and can't stand losing or otherwise failing at a task*

Temptations

Succumbing to desire is one of man's worst vices. He is always in pursuit of happiness, but in order to achieve this goal, man will sometimes partake of that which is illegal, morally wrong, or harmful just to satisfy his urges. Temptations are as diverse and abundant as the sun is hot. Here are a few examples:

- *substance abuse; tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription drugs*
- *nervous disorders; ticks, patterns of speech*
- *selfishness, greed, lust, zeal*

Secrets

Everyone has something to hide. This can range from hiding an embarrassing moment or preventing others from finding out about a criminal record. Irregardless of the subject matter, a secret revealed can not only be devastating psychologically, but also socially as it can lead to excommunication or even incarceration.

- *family history of mental illness; exposure may lead to embarrassment*
- *character is a bank robber; exposure may lead to arrest*
- *true intentions; character has been hurt in the past by revealing his true feelings*
- *experienced the supernatural; exposure may result in being ridiculed by his church or community*

DEMENTIA

Once a character has gained a number of dementia points equal to his dementia rating, he immediately develops a mental illness and his dementia level is reduced to zero. Be warned—just because his dementia has now been reset, it does not mean that the character is not disturbed. The new mental illness can either be the focus of the current scene, taking priority over all other events, or manifest slowly, but in very obvious ways, often interfering with the tasks at hand. While the former method is the most obvious and shocking, the latter offers more in the realm of character development and roleplaying potential. It may also prove to be more interesting as the other

players will most likely experience an epiphany at a later time, realizing just how powerful the source of the shock really was. Recognizing the character's patterns of behavior which lead to his illness only after it is too late can lead to their own dementia gain due to extreme guilt or depression. Such is life—a vicious cycle of cause and effect.

Mental illnesses can be very debilitating to a mortal, but for Unbidden, they are even worse, considering the enormous pressure they are already under. It is no wonder why many of the Unbidden suffer from mental illness.

The exact nature of a mental illness is left to the gamemaster, but the following examples should illustrate just how devastating they can be.

Addiction

It may not solve all problems, but at least it will numb them for awhile. A character with this illness simply gains a *level six temptation*. He turns to some form of addictive substance (alcohol, illegal or prescription drugs, etc.) in order to relax and try to forget all the horrible and irreconcilable images in his head.

Amnesia

Some horrors are not meant to exist. There eventually comes a point when the psyche becomes overwhelmed with harmful memories and impulses. In order to maintain a grasp on reality, the psyche either blocks access to or completely erases all traces of the source of turmoil. These are likely to be the memories associated with the events leading up to the onset of dementia. A character with amnesia will not be able to recall these events no matter the situation. Hypnosis and some endowments may be able to uncover the memories, but this would probably create even more problems (like more dementia).

Anxiety

Never approach the darkness. A character with this mental illness is uneasy when attempting new tasks. This is a result of his past actions which seemed to bring only dire consequences. This is the equivalent of a *level six fear* and affects any task or situation at which the character has not previously experienced.

Delusional

Out of madness comes insight? A character with this illness simply gains a *level six delusion*. It can be anything and everything—the character may begin to believe (and experience in his mind) that he is abducted by aliens on a regular basis or that FBI agents have recruited him to conduct surveillance on a suspected terrorist. The gamemaster may either restrict this illness to one specific recurring delusion or allow the character to experience new and different ones every so often. Either way, this can be one terrifying experience not only for the one with the illness, but also for others around him.

Fear

Fears and phobias are what hold us back. Whatever event or entity which sent a character over the edge has managed to burn itself into his psyche. This is the equivalent of a *level six fear* and affects events and situations which are even remotely connected to the cause of the illness.

Insecurity

Once they know you are crazy, your life is over. A character with this mental illness has come to the realization that if he ever speaks of the situation which caused his dementia, he will be institutionalized. Therefore, he never speaks about it to anyone—not even other Unbidden. This is the equivalent of a *level six secret* and affects the knowledge of the experience which drove him over the edge.

Multiple Personalities

Sometimes the only way to deal is to hand your problems over to someone else. A character with this mental illness gains a split personality. A new character (or characters) must be created by the gamemaster and hidden from the player. The character will begin suffering from blackouts, missing time, and possibly feelings of *deja vu*.

Night Terrors

Real scares never fade. A character with this mental illness experiences terrifying nightmares which replay the events leading up to his breakdown. The gamemaster should penalize all tasks attempted by the character by **1** for a duration of a few hours after he wakes. This penalty will disappear once the memory of his nightmares fade during the day. Should anything happen to the character which even slightly resembles what was in his nightmares, he must attempt a dementia task for benign situations.

Paranoia

Nothing is coincidence. Everything leading up to this moment has been planned. How could it not have been? Everything is closing in and everyone around the character is responsible. A character with this mental illness is practically incapable of cooperating with others without suspicion and great



care. He cannot turn his back on others or even walk down the street without waiting for a passer-by to attack. The character lacks trust and will be difficult to play. Only assign this mental illness when you are confident that the player controlling the character is capable of pulling it off. This is the equivalent of a *level six delusion*.

Rage

Some people lash out when frightened. As with the *fear* illness, the cause of a character's dementia has buried deep into his psyche, but instead of causing fear, it creates an irrational loathing and desire for violence. This is the equivalent of a *level six trigger* and affects events and situations which are even remotely connected to the cause of the illness.

USING LOREMASTERS

Loremasters function as mentors and advisors. They should never really be used as primary characters in Unbidden stories. Quite simply, a Loremaster would never be put on the front lines. Doing so, could jeopardize everything—one less Loremaster means one less person to analyze the Secret Stories and one less person experienced enough to train new Unbidden.

Loremasters work much better as father figures to player character Unbidden. They can direct the actions of those whom they train and influence other Unbidden, who would view them as wisemen. Loremasters are a prop—a way for gamemasters to keep their players on track. For example, if the group strays from what is expected, a Loremaster can contact them or pop up with new directions.

Of course, Loremasters make for great plot hooks too. There's always the

occasional Loremaster who goes missing or one who must be contacted in order to forge an alliance. Loremasters could (and should) be an important part of the game. Just do not make it the most important part and keep their presence to a minimum.

GANGS, COALITIONS AND PACKS

It is not uncommon for a number of Unbidden to form a gang of the willing. In other words, a group ready to fight the Darkness on a moment's notice and to fend on the streets. It is possible for a gang to attach itself to a Loremaster, but there would only be very sporadic visits by the Loremaster.

Many of these gangs also form coalitions with others, most typically those from nearby neighborhoods, but there have been known to be coalitions between gangs from different cities. It is these coalitions which harbor the Loremasters and guard them from harm.

Beside the Darkness, there are also threats from rogue Unbidden who travel in packs in search of Loremasters. They attempt to capture and torture them until their secrets are revealed. These packs can be quite brutal and willing to kill anyone who prevents them from achieving their goals.

Rogue packs are not to be taken lightly since they are made up of Unbidden with no moral restraints. After facing one of these packs, coalitions sound pretty good, even if the allied gangs all have different views.

In the end, players may just decide to let their characters fend for themselves, joining other groups only when necessary for their survival (or when it

suits them). These characters are completely acceptable so long as the gamemaster can maintain a hook for all the characters to remain united for an episode or entire story.

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

In a game where a character's personal inward journey can bring madness and his outward journey can result in physical harm, he should also be given the opportunity to increase his potential to aid either direction.

Traits, skills, and endowments may be raised, as can personal demons be lessened or removed through the expenditure of experience points. These points are gained after each gaming session and after the completion of an entire campaign.

AFTER EACH EPISODE

The gamemaster should reward characters with experience points after each episode. Several factors determine the amount of points issued, however.

Episode Awards

<i>succeeding at a hard task</i>	1
<i>succeeding at an impossible task</i>	2
<i>rolling a critical success</i>	1
<i>good roleplaying</i>	1
<i>excellent portrayal of a personal demon</i>	2
<i>get close to a mortal without revealing secrets</i>	4

Experience points awarded after each episode may only be used to increase an existing skill's (or endowment's) rating if it was used in that episode and in a manner suggesting that the character learned something from the experience. Skills and endowments may only be increased by one point per episode. Endowments which belong to a Lore

with which the character is not familiar, may not be raised. **Note:** skills and endowments cost different amounts.

Episode Costs for Skills

<i>increase to 2</i>	3
<i>increase to 3</i>	4
<i>increase to 4</i>	6
<i>increase to 5</i>	8
<i>increase to 6</i>	10
<i>increase to 7</i>	14
<i>increase to 8</i>	18
<i>increase to 9</i>	22
<i>increase to 10</i>	26
<i>increase to 11</i>	30
<i>increase to 12</i>	34

Episode Costs for Endowments

<i>increase to 2</i>	6
<i>increase to 3</i>	8
<i>increase to 4</i>	10
<i>increase to 5</i>	12
<i>increase to 6</i>	16
<i>increase to 7</i>	20
<i>increase to 8</i>	24
<i>increase to 9</i>	28
<i>increase to 10</i>	32
<i>increase to 11</i>	36
<i>increase to 12</i>	40

AFTER EACH STORY

Like episodes, a character is awarded experience points after the completion of an entire story.

Points accumulated at the end of a story may be used to increase trait, skill, and reputation ratings in addition to learning new skills.

Story Awards

<i>act of heroism</i>	1
<i>act of sacrifice</i>	1
<i>creativity</i>	1
<i>defeat an Agent of the Darkness</i>	2

Traits are only improved when the character dedicates himself to intense training and only one trait may be raised after each story. Do not forget to change the rating of any computed traits that are calculated using the raised trait.

Lores may also be learned between stories, but only one and it requires a dedicated Loremaster who is of considerable experience and wisdom. New Lores do not cost experience to learn, but they do bring one new personal demon which is left totally up to the imagination of the gamemaster. It should fit the concept of the Lore or character, however.

The expenditure of experience points required for raising existing skills is the same as for after each episode. New skills may be learned by undergoing schooling or training by a professional in between stories and do not cost experience. New skills begin with a rating of one.

It costs twenty points to remove one level of a personal demon. It is very expensive because person demons are difficult to overcome.

Story Trait Costs

<i>increase to 1</i>	5
<i>increase to 2</i>	10
<i>increase to 3</i>	15
<i>increase to 4</i>	20
<i>increase to 5</i>	25
<i>increase to 6</i>	30

Not all of the information detailed in this section is known to every Unbidden, either. In fact, only a select few Loremasters know how far back their history goes. With that in mind, it is up to the gamemaster to decide how much information will be given to player characters at the start of a new campaign. Indeed, learning the hidden knowledge of the Secret Stories should be something which occurs slowly over the course of an Unbidden's life and can even be a catalyst for an epic campaign, beginning with street-level horror and building up to an epic, world-spanning adventure as the characters attempt to learn more of the Truth.



REVELATIONS

The Secret Stories stretch back thousands of years, beginning with the advent of the Mayan Calendar in 3300 BCE. In order to fully comprehend the depth of the Secret Stories and the Secret War (which has been fought for just as long) a detailed timeline of events is provided which places the entire underlying precepts behind Unbidden into historical context (even if it is revisionist history). Bear in mind that not every single event recorded in history is presented in the timeline, just dates which are of particularly special importance to the Unbidden.

SECRET STORIES REVEALED: A TIMELINE OF THE TRUTH

Before the Common Era (BCE)

3300 The beginning of the Mayan calendar. Many scholars mark this as a great turning point for the world's civilizations, and in fact, it is this year which marks the date of the first recorded arrival of the Darkness. Demons and evil spirits pour through gateways opened by Mayan sorcerer-priests. As the world progresses to a more secular mindset, however, the nature of gateways change, adopting a more inconspicuous purpose.

3200 Semitic people come to the area around Byblos, Lebanon. It was then called Gebal and the people Giblytes. Loremasters believe that the Giblytes were not simply migrating to a new region, but fleeing an invasion of the Darkness.

3100 According to tradition, King Menes unites the upper and lower kingdoms into one centralized government—the first Dynasty of Egypt. His reign lasts a substantial sixty-two years before a powerful Fate overlord assassinates him. This is the first recorded existence of the Unbidden. According to the Secret Stories, an Unbidden known as Nesmeterpanakhet attempts to prevent the assassination, but is instead killed by the Fate.

The first known incarnation of the ancient stone monument in the south of England known as Stonehenge. Historians believe native Neolithic peoples around this time built the monument, but Loremasters have concluded that it actually served as a gateway for the Darkness to begin its centuries-long reign of terror in Western Europe.

2800 The Bronze Age begins. Improved weapons of war make this era a feast for the Darkness and Hordes in particular.

1350 Amenophis IV becomes Pharaoh of Egypt. He changes his name to Akhenaten and establishes a new monotheistic religion, ordering his subjects to worship the One God. In reality, Akhenaten was unwittingly reviving the power of a Fate overlord and leading his people into worshipping the abyssal demon. For the next forty years, Akhenaten, under the influence of his dark god, initiates a campaign of terror against the Unbidden, who are themselves waging a quiet guerrilla war against the misguided Pharaoh and his master.

1309 -

1291 Sethi I, Pharaoh of Egypt and an Unbidden himself, comes to power through a combination of political machinations and claim of birthright. He restores the ancient gods of Egypt, such as *Amun-Re*, *Ptah*, *Seth*, and

Osiris. At Abydos he builds a temple to the Order of Osiris. The Fate known as the One God is eventually banished by a cabal of Loremasters.

1279 -

1213 Rameses II (the Great) rules Egypt. His capital city is Qantir and is located seventy-five miles north of Cairo. Rameses also falls under the influence of the Darkness and initiates a second campaign of terror upon the Unbidden. When Israelites escape under guidance from Moses (it is still unclear as to whether he was an Unbidden), many Unbidden flee Egypt as well.

1200 The first outbreak of human plague is a scourge that strikes the Philistines. The Old Testament account mentions mice which mar the land. Loremasters know that this was brought about by Plague Bearers in order to drive Philistine Unbidden from the region.

1100 Dorian invaders, armed with iron weapons and influenced by Horde agents, overtake the Mycenaeans. Greek culture enters a Dark Age characterized by the disappearance of writing and a decline in architecture which lasts until 800 BCE. It is obvious to the Loremasters that the Darkness is at work, spreading discord and tyranny throughout the Greek culture in this three-hundred year dystopia.

1075 Third Intermediate Period in Egypt becomes a time of turmoil and economic decline. Historians believe this to be the result of a power dispute between pharaohs reigning in the Delta and the priesthood of the temple of Amun at Karnak. The Secret Stories tell a different story, however. In a rare display of open conflict, the Unbidden openly take on forces of the Darkness through a series of brutal wars lasting until 1000 BCE.

814 Elissa-Dido, Princess of Tyre, flees to North Africa after her brother, King Pygmalion, murders her husband under the influence of a Fiend. Her husband was a threat to the Darkness since he was the Tyre high priest and an Unbidden warrior. She is said to have then founded Carthage on a hilltop now called Byrsa. It became a sanctuary for Unbidden fleeing persecution.

753 Rome is founded in this year. It was originally intended as a refuge for Unbidden fleeing the Darkness from nearby Sabine. Archeological evidence indicates that the founders of Rome were Italic people who occupied the area south of the Tiber River.

300 Agents of the Darkness rage across the Central Asian steppes on a campaign of bloodshed as they search and murder thousands of Unbidden. When the dark forces cross the Amu Darya, they lay waste to the Greco-

Bactrian lands in search of more Unbidden hiding in the countryside. Those fighting the Secret War during this era face hardships previously unknown by those who came before and those who would continue to learn the Secret Stories centuries later.

- 167** Antiochus IV, the Hellenistic tyrant of what would later be called the Middle East, increases maltreatment of the Unbidden under the guise of religious persecution against the Jews in Palestine. Antiochus' hatred toward Jews is amplified by the infernal influence of a Fiend, who then turns Antiochus' hatred toward the Unbidden.

The Common Era (CE)

- 43** The Briton Caratacus, also known as Caradoc, chief of the Catuvellauni and a Loremaster, mounts a guerrilla uprising against Roman rulers thought to be in league or under the influence of the Darkness. His uprising ultimately fails after the Brigantian Queen Cartimandua, who is under the influence of a Fate, betrays him. Caratacus is taken to Rome where Claudius later pardons him.
- 54** Roman emperor Claudius I dies after being poisoned with mushrooms by his wife, Agrippina. She had been suffering from terrifying delusions as a result of haunting by a Nightmare. Her son, Nero, succeeds his great uncle Claudius and becomes the new emperor of Rome. Nero is quickly besieged by the same Nightmare which tormented his mother, and like her, kills his spouse, Octavia. Nero then descends deep into a delirium as his actions become wild and his behavior even more erratic.
- 60** Queen Boudicca of the Iceni in Britain, burns Roman-occupied London in an effort to drive the Darkness from the region. More than seventy-thousand Romans die in the campaign before she is captured. Boudicca eventually kills herself in Roman custody rather than be subject to the torturous whims of the Darkness.
- 66** A Roman General, his name now lost to the Secret Stories, assaults forces aligned with the Darkness at the same time Rome initiates a campaign against the Jewish revolt. Loremasters believe he took the opportunity to initiate this campaign while his comrades were off fighting Jewish rebels.
- 69** The Roman General's supporters enter Rome and discover a Fate in hiding. Under cover of darkness, the general and a select group of Unbidden soldiers confront the Fate and eventually banish it from the world. Years later, the Roman General would be found murdered in his home. The killers are never found, but

Loremasters suspect agents aligned with the Darkness were the probable cause.

- 79** Pliny the Elder, a Roman naturalist and Loremaster, witnesses the eruption of long-dormant Mount Vesuvius. He is overcome by the fumes as he attempts to rescue refugees from Pompeii and Herculaneum. The eruption buries the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum in thirteen feet of volcanic ash and pumice. An estimated twenty-thousand people died, much to the delight of several Fates and Fiends who were operating in the region.
- 81** Several Loremasters holding high positions in the Roman Senate create the Frumentarii—special agents whose task was to root out the Darkness wherever it festered in the dark shadows of Rome. In order to mask their true purpose, the Frumentarii are said to be intelligence officers involved in state security.
- 97** This year marks a turning point for the Unbidden involved in the Secret War. The Frumentarii are largely successful in their own secret war to rid Rome of the Darkness. In fact, Sextus Julius Frontinus, a Roman water commissioner, writes, "The city looks cleaner and different; the air is purer and the causes which gave the city such a bad name are now removed."
- 100** The pagan Celts of Britain and Ireland celebrate Samhain as the end of the Season of the Sun and the beginning of the Season of Darkness. It was believed that on this day the souls of the dead would revisit their homes. In reality, Loremasters predict a new Dark Age approaching in which the Darkness grows in strength to throw the entire world in obscurity and shadow. Once again, many Unbidden go into hiding, while others (like the Frumentarii) continue to fight the Secret War.
- 101 - 131** An era known as the Dark Years. The Loremasters' predictions are true and fervent agents of the Darkness hunt more Unbidden. The situation gets so desperate that Pope Zephyrinus (also a Loremaster) assigns his deacon, Calixtus, to administer a secret underground complex beneath the Appian Way to be used as a sanctuary for beleaguered Unbidden. The complex extends over a thirty mile area and has three levels. The sanctuary eventually becomes known as the Catacombs of St. Calixtus.
- 132** After more than thirty years of hiding, a Loremaster named Vahan leads several hundred Unbidden soldiers in a guerrilla war against the Darkness. They lay siege to those hiding in Britain, Ireland, Rome, and Spain. Like other conflicts before, the battles are fought in secret and go unnoticed by folk living in those regions. Vahan's guerrilla war is successful and most agents of

the Darkness are either driven back into obscurity or utterly defeated. Because it is such a decisive victory, the Unbidden enjoy a four-hundred year period of relative peace. Of course, the Darkness is not completely banished from the world, but large-scale conflicts are practically non-existent and the Secret War reverts back to small skirmishes within the world's major metropolitan centers.

541 The beginning of a pandemic engulfs the Mediterranean region, killing as many as forty million people and weakening the Byzantine Empire. A royal historian writes, "The bodies of the sick were covered with black pustules...the symptoms of immediate death." At its peak in Constantinople, the plague kills ten-thousand people per day. Although it is unconfirmed, Loremasters suspect the plague to be the work of the Darkness. Many fear this is the herald of yet another major struggle for the Unbidden.

650 The epic poem of *Beowulf* is composed at least one-hundred years before the manuscript is actually written. It is an old Anglo-Saxon epic about Beowulf, the hero of the Geats people, who mortally wounds the Grendel, a monster who has been terrorizing the court of the king of Danes. Historians believe it to be based on folk tales known to the Anglo-Saxons prior to their invasion of England; the work is made up primarily of pagan myths and legends. Such is not the case, however, as the Loremasters well know. The tale is in fact true, and is the only literary account of an Unbidden warrior battling an agent of the Darkness.

1095 -

1216 Much of the trials of the Unbidden during this period are unknown, largely because many do not concern themselves with the series of Crusades occurring at this time. The Darkness see the Crusades as a veritable banquet to feast upon, however. The Hordes specifically tackle great pleasure from the deaths of countless Christian and Muslim soldiers.

1118 The Knights Templar are founded as a result of the Crusades. Historians believe the order was formed from a band of nine knights united to protect pilgrims visiting the Holy Land, but the Secret Stories tell a different story. The Knights Templar were actually an order of Unbidden soldiers founded by a cabal of Loremasters and charged with hunting down and destroying agents of the Darkness.

1233 The papal Inquisition is established by Pope Gregory IX to combat the heresy of the Albigenses. The Darkness, ever resourceful and seeking a means to persecute the Unbidden, takes the opportunity to include their ranks in the Pope's campaign.

1314 The Knights Templar's dark opponents strike back by

way of the king of France. Influenced by the Darkness, King Philip VI brands them heretics and burns their leaders at the stake.

1316 Rumors of a Fate overlord named Ashuti ruling in Africa compels several Loremasters to send eight Unbidden to Ethiopia to investigate. They fail to return and the truth concerning the rumors is never discovered. If true, it would be the only time in history when an agent actually made its presence known to folk in that magnitude.

1348 The Bubonic Plague, or the Black Death, devastates Europe in what is perhaps the greatest crisis the continent will ever face. When this wave is over, one third of the entire European population dies. England's misery during the plague is intensified in 1348 when the island experiences its third cold and wet summer in a row. Crop yield is poor and food is short, making people more vulnerable to disease. The Darkness is at their most powerful during this time, feeding on the fear and abject terror which Europeans experience during this time. Hordes march across Europe in swarming packs feeding upon sorrow; Fiends ravage entire kingdoms, pitting brother against brother in fits of paranoia and apprehension; Fates lord over Europe's suffering like malicious executioners. The Unbidden can do nothing to stop it, for they are also susceptible to the plague.

1453 Henry VI finally succumbs to insanity after being terrorized by a Nightmare since his crowning in 1431. History records that Henry was murdered in the Tower of London. This is true, but not at the hands of any mortal. Instead, the Nightmare grew tired of toying with the unstable, weak-willed king and killed Henry himself.

1466 Once again, Loremasters hear rumors of a Fate overlord lording over mortal subjects in Ethiopia. As before, eight more Unbidden are sent to investigate, but this time, they are successful. According to legend, the eight were able to infiltrate the emperor's court and slew him in a fierce battle lasting for seven days. The Fate's death ended a reign devoted to the torture and suffering of its subjects.

1467 Loremaster Alphonse de Spina begins to categorize the demonic agents comprising the Darkness. His work is passed down orally to subsequent generations so that future Unbidden have a full understanding of their responsibilities and opponents.

1493 Columbus builds a fort in Hispaniola. He leaves forty-four men at La Navidad when he sets sail for Spain, carrying exotic gifts. When he returns to Hispaniola later the same year, Columbus discovers that the fort has been burned and the men murdered. Although

history paints a different picture, this is the first recorded instance of the Darkness in the New World.

- 1520** An infectious and fatal disease called the Sweating Sickness plagues England and wipes out much of the population of Oxford and Cambridge. Hordes of Plague Bearers are seen marching through England by Unbidden.
- 1560** A final devastation of the Sweating Sickness sweeps London, killing more than one quarter of the population before a party of Unbidden are able to ambush and destroy the Plague Bearers. Unfortunately, Plague Bearers in New Spain devastate the Aztecs by constructing an outbreak of yet another new disease.
- 1591** The English colonists on Roanoke Island mysteriously disappear, with only the word *Croatan* left as a clue. Historians are still baffled by the disappearance, but Loremasters are certain that Fiends or possibly a Fate named Croatan murdered the colonists.
- 1604** Russian Czar Boris Godunov is murdered by a Fate named Andras who also makes a bold move to assume the Russian throne in human form. Andras reigns for nearly eleven months until killed by Russian Unbidden. Loremasters in the region are responsible for maneuvering Basil IV to assume the throne. Never has another Fate or agent of the Darkness assumed human guise to infiltrate society (as it proves to be much too dangerous).
- 1640** Under the influence of a Fiend, the governor of New Amsterdam calls for a massacre of Wappinger Indians. A party of Unbidden is unable to prevent the killings, but manage to hunt down and destroy the Fiend responsible for haunting the governor.
- 1692** Mass hysteria breaks out in Massachusetts as the infamous witch trials of Salem begin. Twenty witches are eventually put to death. In February, a group of teenage girls in Salem begin experiencing spectacular fits, during which they thrash about, wince, and shriek. The girls initially blame no one, but under repeated questioning by adults, they begin to identify a widening circle of local residents as witches and wizards—mostly middle-aged women. The truth lies behind the machinations of a Familiar named Mestoph, who promised power to the girls if they began accusing other residents of witchcraft. Mestoph also convinced them that the alleged witches would be a threat to their power base. By the end of the summer, hundreds had been accused, twenty-seven put on trial, and nineteen executed.
- 1720** Plague Bearers strike once again. This time, they besiege France and more than fifty-thousand

Marseillais die in the last major outbreak of Bubonic Plague.

- 1775** The American War of Independence begins on April 19, 1775. Hundreds of Unbidden join the American war effort out of fear of an incursion of Hordes pouncing on the war-torn regions like maggots to a carcass.
- 1791** Donatien Alphonse François de Sade writes *Justine*, a novel which explores sadism, the obtaining of sexual gratification by inflicting pain on another. He is eventually charged with numerous sexual offenses and spends twenty-seven years in prisons and asylums. The Loremasters conclude that his writings were actually influenced by an Incubus. The reasons are still unknown.
- 1805** Loremasters worry over the increased presence of Hordes at the Battle of Austerlitz, as Napoleon's armies crush their Russian opponents. It is undetermined whether the French emperor is under the influence of the Darkness.
- 1820** A revolution in Spain, led by Colonel Rafael Riego, eventually ends the Spanish Inquisition, which had begun under Castiles Isabella in 1478. This revolution deals a serious blow to the Darkness campaign of terror against the Unbidden in Europe.
- 1861** The Civil War begins when Confederate Army leader Pierre Beauregard and his troops attack Fort Sumter. The the first major battle of the war at Bull Run is a crushing defeat for the Union. George McClellan is named head of the Union army. Surprisingly, the Darkness remains largely quiet during the entire war (or so it would appear).
- 1867** President Abraham Lincoln is assassinated by actor John Wilkes Booth while attending a performance at Ford's Theater. Booth is under the control of a Fate called Andras. It is unclear if Andras had purposely targeted Booth for the assassination and why it would be interested in causing the President's death.
- 1914** World War I begins. Grueling trench warfare and the use of poison gas commences on the front lines. For the next three years ,the battle lines remain virtually unchanged despite huge casualties at Verdun and the Somme offensive The entire conflict serves as a colossal feast for Hordes and Fiends alike, who relish the death of thousands of soldiers. It is uncertain if the Darkness had anything to do with the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand which initiated the Great War. Loremasters certainly do not overrule the Darkness' audacity to fuel a conflict so great, but it would suggest that the demons had a means to forecast the inevitable outcome. This would indicate that the

Darkness is omniscient—an unlikely yet frightening proposition.

- 1920** Prohibition goes into effect in America after the passing of the Volstead Act. This is also the year in which the first Screemers are recorded by Loremasters. They are referred to as Bindle Punks. The term was originally used to describe chronic wanderers— itinerant misfits, criminals, migratory harvest workers, and lumber jacks. Called so because they carried a bindle.
- 1923** Adolf Hitler is imprisoned after attempting to overthrow Bavaria's republican government. While serving a nine-month prison sentence, his proclivities for anti-Semitism, power worship, disdain for morality, and strategy for world domination are exaggerated by influence from the Darkness.
- 1929** Penicillin is discovered by Alexander Fleming and is first used to fight infection. What proves to be a landmark in the history of medicine is a bane for the Darkness, especially Plague Bearers. And it was all a result of mankind's ingenuity as opposed to influence by the Unbidden.
- 1932** In the United States, the Great Depression continues to take a heavy toll—more than one-thousand banks fail, nearly twenty-thousand businesses go bankrupt, and twenty-one thousand people commit suicide in this year alone as a result of the Darkness influence. The Fate known as La Llorona makes her first appearance in this year. Loremasters think she was drawn to our world as a result of the sorrow and despair brought about by the Great Depression.
- 1933** Hitler's first concentration camp is established at Dachau. Prisoners held in the camp report seeing the terrifying image of a weeping woman who heralds the impending death of those she touches with her icy grip. Those in the camp name the apparition Bloody Mary, but Loremasters know her to be La Llorona.
- 1945** Soviet troops liberate prisoners of the concentration camp at Auschwitz. An estimated six million people die in the German camps. Agents of the Darkness begin migrating to other areas of Europe after Auschwitz is abandoned.
- 1963** John F. Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas, Texas and Vice-President Lyndon B. Johnson takes office. The Warren Commission investigates the assassination and arrests the alleged assassin—Lee Harvey Oswald. Oswald had cracked several years prior after being continually haunted by Nightmares.
- 1970** Cambodia's Prince Norodom Sihanouk is overthrown and defense minister Lon Nol begins a reign of terror in the newly proclaimed Khmer Republic. American

and South Vietnamese forces move into Cambodia, while Loremasters investigate rumors that Nol is under the influence of a Fate named Bucon.

- 1972** Sporadic violence in Northern Ireland takes off on Bloody Sunday when thirteen Roman-Catholics are shot by British troops during a riot, which is, of course, incited by agents of the Darkness. Two months later, Britain dissolves the Ulster Parliament and assumes direct control of the North Irish government.
- 1983** Since the onset of advancements in medical technology, Plague Bearers have had to exploit new ways to destroy mankind and propagate mass murder. Coincidentally, crack cocaine is developed in this year. This highly addictive substance will have disastrous consequences for many American individuals and communities. You do the math.
- 1983** Loremasters and Unbidden fail to stop agents of the Darkness from causing a nuclear accident. As such, the Chernobyl plant in the Ukraine explodes, polluting the environment and causing about eight-thousand short-term deaths.
- 1993** Federal agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) raid the ranch of a Branch Davidian sect in Waco, Texas. This begins a fifty-one day standoff. The crisis ends when federal agents storm the compound of the Davidians. Within hours, their compound becomes engulfed in flames, killing dozens inside. The spiritual leader of the sect is David Koresh, a misguided individual weakened by the abyssal influence of a Familiar.
- 1999** An earthquake that kills some seventeen-thousand people and leaves thousands of others homeless, devastates eastern Turkey. Unbidden living in the region are hunted by an increased presence of the Darkness which is attracted to the carnage present there. Three months later, another earthquake rocks the northwest part of the country, claiming more than four-hundred lives.
- 2000** Plague Bearers strike again by instigating the worst drought in one-hundred years to strike India, affecting more than one-hundred and thirty million people.

Israel explodes in waves of violence as a new intifada (uprising) is launched by Palestinian Arabs in response to Israeli General Ariel Sharon's provocative visit to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Unbidden living in the Middle East face the same turmoil and danger as their counterparts in eastern Turkey—Agents of the Darkness pour into the region, fueling hatred among the religious groups and spreading discord. The Fate Andras is thought to be behind the presence.
- 2003** Present day.

Chapter Seven

DARK PORTENTS

The world of Unbidden is very much like our own, albeit a few shades darker. For the most part, mankind is still trudging down a path of self-destruction with a *me too* attitude and a penchant for screwing over the next guy at the expense of accountability and responsibility. It is also a world marked by dramatic social change, secularism, technological advances, and intolerable danger—all things ripe for exploitation by agents of the Darkness. That is certainly not to say that man is entirely unaccountable for his actions, as human beings are hardly infallible. But one has to wonder—how bad would things really be if the Darkness was not here to spread its dark influence and propagate human suffering and indifference?

A DYSTOPIC WORLD

In most respects, the dystopic nightmare has already come true in the world in general and the United States in particular. Urbanization has reached all new levels of incomprehensibility. Cities like Los Angeles, New York,

Chicago, and London continue to sprawl outward, swallowing smaller suburbs and forming massive metropolitan areas where overcrowding becomes a way of life. Crime in many parts of the world are reaching all-time highs as well. The streets of big Western world municipalities and Third World cities are just as dangerous and the criminals are just as viscious. The power of commercial corporations has grown. Only a very naive person would deny that corporations interfere in world politics or that consumption has become a lifestyle for many people, specifically Americans. The environment is still in danger, too. Fatal global warming is imminent, yet the world's governments refuse to sign international treaties. As if that were not enough, nuclear, chemical, and biological warfare is, once again, plausible and foremost on everyone's minds.

With advances in medical technology, mankind is slowly becoming post-human. Millions of people alter their appearances artificially with plastic surgery and the process of life-saving organ transplantation is taken for

granted. Unethical sciences are slowly becoming accepted as well. People in the more developed nations of the world are already eating genetically engineered food and human cloning experiments will be conducted in the near future.

Mankind's attitudes toward and perceptions of technology have changed just as rapidly as the advancements themselves. It took only half a decade for the majority of people to accept the concept of personal computers as a standard item in their homes or the internet as a medium for personal relationships. The boundaries of human consciousness are shrinking as fast as the influx of global communications reduces the distance between people. And while one would think that such technology would bring us closer together, it has only served to segment the world's population as more and more people quickly discover what they do not have in relation to everyone else.

For the last several decades, it seems that the leitmotif of our global community is that of oppression and rebellion. The *oppressors* become more

and more faceless and dehumanizing as citizens of the world's societies keep living in fear, becoming paranoid and egoistical, almost like hunted animals. In industrialized nations like the United States and those in Western Europe, people experience a profound feeling of being monitored, shadowed, chased, betrayed, or manipulated. This is the Darkness at work, no doubt. The recent de-humanization of society may also be connected to the benefits and hazards of technological progress, as the borderline of humanity is often blurred and its very concept distorted.

URBAN WOES

The urban centers of the world are landscapes which diminish people—cities grow larger by the minute with obtusive, mastodontic architecture engulfing the horizon of many metropolitan areas. The rush and frantic pace of life in many countries has made its people battered and worn-out.

Many large cities, specifically in the United States, have become bureaucratic dystopias, which propagate strictly regulated and hierarchical societies. These bureaucratic regimes and the people who work within strive to achieve absolute power to enforce and defend old, outdated laws, which always seem to stand in conflict with both rational and typical human behavior. Changing the status quo, even everyday procedures, is a long and difficult process for those without power.

Crime is rampant in American cities as well, much more so than in any other nation in the world. In fact, American cities have been infested with grave criminality and the authorities are about to lose control, or in some cases, have already lost it. This criminality spans from street crime to organized crime, yet governmental crime, such as political corruption and abuse of power

festers as well. Authorities often use drastic and inhumane measures to fight this moral decay, perhaps out of desperation or even necessity.

The population of cities has also grown dramatically and the limited resources of our planet are becoming exhausted. Urban residents live in despair and society is in imminent danger of becoming or has already become social-darwinistic. There is an enormous wealth gap between the rich and the poor, and police are used to control the disillusioned masses.

RECIPE FOR A NEW DARK AGE

Regardless of this slow-motion cultural meltdown due largely to mankind's living habits, many people would disagree that the world is going to pot—they just don't perceive a crisis. However, there are darker forces underway which will require many to live differently. The only question is whether the fabric of society will be torn apart in the process. If it were not for the Unbidden, that may certainly have been the case decades ago.

Coming to terms with the way things are includes having the knowledge to do the right thing. The Darkness will fight tooth and nail to make sure that it never happens, and so people go about their daily lives lacking only the will to do the right thing. The inescapable conclusion is that mankind's behavior is made wicked by a combination of its own greed, selfishness, and the secret, malevolent influence of the Darkness. We are liable to pay a heavy price for our ignorance by losing things we love, including freedom and free will.

LOS ANGELES

Although this game does not have a default setting (The Darkness' influence knows no bounds), modern day Los Angeles is included as the foundation for new campaigns. In fact, in a hazy attempt to fathom and place the world's violence, burning, and carnage into context, one should look to the city's economic and social problems as the world in microcosm. Los Angeles is a sprawling metropolis that is ground zero for just about everything good *and* bad. It is the city's spontaneity, intensity, and gritty qualities which make it perfect for a street-level, urban horror game.

Keep in mind that while the city of Los Angeles will be presented within the context of historical accuracy, its *bad* qualities are greatly exaggerated to fit the dark and gritty setting of Unbidden. In other words, do not look to this section as a complete travel guide to Los Angeles. If you do, you will probably never want to visit the place.

It should also be noted that while much of the information on Los Angeles explores the human condition in terms of poverty, racial tension, segregation, and economic and social disparity, it should *not* be construed as social commentary or as an argument for social reforms. It is simply used to provide a detailed setting for this game; one that explores the aforementioned human condition and dark tendencies of society.

CITY OF ANGELS

It is quite ironic that the city of Los Angeles is also known as the *City of Angels*. This is, primarily, because of all the cities in the United States, this one has felt the influence of the Darkness the longest. Day after day, week after week, and month after month, the city's news media is filled numbingly with

stories of random violence, and to the point where increasing numbers of otherwise decent men and women are ceasing to be shocked by incidents that once might have left them incredulous and sickened.

Currently, Los Angeles is being increasingly viewed as a sinister place in which decadence, depravity, and self-indulgence can flourish with impunity. Scenes and stories flashed around the world brand it as a great metropolitan center of gleaming skyscrapers which mark the city as an embodiment in steel and concrete, and of the barbarism that our ancestors sought to flee in ages past. Unfortunately, millions around the world believe that the law of claw and fang now rules Los Angeles. This is entirely founded in truth, even if it is abyssal in nature.

The City of Angels is the accumulation of unrest, drug-related crimes, drug addiction, mass and serial murders, a high divorce rate, crumbling urban areas, troubled schools and falling educational levels, decaying highways and bridges, lack of adequate health care, and a shrinking industrial base. In fact, all of the crises and disasters that are besetting the city make that earlier picture of the incoming Kingdom of God look hopelessly simplistic and naive. In the *Book of Judges*, for instance, at the period of greatest turmoil and lawlessness in the Old Testament Holy Land, we read these words:

"In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (Judges 17:6, KJV.)

Without a common, transcendent moral and spiritual referent, the result is anarchy, chaos, savagery, inhumanity, nightly murders in the streets, decent people being forced to hide and lock themselves in their homes at night, unbridled materialism, corruption in

business and government, cultural decadence, and epidemics of diseases and sickness.

VERICAL APOCALYPSE

Like many other American cities, Los Angeles is a sprawling industrial and commercial landscape, comprised of huge mega-structures which dominate the center of the city. Intimated is the city's vast expanse—a glittering neon world that, upon closer inspection, is an all but an overwhelming cluster of advertising and enticing images perched high atop skyscrapers, while urban canyons are created by huge skyscrapers hunched over dilapidated buildings and crumbling architecture.

Much of the city's streets and neighborhoods have become slums and a polyglot of ethnic crowds bustling past markets and vendors. Looking up from street level, one must peer through wires and between massive skyscrapers toward the sky; then only to gaze into smog-induced darkness and ceaseless acid rain. The street level is a social and physical space which is exposed. It is a place in which people's vulnerabilities are marked by their invisibility.

DARK INFLUENCES

Such is the quality of life in Los Angeles—this makes it a perfect location from which the Darkness may further spread its influence and feed upon and fuel the threatening subconscious sentiments and qualities of its residents. And with a booming population of more than three and a half million people, there is enough of it to go around for demons and other evil entities to make this city the playground of choice.

Like other locales, the Darkness waits patiently in the shadows of Los Angeles, waging a Secret War against people who have no idea that they exist. The

Darkness delights in sowing discord and confusion, and propagating violent emotions to feed their own malicious hunger. For the most part, their activities are strongest in the areas of the city which are stricken with violence and social upheaval, because the folk living there provide a constant source of amusement and sustenance. The more affluent neighborhoods are not safe from the tendrils of the Darkness either. A Fiend is just as likely to influence the actions of a gang banger in Westlake as it would a businessman living in Brentwood.

FAST FACTS

Some tidbits of useful information regarding Los Angeles are listed below. Gamemasters may use this information to provide further color to their stories.

The Media

The major daily newspapers are the Los Angeles Times and the Daily News. KNXO is a news/weather/traffic radio station, while KCRW is a member of National Public Radio. Several stations in the Los Angeles area, such as KLAX, broadcast in Spanish and other languages, as well as English.

Hospitals

Los Angeles has numerous hospitals and free clinics, but the most noteworthy are Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, San Pedro Peninsula, and the UCLA Medical Center.

Weather

Summer in the city is generally warm and dry with low humidity and infrequent rainfall. These dry conditions may lead to brush fires and flash floods. Winters are pleasant enough temperature wise, but they are particular rainy—heavy downpours typically deluge the coast. Areas stripped of their natural vegetation by summer brush fires are often subject to sudden mudslides.

The area's varied geography creates temperature inversion, a phenomenon in which a layer of hot air is trapped over the city. Pollution combines with the static air to create smog. The Santa Ana winds gust through the mountain ranges at speeds of thirty-five to fifty miles per hour and kick up mild dust storms in the northeastern portion of Los Angeles' metro area.

Air Travel

Five major airports serve Greater Los Angeles: Los Angeles International Airport, John Wayne Orange County Airport, Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport, Ontario International Airport, and Long Beach Airport. Los Angeles International (or LAX) is one of the busiest in the world, and roads approaching it are some of the most congested with traffic.

Getting Around

Los Angeles traffic is not for the faint of heart, yet driving is the easiest and often the only way, of driving around the metro area. This results in routinely high traffic volumes which are seldom encountered elsewhere. There is about one car for every two residents in Los Angeles.

Downtown is laid out more or less like a grid, although it is slightly askew from a north-south axis. Several major traffic routes border the downtown area and one-way streets abound.

City driving is usually least complicated on the major boulevards, such as Wilshire or Olympic. Oversized street signs go a long way to assist drivers, as they are legible at great enough distances to permit decisions before reaching an intersection. In some outlying communities signs not only carry the name of the street, but the name of the town as well.

The speed limit on most streets is thirty-five miles per hour or as posted; residential areas have a limit of twenty-

five miles per hour. Freeway speed is generally sixty-five miles per hour. Motorists might be ticketed for driving at speeds considered dangerously slow, as well as dangerously fast.

Taxis

Taxis such as those from Checker, Independent, United Independent, and Yellow Cab are plentiful downtown and at major tourist sites. They can be hailed or boarded from stalls found at the airports, Union Station, and major hotels.

Public Transportation

The city's Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) operates busses throughout the metro area, including many that run to major area attractions. MTA also administers the city's rail system, which has three lines in daily operation. The Metro Blue Line runs along a twenty-two mile stretch between downtown and Long Beach. The Metro Red Line subway traverses Los Angeles proper from Union Station/Gateway Center to Wilshire Boulevard and Western Avenue in the Wilshire district, and north on Vermont Avenue to Hollywood Boulevard. It then travels west to Vine Street and north through the Caheunga Pass to Universal Studios, ending at Lankershim and Chandler Boulevards. The twenty mile Green Line follows *Interstate 105* as an east-west corridor across southern Los Angeles County.

'NICE' NEIGHBORHOODS

The City of Angels can seem more like a series of towns than a city. Some areas, like Santa Monica and Beverly Hills are actually separate entities and West Hollywood seceded from Los Angeles several years ago. But most neighborhoods are part of the larger city. Each neighborhood has a distinct atmosphere—some are better off than

others, but many are havens for crime, poverty, and desperation. The neighborhoods which can be considered upscale are: Beverly Hills, Brentwood, Burbank, Glendale, Hollywood, Los Feliz, Mid-Wilshire, Pacific Palisades, Pasadena, Santa Monica, Sherman Oaks, Studio City, Van Nuys, West L.A., and Westwood.

In one sense, the Unbidden are targeted more frequently in these communities than in places like Compton or Watts, because they stand out among the ritz and glitz. The Unbidden are shunned in places like Burbank and Beverly Hills and are continually harassed by law enforcement, acting on behalf of residents who want the *riff-raff* removed from their streets and out from under their stoops. Thus, it makes it hard for Unbidden to fight the Darkness in secret, because its agents operate from even darker shadows. In one sense, folk living in these communities are even more susceptible to the influence of the Darkness because they live with blinders, ignorant to the poverty and despair which surrounds them.

Gamemasters who wish to run a story in these neighborhoods are advised to heighten the desperation felt by Unbidden player characters. The Secret War in these places is even more clandestine, because so much more is at stake and the danger of exposure is much greater. Trying to uncover and thwart the nefarious schemes of Fiends and Fates is difficult, because they can hide behind a veneer of safety provided to them by the very people they corrupt and subvert. Additionally, unwitting human agents have penetrated many of these communities, making them even more difficult to combat.

Beverly Hills

Beverly Hills is sandwiched between Westwood to the west and West

Hollywood to the east, with the Hollywood Hills to the north and a less savory neighborhood, known as Beverly Hills Adjacent, to the south. Despite its central location, though, Beverly Hills is not part of Los Angeles—it is a separate city, with its own police force, schools, and infrastructure.

Three main drags run east-to-west through Beverly Hills. Wilshire Boulevard is the central route and runs past several of the city's most famous shopping areas and restaurants.

The mansions you have probably heard about are located north of Santa Monica Boulevard on wide streets lined with palm trees. Lots of four-way stops and very few traffic lights make driving somewhat challenging. Shops, restaurants, and medical facilities are clustered between Santa Monica Boulevard and Wilshire Boulevard in a very walkable neighborhood. South of Wilshire, smaller homes and apartments abound. Another commercial district is located even further south, along Olympic Boulevard.

Brentwood

Brentwood is a very upscale neighborhood located north of West L.A. and near the mountains which separate the San Fernando Valley from Los Angeles proper.

The main drag in Brentwood is San Vicente Boulevard, which runs through a small town center lined with restaurants, shops, and a few gas stations. North of San Vicente is a residential area made up of large houses and, further north, mansions. Apartments fill some neighborhoods south of San Vicente, although they tend to be very expensive.

Burbank

The city of Burbank is located in the east San Fernando Valley and is bounded by Glendale, Toluca Lake, and North

Hollywood. Unlike many other neighborhoods, parts of Burbank are quite scenic, especially the northeastern areas approaching the foothills. Many families with children reside in Burbank, as do a number of entertainment industry professionals (several studios occupy land in southern Burbank). Shops and restaurants are plentiful, along with the Media City Center Mall and several movie multiplexes.

Glendale

Glendale is a city located east of Burbank and west of Pasadena in the San Gabriel Valley. Residential areas are concentrated in the northern part of the city. The northeastern part of Glendale, near La Canada/Flintridge, is quite scenic.

Hollywood

Hollywood sits at the north end of Los Angeles, nestled against the Hollywood Hills between West Hollywood (home of the Sunset Strip) and Los Feliz. The Melrose/La Brea area lies to the south.

The main drag, Hollywood Boulevard, is packed with movie theaters, restaurants, clubs, and shops. The western part of Hollywood, between Laurel Canyon Boulevard and La Brea, is mostly residential. The eastern section, which stretches from La Brea to Western Avenue, is more commercial, although housing is also available.

For years, Hollywood was run down and decrepit, but a commercial development and revitalization campaign, capped off by the opening of a huge mall and theater complex at Hollywood Boulevard and Highland Avenue, has resurrected this once-seedy area. But do not kid yourself, Hollywood still has enough grit and grime to harden even the most stalwart individual.

Los Feliz

Los Feliz, which is located northeast of Hollywood and just west of Silverlake, used to be one of the city's hidden gems. It was a safe, family-oriented neighborhood that offered decently priced housing. A few years ago, residents discovered Los Feliz, however, and young professionals and couples began moving to the area. As a result, the cost of living has soared.

Mid-Wilshire

The Mid-Wilshire area of the city is more affordable than many others, but it is also more dangerous. Nice homes and apartments can be found on the side streets north of Wilshire near the Hancock Park area. Massive strips of shopping plazas and restaurants are also present.

The Mid-Wilshire area, which includes the office-tower-lined Miracle Mile along Wilshire Boulevard, is bounded on the east by Korea Town and on the west by Beverly Hills.

The main drags in this area include Wilshire Boulevard, 3rd Street, Olympic Boulevard and San Vicente Boulevard. Beware of getting lost on San Vicente—it is easy to get turned around because the road slants across several main streets.

Pacific Palisades

Pacific Palisades is a mainly residential, obviously upscale neighborhood nestled between Topanga Canyon on the west and Santa Monica and Brentwood on the east. To the north is an area called the Palisades Highlands in the midst of Topanga State Park.

Two main roads run through Pacific Palisades—Sunset Boulevard and the Pacific Coast Highway (PCH), otherwise known as *Highway 1*. The PCH is very scenic but is also subject to huge traffic jams at rush hour, especially during the rainy season. Sunset

Boulevard is easier to navigate, although it contains many curves.

Pasadena

The city is located east of Glendale and is admittedly distant from the beach and western Los Angeles, but it is a short distance from neighborhoods like Los Feliz, Hollywood, and Burbank.

The downtown area known as Old Town Pasadena is a lively city center which makes for a pleasant walk. Shops and restaurants share space with the Pasadena Civic Center and several hotels.

Santa Monica

Santa Monica is located beside the Pacific Ocean. The city is quite large and contains many neighborhoods within its boundaries.

There are several main drags in Santa Monica. San Vicente Boulevard runs through the northernmost part of town and is arguably the fastest way into northern or central Santa Monica. Montana Avenue runs several blocks south of San Vicente Boulevard and is lined with upscale shops and restaurants. Wilshire Boulevard runs through the central part of Santa Monica, ending at the Pacific Ocean near the Third Street Promenade.

The north end of Santa Monica consists mainly of multimillion-dollar residential homes. A few apartments are scattered throughout.

Sherman Oaks

Sherman Oaks is a much nicer area than it might appear at first glance. The town is located between Studio City on the east and Encino to the west.

Although there are plenty of gas stations, car washes, and the like along Ventura Boulevard, shops, restaurants and businesses also are abundant.

Studio City

This area is roughly bounded by

Coldwater Canyon Boulevard on the west and Vineland Avenue on the east. North of the freeway is Valley Village; southern areas of this neighborhood (below Magnolia) are nearly indistinguishable from Studio City. The town of Toluca Lake lies to the east of Studio City, and Sherman Oaks lies to the west. To the south are the Hollywood Hills.

The main drags in Studio City include Ventura Boulevard, Moorpark Avenue, Laurel Canyon Boulevard, and Coldwater Canyon Boulevard at the western edge of the area.

Van Nuys

Van Nuys is a neighborhood in the Valley. It is not as swanky as its southern neighbor, Sherman Oaks, but for those who want to live within city borders, it is a viable alternative. Some parts of Van Nuys have large communities of Hispanics. The neighborhood is located near the North Hollywood metro stop and several major freeways are within easy reach. Van Nuys also is close to the Burbank airport.

West L.A.

West L.A. is not as vast as its name might imply. The area is located south of Wilshire Boulevard and north of Pico Boulevard, and stretches approximately from Beverly Glen Boulevard on the east to Centinela Avenue on the west. There are several main drags running through the area. These streets are lined with stores and gas stations, while side streets contain apartments.

Westwood

Westwood is the area immediately surrounding UCLA and is one of the few truly walkable neighborhoods in the city. The area of Westwood closest to the university and north of Wilshire Boulevard is called Westwood Village. The village contains a mixture of chain stores, local shops, and apartments. Several high-rises along Wilshire

Boulevard are home to a variety of corporate outfits. Apartments predominate the south of Wilshire.

Residents in the village area are often students, faculty, or university staff. Senior citizens and professionals share space with the university folk south of Wilshire.

'BAD' NEIGHBORHOODS

These are some of Los Angeles' worst neighborhoods in terms of poverty, crime, and disparity—perfect locales to stage a street-level horror game since these have felt the influence of the Darkness the most. These are the places which you will not find detailed in local tour guides or through the state's convention and tourism bureau. And if you do, they are given only a passing reference as places to avoid if you want to live.

These are prime areas for the Darkness to invade and fester, primarily because their agents find the most *nourishment* from folks living in these poor, downtrodden neighborhoods. For the most part, the Darkness can operate in relative safety and more freely than in a place like Westwood, because violence and fear are a way of life in some of these places. You will still find Fiends or Screamer packs operating in Burbank or Santa Monica, but they are given more leeway in places like Watts, Korea Town, or South Central.

South Central/Watts

Folks living in South Central Los Angeles have had much of their lives stolen by the Darkness and society's ignorance of their plights. For those living in South Central, there is certainly no spontaneous joy of merely being alive—just the happiness of surviving the day without getting killed. People here live in neighborhoods preventing them from enjoying the outside. Through a combination of their

immediate environment and the influence of the Darkness, they are thrown into the midst of overwhelming circumstances for which there can be no preparation. Unlike the well-to-do jetsetters of places like Beverly Hills, folks living in South Central face issues and situations which harden their souls and callus their emotions. Many special and exciting qualities of life are killed by the Darkness without even knowing the true nature of their loss.

Normalcy is often confused or even mistaken for the abnormal in the heart of South Central Los Angeles. Youth is a time of innocence, when dreams are given first wings to explore unfamiliar landscapes, but they are confined to the concrete jungles in South Central—condemned buildings, walls consumed by graffiti, and liquor stores. It is a dreamless environment which destroys everyone exposed. People are likely to have cold lives here, while a ceiling is placed on their dreams by a fabricated environment which teaches individuals to expect little and to hope for even less.

Violent crime rates in South Central are at an all-time high, escalating since the 1970s. A day hardly passes without news of another eruption of violence, murder, aggravated assault, or robbery (most being gang related). Agents of the Darkness thrive in these communities, fueling people's hatred for their fellow neighbors and for those who are in better positions socially. When someone dies as a result of a gang-related crime, the Fates croon with joy and relish the moment, savoring every last drop of sorrow and despondency. Packs of Screamers and unwitting human agents form tightly knitted gangs of dangerous hoodlums and thieves who prey upon the weak and actively hunt for Unbidden operating in the shadows. Fiends whisper temptations into the ears of young men and women, causing them to lose faith in a system which

cares nothing for their safety or well-being.

Riots rocked the neighborhood of Watts in 1965. It is a community located in South Central Los Angeles which is characterized by a high unemployment rate, poor housing, bad schools, and crime—elements which contributed to the riots. Although the problems were clearly defined in a government report, no great effort was made to address the issues or rebuild what had been destroyed during the riots. Another riot in 1992 occurred with the acquittal of Los Angeles police officers involved in the infamous Rodney King beating.

Unemployment in Watts is still high and slow commercial development has stunted the community's growth. Gang warfare is rampant in the community, with two of the major gangs, the Crips and the Bloods, constantly at each other's throats. The Loremasters know that there is a large concentrated activity of Fiends and Screamer packs in these neighborhoods. Human agents can operate more freely here; many of them are noted gang leaders.

Compton

Also known as the city's Gangland, Compton is a crime-plagued community of ninety-three thousand which is quickly losing the battle to violence. This is due, in part, to agents of the Darkness. In fact, several years ago, the community disbanded its police force, turning law enforcement over to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Like other poor communities in Los Angeles, Compton is lawless and dangerous. The Darkness is particularly fond of Compton, because the gangs are especially prolific and many of their ranks have been infiltrated by Screamers and the influence of Fiends and Fates. Many of the city's residents are lost to a world of

violence, making them the perfect *pets* to be used by the Darkness to spread fear even further.

East L.A.

East L.A. is something of a post-modern wild west where everyone has a gun and they use it. It is an uncontrolled and scary place—a land of broken dreams and fear, where the Darkness plays by its own rules, using the residents of East L.A. as their pawns.

The region has long been a neglected neighborhood and has one of the nation's highest drop-out rates from schools. Unemployment in youths hovers around seventy-five percent in the most neglected areas, and teenage pregnancy is at an all time high. There is also an epidemic of suicide among many residents whose options have been cut off—no education, work, or opportunities for advancement. They stand on street corners and parks, flashing gang signs and inviting bullets. It is either prison or death—a warrior's path when even self-preservation is not at stake. And if they murder, the victims are usually the ones who look like them and closest to who they are—their mirror reflections. Thanks, in part, to the influence of the Darkness, people living in East L.A. murder and they are only killing themselves.

Pico-Union

The Pico-Union area is named for the intersection of Pico Boulevard and Union Avenue, located slightly south and west of downtown Los Angeles. This is the most densely populated section of Los Angeles, with one area east of MacArthur Park containing one-hundred and forty-seven people per acre (or four times the New York City average). It is home to the more impoverished residents of Los Angeles. A complex mix of gangs, violence, poverty, and dark influence fills the community.

Pico-union is a neighborhood marked by blocks of deteriorating apartments and storefronts. Drug dealers and fruit vendors often peddle their wares on the same crowded sidewalks. As night falls, nannies, construction workers, and gardeners trudge home from bus stops. They step carefully around Screamers who have converted MacArthur Park into a narcotics supermarket. They avoid eye contact with gang members influenced by the Darkness collecting rent from pushers and shooting one another over trifles. Police helicopters drone overhead each night, pointing their searchlights below. Like the other communities mentioned above, Pico-Union is a dangerous one made even more desperate by the Darkness.

'ASIAN' NEIGHBORHOODS

There are some notable Asian neighborhoods found in and around the greater Los Angeles area. They include Chinatown, Little Tokyo, and Korea Town. Los Angeles' Asian urban centers are not limited to Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, however. Filipino, Thais, Indonesians, Malaysians, Laotians, Vietnamese, Cambodians, and other Pacific Rim nationalities also enjoy slivers of their own community and add their own culture to the metropolitan, multi-cultural kaleidoscope that is Los Angeles.

Chinatown

Los Angeles' Chinatown is located in the heart of the city, just five minutes north of the downtown area. It is smaller than the Chinese quarters in New York and San Francisco. Nevertheless, it is generally a pleasant area which displays a rich culture and architecture topped by pagoda-styled rooftops. The area in which everyone congregates is between College and Bernard Streets. This is the heart of the community and the Chinese Gate at the

Mandarin Plaza greets all those who visit this Asian community.

It is an interesting neighborhood where exotic foods and herbal remedies are on display in storefronts. Chinese culture dominates the area and the Chinese New Year is celebrated in February with a parade of giant dragons and decorated chariots. Today, some fourteen-thousand people live in this community. Vietnamese immigrants are also now trying to establish their residences and businesses in this area.

Little Tokyo

Little Tokyo is located two blocks east of Los Angeles' City Hall. It is the commercial, social, and cultural center for more than two-hundred thousand Japanese-Americans living in Southern California. Many prolific businesses can be found in Little Tokyo, including the New Otani Hotel, James Irvine Garden, Japanese American Cultural and Community Center/Plaza, and Japanese American National Museum. Unlike some of the other ethnic communities in Los Angeles, Little Tokyo is currently undergoing a restoration. Newly installed public improvements such as malls, plazas, and sidewalks link various developments, making this seven-block, sixty-seven acre project area one of the most pedestrian-friendly communities in Los Angeles.

Korea Town

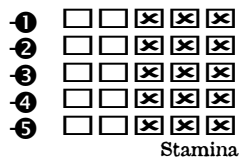
For the Korean residents of Los Angeles, Korea Town (located in the midtown area) is the hub of Korean culture, and social and business life. Repainted California bungalows, stores bustling with Korean foodstuffs, and distinctive angular Korean calligraphy identify this ethnic neighborhood. From a modest population of less than ten-thousand in 1970, Los Angeles' Korean population has grown to an estimated one-hundred and sixty thousand people, making it the largest concentration of Koreans outside of Korea.

Olympic Boulevard serves as the district's main street. Korean signs indicating grocery stores, restaurants, barbershops, hardware stores, travel agencies, import-export firms, and gas stations appear frequently along a three-mile stretch of this street. These signs identify every single establishment on just a few of these blocks and many stores have been built or remodeled in the Korean style of architecture.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

The following sample characters may be used for easy reference in appropriate situations or for brainstorming chance encounters on the fly. Gamemasters can easily modify them to suit their needs. Since mundane (non-Unbidden) characters do not have access to the mythos trait, they do not possess any endowments. Roll one die to determine skill ratings for less experienced characters and two dice for the elite. You can also assign personal demons if desired.

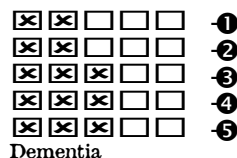
Businessman



9
Reaction

0
Mythos

2
Perception



2
Strength

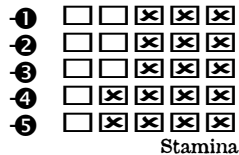
3
Willpower

3
Reasoning

Skills

Performance
Negotiation
Commodities
Computers
Financial

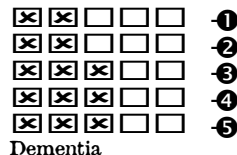
Clergyman



8
Reaction

0
Mythos

3
Perception



1
Strength

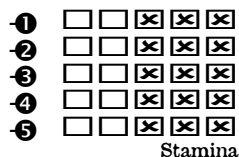
3
Willpower

3
Reasoning

Skills

History
Performance
Theology
Psychology

Street Punk



7
Reaction

0
Mythos

2
Perception



2
Strength

3
Willpower

1
Reasoning

Skills

Brawling
Firearms
Stealth
Finesse
Local Knowledge
Survival
Streetwise

Federal Agent

1	☐	☐	☒	☒	☒
2	☐	☐	☒	☒	☒
3	☐	☐	☒	☒	☒
4	☐	☒	☒	☒	☒
5	☐	☒	☒	☒	☒

Stamina

2
Dexterity

7
Reaction

0
Mythos

3
Perception

1	☒	☒	☒	☐	☐
2	☒	☒	☒	☐	☐
3	☒	☒	☒	☐	☐
4	☒	☒	☒	☒	☐
5	☒	☒	☒	☒	☐

Dementia

2
Strength

2
Willpower

2
Reasoning

Skills

Brawling
Firearms
Driving
Investigation
Law
Composure
Streetwise

Cult Leader

1	☐	☐	☒	☒	☒
2	☐	☐	☒	☒	☒
3	☐	☐	☒	☒	☒
4	☐	☒	☒	☒	☒
5	☐	☒	☒	☒	☒

Stamina

2
Dexterity

9
Reaction

0
Mythos

1
Perception

1	☒	☒	☐	☐	☐
2	☒	☒	☐	☐	☐
3	☒	☒	☐	☐	☐
4	☒	☒	☐	☐	☐
5	☒	☒	☒	☐	☐

Dementia

1
Strength

3
Willpower

4
Reasoning

Skills

Performance
Seduction
Psychology
Theology
Legends
Composure

Journalist

1	☐	☐	☒	☒	☒
2	☐	☒	☒	☒	☒
3	☐	☒	☒	☒	☒
4	☐	☒	☒	☒	☒
5	☐	☒	☒	☒	☒

Stamina

2
Dexterity

6
Reaction

0
Mythos

4
Perception

1	☒	☒	☒	☐	☐
2	☒	☒	☒	☐	☐
3	☒	☒	☒	☐	☐
4	☒	☒	☒	☒	☐
5	☒	☒	☒	☒	☐

Dementia

1
Strength

2
Willpower

2
Reasoning

Skills

Investigation
Design
Driving
History
Legends
Local Knowledge
Streetwise

Dexterity

1

2

3

4

5

Stamina

Reaction

Mythos

Perception

1/+1

2/+2

3/+3

4/+4

5/+5

Dementia

Banes & Skills

Dexterity

1

2

3

4

5

Stamina

Reaction

Mythos

Perception

1/+1

2/+2

3/+3

4/+4

5/+5

Dementia

Banes & Skills

Dexterity

1

2

3

4

5

Stamina

Reaction

Mythos

Perception

1/+1

2/+2

3/+3

4/+4

5/+5

Dementia

Banes & Skills

Dexterity

1

2

3

4

5

Stamina

Reaction

Mythos

Perception

1/+1

2/+2

3/+3

4/+4

5/+5

Dementia

Banes & Skills

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UNBIDDEN

Name

Caste

Lores

Background

Personal Demons

Skills and Endowments

Abandoned Friends and Family

Dexterity

Reaction

Perception

1
2
3
4
5

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Stamina

Mythos

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Dementia

1
2
3
4
5

Strength

Willpower

Reasoning

Current Friends and Allies

REACTION MODIFIERS

Wearing Kevlar/Armor	-1
Knocked Down	-1
Surprised Opponent	+2
Holding Many Items	-1
Holding Bulky Items	-1
Injured	-1 to -5

Attacks

Strength + Brawling

Dexterity + Melee Specialty

Dexterity + Sword Specialty

Dexterity + Firearms

Dexterity + Archery

Dexterity + Staff Specialty

Dexterity + Athletics

Defenses

Strength + Brawling

Strength + Staff Specialty

Dexterity + Brawling

Dexterity + Sword Specialty

Dexterity + Athletics

RANGES

	Ⓟ _{PB}	Ⓟ _S	Ⓟ _M	Ⓟ _L	Ⓟ _E
Throwing	15	30	45	60	90
Bow	30	75	150	225	300
Pistol	15	30	75	120	225
Rifle	15	30	90	150	300
Shotgun	15	30	50	100	150

AMMUNITION

Revolver	6
Semi-Auto Pistol	7 - 20
Rifle	10 - 100
Shotgun	2 - 5

DAMAGE

	PR	AV	GD	EX	CS
Unarmed	1	2	2	3	5
Rock	1	2	3	4	6
Club/Staff	1	2	4	6	10
Knife	1	2	3	6	8
Axe	1	2	4	8	10
Sword	1	3	4	8	10
Arrow	1	2	4	6	8
Pistol	2	3	5	8	10
Rifle	2	4	6	10	12
Shotgun	1	3	7	12	15
Assault Rifle	2	5	7	11	14

SCARS

1	Small Scar
2-3	Disfiguring Scar
4	Muscle Atrophy
5	Damaged Vision
6	Head Injury

TASK MODIFIERS

Target Moving	1
Cover	1 to 2
Partial Light	1
Aiming	+1
Surprised Opponent	+2
In/Under Water	-2 or -1
On the Ground	-2
Armor	-2
Injury	-1 to -5
Dementia	-1 to -5

ADVANCED TASKS

Quickdraw	1
Second Weapon	1
Second Attack	1
Second Target	1 / 2
Called Strikes	1 / 2
Burst Fire (Ⓟ _M , Ⓟ _L)	1
Spray Fire (Ⓟ _M , Ⓟ _L)/(Ⓟ _{PB} , Ⓟ _S)	1 / 1
Scope (Ⓟ _M , Ⓟ _L , Ⓟ _E)	1

SUCCESS TABLE

DIFFICULTY

MARGIN		SIMPLE	EASY	AVERAGE	CHALLENGING	HARD	IMPOSSIBLE
	LESS THAN -6	FAILURE	FAILURE	FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE
	-6 TO -1	FAILURE	FAILURE	FAILURE	FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE
	0	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	POOR	FAILURE	FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE
	1-3	GOOD	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	POOR	FAILURE	FAILURE
	4-5	GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	POOR	FAILURE
	6-7	EXCELLENT	GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	POOR
	8-9	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	POOR
	10-11	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	AVERAGE
	12-13	CRITICAL SUCCESS	CRITICAL SUCCESS	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE
	14 AND UP	CRITICAL SUCCESS	CRITICAL SUCCESS	CRITICAL SUCCESS	CRITICAL SUCCESS	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT
	RANGE	POINT BLANK		SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG	EXTREME
	CONTESTED	POOR		AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	CRITICAL SUC.
	SITUATION	BENIGN	VIOLENT	SUPERNATURAL	HORRIFIC	CATASTROPHIC	EARTH SHATT.
	PERSONAL DEMON	1	2	3	4	5	6

CAUSES OF DEMENTIA

Benign	1☹
Violent	2☹
Supernatural	3☹
Horrific	4☹
Catastrophic	5☹
Earth Shattering	6☹
Personal	varies

SYMPTOMS OF SHOCK

1	Catatonia
2-3	Cower/Flee
4	Denial
5	Enraged
6	Outburst

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UNBIDDEN

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We all see our own version of reality, and it is never exactly the same as another's. In fact, reality is a nebulous thing; we never really see it. We can only try to perceive it through our own flawed perceptions. But what if the reality you once knew suddenly shattered into a million tiny fragments of half-truths and false impressions? As if everything you once knew as gospel suddenly fell apart, leaving you with a veracity that is equal parts horrifying and awe inspiring.

Imagine having your life ripped out from under you and replaced with the horrifying truth that the world is going to hell in the proverbial hand basket, and you're the only one who can do anything about it, provided you know the Secret Stories. But you're unprepared for a life of running, fighting, and surviving. You're still holding on to a ruined idealism that everything is white-picket fences, that good will prevail, and everyone has an equal shot at living the good life if they work at it.

Such is the life of the Unbidden men and women who once held station in life, but suddenly had it taken away. Their exultant lifestyle has been replaced by a growing despondency and they are cursed with a task to serve on the front lines of a Secret War against the dark horrors that feed off the most ignoble and dangerous of human emotions and proclivities: jealousy, hate, anger, fear, lust. To make matters worse, the Unbidden do it alone. Once cursed with a life of unnatural persistence, they cannot count on society to lend them a hand. There's no going to the police; how would you explain the fact that you've just witnessed the brutal murder of a homeless man, who died at the hands of some perverse unnatural creature? How do you tell your friends and family that your dreams have dissolved into recurrent nightmares so vivid that they take possession of your soul and subdue its faculties?

It is this overwhelming fear and notion of powerlessness and amazement that eventually fosters the Unbidden's endurance and tenacity, ensuring that the truths survive regardless of their own fate; it is a duty felt deeply by them all.

THE SECRET STORIES

Unbidden is a role-playing game of horror predicated on legends and myths, more commonly known as the Secret Stories and perpetuated by a displaced people seeking a sense of mission. They live in a world where violence and death are commonplace, and where it is more to one's advantage to grovel before the powerful and shun the weak, and where salvation is nowhere to be found.

But unlike traditional myths and legends, at least as we know them, the Secret Stories of Unbidden are as real as the sky is blue, as a multi-faceted allegorical narrative and a state of being that encompasses three core fundamentals: Truth, Mythos Lore, and Endowments. What you will not find in Unbidden are the traditional urban legends that fuel peoples imaginations with tall tales of kidney thieves, alligators living in sewers, and serial killers with hooks. Rather, these myths and legends in Unbidden are truths transmitted from person to person by oral or written communication and only adhered to by a certain group of people. The Secret Stories typically comprise outlandish, terrifying, and supernatural events, and serve as a way for the Unbidden to impose meaning upon their existence and fuel the mystical Endowments they call their own, for in knowing the Secret Stories, the Unbidden are given a fighting chance against ancient, dark forces.

ROLEPLAYING

The goal of each player is to act out his or her character's personality, abilities, and personal demons. It is the same as performing in a play, except that each player picks his own lines; a form of improvisation. One player must be the gamemaster, who acts as referee and narrator. His job is also to project the proper atmosphere, advance the plot, and assume the role of all characters in the game who are not controlled by the other players. If you would like more information on roleplaying or gamemastering check out:

- <http://roleplaygames.about.com>
- <http://www.roleplayingtips.com>





The first step to learning the Secret Stories comes from discovering the Truth. That is, to learn that reality is a manufactured conjuncture propagated by demons hiding in shadow who feed off of humanity's base emotions and fuel discord within the world, leading to its slow and eventual death. Once an Unbidden discovers the Truth his consciousness is opened to a higher state of being and he is imbued with knowledge of Mythos Lore, a mystical/supernatural force that provides one with an ability to bend reality to his own means, within a defined ideology based on a particular set of beliefs. As part of this core fundamental, an Unbidden also learns of the Secret War and those who fight it.

THE SECRET WAR

The Secret War is a two-fold battle—a war of personal sacrifice and a fight for the fate of humanity. To some that may sound like a cliché, but for the Unbidden it is a scary reality and, in most cases, an unwelcome and unsolicited responsibility.

The Secret Stories tell of demons who found doors to our world and, once here, discovered a place ripe for perversion and corruption. Mankind is their plaything, serving as reservoirs of delectation and nourishment, for they are only satiated by dark human emotions. And much like the Secret War, the demons gateways are equally inconspicuous: abandoned refrigerators, mirrors, dark alleyways, steam tunnels, and shadowy corners all serve as conduits for their infernal visitations.

The war, its beginning partially lost to the Unbidden, has largely been waged behind the backs of an unwitting society, primarily because the demons feed in secrecy. Still, their presence is felt in all aspects of society and no one is safe from their hunger. Every day that the world slips further into misery, selfishness, and indifference the power of darkness expands and the Unbidden grow more desperate.

THE UNBIDDEN

For those who are chosen, the Secret War is a fight for survival, yet it is also one that many resist or have difficulty accepting. The Unbidden were once like you and me, normal people living normal lives, until that life was turned upside down. For them, the price of learning the Secret Stories is an emotional and psychological dichotomy. On the one hand, the Endowments they receive open up new perceptions of reality (no matter how horrifying that may be), on the other, these endowments come at a great personal cost.

As one of the Unbidden you begin your transformation from a lower psychological state, in which you are unaware of the nature and complexity of the problems that now confront you. Circumstances suddenly propel you into a dilemma that demands action, yet you do not have a say in the matter. There is no opportunity to take the low road or the easy way out, and you will often balk at doing the right thing because sacrificing yourself is never easy. Sacrifice is typically that which requires one to give something up in return for accomplishing a higher ideal; unfortunately, as one of the Unbidden, you are ostracized for being different. It is hard to justify doing something for the good of humanity when they shun you. And you can never impart to them the Secret Stories, for that would surely increase the weight of the burden which you already shoulder.

Being imbued with the supernatural Endowments and knowledge of the Secret Stories also makes you a target. The demons that pervert reality and bend it to serve their own ends would just as soon see you dead for the threat you represent. It is all of these factors that cast the Unbidden as comrades-in-arms, regardless of ethnicity, religion, class, and creed, for you know that in numbers lies strength against abyssal adversaries.

THE DARKNESS

The Darkness is an all-encompassing term used to describe the legions of demons and evil spirits that have poured into our world. Some of the Unbidden believe that there were cycles during which demonic activity and influence increased, and use this theory to explain various occurrences. For instance, the elder Unbidden view the demonic theory at work in relation to the rise of occurrences such as Nazism, World War II, the Jonestown Massacre, and the like.

Whatever the case may be, their reasons for being here seem simply to feed on base human emotions and to cause as much destruction as they can in the process. Human beings are pawns to them, playthings for amusements that are quickly tossed aside once the fun has lost its charm. Then it is time to move on to the next victim, and the cycle continues. Most mortals, specifically those not privy to the Secret Stories, are completely unaware of the malignant forces at work. They are ignorant to the fact that otherworldly entities are fueling negative emotions and perpetuating the violence and degradation that continues on a daily basis.

If there is any consolation to this, it is the fact that these demons are unable to interact on a personal basis with humanity (although there are and have been exceptions). That is to say, they have no way of blending in with society and so must remain under cover of shadow and darkness, where they safely manipulate mankind. Were it not for the fact that the Unbidden are able to sense the presence of a demon, these malevolent beings would literally have free reign and a veritable king's banquet of sinister emotions to feed upon. So, what you will not see is a demon in the guise of a corporate CEO, furthering its own agenda behind a mask of human flesh. That is not say you won't find a demon influencing said corporate CEO, fueling his subconscious greed and depravity. These

unwitting human agents can be some of the Unbidden's most dangerous opponents because they can operate within the safe confines of society, while the Unbidden cannot. And they do not even know that they are playing puppets to a higher power.

Demons are creatures of shadow and blackness, each one a different substance and form. They are not like the garden variety you'll read about in the Bible, with barbed tails, cloven hooves, horns, and red scaly skin. Rather, they embody principles founded on specific proclivities, such as discord, ignorance, fear, hatred, etc. For example, an entity known as Mastiphal, whose principle is fear, may appear as a swirling mass of ethereal blackness, thick like oil and just as opaque, yet he has no single definable form.

The Unbidden currently do not know if there is a specific hierarchy to the demons that now inhabit the world, and if there is one, who commands it. But there are certain categories of demons and their agents, which you will soon discover.





The second fundamental of the Secret Stories is Mythos Lore and its direct relation to Endowments. Think of the following concepts in terms of traditional fantasy worlds where magic and spells are interrelated, with the former being a general term to describe a phenomenon and viewpoint and the latter being a specific power that one can command and bend to his will.

Mythos Lore is a phenomenon, a cosmic state of supernatural existence, that powers an Unbidden's Endowments and opens his mind to an intense revelation. No one is certain whether the Unbidden are born with a propensity to wield Mythos Lore or if it just comes to them like a sudden thought or an abrupt revelation. Whatever the case may be, this fundamental is the single greatest ally in the Secret War because it is the Mythos Lore of the Secret Stories that invigorate and encourage the Unbidden.

There are six distinct castes of Unbidden and each hold different beliefs. Each adheres to a certain ancient lineage, propagated by Loremasters. They act as hosts to several Mythos Lore which are studied as part of their traditions and used to determine their perceptions of the Secret Stories. While each caste has the same fundamental goal, they pursue it by different means.

THE LOREMASTERS

Of special importance to the Mythos Lore are the Loremasters, a cabal of eminent men and women who hold high positions among the counter-culture of the Unbidden and who ensure the survival of their caste throughout the Secret War. Each Loremaster embodies the principles and core beliefs of his or her caste and passes that wisdom to other Unbidden who share the same views. They are mentors, protectors, guides and demigods in their own right. They may be compassionate, nurturing, and supportive (like a good parent), but they are also fleeting, eclectic, and sometimes dangerous (like a vengeful god).

ENDOWMENTS



Endowments are the third and final fundamental of the Secret Stories. Once one learns the Truth and commands Mythos Lore he can wield Endowments, mystical powers that each Unbidden wields. It is up to the Loremasters to teach newly awakened Unbidden how to use these powers.

It has been noted by many that when in the presence or atmosphere of an Unbidden, strange happenings take place. Knocks, raps, and other sounds may be heard that are caused by no known agent. There may be the ringing of bells and sounds of musical instruments. Furniture perhaps moves of itself, and other household objects become disarranged. There may appear in the air what seem to be human hands and faces and ultimately complete figures. This is essentially an Unbidden's power mucking about with the collective reality of a world blind to the truth. Endowments go against the very fabric of reality, regardless of whether it has been manufactured, and thus form a paradox of impossibility and improbability.

Folk who often encounter Unbidden have a tendency to grow uneasy, because their unconscious minds have no way of

categorizing and relating to this strange phenomenon that is raw yet bridled supernatural power. This is one of the reasons why the Unbidden must live a solitary life, often living on the streets among their own kind.

When an Unbidden uses an Endowment, he is drawing on a mystical reservoir of power that is stored and shared among the communal existence used by all of his kind. It is like siphoning electrical power from a transformer in Chicago to power a neighborhood in downstate Illinois, but it is farther reaching than that, and its influence knows no bounds. So, in effect, one who is endowed with supernatural ability will never lose that power unless, of course, The Darkness manages to kill every last Unbidden on the face of the planet. And while that is very unlikely, since no one but the Loremasters truly knows how many Unbidden exist, it is certainly not from a lack of trying. The Darkness fear little, no doubt, but they do fear the Unbidden and their opponents ability to wield powers matching their own. It is for this reason that The Darkness continually seek out the Unbidden.

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Dexterity

1

2

3

4

5

Stamina

Reaction

Mythos

Perception

1/+1

2/+2

3/+3

4/+4

5/+5

Dementia

Banes & Skills

Dexterity

1

2

3

4

5

Stamina

Reaction

Mythos

Perception

1/+1

2/+2

3/+3

4/+4

5/+5

Dementia

Banes & Skills

Dexterity

1

2

3

4

5

Stamina

Reaction

Mythos

Perception

1/+1

2/+2

3/+3

4/+4

5/+5

Dementia

Banes & Skills

Dexterity

1

2

3

4

5

Stamina

Reaction

Mythos

Perception

1/+1

2/+2

3/+3

4/+4

5/+5

Dementia

Banes & Skills

UNBIDDEN

Name

Caste

Lores

Background

Personal Demons

Skills and Endowments

Abandoned Friends and Family

Dexterity

Reaction

Perception

①
②
③
④
⑤

Stamina

Mythos

Dementia

①
②
③
④
⑤

Strength

Willpower

Reasoning

Current Friends and Allies

REACTION MODIFIERS

Wearing Kevlar/Armor	-1
Knocked Down	-1
Surprised Opponent	+2
Holding Many Items	-1
Holding Bulky Items	-1
Injured	-1 to -5

Attacks

Strength + Brawling

Dexterity + Melee Specialty

Dexterity + Sword Specialty

Dexterity + Firearms

Dexterity + Archery

Dexterity + Staff Specialty

Dexterity + Athletics

Defenses

Strength + Brawling

Strength + Staff Specialty

Dexterity + Brawling

Dexterity + Sword Specialty

Dexterity + Athletics

RANGES

	Ⓟ _{PB}	Ⓟ _S	Ⓟ _M	Ⓟ _L	Ⓟ _E
Throwing	15	30	45	60	90
Bow	30	75	150	225	300
Pistol	15	30	75	120	225
Rifle	15	30	90	150	300
Shotgun	15	30	50	100	150

AMMUNITION

Revolver	6
Semi-Auto Pistol	7 - 20
Rifle	10 - 100
Shotgun	2 - 5

DAMAGE

	PR	AV	GD	EX	CS
Unarmed	1	2	2	3	5
Rock	1	2	3	4	6
Club/Staff	1	2	4	6	10
Knife	1	2	3	6	8
Axe	1	2	4	8	10
Sword	1	3	4	8	10
Arrow	1	2	4	6	8
Pistol	2	3	5	8	10
Rifle	2	4	6	10	12
Shotgun	1	3	7	12	15
Assault Rifle	2	5	7	11	14

SCARS

1	Small Scar
2-3	Disfiguring Scar
4	Muscle Atrophy
5	Damaged Vision
6	Head Injury

TASK MODIFIERS

Target Moving	1
Cover	1 to 2
Partial Light	1
Aiming	+1
Surprised Opponent	+2
In/Under Water	-2 or -1
On the Ground	-2
Armor	-2
Injury	-1 to -5
Dementia	-1 to -5

ADVANCED TASKS

Quickdraw	1
Second Weapon	1
Second Attack	1
Second Target	1 / 2
Called Strikes	1 / 2
Burst Fire (Ⓞ _M , Ⓞ _L)	1
Spray Fire (Ⓞ _M , Ⓞ _L)/(Ⓞ _{PB} , Ⓞ _S)	1 / 1
Scope (Ⓞ _M , Ⓞ _L , Ⓞ _E)	1

SUCCESS TABLE

DIFFICULTY

MARGIN		SIMPLE	EASY	AVERAGE	CHALLENGING	HARD	IMPOSSIBLE
	LESS THAN -6	FAILURE	FAILURE	FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE
	-6 TO -1	FAILURE	FAILURE	FAILURE	FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE
	0	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	POOR	FAILURE	FAILURE	CRITICAL FAILURE
	1-3	GOOD	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	POOR	FAILURE	FAILURE
	4-5	GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	POOR	FAILURE
	6-7	EXCELLENT	GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	POOR
	8-9	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	POOR
	10-11	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	AVERAGE
	12-13	CRITICAL SUCCESS	CRITICAL SUCCESS	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE
	14 AND UP	CRITICAL SUCCESS	CRITICAL SUCCESS	CRITICAL SUCCESS	CRITICAL SUCCESS	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT
	RANGE	POINT BLANK		SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG	EXTREME
	CONTESTED	POOR		AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	CRITICAL SUC.
	SITUATION	BENIGN	VIOLENT	SUPERNATURAL	HORRIFIC	CATASTROPHIC	EARTH SHATT.
	PERSONAL DEMON	1	2	3	4	5	6

CAUSES OF DEMENTIA

Benign	1☹
Violent	2☹
Supernatural	3☹
Horrorific	4☹
Catastrophic	5☹
Earth Shattering	6☹
Personal	varies

SYMPTOMS OF SHOCK

1	Catatonia
2-3	Cower/Flee
4	Denial
5	Enraged
6	Outburst